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## *Interwar German-Speaking Emigres and American Political Thought: Strauss, Voegelin, and Arendt*

Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, and Elisabeth Glaser-Schmitt (eds.), *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Emigres and American Political Thought After World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 208 pages. (Referred to as *GE*)

Ted V. McAllister, *Revolt Against Modernity: Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and the Search for a Postliberal Order* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996) 323 pages. (Referred to as *RAM*)

**M**odern intellectual traditions associated with the Enlightenment project have become self-undermining, thus leading to a loss of a widely shared orientation in nature, politics, and history. Contemporary Western culture may very well be without sufficient cognitive resources for the achievement of personal integrity and political order. Can we foster and secure public life in a post-Enlightenment and post-traditional culture?

Three great interwar German-speaking emigres—Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin and Hannah Arendt—have brilliantly and durably influenced American political thought and have sought a way out of the modern predicament. The two books under review demonstrate that Strauss, Voegelin, and Arendt as *peregrine* furthered profound-yet quite different-interpretations of the American political experience. Their flight from National Socialism brought with them distinctive cognitive resources which led them to critique American political science and political practice as well as to offer philosophic alternatives to the self-undermining movements of contemporary individualism, materialism, and scientism. These

*peregrini* were not flatterers of the American regime; they were friendly critics. They would become especially severe critics of American social science, viewing this discipline's ambition as imposing upon human beings a moral, political, and social vocabulary completely neutral in tone. The state of American social science is emblematic of the crisis of modernity in that we have lost faith in reason's ability to validate our highest aims.

For Eric Voegelin, postwar academic disciplines in the United States were strongly influenced by "German intellectuals who emigrated to America" bringing with them neo-Hegelian "ideologies, methodologies...phenomenologies, hermeneutic profundities, and so on." This migration coincided with the "populist expansion of the universities, accompanied by the inevitable inrush of functional illiterates into academic positions in the 1950's and 60's." For Voegelin, the social sciences and the humanities in America have produced an intellectual climate that is centered on imported modernist ideas that are bankrupt and derivative of European versions of those ideas debated at the turn of the century. "Today," states Voegelin, "the academic world is plagued with figures who could not have gained public attention in the environment of the Weimar Republic."

For Arendt, the "prediction and control" talk in political science is a dark comedy, both foolish and frightening. Until we *are made* predictable and controllable, human action cannot be predicted or controlled. Arendt claims quite directly that facts fail to determine the laws that explain them:

The perplexity is that the particular incident, the observable fact or single occurrence of nature, or the reported deed and event of history, have ceased to make sense without a universal process in which they are supposedly embedded; yet the moment man approaches this process in order to escape the haphazard character of the particular, in order to find meaning, order and necessity, his effort is rebutted by the answer from all sides: any order, any necessity, any meaning you wish to impose will do.

Social science theories in the United States "cancel each other out," and this is so "because they can all be consistently proved." Because history does not precisely repeat itself, no controlled experiments are possible. The difficulty lies directly with the plurality of the human condition; plurality is irreducible given the many versions of historical truth and the "unprecedented" events of each era.' American social science in the 1950s and 1960s, like older metaphysical systems, tended to obscure the human capacity to break with the past and develop something new. As David Luban puts it, "Arendt finds such a view of social science silly, misguided, and dangerous."<sup>3</sup>

For Strauss, American behavioral science is oblivious to the nihilism at its heart. In the insouciant world of the political science profession, political scientists were fiddling while Rome (American liberal democracy) was burning. The dominance of positivism, historicism, and dogmatic atheism within the political science profession creates a dilemma for most of its members. While they remain liberal, they do so despite the apparent inconsistency between their value neutrality and their liberal convictions. Strauss argued that although value neutrality implies "that before the tribunal of reason all values are equal," most modern liberal political scientists assume that "the rational society will be egalitarian or democratic and permissive or liberal: the rational doctrine regarding the difference between facts and values rationally justifies the preference for liberal democracy-contrary to what is indicated by the distinction itself."<sup>4</sup> The feckless modern political scientist has no criterion for distinguishing specious from genuine claims upon political sympathy because the fact-value distinction subjects such persons to the kind of moral suasion which consists of little more than direct appeals to sympathetic emotions. The political science profession contributes to a public discourse that is unable to *say no* by appeal to high principle and appreciate that any political order must establish a hierarchy of values that represses some values so that others may flourish.

Strauss was critical of the seeming refutation of biblical faith which pervades the modern political science profession. Most in the

profession have rested their political teachings on a "dogmatic exclusion" of the possibilities of biblical faith and an unreflective assumption that social life does not require belief in, and worship of, God or gods.

Given the above characterizations of the dominant "progressionist" wing of American social science by our three emigres, we can certainly appreciate why they have exercised very little influence on the practice of political science. Though Strauss, Voegelin, and Arendt have different philosophical positions themselves, they all present methods and inquiries that separate them from the "mainstream" practitioners of the profession. They are a clear example of the enormous chasm that still exists between the practitioners of political philosophy and the practitioners of political science in the American regime. What accounts for the extraordinary influence of these three *peregrini* in furthering distinctive interpretations of American political philosophy while being thoroughly rejected by the behaviorists and radical historicists?

*Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Emigres and American Political Thought After World War II (GE)* seeks to link the German-Jewish emigration after 1933 and the development of political philosophy in the United States as a single topic. The book is based on a conference at the University of Colorado exploring Arendt's and Strauss's intellectual citizenship of two worlds—belonging fully to neither.

## I.

Focusing first on *GE*, I intend to explore at length Jurgen Gebhardt's outstanding chapter, "Leo Strauss: The Quest for Truth." Gebhardt, a non-Straussian, demonstrates both an acute textual analysis of and an irenic openness to the challenge of Strauss's scholarship. He begins his study of Strauss as an emigre scholar with John G. Gunnell's critical account of the original intentions of Strauss, Voegelin, and Arendt to bring with them to the United States the "myth of the tradition"—a "Europeanized theory in the United States." Political theory, for them, was "a response to a crisis, as a diagnosis of disorder and a critique of contemporary politics...a

search for a truth of political order and human nature, and...the construction of a vision of a new political society." The idea of political theory became institutionalized, academic, and departmentalized (*GE*, 82). The academic activity of political theory alienated itself from political science and politics, becoming a curiosity in the academic world. Gebhardt agrees with Gunnell that Leo Strauss's project of a philosophical inquiry into politics, though well-organized with a routinized system of teaching and researching, is "apparently lost" on the professional practitioner of political science. Gebhardt is also sympathetic to Harry V. Jaffa's criticism of Strauss's former students for hailing the establishment of an award honoring Leo Strauss by the American Political Science Association "for the recognition it has given to political philosophy as one of the important traditions within the discipline.- For Jaffa, this language is absurd in the implication that political philosophy was "one of many" subdivisions or branches of political science. For Jaffa, political philosophy as practiced by Strauss is to guide all other practical sciences-it is the very foundation of the science of politics, not a designated sub-field. Jaffa, as one of Strauss's early students at the New School for Social Research, doubts whether political philosophy should be reconciled with the institutional realities and the practice of professional political science at all (*GE*, 84).

Gebhardt is convinced that Strauss does represent a "Europeanized political theory in the United States" emphasizing the enduring crisis of the West. The persistence of the crisis required that the quest for truth be continued even if it does not promise answers and solutions; such a quest does bring humanizing qualities that make up the good life. Gebhardt quite correctly presents Strauss as obliged to ask persistently the question untouched by the modern sciences, namely how should human beings live because "modern western man no longer knows what he wants" and "he no longer believes that he can know what is good and bad, what is right and wrong" (*GE*, 87). For Strauss, as for Jaffa, political philosophy correctly understood is not to be considered an "academic pursuit," but should be viewed as a cultural enterprise concerned with the principles of societal order. According to Gebhardt, then, Strauss's project assumes "that

sociocultural crises and the ensuing social problems are rooted in the intellectual and spiritual life of society" (*GE*, 87). Gebhardt views Strauss's quest for truth within the context of Strauss's specific cultural interpretation of the modern crisis—a "notion, of the cultural crisis [which] was characteristic of the German intellectual community, the 'mandarin intellectuals.'" Fritz Ringer defines them, in terms of an ideal type, the German cultural and social elite which owes its status primarily to educational qualifications, rather than to the hereditary rights or wealth (*GE*, 87–88). They were guided by the concepts of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung*, which presented higher learning in terms of the quest for truth and self-cultivation and the development of a university-trained cultural elite. Gebhardt maintains that Strauss's personal style and intellectual perspective "reflect the habitudes and the intellectual vision of the German mandarins" (*GE*, 88). Although Strauss began his scholarly life at Jewish institutes in Germany outside of the university, his style in which he later taught in the United States, the way he asserted his authority and his notion of spiritual elevation achieved through learning, had a great deal in common with the German mandarins. Alfons Sollner presents Strauss as a very German figure, "a charismatic representative of Teutonic learnedness," a representative of the nineteenth-century German tradition of a highly elevated aristocracy of scholars of imperious manner (*GE*, 6). Whether Strauss truly fits this model can be answered only by the few who knew him well.

Gebhardt is convinced that much of the controversy that surrounded Strauss and his students had to do with the exotic, German mandarin flavor of his work, which "was met with enthusiasm as well as disgust" (*GE*, 89).

What, according to Gebhardt, is the greatness or distinctiveness of Strauss's learning? It centers on "the problem of the true philosopher," as Gebhardt puts it. Once Strauss contemplates a return to pre-modern philosophy, "a new understanding of philosophizing under modern conditions comes into sight: the ascent from the second unnatural cave of the modern worldview to the primary natural cave of the City by means of historical learning" (*GE*, 96).

Gebhardt, in support of this view, quotes from a generally unknown early review by Strauss in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, no. 52, (December 27, 1931):

Bearing in mind the classic representation of the natural differences involved in philosophizing, in other words, the Platonic allegory of the cave, one can say that today we are in a second much deeper cave than the fortunate ignorant persons with which Socrates was concerned. We need history first of all to reach the cave from which Socrates can lead us to the light. We need preparatory instruction-something the Greeks didn't need-that is, precisely learning by reading (*GE*, 96).

The problem of the true philosopher becomes centered on the return to premodern rationalism, with the reopening of the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns and the discovery of the potential of philosophy, that is Platonic philosophy, found in medieval Islamic and Jewish rationalism. The medieval Muslim, Farabi, becomes Strauss's exemplary model of a true Platonist-he is not concerned with the historical (accidental truth); he is primarily interested in the philosophic (essential) truth. Gebhardt quotes Strauss stating, "only because public speech demands a mixture of seriousness and playfulness, can a true Platonist present the serious teaching in a historical, and hence, playful garb" (*GE*, 97). To qualify as a true Platonist, one must meet a decisive criterion in that there exists "his private, and truly original and individual understanding of the necessary anonymous truth" (*GE*, 97). Is this a self-description of Strauss? For Gebhardt this might be part of the truth of what Strauss was about. Strauss's self-characterization of his vocation was that of scholar who leads us back to our natural ignorance of the common-sense world, and "who retrieves us from the lapsed world of modern rationalism, from the 'second unnatural' cave" (*GE*, 97). We must gain a reading knowledge of the languages used by the great minds in order to be able to listen to them. The scholar prepares the way to philosophizing. Strauss prepares the way for true historical reflection-a nonhistoricist approach to understanding the great thinkers of the past in order to overcome the limitations

of modernity. Modernity cannot be overcome by modern means or subjectivism. The instruments of natural reason have, to some extent, been lost, and we have to learn them from the ancients. Historical objectivity brings about a profound intellectual change in the scholar himself. Once the scholar has led us from the second, "unnatural" cave to the cave of natural understanding, the philosopher can take over.

Gebhardt views Strauss as a critic of the modern world (the second, unnatural cave) where there is no seriousness or morality—a world of *divertissement* (*GE*, 102). It is a world where humans abdicate their humanity and the quest for the right, the good, and the just. True philosophizing involves the restitution of the political—the strict separation of philosophy and social opinion—which is the precarious balance between the few persons who are able to pursue the philosophical life and the many people leading a life of the normal citizen. Though philosophy ultimately transcends political opinion and is transhistorical and transpolitical, it presupposes the political (*GE*, 103). Gebhardt appropriately emphasizes Strauss's most significant teaching, that only when modern man becomes aware of his habitation in the second, unnatural cave and the self-destructive power of modern rationalism can a way be paved for reinstating the City. An ennobled liberal democracy is Strauss's best possible regime under present circumstances. The best regime is dependent on the city-state—the *polis* interpreted by Plato and Aristotle—which is surveyable, urban, moral, serious, based on agriculture, in which the gentry rule. For Strauss this "is morally-politically the most reasonable and most pleasing" (*GE*, 104). These political teachings of Strauss, the Jewish German-American mandarin and emigre, are an exotic and fascinating plant indeed transplanted to an American soil, which can be referred to as "applied Enlightenment" in crisis.

Robert B. Pippin in his chapter, "The Modern World of Leo Strauss," claims that Strauss produced a "complex and multifront attack" on the insufficiencies of modernity and America. The "attack" by Strauss created a distinctly contentious audience in the United States. This fascination with Strauss is the result of the



rediscovery of the "problem of modernity," which includes doubts about the benefits of technological mastery, the eclipse of public reliance on religion, and the greater role of enlightened self-interest in the formation of a polity (*GE*, 139).

Pippin provides a close textual analysis and critique of Strauss's "wave hypothesis"-the modern experiment has occurred in three waves-an instauration begun mainly by Hobbes, a first "crisis" diagnosed by Rousseau, and a second "crisis" diagnosed by Nietzsche and continuing in our times. Pippin argues that Strauss's interpretation of the second wave or first crisis "misinterprets and undervalues the alternatives presented by German thinkers so influenced by Rousseau, the German Idealists: especially Kant, Fichte and Hegel" (*GE*, 140). Pippin disagrees with Strauss's reasons for claiming that this tradition must result in the self-undermining of historicism that intensifies rather than resolves the "modern crisis." For Pippin there is no fatal *aporia* within modernity ultimately revealed by Nietzsche.

Pippin concentrates on Strauss's second wave or "first crisis" of the common theme of freedom in modernity and movement from the liberation of the passions to "absolute freedom." Pippin argues that the best Strauss text to use to examine Strauss's interpretation of this movement is his account of Rousseau in *Natural Right and History*. Strauss claims that Rousseau appeals from both the modern state to the classical city "and almost in the same breath...from the classical city to the 'man of nature,' the prepolitical savage." For Pippin this means that Strauss produces a picture of Rousseau as a confused writer who shifts back and forth between two directly opposed positions (*GE*, 154). This has produced a view of freedom with historical positive results-a wholly modern notion of virtue-man is virtuous only as self-determining and respect should be given only for what we have done or made. But what we feel is our own might not genuinely to be our own, might actually be the product of the desires of others. A goal I posit to be worthy might not truly express "me." With such worries, the "natural" in all the senses involved is "lost" according to Strauss. Pippin suspects that Strauss's characterization of Rousseau as primarily concerned with the self-conscious and natural refugee from civil society reveals his clear

pessimism that a modern, virtuous commonwealth can be established "without reference to man's nature" (*GE*, 156-157). Pippin is not convinced that this tradition ends in a kind of *aporia*. Pippin seeks to show that Rousseau's appeal to autonomy, and the necessarily accompanying "unavailability" of any politically relevant appeal to nature, "is more thoroughly and consistently motivated in Rousseau than Strauss allows for, and generates a far more powerful legacy in later philosophy than the romantic, 'natural' sentiments (or classicist nostalgia) pointed out by Strauss" (*GE*, 159). Pippin seeks to demonstrate, though quite sketchily, in this particular chapter, that the second modern "wave" has not yet peaked or dissipated.

Horst Mewes, in "Leo Strauss and Martin Heidegger: Greek Antiquity and the Meaning of Modernity," begins by noting that at one point in Strauss's life he felt compelled to take an "explicit" stand toward Heidegger. Strauss, when a young student, was deeply impressed by Heidegger's "seriousness, profundity, and concentration in the interpretation of philosophic texts" (*GE*, 105). Gradually, Strauss was to become aware of "the breadth of the revolution of thought" prepared by Heidegger. Like Heidegger, Strauss was to recognize the self-destructive nature of modern rationality and the philosophical limits of modern science's claim to master nature-indicative of a "crisis of the West."

Mewes does identify a significant divergence of positions between Strauss and Heidegger as to how to overcome the crisis by returning to Greek philosophy. Their understandings and interpretations of Greek philosophy were profoundly different; Strauss's life work consisted in a "return to classical *political* philosophy [Mewes's emphasis], while according to Strauss, Heidegger never believed in the possibility of an ethic," and "left no room for political philosophy in this thought" (*GE*, 105). Strauss was to view Heidegger's despicable sympathies with the Nazi movement not simply as a personal flaw, but rather in "their intimate connection with the core of his philosophic thought." The lack of a political philosophy in Heidegger goes to the very core of his project.

Mewes provides us with a highly incisive discussion of Strauss's view that Heidegger's understanding of being differs fundamentally

from that of both Plato and Aristotle. For Plato and Aristotle "to be in the highest sense means to be *always*," while for Heidegger, "to be in the highest sense means to *exist*, that is to *say*, *to be* in the manner in which man *is*" (*GE*, 106). Heidegger's "return" to the ancients is grounded in the radical spirit of modernity and the disposition of the historicism of human existence. For Strauss, it is crucial to understand ancient Greek philosophers as they had understood themselves. Strauss considered Heidegger to be correct in perceiving that there was something concealed to us moderns in the origins of Western philosophy. However, Heidegger failed to identify what was actually hidden, namely the radical division between the philosophers and the non-philosophers. Heidegger had focused on the pre-Socratics, rather than on Aristophanes, Xenophon, and "the Socratic turn." For Strauss, Heidegger failed to appreciate the poetic character of Platonic philosophy and its political roots. Heidegger did not recognize the capacity of the philosopher to transcend in thought his time and place; he could not see the anger traditional authorities express against the philosopher who challenges their love of their own. Nor could he see the importance of the precautions the philosopher must take not to arouse that anger. Strauss, then, considered Heidegger to be a failure in not paying attention to the truly "original" relationship or tension between philosophy and politics. Mewes's analysis of Strauss's view of Heidegger's project becomes especially acute when he states that Heidegger's failure to recognize the fundamental dualisms in human nature-reason and revelation, the philosopher and the non-philosopher, speech and deed, thought and action, and therefore the limits of progress-led Strauss away from Heidegger and toward the view that the philosopher must temper his philosophical *mania*. Mewes makes it quite clear that to read Strauss is to understand well the exceedingly high price Heidegger paid for explaining dualism in being itself rather than viewing the "fate" of Western civilization as the offspring of a "fundamental dualism in man." Strauss refused to follow Heidegger and acknowledged the direct relationship between Heidegger's philosophy and his "resoluteness" which, according to Strauss, leads in "a straight line...to his siding with Nazis

in 1933." What Strauss "could not stomach" was Heidegger's own seeming inability to recognize that he actually had a moral teaching based on his "radical historicism. Mewes's chapter allows us to explore more cogently the contrasting responses of Heidegger and Strauss to the challenges of philosophy and politics and to see more clearly exactly what the philosophy has to do with the philosopher (*GE*, 116-120).

Alfons Miner's contribution is a decent overview of Strauss's thought that unfortunately is riddled with groundless characterizations of Strauss's project. Miner's piece is representative of many misrepresentations of Strauss's writings and career. It might be useful to cite a few of Miner's characterizations of Strauss: his way of thinking could be called "ultraconservative"-a term which will have to be defined more clearly" (which Sollner does not do); he offers a "fundamentalist interpretation of the crisis of his time"; his high point in a "condemnatory method of interpretation was reached in his *Thoughts on Machiavelli* in which long passages" read almost like an exercise in "intellectual exorcism," in which the dichotomous worldview of McCarthyism, that is, of the Cold War, an idiosyncratic apocalyptic gesture, at no time unfamiliar to Strauss, "overlap and even reinforce each other momentarily"; and his position was finally "ultraconservative" "insofar as it took offense at all modern regimes" (*GE*, 121, 132-133). These characterizations of Strauss's work are not helpful in illuminating Strauss's teachings, and contrast sharply with the immensely stimulating and irenic contributions of Gebhardt and Mewes.

Timothy Fuller's "Reflections on Leo Strauss and American Education" offers a very thoughtful and nuanced examination of Strauss's role in contributing to the debates over American education. Fuller notes quite appropriately that in our post-World War era of educational specialization it is difficult to sustain collegiality and conversationality. There may well be a great deal of choice in education, but choice for what end? This deeply concerned Strauss. Liberals had to make a choice between exploring natural right and the uninhibited cultivation of individuality and diversity. For Strauss, they chose the latter.

Fuller is convinced that Strauss's critical view of contemporary educators' insistence "that every comprehensive view is relative to a specific perspective, or that all comprehensive views are mutually exclusive and none can be simply true" is not only extraordinarily prophetic, but also has created a major impact on the American political science profession. His prophecy and the distinctive voice are quite real; his impact on the political science profession is much more problematic.

Fuller cites Strauss's *Natural Right and History* (1953) as an "important harbinger" of the revival of interest in the study of political philosophy. Fuller is quite right to state that interest in political thought has increased. Yet one must also recognize the fact that there is a "babel" of voices in the profession that is mostly historicist and dogmatically atheist in orientation and that, moreover, Strauss's work and career have elicited ferocious animosity and demonization by such diverse personages as Sheldon Wolin, Stephen Holmes, Shadia Drury, and Brent Staples in his editorial in *The New York Times*.

Fuller emphasizes that liberal education in a liberal democracy can engender modesty in things political and boldness in things philosophical by its constant intercourse with the greatest minds. Liberal learning contradicts the prejudices of the modern democratic culture. Liberal education is an act of retrieval of the conversations of the greatest minds and recreates in ourselves a dialogue that is often suppressed in the democratic ambience (GE, 76). Fuller gets Strauss's position quite right when he states that:

When Strauss says he is critical of democracy because a friend to it, he means to say that democracy should be praised for its virtues and challenged on its vices. Unfortunately, there is a democratic tendency to want simply to be praised, or worse, flattered, and that, in effect, is likely to mean being praised for its faults or excesses. The diversity of human goods is real. Thus, the appearance of excellence or greatness in our midst should be responded to so as to appropriate its contribution opportunely, not vilified because it embarrasses a concealed

desire for a diversity that is actually a uniformity (*GE*, 7 footnote 15).

Fuller concludes by claiming that Strauss argues in favor of an education challenging democracy rather than education for democracy. We are called on to question the vast achievements of the scientific-technological culture and egalitarianism as a vision of order of human relationships. Education confronting democracy would be showing how the Enlightenment project contributes to a darkening in which "mass taste precludes holding anyone in particular responsible in any meaningful way.... Everyone and no one is responsible for our situation" (*GE*, 80). We must fortify ourselves to elevate the sense of being responsible-politically, living moderately between natural right and history and, philosophically thinking, boldly pursuing the fundamental problems of the greatest minds.

Hannah Arendt's influence as an emigre on American political thought in *GE* is the subject of three contributions. They focus on her theory of democracy and her classical conception of politics as the basis for critiquing contemporary democratic republics.

Helmut Dubiel offers an astute overview of some of the major themes of "public freedom" and the "founding act" that make up Arendt's contribution to political theory in "Hannah Arendt and the Theory of Democracy: A Critical Reconstruction." Dubiel considers it important to explore the putative tension that exists between her theory of decline from the politics of Greek antiquity to the politics of modern republics and her analysis of contemporary American society. He thinks that this tension, after some reflection, loses some of its starkness (*GE*, 12).

Dubiel presents Arendt's model of modern politics in an illuminating fashion-the social contract model (political authority that demands subordination along with a pragmatic obedience) and a communicative concept of political power that is represented in the American founding. The American founding included a document establishing political authority along with "the communicative energy that went into the document during the process of discussion

prior to its codification" (*GE*, 19). For Dubiel her discussion of contemporary American issues did not basically contradict her model of the American founding. In her discussion of contemporary civil disobedience, for example, she distinguishes it from violence and views civil disobedience as one possible way in which every new generation and every new individual can recreate the conditions for the creative political activity of the founding act; especially when "the majority occludes access to the political realm, they now have the task of insisting, by means of symbolic political practices, upon open access to the political sphere" (*GE*, 22). Dubiel considers Arendt to be ever the Aristotelian, in that she sees an inner connection between the political character of human existence and the ability to coordinate plans for action by means of speech—including symbolic speech. Politics so conceived, says Dubiel, excludes violence. As Arendt puts it, "violence is itself incapable of speech." The state should only employ violence to protect the communicative *modus operandi* of the political sphere.

Dubiel also addresses Arendt's famous classical division between the political and social spheres. In Arendt's view, the political decline most characteristic of modern societies takes place when politics becomes the instrument to realize "the social." Dubiel takes Arendt's conception of politics absent of specific social regulation, abandoning the social sphere to self-regulation, to be quite devoid of particular purpose and incompatible with the essential nature of democratic politics. This leads Dubiel to be somewhat sympathetic to the view that Arendt is a "conservative utopian" or a "political antimodernist" (*GE*, 11).

In "The Questionable Influence of Arendt (and Strauss)," George Kateb critically assesses Arendt's and Strauss's contributions to American democratic theory. For Kateb, "both radiate disapproval of modern democracy" (*GE*, 29). He states "that anyone committed to modern democracy should resist the influence of these German-American philosophers while not being totally impervious to it" (*GE*, 29). Kateb argues that Arendt's and Strauss's love of ancient Greece was mediated by German philosophy, which placed them against modern democracy. Arendt, he muses, might

be a more "serious enemy of modern democracy" than Strauss. Her critique is decidedly political without the cultural pessimism and "snobbism" of Strauss. While Arendt celebrates Athenian participatory democracy as a critique of modern democratic practice, Strauss recovers the ancient political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, which provides, among other things, the basis for a critique of the modern historical relativization of beliefs and principles.

Kateb certainly recognizes that the matter of Arendt and democracy is indeed complex. Arendt wants politics in a democracy to be the monopoly of the admirable—the ones who want to "count and be counted upon," those who refuse the delight of passivity or pleasures or private pursuits (*GE*, 31). In *On Revolution* she theorizes that Jefferson's ward governments "would spell the end of general suffrage as we understand it; for only those who as voluntary members of an 'elementary republic' have demonstrated that they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world would have a right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic" (*GE*, 31). Kateb argues that Arendt is fully aware that she writes as a European coming to America as an adult living spiritually at a distance from her new home. American theorists, says Arendt herself, cannot take European theory unreserved, not even hers.

Even though she is often inspired in interpreting democratic political action at its best, Kateb continues to argue that "her influence is not at all to the good" (*GE*, 35). Her influence is especially regrettable on interconnected matters of modern constitutional representative democracy and the role of genuine political action. Kateb takes her to task for her view of modern constitutional representative democracy as simply grounded in "self-preservation" or self-interest. Such a system is vastly more complex than that. The psychological benefits of being included as equal citizens seems to elude her. Kateb states rather sarcastically that "it is not wise...for us to imitate her onesidedness: We do not have her genius to excuse us" (*GE*, 37). More to the point, Kateb concludes that Arendt is a great and valuable writer in the fields of moral psychology, but her thought trains "must be refracted and resisted by us if they are to bestow their



benefits" (*GE*, 38).

Kateb proceeds to comment on Strauss's relation to modern democracy. He raises a crucial question, namely, Are rules of textual interpretation serving, if only indirectly, a particular political intention? Kateb works with the assumption that Strauss's rules of interpretation as well as his political orientation give "power to his readings." Kateb concludes that "a case could be made for saying that Strauss's strategy of reading is not merely at the service of some local or contemporary conservatism; rather-and far more important-it is at the service of an inveterate antidemocratic outlook, an authoritarian antidemocratic position." For Kateb, though Strauss may formally state that he is a friend and ally of democracy, he is "at most a reluctant and disdainful supporter; a tactical supporter" (*GE*, 39). Kateb would like to demystify Strauss's antidemocratic myths of the Founding Fathers, political authority, the need for divine or metaphysical authentication for morality or systems of gentlemanly virtue and popular discipline "in which full discretionary permissiveness for 'statesman' is joined to rigid moral constraints for the 'masses' (*GE*, 41). Kateb considers Strauss's promotion of "the so-called classical position in the modern age to be an attempt to improve modern democracy by viewing it in the light of Plato's and Aristotle's ideal conceptions" (*GE*, 41). Kateb categorically berates Strauss for being remiss for ignoring the writings of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman as well as American democratic practice and modern democratic practice with the possible exception of Weimar. Kateb does admit that there are statements in Strauss's writings that are positive about democracy, such as that only democracy among the imperfect polities as a matter of principle tolerates and encourages philosophy. Kateb, once again, raises the right question: Was Strauss trying with the statement "to strengthen democracy by avoiding flattery and inducing democrats to undergo an ascesis that would make them better democrats?" (*GE*, 43). If this was Strauss's strategy, states Kateb, it miscarried. Those who were influenced by Strauss, even when they write about the creation and meaning of American constitutional democracy, are "...literal and artificial authoritarian antidemocrats..." (*GE*, 43). Kateb's harsh conclusion is

that Strauss instructed those influenced by him to preserve the American polity, yet "the tendency of their work is to misrepresent it and spread dislike of it." Kateb now clearly places himself in the coterie of Drury, Wolin, Burnyeat, Holmes, and others who wish to demonize the Straussians as an antidemocratic cult bent on undermining American democratic traditions and practices.

I conclude this review of Kateb's discussion of Strauss with two comments by Horst Mewes in the Roundtable Discussion section of *GE*. These comments respond to Kateb's and S~llner's biting remarks about Strauss and liberal democracy. Mewes makes the following critical point:

Strauss saw reflected in [the American] founding act his relation between philosophy and politics. It was precisely the constant references to human nature in terms of the significance of checks and balances that one finds in the Federalist Papers and in all the correspondence surrounding the founding act. [Also] we have, I think, gotten the overall impression that he [Strauss] is not a genuine democrat.... Strauss represented a type [of democracy], and that is the type of the Federalist's democratic republic. The type of democracy that is essentially based on a representative republic governed by an elected, natural aristocracy of merit. Now I regard that to be a genuine type of democracy in the self-understanding of the founders. Whether it is or not, he is providing the most profound theory at the moment that is available for that type of democracy. Now, the fact that this is an extremely unpopular type of democratic theory right now is more than obvious. It is quite clearly a perfectionist theory, as it provides a theory of human excellence. I completely agree with Robert Pippin that after building this edifice Strauss does not provide the tools for the most profound answers to the relation between natural consciousness, modern science, post-Kantianism, etc., and one can hardly blame him for that" (*GE*, 189).

Ernest Volbrath's "Hannah Arendt: A German-American Jewess Views the United States-and Looks Back to Germany" appreciates

the influence of Arendt's refugee experience on her view of the United States' political system. Though she would level harsh criticism against specific political practices, Arendt remained in fundamental agreement with the principles and practices of the founding of the Constitution. She regularly contrasted, and sometimes tried to "even reconcile, the principles of the American political system, with European, above all German, traditions" (*GE*, 45).

Volbrath claims that Arendt's clear-cut distinction between a sphere of the political and an area of the societal is actually taken from German experience-the difference between her position and the German experience is that she never identified the political sphere with the state. This gave her an opportunity "to distinguish between what is authentically political and what is not" (*GE*, 46). This gave her a criterion by which to critique the perversity of politics present in totalitarian domination.

In order to find adequate political categories, Arendt turned to the Greek origins of the political. She knew too well that a simple renewal of the *polis* was doomed to fail under the conditions of the modern age. What could be renewed was Greek *politeia*, its politicality, so to speak. Arendt found this politicality in the founding of the American republic, wherein one could hope for the preservation of the public realm, and of political freedom along with the minimum of social justice without which citizenship is impossible (*GE*, 52-55). This type of thinking hardly existed in the tradition of German culture with the exception of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. According to Volbrath, Arendt was not able to see a truly new foundation for the postwar German Federal Republic. "She measured this against her understanding of the innovative spirit of the American Republic" (*GE*, 58).

*GE* is an enormously rich commentary on the emigre experience of Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt as they theorized in a world between German culture and philosophy and the modern American regime. Most of the chapters will be of great value to those who are open to their profound challenge.

## II.

Ted. V. McAllister's *Revolt Against Modernity (RAM)* is a lucid and powerful account of the crisis of modernity as understood by Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. McAllister is concerned with Strauss's and Voegelin's revolt against modernity—a revolt against modern rationality, political orthodoxies and ideologies, scientism, and the human drive for mastery of the environment. In an important way, one can immediately focus on Strauss's and Voegelin's revolt against modernity by identifying their common rejection of scientism or positivism. For Voegelin, a close reading of Weber reinforced his animus toward modern social science in that Weber restricted the role of the scientists to an exploration of cause and effect, which amounted to the method dictating the subject. Voegelin wanted the realm of science to be much broader and applied to all areas of human experience. For Strauss, positivism or social science grounded in the fact/value dichotomy undermines beliefs necessary for political and social order.

McAllister argues that Voegelin's and Strauss's critique of positivism involved a great issue of which positivism formed a part nothing less than the fate of civilization (*RAM*, 80). "Both men played important roles in the development of a conservative intellectual movement born in the 1950s" (*RAM*, 9). McAllister, unlike many other commentators on their work, realizes fully that applying the conservative label presents special problems. Voegelin objected to the label "conservative" because it tended to "flatten" out "his work" and to be used to buttress a political persuasion he did not openly share. To be sure, Voegelin rejected ideological thinking in any form. Strauss could never be classified as a Burkean conservative traditionalist which, for him, would certainly smack of historicism. Yet, according to McAllister, "Strauss...invited an appropriation of his work by those who misunderstood him" (*RAM*, 9).

McAllister does consider Strauss and Voegelin to be conservatives in one important sense—they were antimodernist. Voegelin can be called conservative because of his "chronic concern for order, or the search for order, or the experience of order" (*RAM*, 10).

Strauss's emphasis upon "nature" may appear to undermine order resting upon convention, habit, or prescription. Strauss's teaching concerning "nature" actually serves a conservative function of undermining historicist or relativist arguments against normative social order. For McAllister, "his motivations were nothing if not conservative." Though Voegelin and Strauss do not fit perfectly the ideal conservative type as do Russell Kirk or Robert Nisbet, "their philosophical assumptions closely resemble those of traditionalist conservatives" (*RAM*, 13). With their rejection of modernity, Strauss and Voegelin were to produce a critique of the modern world that conservatives primarily relied upon to develop their specific attacks on contemporary social ills (*RAM*, 13). McAllister is making two separate claims: (1) Strauss and Voegelin present a critique of modernity that contributes to a postliberal political order and (2) that many contemporary conservatives ground their sociopolitical criticism "primarily" on Strauss's and Voegelin's work. I consider McAllister to be very successful in providing support for the first claim, while his second claim must be viewed as highly problematic and unproven.

McAllister graces the reader with a beautifully crafted and illuminating discussion of Strauss's reading of Machiavelli and Voegelin's reading of Hegel as a way toward understanding their critiques of modernity. These discussions are among the most lucid, concise and nuanced accounts of Strauss on Machiavelli and Voegelin on Hegel available in print.

For McAllister, it was Strauss's intention to recover the "surprise" of Machiavelli, to see once again Machiavelli as innovator, to go beyond the pallor and see the "evil." Machiavelli has so corrupted moderns that they can no longer capture his "creative if demonic genius" (*RAM*, 95). Machiavelli is viewed by Strauss as an Averroist-interested in Christianity only as a political force. Machiavelli reduces God to a symbol equivalent to *fortuna* (or chance) and to a foe that must be conquered (*RAM*, 100-101). Machiavelli's great innovation was to loose human behavior from the coercive dictates of a god or gods, undermining as well the classical belief in the teleology of nature, replacing both with a world in which humans

must live with "chance understood as a non-teleological necessity which leaves room for choice and prudence and therefore chance understood as the cause of simply unforeseeable accidents" (*RAM*, 102). Machiavelli's new modes and orders threatened not only Christianity but also classical political philosophy and in the process challenges the reader to face or recover the "permanent problems."

McAllister manages to capture the larger flow of *Thoughts on Machiavelli* when he states that:

The connections Strauss made between Machiavelli and the moderns who swallowed him whole merge with rarely matched Straussian clarity in the concluding pages of *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Humans moved out of a universe of necessity into a realm of godlike freedom, with their desires positing ends and their evolving science employed in the discovery or creation of means appropriate to those ends. In due course Hitler posited the ends, ratified by the support of the German population, and science and philosophy supplied the means. What was 'the final solution' but a rational method of achieving a political goal? (*RAM*, 105).

Ultimately, Strauss intended to present more than a work on Machiavelli. Strauss was to show that moderns follow Machiavelli without knowing it, moderns lack Machiavelli's own full horizon that he had inherited from the ancients and that "moderns may be Machiavellian more than disciples of Machiavelli" (*RAM*, 107). Most importantly, Strauss was to address the issue of the modern's lost access to "fundamental experiences" or lack of recognition of the "permanent problems." For McAllister, Strauss contrasts the permanent problems with the problem of Machiavelli. Machiavelli produces a constriction of the horizon. "The permanent problems," for Strauss, "concern the irremovable tensions between politics and philosophy, between practical matters and theory, between is and ought" (*RAM*, 109). Machiavelli placed philosophy in the service of politics and eliminated theory and the universal good from the political equation. Machiavelli solved a problem "at the expense of ignorance concerning the highest excellence open to humans as

individuals and as part of a political order" (*RAM*, 109). Though humans could now in godlike terms posit their own goals, they would also become like animals in losing sight of the noble, the excellent, the good.

McAllister most appropriately emphasizes Strauss's characterization of the United States as an example of a non-Machiavellian order because it included in its founding strong premodern teachings that enabled it to sustain a tradition of justice and freedom and to reaffirm the ideals of its society against the backdrop of particular failures. America has been, and Strauss ominously warns must continue to be, a society that escapes the restrictions caused by substituting instrumental reason or method-driven science for theoretical questions about the good and the just. As McAllister puts it, for Strauss, "in the United States, *techne* (technique or instrumental reason) had not entirely overtaken theory" (*RAM*, 109). McAllister helps the reader appreciate why Strauss and Voegelin are so severely critical of American social sciences' emphasis on *techne*, which has led to the forgetting of the fact that the United States was "founded in explicit opposition to Machiavellian principles."

There is an existential issue involved in Voegelin's reading of Hegel, according to McAllister; it involves a characterization of Hegel as modernity's paradigmatic man. Voegelin saw Hegel's intellectual project as a "revolt against the Christian reliance in a world-transcendent God by bringing God to earth in the mode of becoming and as immanent in history," thereby allowing for human mastery of their human world and fate (*RAM*, 110). In due course, according to Voegelin, God must be murdered to make way for human creativity and domination. While for Strauss the problem with modernity was purely philosophical (Machiavelli's new science of philosophy in competition with ancient science and philosophy), for Voegelin the problem was the recurrence of a spiritual disease requiring a return to the true science of the soul and order. McAllister's examination of Voegelin on Hegel centers on his lengthy essay "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery." Voegelin makes his critical point in the title, namely that there is a magical component of modernity. Gnostics expect to achieve a transformed humanity

through magic. A belief in the magical ability ("metastasis" was Voegelin's word) to change reality animated all gnostic thinkers, especially modern gnostics who emphasized revolution. Magicians or sorcerers are frauds or swindlers using tricks. Hegel is a magician and Voegelin exposes his tricks (*RAM*, 128).

Voegelin certainly recognized Hegel's brilliance. Yet Voegelin characterizes him as deforming reality as a divided self, a tortured soul. Hegel cannot gain the stature of his true self under God, which produces "the darkness of this existential deficiency" upon which "rises the *libido dominandi* and forces him into the imaginative construction of a false self as a messias of the new age" (*RAM*, 128). Since no person could actually become a god or alter his nature, Hegel must "eclipse" reality and construct a "second reality." Voegelin understands Hegel to see himself as the new Christ, the locus of spiritual energy that inaugurates a new age. The philosopher no longer limits himself to the search for wisdom (which recognizes human limitation) but seeks to use the symbol "science" to acquire a peculiarly modern magic. Voegelin's Hegel is intensely jealous of Napoleon passing through Hegel's town. Voegelin exposes Hegel's tricks, which served as expressions of his self-deification. The most important of these was a circularity of language. "The game was rigged, you can't win once you let yourself be sucked into accepting Hegel's language" (*RAM*, 130). Hegel replaces Jesus by bringing the fullest revelation in which spirit and flesh become one. This is a second reality created by Hegel, which is ill-fit to the human condition in the *metaxy* which is the actual in-between tensioned field between God and man, the divine and the mundane. Diseased souls who accept this second reality become most violent in their efforts to realize goals posited by the sorcerer's ideological deformation of reality. McAllister puts Voegelin's prescription quite simply when he states that "only a return to the balanced consciousness and an acceptance of the reality of the *metaxy* can deliver us from the violence and disorder of modernity" (*RAM*, 131).

Strauss's profound analysis of Machiavelli's project and Voegelin's profound analysis of Hegel's project were both, to be sure, highly controversial. Each of them would provide Strauss and Voegelin



with a firm foundation, along with other studies, for their critiques of modern liberalism.

For Strauss, American liberalism originally was grounded in two faiths—modern and premodern—drawing sustenance from modern natural rights theory and also from premodern beliefs in the Christian God and classical republican virtues. In effect, "unalienable rights were lodged in a larger framework that shaped the range of appropriate uses of these freedoms (*RAM*, 162). Strauss, from the vantage point of 1950, began to see a great change in which the United States was moving toward a German type of relativism. With the growth of prestige of an American social science, with its characteristic fact/value distinction, American social scientists would greatly influence the society to see humans as motivated by urges and aspirations with no natural right. This is the crisis of liberal democracy—to be wedded to ideals that are no longer defensible as good. Even modern natural right, shorn of religious support, leads to relativism. McAllister strongly emphasizes Strauss's view of the pernicious role social science plays in our liberal democracy, as we have also discussed above. McAllister rightly focuses on Strauss's analysis of the modern understanding of nature, which leads to the elevation of certain areas of knowledge as being useful for controlling or manipulating nature—including human nature. Yet science alone cannot address "the question of how this power ought to be used" (*RAM*, 163). As the premodern elements in the American regime diminish in the postwar period, and the prestige and influence of modern social science is enhanced, the United States would be left with unlimited modern natural right, escalating demands for greater and greater freedom, and a politics primarily grounded in the will to power. Like Weimar, we seem to be experiencing a growing inability to identify and defend our highest principles (*RAM*, 166).

Strauss and Voegelin both view modern humanity as having lost access to a wisdom that insists on evaluating the use of knowledge in terms of proper ends. Unlike Strauss, Voegelin argues that the human horizon, which naturally includes the apperception of the mysterious ground of human existence, suffered an artificial con-

striction in which modern humans have lost access to the actual ordering principles *inherent* in the reality of which they form a part. This artificial constriction produces for Voegelin the danger of modern liberalism, which is "the defense of the private good as the greatest good," as McAllister puts it (*RAM*, 170).

Although, Voegelin rarely comments on the current conditions of the spiritual bankruptcy of modern liberalism, McAllister cogently demonstrates that a close reading of certain essays by Voegelin, especially "The German University and the Order of German Society: A Reconsideration of the Nazi Era," will lead to much insight about Voegelin's view of the modern expressions of that bankruptcy. Like Strauss, Voegelin found the Weimar and Nazi past to be illuminating for contemporary liberal public life in general. What is required in studying Weimar, Nazism, and the German University is a "critical history" requiring those who pursue it to have a balanced consciousness. Modern liberal democracies tend to accept an individualistic ethic emphasizing one's uniqueness, elevating the private character of one's existence which tends to replace virtue, duty, or citizenship with freedom and originality. Universities no longer play the role of guardian and dispenser of the knowledge needed for rational public deliberation (*RAM*, 173). Modern education is not concerned with building character or orienting people to the nature of human reality as experienced by spiritually sensitive people. With this loss, a vacuum is created which the modern gnostics can exploit. "Those who have lost sight of the divine ground but who cannot believe in these 'second realities' are unable to respond" (*RAM*, 172). For Voegelin most intellectual leaders in postwar Germany and the West generally are spiritually incapable of understanding his critique. McAllister once again makes the correct point that "Voegelin must remain on the intellectual margins as long as his apperception of this larger context of human existence remains unbelievable to the larger intellectual community" (*RAM*, 172).

Despite the intellectual blindness around him, Voegelin still wrote with some hope that we can develop and teach a spiritually differentiated language that could counter such deformed language

symbols as the subject/object dichotomy. This development is crucial if we are to resist the language of "values" and "value-free science." A few contemporary Germans, though, could understand what Voegelin meant when he ended his German lecture with the example of the watchman who speaks God's words even though few will respond (Ezek. 33:7-9). In order to reach them Voegelin "had to create a new symbolic structure representing the noetic structure of existence while exposing the untrue structure and motivations of ideologies" (*RAM*, 173).

McAllister points quite properly to the affinities of Strauss's and Voegelin's diagnoses of the crisis of the West. Their answers to the crisis point in different, but by no means opposite, directions. McAllister devotes a chapter to Strauss "the philosopher" and Voegelin "the mystic."

Strauss's subtle understanding of the paradoxical nature of the relationship between the philosopher and the social order, in which the commands of the law and the philosophic quest to replace opinion with knowledge produce an obvious tension. The philosopher is "something of an outsider," such as the condition of a Jewish philosopher in a Christian society (*RAM*, 178). It was this "problem"-the quarrel between Jerusalem and Athens-that was to dominate Strauss's project throughout his career.

McAllister gives the reader a scrupulous discussion of the key texts that relate to the Jerusalem and Athens quarrel and Strauss's view that the Jewish problem is the most manifest symbol of the human problem insofar as it is a social or political problem (*RAM*, 178). For Strauss, "the political dependence [of Jews] was also spiritual dependence" (*RAM*, 180). The Jewish problem was more than a political problem; it could be addressed only as a socio-religious matter. Strauss argues that a regime that ignores the religious roots of conventional morality is vulnerable or spiritually weak. The Jewish problem appeared insoluble, because one must belong to a particular society. One must embrace one's community. A Jew must "return" to the Jewish faith and to the Jewish way of life. McAllister characterizes Strauss's own response to this situation as "ambiguous" because Strauss was a zetetic philosopher skeptical

about all beliefs yet open to the possibility of truth who, nonetheless, did call for a return to the ancient faith for the Jew (*RAM*, 182). This discussion of the Jewish problem, for Strauss, in the works of Spinoza, Herman Cohen, and Franz Rosenzweig focuses on the question of the relationship between orthodoxy and philosophy. The discussion emphasizes the appropriate moral posture that "prevents modern intellectuals from seeing clearly," according to McAllister's interpretation of Strauss's project (*RAM*, 181). The term for this moral posture, absent in these modern intellectuals, is "intellectual probity," which appreciates the impossibility of disproving revelation, seeks to understand revelation as believers understood it, and recognizes the danger of undermining religious beliefs through mockery. The Enlightenment thinkers "embraced their own epistemology with such tenacity that they eliminated all room for revelation" (*RAM*, 182). Strauss, in these terms, held up orthodoxy as an intellectually defensible alternative. McAllister claims that for Strauss, orthodoxy "serves a vital need" (*RAM*, 182).

McAllister describes Strauss's call for "return" as "oblique." For many, the law is really no more, God is dead, and we find ourselves in the sub-cave. Without the law, though, morality fades, political order is precarious, and no specific transcendent morality can be championed. Strauss's examination of Maimonides' prophetology led him to conclude that Moses had seen reality beyond the cave using his "imagination" as philosopher and prophet to see the general theory and the particular political order. He was not the traditional or conventional prophet; he was a gifted philosopher. Men as social beings need such prophets to give the law, which "must be of a sort that directs fractious human natures toward communal harmony," according to McAllister's characterization of Strauss (*RAM*, 202). The prophet is the founder of a society dedicated to human perfection, which is, by the way, philosophy. Moses, by providing the "divine" law, addressed the practical philosophical needs. All subsequent philosophers should defer to the law giver-a social order "requires a normative order that supersedes individual conceptions of right and wrong and that binds a people together in a common goal or purpose" (*RAM*, 203). The

few must instruct the many about proper beliefs concerning heavenly matters, which will then allow the philosopher to interpret and reinterpret the literal meaning of the legal text. The Torah is enormously flexible, which allows the philosopher, even commands him, to freely interpret the established legal foundation. This is medieval "enlightened" reason, which rejects efforts to reshape the world radically in contradistinction to modern "enlightened" reason, which reversed the priority of medieval Islamic and Jewish rationalism-the superiority of theory over practice-and sought to reconstruct the world. The modern enlightenment claimed that knowledge and reason could replace superstition and faith as the compass of human action. The many must be liberated from orthodox religion. Freedom of thought was possible for the many, not just the few. The many would be cut off from their moral roots subsequently producing alienated and egoistic creatures. As McAllister puts it, Strauss saw the many as gravitating toward "mass movements others to crass consumerism, but whichever way they went, the normative order fell apart. Not reason but passion ruled" (*RAM*, 204). Strauss, states McAllister, sought "to secure a rationale for other people to reconstruct [to return to] an old one [the insights and enlightened reason of Farabi and Maimonides]" (*RAM*, 204).

Strauss's "return" to Maimonides eschewed metaphysical questions and emphasized moral-political matters. Strauss and Maimonides as philosophers were not truly concerned with the "source" of the law. Strauss knew enough about the life of the philosopher to recognize the need for political philosophy (*RAM*, 205).

Strauss also "returns" to, or reconstructs, the Platonic concept of philosophy, which is centered on the question of how one should live; philosophy is a way of life rather than a rigid set of doctrines. For Strauss, genuine philosophers live with a "mania" or existential imperative that turns to "nature" as a means to understand the whole without appeal to authority and with agnosticism concerning which claims about god or the gods to believe. For Strauss, the philosopher lives in between relativism and orthodoxy. Strauss remained in the human realm, leaving others to examine divine things.

Those who pursue philosophy, in "Platonic" terms, are concerned with "permanent problems." They begin in wonder and doubt, refuse to accept hearsay or authority, and begin to pursue their own investigation of conflicting opinions. This may produce a synthesis that partly purifies opinions of their conventional properties. An ascent may take place not producing complete knowledge, but an understanding of the permanent problems and the range of answers available to human beings. The philosopher annoys the citizens of the city and is endangered. The Platonic philosopher learns to become the political philosopher (*RAM*, 216). The Platonic Socrates, then, "must have moved to a greater concern for, and awareness of, souls and their natures" (*RAM*, 216). This awareness implicates the political by leading to Socrates' accommodating himself to the city. For Strauss, Platonic political philosophy emerges as an astute presentation of philosophy as well as a philosophy of politics.

Strauss's own great work of political philosophy is *Natural Right and History*. McAllister centers his attention on Strauss's discussion of Platonic political philosophy. The conclusion drawn about the Platonic conception of the philosopher is that he must concern himself with the health of the city, which is coeval with the health of philosophy. Cities cannot promote the skeptical life and survive. Laws are dependent upon some myth about the nature of reality and right and wrong. Political questions are always moral and religious. Liberal democracies, which can be friendly to philosophy, cannot long survive if they are actually grounded in the pursuit of idiosyncratic individual happiness alone. Without a social myth, society, whether liberal democratic or not, will slowly lose the means of protecting itself (*RAM*, 220). Strauss wanted to "breathe new life into the quest for transhistorical truth about natural right" in order to secure a political and moral center as well as revive a "defensible religious faith," according to McAllister, because Strauss recognized that political societies depended upon some metaphysical construction. Strauss respected religious faith in terms of its political utility, in terms of the respectable people who possess such faith, and in terms of the natural or common-sense experience of the world which

is bound up in religious/mythological expressions of reality. Modern atheistic dogmatism, as expressed by historicists and positivists, has to be attacked by Strauss, according to McAllister, if the damage done to the cause of faith is to be repaired in the interest of true enlightenment as best understood by the premodern Islamic and Jewish philosophers. McAllister characterizes Strauss as a "conservative" in a special sense. He lived the life of the mind in search of enlightenment-of the truths locked away in great books. McAllister states that "Strauss was forced to speak to his society because Heidegger could not. Strauss felt compelled to answer Heidegger's silence" (*RAM*, 221). We might also add that Strauss felt compelled to speak to a civil society that was deeply undermined by a social science that "fiddles while Rome burns." Pathetically, the political science discipline does not even realize that it is fiddling and that Rome is burning. He is a conservative in the sense that he calls for a return to the problems, alternatives, vital tensions, and guiding principles found in the quarrel of philosophy and biblical religion, the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, and the quarrel of philosophy and poetry. Such a "return" could restore the social vitality of the United States and the West (*RAM*, 221). McAllister is correct to apply the label "conservative" to Strauss if *we* understand it to mean that Strauss was deeply concerned with both the revival of religious education of the people and of liberal education of the representatives of the people.

McAllister refers to Voegelin as the mystic whose philosophical investigations were concerned with the individual soul and the understanding of consciousness. His work was indeed "unfashionable" (*RAM*, 222). The mysteries of humans, society, history, and God rest in the depths of the human soul. Order and disorder are attunement to, or alienation from, the truths apperceived in the soul. Voegelin's historical analysis "sought to recapture the experience that created the symbols of order that, for him, constituted history" (*RAM*, 224). For Voegelin there is a historical "reality" that allows communication across huge cultural divides. Plato's experiences could make sense only when they engender a "responsive experience" in us. What is required, according to Voegelin, is an openness.

What is the universal experience resting beneath the historically conditioned veneer of the spiritual struggle of Moses or Plato?

McAllister alerts us to the fact that Voegelin's use of *consciousness* "most nearly parallels Heidegger's *Dasein* as the place in being where being becomes aware of itself (a process Voegelin called 'luminosity')." (*RAM*, 232). The specter of Heidegger haunts all three of the *peregrine* discussed in this review essay. Voegelin's understanding of consciousness is not that of a relationship, but as a participation event. "Humans learn about the story in which they discover themselves only from the perspective of participants" (*RAM*, 232). The luminous discovery identifies a part of reality in which "the knower and the known move into tensional poles in a consciousness we call luminous as far as it engenders symbols which express the experience of its own structure" (*RAM*, 234). For both Strauss and Voegelin, Plato stands at the beginning of a search often "derailed" by modernity.

Voegelin appropriates from Plato the symbol and word *metaxy* -meaning "in-between"-as peculiar to the human condition. We participate in both immanent reality and transcendent reality in which the philosophers among us search (*zetema*) for the ground of existence. The mutual attraction of the human *nous* and the divine *nous* produces consciousness. The experiences of Moses and Plato are "equivalent" and rest on a theophanic ground even if they expose different dimensions of the common experienced reality. "In sharp contrast to Strauss," states McAllister, "Voegelin did not juxtapose faith and reason, nor did he suggest that they were complementary faculties. Faith and reason belong together as part of the same experience" (*RAM*, 248).

There is no history without God, according to Voegelin. However, the mystery-human interaction with the divine-cannot be penetrated by a set of doctrines about the nature of God. Voegelin considered himself, when asked, to be a pre-Nicean Christian. His prime concern was the reification of the history of Christian symbols. The problem with modern civilization is that it has inherited and reified the earlier symbols of differentiated consciousness that found its synthesis in Christianity. Those earlier symbols have lost



their transparency to truth and have become deformed. The consequence of this deformation is a "bastardized set of ideas" and gnostic ideologies. These ideas do not rest upon an experiential base nor do they orient individuals or societies to being (*RAM*, 254). Individuals who cannot live in-between in the pole of reality beyond human control (*libido dominandi*) select from any array of ideas or ideologies. For Voegelin, modern political science rests, as well, upon an anti-metaphysical bias springing from a lust for power and control in which there is a virtual eclipse of the transcendent pole of reality and a reification of immanent reality. Losing access to the *metaxy*, modern political scientists could not conceive of a right order. They talk instead of "values." Cut off from participation in the *metaxy*, there can be no adjudication (*RAM*, 258-59). Consequently, a deformed political science can offer no resistance to the development of the most monstrous ideologies. McAllister is convinced that Voegelin believed that America and the West could not last long in a world of epiphenomenal "values" and with such a minimalist conception of the good. An understanding of the good that is "larger than collective individual goods...requires an understanding of consciousness that enlarges the realm of human participation to include the divine pole of reality" (*RAM*, 259). As McAllister puts it, Voegelin did not call for any old God-as Strauss came close to advocating-but for the mysterious God beyond existence whose revelations are revelations of mystery. Politics is equally dangerous with reified gods or with no god at all (*RAM*, 250). This statement gives us a most felicitous summary of Voegelin's approach to a new science of politics along with an ungracious swipe at Strauss's approach to God. Perhaps McAllister and others would do well to consider Strauss's most revealing and subtle lecture, now published, "Why We Remain Jews: Can Jewish Faith and History Still Speak to Us?"<sup>5</sup>

McAllister in his conclusion reveals the strengths and weaknesses of his work. He demonstrates admirably Strauss's and Voegelin's search for a normative order, finding few definitive answers, yet shaping intellectually the few people who pursue the search. By attracting some who are open to the possibility of truth they help save philosophy and perhaps even serve society. These

approaches to the soul as a natural hierarchy of parts or the ordered soul in the *metaxy* are certainly timeless. I am not convinced, however, that many politically oriented conservatives such as libertarians, the religious right, supply-side economists, or even most traditionalists have been profoundly influenced by Strauss or Voegelin. Both strongly objected to being labeled conservative or traditionalist and for good reason. Both of these German emigres could not uncritically accept market ideologies, the prestige of American social science, or political or religious orthodoxies. Strauss and Voegelin would also become very ambivalent about America's particular traditions of individualism, scientism, and egalitarianism. The philosopher and the mystic, each pursuing his own search, would provide us with cognitive resources that could be used against modern social science for the achievement of personal wholeness and social coherence. Their legacy is best understood as propaedeutic. What finally mattered most to both of them was to serve as guides for the perplexed in modern times-to attract a few to pursue the search for wisdom, to get the many to consider putting their lives in the service of common ideals and to see their private concerns as part of something larger and more significant. Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin both brilliantly struggled with the question that Friedrich Nietzsche posed around the turn of the last century:

And now the myth-less man remains eternally hungering among all the bygones, and digs and grubs for roots, though he has to dig for them even among the remotest antiquities. The stupendous historical exigency of the unsatisfied modern culture, the gathering around one of the countless other cultures, the consuming desire for knowledge-what does all this point to, if not to the loss of myth, the loss of the mythical home, the mythical source.'

Kenneth L. Deutsch  
State University of New York-Geneseo

## NOTES

1. Quotations from Voegelin are cited in Marion Montgomery, *The Men I Have Chosen for Fathers: Literary and Philosophical Passages* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), pp. 138-39.
2. Quotations from David Luban, "Explaining Dark Times: Hannah Arendt's Theory of Theory" in Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman (eds.), *Hannah Arendt: Critical Essays* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 86-87.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
4. Herbert J. Storing (ed.), *Essays in the Scientific Study of Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962), p. 221.
5. Kenneth L. Deutsch and Walter Nicgorslā (eds.), *Leo Strauss: Political Philosopher and Jewish Thinker*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Pubs., 1994), p. 52.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Hausmann (Edinburgh, Scotland: Foulis, 1910), p. 175.