

Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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Interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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More Early Writings by Leo Strauss from the *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* (1925–1928)

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

The following texts by Leo Strauss (1899–1973) were rediscovered by Thomas Meyer and translated into English by Michael Zank.¹ These writings originally appeared between 1925 and 1928 in a regional Jewish weekly serving the city of Kassel and the region of Hesse and Waldeck (*Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck*). In 1929, the same weekly carried the obituary Strauss wrote for the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929).²

Strauss wrote these pieces in connection with his employment as a fellow of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, an institute for advanced Jewish research, founded in 1919, that sent Strauss to Kassel for a seven-month period, commencing on February 15, 1925. The purpose of his mission, as described in the 1925 report of the scientific board of the Akademie, was for Strauss “to offer lectures and seminars in Jewish studies.”

¹ The authors would like to acknowledge the editorial assistance of Ms. Theresa Cooney, PhD Cand. (Boston University).

² Leo Strauss, “Franz Rosenzweig und die Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums,” *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 6, no. 49 (Dec. 13, 1929); repr. in Leo Strauss, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Heinrich Meier, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1997), 363–64; English translation in Leo Strauss, *The Early Writings (1921–1932)* [henceforth *EW*], ed. Michael Zank (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 212–13.

The choice of location was not accidental. The original gift required a research fellow to serve as a lecturer in that particular Hessian city. By sending Strauss to Kassel, the Akademie fulfilled an obligation it had accepted with the establishment of the Frau Kommerzienrat Rosenzweig Stiftung whose endowment of 50,000 Mark³ is mentioned in the institution's first budget report of December 31, 1919. The donor was Adele Rosenzweig, mother of the Kassel native Franz Rosenzweig, on whose initiative the institute had been founded.⁴

Leo Strauss was the only fellow of the Akademie who made good on the mandate to teach in Kassel. There are several reasons why he complied with a stipulation that others may have found onerous. His hometown, Kirchhain, was nearby, as was Marburg, where his sister Bettina was studying at the time. Strauss had avuncular friends in Marburg with whom he had lodged as a high-school student. Finally, the presence of Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Heidegger at Marburg University were attractive to Strauss, not to mention the university library at his disposal. None of this, however, explains why he did not simply move to Marburg but instead accepted the Kassel obligation.

The reason why Strauss, but none of the other employees of the Akademie, moved to Kassel at that time can be determined despite the relatively poor documentation. It was first and foremost because of his prior relationship with the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. Rosenzweig was perhaps the first to recognize Strauss's talents as a teacher and gave him his first teaching opportunities. Strauss's candid self-assessment ("Postscript to the Discussion," here included) and letters of recommendation from a decade later, when Strauss was seeking employment as an academic lecturer in England and the US, attest to the fact that Strauss, though widely thought of as a gifted researcher and a brilliant intellectual, was hardly a charismatic teacher.

In 1924 Strauss taught at Rosenzweig's Freies jüdisches Lehrhaus, an unaffiliated Jewish adult-education center, where he directed a seminar (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) on Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason*

³ Using <http://www.measuringworth.com> to determine the relative value of the dollar amount of roughly 1,500 which, in 1919, would have been the exchange value of 50,000 Mark (conversion according to table at <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/projects/currency.htm>), the equivalent in USD from the year 2000 would be anywhere between \$11,800 and \$191,000. In other words, it is difficult to say on the basis of such calculations alone how significant a contribution it was. The year 1919 saw the beginning of hyperinflation of German currency.

⁴ Franz Rosenzweig, "It Is Time: Concerning the Study of Judaism," in *On Jewish Learning*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 27–54.

from the Sources of Judaism (May to July) and taught a course on Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* (October to December). In January 1925 Strauss started a new lecture course, "Theory of Zionism," and directed a seminar on Spinoza's *Tractatus*, but once the position with the Academy commenced, Strauss stopped teaching in Frankfurt. Teaching in two places at once would have been too much, especially now that Strauss was devoting most of his attention to his main responsibility toward the Academy, namely, research on the biblical scholarship of Spinoza and his predecessors. According to what he wrote later, Strauss began work on the Spinoza book in 1925 and completed the manuscript in 1928, though work on the manuscript dragged on for another year owing to Academy director Julius Guttman's request for revisions. Strauss later famously quipped that the book, which was published in 1930, had been written under conditions of censorship. By teaching in Kassel when he did, Strauss ultimately fulfilled a personal obligation toward Rosenzweig who, it may be remembered, suffered from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease).

Since most letters to and from Strauss from the early 1920s have been lost it is difficult to ascertain how Strauss had come to know Rosenzweig. Most likely it was Ernst Simon (1899–1988) who made the connection. Strauss first met Simon in December 1919, at the convention of the Kartell Jüdischer Verbindungen (KJV) (Confederation of Jewish Fraternities) in Frankfurt, an event attended by over fourteen hundred members. Strauss had been a member since the summer of 1917. At the time of the convention Strauss lived in Frankfurt while Simon, who attended the convention as a speaker and a reporter, lived in Heidelberg. Despite their differences in background, temperament, and worldview, Strauss and Simon developed a close friendship they maintained over several decades.

The link between Simon and Rosenzweig was Martin Buber (1878–1965), then living in Heppenheim (halfway between Frankfurt and Heidelberg and on the same train line), who taught in Frankfurt and collaborated with Rosenzweig on a translation of the Hebrew Bible.⁵ As an editor of Buber's monthly *Der Jude*, Simon was able to bring young writers such as Strauss to Rosenzweig's attention as possible docents for the Freies jüdisches Lehrhaus. Simon's relationship with Buber and Rosenzweig was never entirely free of tension, as we know from letters. But on occasion Simon could also exert considerable influence. In 1923, for example, Julius Guttman (1880–1950) approached the then only twenty-four-year-old Simon

⁵ On Buber's Frankfurt years see Michael Zank, "Martin Buber: A Visualization in the Cities of his Work," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. M. Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 20–23.

in a letter inquiring whether he could imagine Rosenzweig as the author of an introduction to the planned Akademie edition of Hermann Cohen's Jewish writings and suggested that, if so, he should let Rosenzweig know that the Akademie was interested in his authorship. The introductory essay had originally been assigned to the neo-Kantian philosopher, Cohen student, and liberal rabbi Benzion Kellermann (1869–1923), who suddenly passed away. Despite all the reservations Rosenzweig maintained toward the institution, which he perceived as having strayed far from his original vision,⁶ Rosenzweig nevertheless undertook the requested writing.

Simon's influence on Strauss's work for the Lehrhaus is also attested by the fact that Strauss took on the very subjects that Simon—now back in Heidelberg—had taught before. Simon was particularly interested in two subjects, namely, theory of Zionism and the development of Judaism in the nineteenth century; he had originally planned to write a doctoral thesis on the last-mentioned topic under the guidance of historian Hermann Oncken (1869–1945). Strauss obviously shared Simon's interest in these questions.

The issue most intensely debated in the various newspapers and brochures associated with the KJV at the time was the need to educate the Jewish public, especially the young generation, by disseminating Jewish knowledge. The various affiliated fraternities could agree on this objective even while disagreeing with one another on most other goals and the means by which to attain them. The innovation and enlivening of Jewish education had also provided the impetus for Rosenzweig's conception of a Jewish academy of advanced research as well as for his Lehrhaus initiative. Strauss's commission for Kassel followed this trajectory, which is evident from the programs he conducted there.

As an avid reader of Buber's *Der Jude* as well as of the mainstream German Zionist *Jüdische Rundschau*, Rosenzweig must have been familiar with Strauss's articles and his views. Strauss's lecturing at Rosenzweig's Lehrhaus coincided with the publication of his essay "Cohen's Analysis of Spinoza's Bible Science," published in the May–June 1924 issue of Buber's *Der Jude*.⁷ Simon, we believe, helped to launch Strauss in both venues. Once discovered by Guttmann and recruited for the Academy, Strauss remained in Rosenzweig's orbit by accepting the commission in Kassel. There are thematic

⁶ See "Bildung und kein Ende," English trans. by Michael Zank in "Franz Rosenzweig, the 1920s, and the <email> moment of textual reasoning," in *Textual Reasonings: Jewish Philosophy and Text Study after Modernity*, ed. Peter Ochs and Nancy Levene (London: SCM Press, 2002), 229–50.

⁷ See Strauss, *EW*, 140–61.

connections between Strauss's engagement in Frankfurt and his teaching in Kassel. The documents here presented allow us to deepen our knowledge of Strauss's development as a teacher and a thinker in the years during which he worked on his first published book, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*.

Finally, it should be noted that, only days after Rosenzweig's untimely passing on December 10, 1929, Strauss published his obituary in the same venue, the *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck*, where the pieces here translated had appeared before. His obituary foregrounds Rosenzweig's role as the founder of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, points out the political nature of Rosenzweig's initiative, and links him to Hermann Cohen as the "greatest teacher of German Judaism."⁸

Until now it was unknown that Strauss ever taught Hebrew, more precisely biblical Hebrew. The texts here presented attest to the significance of the Bible for Strauss from early on. As he states in the article about his Lehrhaus colleague Georg Salzberger, his efforts at teaching Hebrew language were not crowned with great success. This was most likely due to the fact that Strauss chose the teaching method most commonly practiced in most religious schools of the time, which was to teach Hebrew by reading biblical texts. In light of modern methods this procedure no longer appealed to many Jewish students. Strauss's choice of readings from Judges, Kings, and Amos was not due to purely pedagogical considerations, either. The selected passages matched the program of political Zionism as Strauss understood it, as attested in other of his early essays and lectures.

We don't intend to offer an interpretation of the brief pieces here included, some of which are mere course announcements. There is no further information about them to be found in the Strauss archives and any interpretation would need to embed these writings into a broader context. Instead we decided to include the article by Artur Katz, which gives an impression of how Strauss's activity was perceived by the Jewish public and provides a representative reaction to the positions taken by Strauss. Katz, who owned a well-known bookstore in Marburg and was familiar with Strauss through his activities in the KJV, was in fact the editor of the *Jüdische Wochenzeitung*.

The most substantial piece here included is Strauss's review of the 1924 three-volume edition of Hermann Cohen's Jewish writings.

⁸ See Strauss, *EW*, 212–13.

This piece deepens our appreciation for Strauss's early and sustained pre-occupation with Cohen's philosophical thought and with Cohen's role as a representative of German Judaism. It is unlikely that Cohen's Jewish writings were a new discovery for Strauss. Strauss's attention was first drawn to the philosopher and his complex relationship with Judaism by a friend of Cohen's, the Marburg teacher Abraham Strauss, with whom the young Leo Strauss took lodging as far back as his high-school days in Marburg, where Strauss attended the Gymnasium Philippinum from 1912 to 1917. Teacher Strauss was a font of anecdotes about Cohen that later appeared in Rosenzweig's "Introduction." Strauss was also close to Abraham Strauss's son Bruno (1889–1969), who was the editor of Cohen's Jewish writings, and Strauss later collaborated with Bruno Strauss, a Germanist and historian of philosophy, on the Academy's jubilee edition (*Jubiläumsausgabe*) of the works of Moses Mendelssohn. Strauss venerated Abraham Strauss and claimed that it was "Lehrer Strauss" who taught him how to write German essays. Michael Zank further conjectures that Strauss's decision to write his dissertation under the guidance of Ernst Cassirer, then widely thought the true intellectual heir of Cohen, had been due to his abiding interest in Cohen as well. Strauss repeatedly refers to Cohen in the early 1920s, including in his 1923 review of Rudolf Otto's *The Holy*. The 1924 essay "Cohen's Analysis of Spinoza's Bible Science," mentioned above, opens with an explicit reference to Bruno Strauss's edition of Cohen's *Jüdische Schriften*, which had just appeared in print. Strauss is likely to have been as familiar with parts of this collection of Jewish writings as he was with Cohen's philosophical works. His familiarity with Cohen's philosophical system can be deduced not only from his criticism of Walter Kinkel's naive Cohen apologetics but also from the fact that Strauss argues for a mutually constitutive relation between Cohen's systematic works and his late writings on the philosophy of religion. Strauss was not convinced by Rosenzweig's view, by now widely discredited, that Cohen's *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism* (posthumously published in 1919) represented a departure of the philosopher from his system of philosophy. This stance, formulated during his year in Kassel, attests not just to Strauss's familiarity with the problems that were at stake in this debate but also to the independence of his judgment.

A second, more substantial, piece here included, a critical report on a lecture, held in Kassel, by Strauss's Lehrhaus colleague Salzberger in 1928, touches on more than just a local disagreement on the right method of Jewish religious education. In the first part of the article Strauss tersely summarizes and brings to bear on his analysis of the lecture a central thesis

of his Spinoza book when he states that liberal Judaism can neither justify its own position concisely nor indicate the exact foundation of its critique of orthodoxy. To the young Strauss, the modern critique of religion, especially the critique of miracles, stood on earthen legs.

The evidence here provided of Strauss's presence in Kassel and Frankfurt during several months in 1924 and 1925 as well as in 1927 and 1928 makes room for further suppositions. Following this period, Strauss went first to Paris (October 1932) and then to England (1934 to 1938), as a research fellow supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. Judging by the correspondence from this period, now conveniently accessible in volume 3 of Heinrich Meier's edition of Strauss's *Gesammelte Schriften*, Strauss maintained a close intellectual companionship with Gerhard Krüger and Karl Löwith. But while the correspondence, given by Meier, commences only in September 1928 (Gerhard Krüger) or even later (Karl Löwith, in November 1932), Strauss must have met Krüger and Löwith much earlier to be engaged in such an intimate philosophical exchange with these correspondents later on. We surmise that he made these men's acquaintance during his stint in Kassel and Marburg, where they formed what Dieter Henrich described as a *Marburger Konstellation* centered on the Protestant theologian Rudolf Bultmann.⁹ For the reasons stated above, Strauss made frequent visits to nearby Marburg while teaching in Kassel. We know this from the numerous borrowing slips from the Marburg university library preserved in the Strauss archives that can be dated to the period in question. Whether Strauss also heard Martin Heidegger's lectures on Wilhelm Dilthey, which the philosopher held in Kassel from April 16 to 21, 1925, cannot be said with any certainty based on our current documentation.

For this edition, abbreviations have been resolved and errors tacitly corrected. Otherwise the original texts appear here without modification. There are no extant manuscripts for these publications. We must assume that they were lost, along with parts of Strauss's library, in the chaos that prevailed in Marburg in the aftermath of the Second World War.

⁹ See Matthias Bormuth and Ulrich von Bülow, eds., *Marburger Hermeneutik zwischen Tradition und Krise* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2008).

PART II: DOCUMENTATION

Courses, sponsored by the Academy for Jewish Research, in Cassel¹⁰

The Academy for Jewish Research commissioned me to hold courses on a range of subjects in Jewish studies in Cassel, beginning in mid-February. The curriculum for these courses has already been published in a previous issue (of this paper). To launch these courses, it seems advised that I briefly explain the curriculum in this place:

1. Beginning Hebrew. Time: Wednesday 7–8 o'clock. The only prerequisite is familiarity with the Hebrew alphabet. Course goals: (1) Knowledge of elementary biblical grammar. (2) Introduction to the history of our age of judges and kings. Reading of Judges 13–21 (Samson; the cast image of Micah; the concubine of Gibeah) and the history of the post-Solomonic kingdom in the Books of Kings.

2. Advanced Hebrew. Time: Saturday 6–7 o'clock. Prerequisite: Knowledge of elementary Hebrew grammar with experience in the use of a dictionary. Goal: Introduction to biblical prophecy. Reading: The Book of Amos.

Casseler Kurse im Auftrage der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums

Die Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums hat mich beauftragt, von Mitte Februar d. J. an in Cassel Kurse aus dem Gebiete der Wissenschaft des Judentums zu halten. Das Arbeitsprogramm ist bereits in einer früheren Nummer veröffentlicht worden. Man hat es für ratsam im Interesse des Zustandekommens der Kurse gehalten, daß ich das Programm an dieser Stelle kurz erläutere—was hiermit geschieht.

1. *Hebräisch für Anfänger*. Zeit: Mittwoch 7–8 Uhr. Vorausgesetzt wird lediglich Kenntnis der hebräischen Schrift. Unterrichtsziel: 1. Kenntnis der hebräischen Elementargrammatik; 2. Einführung in die Geschichte unserer Richter- und Königszeit. Gelesen wird Richter 13–21 (Simson. Gußbild des Micha. Kebsweib von Gibeah) und die Geschichte des nachsalomonischen Königtums in den Königsbüchern.

2. *Hebräisch für Fortgeschrittene*. Zeit: Sonnabend 6–7 Uhr. Vorausgesetzt wird: Kenntnis der hebräischen Elementargrammatik mit Uebung im Gebrauch des Wörterbuchs. Unterrichtsziel: Einführung in die biblische Prophetie. Gelesen wird das Buch Amos.

¹⁰ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 2, no. 8 (February 19, 1925): 1 (s.p.).

3. Seminar on “German Judaism since Moses Mendelssohn.” Time: Wednesday evening at 8:30 sharp. The expression “Seminar” [*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*] means that [course number] 3 requires more work and collaboration than 1 and 2. At least some of the participants need to commit to giving presentations. The course subject is to be treated as a historical *problem* [*problemgeschichtlich*]. The particular themes will be determined at the first meeting or possibly from time to time by agreement. Topics we may consider include “The Relationship between Judaism and Hellenism [*Griechentum*] in the view of nineteenth-century German Judaism” (Sources: [Heinrich] Heine, S. R. Hirsch, Moses Hess, Hermann Cohen); “The Image of Spinoza in German Judaism” (Sources: Mendelssohn, Heine, Hess, Graetz, Cohen); “Judaism and the German State”; “Revelation and Science.” The course will be introduced by a lecture on “Motives of the German-Jewish Connection” (Wednesday, February 25, 8:30 pm).

All courses will start punctually at the appointed time. Place TBA. Dr. Leo Strauss.

3. *Arbeitsgemeinschaft über: Deutsches Judentum seit Moses Mendelssohn.* Zeit: Mittwoch pünktlich ½ 9 Uhr abends. Der Ausdruck „Arbeitsgemeinschaft“ besagt, daß für 3. mehr Arbeit, Mitarbeit verlangt wird als für 1. und 2. Mindestens eine Anzahl der Teilnehmer muß sich verpflichten, Referate zu halten. In dem Kurs soll der Gegenstand *problemgeschichtlich* behandelt werden. Die einzelnen Themen werden in der ersten Arbeitssitzung, eventuell von Fall zu Fall auf Grund von Vereinbarung bestimmt. Es kämen u.a. in Frage: „Verhältnis von Judentum und Griechentum nach der Auffassung des deutschen Judentums des 19. Jahrhunderts“ (Quellen: Heine, S. R. Hirsch, Moses Heß, Hermann Cohen); „Das Spinoza-Bild des deutschen Judentums“ (Quellen: Mendelssohn, Heine, Heß, Graetz, Cohen); „Judentum und deutscher Staat“; „Offenbarung und Wissenschaft“. Der Kursus wird eingeleitet durch einen Vortrag: „Motive des deutsch-jüdischen Zusammenhanges“, Mittwoch, 25. Februar, abends ½ 9 Uhr.

Sämtliche Kurse beginnen pünktlich zur festgesetzten Zeit. Lokal wird noch bekanntgegeben. Dr. Leo Strauß

The “Jewish Writings” of Hermann Cohen.¹¹ By Dr. Leo Strauss, Cassel.

Getting to know the “Jewish Writings” of Hermann Cohen is not advised by curiosity. They are barely “modern,” these writings, which were written over the course of half a century by the greatest German Jew of his generation from within German Judaism and in the interest of German Judaism. Their coloration is the unpoetic and unsensational pallor of the just bygone. The process that filled Cohen’s life—one is tempted to say: that *is filled by* this life—is, as it were, completed by the product of this life. But only as it were and on the whole. It is completed for German Judaism as a historical totality, though not for the particular Jew of the present generation. Each individual German Jew must undergo the process for which Cohen is and remains paradigmatic. This means: appropriating the “Jewish Writings” of Hermann Cohen is of the utmost urgency for our most personal life as Jews.

The development of German Judaism since Moses Mendelssohn unfolds in such a way that a process of dissolution that lasted until around 1880 was replaced by a process of consolidation. In the first stage of this development the

Die „Jüdischen Schriften“ Hermann Cohens. Von Dr. Leo Strauß, Cassel.

Die „Jüdischen Schriften“ Hermann Cohens kennen zu lernen, rät nicht Neugier an. Sie sind sehr wenig „modern“, diese Schriften, die im Laufe eines halben Jahrhunderts von dem größten Deutschen Juden seiner Generation aus dem Deutschen Judentum heraus im Interesse des Deutschen Judentums geschrieben worden sind. Ihre Farbe ist die poesie- und sensationslose Blässe des Eben-Vergangenen. Der Prozeß, der Cohens Leben ausfüllte, man möchte sagen: *den* dieses Leben ausfüllt, ist durch das Produkt dieses Lebens gewissermaßen abgeschlossen. Aber doch nur gewissermaßen und überhaupt. Er ist abgeschlossen für das Deutsche Judentum als geschichtliche Ganzheit, nicht für den einzelnen Juden der gegenwärtigen Generation. Jeder einzelne Deutsche Jude hat den Prozeß, für den Cohen vorbildlich ist und bleibt, in sich durchzumachen. Das besagt: Die Aneignung der „Jüdischen Schriften“ Hermann Cohens ist von größter Dringlichkeit für unser persönlichstes Leben als Juden.

Die Entwicklung des Deutschen Judentums seit Moses Mendelssohn vollzieht sich in der Weise, daß ein Auflösungsprozeß, der bis etwa 1880 dauert, abgelöst wird von einem Konsolidierungsprozeß. In dem ersten Abschnitt

¹¹ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 2, no. 18 (May 8, 1925): 1–3 (s.p.).

traditional Jewish connection dissolves itself under the influence of Europe's critique. The new consolidation of the Jewish connection does not result from a rejection of this critique, a cowardly flight from a cold, harsh, illusion-lacking, dangerous, open Europe into the cozy narrowness of the ghetto. It does not result from such drives as long as it is more than sentimentality. Strictly speaking, this is not a kind of severance, a following of one process on the other, but rather a legitimate proceeding of the later from the earlier.

Hermann Cohen moved from the Jewish context to Europe when he left the Breslau seminary to avail himself of the psychology of the school of Herbart as a means to obtain a certainty that Jewish theology was not able to give him. An unambiguous path—the path of scientific man who wants, and is compelled, to make certain of the foundations of his science—led him from this psychology to the Kantian system.

On that ground—the ground of a Kantian system enlivened and changed in a particular way by the problems of the '70s and '80s (i.e., natural science and social politics)—Cohen arrived at the necessity of the concept of God. If one considers that, according to Cohen, the system of philosophy is to accomplish

dieser Entwicklung löst sich der traditionelle jüdische Zusammenhang unter dem Einfluß der Kritik Europas auf. Die Neukonsolidierung des jüdischen Zusammenhangs entspringt nicht einem Sichsperrn gegen diese Kritik, einer feigen Flucht aus dem kalt, ungemütlich, illusionslos, gefährlich, offen gewordenen Europa in die trauliche Enge des Ghetto. Sie entspringt nicht solchen Antrieben, gesetzt, daß sie mehr ist als eine Sentimentalität. Eigentlich gesprochen, handelt es sich um ein Sichablösen, um ein Aufeinanderfolgen der beiden Prozesse, sondern vielmehr um ein begründetes Hervorgehen des späteren aus dem früheren.

Den Weg vom jüdischen Zusammenhang zu Europa ging Hermann Cohen, als er das Breslauer Seminar verließ, um sich mittels der Psychologie der Herbart-Schule die Gewißheiten zu verschaffen, die ihm die jüdische Theologie nicht zu geben vermochte. Von dieser Psychologie führte ihn ein eindeutiger Weg, der Weg des wissenschaftlichen Menschen, der sich der Grundlagen seiner Wissenschaft versichern will und muß, zu dem Kantischen System.

Auf dessen Boden, auf dem Boden des im Zusammenhang mit den Problemen der 70er und 80er Jahre: Naturwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik lebendig gewordenen und damit charakteristisch verwandelten Kantischen Systems, ergab sich für Cohen die Notwendigkeit des Gottesbegriffs. Bedenkt man, daß das

the foundation [*Begründung*] of “culture,” i.e., of European culture, and that the concept of God of Cohen’s ethics stands in explicit relation to the Jewish concept of God, as far as it is possible to speak of this on the basis of the critique of the recent centuries, this path of Cohen’s already constitutes a “return” from Europe to Judaism. When Cohen asks, what necessity of the system of philosophy leads to the idea of God, he implicitly asks: What European necessity demands the preservation and development of Judaism?

It follows from the aforesaid that Cohen’s doctrine of religion, of Judaism, of God cannot be understood without knowledge of his system. This however represents great difficulties. One knows that approximately ninety percent of German professors of philosophy never studied Cohen’s *Logic of Pure Cognition* or, if they studied it, they openly admit that they did not understand it. This is not to say that a Jewish reader may not understand the work anyway. But one ought to consider that understanding it presupposes familiarity with the ideas of three centuries of mathematical sciences [*mathematische Naturwissenschaften*]. We therefore try to make do with the popular exposition of Cohen’s system that a student of Cohen’s provided.

System der Philosophie nach Cohen die Begründung der „Kultur“, d.h. aber der europäischen Kultur, zu leisten hat, und daß der Gottesbegriff der Cohenschen Ethik in ausgesprochenem Zusammenhang mit dem Gottesbegriff des Judentums steht, soweit von ihm auf Grund der Kritik der neueren Jahrhunderte die Rede sein darf, so bedeutet dieser Weg Cohens bereits eine „Rückkehr“ von Europa zum Judentum. Wenn Cohen fragt: Welche Notwendigkeit des Systems der Philosophie führt zu der Idee Gottes?—so fragt er eben damit: Welche europäische Notwendigkeit fordert die Erhaltung und Entwicklung des Judentums?

Aus dem Gesagten ergibt sich, daß die Cohensche Lehre von der Religion, vom Judentum, von Gott nicht zu verstehen ist ohne die Kenntnis seines Systems. Damit aber hat es große Schwierigkeiten. Man weiß, daß schätzungsweise neunzig Prozent der deutschen Philosophie-Professoren die Cohensche „Logik der reinen Erkenntnis“ nie studiert haben, bzw. wenn sie sie gelesen haben, freimütig gestehen, sie hätten sie nicht verstanden. Nun ist damit allerdings noch nicht gesagt, daß nicht dennoch der jüdische Leser das Werk verstehe. Aber es ist zu bedenken, daß es zu seinem Verständnis die ideelle Gegenwärtigkeit dreier Jahrhunderte mathematischer Naturwissenschaft voraussetzt. Versuchen wir es also mit der populären Darstellung des Cohenschen Systems, die ein Schüler Cohens gegeben hat.

Walter Kinkel's book *Hermann Cohen: Einführung in sein Werk* (Hermann Cohen: An introduction to his work) (Stuttgart, 1924) indeed undertakes to present Cohen's philosophical work to a philosophically uneducated public. In the attempt to attain popularity (which is unattainable) if necessary by force, the author deems it useful to dissolve the precision and consistence of Cohen's thought into something completely blurry and lukewarm. Given the purpose of the book, one could have dispensed with an exposition of the deduction of the particular categories. What might have commended itself instead is a brief and simple explanation of Cohen's concept of "generation" [*Erzeugung*]. It is not even necessary to formulate each sentence so that any reader can understand it at first glance. A few examples of the style of the book in question may provide a vivid impression of its literary level. When attending to the style of a book on Cohen we are not guided by aesthetic windbagery; rather we know ourselves to be in agreement with Hermann Cohen himself who in many places expressed how closely related are the style and the person, thinking and writing. Literary irresponsibility is ultimately the particular symptom of a more general deficiency.

Sentences with "without" are typical for Kinkel's book. A few examples: "Cohen went through the school of Herbart

Das Buch von Walter Kinkel: Hermann Cohen. Einführung in sein Werk (Stuttgart 1924) stellt sich in der Tat die Aufgabe, einer philosophisch ungeschulten Öffentlichkeit das philosophische Werk Cohens zu vermitteln. Der Verfasser hält es für zweckmäßig, die Popularität dadurch, wenn nicht zu erreichen, so doch zu erzwingen, daß er die Präzision und Strenge des Cohenschen Denkens in eitel Verwaschenheit und Lauheit auflöst. Für den Zweck des Buches wäre etwa die Darstellung der Deduktion der einzelnen Kategorien entbehrlich gewesen. Statt dessen hätte sich eine knappe und einfache Erklärung des Cohenschen Begriffs der „Erzeugung“ empfohlen. Die Sätze brauchen ja nicht so geschrieben zu sein, daß sie ein beliebiger Leser beim erstmaligen Darüberhinfliegen versteht. Von dem Niveau des in Rede stehenden Buches mögen einige Stilproben ein anschauliches Bild geben. Wenn wir auf den Stil eines Cohenbuches achten, so leitet uns nicht ästhetenhafte Windbeutelerei: vielmehr wissen wir uns damit in Uebereinstimmung mit Hermann Cohen selber, der an vielen Stellen ausgesprochen hat, wie unmittelbar der Zusammenhang ist, der zwischen Stil und Menschen, zwischen Denken und Schreiben besteht. Literarische Verantwortungslosigkeit ist am Ende der Sonderfall eines allgemeineren Mangels.

Charakteristisch für das Kinkelsche Buch sind die Sätze mit „ohne“. Einige Beispiele: „Cohen hat die

without ever having been an orthodox Herbartian” (p. 18). Why explicitly mention the “without?” Would it have been shameful for Cohen if, for a few years as a young man, he had looked at the problems of philosophy from the position of Herbart? Honestly speaking, this would not have been as bad as a philosophy professor who spends his life hashing out the *verba magistri* [Lat., “words of his master”] he learned as a student. But the point is to safeguard Cohen’s originality. This provides opportunity for a further sentence with “without.” “Without wishing to pass judgment on Hegel and his significance we merely wish to remark at this point that it was the originality and freshness of Cohenian (!) thinking that was compelled to revolt against Hegel” (p. 38). This “without”-sentence reveals the proper essence of this stylistic device. It makes it possible to pass judgments that entail no obligation. Thus on p. 2, Professor Kinkel criticizes romanticism “without wishing to pass final or absolute judgment.”

Note that Professor Kinkel does not *want* to pass judgment. To be sure, [he could] if he wanted... To conclude with a paradigmatic example: “Cohen’s position toward the Gothic was in no way one of *unmitigated* admiration but actually rather one associated with a *faint hint* of disapproval” (p. 36).

Schule Herbarts durchgemacht, ohne doch offenbar jemals ein orthodoxer Herbartianer gewesen zu sein.“ (S. 18) Warum wird das „ohne“ ausdrücklich erwähnt? Wäre es eine Schande, wenn Cohen wirklich als junger Mensch einige Jahre lang vom Standpunkte Herbarts die Probleme der Philosophie gesehen hätte? Es wäre offen gesagt, nicht so schlimm, als wenn ein Philosophieprofessor sein liebes langes Leben lang die während seiner Studienzeit *verba magistri* breit und weich träte. Aber es gilt, die Originalität Cohens zu sichern. Dies gibt Gelegenheit zu einem weiteren „Ohne“-Satz: „Ohne ein Urteil über Hegel und seine Bedeutung damit aussprechen zu wollen, bemerken wir nur vorgreifend, daß es die Originalität und Ursprünglichkeit Cohenschen (!) Denkens war, die sich gegen Hegel auflehnen mußte.“ (S. 38) In diesem „Ohne“-Satz wird das eigentliche Wesen dieses Stilmittels offenbar: Es ermöglicht, Urteile abzugeben, die zu nichts verpflichten. So tadelt Professor Kinkel auf Seite 2 die Romantik, „ohne doch irgendein endgültiges oder absolutes Urteil zu wollen.“

Wohl gemerkt: Professor Kinkel *will* kein absolutes Urteil abgeben; aber, wenn er wollte... Ein Musterbeispiel zum Schluß: „Cohens Stellung zur Gotik war *keineswegs* eine *unbedingt* bewundernde, sondern sogar eher mit einem *leisen Unterton* der Mißbilligung verknüpft.“ (S. 36)

The only point in Cohen's system of thought Kinkel dislikes is the constitution of a philosophy of religion *next to* the ethics that, while not independent, is still particular [*eigenartig*]. This ceases to be surprising as soon as one notices the massive cluelessness of the author in regard to Jewish things that must have appeared to him as Jewish curiosities [*jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*] in the style of past centuries. I allow myself the following quotation: "Particularly gifted individuals made it to the *Shulkhan Arukh*. The history of revelation and the second book of Moses were also studied" (p. 28). By the way, the old Schudt¹² of all people would hardly have written such a sentence. Without a more specific perception of the context from which Cohen hailed and to which he "returned" it is impossible to understand his system as one culminating in Jewish theology.

If we now make mention of the essay that Franz Rosenzweig wrote as an introduction to the "Jewish Writings" of Cohen we must first say *l'havdil*, and not just on principle. Very tentatively speaking, in these fifty pages Rosenzweig has brought the science of Judaism as a historical discipline to a level of sophistication never heretofore attained, and it is very much the question whether it will be able to hold on to this level. It goes without saying that Rosenzweig avoids Kinkel's

Der einzige Punkt des Cohenschen Gedanken-Zusammenhanges, der Kinkel mißfällt, ist die Konstitution einer zwar nicht selbständigen aber doch eigenartigen Religionsphilosophie *neben* der Ethik. Das nimmt nicht mehr Wunder, sobald man die massive Ahnungslosigkeit des Verfassers in Bezug auf jüdische Dinge, die ihm wohl als jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten im Stile vergangener Jahrhunderte erschienen sind, bemerkt. Ich gestatte mir folgendes Zitat: „Besonders Begabte kamen bis zum Schulchan Orach. Auch die Offenbarungsgeschichte und das zweite Buch Mosis wurden traktiert.“ (S. 28). Uebrigens wäre wohl gerade dieser Satz dem alten Schudt schwerlich unterlaufen. Ohne eine konkretere Vorstellung von dem Zusammenhang, dem Cohen entstammte und in den er „zurückkehrte“, ist ein Verständnis seines Systems, als welches sich in einer jüdischen Theologie vollendet, unmöglich.

Wenn wir nunmehr die Arbeit, die Franz Rosenzweig zur Einführung in die „Jüdischen Schriften“ Cohens geschrieben hat, erwähnen, so haben wir zuerst einmal, und nicht nur aus dem allgemeinen Grunde, *l'havdil* zu sagen. Ganz vorsichtig gesprochen—Rosenzweig hat mit diesen fünfzig Seiten der Wissenschaft vom Judentum, als historischer Disziplin, ein Niveau erobert, das sie bisher nie erreicht hat, und bezüglich dessen es sehr fraglich ist, ob es ihr

¹² The reference is to J. J. Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten* (Frankfurt, 1714–18), a Christian Hebraist whose scholarship detailed Jewish ritual practices.

mistake of confusing the less philosophically educated by getting lost in details that are unnecessary for an understanding of the distinctive system of thought. It also goes without saying that, instead of foolishly "emphasizing" Cohen's originality, Rosenzweig concisely elaborates the significance of nineteenth-century philosophy for Cohen, as far as it is known and acknowledged. What is decisive, however, is that Rosenzweig takes the result of Cohen's life, namely, the "return," seriously in the sense that he understands Cohen's entire development in light of it and understands that development afresh. How self-evident and, at the same time, how surprising is the observation that Cohen never wrote his [philosophical] psychology and that the place of this long-anticipated work in the system is taken by *The Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*; that accordingly the goal of the system is no longer the unity of the cultural consciousness but the standing-before-God of the human being, of the Jew! The ideas of Cohen's philosophical system thus gain new vitality and new meaning, and Cohen's astonishingly far-flung *practical* activity in the service of Jewry is really appreciated in its centrality.

möglich sein wird, es festzuhalten. Selbstverständlich, daß der Fehler Kinkels, durch Sich-Verlieren in Details, die für das Verständnis des charakteristischen Gedankenzusammenhanges entbehrlich sind, die philosophisch weniger Geschulten zu verwirren, vermieden ist; selbstverständlich auch, daß die Bedeutung der Philosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts für Cohen, soweit sie erkannt und anerkannt ist, klar und präzise herausgearbeitet ist, anstatt in törichter Weise die Cohensche Originalität zu „betonen“. Das Entscheidende aber ist, daß mit dem Resultat des Cohenschen Lebens, jener „Rückkehr“ in dem Sinne ernst gemacht wird, daß Rosenzweig von ihm aus die gesamte Entwicklung Cohens versteht und neu versteht. Wie selbstverständlich und wie überraschend zugleich ist die Feststellung, daß Cohen seine Psychologie nicht geschrieben hat, und die Stelle dieses von langer Hand vorgesehenen Werkes das Nachlaßwerk: „Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums“, einnimmt. Daß dem gemäß als Ziel des Systems nicht mehr die Einheit des Kulturbewußtseins, sondern das Vor-Gott-Leben des Menschen, des Juden erscheint! Und so gewinnen nicht nur die Ideen des philosophischen Systems Cohens eine neue Lebendigkeit, einen neuen Sinn, sondern auch die erstaunlich ausgebreitete *praktische* Tätigkeit Cohens im Dienste der Judenheit kommt so zu wirklichem, zentralem Verständnis.

Rosenzweig understands Cohen's development from its end. Rosenzweig's own standpoint is however not the final point of Cohen's thought. Therefore the elements of the preceding stages that were preserved in the last stage [of Cohen's thought] without being decisive any longer have no immediate vitality [*Lebendigkeit*] for him [i.e., Rosenzweig]. All the elements that Rosenzweig deems "past" have vanished from the exposition. But precisely this must be the question in each case, namely, whether they have passed away. Perhaps now is the time to retrieve the deep and genuine motives of the nineteenth century that had been abandoned in a perilous reaction to the perversions of this most defamed of all centuries. Let us drop the rhetorical "perhaps"! It is *certain* that things would be different with the intellectual probity of our time and with the circus of worldviews if more of the spirit were alive to which Hermann Cohen gave unique expression when he said: "We harbor an irrepressible suspicion toward a truth that derives its legitimacy from anything other than knowing reason"—which is not to say that philosophy must once again yield the most serious and profound human concerns to chemists and apothecaries. And thus or similar may be the state of affairs also in other respects with regard to the relinquishing of motives of the past century.

Rosenzweig versteht die Entwicklung Cohens von deren Ende aus. Der Punkt, auf dem Rosenzweig selber steht, ist nun aber nicht der Endpunkt des Cohenschen Denkens. Daher haben die Elemente der früheren Stufen, die in der letzten Stufe zwar erhalten blieben, aber nicht mehr bestimmend waren, für ihn keine unmittelbare Lebendigkeit. Alle die Elemente, die Rosenzweig als „vergangen“ gelten, sind aus der Darstellung verschwunden. Aber gerade dies hat jeweils die Frage zu sein, ob sie vergangen sind. Vielleicht ist es nunmehr Zeit, die tiefen und echten Antriebe des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, die man in gefährlicher Reaktion auf die Verkehrtheiten dieses verläumdeten aller Jahrhunderte preisgegeben hat, wieder zu holen. Lassen wir das rhetorische „Vielleicht“! Es ist *gewiß*, daß es anders stünde um die intellektuelle Redlichkeit unserer Zeit und anders um den Weltanschauungsrummel, wenn mehr von dem Geiste lebendig wäre, dem Hermann Cohen in seiner Weise Ausdruck verlieh, wenn er sagte: „Wir haben unbezwinglichen Verdacht gegen die Wahrheit, die auf anderen Gerechtsamen beruht als auf der erkennenden Vernunft.“—, womit nicht gesagt und von Cohen nicht gemeint ist, daß sich die Philosophie noch einmal die ernstesten und tiefsten Anliegen des Menschen von den Chemikern und Apothekern entreißen lassen solle. Und so oder ähnlich möchte es wohl auch in anderer Hinsicht um die Preisgabe der Antriebe des vorigen Jahrhunderts stehen.

Our reservation against Rosenzweig's interpretation of Cohen concerns the fact that he ignores the mathematical sciences [*mathematische Naturwissenschaft*]. This is and remains the foundation of Cohen's system, grounded in the *Logic of Pure Cognition*. While the internally [*innerlich*] justified extension of the system toward Judaism motivates a receding of logic in regard to the proportions of a building that happens to turn out differently than originally planned, it does not reduce its [i.e., logic's] constitutive meaning. This should be evident from the fact alone that the judgment of origin, which unfolds itself first, and not accidentally so, in the *Logic*, remains constitutive also for theology. One hint must suffice here. The necessity to introduce the idea of God follows from the difference in kind between pure thought and pure will. More accurately, it follows from the difference in kind between nature and human reality as moral reality. In the face of the fact that the human is conditioned by the extra-human, in the face of this relation of *dependence*, arises the necessity of "God" as foundation [*Grundlegung*]. This means that in order to understand the meaning of "God" as elicited in the *Ethics of Pure Will*, which remains decisive all the way to, and within, the posthumous work, one must presuppose the insight into this dependence, the perspective of eternal death. This approach of Cohen's theology is destroyed if the exact concept of "nature" as elaborated in mathematical science and secured

Unser Bedenken gegen die Rosenzweig-sche Cohen-Interpretation richtet sich gegen die Außerachtlassung der mathematischen Naturwissenschaft. Sie ist und bleibt, in der Logik der reinen Erkenntnis begründet, der Grundstock des Cohenschen Systems. Die innerlich begründete Ausweitung des Systems auf das Judentum hin motiviert zwar ein Zurücktreten der Logik in Bezug auf die Proportionen, aber nicht in Bezug auf die konstruktive Bedeutung für den Bau, der am Ende anders ausgefallen ist als er am Anfang geplant war. Schon dieses Eine muß stutzig machen, daß das Urteil des Ursprungs, das sich nicht zufällig zuerst in der Logik entfaltet, konstituierend bleibt auch für die Theologie. Eine Andeutung muß hier genügen: Die Notwendigkeit der Einführung der Gottesidee ergibt sich auf Grund der Andersartigkeit von reinem Denken und reinem Willen, genauer: auf Grund der Andersartigkeit von Natur und menschlicher Wirklichkeit als sittlicher Wirklichkeit. Angesichts der Bedingtheit des Menschlichen durch das Außer-Menschliche, angesichts dieses *Abhängigkeits-Verhältnisses* erwächst die Notwendigkeit der Grundlegung „Gott“. Das heißt: um den in der „Ethik des reinen Willens“ eruierten Sinn von „Gott“, der bis in das Nachlaßwerk hinein bestimmend bleibt, zu verstehen, ist vorausgesetzt: die Einsicht in diese Abhängigkeit, die Perspektive des ewigen Todes. Dieser Ansatz der Cohenschen Theologie wird zerstört, wenn der exakte Begriff der „Natur“, den

by the *Logic* is relinquished or ignored. With this concept of nature stands and falls the peculiar “care” [*Besorgnis*] that is the carrier of belief in God and that is necessary only in the face of this nature, not in the face of a nature that has been rendered comfortable and familiar by inference from concepts of life, meaning, and purpose. This is the meaning natural science gains in the context of Cohen’s thought: to be the human agent [*Sachwalterin*] of the extra-human. And this meaning, which rules the entire edifice of the *Logic* (though this is acknowledged only in the chapter on the “idea of God” of the *Ethics*), remains significant and unshaken even if one rejects Cohen’s solution to the resulting problem as an attenuation.¹³

die mathematische Naturwissenschaft herausstellt, und den die Logik verbürgt, preisgegeben oder außer Acht gelassen wird. Mit diesem Begriff der Natur steht und fällt die eigentümliche „*Besorgnis*“, die das Vehikel des Gottesglaubens ist und die allein angesichts dieser Natur und nicht angesichts einer durch Hineintragung von Lebens-, Sinn- und Zweckbegriffen wonnesam und traut gemachten Natur notwendig ist. Diesen Sinn also gewinnt die Naturwissenschaft im Zusammenhang des Cohenschen Denkens: Menschliche Sachwalterin des Außer-Menschlichen zu sein. Und dieser Sinn, der freilich erst in dem Kapitel „Die Idee Gottes“ der Ethik eingeständlich wird, in dessen Dienste aber der ganze Aufbau der Logik steht, bleibt bedeutsam und unerschüttert, auch wenn man die Cohensche Lösung des sich hier ergebenden Problems als Abschwächung verwirft. (Fortsetzung folgt.)

Cassel Courses of the Academy for Jewish Research¹⁴

(Cassel.) The courses that were offered this spring between February 15 and May 15 will resume September 1. There will be two courses of two hours each.

Casseler Kurse im Auftrage der Akademie der Wissenschaft des Judentums.

Cassel. Die Kurse, die in diesem Frühjahr vom 15. Februar bis zum 15. Mai stattgefunden haben, werden am 1. September wieder beginnen, und zwar finden zwei zweistündige Kurse statt:

¹³ The original ends with a parenthetical “To be continued,” but Strauss never wrote or published the conclusion to this review.

¹⁴ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 2, no. 34 (August 28, 1925): 7 (s.p.).

1. Hebrew: Continuation and conclusion of elementary grammar. The main subject will be the irregular verb. If there is demand, it is possible to add another course for beginners (prerequisite: familiarity with the alphabet). Textual basis: biblical miracle stories.

2. A seminar on the topic of “Religion and the Critique of Religion.” This will be the continuation of the spring seminar where we tried to understand the path leading from the dissolution of the German-Jewish context to its renewed consolidation—we elucidated this path by looking at the development of Hermann Cohen. This time the focus is on understanding the process that preceded this dissolution historically and essentially, namely, the explosion [*Sprengung*] of the context of Jewish tradition through the forces of European criticism. We will orient ourselves by Spinoza’s *Theological-Political Treatise* (those who do not read Latin will best use the translation by Carl Gebhardt, Philosophische Bibliothek, Meiner, Leipzig).

For now the rooms of the Sinai-Lodge (Akazienweg) are available to us. We will determine the time for these courses at the first meeting at the lodge, scheduled

1. *Hebräisch*. Der Unterricht in der Elementar-Grammatik soll fortgesetzt werden und zu Ende geführt werden. Der Hauptgegenstand wird das unregelmäßige Zeitwort sein. Sollte das Bedürfnis vorhanden sein, so besteht die Möglichkeit, eventuell noch einen Kurs für Ganz-Anfänger anzusetzen. (Kenntnis der Quadratschrift wird aber vorausgesetzt.) Lektüre: Biblische Wunder-Geschichten.

2. *Arbeits-Gemeinschaft* über das Thema „Religion und Religions-Kritik“. Diese Arbeitsgemeinschaft setzt die des Frühjahrs fort. Handelte es sich damals darum, den Weg zu verstehen, der von der Auflösung des deutsch-jüdischen Zusammenhangs zu seiner Neu-Konsolidierung führte—diesen Weg machten wir an der Entwicklung Hermann Cohens deutlich—, so wird es nunmehr darauf ankommen, den zeitlich und sachlich vorangehenden Prozeß: die Sprengung des Zusammenhangs der jüdischen Tradition durch die Mächte der europäischen Kritik begreifen zu lernen. Wir orientieren uns hierfür an dem Theologisch-Politischen Traktat Spinozas (am besten für die des Lateinischen Unkundigen in der Uebersetzung von Carl Gebhardt, Phil. Bibl., Meiner, Leipzig, zu benutzen).

Vorläufig stehen uns die Räume der Sinai-Loge (Akazienweg) zur Verfügung. Die Zeit der Kurse wird festgesetzt in einer Vorbesprechung, die Mittwoch

for Wednesday, September 2, punctually at 8:30 pm. This discussion will be preceded by a lecture on the tasks and methods of the science of Judaism as an introduction to these courses. Dr. Leo Strauss.

[Artur Katz]
**Kassel. Spinoza's Criticism
 of the Law.**¹⁵

Spinoza's criticism of the law was the subject of the introductory lecture in a series sponsored by the Academy for Jewish Research that Dr. Leo Strauss is currently holding in Kassel and that is mainly to deal with Maimonides. The speaker contrasted the philosophical reasoning of Maimonides and Spinoza and showed how their different mentalities inevitably lead these two philosophers to arrive at opposite results, whereby Maimonides and his worldview are in agreement with Jewish doctrine whereas Spinoza *cannot* be considered a Jew, especially because of his stated position on the law; after all, Spinoza's doctrine of unity is radically opposed to the biblical view.

More dubious was the speaker's view that Maimonides's interpretation of the law also fundamentally subjected the law

den 2. September, abends 8.30 Uhr pünktlich, in der Loge stattfinden wird. Der Vorbesprechung wird ein Vortrag über die Aufgaben und Methoden der Wissenschaft vom Judentum als Einführung in die Kurse vorangehen. Dr. Leo Strauss.

[Artur Katz]
Kassel. Spinozas Kritik am Gesetz.

Zur Einführung in die Vortragsreihe, die Herr *Dr. Leo Strauß* im Auftrage der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums zur Zeit in Kassel abhält und die sich insbesondere mit *Maimonides* beschäftigen soll, wurde Spinozas Kritik am Gesetz behandelt. Der Redner stellte die philosophischen Gedankengänge Maimons und Spinozas gegenüber und zeigte, wie beide Philosophen infolge ihrer verschiedenartigen Denkungsweise auch zu entgegengesetzten Ergebnissen kommen müssen, aufgrund deren Maimonides mit seiner Weltanschauung im Einklang mit der jüdischen Glaubenslehre stehe, während *Spinoza* letzten Endes, insbesondere wegen seiner Stellungnahme zum Gesetz, *nicht* als Jude gelten könne; die Einheitslehre Spinozas stehe eben zu der biblischen Anschauung im schärfsten Gegensatz.

Bedenken dürfte aber die Ansicht des Redners begegnen, daß auch Maimonides mit seiner

¹⁵ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 4, no. 12 (March 25, 1927): 6–7 (s.p.).

to criticism. Maimonides in fact never left any doubt that his giving reasons for the laws represented merely an incomplete and fragmentary *attempt* that in no way touched the binding authority of the law.

The lecturer pointed to the attempt among recent intellectual movements, such as socialism, to claim the philosopher Spinoza for themselves, and explained to what extent such claims may be justified by Spinoza's worldview. He dismissed as unscientific and contrived the views of those who believe that Spinoza can be explained from his Jewish origins, from the opposition to his environment, or even from an alleged "Jewish" spirit of negation.

Despite their rigorous scholarship, these lectures (held every Monday) are so clear and generally accessible that we can only recommend attendance.

Dr. Artur Katz

Gesetzesinterpretation grundsätzlich eine Kritik am Gesetz vorgenommen habe. Maimonides hat vielmehr nie im Zweifel gelassen, daß seine Gesetzesmotivierung nur einen unvollständigen und lückenhaften *Versuch* darstelle, durch den die Verbindlichkeit des Gesetzes in keiner Weise berührt werden könne.

Der Referent wies auf den Versuch neuerer Geistesströmungen, z. B. des Sozialismus hin, den Philosophen Spinoza für sich in Anspruch zu nehmen, und legte dar, inwieweit diese Ansprüche durch die Weltanschauung Spinozas gerechtfertigt seien. Die Ansichten derer, die glauben, Spinoza aus seiner jüdischen Herkunft, dem Gegensatz zu seiner Umgebung oder gar aus einem angeblich „jüdischen“ Verneinungsgeiste erklären zu können, seien als unwissenschaftlich und gekünstelt abzulehnen.

Die Ausführungen sind trotz ihrer strengen Wissenschaftlichkeit derart klar und auch gemeinverständlich gehalten, daß der Besuch dieser (jeden Montag stattfindenden) Vorträge nur empfohlen werden kann.

Dr. Artur Katz

Courses Sponsored by the Academy for Jewish Research¹⁶

Topic: The question of “faith and knowledge” and its history. This topic is to be treated in a sequence of courses.

We plan, to begin with, to establish a seminar that is to introduce and clarify the basic concepts. To this end we will jointly read and discuss fundamental passages from the works of the Greek philosophers; the seminar may therefore also be said to serve the purpose of a general introduction to philosophy as such.

Knowledge of the Greek language and of the language of the philosophical schools is not a prerequisite for participation in the course. The seminar opens with an introductory lecture on Thursday, November 17, punctually at 8:30 pm. Location: Jewish community reading room, Rosenstrasse 22. Dr. Leo Strauss.

Postscript to the Discussion¹⁷

By Dr. Leo Strauss

The following remarks refer to the lecture by Rabbi Dr. Salzberger held

Kurse im Auftrag der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums.

Thema: Die Frage „Glauben und Wissen“ und ihre Geschichte. Dieses Thema soll in mehreren aufeinanderfolgenden Kursen behandelt werden.

Es ist geplant, zunächst eine Arbeitsgemeinschaft einzurichten, in der die elementaren Begriffe eingeführt und geklärt werden sollen. Zu diesem Zweck werden grundlegende Texte aus den Werken griechischer Philosophen gemeinsam gelesen und besprochen werden; der Zweck der Arbeitsgemeinschaft läßt sich daher auch als Einführung in die Philosophie überhaupt bezeichnen.

Kenntnis der griechischen Sprache und der philosophischen Schul-Sprache wird für die Teilnahme an dem Kursus nicht vorausgesetzt. Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft wird durch einen einleitenden Vortrag am Donnerstag 17. November abends 8 ½ Uhr, pünktlich eröffnet. Ort: Lesezimmer der jüdischen Gemeinde, Rosenstraße 22. Dr. Leo Strauß.

Nachwort zur Diskussion.

Von Dr. Leo Strauß.

Die folgenden Bemerkungen nehmen Bezug auf den Vortrag, den Herrn Rabbiner Dr. Salzberger am vergangenen

¹⁶ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 4, no. 43 (November 11, 1927): 7 (s.p.).

¹⁷ *Jüdische Wochenzeitung für Cassel, Hessen und Waldeck* 5, no. 2 (January 1928): 5–6 (s.p.).

last Sunday in the Liberale Vereinigung (Liberal Association).

Rabbi Dr. Salzberger's lecture on the topic "How can we liberal Jews productively shape our divine worship service?" entailed in truth a justification and critique of Jewish liberalism as a whole. Essentially the same principles that provided the foundation for the justification returned during the critique.

To be sure, this is not to say that the speaker attempted to bring to bear the same principles on his critique of liberalism that once provided the foundation of liberalism. To the contrary! In everything essential, the critique rested on an unambiguous denial of the principles on whose unambiguous affirmation the justification had rested. The critique rendered the justification absurd. Everyone realized the absurdity of such principles as "brevity," "beauty," and "general accessibility" that had been used to criticize the traditional worship, everyone, that is, who does not, by means of the principle of tradition, invoke the hundred-year-old tradition of the rejection of tradition, thus squaring the absurdity, or who even uncritically accepts the tradition of the rejection of tradition. What was left as the outcome of liberalism was a certain order [*Ordnung*], or rather the tidiness [*Ordentlichkeit*] of the service, confirmation of girls and the like. But was it really worth it to shatter

Sonntag in der Liberalen Vereinigung gehalten hat.

Was Rabbiner Dr. Salzberger (Frankfurt am Main) in seinem Vortrag über das Thema: „*Wie können wir liberalen Juden unseren Gottesdienst fruchtbringend gestalten?*“ sagte, das schloß in Wahrheit eine Rechtfertigung und eine Kritik des jüdischen Liberalismus überhaupt in sich. Wesentlich die selben Prinzipien, die der Rechtfertigung zu Grunde lagen, kehrten in der Kritik wieder.

Dies darf freilich nicht so verstanden werden, als ob der Redner versucht hätte, die selben Prinzipien, die den Liberalismus einst begründet haben, nunmehr für die Kritik am Liberalismus fruchtbar zu machen. Im Gegenteil! Die Kritik beruhte in allem Wesentlichen auf der einsinnigen Verneinung der Prinzipien auf deren einsinniger Bejahung die Rechtfertigung beruhte. Die Kritik führte die Rechtfertigung *ad absurdum*. Die Absurdität solcher Prinzipien wie „Kürze“, „Schönheit“, „Allgemeinverständlichkeit“, die zur Kritik am traditionellen Gottesdienst verwandt worden waren, wurde jedem klar, der nicht in potenziert Absurdität sich mittels des Prinzips der Tradition auf die hundertjährige Tradition der Traditions-Verwerfung beruft, oder gar die Tradition der Traditions-Verwerfung kritiklos übernimmt. Als Ergebnis des Liberalismus blieb übrig eine gewisse Ordnung, vielmehr Ordentlichkeit des Gottesdienstes, Einsegnung der

the beautiful world of tradition for *this* result? Obviously not. But liberalism is more than mere liturgical reform; its actual principle is the freedom of reason and of conscience.

Even if from now on the law once again determined Jewish life (and especially Jewish liturgy), as before, as the highest and exclusive measure, the individual's reason and conscience remain free. But does not the fulfillment of the law, the preservation of the "form," presuppose the affirmation of certain fundamental convictions, the agreement of all in regard to these convictions, call them *dogmas* or not? Even if one generously leaves unanswered the question what convictions sustain the Jewish context, there is not a moment's doubt that there are such convictions that must be clearly articulated as such. And what is the state of these convictions in the current liberal movement?

The criticism of the last three centuries called many things into question. But only inessential things. This is precisely the question on whose answer everything depends. For example, if today's liberalism succeeds in overcoming the criticism of miracles only by suggesting that this criticism has a meaning

Mädchen und ähnliches. Aber hat es gelohnt, um *dieses* Ergebnisses willen die schöne Welt der Tradition zu zerschlagen? Offenbar nicht. Aber Liberalismus ist mehr als bloße Reform des Gottesdienstes; sein eigentliches Prinzip ist die Freiheit der Vernunft und des Gewissens.

Mag immerhin von nun an wieder, wie einst, das Gesetz als oberste und einzige Richtschnur das jüdische Leben (insonderheit den jüdischen Gottesdienst) bestimmen—Vernunft und Gewissen des Einzelnen bleiben frei. Aber setzt nicht die Erfüllung des Gesetzes, die Bewahrung der „Form“ die Bejahung gewisser Grund-Ueberzeugungen, die Uebereinstimmung Aller hinsichtlich dieser Ueberzeugungen, ob man sie nun Dogmen *nennen* will oder nicht, voraus? Man mag die Beantwortung der Frage: welche Ueberzeugungen den jüdischen Zusammenhang tragen, in noch so großzügiger Weise offen lassen: daß es solche Ueberzeugungen gibt, die als solche klar anzugeben sind, kann keinen Augenblick zweifelhaft sein. Und wie steht es mit diesen Ueberzeugungen in der gegenwärtigen liberalen Bewegung?

Die Kritik der letzten drei Jahrhunderte hat manches in Frage gestellt. Aber doch nur Unwesentliches. Gerade dies ist die Frage, von deren Beantwortung alles abhängt. Wenn es zum Beispiel dem heutigen Liberalismus nur dadurch gelingt, mit der Wunder-Kritik fertig zu werden, daß er dieser Kritik einen

that it does not have—an orthodoxy that understands itself correctly is not touched by the criticism of miracles—then this merely indicates that it is in truth *not* able to overcome this criticism, that this criticism aims for and hits not the periphery but the center. A productive debate with the liberal movement of the present will remain impossible as long as there is no clarity with regard to the central questions, which are always theological questions.

One must not complain that the speaker did not address these questions: his topic was much more limited; nor should one assume that he does not recognize their urgency. They were not raised in the ensuing *discussion*, either. In accordance with the purpose of the event, the discussion was limited to questions of practice, though it focused on the most urgent question of practice, namely, the question of *religious education*. As demanded by the matter at hand, it was mostly men active as teachers who spoke. If one wishes to deal publicly with questions that concern the public, amateurism can only be avoided if specialists speak in public and submit their arguments and counterarguments to public arbitration.

Sinn unterschiebt, den sie nicht hat—die sich selbst recht verstehende Orthodoxie wird von der Wunder-Kritik nicht berührt—so ist das doch wohl ein Zeichen dafür, daß er mit dieser Kritik in Wahrheit *nicht* fertig wird, daß diese Kritik nicht die Peripherie, sondern das Zentrum meint und trifft. Solange über die zentralen Fragen, die immer theologische Fragen sind, nicht Klarheit geschaffen ist, so lange ist eine fruchtbare Auseinandersetzung mit der liberalen Bewegung der Gegenwart nicht möglich.

Daß der Redner auf diese Fragen nicht einging, ist ihm nicht zu verübeln: sprach er doch über ein wesentlich begrenzteres Thema; daß er sie nicht als dringlich erkennen sollte, ist nicht anzunehmen. Sie wurden auch nicht in der *Diskussion*, die sich an den Vortrag anschloß, berührt. Die Diskussion beschränkte sich, dem Sinn der Veranstaltung entsprechend, auf Fragen der Praxis; immerhin doch auf die dringliche Frage der Praxis, auf die Frage des *Religionsunterrichts*. Wie es die Sache verlangte, sprachen vor allem Männer, die lehrend tätig sind. Sollen die Fragen, welche die Öffentlichkeit angehen, öffentlich behandelt werden, so ist die Gefahr dilettantischer Behandlung nur dann zu vermeiden, wenn in erster Linie die Sachverständigen vor der Öffentlichkeit zu Wort kommen, ihre Gründe und Gegenstände der öffentlichen Beurteilung vorlegen.

One cannot demand that specialists settle such questions exclusively amongst themselves; at least one cannot raise such a demand as long as one continues to stand by democracy [*sich noch zur Demokratie bekennt*]. At any rate, the question of religious education is of the highest interest to the Jewish public; and in this regard everyone is capable of judging by himself (to the extent that he is capable of judging at all) in the sense that he can discern whether he has learned anything in school that endures. Now, no one can fail to notice that the method that has hitherto generally been used has, on average, failed. This method arose at an age when the Jewish collective “learned.” The changed situation requires a different method; it provides the only method now possible.

What could be presupposed in the past can today no longer be expected; instead today something can be presupposed that could not be expected in the past. A large part of the students of religion today learn one or more foreign languages; training in foreign-language acquisition must and can be utilized for religious instruction. If every mediocre student can be brought to the point that, after nine years of schooling, he is able to handle even difficult Latin texts or, after six years of schooling, he is able to handle intermediate Greek texts, then it must also be possible to get every mediocre student of religion to the point that he is able, at the maturation exam, to

Man kann nicht verlangen, daß ausschließlich die Sachverständigen unter sich die Erledigung derartiger Fragen unter sich ausmachen; man kann dies wenigstens so lange nicht fordern, als man sich noch zur Demokratie bekennt. Die Frage des Religionsunterrichts ist jedenfalls von höchstem Interesse für die jüdische Oeffentlichkeit; auch ist bezüglich ihrer jeder in dem Sinn urteilsfähig—wenn er überhaupt urteilsfähig ist—, daß er feststellen kann, ob er in seiner Schulzeit etwas gelernt hat, das bleibt. Nun kann niemand verkennen, daß die Methode, die bisher allgemein angewandt wurde, durchschnittlich versagt hat. Diese Methode entstammt einem Zeitalter, in der die jüdische Gesamtheit „lernte“. Die veränderte Lage erzwingt eine andere Methode, sie stellt die in ihr einzig mögliche Methode bereit.

Was früher vorausgesetzt werden durfte, kann heute nicht mehr verlangt werden; dafür aber kann heute etwas vorausgesetzt werden, was früher nicht zu verlangen war. Ein großer Teil der Religionsschüler lernt heute eine oder mehrere Fremdsprachen; die Schulung im Erlernen fremder Sprachen muß und kann für den Religionsunterricht nutzbar gemacht werden. Wenn es möglich ist, jeden mittelbegabten Schüler dahin zu bringen, daß er nach neunjähriger Schulung selbst mit schwierigen lateinischen Texten oder nach sechsjähriger Schulung mit mittelschweren griechischen Texten fertig wird, so muß es auch möglich sein, jeden

handle Hebrew texts at the corresponding level. That, on average, this goal is *not* reached in the circles of liberal Judaism is admitted by everyone. This is explained by parental indifference. Certainly a real reason, but is it decisive? After all, today it is possible to win over young people without or against parental consent.

Of course not everyone can bring this about but only one who has the necessary personal qualifications. Perhaps I am particularly entitled to speak to this. Three years ago I made the attempt here in Kassel to stimulate the liberal youth to systematically acquire the language of the Bible; this attempt has certainly failed. Since last year *Herr Lehrer* Bacher is making the same attempt; this attempt has certainly succeeded. If under otherwise equal conditions the factor B elicits a completely different effect than factor A, the reason for the difference in the effect must be found in the essence of factor B. This means: *Herr* Bacher obviously possesses the peculiar gift that enables its possessor to seize the young people, to seize them so that they love to attend his language lessons and participate voluntarily. In this experiment, conducted here in Kassel according to every rule of exact scientific research, the parental factor is a constant; in the discussion of the preconditions of fertile religious education that opened

mittelbegabten Schüler des Religionsunterrichts dahin zu bringen, daß er bei der Reifeprüfung in entsprechender Weise hebräische Texte bewältigt. Daß dieses Ziel heute in den Kreisen des liberalen Judentums durchschnittlich *nicht* erreicht wird, geben alle zu. Als Grund wird angegeben: die Gleichgültigkeit der Eltern. Gewiß ein wirklicher Grund; aber der entscheidende Grund? Heute besteht doch die Möglichkeit, ohne oder gegen die Eltern die jungen Leute zu gewinnen.

Dies ist selbstverständlich nicht jedem möglich, sondern nur dem, der die entsprechenden persönlichen Voraussetzungen mitbringt. Vielleicht habe ich ein besonderes Recht, mich hierüber zu äußern. Vor drei Jahren machte ich hier in Kassel den Versuch, die liberale Jugend zum systematischen Erlernen der Sprache der Bibel anzuregen; dieser Versuch ist durchaus gescheitert. Seit einem Jahr versucht *Herr Lehrer* Bacher dasselbe; dieser Versuch ist durchaus geglückt. Wenn unter sonst gleichen Bedingungen der Faktor B eine ganz andere Wirkung hervorruft als der Faktor A, so ist der Grund für die Verschiedenheit der Wirkung in dem eigentümlichen Wesen des Faktors B zu suchen. Das heißt: *Herr* Bacher besitzt offenbar die eigentümliche Gabe, die es ihrem Besitzer ermöglicht, die jungen Leute zu erfassen, so zu erfassen, daß sie in seinen Sprach-Unterricht gern und freiwillig kommen. Die Eltern sind bei dem Experiment, das hier in Kassel nach allen Regeln exakter Forschung

last Sunday, parental behavior is therefore a variable that may and must be neglected.¹⁸

gemacht wurde, ein konstanter Faktor; das Verhalten der Eltern ist also für die Diskussion über die Voraussetzungen fruchtbringenden Religionsunterrichts, die am vergangenen Sonntag eröffnet wurde, eine Größe, die nicht [sic] vernachlässigen darf und muß.

¹⁸ Translator's note: Literally, the sentence ends with an ungrammatical and, in its context, illogical statement ("eine Größe, die nicht vernachlässigen darf und muß"). The intended meaning is clear, however, and it is the one given in this translation.

Reexamining Political Participation in Rousseau's Political Thought: Does Citizens' Political Participation Include Public Discussions and Debates?¹

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Abstract: Although Rousseau is widely known as a strong advocate of direct democracy, it is a baffling paradox to find that many passages in his *Social Contract* seem to deny citizens' active discussion and debate in public assembly. Thus, many commentators, including Bernard Manin, Roger D. Masters, and Jürgen Habermas have reached the negative interpretation that Rousseau excludes such activities from a proper form of civic political participation and only allows citizens to vote on given legislative proposals. This essay, by contrast, offers a more positive interpretation whereby Rousseau's citizens are allowed to engage in active discussion and debate. In order to develop this argument and demonstrate its validity, the essay begins by classifying and examining the types of state presented in *The Social Contract* in terms of their degree of corruption and various manifestations of political participation. It then introduces various negative and positive interpretations on this subject. Finally, it presents a critique of negative interpretations and defends its own positive interpretation by means of textual analysis and logical inferences.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is known as the strongest advocate of popular sovereignty and the most consistent defender of direct democracy through active civic participation among modern Western political theorists.² However, the baffling paradox remains that most Western commentators

¹ This paper was originally presented to the 69th Annual National Conference of the MPSA in 2011 (Chicago, March 31–April 3). This work was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea Grant funded by the Korean Government (NRF-2011-330-B00010) and also partly by the Sogang University Research Grant of 2011.

² Of course, Rousseau accepts and prescribes representative democracy on a national level to make allowances for the size of the territory and the population in a given state in *Considerations on the Government of Poland*.

interpret Rousseau—contrary to wide popular assumption—as denying citizens the ability to participate in politics through forms of public interaction such as discussion and debate. Rousseau’s work—notably his celebrated *Social Contract*—contains certain passages that seem to deny citizens the right to active public interaction, so that it remains unclear whether citizens are allowed to engage in such interaction in the process of finding the general will and making it into law. One of the most typical and frequently cited passages regarding this question is found in book II, chap. 3 of *The Social Contract*: “If, when an adequately informed people deliberates, the citizens were to have no communication among themselves, the general will would always result from the large number of small differences, and the deliberation would always be good” (II, iii, 61).³

If citizens were denied public interaction and political participation in civic assemblies, and therefore confined to voting for or against given legislative propositions, Rousseau’s strong advocacy of direct democracy would lose a great deal of its purport and significance. Careful examination of *The Social Contract*, *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (hereafter *Considerations*), and Rousseau’s other political writings, however, reveals that discussion and debate are allowed under certain conditions; that is, according to “type of the state” and subject to certain regulations.⁴ I therefore oppose the conventional negative interpretation according to which Rousseau comprehensively forbids discussion and debate, taking instead the position that it is crucial, in evaluating Rousseau’s direct democracy, to note the public civic discussion that his political thought allows.

In order to develop and defend my positive interpretation, I first classify the types of state described in *The Social Contract* in terms of degree of corruption and variety of civic participation. I then offer various interpretations with regard to the question whether Rousseau’s citizens are allowed to engage in active public interaction in assemblies, before placing these interpretations into negative and positive categories. Finally, I seek to refute negative interpretations and support the positive one on the basis of my reading of Rousseau’s major works.

³ This passage will be analyzed in more detail later in the paper. Hereafter I refer to this passage as “P1,” since it is cited frequently below. The text used for *The Social Contract* in this paper is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy*, ed. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin’s, 1978). Whenever *The Social Contract* is cited in this paper, this text will be used, with parenthetical reference to book, chapter, and page.

⁴ The meaning of the phrase “subject to certain regulations” will be elaborated later in the paper.

ROUSSEAU'S CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF STATE: DEGREE OF CORRUPTION AND VARIETY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In *The Social Contract* IV, chap. 1, Rousseau classifies types of state primarily in terms of degree of corruption. Aspects and consequences of civic political participation appear to vary according to the type of state. After presenting his typology of the state, Rousseau offers his main point: "It can be seen from the preceding chapter that the way in which general matters are handled can provide a rather precise indication of the current state of the mores and health of the body politic" (IV, ii, 109). The major assumption of this paper is thus that we must examine whether civic participation includes public discussion and debate, according to the type of state. I identify four types of state in *The Social Contract* by considering passages in book II, chap. 3 and book IV, chap. 2, although Rousseau presents only three types in book IV, chap. 1. The validity of this addition will be confirmed through the subsequent development of my interpretation.

THE IDEAL STATE:

A HEALTHY PEASANT COMMUNITY (TYPE 1)

Rousseau describes as the happy and ideal state the simple and honest community in which a group of peasants as "a single body" manages its common affairs according to "a single will which relates to their common preservation and the general welfare." In such a community, "the common good is clearly apparent everywhere, and requires only good sense to be perceived" (IV, i, 108). Here, as citizens do not pursue their private interests or form small factions or associations, there are no clashes between the general will and the particular wills of individual citizens, so that unanimous decisions can be reached without trouble. As the citizens are uncorrupted and the common good is easy to discern, they decide upon the affairs of state wisely. Rousseau describes how they are dealt with as follows:

A State governed in this way needs very few laws, and to the degree that it becomes necessary to promulgate new ones, this necessity is universally seen. The first to propose them merely states what everyone has already felt, and there is no question of intrigues nor of eloquence to pass into law what each has already resolved to do as soon as he is sure that others will do likewise. (IV, i, 108)

THE SEMI-IDEAL STATE: THE EARLY
ROMAN REPUBLIC (TYPE 2)

Rousseau regards the early Roman republic as a kind of semi-ideal state, not able to reach the level of the ideal state described above. While recognizing the confrontation of the patricians and plebeians “whose quarrels often disturbed the comitia even in the finest period” of the Roman republic, and diagnosing this as deriving from problems inherent in the constitution itself, he still stresses that “even in the stormiest times, the plebiscites of the people, when the senate did not interfere with them, always passed calmly and by a large majority of votes. Since the citizens had only one interest, the people had only one will” (IV, ii, 109–10). Thus, according to Rousseau, although some Roman plebeians pursued individual private interests, excluding the possibility of unanimous will, they were still able to pass resolutions by a large majority because they were still not divided into factions or parties.

Rousseau’s description of the early Roman republic shows that he recognized it as being, overall, a healthy body politic, albeit one that fell short of the ideal peasant state. Rousseau appears to think that, insofar as small parties and associations around which private interests partially cohere are not formed, the general will will prevail at least by a large majority, if not with unanimity. Such is the difference between the ideal and the semi-ideal state. Rousseau thus states: “In order for the general will to be well expressed, it is therefore important that there be no partial society in the State, and that each citizen give only his own opinion” (II, iii, 61). He describes the deliberation process as follows:

If, when an adequately informed people deliberates, the citizens were to have no communication among themselves, the general will would always result from the large number of small differences, and the deliberation would always be good. (II, iii, 61)⁵

Here, Rousseau elaborates on the meaning of the “large number of small differences” deriving from each citizen’s own opinion or private will:

There is often a great difference between the will of all and the general will. The latter considers only the common interest: the former

⁵ “Si, quant le peuple suffisamment informé délibère, les Citoyens n’avoient aucune communication entre eux, du grand nombre de petites différences résulteroit toujours la volonté générale, et la délibération seroit toujours bonne” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 3, ed. Bernard Gagnebin and Marcel Raymond [Paris: Gallimard, 1964], 371).

considers private interest, and is only a sum of private wills. But take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel each other, and the remaining sum of the differences is the general will. (II, iii, 61)

This passage reinforces my point that the category of semi-ideal state is independent and distinct from that of the ideal state, by showing additionally that the way the general will is found in the former is different from that in the latter.

THE CONSIDERABLY CORRUPT STATE (TYPE 3)

In Rousseau's political theory, any state that is healthy to begin with is inevitably susceptible to corruption and decline. He thus depicts civic participation in a state with considerable corruption:

But when the social tie begins to slacken and the State to grow weak; when private interests start to make themselves felt and small societies to influence the large one, the common interest changes and is faced with opponents; unanimity no longer prevails in the votes; the general will is no longer the will of all; contradictions and debates arise and the best advice is not accepted without disputes. (IV, i, 108)

Here, the decisive difference between the semi-ideal state and the considerably corrupt state seems to be whether small parties, associations, and societies are formed in the body politic. In the latter state, citizens now start to form small societies and participate in politics pursuing private interests (or particular wills) of individuals and small societies rather than the general will. Rousseau thus distinguishes such a state from ideal and semi-ideal states:

One can say, then, that there are no longer as many voters as there are men, but merely as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and produce a result that is less general. (II, iii, 61)

Rousseau makes a similar contrast elsewhere:

The more harmony there is in the assemblies, that is, the closer opinions come to obtaining unanimous support, the more dominant as well is the general will. But long debates, dissensions, and tumult indicate the ascendance of private interests and the decline of the State. (IV, ii, 109)

In a state where corruption has advanced to a considerable degree, the will of all cannot undergo the mutual cancellation of individual wills necessary to obtain the general will, making the latter a rarity. As the

passage “the best advice is not accepted without disputes” suggests, however, this does not mean that the general will is disregarded completely. Rousseau’s solution for letting the general will prevail in such a body politic is to restore it artificially to a condition closer to that of the semi-ideal state, suggesting that “if there are partial societies, their number must be multiplied and their inequality prevented” (II, iii, 61). If such a measure were successful, the will of all would approximate to the general will through the mutual cancellation effect, with resolutions passed by a large majority.

THE SEVERELY CORRUPT STATE (TYPE 4)

Finally, Rousseau describes political participation and its consequences in a severely corrupt state:

Finally, when the State, close to its ruin, continues to subsist only in an illusory and ineffectual form; when the social bond is broken in all hearts; when the basest interest brazenly adopts the sacred name of the public good, then the general will becomes mute; all—guided by secret motives—are no more citizens in offering their opinions than if the State had never existed, and iniquitous decrees whose only goal is the private interest are falsely passed under the name of laws. (IV, i, 109)

In such a severely corrupt state, as a consequence of the failure of Rousseau’s solution, the number of small societies decreases and the equality among them breaks down completely: “Finally when one of these associations is so big that it prevails over all the others, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference. Then there is no longer a general will, and the opinion that prevails is merely a private opinion” (II, iii, 61).

In book IV, chap. 2 of *The Social Contract*, Rousseau describes the mode of political participation and its consequence when corruption reaches its extreme point, citing the case of the abject state of the Roman senate under the emperors:

At the other extreme, unanimity returns. That is when the citizens, fallen into servitude, no longer have either freedom or will. Then fear and flattery turn voting into acclamations. Men no longer deliberate; they adore or they curse. (IV, ii, 110)

Since a few factions (or just a single faction) occupy the dominant position in the state, the remaining, powerless citizens are overwhelmed by this domi-

nant faction(s) and unable to frankly express opposite or different opinions. They merely engage in “curses” or “flattery,” out of sheer fear.⁶

Among these four types, the ideal and semi-ideal states are those in which simplicity and honesty would prevail among mostly healthy citizens. The early Roman republic and Sparta before its decline, in which small societies had not formed, seem to correspond to the semi-ideal state. Political decisions are made unanimously in the ideal state, but by majority vote in the semi-ideal state, for there is some embryonic corruption among the citizens in the latter. In considerably and severely corrupt states, by contrast, most citizens have lost their simplicity and honesty. Athens, the later Roman republic, and Rome in its imperial stage would correspond to these. Partial societies and factions form in both types: in the considerably corrupt state, their number is still plural, they balance one another, and their influence is dispersed; while in the severely corrupt state their number is reduced to a few, or one, and their influence is severely skewed in favor of the few, or monopolized by a single faction. If we compare the four types of state in terms of expression of the general will in relation to the will of all, there are interesting differences to be noted. While the will of all is naturally identical to the general will in the ideal state, and the former turns artificially—i.e., by mutual cancellation of individual wills—into the latter in the semi-ideal state, the general will is rarely expressed in the considerably corrupt state and, when it is, this is often not inevitable but accidental. Obviously, the will of all or the majority does not coincide with the general will at all in a severely corrupt state.

DOES CIVIC POLITICAL PARTICIPATION INCLUDE PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DEBATE? OVERVIEW OF EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS

Now we may turn to the main subject of this paper. Although the question whether civic political participation includes public discussion and debate is more complicated than is usually assumed, not many commentators explicitly examine this question and come up with their own interpretation. In addition, most commentators who manage to advance explicit interpretations take the negative position that Rousseau does not allow public discussion and debate. In contrast, my ultimate interpretation in this paper is the positive one that Rousseau's citizens are allowed to engage

⁶ Therefore, Rousseau prescribes that the decision procedure should change from public to secret voting, as the healthy body politic turns into a corrupt state (IV, iv, 119).

in active public interaction according to type of state and subject to certain regulations. Without allowing public interaction, I assert, the true value of Rousseau's direct democracy would not be realized or appreciated at all. In order to argue the validity of my position, a persuasive refutation of the aforementioned negative position is needed. I thus summarize the critical passages at issue in *The Social Contract*, before surveying negative and positive interpretations in this section. Finally, in the next section, I advance my critique of negative positions and elaborate my positive alternative.

Crucial passages cited to support negative interpretations are P1 in book II, chap. 3; the passage in which civic public interaction is described as almost unnecessary in the ideal state portrayed in book IV, chap. 1; and the passage in which "long debates, dissensions, and tumult" are described negatively as indicating "the ascendance of private interests and the decline of the State" in book IV, chap. 2. In addition, there is a critical but ambiguous passage that seems to validate the negative interpretation, but, in my opinion, actually suggests the probability that active civic public deliberation is allowed. This passage merits quotation at length:

I could make many comments here about the simple right to vote in every act of sovereignty—a right that nothing can take away from the citizens; and on the right to give an opinion, to make propositions, to analyze, to discuss, which the government is always very careful to allow only to its members. But this important subject would require a separate treatise and I cannot say everything in this one. (IV, i, 109; hereafter "P2")⁷

I will now introduce and examine various interpretations of this subject, before advancing my own. Most of the scholars to be examined take a negative position, except Hilail Gildin and Melissa Schwartzberg who recently published an article on the subject under the title "Voting the General Will: Rousseau on Decision Rules."

James McAdam, in his article on Rousseau's general will, offers a negative interpretation in consideration of Rousseau's negative view of small associations immediately following P1: "in coming to a decision regarding the General Will, no individual would even communicate his thoughts on the matter to other individuals. His reason for this extraordinary measure is precisely that such exchange of views between individuals

⁷ Interpretation of this passage will be offered in the next section.

encourages the development of partial general wills which could then be in direct competition with the General Will.”⁸

Roger D. Masters, an authoritative commentator on Rousseau's political thought in the United States, also takes a negative position. Masters does not make explicit remarks on P1 in his book *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* or in his edition of Rousseau's *Social Contract*.⁹ But he quotes P1 elsewhere in order to argue that Rousseau's citizens are not allowed public discussion and debate. In his editorial footnote to P2 in Rousseau's *Social Contract* he states:

Rousseau's ironical defense of free speech has confused some editors who read the last clause as a serious statement of principle; such an interpretation is unlikely given the next chapter as well as Book II, Chap. 3 [i.e., P1].¹⁰

The German social philosopher Habermas, while developing his theory of the public sphere in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), gives a negative interpretation that merits our attention for its explicit denial and lengthy elaboration:

Locke's "Law of Opinion" became sovereign by way of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. Under the rubric of a different *opinion publique* unpublic opinion was elevated to the status of sole legislator, and this involved the elimination of the public's rational critical debate in the public sphere. The legislative procedure envisaged by Rousseau left no doubt in this regard. *Bon sens* (common sense, *gesunder Menschenverstand*) was all that was needed to perceive the common welfare. The simple people, indeed simpletons, would be merely irritated by the political maneuvers of public discussion: long debates would bring particular interests to the fore. Rousseau contrasted dangerous appeals of silver-tongued orators with the harmony of assemblies. The *volonté générale* was more a consensus of hearts than of arguments. The society was governed best in which the laws (*lois*) corresponded to the already established mores (*opinions*). The simplicity of mores was a protection

⁸ James McAdam, "What Rousseau Meant by the General Will," *Dialogue* 5, no. 4 (1967): 503. Lester G. Crocker, who edited one of the popular editions of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, offers the same interpretation: "There is no debate or discussion, and each citizen must deliberate in isolation" (Lester G. Crocker, introduction to *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, ed. Crocker [New York: Washington Square Press, 1967], ix). However, as we shall see later, Bernard Manin denies even the need for isolated deliberation.

⁹ Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 386ff.; J.-J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract, with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy*, ed. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St Martin's, 1978).

¹⁰ Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, ed. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters, 150n112.

against “thorny discussions” (*discussions épineuses*), whereas luxury corrupted healthy simplicity, subjugated one group to another and all of them to public opinion (*et tous à l’opinion*).¹¹

Here, Habermas gives the explicit interpretation, focusing primarily on Rousseau’s ideal state, according to which Rousseau’s citizens are prohibited from engaging in any communication, including discussion and debate, among themselves. I will not present any additional analysis of Habermas’s long quote, for it shows fully his interpretation and the rationale behind his defining of Rousseau’s democracy as “democracy of unpublic opinion” or “democracy without public debate.”¹² As textual evidence to support this interpretation, he refers to book IV, chaps. 1–2 and book III, chaps. 1 and 4 in the footnotes without offering further analysis.

Finally, French political theorist Bernard Manin offers a negative interpretation in his article “On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation” and provides detailed grounds for it. His points can be summarized as follows. First, Manin interprets the word “deliberation” (*délibération, délibérer*) in *The Social Contract* as referring not to the “process” of citizens communicating with each other and forming a collective will but to the “decision” itself. As examples to support this, he suggests two passages in book II, chap. 3 and a passage in *Discourse on Political Economy*.¹³ One of the two passages in the *Social Contract* is P1, and the other is the following:

It follows from the preceding that the general will is always right and always tends toward the public good. But it does not follow that the people’s deliberations have always the same righteousness [rectitude]. One always wishes for one’s own good, but one cannot always see it. The people cannot be corrupted, but they are often deceived, and it is only then that they seem to wish for what is bad. (II, iii, 61)

After quoting this passage, Manin asserts:

In this passage, the “deliberations of the people” obviously refer to the choices the people make, and not to the process that leads to the choice. There would be no sense in saying that a process is morally right or not.¹⁴

¹¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, tr. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 97–98.

¹² *Ibid.*, 98–99.

¹³ For the passage in the *Discourse on Political Economy*, see Bernard Manin, “On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation,” *Political Theory* 15, no. 3 (1987): 345. I shall not elaborate on it in this paper.

¹⁴ Manin, “On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation,” 345.

Secondly, he suggests that “Rousseau’s individuals are already supposed to know what they want when they come to a public assembly to decide in common. They have already determined their will, so that any act of persuasion attempted by others could only taint their will and oppress it.”¹⁵ In order to support this interpretation, Manin cites the ideal state in book IV, chap. 1, in which “its maxims [are] *clear* and *luminous*... the public good would be *evident* everywhere” (emphasis by Manin). Thus, according to Manin, deliberation that ordinarily presupposes communication of opinions and discussion is a process necessary when the locus of the public good or the general will is uncertain and the collective examination of alternative possibilities is thus required. In Rousseau’s ideal state, however, Manin stresses that “what is evident, simple, and luminous does not need to be deliberated in the strong sense of that term.”¹⁶

Thirdly, Manin cites Rousseau’s argument that criticizes the harmful effect of discussion, debate, and dissension among citizens in state types 3 and 4, where corruption plagues the state to considerable and severe degrees, respectively. Manin interprets Rousseau as rejecting not only discussion and debate but also “the mere communication between citizens,” because phenomena such as the manifestation of special interests, the exercise of undue influence, and flimsy persuasion by eloquent rhetoric provide opportunities for the formation of parties and taint and suppress the will of individual citizens.¹⁷

In contrast to the negative interpretations so far examined, H. Gildin and M. Schwartzberg posit the probability that Rousseauan citizens are (to a certain extent) allowed public discussion and debate; I agree with their position overall. First of all, Gildin interprets the “no communication” clause in P1 as meaning that Rousseau wants to ban “secret agreements” among citizens who are liable to form partial associations and parties, noting their deleterious effect on the expression of the general will. Furthermore, citing a passage from *Letters Written from the Mountain* (hereafter *Letters*), Gildin advances the interpretation, similar to that of Masters, that Rousseau actually seems to permit citizens public discussion and debate in P2, and,

¹⁵ Ibid., 346.

¹⁶ Ibid., 347. However, if we take seriously Rousseau’s statement in the quote above, “One always wishes for one’s own good, but one cannot always see it,” may Rousseau’s citizens not need some form of deliberation to check whether what they have seen is correct or not? Opinion is related to the realm of the visible, and so susceptible to deception and self-deception.

¹⁷ Ibid., 345–47.

contrary to Masters's perplexity, further argues that this shows Rousseau's flexibility with regard to the citizen's right to submit new laws and debate them:

His [Rousseau's] remarks have occasioned some perplexity. He clearly declares that the right to vote on laws is an essential part of sovereignty. He has been believed to hold further that the right to bring a new law before the sovereign assembly and to state one's opinion of its merits or disadvantages must be the preserve of government. In the *Letters Written from the Mountain*, however, while he continues to favor reserving to the governing councils of Geneva the right to submit new laws to the sovereign he complains of their denying the sovereign the right to debate them.¹⁸

In addition, noting Rousseau's rather unenthusiastic description of the governmental tendency to reserve the right to submit new laws and to debate them to its members in P2, and his strong caution against governmental tyranny and decay encroaching on the freedom of a people, Gildin states conclusively: "Rousseau's remarks [in P2] suggest that there are many possible arrangements regarding the right to propose and to debate laws compatible with his principles."¹⁹

Although recognizing the significance of P1 and accepting the mainstream interpretation of it, M. Schwartzberg also carefully advances the interpretation that, while communication among citizens should be banned completely at the time of voting, since this is when it poses the greatest threat, some amount of discussion should be permitted prior to this point.²⁰ On Rousseau's ultimate position over the decision rule, Schwartzberg prefers majoritarian to unanimous rules, saying "although the votes as a whole ought optimally to approach unanimity, the means by which that might be accomplished is through majoritarian and supermajoritarian rather than unanimous voting rules." This is for moral and other reasons.²¹ She then argues that majoritarian and supermajoritarian rules require some form of communication among citizens, including discussions, prior to voting. On this interpretation, Schwartzberg maintains that when Rousseau's citizens make voting decisions, they ought to carefully reflect on the correctness of

¹⁸ Hilail Gildin, *Rousseau's Social Contract: The Design of the Argument* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 159.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* In order to support this argument, Gildin notes the rights of peasants to propose new laws in the ideal state, in the passage quoted above.

²⁰ Melissa Schwartzberg, "Voting the General Will: Rousseau on Decision Rules," *Political Theory* 36, no. 3 (2008): 418.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 415.

their own decision, consider other citizens' opinions from a perspective of humility and their own fallibility, and be willing to revise their own decisions. This task requires the prior knowledge of other citizens' opinions and positions, which is, in turn, to be acquired only by some form of discussion and debate:

One must be specially concerned to ensure that *amour propre* has not blinded oneself to the general will: in the face of almost universal opposition...the prospective voter ought to recognize that one is very likely to be mistaken, and reverse one's vote rather than exercise a veto. However, a representative could not possibly know whether he was actually using his veto power *ex ante*—whether his view was idiosyncratic or in keeping with the other voters—if he did not possess any prior knowledge of others' likely votes. This knowledge, however, could only come from discussion.²²

Further, noting that correct decisions depend on a people “sufficiently informed” (*suffisamment informé*) according to P1, Schwartzberg still argues that although the “way in which citizens come to know the perspectives of others cannot take the form of rhetorical appeals or vigorous debates, and certainly not bargaining,...it must indeed be at least partially a discursive process.”²³ In short, Schwartzberg's positivist interpretation seems quite modest, partly owing to being overwhelmed by Manin's argument against which she raises her own alternative interpretation.

In order to refute the negative and reinforce the positive interpretation in the next section, it is necessary to summarize the two positions more succinctly. The negativists I have examined, notably Masters, Habermas, and Manin, reach the interpretation that public discussion and debate among citizens are never allowed, regardless of political context and type of state, because they are unnecessary in the ideal state and even obstructive when it comes to finding expression of the general will in other types of state, by encouraging the formation of small societies around which private interests cohere. First, Masters takes it for granted that P1 supports the negative interpretation without exception, thus attempting no flexible interpretation of it. When he finds, however, that P2 seems to hint at the

²² Ibid., 417.

²³ Ibid., 417–18. To reinforce her point, Schwartzberg also calls attention to this passage regarding the ideal state: “There is no need for intrigues or eloquence to secure passage of law of what each has already resolved to do *as soon as he is sure that the others will do likewise*” (IV, i, 108; emphasis by Schwartzberg). She then suggests that, although the common good is so apparent, the confidence *ex ante* that “others will see the matter similarly” requires a “discursive process.” She also raises some more minor points to strengthen her interpretation (“Voting the General Will,” 418).

right of citizens to submit new laws and debate them, as Gildin's comment suggests, he is a little embarrassed but still adheres adamantly to his negative position, relying on P1 and pondering P2 no longer.

Habermas advances his negative interpretation on the basis of passages in book III, chap. 4 and book IV, chaps. 1–2, without directly mentioning P1. When Rousseau discusses democracy in book III, chap. 4, he stipulates as necessary conditions for it (1) a small state, (2) the simplicity of mores that prevents a multitude of business and thorny discussions, (3) a great equality among citizens, and (4) little or no luxury (III, iv, 85). Thus bearing mostly state types 1 and 4 in mind, Habermas does not hesitate to characterize Rousseau's view of democracy as "democracy without public debate."

Finally, Manin argues strongly that the deliberation of Rousseau's citizens does not include interactive discussion and debate, saying "the 'deliberations of the people' obviously refer to the choices the people make, and not to the process that leads to the choice." In addition to his own analysis of the meaning of deliberation in *The Social Contract*, Manin suggests that citizens' interactive deliberation is not necessary in state type 1, and that it is even harmful in state type 4.

However, the positivist Gildin takes P2 as Rousseau's principal position and interprets P1 in a rather limited way. But Gildin keeps silent about the way in which Rousseau's citizens engage in lively public interaction and also does not seek to adduce additional textual evidence to support his argument. Schwartzberg also suggests the probability, based on more careful inference and concrete textual evidence, that Rousseau's citizens may need public discussion on occasion, while still respecting the mainstream negative interpretation. But her interpretation remains confined to pointing to probability, failing to suggest more concrete textual evidence or further inference to support it.

CRITIQUE OF NEGATIVE INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFENSE OF THE POSITIVE INTERPRETATION

According to my examination so far, three issues must be resolved in order to decide whether Rousseau allows public discussion and debate. First, we must relate our subject more closely to the various types of state. Negativists strongly assert their own interpretations and admit no exceptions, relying primarily on Rousseau's negative comments about discussion and debate among citizens and focusing mainly on state types 1

and 4. Positivists in turn advance theirs in a very modest and defensive way, not paying close attention to the various types of state.²⁴ We may well also approve the interpretation, agreed by both parties, that interactive communication among citizens such as discussion and debate is unnecessary in the state type 1 and even deleterious in state type 4. However, both parties appear to fail to examine with discrimination the question whether public discussion and debate are permitted in state types 2 and 3, even though we might imagine that public discussion and debate would turn out to be useful and even necessary in these types. Second, it should be decided how consistently we must match the conditional “no communication” clause in P1 with P2, which is rather ambiguous regarding whether Rousseau's citizens are allowed active public interaction. Third, we must search for any important passages in Rousseau's other political writings that show a positive position regarding this question.

Here, the discussion of the first issue involves my critique of both positivists and negativists; that of the second relates to the refutation of Masters's argument in particular; and that of the third aims to reinforce positivist arguments while rejecting negativist ones. Thus, although my respective arguments about these issues may turn out to be insufficient alone, I hope that they may cumulatively produce an outcome sufficient to refute the negativist interpretation and strengthen the positivist one as a whole.

ARE ROUSSEAU'S CITIZENS NOT ALLOWED PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IN GENERAL?

Let us examine the first issue. My interpretation is that although Rousseau issues many critical remarks about public discussion and debate in *The Social Contract*, he nevertheless does not reject them across the board. I shall attempt to develop my argument in relation to the types of state I have presented up to now.

In the case of the ideal peasant state, all the peasant-citizens pass any law submitted by an individual peasant unanimously and without additional public discussion or debate. More accurately speaking, they pass the law without feeling the necessity to engage in them. It is better to interpret such a situation as one that does not need public discussion or debate to start with, rather than one that rules them out. This is because peasants are in tune with each other and their hearts are in accord. In the case of the state severely

²⁴ As we shall see later, Gildin pays some attention to state type 3.

corrupted, at the other extreme, most citizens express their opinions spurred by secret and private interests, so that public discussion and debate are useless and even obstructive when it comes to determining the public good. In such a state, the general will becomes mute, for it is not found in majority decisions, and there is therefore no freedom among citizens (IV, i, 109; IV, ii, 111). In this regard, negativist interpretations that focus on state types 1 and 4 to argue that Rousseau rejects public discussion and debate from civic political participation gain much plausibility.

What is left to examine, then, is whether civic participation includes active public interaction in state types 2 and 3—a question that both negative and positive arguments tend to overlook. It is reasonable to suppose that Rousseau intends to apply his political theories in *The Social Contract* not necessarily only to the ideal peasant state, but also to the semi-ideal and considerably corrupt states, both of which may need his political theory more than the former. Thus, although Rousseau describes public interaction among citizens in a considerably corrupt state in negative terms, using such words as “long debates,” “dissensions,” “tumult,” and “contradictions and debates,” it must still be noted that he explicitly acknowledges the probability that the best proposal will be made into law, despite being confronted by disputes (IV, i, 108). Noting this point, Gildin also states: “It is important to note that Rousseau does not despair of the effectiveness of the general will under these circumstances.”²⁵ Thus, in a type 3 state, public interaction seems necessary in order to sift the general will from particular wills, or the best proposal from inadequate proposals. The remaining question, then, is whether public interaction is allowed in Rousseau’s semi-ideal state. My intention, however, is to deal with this while examining the second issue: that of how to interpret P1 and P2 consistently. This is because my interpretation of P1 is closely intertwined with the question whether public interaction is allowed in Rousseau’s semi-ideal state.

Finally, in order to complete our investigation of the first issue, we need to examine Manin’s apparently powerful argument that “deliberation” in Rousseau’s political thought always means “choices” and “decision” reached finally, and does not include the “process” of decision making. Of course, the examples Manin cites of deliberation meaning decision seem to secure plausibility. There are other passages in *The Social Contract*, however, in which deliberation seems to include interactive discussion and

²⁵ Gildin, *Rousseau’s Social Contract*, 151.

debate; Manin ignores them. In this sense, his examples are selective and not exhaustive. For example, when Rousseau describes the return of unanimity in a completely corrupt state, he uses the word “deliberation” in my interactive sense:

At the other extreme, unanimity returns...Then fear and flattery turn voting into acclamations. Men no longer deliberate: they adore or they curse. Such was the abject manner in which the senate expressed its opinions under the emperors. (IV, ii, 110)

In this quote, Rousseau contrasts “deliberation” with “adore” and “curse,” all of which refer to the process or “manner” by which citizens express their opinions in a public assembly, not to the “decision” itself, even suggesting that there is a heated debate before voting.

If this passage is insufficient in number or ambiguous in meaning, I may cite another passage in *The Social Contract*:

because in this institution everyone necessarily subjects himself to the conditions he imposes on others, an admirable agreement between interest and justice which confers on common deliberations a quality of equity which vanishes in the discussion of private matters. (II, iv, 63)

At first, here, it appears rather unclear whether the “quality of equity” that is to be conferred on common deliberation refers to the decision or the process, but if we consider the following relative-noun clause, “which vanishes in the discussion of private matters,” then “a quality of equity” seems to refer to the process of public interaction rather than the decision itself. We may also note that “a quality of equity” disappears “in the discussion” of private matters, that is, “in the process,” not “in the outcome” of the discussion.

If we are allowed to refer to Rousseau’s other political writings, we find cases where deliberation explicitly refers to the process of interactive participation, notably in *Considerations*: “It is better, in my opinion, to have a less numerous council, and give its members greater freedom, than to increase its size and hamper its freedom of deliberation.”²⁶ In short, judging from these quotations, Manin’s argument that Rousseau’s use of deliberation always refers to choices and decisions, not the process of reaching them, turns out to be only partially valid at best, and misleading at worst.

²⁶ J.-J. Rousseau, *Considerations on the Government of Poland* VII, in *Political Writings*, ed. Frederick Watkins (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 200.

HOW TO RENDER A CONSISTENT INTERPRETATION OF P1 AND P2

As examined above, McAdam, Masters, and Manin claim, primarily on the basis of P1, that Rousseau's citizens are not generally allowed public interaction. However, I believe that the "no communication" phrase should be interpreted in a limited way. In developing this argument, I will raise two points. First, I intend to interpret the "no communication" phrase as forbidding private communication that would provide an opportunity to form small parties and collusion, following Gildin. According to this interpretation, Rousseau's "no communication" prohibits secret or private communication on various matters both in and outside the assembly.²⁷ This means that Rousseau allows, or at least tolerates, public discussion and debate in citizens' assemblies, in the same manner as jurors during their deliberation. Second, while allowing public deliberation, Rousseau takes special pains to regulate the manner and process of it, as he is keenly aware of the negative side effects of public interaction as well as its benefits. At the same time, he adopts measures to prevent the government from abusing its authority to oppress the freedom of citizens to interact in public, as will be discussed later when I address the third issue: the search for passages in Rousseau's other political writings that show a positive position regarding public discussion and debate.

To elaborate on the first point, the communication among citizens that Rousseau seeks to discourage or ban is that which is likely to lend itself to the formation of small parties and private collusion. Here, it should be remembered that Rousseau discusses the negative effects of factions and partial associations immediately following P1. As is well known, Rousseau is strongly opposed to what we understand today as liberal-pluralist democracy or interest-group politics. These associations and factions, Rousseau thinks, encourage the expression of particular wills or private interests by mutual collusion and aggregation, thereby distorting the public judgment of individual citizens. It is quite clear that Rousseau takes a negative view of secret or private communication among citizens that is likely to lead to the formation of partial associations and private conspiracies.

²⁷ I believe that, for similar reasons, jurors are prohibited from obtaining information on the cases with which they are concerned from outside sources, and communicating with others during trials, except during the formal procedure of jury deliberation, in the United States. Although Rousseau's citizens' deliberation is legislative, while jury deliberation is adjudicative, I still believe that the former requires public interaction more than the latter, as it is concerned with the general affairs binding the political community as a whole, even for an uncertain future.

According to Rousseau, when factions and eloquent speeches prevail in the public assembly, citizens tend to expend their time and energy “adoring” their own faction and “cursing” other opposing ones, rather than “deliberating” soberly, so that “long debates, dissensions, and tumult” take over the assembly. We should thus interpret Rousseau as criticizing discussions, debates, and dissensions only insofar as they are colored by private interests and clothed in rhetorical eloquence. Thus, the context of public deliberation (whether it takes place in a healthy or a corrupt state), its guiding principle (whether citizens seek to find the common good or merely to achieve private interests), and the manner of public expression (whether the public speeches are made by rhetorical eloquence or by simple and plain words) are, for Rousseau, the crucial criteria in deciding whether a given public interaction is worthwhile.

Thus, if we accept the interpretation according to which Rousseau is not opposed to communication among citizens in itself, insofar as the corruption of the state has not reached a severe level, civic deliberation is shaped overall by the common good and guided by the general will, and the public expression of citizens’ opinions is made in simple and clear speeches, we may interpret the apparently baffling “no communication” phrase as being meant to prohibit secret or private communication among citizens that is liable to lead to the formation of factions and collusion, which in turn hinders the expression of the general will and the pursuit of the common good. This is why Rousseau has to add the following phrase immediately after discussing deleterious effects of factions: “In order for the general will to be well expressed, it is therefore important that there be no partial society in the State, and that each citizen give only his own opinion” (II, iii, 61).

We must now address the second point. My interpretation to the effect that Rousseau seeks to regulate civic public deliberation through government intervention is helpful in understanding P2. In P2, while Rousseau stresses that the right to vote cannot be taken away from citizens, he mentions that the “government is always very careful to allow only to its members” the “right to give an opinion, to make propositions, to analyze, to discuss.” However, as we have also seen, he adds a strong qualification by saying that he “could make many comments” on this matter, even to “require a separate treatise,” a task that he has to postpone until after *The Social Contract*. Some scholars have been perplexed by this passage’s suggestion that the executive exercises powerful influence in the legislative process, with the role

of citizens relegated to the mere passive task of voting.²⁸ In this regard, the power of the Rousseauian citizens' assembly seems much weaker than those of the Athenian assembly and the Roman comitia, which even enjoyed the right to initiate legislation as well as the right to public deliberation. However, it seems clear that Rousseau's passage does not exclude citizens' right to public interaction. My interpretation is that the lingering note with which Rousseau concludes the sentence in P2 suggests strongly that he agonized over how to strike a balance between the government's need to regulate "long debates, dissensions, and tumult," and its possible abuse of such regulatory power to suppress lively public deliberation among citizens, a point on which I shall soon elaborate further.

Before we examine this, however, we need to turn to the hitherto unaddressed issue of whether Rousseau allows public discussion and debate in his semi-ideal state. In order to discuss this, it should be remembered that my construction of the semi-ideal state is derived from my interpretation of the chapter on the fallibility of the general will (book II, chap. 3) and Rousseau's discussion of the Roman comitia (book IV, chap. 2). I will thus raise two points, one theoretical and the other historical, to demonstrate that active public interaction is necessary in order to find the general will and to turn it into law in the semi-ideal state.

The theoretical point is concerned with how to find the general will through majority rule. As we have seen, the general will is still expressed more often in the semi-ideal state than in the considerably corrupt state, but is obtained by majoritarian or supermajoritarian rule rather than by unanimity in the ideal state. Rousseau suggests how to derive the general will from the will of all in the semi-ideal state in a well-known metaphorical passage just before P1: "But take away from these same wills [a sum of private wills, or the will of all] the pluses and minuses that cancel each other out, and the remaining sum of the differences is the general will" (book II, chap. 3).²⁹ In order to obtain this transformative result, Rousseau stresses the necessary presence of the "large number of small differences" in the deliberation of citizens, which is of course one of the main reasons for his opposition to factions and partial associations. It must be noted here that matters in the citizen's assembly are not to be decided simply by yes-or-no vote. If this were

²⁸ Richard Fralin, "The Evolution of Rousseau's View of Representative Government," *Political Theory* 6, no. 4 (1978): 525–26.

²⁹ With regard to this process, see Gildin's illuminating interpretation (Gildin, *Rousseau's Social Contract*, 55–57).

the case, the simple majority rule would suffice and there would be no need to go through the cumbersome mutual cancellation process. At the same time, the task of interpreting what Rousseau metaphorically coins “pluses and minuses” and canceling them against each other is not one that should be assigned to the government, which tends to abuse its power and oppress the freedom of citizens. The task, moreover, should be carried out before voting, not afterward, which suggests that interactive public deliberation among citizens should take place before voting.³⁰ If these tasks of interpretation and cancellation were assumed by the government, after voting, the government would usurp the citizens’ right to vote by arbitrarily manipulating voting outcomes and popular sovereignty would vanish into thin air.

My second point is the historical argument that Rousseau takes the early Roman republic as an example of the semi-ideal state, the characteristics of which I have described earlier. In the Roman comitia, as Rousseau describes it, resolutions were passed by “a large majority of votes,” for there were no factions formed and no ascendancy of private interests. It seems important to note that Rousseau keeps significant silence about the right of Roman citizens to propose laws and discuss them in his praise of the Roman republic, while being critical of the same practice in corrupt Athens. This means that Rousseau approves such Roman practices as long as Rome remains healthy on the whole.³¹

PASSAGES SHOWING ROUSSEAU’S RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

It is now time to address the third issue by locating passages that show Rousseau’s explicit admission of active civic public interaction. With regard to this, we may first point to the fact that Rousseau complained strongly to the Genevan government in *Letters* that a Genevan citizen could not “propose anything in these assemblies [general Conseil], one cannot

³⁰ By suggesting additional reasons, this interpretation reinforces that of Schwartzberg, that there should be a discursive process before voting. Interpreting P1, Gildin also suggests that there should be active public deliberation in order to guarantee its “rectitude”: “Rousseau obviously assumes that the assembly will include members with the ability to enlighten their fellow citizens” (Gildin, *Rousseau’s Social Contract*, 57–58). He does not, however, provide substantial evidence or argumentation to support this assumption.

³¹ In this context, it is useful to recall Machiavelli’s chapter in *Discourses* titled “How Free Government Can Be Maintained in Corrupt Cities, If It Is Already There; And If It Is Not There, How It Can Be Set Up,” in which he shows that the good Roman custom of granting citizens the right to propose and discuss laws turned into a harmful practice when people became wicked and corrupt (*Discourses* I, chap. 18, in *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others*, trans. Allan Gilbert [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965], 1:241–42).

discuss anything in them, one cannot deliberate over anything,” owing to regulations imposed by the executive Conseil in the name of public security, while describing past political practice, where citizens were able to speak more freely—even to shout—in a comparatively positive light.³²

We also find, furthermore, that Rousseau explicitly acknowledges public discussion and debate among citizens in his last political writing, *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. When depicting proceedings in the diets and dietines,³³ he stresses that it is more important to assure freedom than to impose regulation, and asserts that the rights of citizens to speak, discuss, and debate, which naturally accompany collective deliberation, be permitted:

All the measures you adopt to prevent licence in the legislative order, though good in themselves, will sooner or later be used to oppress it. Long and useless harangues, which waste so much time, are a great evil; but it is an even greater evil for a good citizen not to dare speak when he has something useful to say. When it reaches the point where certain mouths only are opened in the diets, and even those are forbidden to speak freely, they soon will say nothing but what is apt to please the powerful.³⁴

As this passage shows, Rousseau stresses the evil of lengthy speeches, but at the same time emphasizes more strongly that they should not be entirely suppressed.

In a passage immediately following this quote, Rousseau argues that certain measures regarding the appointment of officials and the distribution of favors should be taken in order to reduce “vain harangues and flatteries,” and then that regulation of citizens’ manner of speaking should be additionally introduced:

In order to prune away some of the farragoes of rhetorical nonsense you might, however, require each orator to announce at the beginning of his discourse the proposition he wants to establish and, after presenting his arguments, to summarise his conclusions, as lawyers do in

³² J.-J. Rousseau, *The Collected Writings of Rousseau*, vol. 9, ed. Christopher Kelly and Eve Grace (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 250–51. Of course, this passage cannot be interpreted as direct evidence that Rousseau allows public discussion and debate, although it is suggestive of this. It also merits our attention, however, in that “deliberation” here refers to active public interaction.

³³ Here it should be remembered that dietines refer to regional assemblies in which citizens participate directly, while diets are representative assemblies.

³⁴ Rousseau, *Considerations*, in *Political Writings*, ed. Watkins, 198; see 196.

court. If that did not make speeches shorter, it would at least restrain those who merely want to talk for the sake of talking, and waste time to no purpose.³⁵

The two quotes I draw from *Considerations* clearly show that the negative interpretation examined thus far falls short of doing justice to Rousseau's political thought as a consistent whole. They also suggest that Rousseau took continuous pains to strike a balance between the governmental need to regulate public proceedings and the danger of the abuse of governmental regulative power, as he is fully aware of the evils of both.

At this point, we would raise a question: To which type of state did Poland belong at the time that Rousseau prescribed a system of government for her? Although Rousseau praised the Polish love of liberty and the Poles' struggle for independence against Russia, Poland did not seem to belong to the semi-ideal state; nor did it belong to the severely corrupt state. The country would thus seem to fit into either the considerably corrupt state category or between the semi-ideal state and the considerably corrupt state. If my reasoning is plausible, it boils down to confirmation of my point that Rousseau was still willing to grant interactive public deliberation in the considerably corrupt state.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As my examination has shown so far, the negativists seem unable to escape the suspicion that they attempt to fit Rousseau's more complicated ideas about civic political participation into their simplified interpretive schemes, by focusing and expanding on certain selected passages in *The Social Contract* and ignoring Rousseau's agony over striking a fine balance between "discipline" and "liberty":

A better system of discipline in the diets and dietines would surely be most useful: but I can never repeat too often that you must not seek two contradictory things at the same time. Discipline is good, but liberty is better; and the more you hedge in liberty with formalities, the more means of usurpation will these formalities furnish.³⁶

At the same time, the positivists as well as the negativists seem to overlook the point that civic public discussion and debate might well be permitted and useful in state types 2 and 3 located between the two extreme state types 1

³⁵ Ibid., 198.

³⁶ Ibid.

and 4, for they derive their general interpretations primarily from passages relevant to the extreme types.

Finally, negativists may well sidestep my critique by arguing that the general principle of Rousseau's political thought is to exclude public discussion and debate from citizen's participation and that passages drawn from *Letters* and *Considerations* constitute only exceptions to this general principle. That is to say, Rousseau's general principles are laid out in *The Social Contract* and some variations are made when he makes actual applications of them in *Letters* and *Considerations*. A similar relationship may be observed between Plato's two major political works, the *Republic* and the *Laws*. Rousseau, however, is not conscious of the kind of discrepancies between principles and exceptions that negativists may point to. On the contrary, he makes clear in many passages that the arguments he puts forward in *Considerations* are consistent with the principles he has articulated in *The Social Contract*. That is, it is the outcome of direct application of his principles.³⁷

Rousseau does not approve public discussion or debate enthusiastically or unconditionally. As has been confirmed repeatedly by my examination, Rousseau favors harmonious decision reached by unanimity or overwhelming majority, which is not accompanied by wasteful discussions and exhaustive debates. It may, however, be an unreasonable exaggeration of Rousseau's political thought to jump to the conclusion that he bans *in toto* public discussion and debate that inevitably accompany civic political participation, thereby reducing the role of citizens to that of simply casting votes. This point is confirmed more explicitly in the passages cited from *Considerations* in which Rousseau still seeks a solution in regulating the right of citizens to speak in the public assembly instead of banning it completely, while remaining critical of "long and useless harangues" and "flatteries."

In light of all the foregoing, my position regarding whether Rousseau's civic political participation allows public discussion and debate is a moderately positive one. If Rousseau attempts, in P1, to suppress communication among citizens that is likely to lead to collusion and the formation of small associations, he also seeks, in P2 and passages we have drawn from *Letters* and *Considerations*, to positively accommodate public civic discussion and debate. In the latter case, while he is willing to propose governmental power to intervene in public proceedings in order to prevent the civic right to free speech from getting out of control through its abuse by a powerful few,

³⁷ Ibid., 190, 195.

he also issues a strong warning of the dangers of oppressing civic liberty. In short, my interpretation is the elaboration and clarification of Gildin's rather vague yet flexible interpretation that "Rousseau's remarks suggest that there are many possible arrangements regarding the right to propose and to debate laws compatible with his principles."

Steven Johnstone, *A History of Trust in Ancient Greece*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011, xii + 242 pp., \$45.00 (hardcover).

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The title of this book invoking the word “trust” calls to mind other studies, such as Francis Fukuyama’s *Trust* (1995), George P. Fletcher’s *Loyalty: An Essay on the Morality of Relationships* (1993), or Martin E. Marty’s *Building Cultures of Trust* (2010). While loyalty and disloyalty and trust and self-interest inevitably require consideration, Johnstone’s focus necessarily seems more impersonal, although Marty too talks about the institutions and boards that make trust work, much like our corporate boards today. It is easier to approach service on boards and committees today from the point of view of how the person should act. The distance imposed by fragmentary references inevitably leads one to think in broad concepts. Trust and risk travel together. The paradoxical theme of verification for trust ties this social, political, and economic history of early Greek institutions together.

Thus weights and measures (one of Mabel Lang’s specialties in her studies of the agora) were insured by a coin tester in the agora, just as the cashier holds a hundred-dollar bill up to the light to verify the water marks. If we use the word “trust” for both banking instruments and arrangements for wealth transfer as well as the professional and private conduct of individuals, we are not surprised that the Greeks mediated these relationships through the institution of haggling, reflecting relative equality in the marketplace of buyers and sellers despite their unequal information. If this sounds as though it is a discussion of the duty to disclose (or not), Stephen Johnstone sets about bringing the agora to life from the ancient Greek sources of the fifth and fourth centuries BC and reminding us of the actual circumstances in which the Greeks lived their lives. The work of making the agora work as

an exchange through verification of standardized measures spilled over into the political realm.

The meaning of rural life with its back-breaking physical tasks and lack of routine mechanical aids, to say nothing of easy calculators, takes us far from Vergil's paean to beekeeping and the farm as literally a source of culture. The *oikos*, or household, from which we received our word "economy," worked on a finely honed sense of guesstimation. Unlike the rural character of much of ancient society just outside the major city-state, another subject Johnstone covers still shares much in common with us: the problems of joint and several (proportionate) liability. Johnstone makes this chapter intriguing by examining Xenophon's sociological consideration of "how shared liability affected the behavior of associates in groups" (128, 141–46). Agency costs of disclosure, compliance, and enforcement are treated conventionally by Plato, Aristotle, and Protagoras as an epistemological problem of *quantum meruit*, as after all we still do. Xenophon goes beyond the methodology of measuring, for example, the value of labor when he tries to limit agency costs by suggesting that a fair judge (symbolized by Cyrus) could increase value by setting up competitions for prizes in which agents labor more zealously, thus, as Johnstone concludes, enmeshing the system even more fully in personal trust. "The virtue of Xenophon's irony is that it allowed him to confront the limitation of his own analysis."

When trust and distrust are juxtaposed in the reader's mind in Johnstone's eighth chapter, dispute resolution inevitably comes to the fore. In the last fifteen years, Matthew R. Christ, *The Litigious Athenian* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Victor Bers, trans., *Demosthenes, Speeches 50–59*, *Oratory of Classical Greece*, with series preface and introduction by Michael Gagarin (University of Texas Press, 2003); and Adriaan Lanni, *Law and Justice in the Courts of Classical Athens* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) dealt with rhetoric and litigation in their studies, as did Johnstone in his earlier study, *Disputes and Democracy: The Consequences of Litigation in Ancient Athens* (University of Texas Press, 1999). There he built the foundation for the final chapter in this work, a continuation of his study of rhetoric and persuasion. This time he wants to structure his study around the effect on the listener, but he does not explicitly link rhetoric to truth until p. 169. At the outset of the chapter, titled "Deciding," Johnstone sets forth his aim to focus on the audience's "essential role" in receiving the oratory (149).

The audience, whether in the guise of jurors/judges or as the-atergoers, evaluate the words of the opposing orators or masked characters

in a play (Aristophanes's *Knights* [152]). Johnstone emphasizes the role of the audience as a hot bench, "shouting, heckling or otherwise making a noise, whether in encouragement or challenge" (153). Johnstone concludes that the listeners "were themselves rhetorical subjects" (153), thus allowing him later to conclude that they fulfilled a regulatory check on the trustworthiness of the proceedings in their decision (*krisis*) at the end of the speeches (169). Perhaps in an unnecessarily complicated way, Johnstone speaks of the "complexifying triangulation of rhetorical materials—from a speaker, his opponent, and the listeners' past experiences" (156). He seems to mean that with experience as an adult ("People hanging out in the agora" [158]), a juror might be skeptical about both speeches. Johnstone concentrates on five elements in Athenian legal rhetoric: narrative form, legal principles, presentation of character evidence and interpretation, call to emotional identification with the orator's moral righteousness in the circumstances, and an assessment of probabilities in carrying the speaker's burden of proof (159). The author then hints at the connection with trust by saying that he will address a sixth element, "the critical reflection on rhetoric itself."

The most intriguing discussion deals with the danger that the rhetorical "system itself could fail" (166). Gaming the system is of particular interest in today's American politics in the rhetorical discussion of whether the global economy is to blame for increasing inequality of wealth or the failure of politicians to regulate the economy because of political donations caused the insertion of instability into the democracy. Thus the internal checks and balances in the classical Greek rhetorical system point up problems of *sykophancy* (161) and cynicism. While the juror listening to the speeches may have been suspicious of a particular speech, the juror probably "retained trust in the system of rhetoric as a whole" (169). Each juror's suspicion led to trust in the ultimate decision in a particular case since each juror's decision was added to every other decision in tallying up the votes for one speaker or the other, for example, 535 to 280. This reinforced the individual's trust in the system. Each juror knew that every other juror went through the same process of sifting the information in the presentations. Would that we could have such trust in our political and judicial decisions.

Josiah Ober mentions that the Greeks had a system of various methods of personal trust whereas we today trust in the market and other impersonal measures. Perhaps this provides a reason for Johnstone's linking different types of trust together by including them in the same book. The reader must trust that a different example of trust will emerge by the end

of each chapter and that a personal system of trust will emerge from the different chapters. The author includes different types of analysis, from political (citizens engage with each other through rhetoric and weights and measures in the agora) to economic (agency costs) to sociological (Xenophon as managerialist). Accurate weights and measures allow the buyer in the agora to “trust” the marketplace by supplying some deficits in disclosure. A jury composed of hundreds allows each juror to “trust” the justice system because the jurors are all skeptical when they arrive to hear the speeches and no speaker could afford to bribe all the jurors. Majority rule means that enough of the jurors were paying attention to ensure a “correct” verdict. According to Johnstone, these indirect checks and balances were the warp and woof of the classical Athenian democracy. Together, they provide in effect a rug of trust on the agora floor, smoothing away some of the roughness and holding down the amount of dust in the eye.

Note: Major presses today use distracting practices such as contractions and split infinitives; for example, footnote 54 on p. 212, additionally sloppy in ignoring the singular subject of the sentence: “neither Bickford nor Braet intend (*sic*) to accurately describe Athenian rhetoric,” ironic in a book that argues rhetoric counts and doubly distracting.

Jacob Howland, *Plato and the Talmud*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, xi + 282 pp., \$85.00 (hardcover).

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The normally compelling conventions that play so great a role in the human story give it an appearance of kaleidoscopic diversity. Yet if there really is such a thing as human nature, or if there is a human condition, then we should not be too surprised when intelligent efforts to understand and explain human things are convergent. Certain problems with or challenges to living our lives collectively and individually are bound to recur, and there are by no means an infinite number of responses to those challenges. With some noteworthy exceptions, today believers in secular progress have a more chastened view than in the past of the prospects for an entirely new order of the ages. Even within the framework of proliferating technological change it is not so hard to see the patterns or cycles that might lead one to conclude there is at least very little new under the sun.

Nevertheless Jacob Howland's *Plato and the Talmud* remains, despite its slightly misleading title, a delightful surprise, particularly (though far from exclusively) for incautious readers of Leo Strauss's thoughts on the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem. It would hardly be shocking to consider that there would *not* be a great deal of overlap between the Platonic corpus, to which, as Whitehead suggested, all subsequent philosophy is appended as a footnote, and the Talmud's 2.5 million-word¹ compilation of Jewish law and lore, a record of discussions going back some 2000 years and the centerpiece, in something like its present form, of study for the incul-

¹ Adin Steinsaltz, *The Essential Talmud* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1992), 74.

cation of pious orthodoxy for over 1000 years. But Howland carefully and thoughtfully suggests that there is substantial common ground.

Howland, long known as a profound interpreter of Plato, shows himself to be an equally serious student of at least the relatively tiny part of the Talmud that he discusses. The book is more narrowly focused than its title might suggest. His discussion of Plato takes on the *Apology* and *Euthyphro*, and the Socrates of these two dialogues is compared with great insight to the stories of wonder workers portrayed in chapter 3 of tractate Ta'anit (or Taanis) from the Babylonian Talmud. "Ta'anit" means "fast day," but the broad topic of the tractate includes discussions of fast days and rain, since fasting is one of the possible responses to drought. Chapter 3 contains what Howland acknowledges to be a collection of very atypical stories. They include characters like Choni the Circle Maker, whose prayer can bring rain, yet who argues with God about getting just the right kind of rain, and Nachman ish Gam Zu, for whose sake a miracle occurs when a gift he is taking to Caesar is stolen. While it is not that uncommon for the Talmud to illustrate some issue or point of law with a story drawn from the life of one of its plethora of rabbinic characters, the succession of wonder-working incidents recounted here is unusual enough for the pious to have given this chapter a special name, "the chapter of the saintly ones."²

Howland's goal in comparing two Platonic dialogues with the chapter of the saintly ones is "to illuminate the inner connection between the exemplary lives of philosophy and faith...and to clarify the ways in which these texts seek to educate their readers to live these lives" (14). He wants to show how a tension between "rational inquiry and faith" not only exists *between* the two, but is inherent *within* both faith and rational inquiry themselves. The texts contain "comparable conceptions of the proper roles of inquiry and reasoned debate in religious life" and share "a profound awareness of the limits of our understanding of things divine" (18). Furthermore, the texts share a common method of education. Plato and Talmud both reflect on themselves, and thereby "invite readers to participate in the inquiries they present or represent," teaching readers by example "how to learn—as well as what it means, in human terms, to do so" (19). They thereby portray and inculcate "dispositions of mind and character that cannot be encapsulated in purely legal discourse or philosophical argumentation" (20).

² Hersh Goldwurm, ed., *Talmud Bavli: Tractate Taanis* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 2004), xxxvii.

As he concludes his book, Howland suggests that he has shown “a number of analogies” between his chosen dialogues and the chapter from Ta’anit, having to do with the “conceptual and practical spaces” occupied by the investigations in the works, the “main ideas” that are at work in navigating these spaces, and the role the texts play in “mediating the reader’s relationship to these ideas” (253). More specifically, Howland believes that philosophy and faith both occupy a realm between the merely mortal and the immortal, representing the potential human beings have to be called to an “exemplary” way of being that goes beyond the mere satisfaction of “our animal nature” (254). Those so called constitute a “never wholly actual” but rather aspirational community of inquiry and learning (255), a community of “deeply thoughtful and morally responsible individuals learning from and teaching one another” (257). This community is founded on never forgetting “the ignorance of even the wisest human beings,” particularly in relation to divine things (256–57). The texts themselves call people to this community by using “narrative, drama, and dialectical argument to draw readers into debates about fundamental moral and theological issues—issues such as the nature of piety, justice and charity” (257). These debates are not settled by the texts, but prompt willing readers to be “active partners” thinking for themselves (257). Finally, a member of either the Socratic or the Talmudic community so constituted must ultimately be aware of the problems posed by being one of the few so called among many fellow human beings who are not (259).

Such bare summaries of Howland’s conclusions do not do justice to the grace and subtlety with which he analyzes his texts in order to reach them. But they are enough to suggest the challenge that Howland is presenting to Strauss’s view of the conflict between biblical and philosophic notions of the good life. Where Strauss, Howland says, acknowledged a great potential for overlap as well as productive tension between the two, he still held them to be in irresolvable conflict “because divine omnipotence is ‘absolutely incompatible with Greek philosophy in any form’” (4). But what Strauss missed, Howland argues, is that within both Judaism and Greek philosophy there are “essential roles” for “wonder and autonomous understanding” on the one hand and “obedience and humility” on the other. That is because both depend on the existence of a rational order that is at the same time beyond human creation and prescriptive, whether that order is by nature or divinely created. Hence for Howland Socrates illustrates how “the love of wisdom that springs from wonder is moderated by a sense of awe before, and responsibility to, that which presents itself as divine” (10). In complementary fashion,

“readers who come to the Talmud after long acquaintance with Plato cannot fail to be struck by the dialectical character of rabbinic thought, by the text’s preference for raising questions rather than furnishing answers, and by its open-ended, conversational form” (11). From this point of view, revelation, the presence of an omnipotent God in history, is but the beginning of a thoughtful investigation into right living; in principle the answers are to be found in God’s word but in practice a good deal of human rational ingenuity is required to find them out.

The Socratic life of reason, then, is not without its faithful elements; the faithful life of the Talmudic rabbis is impossible without reasoned discourse. One might say that Howland is presenting us with a kind of phenomenology of philosophic and rabbinic lives and that he finds that the lived experience of the one is not so very different from the lived experience of the other, the more so when one adds to the picture (as he does) the delicate relationship between the philosopher and the city, and the equally problematic relationship between Jews and the nations, and the rabbis in relation to the “*am ha’aretz*,” people of the land, the not entirely reliable mass of their fellow Jews.

For many readers, I suspect that one sticking point for accepting Howland’s analysis is his utter willingness to accept the proposition that the interrogating mission of Socrates as we know it through Plato was indeed motivated, as Socrates claims in the *Apology*, as a response to the oracle at Delphi. Howland’s arguments on this point are intelligent; whether they are definitive—how, for example, we are to reconcile this account of Socratic questioning with that given in *Phaedo* 96aff., about which Howland is silent here—is a topic best left to those more expert in Plato than I. It might be said, though, that even if Howland is correct, he has established the existence of a Socratic piety something akin to what Heidegger states at the end of “The Question Concerning Technology”: “Questioning is the piety of thought.”³ The actual relationship that kind of piety has with Talmudic piety could still be an open question, even if both contain a crucial rational element.

For as Howland is well aware, whatever god Socrates might have believed in, it is emphatically *not* the God of the Talmud (125). That is why for the most part Howland is clear that the likeness he is establishing between Socrates and the sages can only be analogical. Miracles or prophecy

³ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 35.

would seem to represent the limit of any attempt to analogize between the philosopher's efforts to understand human things in accord with nature and the revelation of an omnipotent God. Howland approaches this difficult topic with admirable directness in the most compelling part of his book, providing a fascinating picture of what stories of miracle workers in the chapter of the saintly ones tell us about miracles and their role in human life. He shows convincingly that these stories suggest a certain caution and ambivalence about miracles, a conclusion that is certainly consistent with the broader Talmudic teaching. That miracles happen is undeniable, but praying for them is normally discouraged, relying on them basically prohibited. There is even an effort, Howland shows, to distinguish between weak miracles that do not violate the laws of creation and strong ones that do, and to minimize the role strong ones play in the order of things by suggesting how they might have been built into creation from the beginning. Furthermore, particular providence as expressed in miraculous events can be a tricky thing; the Talmud is perfectly aware of the problem of getting what you pray for.

But if indeed Howland shows that the sages are not simple-minded believers in miracles and that there is even in this respect a powerful rational element that informs their faith, he can still go only so far to bring them together with Socrates, or even analogize between them. As Strauss notes in one of his discussions of Jerusalem and Athens (in which he himself speaks of Socrates having a divine mission, like the prophets), the Socratic best regime, a purely human achievement, is built on unchanging human nature, and therefore represents an unlikely possibility. The Talmud, in contrast, is built on a prophetic tradition that promises at some point in time the coming into being of a God-given order radically different from anything the world has hitherto known, with nations united and at peace and lions lying down with lambs.⁴ Socrates for his part seems dismissive of the fantastic if not miraculous stories told of the traditional Greek pantheon, and it seems at least unlikely that "the god" he refers to as a philosopher would intervene in the world in such a way. His own *daimōn* advises him about what not to do, but does not step in to alter the world for him to prevent harm to him, let alone to do him good. And on the side of the sages, while it would be wrong to say that the miraculous past, present, and future intervention of God in the story of the Jewish people is simply an unreflective given, it remains nevertheless absolutely foundational.

⁴ Leo Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 403.

Howland sees some of the limits this difference imposes on his ability to analogize (128) but I would suggest he does not go quite far enough. Given the ultimate incompatibility of Athens and Jerusalem on the matter of divine omnipotence, a point on which Strauss and Howland seem to agree, the very kind of “informed intellectual imagination” that Howland seeks to bring to his study of the “actual life worlds” of Plato and the Talmud *could* conclude that beyond the level of “a certain unavoidable abstraction” (16), obedience means one thing in one context and another in the other, as does autonomous understanding. That is to say, the omnipotence of one God is not merely a doctrinal difference, but it alters the *lived* experience of the Jewish sage in comparison with the philosopher.

We can see the consequences of this difference in a closer look at how wonder and autonomous understanding work among the Talmudic sages. Howland is correct that Talmud contains a massive quantity of rational yet faithful, pious questioning. But any likeness with Socratic questioning, analogical or otherwise, occurs at a very high level of generality. Look across a broader range of the text than Howland considers and you will notice quickly that in a variety of specific ways Talmudic dialectic often does not work the same way as the questioning that Socrates undertakes. First there is the question of subject matter. One can believe that Plato might have written more dialogues of Socrates covering a wider selection of topics and still suspect that a vast amount of the questioning that goes on in the Talmud would have been bizarre from his point of view. There is no Socratic dialogue—it is hard even to imagine a Socratic dialogue—that takes up in minute detail the procedures for the ritual sacrifices of his day, a topic to which the Talmud devotes thick volumes despite the fact that by the time of its compilation those sacrifices had long been impossible to perform. We know nothing directly of Athenian laws of divorce or property ownership from Plato, topics in Jewish law exhaustively treated by the Talmud. Socrates may refer to religious celebrations, as in the prelude of the *Republic*, but the Talmud focuses intensively on the proper celebration of Jewish festivals and holy days. Socrates discusses the art of medicine in the abstract, but so far as I know says very little about specific medical practices; the Talmud discusses cures, potions, and fetal development. The Talmud is an extraordinarily comprehensive description of a way of life determined by a particular divine revelation, including but not limited to civil, criminal, and ritual law and procedure; food production, eating, and drinking; sex, marriage, divorce, childbirth, and child rearing; anatomy (human and animal) and charity; customs and legends. In contrast with *The Republic*, then, it could with justice be called *The Republic of the Jews*. All indications are

that Socrates had no such exhaustive interest in the Athenian regime or any other, and his descriptions of his best regimes look like preliminary outlines when compared with the historical/aspirational elements of Talmudic discussions of the regime of the Jews.

Second, there is the question of method. While Howland is right that both Socrates and the sages engage in dialectic, it does not work the same way in both instances. There are, to be sure, not a few eristic and aporetic moments in the Talmud. The rabbis (very often, unlike what we see in Plato, arguing with intellectual equals) can be as ferocious as Thrasymachus (if never so long-winded), and become so seduced by wonder and the dialectic as to pose questions of such exquisite refinement (if not absurdity) as to lead to a formulaic, one-word conclusion that means in effect “let the issue stand unresolved.” Yet the far more common use of dialectic is to find the subtle distinction that allows *apparently* divergent views across generations of rabbis to be *reconciled*. It may seem that these two sages are contradicting each other but actually they are talking about two different cases and on the basic principle they agree. Or else, agreement is achieved by a sometimes amazing willingness to assume that the source material under discussion is corrupted or incomplete, and needs to be rewritten entirely. This effort to find consistency in the face of obvious divergence, by the way, is no small feat given that the Talmud is encyclopedic without being systematic. That is to say, it does not start from first principles and elaborate on them; indeed, it begins and ends where it does only by tradition. A given tractate is unlikely to focus on only its nominal subject matter. One could begin studying Talmud at any point and be no worse off (or better off) than having started somewhere else. Yet amazingly, its orthodox interpreters can make a plausible case that every part of the text is compiled with full awareness of all other parts, so that an argument on one topic in one context may be worked out as it is so that, on an entirely different topic in another part of the text, a consistent position can be articulated.

In short, then, the Talmud makes great efforts to be dialectical but not aporetic. (How much it succeeds at this goal is a matter where reasonable people disagree.) When all else fails, rabbis are expected to give in to majority opinion, no matter what their personal brilliance and stature. So the Talmud is not teaching that the best way of life is devoted to *asking the question* how we should live, but to *determining* how we should actually be living day to day and moment to moment within the framework of divinely given law that is presumptively comprehensive in its scope even if the manner

in which it is to be embodied comprehensively requires human elucidation and decisions. As Howland admits, the philosophic life of Socrates is self-contained, an end in itself. Socrates discussing piety with Euthyphro is doing exactly and exhaustively everything he needs to do to live the best life. “Socratic philosophizing...blends seamlessly with Socratic piety” (126). But Talmudic sages discuss prayer not only for the sake of the discussion, as important as that is, but in order to be sure that they and the community engage in the proper prayers at the proper times of day. They will discuss erotic things with a view to engaging in appropriate sexual relations with their wives, not to avoid going home to them. Looking beyond Howland’s abstraction, or, one might say, looked at more concretely, the seamless Socratic piety that defines obedience as the exercise of autonomous understanding, the always questioning philosophic life itself, is quite different from a Talmudic piety in which there is a perennial if productive tension between the wonder of Torah study, the lens through which the rabbis view the human world and the world of what we call nature, and the discipline of pious action that is defined by the performance of the 613 *mitzvot* given by God.⁵

Howland has done a fine job of showing how students of political philosophy might begin to take the Talmud seriously. (An unprecedented opportunity for such studies is offered by the Mesorah [Artscroll] edition of Babylonian Talmud and the forthcoming complete Steinsaltz edition, published by Koren—both of which are slated to be available also as iPad apps.) My reservations are only intended to suggest some further considerations that might be brought to bear in such discussions. Doubtless there is much more to be said. For even were Howland entirely correct on his own terms, well might one say of Talmud what Rabbi Ben Bag Bag said of the Torah itself, “Turn it, and turn it again, for everything is in it.”⁶

⁵ Compare, for example, *Avot* 1.17 with *Kiddushin* 40b.

⁶ *Avot* 5.26

Gerard B. Wegemer, *Young Thomas More and the Arts of Liberty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 210 pp., \$85.

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In this, the third of his monographs on Thomas More, Gerard Wegemer returns to ground that will be familiar to readers of his *Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage* (Scepter Publishers, 1995) and *Thomas More on Statesmanship* (Catholic University of America Press, 1996). Professor of literature at the University of Dallas, Wegemer is also trained in political philosophy and heads the Center for Thomas More Studies, whose aims—to deepen our understanding of the life and thought of Thomas More, and to explore their relevance to questions of contemporary statesmanship—nicely encapsulate the thrust of Wegemer’s own work. Drawing from an apparently exhaustive familiarity with More’s biography, his writings—major and minor, published and unpublished—and his literary sources, Wegemer seeks to draw the reader into a careful study of texts grounded in the sort of dialectical questioning that drove More’s self-development as a scholar, author, and statesman. Simultaneously, he outlines the key principles and conclusions that characterized More’s ethical and political writings and informed his actions as a lawyer, diplomat, friend, family man, defender of orthodoxy, advisor to Henry VIII, opponent of the same, and martyr. Taking advantage of Yale’s recent publication of More’s complete works, completed in 1997, while himself overseeing the publication of paperback, journal, and web-based editions of More’s major writings and aids to their comprehension, Wegemer continues his invaluable efforts to facilitate a more profound and inspiring grasp of More on the part of scholars, teachers, and students.

As in prior volumes, Wegemer focuses on More’s status, along with his friend and ally Erasmus, as a self-conscious proponent of

the humanist movement within sixteenth-century Christendom. Eschewing the reductionist historicism and psychologizing sometimes applied to More's thoughts and deeds, Wegemer emphasizes the care and subtlety with which More read, translated, evaluated, and imitated a wide range of classical authors, from Homer, Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle, to Cicero, Horace, Sallust, Seneca, Lucian, and Augustine. Beginning with chapters devoted to these authors, then proceeding to analyze More's early corpus, Wegemer demonstrates how More's engagement with the former helped him to formulate the principles and methods with which to diagnose and address significant shortcomings in the moral, political, and religious practices and institutions of his day. Reading More's work alongside theirs helps us to notice and comprehend the artful use of irony, paradox, indirection, and humor through which More delivers his constructive critiques. Seeing the grounds of his criticism in turn enables us to understand More's positive vision of *humanitas*—"his philosophy of human nature and society," which, following Cicero, "formed the basis of his conceptions of civic and international law" and of "those arts needed to promote and protect justice, liberty, and peace" (6). It is ultimately More's view of *humanitas* that explains his calls for political, social, and religious reform, as well as his rejection of alternative models of change presented or represented by the likes of Machiavelli, Luther, and Henry VIII. It is in turn More's position as a neoclassical alternative to the late scholastic, early modern, and protestant theorists whose influence so shaped the subsequent development of European political society that renders his own life and writings of more than historical interest today.

As the title indicates, *Young Thomas More* focuses on More's early life and writings, from his first political poems to *Utopia*, and including his translations of Lucian, *Life of Pico della Mirandola*, Coronation Ode (for Henry VIII), and *History of Richard III*. Wegemer has treated these works before, and his conclusions here confirm his previous findings. As always with great books, however, the effort of revisiting these texts is not without fruit. Especially interesting is the way Wegemer uses visual art as a means of illustrating More's thought. His penultimate chapter (160–75), for example, is an analysis of Hans Holbein's portrait *Sir Thomas More and His Family*, with close attention to the changes made from the initial sketch to the final painting, probably in part at the behest of More and his family. Wegemer considers the texts visible in the final portrait—two by Seneca and one by Boethius—with their treatment of the themes of virtue, happiness, madness, and persecution; he considers significant alterations rendering signs of the family's piety less ostentatious, while emphasizing their fruitfulness,

hospitality, and love of the arts. These and other details draw attention to the humanism of More's Christianity and the particular blend of philosophy, faith, and politics defining it.

That same humanism is treated in Wegemer's first chapter (1–22) through a study of the frontispiece of Erasmus's 1515 edition of Seneca's works, an edition Erasmus worked on while visiting More. An element of this artwork is repeated in the 1518 edition of *Utopia*: two crowned serpents entwined around a staff and protecting a dove, surrounded by words in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The combination of serpent and staff evokes Asclepius, the Greek god of health. Based on Matthew 10:16—the Greek text quoted—the crowned serpents represent prudence or the rule of reason within the soul, while the dove represents integrity or simplicity of heart. The Latin cites Martial's claim that happiness is found in “shrewd simplicity and love of doing right,” while the Hebrew quotes David's prayer that God do good “to those who are upright in their hearts.” The whole therefore suggests the convergence of philosophy, poetry, and religion on the lesson that happiness is found in the practice of virtue consisting in a combination of intellectual and moral perfection or the well-ordered soul, whose natural or intrinsic goodness is not to be understood as exempting one from reliance upon divine assistance.

The political import of this lesson is suggested in Erasmus's version. Here *Humanitas* is depicted as a lady sitting in a chariot drawn by Cicero, Virgil, Demosthenes, and Homer, “peacefully reading” while riding triumphantly over Time and Nemesis. The meaning seems to be that the idea of virtue uncovered by the study of human nature is the key not only to personal happiness but also to the well-being of political society. Philosophy, assisted by the arts of poetry, rhetoric, and politics, can to some extent master human affairs and guide political society toward the procurement of “peace, prosperity, and liberty.” In fact, Wegemer contends, the very essence of the goodness sought through liberal studies—the fulfillment of one's humanity through self-perfection—entails the desire and duty to share this goodness as far as possible with others who share that humanity. Thus the philosopher comes to light in this account, drawn especially from texts of Cicero and Seneca, as a “first citizen” (*princeps*) responsible for promoting “justice, liberty, and peace” within society, and *humanitas* appears as a bridge between the realms of theoretical and practical science, of personal and political excellence.

Lest we take More to be hopelessly “utopian” in the colloquial sense—a sense informed by a misreading of his most famous work—Wegemer stresses the numerous and great obstacles to the achievement of virtue, personal or public. It is on account of the weakness of reason in the hearts and assemblies of men that the art of coercive law must be among those studied and applied by the *princeps*. Though human vices render law an indispensable help to society, however, those same vices render it an incomplete help, since good laws are the product of great prudence, and “even the best laws could be manipulated unless learned, prudent, and courageous *principes* exercised constant vigilance and prudent care.” It is equally “utopian” to expect law to function without liberal education as it is to expect liberal education to substitute for law (176–77). The use of the liberal arts to cultivate strength of mind and character among citizens and their leaders is as necessary to counterbalance the defects of law as law is necessary to address the limits of such arts. Properly understood, this mutual aid among the imperfect human arts, fostering in turn the mutual aid of imperfect human beings, accounts for both the limits and the prospects of More’s classical realism.

Wegemer’s second chapter (23–34) explores More’s understanding of art as the arduous cultivation of man’s natural potential, showing its roots in texts of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca. Though he does not call attention to it here, Wegemer’s account serves as a corrective to the modern concept of art as the negation or conquering of nature. If the rules of art derive from the structure of being, one must study nature to aid nature with art, and the highest art—wisdom—will guide us to the completion of our own nature through virtue. As before, the lesson applies as much to politics and the common good as it does to personal virtue; or rather, it regards the two as essentially intertwined, since personal virtue must be pursued in a political context, and the common good depends on cultivating personal virtue in citizens. Since virtue must be chosen to be genuine, however, “human beings are by nature free,” and the seeds of virtue within them must be fostered as much through education and rhetoric as by law. Discovering and implementing the modes of persuasion and coercion most likely to facilitate virtue in a given political society requires an exacting knowledge of both universal and particular matters. Unlike the Cynics and Stoics, who latched on to philosophy’s endurance and hardness, and the Epicureans, who were seduced by its discussions of pleasure, the philosopher-*princeps* “needs a full and complete education in *studia humanitatis*,” and hence a broad knowledge of both human nature and human affairs. As More would later write, true

philosophy is a “civil philosophy,” by which the *princeps* comes to “know his stage, adapt himself to the play at hand, and perform his role appropriately.”

In this context Wegemer alludes to an important issue whose fuller contours he does not explore. How does the Ciceronian idea of the philosopher-statesman square with the Platonic and Aristotelian teaching on the distinction between the contemplative life and the active or political life—along with their corresponding virtues—and the superiority of the former to the latter? Cicero himself seems to have considered this a difficult problem, but without probing into the competing sides of this question Wegemer takes Cicero’s emphasis on practicality and civic virtue as a decisive improvement over his intellectual forebears.

In chapter 3 (35–52) this Ciceronian formula unfolds. The *princeps* emerges as the first among equals, whose excellence makes him fit to rule over free citizens, and whose character sets the tone for society. As faction is the greatest threat to the common good, and as “peace with dignity” requires the union of citizens in love, the statesman must be above worldly goods, ruling for the sake of the citizens and thereby inspiring them to mutual service. Thus far, at least, Roman philosophy borrows heavily from the Greek. Where Cicero seems to have surpassed his mentors, however, is suggested in a comment of Erasmus which Wegemer approvingly cites: “Plato and Aristotle tried to introduce [philosophy] to the courts of kings....But Cicero seems to me to have brought her almost onto the stage...[so] that even a miscellaneous audience can applaud.” By immersing himself in the history and law of his own people along with the *studia humanitatis*, Cicero was able to gain “a truly philosophic perspective” on Roman political society, noting its strengths and weaknesses, and presenting the lessons philosophy would teach it through the mouths of its own “greatest leaders from the past” and ancient legal principles. Hence Cicero shows how the persuasive and trustworthy leader can utilize the elements that affectively and intellectually unite citizens to shape the public mind and character in accordance with right reason. It is precisely such an art that Wegemer sees More—the “English Cicero”—studying from his youth, and prepared to practice in his maturity.

In the chapters that follow, Wegemer explores the myriad ways in which More probed the meaning of *humanitas* and applied it to the men and manners of his age. Chapter 4 (53–69) begins with More’s “Pageant Verses” and “Fortune Verses,” which mock the boastful folly of men and praise the wisdom of a life detached from wealth and honor and grounded instead in the humble pleasures of nature and virtue. Next, Wegemer notes

the significance of More's *Declamation in Reply to Lucian*, which accompanies his translation of Lucian's *Tyrannicide*. In the latter work, the speaker claims a reward from his city for having indirectly caused a tyrant's suicide through the inept murder of the tyrant's son. In response, More stresses that the damage done by the tyrant to the people's liberty stemmed from his lust for power and disregard for his fellows, and that genuine freedom from tyranny presupposes the opposite virtues: those respecting the law, the gods, and human life. To escape a tyrant only to honor a lawless and unskillful murderer would undermine "the republic's *libertas*, safety, and prosperity," though to the same end it may be lawful to hire a more "resourceful" and "strong-hearted" liberator. Though Wegemer does not spell out the implications of this text for modern intellectual and political revolutions, the context rightly implies that the reader would profit from pondering them.

Finally, Wegemer considers the witty and profound lessons on self-mastery found in "the other three Lucian dialogues [More] chose to translate." *The Cynic* shows how the quest for virtuous self-sufficiency can become marred by a pride-induced delusion of near-divinity and an accompanying blindness to the goods of human life and society; *Lover of Lives* and *Menippus* likewise expose the follies and contradictions of a pseudophilosophy detached from practical affairs and sound reasoning. Together these writings indicate the kind of leadership More believed would or would not serve to advance European civilization in his day.

Chapter 5 (70–87) extends More's critique of a life carried away by "the enticements of philosophic pleasure" and hubris. Through careful attention to the changes and additions More made to his sources in the *Life of Pico*, as well as a juxtaposition of Pico's life with More's, Wegemer brings to light More's implicit critique of his great humanist predecessor. Pressured into theological studies by his mother before his tenth year, presumably on account of the clericalism of the age, Pico became enamored of arcane knowledge and the liberty and happiness it promised. Losing sight of the dependence of philosophy on political society, Pico neglected—in practice as well as theory—the duties of a philosopher toward that society. More, by contrast, was pressured by his father to drop liberal studies and study practical arts. Resisting this pressure, More carefully discerned his vocation, opting to make the personal sacrifices necessary to engage in both contemplative studies and a life of active professional, familial, personal, and political service. The poems More wrote to expand on Pico's "Twelve Properties of a Lover" stress—in contrast to the life of the original author—the lover's "joy...

diligently to serve [his love] both day and night.” Thus does More succeed at preserving the fullness of Ciceronian *humanitas*, which seeks liberty through “humor, charm, happiness, friendship, and civic service,” as well as that of Christ, “a man-god of love who serves and suffers willingly and gladly, in the roles of both Martha and Mary” (see Luke 10:38–42; Wegemer does not address the statement that “Mary hath chosen the better part,” often read as confirming the intrinsic superiority of contemplation).

The next three chapters explore More’s application of *humanitas* to English politics. Chapter 6 (89–103) considers More’s Coronation Ode. Its ironic praise of the yet untested Henry VIII, combined with a bold critique of his father’s tyranny and allusions to problematic kings such as Saul and Achilles, add weight to its warning about the tendency of unlimited power to weaken good minds. Though signs already pointed to Henry’s infatuation with warfare and personal glory, More sought to give him a model of governance focused on peace, civic virtue, and the rule of law. To place this advice in its proper context, chapter 7 (104–18) examines More’s political poems of 1509–1516, in which we see evidence for his belief that right reason is most likely to find force in society through the sound deliberation of republican government. More sees a need for the leadership of *principes*, but he also regards the power of kings as tempting them to reject the salutary constraints of both law and the spirit of mutual cooperation among equal citizens. Though he was willing to advise kings for the better, then, it seems that More’s idea of the good *princeps* tended against his age’s idea of a strong prince. Chapter 8 (119–38) makes a similar point in light of More’s *Richard III* and its treatment of the causes of English civil war. Here Wegemer notes More’s use of dialysis, a “classical trope” by which “the narrator sets forth a series of alternatives but leaves it to the reader, on the basis of the many clues given, to decide which is actually correct, or left out.” On the basis of More’s clues, Wegemer interprets the history as contrasting the faction-enflaming ambitions of the king and his nobles to the good faith and willingness to sacrifice for the common good demonstrated (however imperfectly) by the citizens of ancient Rome and of Ricardian London.

Chapter 9 (139–59) turns to *Utopia*, a work to which Wegemer devoted three chapters in *Thomas More on Statesmanship*. As before, Wegemer argues that careful attention to the details of the text, as well as to the greater context of More’s life and writings, presents us with a clear sense of More’s intentions in this famously enigmatic classic. In brief, Wegemer takes as More’s position the judgment he expresses in the closing lines of

Utopia: that “many things” in the Commonwealth of Utopia are worthy of imitation, while “not a few” of their customs—including “the basis of their whole system”—are “quite absurd.” Close attention to the character as well as the account of Raphael Hythloday, in contrast to the character and thought of More himself, reveals a gulf between the former’s knowledge of “human things” and the latter’s study of *humanitas*. In Wegemer’s view, More agrees with Raphael’s critique of the evils caused by faction in England, while rejecting the chief means by which Raphael believes genuine *res publica* can be achieved. It is not only that Raphael’s doctrinaire and monological presentation is full of contradictions and impossibilities—examples of which Wegemer here multiplies. Most crucially, in his reading, the combination of Utopia’s incoherent and hedonistic account of virtue with its use of draconian punishments and terror vitiate any claim it makes to the achievement of humanist goals. By way of contrast, many of the institutions rejected or minimized in Utopia—from property, law, and family to revealed religion and free civic discourse—are identified by More as vital to the flourishing of real political society. By juxtaposing the real and the absurd in this way, Wegemer persuasively claims, More calls upon the reader to practice sharp-sightedness in reading, which in turn will equip him to know and “adapt himself to the play at hand.”

As is to be expected in a work of this scope, not all aspects of the subject are examined in equal depth. In general, given the dialogical character of More’s thought, one could wish for a more detailed consideration of arguments in favor of perspectives More rejects. It would also be of tremendous interest to hear further from Wegemer about how one might apply the principles of More’s thought to contemporary questions of political theory and practice. Most of all, as others have noted, Wegemer could say much more about the influence of Plato, as well as Cicero and Augustine, on works like *Utopia*. By way of illustration, consider More’s treatment of the theme of the best regime. In Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates, who advances the superiority of the philosophic life to the political, presents the best regime as existing only in speech. In Cicero’s *Republic*, Scipio treats Rome as the best regime, while admitting that he does so ironically, presumably in order to bring the insights of Greek philosophy to bear more powerfully on the Roman people. St. Augustine’s *City of God* portrays the best regime as existing in seed form on earth in the virtues and hope of believers, while achieving full fruition only after the Last Judgment and in the heavenly city. More’s *Utopia*, like Cicero’s *Republic*, purports to find the best regime in an actual political society, while ironically teaching that the just society exists “no place” on earth.

Unlike Cicero, however, and like Plato and Augustine, More openly dwells on the defects of the political society he is trying to reform; and like Plato, he presents a “best” regime possessing both virtues and flaws through which the reader must sort. Finally, More’s allusions to Augustine and orthodox Christianity in *Utopia*—which Wegemer explores in *Thomas More on Statesmanship*—remain for some reason heavily veiled. Though Wegemer has provided ample and valuable material toward this end, much work remains if we are to comprehend the nature of and intention behind More’s adaptation of his great teachers.

If these omissions in Wegemer’s account might in some cases constitute flaws, it must be said that they stand out primarily because of the candor and rigor with which he identifies complex and fundamental questions and possibilities regarding More’s thought. Wegemer’s probing spirit, combined with the wealth of information he possesses and shares, provides the reader with ample material for years of study and reflection on More’s careful treatment of some of the most enduring and important problems in political philosophy. For this Wegemer continues to deserve the respect and gratitude of all who agree that the arts of liberty More sought to know and practice are as important in our season as they were in his.

David Lay Williams, *Rousseau's Platonic Enlightenment*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007, xxx + 277 pp., \$27.95.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau on Philosophy, Morality, and Religion*. Edited by Christopher Kelly. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 2007, xxxiii + 306 pp., \$25.95.

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Was Jean-Jacques Rousseau a modern or an ancient? In his book *Rousseau's Platonic Enlightenment*, David Lay Williams is the first scholar since Iring Fetscher, half a century ago, to argue that he was an ancient.¹ This puts Williams in opposition to the dominant, Straussian school. Following the publication of Leo Strauss's *Natural Right and History*, and certainly since "Three Waves of Modernity," Rousseau has been read by most as a modern.² There have been some scholars who have disagreed with this interpretation, such as Patrick Riley, Judith Shklar, and Jean Starobinski, but others—such as Allan Bloom, Victor Gourevitch, Hilail Gildin, Christopher Kelly, Roger Masters, and Arthur Melzer—have generally followed Leo Strauss's interpretation. In determining the latter group's influence, one need simply look at the current English translations of Rousseau's works, most of which were prepared by them. Nor does David Williams hide the main opposition to his reading of Rousseau. In the acknowledgments, he identi-

¹ Iring Fetscher, *Rousseaus politische Philosophie: Zur Geschichte des demokratischen Freiheitsbegriffs* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1960).

² Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Leo Strauss, "Three Waves of Modernity," in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy: Ten Essays*, ed. Hilail Gildin (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1959), 81–98.

fies the interpretations offered by Roger Masters and Arthur Melzer as most influential for his own reading while attempting to refute them.³

Williams classifies all philosophers as either idealists or materialists, Plato falling in the first category. Thus, to deem Rousseau an ancient, Williams must begin by showing that he was a Platonist. To that end, Williams defines what he means by Platonism, namely, “the commitment to transcendent ideas as the ultimate authority for moral and political arguments” (xxvii). He lists four categories to serve as a checklist for determining whether Rousseau falls into the category of “materialist” or “Platonist”: metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, and politics (xix). Regarding metaphysics, a Platonist believes in metaphysical dualism, that is, that human beings are composed of a body and a soul. Second, Platonists claim that there are eternal, unchanging substances which human beings are incapable of changing through their own art and volition. Further, these substances will be pursued differently according to circumstances. The latter point is important for Williams as it allows him to argue that justice manifests itself differently in Plato’s and Rousseau’s times. Third, these substances must be knowable, although men might not know them without education. Fourth, the ideas of justice and goodness can be known and effective in politics. The modern Platonists drew four important conclusions from these Platonist assumptions. These were faith in God, immortality of the soul, free will, and the existence of immaterial ideas (xxiii). The main task of Williams’s book is to present the evidence that Rousseau subscribed to this so-defined Platonist doctrine.

After setting forth his definition of Platonism, Williams situates Rousseau’s political philosophy in its historical context. In the first of eight chapters he characterizes the materialist political philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Showing first that Hobbes and Locke were indeed materialists and positivists, Williams goes on in chapter 2 to demonstrate that English materialism was beginning to take hold in continental Europe through the efforts of the philosophes and that it was opposed by Platonists. Here Williams does some of his best work by briefly summarizing the Platonist positions of Marsilio Ficino, Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Benjamin Whichcote, Johann Adam Scherzer, Jakob Thomasius, Leibniz, Malebranche, Fenelon, and Bernard Lamy. In addition to putting Rousseau in his historical context, Williams shows that Rousseau had read the

³ Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau’s Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

participants in this debate, was often personally acquainted with them, and consequently reacted to them or took their side. Williams is most successful in demonstrating that Rousseau knew the works of many of these authors (50). As further evidence for the influence the Platonists had on Rousseau, Williams points to the many parallels between their arguments and Rousseau's (36–37, 40, 40–41, 54ff.).

In the third chapter, Williams compares his checklist against Rousseau's positions and concludes that Rousseau believed in the existence of God, free will, an immaterial soul, transcendent ideas, and human beings acquiring knowledge through inner sentiment (62). This argument relies most importantly on Rousseau's explication of these doctrines in the Profession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar in book 4 of the *Emile*. However, because Rousseau does not present the Profession of Faith in his own name, scholars have wondered whether it truly reflects Rousseau's own opinion. This argument has been made especially forcefully by Leo Strauss and his students. Williams argues against the Straussians that the arguments of the Profession of Faith are repeated by Rousseau in his own name in other works and that it is possible to give other reasons for Rousseau to use the Vicar as his mouthpiece (63). Thus, for Williams, instead of imputing to Rousseau a doctrine of esoteric writing, one should take him at his word when he claims to be sincere (64). In order to reject materialism, Rousseau relied heavily on conscience or natural sentiment. Williams consequently cites the many references in Rousseau's oeuvre to conscience (73–76). Most importantly, Williams quotes Rousseau in the *Emile* as saying that "I do not draw these rules from the principles of a high philosophy, but find them written by nature with ineffaceable characters in the depth of my heart." Williams anticipates the counterargument that Rousseau rejected natural law and challenges the evidence, mainly from the *Second Discourse* and the *Geneva Manuscript*.

Williams presents further evidence for his thesis in chapter 4 by showing that only the assumption of Rousseau as a Platonist sufficiently explains the general will. Contrary to the claim by Roger Masters, Williams argues that Rousseau's general will implements his Platonic metaphysics. The charge against Rousseau had been that the general will lacks any substantive grounding and depends on the prejudices and misguided judgments of the people. Contrary to this, Williams shows that the general will is preceded by an eternal idea of justice which becomes manifest through the general will.

In chapters 5 and 6, Williams takes up Plato's allegory of the cave and the problem of tyranny. Both chapters further substantiate

Williams's claim that Rousseau was a Platonist. Chapter 5 suggests that Rousseau was a Platonist because of his extensive use of Platonic symbolism connected to the allegory of the cave. However, Rousseau was much more optimistic about the power of education to enlighten men, which leads to his adoption of democratic political institutions. As Williams argues that Emile's education and the *Social Contract* provide Rousseau's solutions to the problem of the cave, he is forced to react to Strauss's counterargument that Rousseau was a precursor to the Jacobins. In chapter 6, Williams contends that Rousseau's solution does not lead to tyrannical government. Instead, Rousseau provided the institutional solutions to secure justice for all through an elaborate system of checks and balances.

Finally, Williams shows in chapters 7 and 8 how a corrupted version of Rousseau's thought was adopted by John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, and Michel Foucault via Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx. While Kant remained a Platonist, according to Williams, he also developed a formalist version of Rousseau's thought which in turn was used by Rawls and Habermas. In taking up Rousseau's critique of social power and its manifestations in language and ideas, Marx and Foucault ultimately founder owing to their rejection of his Platonism. Williams suggests that contemporary political thought would be best served by returning to Rousseau and possibly Kant (275), instead of following the modern sophisms of Rawls, Habermas, and Foucault.

By looking at the contemporary world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Williams shares with Leo Strauss and his students the sense that a return to an earlier time is necessary. The difference between Williams and Strauss et al. is that Williams argues that Rousseau should be the model for our times whereas they suggest a return to either early modern or ancient thought. Because Williams claims that Rousseau is the uncorrupted representative of a superior tradition of Platonic philosophy, the Straussians provide the main alternative to Williams's solution. But has Williams really demonstrated that Rousseau was a Platonist? And if Rousseau restates Plato's philosophy, why should we follow Rousseau rather than Plato?

Returning to the original argument made by Leo Strauss, three arguments serve to show that Rousseau was a modern. First, Rousseau did not succeed in returning to the ancient notion of virtue. He failed because he substituted the idea of perfectibility for a natural end. Abandoning man's highest natural end originated with Machiavelli and had been first applied to natural science by Bacon and then to morality by Thomas Hobbes. Rousseau replaced virtue with perfectibility, which implied the possibility of progress

while avoiding any discussion of a final end. Furthermore, perfectibility is an attribute of the human species rather than of individuals and is therefore realized in history rather than by any particular individual. Second, Rousseau introduced the doctrine of the general will, which can be realized only when every citizen puts the common good above his individual self-interest. Every citizen can “know” about the general will through introspection, or following his or her conscience. As conscience is acquired through the experience of the mores of a political society, it puts the general will on an egalitarian basis. Hence, anyone with access to the societal tradition can be a good citizen. Finally, Rousseau is a modern because he ultimately seeks an exit from all forms of slavery, which includes the good society. Freedom and happiness can be found only in the experience of the sentiment of existence, which can occur only outside of society.

Williams focuses his efforts on showing that the general will is preceded by the idea of justice. However, the pursuit of the common good can be in conflict with the pursuit of justice. For example, it may be advantageous, and therefore in accordance with the general will, to defend one's borders against impoverished foreigners; but it may also be unjust to leave them to their fate. As Williams himself notes, Rousseau hardly discusses justice. Williams does not explain what concept of justice one receives through conscience any more than Rousseau does. It is somehow assumed that the “inner sentiment” always provides universal and particular answers to the right decision. This, however, is problematic even for Rousseau. After all, the *Emile* has numerous references to Achilles and anger as an alternative passion leading to the experience of justice. Furthermore, Williams suggests that conscience or feeling is in agreement with reason. But here the question arises whether the *ur*-passion, as we supposedly always have conscience, does not have to be modified to apply only to our fellow citizens rather than to all of mankind. Yet the particular passion of love of a fatherland is not once discussed by Williams, nor does he comment on the importance of mores for Rousseau.

On one occasion Williams discusses perfectibility (68–69) and in this context challenges Strauss directly. Williams reads Strauss as saying that Rousseau had abandoned free will. Yet in the relevant passage from *Natural Right and History*, Strauss merely argues that Rousseau introduces perfectibility in order to avoid the divisive issue of a dualistic metaphysics (265). However, Rousseau's use of the perfectibility argument does not imply that he necessarily rejected the possibility of free will. Strauss argues that, on

the contrary, the advantage of the introduction of this new concept is that it helps Rousseau avoid the issue altogether. Williams's discussion therefore misses the point. Strauss would agree that Rousseau argues for free will, but it is Rousseau's stipulation of man as a "free agent," not the discussion of free will, that provides the clue to his intention.

Finally, Williams is led to ignore the autobiographical works of Rousseau and especially the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* as examples of Rousseau's concern with the sentiment of existence. Williams presents Rousseau as providing a feasible solution to the problem posed in the first and second *Discourses*. The *Emile* and the *Social Contract* open the way to a political society that can overcome the ancient abuses of the church and the wealthy. Yet Rousseau never suggested that he would be happy living in such a society. Williams criticizes Strauss for saying that Rousseau "lost the only potential source of objective standards—nature" (104). Yet Strauss does not make this argument in "Three Waves of Modernity," and in *Natural Right and History* he argued that "in the name of nature, Rousseau questioned not only philosophy but the city and virtue as well" (263). The difficulty is rather to explain why the general will is simultaneously based on nature and opposed to it.

In *Rousseau on Philosophy, Morality, and Religion*, Christopher Kelly brings together most of Rousseau's essays pertinent to the questions raised by Williams. As the title promises, Kelly unites Rousseau's works on these themes, such as the *Letter to Voltaire*, the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, and the *Preface to Narcissus*. It understandably leaves out the first and second *Discourses* and the Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar, which even a casual reader of Rousseau already owns. This edition's convenient and affordable format appeals especially to the intermediate student who wants to advance his studies beyond those major works. One particular highlight of the volume is to make the important *Moral Letters* easily available in English for the first time. It is, therefore, a volume well suited to providing the resources needed to engage Williams's claims.

The starting point must be Rousseau's *Letter to Voltaire*, for, as Victor Gourevitch argues, "the *Letter to Voltaire* is Rousseau's most authoritative discussion of religious issues."⁴ Williams uses the *Letter to Voltaire* to support his arguments four times (51–52, 64, 66, and 72n; in the

⁴ Victor Gourevitch, "The Religious Thought," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rousseau*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 194.

index, the long quote from the letter on p. 64 is missing). First, Williams uses the *Letter* to argue that Rousseau endorsed Leibniz's argument that "all is well"; second, as an example of an appeal to inner sentiment; third, for proof of Rousseau's faith in God; and, finally, to support Rousseau's belief in the immortality of the soul. Therefore, almost all of Williams's arguments for Rousseau's Platonism are supported with references to the *Letter to Voltaire*.

However, does the *Letter to Voltaire* support Williams's claims? First, Williams suggests that Rousseau simply endorses Leibniz's argument that "all is well." While Rousseau does argue that all is well, to grasp what he means by this one should turn to the opening sentence of the *Emile* and recall that "everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man."⁵ Contrary to Leibniz, Rousseau allows for human action to improve the state of man, but—contrary to Voltaire and in agreement with Leibniz—within the boundaries set by nature. Williams proceeds too quickly from Rousseau's explicit endorsement of Leibniz and Pope to the conclusion that there are no differences between their respective arguments (see, for example, Rousseau's explicit praise of Voltaire for improving upon Pope [Kelly, 56]).

Furthermore, Williams highlights the passages in the *Letter* where Rousseau endorses the sentiment of existence (Kelly, 58; see also 52). For Rousseau, the sentiment of existence applies not only to a short moment in time, but is in effect a hope for personal immortality. As the body certainly is mortal, the soul has to be immortal. The immortal soul in turn implies personal divine providence. Finally, personal divine providence implies the existence of God. If Rousseau had stopped here, then Williams's interpretation of Rousseau as a Platonist would be accurate. However, Rousseau also argues that none of his arguments is free from rational doubt. In other words, Rousseau cannot scientifically prove to Voltaire that God exists, that the soul is immortal, or that human beings have free will. Rousseau himself considers the pros and cons and decides that "a thousand subjects of preference pull me from the most consoling side and join the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason." In other words, Rousseau's arguments are based on a "proof of sentiment" or "a prejudice" (Kelly, 58–59).

Without conclusive proof for or against materialism, the question remains what propelled Rousseau to take his position. In its stead, Rousseau says that for him the standard is "that there is some inhumanity in

⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 37.

troubling peaceful souls, and in afflicting men to no purpose, when what one wishes to teach them is neither certain nor useful” (Kelly, 60). In the *Letter to Voltaire*, Rousseau rejects Voltaire’s pessimism on the grounds of his defense of ordinary folks and their common sense. Rousseau agrees with Voltaire’s supposed belief in God; but rather than draw Voltaire’s consequence of a human rebellion against nature, Rousseau opts for the existence of a natural standard to which human beings must adhere.

Williams’s argument becomes problematic at this point because the main conflict should be between materialists and Platonists. However, the debate between Voltaire and Rousseau suggests that the conflict is rather between two different concepts of nature. Only if the understanding of nature is at stake does it make sense to oppose Voltaire and the materialists—who argue that nature should be subjected to human will—to Rousseau and other believers who argue that nature or God provides a standard and limit for human action. An alliance between Rousseau and believers appears at this point, but it does not go beyond their mutual opposition to Voltaire and the materialists. This dimension of the debate, however, does not emerge from Williams’s portrayal.

Yet uniting Rousseau with Christians such as Malebranche or Lamy under the heading of Platonism obscures the fundamental differences that separate them. For example, Rousseau rejects divine punishment (Kelly, 58), resurrection, and the trinity. One wonders, therefore, whether the category of Platonism is based on an appropriate first principle. Furthermore, Williams does not discuss the *Letter to Voltaire*’s deleted paragraph in which Rousseau doubts even the existence of God.⁶ While it is not necessary to give a deleted paragraph the full weight of the published parts, it still would have deserved a discussion.

Despite my critique of Williams’s book, I consider it one of the best books on Rousseau to appear in recent years. Its main argument, that Rousseau tried to recreate Platonic political theology, provides a serious alternative to the currently dominant interpretations of Rousseau. Read together with Christopher Kelly’s edited volume on Rousseau’s thought on philosophy, morality, and religion, and maybe the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, it could serve as a dialectical introduction to the heart of Rousseau’s political philosophy.

⁶ See Gourevitch, “Religious Thought,” 211.

William H. F. Altman, *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism*. With a foreword by Michael Zank. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011, xix + 589 pp., \$90.

**“With a Friend Like This”;
or,
How to Begin to Read William H. F. Altman**

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Having attended a remarkable performance of [Schoenberg’s] *Moses and Aaron* in Düsseldorf, I couldn’t help wondering how they managed to learn it and whether it was worth all the effort.
—Sviatoslav Richter

The above epigram signals the challenge awaiting most readers of William H. F. Altman’s *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism*. Mammoth in size, prodigious in intellectual resources, and single-minded in purpose, Altman’s text is initially as intimidating as its subject is interesting and important. While I am not in agreement with Altman’s interpretation of Strauss, my aim is to suggest why, and in which way, one might wish to read his book.

Michael Zank and Peter Minowitz have compared Altman’s project, not without reason, to those of Myles Burnyeat, Shadia Drury, Nicho-

las Xenos, and Anne Norton (xii).¹ This comparison needs qualification for three reasons. First, Burnyeat, Drury, Xenos, and Norton made less use of the primary resources than Altman does. Second, with the possible exception of Burnyeat, the aforementioned authors were primarily concerned with the reception of Strauss's thought in American academic and political contexts. Finally, none of the aforementioned authors goes to great lengths to connect Strauss's writing and its American influence back to its inception in Weimar Germany. In so doing, Altman has created a book-length narrative that (from the point of view of Strauss critics) is *sui generis*.

What is the reader to make of a book that traverses the forms of historical account, biography, textual exegesis, legal brief, apologetics, religious testimony, and manifesto? If it is viewed, from the outset, as a philosophical argument, the reader may mirror Maimonides's dismay after reading the *Mutakallimun*: "every argument deemed to be a demonstration...is accompanied by doubts and is not a cogent demonstration except among those who do not know the difference between demonstration, dialectics, and sophistic argument."² To read it as such, however, would be to miss Altman's point almost entirely; as he tells the reader in his preface, his book is largely a polemic against Strauss and his school (xxi). Michael Zank, in his foreword, expands: "The vigorous attack launched on Strauss in this book is to deal a decisive blow to a major enemy of liberal democracy and of the humanizing faith on which it rests. No holds are barred. In the world of the spirit, one of the major weapons is naming. Altman calls Strauss 'the German Stranger'"(xiii). It is simply not Altman's objective to provide a reasoned presentation of both sides of "*der Fall Strauss*" (521). Rather, in taking up battle against Enemies, Altman self-consciously takes a page from their book of tactics. This suggests what Altman never ceases to make clear in *The German Stranger*: Strauss, like his intellectual coconspirator Carl Schmitt, operates according to the friend/enemy distinction; in doing battle against evil, one inevitably (if momentarily) fights on enemy turf: "how do you fight Carl Schmitt without proving him right? There it stands: Schmitt and Strauss are necessarily my Enemies. And thus my writing this book requires embracing their 'logic of the political.' So be it: the very fact that the Nazis cold-bloodedly assumed that liberal democrats would never fight *warms my blood*" (524).

¹ Peter Minowitz, "What Was Leo Strauss?," *Perspectives on Political Science* 40, no. 4 (October 2011): 218–26.

² Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 1:180.

Goodness—these are indeed fighting words! And yet, for all the saber-rattling, Altman remains something of a happy warrior. It is difficult not to find his persona compelling (or at least intriguing). Altman is a Latin teacher at a public high school—he is therefore (almost by definition) fighting the good fight of educating the youth. Additionally, he understands his philosophical compulsions to be of a piece with his teaching responsibilities and his political commitments. I have not yet read his 500-plus-page book on Plato (also with Lexington Books—the first of a projected trilogy), but there is enough discussion at the end of *The German Stranger*, as well as in his published articles, to bear this general claim out: he orders the Platonic dialogues not chronologically but rather pedagogically in order to show readers the value of Socrates’s return to the Cave with the purpose of educating the citizens about the good.³ That good, for Altman’s Plato, is bound up with “the dualism of mind and body as taught by Plato from *Alcibiades Major* straight through to *Phaedo* [and] makes *Crito* the classical *fons et origo* of the separation of Church and State: it is merely the body of Socrates that will remain in Athens, in obedience to her laws; his soul will be justly judged in a higher court” (477–78). That Socrates’s soul will be judged in said “higher court” cannot but suggest parallels with scripture-based religion (which parallels are wholly and explicitly confirmed by Altman). Put differently, it is the confluence of biblical wisdom and Greek philosophy, rather than their dialectical tension, that serves as the basis for all things noble in Western civilization (e.g., the separation of church and state [27]). This confluence, it might be said, is the essentially unpolemical “positive” content of Altman’s reflections (xxi). He is at his most joyful when he is discussing it.

But *The German Stranger* does not have this content as its center of gravity. Instead, it is a sharp indictment of Strauss’s attempts at destroying this noble confluence. In fact, for Altman, Strauss is merely a special case of a spiritual sickness characteristic of (most) early twentieth-century German intellectuals. Hence, Altman responds in kind: “We provided most of them refuge, published their books, gave them our best young minds to teach and mold, trusting that they would honor our liberal and humanitarian principles; at the very least, we underestimated the demoralizing power and corrupting influence of the anti-Weimar *Zeitgeist*. Schooled by this error, we must now debate the degree to which they betrayed our trust before building any further on the intellectual foundations they offered us in return. But

³ William H. F. Altman, “Reading Order and Authenticity: The Place of *Theages* and *Cleitophon* in Platonic Pedagogy,” *Plato: The Electronic Journal of the International Plato Society* 11 (2011): 2, 41.

the first step toward doing so is an unblinking recognition of the intellectual impetus behind National Socialism's holy war against Israel's God.²⁴ By indicting the majority of German thinkers as he does, Altman inoculates his critique of Strauss against any purported similarity with other figures—they are all tainted. It may be that the relatively uncontroversial Walter Benjamin is the “Weimar intellectual *du jour*,”²⁵ but this no more helps Strauss than a person addicted to Merlot can help one addicted to Gentleman Jack; they are fruits of the same vine (as it were).

Which vine do these trendy German intellectuals come from? One that also gave rise to Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger (with its roots steeped in Jacobi and Nietzsche): atheistic nihilism. The only difference between Strauss and the other branches is that Strauss learned—en route from Germany to America—how to conceal his atheism from his American audience so that his project of undermining the biblical-Platonic foundation of Western (specifically American) democracy would go all but unnoticed. Were this all, however, Strauss would presumably be no more problematic than Foucault, Derrida, or any other fashionable (and decadent?) European intellectual. For Altman, Strauss was an ideal student of German antidemocratic thought insofar as he understood the consequences of atheistic nihilism and actively worked on behalf of them. These consequences amount to nothing less than articulating (for those in the know) a philosophically coherent form of life based on self-divinization and the accumulation of power (all the while leaving the masses clueless as to their true intent). Put differently, Strauss (on Altman's account) has imported an intellectual strain of National Socialism into American intellectual and political life. Altman's Strauss (i.e., the “German Stranger”) has done to America what Strauss's Athenian Stranger (from Plato's *Laws*, on which text Strauss wrote one of his last books) ostensibly did to Crete—he tried to undermine the religious foundations of a polity. Hence, “With a friend like this, who needs enemies?” (352).

“But wait,” I hear the reader exclaim, “Strauss couldn't have been a National Socialist! Strauss was...Jewish!” Even if one grants (as I do) that Strauss rejected Jewish *belief* in favor of “citizenship in Athens,” this question still has purchase. In fact, although Altman fights against Strauss's Judaism at any level (other than birth), he actually provides materials as to Strauss's deep and abiding knowledge of Judaism, which aids the

⁴ William H. F. Altman, “Disturbing Proximity,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 101, no. 2 (2011): 308.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 307.

force and urgency of this question. In a letter to Jacob Klein (December 12, 1938), Strauss notes that “there exists no ‘earlier and later’ in Plato’s writings” (20n84). Given that the formulation of this statement mirrors Rashi’s commentary (originally from the Babylonian Talmud) on Exodus 31:18 (i.e., there is no “earlier” or “later” in the Torah), one might reasonably conclude that Strauss is (even at a relatively early period in his career) attempting to think the relation between Athens and Jerusalem. Altman reads this simply as indicating that several of Strauss’s “important insights about Plato arise simultaneously” (20). Why does Altman take this route?

For Altman, Strauss’s “close relation to Judaism” is exactly the pretense Strauss *wants* the reader to believe. If Strauss had not learned the art of writing between the lines as well as he had, this claim would not have the purchase that, for Altman, it does. But Strauss is nothing if not a careful reader and writer. As such, he knows how to conceal his true intentions in the interstices of respectable-sounding words in order to pacify his less careful readers (presumably like myself). Strauss used his Orthodox upbringing and Zionist participation in Blau-Weiss to conceal the fact that he viewed liberalism as a secularized form of *Verjudung* (“Jewification”) which needed to be destroyed. Hence, Strauss’s relation to Judaism is a cover that hides his extreme anti-Jewish views. At this point, the reader might ask: “*Really?* What about Strauss’s close study with the Torah scholar Nehama Leibowitz in which she taught him Saadia Gaon in exchange for his teaching her the *Gorgias* in Greek (all this occurring in Julius Guttman’s 1924–25 Berlin seminar on Maimonides)?”⁶ I anticipate Altman’s response: “It’s a clever disguise.” *Reader*: “And Hans Jonas’s account of Strauss’s guilt over not being a believer?”⁷ *Altman*: “Proves nothing. Jonas was ‘on the vine’ as well.” *Reader*: “What about Strauss’s statement (in the 1965 preface to his Spinoza book) to the effect that ‘the founding of modern Israel was “a blessing for all Jews everywhere”’?”⁸ *Altman*: “The statement is ironic.” *Reader*: “And Strauss’s 1957 letter to the editor of the *National Review* criticizing their anti-Israel posture?”⁹ *Altman*: “Don’t get taken in by Strauss’s public persona.” *Reader*:

⁶ See Alan Udoff, “On Leo Strauss: An Introductory Account,” in *Leo Strauss’s Thought: Toward a Critical Engagement*, ed. Alan Udoff (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1991), 26–27n63.

⁷ Hans Jonas, *Memoirs*, ed. Christian Weise, trans. Krishna Winston (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 49.

⁸ Minowitz, “What Was Leo Strauss?,” 225n44.

⁹ Leo Strauss, “Letter to the Editor: The State of Israel,” in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 413–14.

“But Strauss requested to have Psalm 114 (dealing with, of all things, religious miracles) read at his funeral!”¹⁰ *Altman*: “Mere concealment for posterity.” Etc.

Rest assured, however, Altman is not claiming that Strauss desired anything like immediate regime change in his newfound residence: “I see the German Stranger’s project as primarily destructive; it was the theoretical foundation of Liberal Democracy in general that he sought to annihilate, not some new form of totalitarianism that he aimed to erect” (26). Even this modified claim raises questions. *Reader*: “Are we to make nothing of Strauss’s critical 1954 mention of Joseph McCarthy?”¹¹ *Altman*: “How do we *know* that he was *really* being critical?” In short, Altman’s project—taking a page from (his construal of) Strauss’s playbook—seeks to combat and destroy Strauss’s reputation and corrupting influence. Hence, the polemical nature of Altman’s book.

My tone thus far has been, admittedly, more polemical than I would like it to be (or than I am used to writing). This is not because I believe Altman’s work is fit for mockery—far from it. He writes on interesting topics and brings a wealth of hitherto untranslated primary materials (in the form of early essays and correspondence) from Strauss’s *Gesammelte Schriften* (edited by Heinrich Meier) to the reader’s view; this occurs both in the body of the text and in the extensive footnotes (which contain copious references to, and passages from, these early texts; interestingly, Altman makes no use of Strauss’s later lecture courses). Moreover, Altman presents his views with passion and erudition that cannot be mistaken for the neutrality that Strauss so often criticized. Were I to treat this case as an instance of philosophy, I would be doing a manifest disservice to Altman’s text. Altman knows very well that his project strongly aims at persuasion. If I have not misunderstood him, Altman’s argument is, in fact, premised on two indemonstrable assumptions: (1) atheism implies or leads to nihilism and (2) such atheistic nihilism leads to (views expressed by movements such as) National Socialism. To underappreciate this essential aspect of his work is to miss how his claims function in terms of the “whole picture” he is trying to construct. As a result, Benjamin Wurgaft’s perceptive comment that Altman’s correlations between Strauss and Heidegger (and Strauss and Schmitt) do not constitute causal connections between them is simultaneously absolutely correct and

¹⁰ Udoff, “On Leo Strauss,” 14.

¹¹ Robert Howse, “From Legitimacy to Dictatorship—and Back Again: Leo Strauss’s Critique of the Anti-Liberalism of Carl Schmitt,” in *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt’s Critique of Liberalism*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 74.

something of a side issue.¹² Altman is not attempting to create a logical argument but rather (as Wurgaft recognizes) to prosecute a case. In painting a picture of Strauss's intellectual trajectory, Altman aims to discredit Strauss as a friend of liberal democracy, Judaism, and philosophy (as normally understood). While the topic is dire, dour, and in my view misguided, Altman's virtuoso performance makes it impossible for readers to come away from his book intellectually unprovoked. This becomes clearer when the book is viewed in its properly polemical light. David Janssens holds that "while [Altman's] critical readings yield many interesting insights, the framework within which they are presented—the apocalyptic final battle between atheist nihilism and combative Christian Platonism for the soul of the Republic—finally risks turning scholarly exposure and autobiography into epic poetry."¹³ This is not wholly a bad thing. As a piece of scholarship, its argument is extremely problematic—but *what a poem!* Given that the book is as much about Altman's journey along the Straussian path as it is about Strauss, one might refer to it as the *Altmaniad*. And insofar as his book emphasizes the interpretive principle that "[Strauss] counts on the fact that you will not believe me" (31), Altman's polemical intent is utterly clear.

Chapter 1 deals with Strauss's initial work on Jacobi (in his dissertation under Ernst Cassirer). Altman's claim is that Jacobi was (unbeknownst to many scholars of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German thought) an exoteric writer who (under the guise of Christianity) was really a self-divinizing atheist. The claim that Jacobi was an exoteric writer is very interesting and, if true, could be the basis for an entirely new narrative about the reception of Spinoza in German Idealism. The current narrative goes something like this: prior to Jacobi's texts on Spinoza, the Dutch Jewish thinker was appreciated as a social-political philosopher (by folks like Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine) whose major text was the *Theological-Political Treatise*. However, "the biased manner in which Jacobi would fashion his reading of Spinoza as a representative of a metaphysical position [based on the *Ethics*] also led to the eclipse of interpretations of Spinoza that not only preceded Jacobi but made his own reading possible."¹⁴ This reading would

¹² Benjamin Aldes Wurgaft, review of *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism*, by William H. F. Altman, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews: An Electronic Journal*, June 6, 2011, <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24717-the-german-stranger-leo-strauss-and-national-socialism/>.

¹³ David Janssens, review of *The German Stranger: Leo Strauss and National Socialism*, by William F. Altman, <http://www.case.edu/artsci/jdst/reviews/German.htm>.

¹⁴ Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 12.

be characterized by a Spinoza who was either an atheist or a pantheist (both metaphysical categories) and it became the dominant reading for Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. What obsessed these thinkers above all (as that which needed to be overcome) was Spinoza's substance-monism. If Altman is correct—if Jacobi's Christianity was simply an exoteric cover for atheism—then his bequeathing the metaphysical atheist Spinoza (instead of the social-political Spinoza who emphasizes the separation of church and state as well as a civic religion based on justice and charity) to German Idealism might have to be understood differently. Rather than illuminating Jacobi's (and, thus, German Idealism's) concern over Spinoza's *atheism*, this new reading might suggest that *Jacobi wanted to conceal Spinoza's attempt at providing a rational basis for religion in the public sphere*. This would truly be a novel approach to the German Enlightenment. Unfortunately, this lies somewhat outside the purview of Altman's project. Altman is concerned to show that Strauss (in sharp contrast to his claim that philosophers did not write exoterically after Lessing) knew of Jacobi's exotericism, saw his atheistic nihilism, and (himself not being a believer) followed Jacobi's path. Since Altman's Jacobi maintained an atheistic nihilism in which all important matters were simply the product of an irrational and self-serving "decision," Altman holds Jacobi to be the first proponent of "decisionism."

Were the reader to ask how this atheistic nihilism is compatible with Strauss's early activities in the political Zionist movement Blau-Weiss, Altman stands ready in chapter 2. Having rejected his Orthodox Jewish upbringing after studying Nietzsche, and having learned (from Jacobi) the art of exoteric writing with which to mask atheistic (i.e., self-deifying) nihilism, Strauss adopts a political stance that fits his views. Blau-Weiss, on Altman's account, was the most right-wing and antidemocratic of the political Zionist movements and thus (for Altman) fit Strauss's needs perfectly. During his time in Blau-Weiss, Strauss wrote essays that attacked cultural Zionism (the view that Jews did not need a nation-state so much as a cultural homeland) by means of "double envelopment." At times, Strauss attacked cultural Zionism for its connections to liberalism, while at other times he attacked it for its proximity to Orthodoxy. Given that Altman's Strauss was a self-deifying nihilist, no concern about consistency in rhetoric was necessary. Moreover, Altman's Strauss learned from the history of German antisemitism to exploit the rhetoric of *Verjudung* to his own advantage—i.e., liberalism, Orthodoxy, even Christianity were at bottom secularized forms of "Jewification." Altman's Strauss never comes out and says as much (except, of course, "between the lines"). Ultimately, then, Strauss wished to rid the world

of secularized Judaism (even if he did not call for the elimination of actual Jews). The reader might wonder about Strauss's 1962 Chicago Hillel lecture "Why We Remain Jews" at this point: *Reader*: "How could Strauss simply have disdain for cultural Zionism when the very premise of the lecture's title is a reference to Ahad Ha-'Am's essay 'Slavery in Freedom' (mentioned by Strauss in the question-and-answer period as an essay 'worthy of being read by everyone interested in this [topic]'),¹⁵ which specifically asks the question as to why we remain Jews?¹⁶ Moreover, how could Strauss want to rid society of Judaism when the answer he gives to the lecture's titular question is that it is impossible to run away from our Jewish origins and remain 'honorable men'?"¹⁷ *Altman*: "That's *exactly* what Strauss wants you to think." Etc.

Chapters 3 and 4 treat, respectively, Strauss's engagements with the thought of Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. That these two thinkers embraced (for differing lengths of time) National Socialism is common knowledge. That many Weimar intellectuals (Jewish and Gentile) were attracted to them is also well known. Finally, that many Weimar intellectuals—Strauss included (see his May 19, 1933 letter to Karl Löwith)—flirted with far-right-wing ideas in their attempts to pose a credible critique of the Weimar government is acknowledged. Altman's claim is not simply that Strauss knew the work of Heidegger and Schmitt or even that he appreciated it. His claim is that Strauss took over the projects of Heidegger and Schmitt—"two cowardly, utterly repulsive, lapel-pin-wearing Nazi philosophers"—and "did what no mere Nazi could have done or even dreamed of doing: he boldly brought his anti-liberal project to the United States" (26). If Heidegger and Schmitt amount to the century's most extreme German proponents of atheistic nihilistic decisionism, Strauss (in the guise of the German Stranger) smuggled the virus into America. The claim that Heidegger and Schmitt were atheists is open to question: Heidegger rejected his Catholic upbringing in its doctrinal form, never in its cultural manifestation. It is hard to imagine Schmitt—the author of *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* and the political theorist of the *Katechon* ("restrainer") of 2 Thessalonians—as being an atheist without qualification.

That qualification comes in chapter 5, in Altman's discussion of "secularization." Altman's usage of this concept can best be illuminated by

¹⁵ Leo Strauss, "Why We Remain Jews," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 341.

¹⁶ Ahad Ha-'Am, *Selected Essays of Ahad Ha-'Am*, ed. Leon Simon (New York: Atheneum Press, 1962), 187, 194.

¹⁷ Strauss, "Why We Remain Jews," 317, 329.

reference to Jacob Klein's June 19–20, 1934 letter to Strauss in which he refers to National Socialism as “‘perverted Judaism,’ nothing else: Judaism without God” (257). Strauss's response (June 23, 1934): “That National Socialism is perverted Judaism I would admit. But only in the same sense in which I admit this description for the whole modern world” (263). Altman's commentary on both: “What Strauss means by ‘perverted Judaism’ is the opposite of what Klein means by it: Klein assumes that there is an un-perverted core of Judaism *based on God*. For Klein, this core becomes *perverted* when it becomes National Socialism, i.e., Judaism *without God*. Strauss, who refuses even to mention God, is naturally silent about this formulation. For Strauss, Klein's un-perverted Judaism, thanks to its dependence on ‘God,’ is *already* ‘perverted Judaism’” (264). Step one in Strauss's internalization of Jacobian atheistic-nihilistic decisionism occurs as a result of Strauss's rejection of God. Step two occurs in what Altman takes to be Strauss's affirmation of self-deification in place of religion: “National Socialism is only the last word in ‘secularization,’ i.e., the belief in the harmony that produces itself from itself or the reign of passion and feeling or in the sovereignty of the *Volk*” (264). National Socialism, as Judaism without God, needs nothing outside of its pure decisionistic willing of its own existence (by its own *Volk*) in order to legitimate itself. That Heidegger and Schmitt were National Socialists means, according to Altman's definition of “secularization,” that they are atheists and thus advocates of self-deifying power. The same applies to Altman's Strauss: “Secularization,” Strauss holds, “means...the preservation of thoughts, feelings, or habits of biblical origin after the loss or atrophy of biblical faith” (267). Such usage of religious categories for a nonreligious end amounts (for Altman) to self-deification. If National Socialism is “the last word in ‘secularization,’” then it (along with modernity) is the logical response to *Verjudung*.

The Strauss that Altman serves his reader is not only a radically modern Strauss who understands nihilism, but in fact one who embraces and desires nihilism. Chapters 6 and 7 give Altman's first presentation of the “American Strauss” (the German Stranger, properly speaking) through readings of his lecture “German Nihilism” and *Natural Right and History*. Given that Altman's overall narrative is doubtless familiar to readers at this point, I will point to what I take to be the unique moment in his chapters: his discussion of National Socialism. In his introduction, Altman informs the reader that he will oppose Strauss's definition of National Socialism (from his 1965 preface to his Spinoza book) as “ha[ving] no other clear principle except murderous hatred of the Jews” (10). Altman tells his readers that he will not define National Socialism for them but “will rely on them to

recognize National Socialism when they see it” (8). Fair enough. The problem is that he continually breaks this promise in order to combat what he takes to be Strauss’s pivot away from the real issue: “there is one guideline, subject to later revision, that I will set out at the beginning: anti-Semitism, and *a fortiori* eliminationist anti-Semitism, is neither a necessary nor a sufficient component of Nazism. It is what Hitler sought—tyrannical power over his nation—and not the specific internal enemies that he targeted in order to obtain power that appears to be the crucial matter” (9).

I cannot recall a “later revision” to this initial observation. Instead, Altman appears to fortify it in his reading of “German Nihilism.” Strauss’s 1941 New School lecture was ostensibly given as a report on the former Nazi Hermann Rauschning’s recently published book *The Revolution of Nihilism: A Warning to the West*. The reader discovers that Altman’s understanding of National Socialism coincides with Rauschning’s description (with which, according to Altman, Strauss’s understanding coincides—albeit in an inverted form). Thus Rauschning: “A sharp distinction must be drawn in National Socialism between this genuinely irrational revolutionary passion, affecting not only the mass of followers but the leaders themselves, and the very deliberate, utterly cold and calculating pursuit of power and dominance by the controlling group....The doctrine was meant for the masses. It is not part of the real motive forces of the revolution. It is an instrument for the control of the masses. The élite, the leaders, stand above the doctrine. They make use of it for the furtherance of their purposes” (306). Altman does not question whether Rauschning’s description is exoteric, self-serving (having been a former Nazi, it is not unthinkable that it might be); he simply accepts it as confirmation of his own, earlier stated views. It is the principle of pure decisionist nihilism (atheist, self-deifying, etc.) that guides the upper echelons of National Socialism. For Altman, Strauss shows his recognition of this by giving it a philosophical articulation later in his lecture: “A new reality is in the making; it is transforming the whole world; in the meantime there is: nothing, but—a fertile nothing” (325). National Socialism, that “Judaism without God,” stands opposed to liberal democracy (with its basis in Plato and scripture). When confronted with National Socialism, Altman’s Strauss sees, understands, and approves.

Even beyond the question whether or not Strauss’s ambiguities constitute affirmation of problematic views, something needs to be said about the Altman/Rauschning definition of National Socialism. It is clear that the Nazis opposed liberal democracy. It is clear that there was a

hierarchy composed of élites and underlings. But this definition can also encompass Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, and any other tyrannical regime. To be sure, antisemitism is prevalent in places other than Nazi Germany. Moreover, I agree with Altman's contention that "it *can* happen here." None of this changes the fact that Strauss was right in his statement of 1965: the only unique and distinguishing feature of National Socialism was its genocidal mission. Or was Saul Friedländer equally "on the vine" with the other German intellectuals when he concluded that, given the increase in deportations and the initiations of death marches in 1944–45 (the very moment when Germany was losing the war), "nothing seemed to have changed in Hitler's innermost ideological landscape from his earliest forays into political propaganda in 1919 to the last months of his crusade against 'the Jew'"?¹⁸

Also puzzling is Altman's descriptions of "decisionism." As he uses it, the term seems to be a synonym for irrational nihilistic faith in one's will-to-self-deification. To read this back into Jacobi is anachronistic; one can make a case that Heidegger's conception of the "leap" (in his work from the 1930s) owes its formulation to Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" (but Altman does not explore this view for perhaps obvious reasons); the term was coined to describe Schmitt's view that politics cannot simply be legitimated by norms (in a Kantian or post-Kantian sense), since those norms are themselves legitimated within the context of concrete political existence. Let us see what Schmitt actually says. In his 1928 *Constitutional Theory*, Schmitt makes the following statement about constitutional laws and their grounding legitimacy: "For its validity as a normative regulation, every statute, even constitutional law, ultimately needs a political *decision* that is prior to it, a decision that is reached by a power or authority that exists politically. Every existing political unity has its value and its 'right to existence' not in the rightness or usefulness of norms, but rather in its existence....Prior to the establishment of any norm, there is a fundamental *political decision by the bearer of the constitution-making power*. In a democracy, more specifically, this is a decision by the people; in a genuine monarchy, it is a decision by the monarch."¹⁹ That Schmitt eventually decided to apply this conception to National Socialism is a matter of historical fact. There is, however, nothing in this description that necessitates an irrational self-deifying nihilism. All it says is that norms are accepted (and, thus, legitimated) *as norms* by

¹⁸ Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933–1945*, abridged ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 415.

¹⁹ Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, ed. Jeffrey Seitzer (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 76–77.

a decision (be it democratic or monarchical). Arguably, this is exactly how norms function in the United States. To say, as Altman presumably wants to, that the United States is grounded in norms that ultimately have religious foundations is *prima facie* in need of further proof insofar as it has never ceased to be a subject of contention. In fact, one might argue that Schmitt's adoption of National Socialism was due more to his particular conception of "sovereignty" than to his conception of "decision."²⁰ But this is all beside the point for Altman, given his either/or dichotomy regarding the grounds of politics (i.e., either the actual deity or self-deification).

Even if the reader concedes Altman's point that a decision always implies faith—either faith in God or nihilistic "faithless faith"—it is difficult to see how Strauss can be accused of this. While he does say that Athens and Jerusalem cannot refute one another (the adoption of either one being a product of our choice—i.e., decision),²¹ his "Athenian citizenship" cannot be said to be grounded in an *irrational* decision (it is, in fact, no more or less rational—and no more or less a decision—than is Altman's). The philosopher's desire is to understand or comprehend the whole. If this desire is not completely rational (it is, after all, a desire), it is not for that reason irrational since its arc would find rest in an (albeit finite) understanding/comprehension of the whole. If there is less security in Athens than in Jerusalem, it is not by virtue of its being nihilistic but, rather, in its clarity about the limits of the human. At this point, I am fairly certain that Altman would consider my reading to be (at best) that of a gentleman.

I will present Altman's final two chapters (8 and 9) in reverse order only because doing so will allow me to briefly contrast Altman's approach to the subject matter of his eighth chapter—Strauss's 1954–55 Hebrew University lectures which comprise "What Is Political Philosophy?"—with my own (in a manner similar to Altman's juxtaposition of his own reading of Plato with Strauss's in chapter 9). That Altman takes extreme issue with Strauss's late interpretations of the ancients should not come as a surprise to his readers. Yet he does, for all this, credit Strauss with making his own interpretive stance possible: "Strauss's willingness to read Plato as an exoteric writer has made it possible to truly read the dialogues as they should be read once again even though he slavishly employs the technique only to find 'the evil doctrine' hidden between the lines. Despite all this, a post-Straussian

²⁰ Paul W. Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press), 9.

²¹ Leo Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 380.

awareness of exotericism will eventually revolutionize our understanding of the Classics” (463). What is the “evil doctrine” that Strauss finds in Plato? For Altman it consisted in “divorcing Plato from Platonism—and by extension from ‘Jerusalem’” (462). In transforming the forms into fundamental problems, in separating Plato from the Bible, and in showing the primacy of the political for the ancients, Altman’s Strauss brings his atheistic-nihilistic decisionism full circle from Jacobi through Heidegger and back to the Greeks. Altman sets this reading in contradistinction to his own approach: “The Plato I found was a Liberal Democrat who used the myth of an authoritarian city to persuade some boys—and I never for a moment doubted that I was one of them—to go back down into the Cave in order to prevent tyrants from destroying the freedom to philosophize that only Democracy makes possible” (399–400). For Altman, Plato’s writing between the lines is always already indexed to a (fully comprehended?) form of the good. The fact that the good is evident in the city (rather than outside of it) means, for Altman, that civic education is our primary (and never-ending) responsibility. This concern is laudable. But his critique of Strauss as “separating Plato from Platonism” is worthy of mention for a different reason. Does Altman wish to suggest that tradition—and the sectarianism and scholasticism to which it has always given rise—is good in an unqualified sense? If so, why does Altman oppose those aspects of tradition with which he disagrees? Is there not rather some sense in the project of recovering original insight (irrespective of which figures one takes to “lead the way back”)?

The fact that the preceding question is (in a modern context) inevitably linked to the figures of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Strauss is not lost on Altman. In fact, his reading of “What Is Political Philosophy?” is premised on the belief that despite Strauss’s talk about retrieving classical political philosophy, it is Heidegger who is the almost completely “unnamed presence” (423) throughout the lectures. That Altman’s Strauss was now finally able to import his evil atheism (nihilism, decisionism, etc.) to *Jerusalem* qualifies it (on Altman’s terms) as Strauss’s “masterpiece” (404). Although Heidegger is mentioned only once in the lectures, “Strauss’s return to classical political philosophy is the *political* equivalent...of Heidegger’s deconstruction of *the ontological tradition*. The attempt to gain ‘a horizon beyond,’ so central to Strauss’s radical critique of liberalism, is in fact a political application of Heidegger’s far more sweeping approach” (411). And for evidence? “The most revealing instance of Heidegger’s concealed influence on the crucial middle section is visible in the discussion of the anti-democratic orientation of ‘the Classical Solution.’ For the ancients, democracy is ‘an inferior kind of regime’

because it can only be ‘government by the uneducated’” (412). Similarly, “Heidegger’s thoughtful historicism clearly gave [Strauss] a criterion for recognizing *when to seize the chance*; i.e., when there exists a good dispensation of fate in order to realize ‘the good society.’ The problem is that Heidegger was wrong: the National Socialist Revolution failed.... Although he demonstrated a poor sense of timing, Heidegger did the best ‘man’ can do in 1933. He did not await the verdict of history—as Hegel would have done or as Strauss’s Jewish background compelled *him* to do—but rather embraced the responsibility of putting his philosophy *into political action*” (419–20).

Imagine delivering this concealed Nazism to a Jewish audience; in 1954; in Israel; in “Jerusalem.” Imagine...

There is, in fact, one thinker who (gentlemanly reading notwithstanding) functions as an *actual* unnamed presence in “What Is Political Philosophy?” He is also a figure who is given precious little analysis by Altman in what is otherwise a “cast of thousands.” That thinker is Maimonides. It is unclear why Altman spends so little time on the one figure Strauss continuously read in all periods of his intellectual career. The reader is compelled to ask why Altman shies away from such analysis. In any event, the *beginnings* of a Maimonides-centered reading of Strauss’s lectures would go something like the following.

Taking Strauss’s oral communication to embody the form of a Platonic dialogue, one would understand the first paragraph of the lectures as setting the context for the whole. As it fulfills this function, I reproduce it here in full:

It is a great honor, and at the same time a challenge to accept a task of particular difficulty, to be asked to speak about political philosophy in Jerusalem. In this city, and in this land, the theme of political philosophy—“the city of righteousness, the faithful city”—has been taken more seriously than anywhere else on earth. Nowhere else has the longing for justice and the just city filled the purest hearts and the loftiest souls with such zeal as on this sacred soil. I know all too well that I am utterly unable to convey to you what in the best possible case, in the case of any man, would be no more than a faint reproduction or a weak imitation of our prophets’ vision. I shall even be compelled to lead you into a region where the dimmest recollection of that vision is on the point of vanishing altogether—where the Kingdom of God is derisively called an imagined principality—to say here nothing of the region which was never illumined by it. But while being compelled, or compelling myself, to wander far away from our sacred heritage,

or to be silent about it, I shall not for a moment forget what Jerusalem stands for.²²

Strauss is indeed delivering something controversial to the newly formed state of Israel—Athens. This is a delicate issue precisely because there are those (in any state) who wish to see politics founded on religion. As a “citizen of Athens,” Strauss cautions against “filling the purest hearts and loftiest souls” with “zeal” concerning “sacred soil.” The question throughout the lectures is: How does one issue a caution about theological-political fanaticism while simultaneously allowing the philosophically minded to understand that the Jerusalem/Athens distinction—while being the dialectically productive basis of Western civilization—has no worldly solution?

There is a barely noticeable gap between his discussion of classical political philosophy and modern political philosophies (i.e., between sections/lectures 2 and 3). The one figure who, for Strauss, *actively* confronted (and never ceased to confront) the Jerusalem/Athens distinction is missing. He is not only a figure about whom Strauss has written much, but he is also a figure on whom Strauss lectured during his year at Hebrew University (in fact, this event was big enough that the Maimonidean Yeshayahu Liebowitz acted as Strauss’s commentator).²³ However, if classical political philosophy accepts the role of chance in the actualization of the best regime,²⁴ and if Machiavelli (as the first modern political philosopher) expresses both (1) an awareness of religious fanaticism and theocracy and (2) a desire to overcome chance as a constitutive principle of regimes, the reader is compelled to ask the following question: Is there a thinker who rejects the theocratic impulse but *at the same time* resists the self-divinatory impulses of modern philosophy and preserves the classical ordering principle of nature which includes an acknowledgement of nature’s limits—i.e., of chance? I would submit that the answer to this question is Maimonides. To be sure, Strauss viewed him as a “citizen of Athens.” Moreover, to explicitly locate Maimonides as an Athenian (in that context) might not be terribly helpful for nonphilosophers who are concerned about forming (and founding) the identity of a Jewish state. On this reading, Strauss raises the issue of theocratic fanaticism as a cautionary tale for some, while indicating the insolubility of the Jerusalem/Athens distinction for others. If I am right, if Maimonides is the “silent center” of

²² Leo Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” in *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959), 9–10.

²³ I should like to thank Warren Zev Harvey for mentioning this fact to me in an email correspondence.

²⁴ Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy?,” 34.

Strauss's Jerusalem lectures—and given that Maimonides was exposed to both Athens and Jerusalem and continued to write as he did, defending both cities (i.e., as a *philosopher*)—I am compelled to raise the following question: What can it mean to be a “citizen of Athens” and be open to the challenge of Jerusalem in a manner affirming the dialectical tension that gave (and continues to give) rise to Western civilization? This is the unpolemical terminus of my polemical review of Altman's provocative polemic.

Daniel Klinghard, *The Nationalization of American Political Parties, 1880–1896*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, xii + 268 pp., \$95.00.

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The Nationalization of American Political Parties examines why at the supposed high point of American political parties (the late nineteenth century), the writings of party leaders contain “a raging debate over the need to renew party organizations in America” instead of “a ringing defense of traditional methods” (vii). In investigating the sources of party leader angst and how it changed the American party system, this book demonstrates that the ideas of party leaders were crucially important in bringing about this party system transformation. Klinghard here diverges from other scholars by arguing that the system change was “a political thing, crafted by practical politicians” rather than the result of a grand ideological shift (ix).

Klinghard’s work attempts to refute three common claims about nineteenth-century politics. First, the Jacksonian party model was not particularly representative or participatory, as it involved the use of local patronage to cultivate party loyalty rather than doing so through the implementation of effective national policies. While this organizational model offered certain advantages in the more sectionalized pre-Civil War electorate, it was ripe for change in the postwar era as increasing links and common interests were forged across states. Second, Klinghard shows that while there were undemocratic antiparty reformers, their ideologies were not implemented by party leaders. Third, McKinley’s 1896 campaign did not lead to the decline of popular politics, but was instead exemplary in its effective use of the new national party-in-the-electorate.

Klinghard agrees with the historians—contra some political scientists—that despite the trauma of the Civil War, the essential nature of

the Jacksonian party model designed by Van Buren remained in place until the 1880s. He argues that this changed between 1880 and 1896 as political party leaders saw the need to adjust their strategic approach to take advantage of the post-Civil-War-era increase in individualism and issue nationalization. They did so by paying less attention to the increasingly unrealistic assumption of Jacksonian parties that “states had definitive and unitary interests” (69), instead taking advantage of the rapid multiplication of new civic associations that “emphasized the centrality of independent judgment” (73). While this came at a cost to party loyalty, it allowed national leaders to bypass the limiting agendas of local party leaders in favor of a more unified national campaign.

Party leaders reformed the national party organization in four key ways based on lessons they learned from the experiences of the new civic associations. First, parties began using educational methods in campaigning, distributing national campaign literature directly to voters instead of leaving it to local and state party leaders to decide what issues to emphasize. These educational campaigns “abandoned the republican values of communal appeals, compromise, localism, and mobilization, emphasizing instead substantive appeals that were national in scope, appealed to voters’ interests, and questioned traditional partisan lines” (104). Second, national committees were formed to coordinate and directly run national campaigns, as parties attempted to appeal to business by incorporating their methods and leadership.

The third change involved the formation of party clubs that created “a direct relationship between the national party and the party-in-the-electorate” (99), as “the procedures for integrating new clubs into the national association...[brought] local clubs under the influence of national party leaders, breaking their members away from traditional localistic boundaries” (135). Although party clubs ultimately faded as a means of political organization, they “shaped the notion of a national party-in-the-electorate with a direct relationship with the national party organizations” (143).

The final major change in party organization involved presidential candidates getting directly involved in national campaign strategy. Klinghard demonstrates that Grover Cleveland’s trio of proactive presidential campaigns leading to three popular-vote victories were critical in effecting the change from the legislative-branch-dominated Jacksonian nominating convention to a more constitutional and popular approach. He thus agrees with David Nichols that the “modern” presidency is more of a return to the

original constitutional presidency.¹ Cleveland accomplished this new brand of political leadership by availing himself of the new civic associations, by effectively combining his veto power with public appeals, and by making use of executive messages. For example, his 1887 message to Congress focusing exclusively on the tariff issue demonstrated this new approach by “inviting public comment and giving the party-in-the-electorate reason to read the message in the privacy of their homes—it was the campaign of education applied to presidential leadership” (167). While his 1887 tariff policy was not implemented, it assured his renomination since a rejection of him would—in the public mind—have meant rejecting the party’s tariff policy.

Much as Cleveland did for the Democratic Party, William McKinley changed how Republicans saw the president’s role, as he won a triumphant victory through a strategy of directly addressing the voters. McKinley then applied this logic to the presidency itself by using his inaugural address to “bind his fellow Republicans to the results of the election, as he defined them” (230), a marked change from the Jacksonian-era Whig approach to shunning executive power and direct party leadership.

The switch to more nationalized political campaigns was no easy transition as local party organizations “were not willing to sacrifice their hard-won state and local independence simply to empower national majorities” (7). While change did occur through the initiative and flexibility of party leaders and presidential candidates who advocated for it through emphasizing practical political consideration, much of the old state and local party organization remained in place well into the twentieth century.

This dual system highlights a major contribution of this book. Klinghard is clear that he is not “disputing the value of the concept of path dependency to political science” (241), but he argues that we must “delineate between types of political institutions that are more or less susceptible to self-reinforcing developmental processes” (241–42). In short, owing to the greater turnover in party leadership, the continually shifting nature of the key political issues of the moment, and the layers of party organization, path dependence is less useful in understanding how political parties develop than it is in understanding the development of other political institutions. National Republican and Democratic party organizations moved strongly in a new direction between 1880 and 1896, yet local and state party organizations won

¹ See David Nichols, *The Myth of the Modern Presidency* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 26–27.

a number of turf battles, thereby suggesting that choices made by the party at one level did not greatly constrain party leaders at other levels. Ultimately the more representative national electoral ideal that party leaders were seeking in this era was not really achieved until presidential primaries finally gained primacy in the 1970s as the method of selecting presidential nominees. Thus a process that Klinghard argues began in 1880 took nearly a century to reach fulfillment, with many steps both forward and backward in the interim, steps that point to the limits of path-dependence analysis.

My main critique of this generally excellent work is that Klinghard provides mixed evidence for his argument that the party organizational shift produced better representation. While it did so in that it made parties more effective in passing policies with national appeal, it also increased the potential for manipulation from above as parties began to be more top-down than bottom-up organizations. Thus parties began representing national coalitions more effectively, while paying less attention than before to the concerns of smaller political communities.

Overall, *The Nationalization of American Political Parties* provides a valuable contribution by showing that national party campaigns began to supersede local party organizations as a result of the contingent political decisions of leaders as they attempted to adjust to the new environment in which state issues mattered less and in which there were more organizations with which they had to compete. Klinghard's careful documentation of the history of the move toward a more national party is exemplary. While providing a clear statement of what the book will argue at the beginning and documenting it throughout, the book's contribution could be more clearly articulated in the book's conclusion. Nevertheless, Klinghard's work on the whole demonstrates the importance of taking agency seriously in political science analysis and reminds readers that political changes that seem to be driven by structural or institutional factors often contain contingent decisions that—made differently—could have changed the course of political development in important ways. As he points out, the mixed and often conflicted development of American parties both reinforces the importance of decisions in shaping an organization's developmental path and reminds us of the continued role of individual agency throughout the process.

Johan P. Olsen, *Governing through Institution Building: Institutional Theory and Recent European Experiments in Democratic Organization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 249 pp., \$85 (hardcover).

Institutions at Issue

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Johan P. Olsen is an important figure in political science. Along with his coauthors, he has formed the leading defense against the total takeover of the discipline by economics. And he has done it in the name of institutions.

As he recalls in *Governing through Institution Building*, political science was once all about institutions. After the discipline first appeared in the late nineteenth century, political scientists typically studied the formal structures of government. Woodrow Wilson—the only political scientist to become president—wrote about Congress, the Constitution, and public administration.

But after World War II, such description came to seem no better than high-school civics or journalism. Political scientists longed to discover the actual patterns of political power, which might differ greatly from the formal structures. So instead of dissecting the institutions, they traced political influence back to social and economic forces outside government, a tendency reflecting the influence of Marxism. Even more, they analyzed politics in terms of individual voters or politicians. Once you did that, many believed, the institutions became merely the arena in which political combat occurred, and they lost all independent importance.

In recent decades, the use of game theory has driven this individualism to new levels. The “rational choice” approach, which first arose

in economics, presumes that voters and politicians act out of self-interest. They seek to maximize their own utilities, typically meaning economic advantage. To analyze politics means to write equations that specify how the pursuit of individual advantage leads to the behavior we observe. Effectively, politics becomes a branch of economics. Rational choice provoked something close to a civil war in political science, yet it still advanced. By 2007, 30 percent of articles published in the *American Political Science Review* used rational choice methods, up from 9 percent in 1968.¹

The resistance was ineffective in part because opponents felt threatened by the new methods yet made no serious argument against them. Modelers dismissed the resistance as old-fashioned fuddy-duddies who should learn more mathematics. A serious argument, however, is just what Olsen and his allies provided. In 1984, he and James G. March proclaimed a “new institutionalism.” They questioned the new orthodoxy that only individuals matter. Institutions, they argued, are not just the arena within which actors maneuver; they also shape the goals and norms of the players themselves.² In a series of books and articles since then, March, Olsen, and their allies have continued to make this case.

The new institutionalism is conservative in harking back to an older political science, yet it is radical in its own way. As Olsen notes, “The modern project is the pursuit of will, understanding, and control” (74), but in politics that goal is quixotic at both the individual and collective level. In government, individuals do not act rationally in the simple, calculating way assumed in economics. New institutionalists draw on the organization theory developed by Herbert Simon, James March, and others. That theory says that action by individuals in an organization is “bounded” by the rules that body gives them for reaching their decisions. Similarly, political actors are shaped by their institutions. They are only “boundedly rational” (13). Their behavior is less calculating than it is “rule-following” (126).

Still more radically, Olsen says, the political system cannot engage in simple rational action. We presume that in a democracy the institutions are created to achieve goals determined by the people through their representatives. But this “democratic-instrumental vision” (12) exaggerates how directly leaders can pursue change. Public institutions are not created

¹ See Lawrence M. Mead, “Scholasticism in Political Science,” *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): 459–61.

² See James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life,” *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984): 734–49.

fresh for every new decision. Policymakers face a ground already encumbered by past procedures, programs, and agencies. Any new action will interact with that institutional legacy, making outcomes indeterminate. The public is currently disillusioned with government. It yearns for some radical transformation. Usually, however, only incremental change is possible.

The new institutionalists are latter-day Burkeans. For them, policymaking is not conducted on a *tabula rasa*. Statesmen must act using the building blocks of existing structures, and they are wise to accept this. That heritage means that they never act alone. Even if they have all power formally, in practice they share it with those who occupy the existing institutions.

Olsen dramatized this in connection with bureaucracy. According to Max Weber's formal theory, bureaucracy is an exercise in collective rational action. Agencies are set up to do the will of democratic leaders as codified in law, and to optimize the details of policy where officials are left with discretion. But in practice, the people who comprise organizations are seldom optimal for the problem at hand, nor is their task clearly defined, nor are decision procedures clear. In a famous article, Olsen and coauthors demonstrated that under such conditions, group decision-making can resemble a "garbage can," or an "organized anarchy," with highly variable and irrational results.³

Rational choice modelers dismiss such arguments as insufficiently analytic. Olsen and his allies, they say, are simply describing the irrationality of government viewed from the outside. They have not driven their analysis home to the individual actors and their motivations. Had they done so, outcomes would seem less crazy and could, potentially, be improved.⁴ Olsen retorted, however, that mere description of what goes on in government is essential, the beginning of theory. To deny this reflects an "imperialist intellectual tradition," the false idea that "a single, simple theory of human action" is enough to understand actual government. A "catholic approach" that admits varying motivations, some of them shaped by institutions, is far more realistic.⁵

³ See Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1972): 1–25.

⁴ See Jonathan Bendor, Terry M. Moe, and Kenneth W. Shotts, "Recycling the Garbage Can: An Assessment of the Research Program," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (2001): 169–90.

⁵ See Johan P. Olsen, "Garbage Cans, New Institutionalism, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (2001): 191–98.

In the current book, Olsen elaborates the main themes of new institutionalist thinking in the context of the European Union. The EU is an ambitious structure for continent-wide economic policymaking to which twenty-seven countries now belong. Headquartered in Brussels, it oversees and regulates a common economic market to which all members have access without the trade restrictions that usually separate countries. It also subsidizes European farmers and its poorer member states, among other functions. This vast edifice has grown up in stages since 1951, every one of them contested among the members or by various parties and leaders within them.

Secondarily, Olsen contests the “new public management,” the recent idea that government can be “reinvented” by devolving many functions to private or nonprofit bodies and holding them accountable for efficiency or results, as if their clients were private-sector “consumers” rather than citizens. The author finds that such thinking has not and cannot replace the older focus on bureaucratic formality. Rather, the two theories exist in tension, each checking and challenging the other.

These complex settings dramatize Olsen’s moral about the difficulty of deliberate change. But not every government setting is this complex or conflicted. Rapid and directed change can occur when policymakers are sufficiently determined to achieve it. One American example was the enforcement of voting rights for blacks following the civil rights reforms of the 1960s. And the new institutionalism presumes that there *are* strong institutions worth analyzing. The great problem in much of the world is precisely that institutions are weak. Norms of good behavior are insufficient for government to work well, or to restrain rampant corruption by office holders. In those regimes, the rational choice presumption that everyone is out for himself becomes all too true. So the applicability of the new institutionalism is largely confined to strong governments, most of them Western.

Methodological struggles such as Olsen’s have unfortunately absorbed all too much of political science’s energy in recent decades. The more pedestrian work of just getting the facts on how government and politics work has often been forgotten. Olsen says he esteems this journalistic side of research, but he does not demonstrate that himself. The main limitation of this book is that the discussion is almost entirely theoretical. Almost nothing Olsen claims is supported by examples and illustrations. If one knows the history of the EU and its major institutions, one can, so to speak, fill in the blanks. But an argument backed up with actual research on the EU would have had much more authority. As James Q. Wilson has said, few of those

who theorize about bureaucracy ever studied it close up, and in this book Olsen is no exception.

In this lack of empiricism, ironically, Olsen resembles nothing so much as his rational choice opponents, many of whom would rather model government than investigate it. They have dragged him away from the close observation of government that he says he wants. Olsen opposes their scholasticism, but—perhaps inevitably—he is tarred with his own brush. The task begun by political science over a century ago of understanding governing institutions is still unfinished.

Reply to Leibowitz

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David Leibowitz and I are somehow speaking past one another. His reply to my review suggests I missed his “fundamental point” along with many others (98–99, cf. 96), and I believe he has not understood my objections to his book’s argument and his fundamental point in particular.¹ Our exchange thus risks a descent to the relatively uninteresting question of who interpreted whom correctly. But, as Leibowitz notes in his reply, behind our disagreements stands our shared belief in the great significance of Socrates’s account of his “Delphic Mission”; strange as it should seem to those who do not accept our view of the *Apology*, the very possibility and goodness of the life we both seek to understand and to live is at stake (95, 102). Thus, I will not dwell on all our disagreements—I address some points in my notes, and encourage those interested to compare the relevant texts for themselves—focusing only on clarifying our disagreements about his fundamental point and related matters.

In his reply, Leibowitz stresses that his fundamental point is expressed in a passage in his book that reads, “consciously or unconsciously, the believer raises the claim that god’s commandments and actions are just, and this claim can be examined,” or at least Socrates suspects as much (99). I do not agree that Leibowitz’s book manages to present this point altogether

¹ David Leibowitz, *The Ironic Defense of Socrates: Plato’s “Apology”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); David Levy, review of *The Ironic Defense of Socrates*, by David Leibowitz, *Interpretation* 38, no. 3 (2011): 261–69; David Leibowitz, “Reply to Levy: Socrates’s Post-Delphic Refutations,” *Interpretation* 39, no. 1 (2012): 95–102. All unspecified references are to Leibowitz’s reply.

unambiguously,² but my review certainly does not miss that this is his point. This is the reason I went on to argue about the existence of believers who are exceptions to his fundamental point (Levy, 267), an unnecessary task if Leibowitz fully acknowledged their existence.³ Furthermore, I said only that “Leibowitz *seems* to acknowledge” the exceptions to his fundamental point, because, though he appeared for a moment to admit this defect in his argument, in my view, he did not face it squarely (Levy, 267; emphasis added).

Leibowitz’s fundamental point is a key premise for that aspect of his account of Socrates’s Delphic refutations to which I object. I do not object to the suggestion that “moral man as such is the potential believer” (100). As my review indicates, I find plausible Leibowitz’s suggestion that Socrates believes moral beliefs provide some kind of basis for belief in the gods, and that Socrates’s Delphic refutations were his way of testing this belief (Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 72, 88; Levy, 264–65). But in his attempt to describe these refutations more precisely, Leibowitz argues that they consist in refutations of beliefs about the gods’ justice or morality (Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 92–99). This particular view of Socrates’s Delphic refutations seems to be what makes Leibowitz’s fundamental point so fundamental to him: if there are believers who do not believe in intelligibly just gods, Leibowitz’s refutations would leave them unscathed. And it is about the claim that Socrates’s

² See Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 95: to the objection he allows that one might raise to his argument, namely, that Socrates’s approach does not deal with those who believe that the gods are unjust, he responds with a tentative suggestion that he quotes in his reply (99). I did not realize that Leibowitz thought this tentative suggestion sufficient to answer the objection he had raised. Moreover, a few lines earlier in the book, he announces his suspicion that “Socrates finds that such belief [in unjust gods or gods unconcerned with justice]...is not only rare but is *almost* never supported” (*Ironic Defense*, 95, my emphasis; cf. Levy, 267). Here, Leibowitz seems to admit that he suspects that sometimes Socrates does find such belief. Finally, see also *Ironic Defense*, 99n72: “a believer may believe, or in the course of examination come to believe, that, owing to intrinsic weakness or corruption by sin, human reason sometimes sees divine truths, and perhaps others as well, as false and even self-contradictory”; Leibowitz does not appear to qualify his remark here with any suggestion about the believer’s unconscious belief. Later in the note, he refers to “those who reconcile themselves to unfathomable gods and inexpressible divine experiences.” Leibowitz does suggest an examination of these beliefs that might have the effect of changing their beliefs, but this examination, as Leibowitz describes it, presupposes the existence of believers who are at the outset reconciled to unfathomable gods.

³ To be precise, Leibowitz does not quite say that I missed his fundamental point, saying only that one of my sentences misses it (98–99), and Leibowitz’s responses to arguments I make against his fundamental point suggest his awareness that I understood the point (98–100). He similarly implies that his “fundamental contention” contradicts my suggestion that, according to him, Socrates’s refutations concern the “discrepancy” between believers’ moral views and their beliefs about the gods (96). I make this suggestion with the support of statements in his book such as the following: “[Socrates] tries to make these men see that the moral content of their experience—the divine command, let us say—is incompatible with the moral perfection...that they demand...of god” (Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 93; see also especially the top of 94). Leibowitz’s account asserts and depends on this discrepancy.

Delphic refutations were his refutations of beliefs about the morality of the gods in particular that my review expresses doubt (Levy, 266–67).

It is not entirely clear that Leibowitz considers his fundamental point to be distinct from the portion of his account that I find plausible. In a passage from his book that he quotes in his reply, he writes, “perhaps believers, whether they know it or not, expect the gods to be bound by some kind of humanly intelligible law or justice. *That is*, however much they may think that their moral beliefs derive from their beliefs about the gods, the truth may be that their beliefs about the gods, including the belief that they have had contact with gods, somehow derive from their merely human moral beliefs” (97; my emphasis). As his “that is” suggests, Leibowitz seems to link the suggestion that belief in the gods derives from moral beliefs very closely to his fundamental point, that all believers believe in intelligibly just gods. Now, Leibowitz’s claim about the basis of beliefs in the gods is certainly logically distinct from his fundamental point, and it is not self-evident that a moral basis for belief in the gods necessitates belief in moral gods. If morality provides a basis for belief, it is not unlikely that this basis would be reflected in the character of the beliefs themselves, but an argument is required to explain why a moral basis for belief in the gods necessitates that these be beliefs in moral gods. Furthermore, even on the assumption that belief in gods is always somehow belief in just gods, it is not clear—especially in light of the difficulties that the course of the world creates for this belief—that these gods must be intelligibly just. Therefore, since I do not see why Socrates’s suspicion of a moral basis of belief would lead to the conclusion that all believers believe in intelligibly moral gods, I doubt a description of Socrates’s refutations that includes this claim about believers as a fundamental premise.

My reasons for doubting the accuracy of Leibowitz’s account of the Delphic refutations do not end here. I also doubt that textual evidence supports it (Levy, 266). Leibowitz does offer evidence from the *Apology* that Socrates was aware of common moral beliefs about the gods, and Leibowitz can point to refutations in the *Republic* and *Laws* that are similar to the Delphic refutations he describes (97–98). But he offers no evidence from the *Apology*’s description of these refutations that Socrates refutes beliefs about the gods in particular.⁴ And it is doubtful that Socrates regards the refutation in the *Republic*, which Leibowitz cites as an example, as a refutation of beliefs

⁴ Note that Socrates’s refutation of Meletus, which Leibowitz emphasizes in his reply (98), does concern morality and the gods, but does not refute Meletus’s moral beliefs about the gods (24b–28a).

about the gods,⁵ or that Plato regards the refutations Leibowitz cites in the *Laws* as serving the purpose of the Delphic refutations.⁶

As I also suggest in my review (Levy, 267n5), I believe Leibowitz's remarks about the *Euthyphro*, which he further develops in his reply, serve to cast doubt on his description of the Delphic refutations. Leibowitz describes the *Euthyphro* as depicting a failed approach to the theological problem, but by what standard does he judge it a failure? It seems to be that Socrates fails to move Euthyphro in the manner required by the Delphic refutations as Leibowitz understands them (96n1; Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 95)—the very standard I doubt. To prove that the *Euthyphro* depicts a Delphic refutation would require a full interpretation of the dialogue, but for those inclined, as I am, to suspect that Socrates's ironic statement at the end of the dialogue contains a serious truth, there is more reason to believe that the *Euthyphro* depicts a Delphic refutation than that the arguments Leibowitz cites do. At the conclusion of the dialogue, Socrates notes that he has given up his hope to learn from Euthyphro about piety, and, lacking a teacher in divine matters, he remains in ignorance about them (15e–16a). Socrates's failure to find such an educator is surely reminiscent of the failures he recounts in his discussion of his Delphic investigations, and this failure also amounts to the discovery that Euthyphro cannot teach him. This discovery, then, if it is meant as a discovery of Euthyphro's incompetence as a teacher, a subject the dialogue does not fail at least to touch upon,⁷ would amount to as great a success as any Leibowitz's Socrates could attain through the refutations Leibowitz describes: it would confirm that Euthyphro does not have genuine evidence or knowledge of the gods.⁸

⁵ It is not clear that Cephalus regards his belief about justice as a belief about a divine command, as Leibowitz's account requires; what is more, Socrates is not concerned to establish that Cephalus believes this view to have divine sanction (331b–d; Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 93–94). See also David Bolotin's criticism of Leibowitz's textual evidence (David Bolotin, "Delphic Examinations," *St. John's Review* 53, no. 1 [2011]: 95).

⁶ See again Bolotin, "Delphic Examinations," 95. One cannot even be certain that Socrates is present in the *Laws*, which alone would make it a very strange place for Plato to offer one of his two major depictions of Socrates's distinctive philosophic activity.

⁷ See *Euthyphro* 4e–5a, 6a–7a, 11b–c, 14b–c.

⁸ That is, according to Leibowitz's more defensible statements about what Socrates could learn from his refutations, as opposed to the suggestion that Socrates's refutations could determine whether or not there are gods (*Ironic Defense*, 71; cf. 87–88). In this regard, consider even Leibowitz's formulation of what he believes is his "fundamental point," according to which "the believer raises the claim... that god's commandments and actions are just, and *this claim* can be examined" (99; my emphasis): here, again, Leibowitz turns his focus to examinations about the gods from examinations of believers' evidence. Compare his sounder discussions of Socrates's study of believers' *evidence* (e.g., 99, 101; *Ironic Defense*, 67–69, 72), and see Bolotin's criticism ("Delphic Examinations," 91–94). As his formulation of

I doubt Leibowitz's description of the Delphic investigations not only because it is not justified by his claim about the moral basis of belief and lacks textual support. I doubt also that many believers can be refuted in the manner Leibowitz suggests, and thus that Socrates would have relied on these refutations (Levy, 267). As Leibowitz notes in his reply, this issue can only be settled by testing believers ourselves (100), yet short of such tests, I believe there is good reason to doubt that Leibowitz's refutations could be successful. There are many believers who deny believing in intelligibly just gods, but Leibowitz believes they are mistaken about their own convictions: according to his fundamental point, they claim "unconsciously" that god is intelligibly just (99).⁹ However, I do not believe Leibowitz offers any good reason to distrust these claims not to believe in intelligibly just gods, just as his failure to show that his fundamental point follows from the premise that all belief in the gods derives from moral beliefs leaves us without good reason to think that Socrates would distrust these claims. Furthermore, since many of these believers appear quite convinced that they believe what they claim, I think it is implausible that many of them would be shaken by arguments against their god's justice, as is required by Leibowitz's account (Leibowitz, *Ironic Defense*, 94, 96).¹⁰

Still, there seems to be a large group of believers who profess to hold the kinds of views that Leibowitz's Socrates can refute, and thus my argument so far could give the impression that the approach Leibowitz describes merely needs to be supplemented with an alternative approach for these difficult cases. But I doubt that Leibowitz's approach could be truly successful even with many believers who profess to believe in intelligibly just gods, because many of these believers, even when they express this agreement, may fail genuinely or fully to understand it. And this is a possibility of which Socrates was well aware, as we can see from the *Euthyphro*. Regardless of how one interprets the dialogue's final teaching, all can see that Euthyphro voices

his fundamental point may well suggest, confidence that claims about the gods are claims about intelligible gods would make it seem easier to refute beliefs about the gods themselves, which would relieve one of that ignorance about the gods characteristic of Socrates (*Euthyphro* 6a–b).

⁹ For examples of thoughtful believers who have claimed to believe in mysterious gods and mysterious divine commands or who have denied that their claims about the gods can be properly examined by the reason of unbelievers, see Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, trans. E. M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 193–209; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, III.25–26; cf. Bolotin, "Delphic Examinations," 96. Finally, consider Maimonides's discussion of the Ash'ariyya sect's view of providence (*Guide*, III.17).

¹⁰ As Bolotin notes, it also would not be possible for Socrates to be sure in many cases that he had shaken a believer's belief ("Delphic Examinations," 92; cf. 88–89).

his agreement to a suggestion that would subordinate the gods' will or commands to an independent standard (10d–e). But then, once Socrates brings out the consequences of this agreement for the status of the gods' will, which, according to the agreement, would merely comply with the higher standard (10e–11b), Euthyphro realizes he did not understand the earlier agreement and even blames Socrates for the confusion (11b–d). And at the end of the dialogue, as Socrates notes, Euthyphro is still convinced that the gods' will is prior to any standard (15b–c). Furthermore, the possibility depicted in the *Euthyphro* strikes me as one that is likely to be common precisely if Leibowitz is correct that believers tend to be confused about the beautiful, just, and good. For in this case, when considering divine commands, believers are likely to be of (at least) two minds about the commands' beauty, justice, or goodness. And it would be in keeping with this confusion if they believe, as many appear to do, that the god's command is both manifestly just and a product of such divine perfection as is superior to any humanly intelligible standard, or that justice means both their performance of tasks which are intrinsically just or good and their adherence to mysterious commands. For these believers, refutations of their gods' justice are much more likely to leave them puzzled than shaken, since these refutations have not taken into account their full belief.

Thus, I doubt for many reasons Leibowitz's claim that the Delphic refutations focus on beliefs about the gods' morality, and our disagreement begins with his fundamental point. However, the discussion Leibowitz offers in his book of the link desert provides between morality and piety could seem to provide a partial basis for his fundamental point (*Ironic Defense*, 177). If belief is possible only for someone who believes he deserves a divinely given reward, then it would make some sense to claim that all gods are believed to be just or rewarding (though it would remain unclear why these gods must be intelligibly just) (cf. Levy, 268). Therefore, after noting the connection between Leibowitz's treatment of desert and his description of the Delphic refutations, my review criticized the suggestion that it is this concern for desert that provides a basis for belief.

Leibowitz's reply raises several objections to my criticism. The most important of these objections is his indication that, by referring to morality as a "basis" for belief, he meant only that morality is a necessary and not a sufficient condition for belief (101).¹¹ For in my review, I did not focus

¹¹ Leibowitz also objects to my neglect of his "more nuanced" formulation, according to which morality provides a "basis" on which certain experiences are interpreted as divine (101). I neglect this

my criticism solely on the claim that desert provides a necessary precondition for belief. Still, I also expressed my doubt that Leibowitz had indicated “*any way* in which our moral beliefs provide a basis for piety” (Levy, 269; emphasis added). And I continue to believe that he has failed to show how morality serves as a necessary precondition for belief. If morality is a necessary precondition for belief, then it must offer something that the amoral man lacks, which makes it *possible* for the moral man to believe when the amoral man cannot, and I do not believe Leibowitz provides a satisfactory account of what it is that morality offers. In his book, Leibowitz emphasizes in particular that desert “links” morality and belief in the gods (*Ironic Defense*, 177), but whether and how this link would serve as a necessary precondition of belief remains unclear. As it seems to me, it is sufficiently clear that a concern for desert provides moral men a specific need or longing for the gods that amoral men lack, but an amoral man who merely wishes not to die may also long for a god. Thus, noting a longing for the gods that morality gives to moral men does not explain why the moral man may be *able* to believe in a god who answers his longing when the amoral man cannot. It is also clear that under certain circumstances the belief that one deserves a reward can contribute to the hope or belief that one will receive it, namely, when one also believes in a power that provides deserved rewards, but it remains unclear in Leibowitz’s account whether and how the belief in or concern for desert could *permit* any confidence that such a power exists. Similarly, Leibowitz also refers to a variety of moral-religious experiences and beliefs in addition to desert (e.g., 100–102), and I cannot say an analysis of these experiences and beliefs would not show how morality is a necessary precondition of belief; I only deny that Leibowitz offers this analysis. Furthermore, in agreement with the claims of many believers, I do not believe that this analysis, if it were offered, would provide solid support for Leibowitz’s fundamental point.

However, it is not entirely clear that Leibowitz intends to show how morality serves as a necessary precondition of belief. Although he stresses in his reply that he leaves “open whether—and hence to what extent and how—moral beliefs are the basis of [divine] experiences themselves” (101), he makes quite clear that he believes moral beliefs are a necessary precondition for belief in the gods. But to judge by the penultimate paragraph of his reply, where he merely asks whether it is “hard to imagine” that various

formulation because it merely specifies one way in which the more general formulation would be true, that is, as he suggests in his reply, morality somehow permits a confidence or belief that there are gods that is not possible without being moral—regardless of whether morality does so through generating experiences or facilitating a specific interpretation of them.

moral beliefs would give rise to various religious experiences or allow one to interpret those experiences as divine (101–2), it seems possible that Leibowitz does not think he needs to offer an explanation of how morality serves as a necessary precondition for belief—for he leaves it an open question. To leave this an open question is unsatisfactory, because, among other reasons, it leaves unexplained why Socrates ever suspected that belief in the gods depends on moral beliefs and took up his Delphic investigations in the first place.

Let me stress in conclusion that despite my many disagreements with it, Leibowitz's book strikes me as an impressive work; we agree about the significance of Socrates's Delphic oracle story to Plato's philosophy as a whole, and Leibowitz well explains how many of the *Apology's* difficult details accord with this shared view. Our agreement about the Delphic oracle story probably places our interpretations of Plato much closer to one another than to those of the overwhelming majority of Plato scholars. But this agreement should not obscure how much is at stake in our disagreements: If Leibowitz is correct, then I unreasonably reject an account that would help vindicate my belief in the possibility and goodness of the philosophic life, and thus expose myself needlessly to the painful doubts about that life which must accompany my rejection of his account. And if I am correct, Leibowitz accepts an inadequate response to the challenge posed to philosophy by revelation, and thus conceals from himself the true difficulty of the philosophic life.

I N S T R U C T I O N S F O R C O N T R I B U T O R S

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