Reason and Revelation in the

Work of Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin

The title of this paper indicates a subject-matter far too extensive to discuss properly in a short paper, or even a long one. This was not always true. In 1993, when Peter Emberley and I drew together 53 letters by Strauss and Voegelin, the task was relatively manageable.[1] [1] The eight commentaries in Part III of that book provide the evidence. Fifteen years ago it was possible to argue that Voegelin's hermeneutic of experience and symbolization was sharply distinct from Strauss's "total commitment to Greek philosophy,&#65533; as Tom Altizer put it (p. 267). A few pages later, Tom Pangle contrasted "Voegelin's faith-inspired historical philosophizing or philosophy of history&#65533; with Strauss's "intransigent stand for philosophy as rigorous science&#65533; (p. 341).

Several commentaries drew attention to a remark by Strauss from his 1954 paper, "The Mutual Influence of Theology and Philosophy,&#65533; also included with the correspondence, that: "no one can be both a philosopher and a theologian or, for that matter, a third which is beyond the conflict between philosophy and theology, or a synthesis of both&#65533; (p. 217). Or, as Strauss wrote to Voegelin (25/02/1951) "every synthesis is actually an option either for Jerusalem or for Athens&#65533; (p. 78). Voegelin replied that "the problem of revelation,&#65533; along with the form of the

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[1] [1] Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964, tr. and ed., Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). A second edition, without the commentaries was published by the University of Missouri Press in 2004. References to the first edition are given in parentheses in the text.

Platonic dialogue, was "quite rightly identified in your letter as the cardinal points at which our views probably differ" (p.80).

There is also an element of accident that should be noted. Prior to the publication of the correspondence the only public evidence that Strauss and Voegelin were aware of one another was the 1949 review by Voegelin of Strauss's study of Xenophon's Hiero, and Strauss's response to it a few years later (pp. 44-57). Most political scientists during the 1950s and 1960s would likely have categorized the two scholars, probably along with Hannah Arendt, Yves Simon, and perhaps Jacques Maritain, as "political theorists," the most familiar exemplar of which was George Sabine, and before him, reaching back to the turn of the century, W.A. Dunning.[2] [2]

By the late 1960s, the differences among these practitioners of "political theory," and specifically between Strauss and Voegelin, gradually fell into focus. To simplify but not unduly distort, many who read Voegelin were also concerned with theology and comparative religion, for example, whereas, it is probably accurate to say that many who read Strauss carefully were chiefly, not say exclusively, concerned with the tradition of western "political philosophy." Indeed, the term "political philosophy," as a term of art, was introduced by Strauss, so far as I can tell, in a lecture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in the winter of 1954-55.[3] [3]

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[2] [2] See John G. Gunnell, "The Myth of the Tradition," APSR 72:1 (1978) 122-34.

[3] [3] Gunnell noted that the term, "political philosophy" was "problematic," but he did not remark upon its novelty nor how the structure of the essay that introduced it had its own integrity - not unlike the recently republished essay by Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" According to Gunnell, "there is no greater interpretative prejudice than approaching these works [that are part of 'the tradition'] as if they were philosophical exercises undertaken within the conventions of some particular ongoing activity." "The Myth," 133.

In the past fifteen years a number of things have changed regarding the scholarly literature on the work of both Voegelin and Strauss. I would like to suggest a couple of them today and indicate that these changes may have a bearing on how we understand the work of these two men on this particular question. I will begin with Voegelin.

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In his article "The Vocation of a Scholar,&#65533; J&#65533;rgen Gebhardt argued that Voegelin was first and last a scientist, a Wissenschaftler and not, to use Gebhardt's language, a prophet or a Church Father.[4] [4] In support of his view and of the distinction he drew between scientific and other vocations, Gebhardt quoted a remark Voegelin made in 1976 at the Thomas More Institute in Montreal, in answer to a question regarding the adequacy of a Thomistic handling of the statement of Jesus, "before Abraham was, I am&#65533; (John 8:58).

"That's a large order,&#65533; Voegelin began (CW, 33:325-6). The problem, in summary form, was that the distinction made by Thomas, between philosophy as the achievement of "natural reason&#65533; and theology that results from "supernatural revelation&#65533; just "doesn't hold water.&#65533; Many Greek poets and philosophers have discussed their revelation experiences in the context of their account of the structure of reality, Voegelin said. Thomas, on the other hand was concerned with salvation out of the structure of reality.

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[4] [4] Gebhardt, in Stephen A. McKnight and Geoffrey L. Price, eds., International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Eric Voegelin, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 10-34.

Voegelin then illustrated the problem with the example of a state-supported university housing a department of religious studies where students were taught every religion except Christianity because of concerns over the constitutional separation of Church and State. "Everywhere,[illegible] he continued,

> such departments of religion you run into somebody who is bright enough to ask himself occasionally whether it is just a question of the Buddha having a conception of something, and Confucius having another one, and so on [illegible] or whether perhaps they have all experienced the same Divine reality and there is only one God who manifests Himself, reveals Himself, in a highly diversified manner all over the globe for all these millennia of history that we know. The mere fact that we now have in history a global empirical knowledge extending into the archaeological millennia all over earth requires a theology that is a bit less confined to Islam or to Christianity. It must explain why a God who is the God of some witch doctor in Africa is the same God who appeared to Moses as "I am[illegible] or to Plato in a Promethean fire. And that theology is unfortunately not yet in existence.
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> P. Coonan: But wouldn't you have to use philosophy in order to try to understand the evidence and the formulation?
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> E. Voegelin: Absolutely.
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> P. Coonan: But it is a distinct job, you're not yet doing theology?
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> E. Voegelin: It is a distinct job to develop a theology in the Platonic sense [illegible] to know all these various types of theologies, the various types of faith, and to analyze their structures [illegible] always with an eye to the problem that even the most exotic ones, ones that may appear primitive to us, are revelations that have to be respected (CW, 33:326).

It was clear from the subsequent questions Voegelin was asked that the more or less pious Catholics at the Thomas More Institute were distressed at the notion that the God who is the God of "some witch doctor in Africa" had anything to do with the Yahweh of Moses. It was also clear from the conversation with Patricia Coonan that she objected to Voegelin's implication that theology was no longer the queen of the sciences, as it was for St. Thomas.

Gebhardt concluded from this exchange that Voegelin had no intention of formulating any such "new theology" because his analytical understanding of the experiential sources of symbolic orders led him to conclude that "the language of the gods...is fraught with the problem of symbolizing the experience of a not-experientiable divine reality" (CW, 18:83). As a result, because the language of gods tends to be misconstrued as referring to "a divine entity "beyond' the experience of the [presence of the] Beyond," then the gods must die when a more adequate language is achieved. In this way "the historical scene becomes littered with dead gods." On the other hand, if language is not misconstrued "the succession of the gods becomes a series of events to be remembered" as the history of the presence of the Beyond. What has history, what leaves a historical trace, is not the Beyond, which is also "beyond history," but the presence of the Beyond "in the bodily located consciousness of questioning man." That is, "the experience of the non-experientiable divine reality has history," namely "the history of truth emerging from the quest for truth" that in turn occurs "in the bodily located consciousness of questioning man" and so constitutes an element of his (or her) biography. In this respect, "the serious effort of the quest for truth acquires the character of a divine comedy" (CW, 18:84). In other words, there is no Beyond beyond the experience of the presence of a Beyond. And that being so, the focus of science is on the experience and its symbolization, not the imaginary hypostasis of a

Beyond beyond experience. This is why Voegelinian political science is empirical in the precise, Aristotelian sense.[5] [5]

A second piece of evidence, to which Gebhardt referred, was a 1953 letter Voegelin wrote to Thomas I. Cook, a professor of political theory at John Hopkins. Cook had taken issue with Voegelin's "theological premises" in The New Science of Politics because, "being an agnostic with [respect to] religious sentiments" he could not share Voegelin's approach (HI, 9:28). In his reply, after noting his ignorance of the origin of this attitude, even though it is "widespread in our academic environment," Voegelin set him straight:

> The question whether anybody is an agnostic, or religiously inclined, or whether he is both at the same time, as it seems to be your predicament, has, in my opinion, nothing to [do] whatsoever with theoretical issues. I feel even unable to return your confidence on this point, for the good reason that I am not clear myself about my own state of sentiments in such matters. Metaphysics is not a "premise" of anything, as far as I am familiar with the works of philosophers, but the result of a process in which a philosopher explicates in rational symbols his various experiences, especially the experiences of transcendence. And the same goes for Christianity: theology is not a premise, but a result of experiences. As far as political science is concerned, we are faced with the fact that such experiences are constituent elements in social order. Insofar they are facts of political history, a theory of politics, therefore, must take cognizance of these facts and interpret them on their own terms, that is, as experiences of transcendent order, articulating themselves in metaphysics and theology. As a critical scientist I have to accept these facts of order, whatever my personal opinion about them should be.

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[5] [5] Barry Cooper, "Eric Voegelin, Empirical Political Scientist" in Cooper, The Restoration of Political Science and the Crisis of Modernity (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 271-82.

Voegelin went on to explain that he was not operating with any theological premise at all but with empirically tenable propositions, namely that experiences of transcendence are capable of rational articulation in theology and metaphysics. To deal with such experiences you no more have to be a theologian "than you have to be a great artist in order to write a competent study on Rembrandt.&#65533; There is, however, one "difficulty,&#65533; and that is that "your theoretical instrument must be adequate.&#65533; And, in fact, the most adequate theoretical instruments of the treatment of these facts, happen to be (as might be expected) the theoretical articulations provided for such experiences by the men who had them. In brief: in order to interpret Plato or Christianity adequately, the theories developed by Plato or St. Augustine will prove considerably more adequate than the theories developed by such comparatively provincial thinkers as James or Dewey (CW, 30:187-8). Voegelin then assured Cook this was not a dogmatic statement but an empirical observation. As Matthew Arnold said in a similar discussion with the proponent of what in Victorian times was called an agnostic position with respect to Biblical revelation: "try it; try reading and thinking about it.&#65533; It is clear from subsequent correspondence with Cook that his theoretical instrument was incapable of grasping Voegelin's point.

As with the remarks made in In Search of Order on the Beyond quoted above, the significance nevertheless seems clear enough. The task of the philosopher, scientist, or scholar is to account for experiences of transcendence insofar as they are part of the reality he studies. And, in fact, those experiences happen to be a significant constituent element of the order of the political world. In addition the scholar must reflect on his own experiences of philosophizing in order to understand the philosophizing experiences of others. Gebhardt then drew a perfectly sensible conclusion: that which "constitutes the intelligibility of the diverse civilizational processes is the historical equivalence of the plural modes of human participation in the one

comprehensive reality of God, world, and human being. Voegelin expresses this common point of reference as the symbol "universal humanity' that reflects the universal structure of human existence."[6] [6]

Once again, however, as with the symbol, the Beyond, universal humanity " or "universal mankind," to use Voegelin's term " is not "a society existing in the world, but a symbol that indicates man's consciousness of participating, in his earthly existence, in the mystery of a reality that moves towards its transfiguration. Universal mankind is an eschatological index" (CW, 17:376). In other words, even though historical events are founded in the biophysical existence of human beings on earth, who live their lives in the time of the external world of plants, animals, and things, this biophysical existence becomes "historical" insofar as it is lived not in the external world but in the presence of the divine, which is not a "spatio-temporal given." There are plenty of complexities in Voegelin's formulation that may need to be clarified, but the general meaning is obvious: what Gebhardt referred to as "the universal structure of human existence" appears in the world as specific and particular symbolizations of experiences of a truth that transcends the occasion of its manifestation. Gebhardt's focus, in short, was on the empirical.

Frederick Lawrence, in the next article in the book following Gebhardt's, took issue with him.[7] [7] He began by referring to a paper, "Voegelin's Order and History: A Civitas Dei for the

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[6] [6] Gebhardt, "The Vocation of a Scholar," 31.

[7] [7] Lawrence, "The Problem of Eric Voegelin, Mystic Philosopher and Scientist,' 35-58. Page references to these two articles are given in parentheses in the text.

Twenty-first Century?" delivered by Paul Caringella to the second international conference on Voegelin hosted by the University of Manchester in the summer of 1994.[8] [8] As Caringella's title indicated, he argued that there were a number of parallels between Voegelin and St. Augustine. There are good commonsensical as well as textual reasons for thinking so. After all, Voegelin used as an epigraph for Order and History a passage from Augustine's On True Religion. In particular, Caringella drew attention to the meditative quality of the work of both thinkers, which Lawrence called the "mystical dimension" of Voegelin's thought. Whatever Lawrence meant by that term, it was to be contrasted with what he referred to as Gebhardt's "rationalism." Lawrence's argument was meant to show that "it is false to contrast his [Voegelin's] achievements in the restoration of reason in political science, with his meditative endeavour" (36). Now, Lawrence, Caringella, and Gebhardt are all first-rate scholars so it is important to discover whether they were simply emphasizing different aspects of Voegelin's text or whether they disagreed fundamentally about its meaning. I should add that the purpose of the present analysis of the issue between Lawrence and Gebhardt is neither to find some accommodating and conciliatory "middle ground" nor to provide an opinion as to who was more "correct" in his interpretation, as if we were assigning grades on a term paper, but to illuminate a problem central to Voegelin's political science.

Caringella argued that Voegelin's "first anamnesis" was the "meditative unit," consisting of his anamnetic experiments of 1943, his paper, "On the Theory of Consciousness,"

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[8] [8] Many of the papers were published in Hughes, McKnight, and Price, eds., Politics, Order and History; others were published in McKnight and Price, eds. International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives, where the Gebhardt and Lawrence papers are to be found.

and his letter to Alfred Sch&#65533;tz of September, 1943, on Husserl, all of which were collected in Anamnesis (1966) (CW, 6:45-98). The background of this meditative unit was found in Voegelin's Herrschaftslehre of the early 1930s, and also in a "Privatseminar&#65533; he gave in 1936-7 at his apartment in Vienna.[9] [9] On the basis of this first anamnesis, Voegelin was able to understand the importance of Vico as a kind of inoculation against the promise of Hegel that he had created a final and complete system of science.[10] [10]

According to Caringella, Voegelin's "second anamnesis&#65533; took place during the decade after 1964 and found it initial expression in his paper "Eternal Being and Time&#65533; (CW, 6:312-37) and a more complete formulation in the middle chapters of The Ecumenic Age (CW, 17:229-339). The "third anamnesis&#65533; started with the 1977 paper "The Beginning and the Beyond&#65533; and ended with Voegelin's analysis of Plato's Timaeus in In Search of Order (CW, 28:173-232; 18:103-4). From Caringella's presentation, Lawrence drew the conclusion that Voegelin's three anamneses corresponded to Augustine's Confessions and that his Order and History corresponded to Augustine's City of God. Accordingly, "Voegelin's career traces an anamnetic ascent not unlike that of Augustine&#65533; (42), the Church Father.

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[9] [9] The seminar was called "Introduction to Philosophical Meditation&#65533; and was described as follows: "We will examine the nature of philosophical meditation as found in selected readings drawn from the Indian Upanishads, Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, Maimonides, Descartes, etc., to show that it is the basic form of philosophizing.&#65533; HI, 86:3. See also Thomas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella, "Editor's Introduction&#65533; to CW, 28: xxvii, fn 19, and William M. Thompson, "Philosophy an Meditation: Notes on Eric Voegelin's View&#65533; in Glen Hughes, ed., The Politics of the Soul: Eric Voegelin on Religious Experience (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 115-35.

[10] [10] See the Vico chapter in CW, 24:100ff and Barry Cooper, Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 335-82.

For reasons noted above, such a commonsensical conclusion is unobjectionable, but not particularly insightful. The interesting problem emerges from Lawrence's analysis of Gebhardt. Unfortunately, he did not always provide a systematic commentary on the development of Gebhardt's argument. As a result, it is not always possible to compare the two commentators' texts with those of Voegelin. The present analysis of these two papers, accordingly, aims to indicate the logical structure of the problem Gebhardt and Lawrence were dealing with.

Lawrence began by retranslating Gebhardt's English back into German. Thus "The Vocation of a Scholar,[illegible] Gebhardt's title, echoed the famous lecture of Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf,[illegible] which could also be translated "Scholarship as a Vocation.[illegible]

Second, Lawrence noted that, according to Gebhardt, Voegelin "would have resented being elevated to a modern Church Father[illegible] but Lawrence neglected to add that this was because, in Gebhardt's view, Voegelin "would have preferred to have his work compared to Plato's, or to that of Bodin, who was his favourite among modern political thinkers[illegible] (Gebhardt, 13; Lawrence, 43). It is perhaps worth recalling that, so far as Voegelin was concerned, both Plato and Bodin could be properly described as mystics (CW, 12: 360-5; 6: 393-6. See also CW, 34: 137-8 for Voegelin's understanding of the term "mystic philosopher[illegible]).

Third, Lawrence (43) quoted Gebhardt (13) that "the very nature of a modern scholar's search for truth[illegible] makes it an on-going process that "resists being finalized in terms of a literary corpus,[illegible] such as the Bible, "that will be transmitted and expounded by future generations.[illegible] Rather, Gebhardt said, the modern scholar's search for truth exists "within the ever-expanding ecumenic horizon of empirical knowledge[illegible] Lawrence interpreted this observation of Gebhardt

as referring to the modern "knowledge explosion" that "has made it virtually nonsensical to compare the situation for the philosophic integration of scientific results with that of premodern philosophy and theology" (44). He passed over in silence, however, Gebhardt's next sentence: "Voegelin characterized Augustine's work as "the summa of the age that has laid the foundation of Western Christian civilization' and [Gebhardt continued] Augustine's spirituality was undoubtedly a formative experience that shaped Voegelin's meditative efforts from the very beginning of his theoretical work" (Gebhardt, 13. The quote from Voegelin on Augustine is from CW, 19:206). Such statements by Gebhardt and Voegelin did not imply that Voegelin understood himself as a modern Augustine, or that Augustine was not so much a philosopher as an ecclesiastical statesman or Church Father.

Gebhardt then advanced the view that Voegelin considered philosophical anthropology to be the fundamental science for all the other "sciences of the socio-historical world" (14). He then explained the implications of this statement with reference to the changes between the position of Voegelin elaborated in The New Science of Politics and the first three volumes of Order and History with the position detailed in the fourth volume, The Ecumenic Age. To simplify somewhat: in the early works, Voegelin conceived the historical differentiation of human experience achieved by Christianity and philosophy to be a "maximum" so that any retreat from "the revelation of the logos in history" constituted a "recession." On these grounds Voegelin detected a "civilizational cycle of world-historical proportions" (CW, 5:221-2). The first three volumes of Order and History were written on the basis of this essentially Vichian corso.

In volume four of Order and History, however, Voegelin reflected on the limitations of such a cycle, world-historical or not, and concluded that the epochal events of philosophy and revelation, or, to use his contemporary formulations, of noetic and pneumatic theophanic experiences, occurred within the ecumenic age, to use the title of the book.[11] [11] According to Gebhardt, this new interpretation was faithful to the theoretical interpretative principles that had guided his inquiry from the beginning, namely the science of order based on a critical theory of human existence, or a philosophical anthropology. Faithfulness to this hermeneutic accounts for why Voegelin abandoned the "history of ideas" approach to political order and it explains as well the changes between volumes three and four of Order and History. Moreover, the application of this interpretative strategy to the ever increasing material produced by the historical sciences – Lawrence's information explosion – has engendered a new theoretical perspective.

Gebhardt's formulation regarding this new perspective was that a "good part" of the institutional and intellectual heritage of Christianity was no longer "socially relevant," including a great deal of patrology (or patristics) and scholasticism.[12] [12] Other parts of the Christian heritage, including faith formed in love (fides caritata formata), the psychology of concupiscence and pride, and certain theological formulations of Eckhart and Schelling, were "not yet ripe for falling into oblivion." Gebhardt interpreted the observation that Voegelin made in a 1945 letter to Karl Löwith as follows: "At closer inspection, the 'essence' of

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[11] [11] See Barry Cooper, "Voegelin's Concept of Historiogenesis," Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques 4:2 (1978), 232-5.

[12] [12] Gebhardt, 16-17, was quoting from a letter from Voegelin to Karl Löwith, 8 February, 1945; HI, 24:4.

Christianity turns out to be a modernist, antitraditional, and antidoctrinal philosophical exegesis of the spiritual core of historical Christianity. Consequently, it is radically dissociated from the ecclesiastical establishment (17).

If the allusion to Feuerbach's notorious Essence of Christianity were not sufficiently provocative, Gebhardt's inference regarding the implications of radical dissociation from the ecclesiastical establishment, that is, the Church, certainly was. First, Gebhardt quoted an excerpt from Voegelin's History of Political Ideas that, in its entirety reads as follows:

> If we formulate somewhat drastically the deepest sentiment that causes the postmedieval spiritual tensions of the West, we might say: the bearers of Western civilization do not want to be a senseless appendix to the history of antiquity. On the contrary, they want to understand their civilizational existence as meaningful. If the church is not able to see the hand of God in the history of mankind, men will not remain peaceable and satisfied but will go out in search of gods who take some interest in their civilizational efforts. The church has abandoned its spiritual leadership insofar as it has left postmedieval man without guidance in his endeavors to find meaning in a complex civilization that differs profoundly in its horizons of reason, nature, and history from the ancient civilization that was absorbed and penetrated by the early church. In the face of this abandonment of the magisterium it is futile for Christian thinkers to accuse modern man who will not submit to the authority of the church of superbia. There is always enough superbia in man to make the accusation plausible, but the complaint dodges the real issue: that man in search of authority cannot find it in the church, through no fault of his own. From dissatisfaction at being engaged in a civilizational process without meaning stem the attempts at a reconstruction of meaning through the evocation of a new "sacred history that began with Voltaire. And with Voltaire began as well the concerted attack on Christian symbols and the attempt at evoking an image of man in the cosmos under the guidance of inner-worldly reason (CW, 24:56-7).

Voegelin was clearly referring to a historical situation, namely the abandonment, in fact, of the magisterium by the Church and to the even more regrettable consequences that followed, starting with "Voltaire's attack,&#65533; to use the heading of the next section in Voegelin's History.

Gebhardt then raised a question with which Lawrence took issue. Granted that the Church had abandoned its spiritual leadership, where would modern or postmedieval men and women find it? Gebhardt answered his own question: "I suggest it is the philosopher-scholar who is called upon to accept the office of magisterium and defend it against intellectual usurpers.&#65533; Indeed, he continued, Voegelin himself determined "the extent of his [own] magisterium by defining science as a truthful account of the structure of reality&#65533; (18). Gebhardt did allow both that The New Science of Politics (1952) "may be called Voegelin's most Christian book&#65533; (15) and that the even earlier History of Political Ideas more or less conforms to the corso outlined in Vico's New Science. Starting with The Ecumenic Age, however, he agreed emphatically with what Gregor Sebba said even about the first three volumes: "Christian symbolism, however helpful in analyzing modern Western ideologies, provided no instrument for dealing with the problem of human (as distinct from Western) history.&#65533;[13] [13] Hence Voegelin's efforts after 1960 or so, to develop a theoretical language adequate to the task of accounting for "an ever-expanding knowledge of the socio-historical world&#65533; that was unlimited by the specifically Western and Christian "language of the gods.&#65533;

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[13] [13] Sebba, The Collected Essays of Gregor Sebba: Truth, History, and Imagination, ed., Helen Sebba, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 92.

Lawrence indicated his understanding of Gebhardt's remark concerning the philosophical exegesis of historical Christianity as being necessarily dissociated from the ecclesiastical establishment by asking the following question: "is not Gebhardt invoking that distinction between philosophy and theology, between reason and revelation, that Voegelin ultimately deemed pass�?� He then added a second question: "does this translatio magisterii from Church to philosopher-scholars imply the not-so-subtle and familiar post-Enlightenment position that philosophy, instead of being a fides quaerens intellectum,[14] [14] is rather reason unillumined by faith, which, in the guise of the empirical human science of politics, has the task of sublating in the sense of eliminating faith in a manner scarcely distinguishable from the procedure of Hegel?" (45).

There are several things to be sorted out here. Most obviously, Lawrence accused Gebhardt, to employ the language of The New Science of Politics, of having regressed from the maximum differentiation of Christianity and philosophy in the direction of "the empirical human science of politics. Second, Gebhardt did so "in the guise of this political science but in fact had another agenda, namely the promotion of a "familiar post-Enlightenment position that, third, was operationalized by means of Hegel's procedure of Aufhebung "sublation being one of the technical words used in English to render Hegel's term. If the reference to fides quaerens intellectum was not simply a slip, Lawrence was indicating that philosophy as well as theology was faith in search of understanding, a position that was intelligible to Voegelin's understanding of science but one that is not self-evident (see CW, 5:276; 6:168 and compare

[14] [14] "Faith seeking understanding is the term Anselm of Canterbury used to describe theology. Anselm is occasionally identified as the founder of scholasticism. See also CW, 1:294.

with 15:290). Whatever one makes of these implications, it was clear that Lawrence was "arguing strongly" against what he called "this element of rationalist bias in Gebhardt's interpretation of Voegelin" (45). Of course, he conceded, Gebhardt may not have intended "such an interpretative twist" but nevertheless it stands in need of a "corrective" and, Lawrence said, one had been supplied by Caringella.

Clearly there is a disagreement between Gebhardt and Lawrence, though its precise contours are difficult to specify. Lawrence did not, for example, explain what he meant by calling Gebhardt a "rationalist." We can perhaps identify the issue more closely by questioning whether, or in what sense, Voegelin "deemed pass" the distinction between reason and revelation. As a practical matter it is not pass" insofar as individuals bolster their arguments on the priority of one or another of the two terms with a peppering of quotations from Voegelin. Again, as a practical matter there is a problem with what Lawrence called "an obscurantist dedifferentiation" among exegetes of Voegelin that would so strongly emphasize "the mystical element" as to eclipse the scientific argument (46). And finally as a practical matter, the essentially Averroist position allegedly adopted by, for example, Leo Strauss, has much to recommend it.[15] [15]

These prudential considerations do not however touch the theoretical issue contained in what Voegelin called "the problem of meditation." An investigation of this problem, naturally enough, begins from the present situation where, once again, the quest for truth is at issue. In the

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[15] [15] See Cooper, New Political Religions: An Analysis of Modern Terrorism (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 185-98.

1981 paper from which Lawrence quoted, "The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order" (CW, 33:384ff), Voegelin discussed the two different types of search, which, to simplify, we shall refer to as reason and revelation – or, if one prefers, noetic and pneumatic experiences and symbolizations of a (or the) search. He also discussed the distinct ethnic communities, which, again to simplify, we can identify as the Hellenic and the Israelite, within which those distinct types of searches were undertaken. When these ethnic communities were brought together in the great ecumenic empires of the Mediterranean basin, the effort was made somehow to combine the previously existing searches for truth – a theology that combined the elements of revelation from the Bible with philosophical language. In this context Voegelin mentioned Philo and "a Christian theology strongly dependent on the theology of Philo" (CW, 33:388; see also the discussion in The Ecumenic Age, CW, 17:75ff). Today, however, Voegelin said, such an effort at systematizing or combining reason and revelation "is no longer needed." Why not? Because "today our historical knowledge is much greater" and we can describe the problem in precise detail.

> It would be senseless in the present ecumenic scientific situation to want to scientifically maintain this categorization. That does not mean that perhaps, in a larger theological context it should not be maintained; after all, here we are dealing with a problem of a church organization that must deal with a large group of people. Here one must proceed circumspectly. In scientific contexts, however, one must be clear about how such things have come about (CW, 33:389).

In other words, for Voegelin there is no scientific problem of reason and revelation, and Lawrence is undoubtedly correct to emphasize it, even though, so far as a church is concerned,

which is to say, as a practical matter (dare one say an exoteric matter?) that involves a large number of people, not all of them scientifically inclined, "one must proceed circumspectly.

Let the distinction between uncircumspect science and the prudential administration of an organization suffice to establish the context for the extensive quotation from Voegelin provided by Lawrence (46). With the awareness that both reason and revelation are concerned with the search for truth:

> Therewith the problem of meditation moves into the center of our consideration. From the one side, namely, from the human, the search can be accentuated. I would call that the noetic posture. From the other side, the revelatory side, one can emphasize the motivational factor. I would call that the pneumatic position. Both are present in the problem of meditation. The tension exists between being moved from the godly side and the search from the human side. Thus the godly and the human sides are assumed in a process of seeking and being moved [to seek]. Such symbols as I have used here a godly reality that moves, a concrete human being who seeks, a process of seeking and being moved I call a complex.
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> Under a "complex I understand the fact that this process of being moved and seeking, which is to be investigated here, should not be cut in pieces or fragmented such that, out of the concentration on the human side, an investigation into the human being, thus an anthropology, arises; or, out of confining [the investigation] to the godly side, a theology is formulated. Also impermissible is the isolation of the process in the form of a process philosophy that confines itself to an investigation of the process that exists between two poles and that would, thus, lead to a psychology. All three forms, "anthropologies, "theologies, and "psychologies, are deformation types and have no place in a meditative investigation (CW, 33:389).

Voegelin went on to discuss the significance of the meditative event and the language terms used to articulate it.

The only comment that needs to be made, it seems to me, is that Gebhardt stressed the importance of intelligibility as the defining feature of science (31). Even the "heart's subconscious love" that Lawrence invoked towards the end of his essay to balance Gebhardt's "rationalism," needs to be made intelligible. Did not St. Paul himself require those who speak in tongues to be intelligibly interpreted?[16] [16]

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Let that suffice for a first effort at interpreting Voegelin's argument on this problem. It is not so much false modesty with respect to my own analytic abilities as it is the subtlety and complexity of Strauss's argument that makes the exegesis of his position more difficult and so summary conclusions more tentative. On the other hand, several recent studies help because they clarify what had been largely obscure, namely Strauss's starting point.

To state the obvious: Voegelin began his scholarly career as a lawyer, as an exegete of Staatslehre, which he studied with Hans Kelsen in Vienna. That was the beginning that eventually led him to "political ideas" and beyond. In contrast, Strauss came from a traditional

[16] [16] I Cor. 14 and CW, 17:309-10.

or conservative Jewish home in the village of Kirchhain; he received a classical German humanist education at the Gymnasium Philippinum also in Kirchhain and then attended the nearby university in Marburg. That is, if one may say that the internal logic of Staatslehre and its limitations guided the beginnings of Voegelin's political science, one would say that the internal logic of the Bildungsideal and its limitation by Conservative Judaism guided Strauss's.

To put my point in a non-biographical way: if we follow one of Strauss's most celebrated hermeneutical maxims, that we seek to understand an author as he understood himself, then the fact that Strauss was a Jew in Germany mattered. Here is a supporting anecdote from the 1970s told by Hadley Arkes:

> Not long after Mr. Strauss's death in 1973, Milton Himmelfarb was doing a commemorative piece, and as he tried to estimate Strauss's relation to Judaism he remarked that Strauss had not been seen often in the synagogue. I remember calling Himmelfarb at the time and recounting to him a story I had been told about Mr. Strauss's appearance for a lecture at Amherst -- a few years before I had arrived at the College. After his lecture, he was approached by a professor of English, a man of Jewish ancestry who had managed, with a steady policy, to detach himself from things Jewish. He ran up to Strauss and said, "But if I follow what you've said, you would have to believe in revelation.&#65533; To which Strauss replied, "But I'm a Jew.&#65533; The professor of English said, "But what does *that* mean -- these days?&#65533; To which Strauss said, "That's not *my* problem.&#65533;[17] [17]

[17] [17] Arkes, "Strauss on Our Minds,&#65533; in Kenneth L. Deutsch and John A. Morley, eds., Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 85.

Or, to put it yet another way: Strauss is well known for his analysis of the following themes: the quarrel between ancients and moderns or between philosophy and poetry or between natural right and history. According to Strauss, however, "the theological-political problem has remained, from that time [1920s] on, the theme of my inquiries.[18] [18] In the Preface to the English edition of his book on Spinoza he elaborated in the first paragraph: "This study of Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise was written during the years 1925-1928 in Germany. The author was a young Jew born and raised in Germany who found himself in the grip of the theologico-political predicament.[19] [19]

We must therefore begin consideration of Strauss's reflection on the subject-matter of reason and revelation from the fact that Strauss was a Jew raised in an orthodox home. It is, then, hardly surprising that as a young scholar he reflected on what, in Weimar Germany, was called the Jewish question or the Jewish problem. Specifically, for Strauss this was the experience of Jew-hatred even in a country where Jews were emancipated and, to a degree, assimilated. "It was in this very concrete form," wrote Daniel Tanguay, "that the theologico-political problem first presented itself to Strauss.[20] [20] Of course, the German-Jewish problem

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[18] [18] Strauss, "Preface to Hobbes Politische Wissenschaft" in Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 453.

[19] [19] Strauss, "Preface to the English Translation," Spinoza's Critique of Religion, tr. E M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 1.

[20] [20] Tanguay, Leo Strauss: An Intellectual Biography, tr. Christopher Nadon (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 11.

was never solved because, as Strauss put it, "it was annihilated by the annihilation of the German Jews.[21] [21]

At the time when Strauss first found himself "in the grip of the theologico-political predicament" he was living under the new liberal democratic regime of the Weimar republic, a weak regime that, he said, had but "a single moment of strength, if not greatness," namely the response in 1922 to the murder of Walter Rathenau, the German and Jewish foreign affairs minister.[22] [22] By the time Field Marshall von Hindenburg became president in 1925, the future of the Weimar republic was in serious doubt. At the very least, the old Germany would likely destroy the new.

The weakness of German liberal democracy suggested to Strauss the weakness of liberal democracy in general, at least so far as Jews were concerned. The initial arguments in favour of liberal democracy were embedded in theologico-political arguments directed against the medieval order or the civil-religious wars that attended its disintegration. In place of Christianity as the substantive bond of society, liberal democrats argued in favour of a "universal human morality." Whatever the term meant, it was distinct from divinely revealed human morality, which henceforth would be a private affair. So far as Jews were concerned, liberal democracy promised something like assimilation as a solution to the Jewish question: "German Jews were

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[21] [21] Strauss, "Preface," 4.

[22] [22] Strauss did not elaborate. There was an impressive display of national mourning. The funeral service was held in the Reichstag, with a funeral oration delivered by the president; half a million Berliners lined the streets. Chancellor Wirth passed a law "for the protection of the republic." On the other hand the moderate centre remained weak and neither the left nor the right was affected.

Germans of the Jewish faith,” Strauss wrote of this liberal democratic promise. "They were no less German than the Germans of the Christian faith or of no faith.”[23] [23] The problem was that political equality was in fact accompanied by social inequality or "discrimination” about which liberalism could do nothing without destroying its own premise, namely the distinction between public and private. The conclusion Strauss drew, with some guidance from Herzl, was that "the liberal state cannot provide a solution to the Jewish problem.”[24] [24] Even if it were not a failure, assimilation to one raised in a conservative Jewish home meant abandoning whatever made Jews Jewish.

Herzl's answer was Zionism, and it emerged, Strauss said, precisely from the failure of the liberal attempt at a solution. It evidently appealed to Strauss, for reasons of self-respect if nothing else.[25] [25] The logic of political Zionism, however, turned the Jewish people into "a herd without a shepherd,” which is to say, an ordinary people determined to take care of itself. Accordingly, it had to be supplemented by what Strauss called "cultural Zionism,” a kind of middle ground between straightforward power politics and divine revelation. But then, "when cultural Zionism understands itself, it turns into religious Zionism. But when religious Zionism understands itself, it is in the first place Jewish faith and only secondarily Zionism.”[26] [26] This

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[23] [23] Strauss, "Preface,” 4.

[24] [24] Strauss, "Preface,” 6. Herzl is quoted (p. 4): "Who belongs and who does not belong, is decided by the majority; it is a question of power.”

[25] [25] Tanguay, Leo Strauss, 14; Stephen B. Smith, Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 31; Strauss, "Preface,” 4-5.

[26] [26] Strauss, "Preface,” 6. Readers more familiar with Voegelin will find Strauss's remarks entirely compatible with vol. one of Order and History.

insight carried with it the implication that any attempt at a human solution to the Jewish problem was "blasphemous,&#65533; not to say atheist. Then Strauss made the following remark:

> The establishment of the state of Israel is the most profound modification of the Galut [i.e., Exile] which has occurred, but it is not the end of the Galut; in the religious sense, and perhaps not only in the religious sense, the state of Israel is a part of the Galut. Finite, relative problems can be solved; infinite, absolute problems cannot be solved. In other words, human beings will never create a society which is free of contradictions. From every point of view it looks as if the Jewish people were the chosen people in the sense, at least, that the Jewish problem is the most manifest symbol of the human problem as a social or political problem.[27] [27]

Zionism and assimilation, however opposed they might be politically, were in agreement with respect to ending what, in both 1923 and 1962, Strauss called "the world of the Galut.&#65533;[28] [28] Corresponding to Galut is the messianic hope of redemption. Strauss's point: if you abandon the world of the Galut, you abandon the essential attribute of Judaism.

One can summarize the logic of Strauss's first encounter with the grip of the theologico-political predicament. The failure of liberalism made the alternative of political Zionism attractive. Political Zionism was insufficient because the goal was a Jewish state, not just a state for people discriminated against who happened to be Jewish. A Jewish state demanded Jewish culture. But cultural Zionism was also insufficient because what made Jews Jewish was not their

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[27] [27] Strauss, "Preface,&#65533; 6.

[28] [28] Strauss, "Response to Frankfurt's &#65533;Word of Principle'&#65533; in Strauss, The Early Writings, 1921-1932, ed. Michael Zank (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 67-8.

culture but their Jewishness. At the centre of the experience of being a Jew was not the entirely accidental issue of culture -- for the culture of German Jews was not that of Moroccan Jews -- but the gift of divine revelation. "God's revealing Himself to man,&#65533; Strauss wrote, "His addressing man, is not merely known through traditions going back to the remote past and therefore now &#65533;merely believed,' but is genuinely known through present experience which every human being can have if he does not refuse himself to it.&#65533;[29] [29] To put Strauss's point (which surely reminds those familiar with Voegelin's writing of Voegelin's formulations summarized above) in later Straussian language, the cultural Zionists did not understand Judaism as it understood itself.

One additional thing should be said about Strauss's 1961 "Preface&#65533; to the Spinoza book. At one point he compared the reception of Greek philosophy, "which was understood to be Greek only accidentally,&#65533; by Spanish Jews, to the emancipation of Jews in Germany, which "coincided with the greatest epoch in German thought and poetry, and so was roughly comparable to the Spanish period. In Germany, under the Weimar regime "when German Jews were politically in a more precarious situation than Jews in any other Western country,&#65533; what did they do? "They originated &#65533;the science of Judaism,' the historical-critical study by Jews of the Jewish heritage.&#65533; Strauss himself was a Mitarbeiter, a staff researcher, at the Akademie f&#65533;r Wissenschaft des Judentums. The significance of the Akademie, however, was that "the Jews opened themselves to the influx of German thought, the thought of the particular nation in the midst of which they lived -- a thought which was understood to be German essentially:

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[29] [29] Strauss, "Preface,&#65533; 8.

political dependence was also spiritual dependence. This was the core of the predicament of German Jewry.[30] [30]

It is, perhaps, useful to dwell on Strauss's predicament prior to Hitler. On the one hand, the logic of Zionism led to a spiritual dead end. On the other, his way of thinking in the Akademie was part of the problem.

There remained a final possibility, a return to the traditional Jewish community sustained by Jewish faith and the Jewish way of living, techouvah or teshubah, the return of the right path, or repentance. Even while he was a researcher in the science of Judaism and writing the Spinoza book, he encountered in the work of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig (to whose memory the Spinoza book was dedicated), the so-called "new thinking. Buber and Rosenzweig certainly opened the possibility of techouvah. As Smith said, "Strauss was especially impressed by Rosenzweig's claim that Judaism is not about law (Gesetz) in the Kantian sense of universality, but about command (Gebot). The mitzvot [charitable acts] are commandments in the primordial and most revealing sense of the term: God speaks, we listen.[31] [31]

By emphasizing the importance of the (human) act of faith, however, Buber and Rosenzweig still avoided, in Strauss's view, the central experience of revelation, which is not simply human but an encounter with God. Or, as he said in his 1952 lecture, "Progress or Return? traditional techouvah was a naive return, but the "new thinking was a reflective

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30 [30] Strauss, "Preface, 3.

31 [31] Smith, Reading Leo Strauss, 35.

return to tradition, which is to say a return based on the premises of modern thought.[32] [32] The self-reflective element or, if you prefer, the element of modern individualism, led to "the conscious and radical historicization of the Torah.[33] [33] In contrast, for Jewish tradition -- and recall that Strauss grew up in that tradition -- "one must start from what is primary or authoritative for the Jewish consciousness and not from what is the primary condition of possibility of the Jewish experience: one must start from God's Law, the Torah, and not from the Jewish nation. But Rosenzweig did the opposite, and argued that the Torah was a product of the Jewish nation, to which Strauss replied: "if the Jewish nation did not originate the Torah but is manifestly constituted by the Torah, it is necessarily preceded by the Torah, which was created prior to the world and for the sake of which the world was created.[34] [34]

The "considerations just summarized led Strauss to "wonder whether an unqualified return to Jewish orthodoxy was not both possible and necessary -- was not at the same time the solution to the problem of the Jew lost in the non-Jewish modern world and the only course compatible with sheer consistency or intellectual probity. Accompanying such "wonder was a sense of "vague difficulties that soon enough took the form of Spinoza. "Orthodoxy, wrote Strauss "could be returned to only if Spinoza was wrong in every respect.[35] [35]

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[32] [32] Strauss, "Progress or Return, in Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity, 93-4.

[33] [33] Strauss, "Preface, 14.

[34] [34] Strauss, "Preface, 13.

[35] [35] Strauss, "Preface, 15.

In his 1930 book on Spinoza Strauss did not succeed in proving Spinoza wrong in every respect. He did, however, make the following case, according to his 1962 Preface:

> If orthodoxy claims to know that the Bible is divinely revealed, that every word of the Bible is divinely inspired, that Moses was the writer of the Pentateuch, that the miracles recorded in the Bible have happened and similar things, Spinoza has refuted orthodoxy. But the case is entirely different if orthodoxy limits itself to asserting that it believes the aforementioned things, i.e., that they cannot claim to possess the binding power peculiar to the known. For all assertions of orthodoxy rest on the irrefutable premise that the omnipotent God whose will is unfathomable, whose ways are not our ways, who has decided to dwell in the thick darkness, may exist. Given this premise, miracles and revelations in general, and hence all Biblical miracles and revelations in particular, are possible, Spinoza has not succeeded in showing that this premise is contradicted by anything we know.[36] [36]

The age of the earth is not contradicted by geological "science" because such "science" rests upon the assumption that the earth came into being naturally, and not according to the Biblical account. In other words, neither experience nor the principle of contradiction can refute the orthodox account. This is proven indirectly by the fact that Spinoza did not refute the Biblical account so much as ridicule it. One cannot help but observe a similarity between Strauss's observation and the contemporary disputes between fundamentalists of Darwinian and creationist faiths.

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[36] [36] Strauss, "Preface," 28.

The only convincing proof of Spinoza's position would be that the world, including human being, was perfectly intelligible "without the assumption of a mysterious God.&#65533; But that proof has never been accomplished, not by Spinoza and not even by Hegel, as Strauss pointed out in his famous exchange with Koj&#65533;ve. As a result, the "cognitive status&#65533; of Spinoza's philosophy, including his critique of religion

> is not different from that of the orthodox account. Certain it is that Spinoza cannot legitimately deny the possibility of revelation. But to grant that revelation is possible means to grant that the philosophic account and the philosophic way of life are not necessarily, not evidently, the true account and the right way of life: philosophy, the quest for evident and necessary knowledge, rests itself on an unevident decision, on an act of the will, just as faith does.[37] [37]

The problem -- indeed the fatal problem -- is that philosophy cannot itself be based on an act of faith or will and yet remain philosophy. This analysis, as well as "other observations and experiences&#65533; led Strauss

> to wonder whether the self-destruction of reason was not the inevitable outcome of modern rationalism as distinguished from pre-modern rationalism, especially Jewish-medieval rationalism and its classical (Aristotelian and Platonic) foundation. The present study was based on the premise, sanctioned by powerful prejudice, that a return to pre-modern philosophy is impossible. The change of orientation which found its first expression, not entirely by accident, in the article published at the end of this volume [on Carl Schmitt], compelled me to engage in a number of studies in the course of which I became ever more attentive to the manner in which heterodox thinkers of earlier ages

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[37] [37] Strauss, "Preface,&#65533; 29.

> wrote their books. As a consequence of this, I now read the Theologico-political Treatise differently than I read it when I was young. I understood Spinoza too literally because I did not read him literally enough.[38] [38]

Strauss's autobiographical "Preface" was less detailed and elaborate than Voegelin's Autobiographical Reflections, but it served the same purpose: it situated his later thinking in the context of the existentially compelling problems faced by the young scholar. The concluding paragraph of his "Preface," from which we just quoted, indicated in outline the subsequent trajectory of Strauss's work that has been so ably discussed by Tanguay, Green, Smith, and Zank, whom we have quoted, but also by Brague, Sorensen, Sheppard, and Meier whom we have not.[39] [39] Despite differences in emphasis, particularly by Meier, the focus on and analysis of Strauss's early work has, it seems to me, situated his political philosophy more accurately than was done fifteen years ago.

With respect to the question of revelation, let me conclude with a remark Strauss made to Karl L"with in a letter in 1946: "there is only one objection against Plato-Aristotle: and that is

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[38] [38] Strauss, "Preface," 31.

[39] [39] Remi Brague, "Athens, Jerusalem, Mecca: Leo Strauss's "Muslim' Understanding of Greek Philosophy," Poetics Today, 19:2 (1998), 235-59; Kim A. Sorensen, Discourses on Strauss: Revelation and Reason in Leo Strauss and his Critical Study of Machiavelli (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 2006); Eugene R. Sheppard, Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile: The Making of a Political Philosopher (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2006); Heinrich Meier, Das theologisch-politische Problem: zum Thema von Leo Strauss (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2003).

the factum brutum of revelation or of the 'personal' God.'[40] [40] In light of what has been previously discussed, it is clear that Strauss was emphasizing the externality or objectivity of revelation as an event that human beings can accept or reject, to be sure, but the reality of which does not depend on acceptance or rejection.

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Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and many lesser and dimmer lights have accused Strauss of being an atheist.[41] [41] For reasons just elaborated, such a judgement is contradicted by the evidence. Nor is it clear that one can say that Strauss took an intransigent stand for philosophy as a rigorous science -- that is, for Athens over Jerusalem. When Strauss wrote that "no alternative is more fundamental than this: human guidance or divine guidance,' he meant it.[42] [42] For Strauss, divine guidance first of all meant Jewish orthodoxy, not the riddles of Delphi. It meant as well an understanding of Jewish orthodoxy as it has traditionally understood

[40] [40] Strauss, Gesammelte Schriften, eds. Heinrich and Wiebke Meier (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2001), vol. 3, 663.

[41] [41] The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932-1940, tr. Gary Smith and Andr' Lefevere (New York: Schocken, 1989), letter 72, 155-8; Hannah Arendt - Kar Jaspers Correspondence, 1926-1929, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, tr. Robert Kimber and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992), letter 156 (14 May, 1954), 241.

[42] [42] Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 74.

itself. The distinctive attributes of Jewish orthodoxy, as Tanguay summarized Strauss's understanding of them, were as follows:

> faith in the creation of the world, in the revelation of Sinai, in the reality of the Bible's miracles, and in the unchangeable and obligatory character of revealed law. The greater miracle is the divine gift made to Moses on Mount Sinai: the Torah comes from God; it is literally the word of God. Revelation is the announcement of the Law.[43] [43]

The conflict between Athens and Jerusalem is, therefore, more intense than that between the philosopher and the city, so there is no way to distance oneself through philosophical irony.

From the philosophical position, a defence of philosophy takes the form that philosophy is the best guide to living because it conceives of the best life as the search, the zetesis, as Plato said, for an answer to the Socratic question, "What is the best life?" Moreover, because philosophy cannot disprove or refute revelation rationally, it must on reasonable grounds admit of the possibility that philosophy, zetetic philosophy, is not the best way of life.

It seems to me that, notwithstanding strategies, Strauss's position is in all essential features that of Voegelin. In his 1971 essay, "The Gospel and Culture" Voegelin discussed the question of reason and revelation along different but complementary lines (CW, 12:172-21). Characteristically, Voegelin began with a brief historical reference to the initial absorption of the "life of reason," or the "culture of the time," namely, Hellenistic philosophy, by the community formed by the gospel. In this way, Voegelin said, the sectarian Jewish community

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[43] [43] Tanguay, Leo Strauss, 164.

was able to become the Christianity of the church. The gospel was acceptable to the culture of the time, furthermore, because it appeared to answer the questions raised by the philosophers. In the First Apology of Justin the Martyr, the author claims that the Logos of the gospel is the developing logos of philosophy. "Hence, Christianity is not an alternative to philosophy, it is philosophy itself in its state of perfection; the history of the Logos comes to its fulfillment through the incarnation of the Word of Christ.[illegible] Accordingly, the distinction between philosophy and the gospel is the difference between stages in the history of reason.

A modern way of posing the same question that has a more direct bearing on the issue under analysis is the controversial 1966 New Catechism, published by the Dutch bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. The opening chapter is called "Man the Questioner.[illegible] It asserts that Christians are human beings with "inquiring minds[illegible] and are searching for ways to account for their faith. The motivation of the Dutch bishops is a mirror image of the motivation of Justin: he began as an "inquiring mind[illegible] and, following the philosophical schools, was led to the gospel; the bishops, in contrast, had somehow to recover a sense of inquiry because it had been lost and, as is true of many contemporary Christians, they remained in a tranquil state of unenquiring faith. Voegelin added as a "supplement[illegible] or a "reminder[illegible] that "neither Jesus nor his fellowmen to whom he spoke his word did yet know that they were Christians -- the gospel held out its promise not to Christians but to the poor in the spirit, that is, to minds inquiring, even though on a culturally less sophisticated level than Justin's.[illegible] The conflict that lay behind the assertion of the Dutch bishops and that expressed itself in the ensuing controversy over the Dutch Catechism, as it is generally known, was not between the gospel and philosophy "but rather between the gospel and its unenquiring possession as doctrine.[illegible]

The conflict, that is to say, is between an inquiring mind and a doctrine that prohibits inquiry. Whatever the pragmatic effectiveness of doctrine as a means of ensuring the credal integrity of a community, which as was noted at the beginning of this paper, is a matter where one must proceed with circumspection, the price is invariably the suppression of questions that an inquiring mind is apt to ask. Just as Strauss found a way to express the tension between Athens and Jerusalem, so did Voegelin find a way to express the issue of an inquiring mind in the context of Christianity. To put the issue simply: "the question to which, in Hellenistic-Roman culture, the philosopher could understand the gospel as the answer" concerns "the humanity of man," which "is the same today as it ever has been in the past." The emphasis for both Voegelin and Strauss lies on the questions asked, not the more or less adequate answers received, nor on the equally questionable criteria by means of which the more adequate can be distinguished from the less.