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THE DISCOVERY OF MORAL VIRTUE:
A DISCUSSION OF ARISTOTLE'S FOUNDING
OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN THE FORM
OF A COMMENTARY ON THE INTERPRETATION
OF LEO STRAUSS.

Claremont Graduate School, Ph.D., 1976
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THE DISCOVERY OF MORAL VIRTUE:
A DISCUSSION OF ARISTOTLE'S FOUNDING OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE IN THE FORM OF A COMMENTARY ON THE
INTERPRETATION OF LEO STRAUSS

By

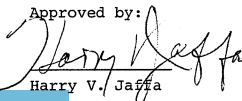
M. Richard Zinman

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty
of Claremont Graduate School in partial
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degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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Claremont

1976

Approved by:


Harry V. Jaffa

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We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Visiting Examiner

George S. Blair

Faculty Reader

Walter Diamond

Faculty Reader

Supervisory Committee

Henry V. Jeffers

Chairman

Harry Neumann

MBL

November 14, 1975

Date

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This dissertation is the first part of an attempt to clarify the nature and purpose of political science by uncovering the foundations of the original form of political science: Aristotle's political science. Aristotle was the founder of political science as an independent or autonomous discipline--as one discipline among a number of disciplines. As such, he could not take for granted either the possibility or the necessity of political science. Rather, he was compelled to raise and answer the most elementary questions as they emerged directly from political life. His answers were not mediated by a tradition of political science.

The author believes that any serious attempt to understand the founding of the discipline must come to grips with the writings of Leo Strauss. The dissertation therefore takes the form of an extended commentary on Strauss's interpretation of the origins and foundations of Aristotle's

political science as it is presented in the first chapter of The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1964). On the one hand, the commentary is intended to explicate and fill out Strauss's elusive and compressed interpretation. As such, it is an attempt to begin an investigation of Strauss's thought in its own right. But, as far as the author is able to judge, Strauss's interpretation at least touches on every consideration relevant to an understanding of Aristotle's founding of political science and the problems inherent in that founding. Thus, on the other hand, the dissertation is an attempt to use Strauss's interpretation as a vehicle for setting out the themes and problems that must be treated in any comprehensive interpretation of the ground of Aristotle's political science. As such, the dissertation is intended to be the prologomenon to a fresh inquiry into the nature and purpose of political science.

Aristotle appears to found political science on the basis of but in opposition to Socratic political philosophy. The commentary proper therefore begins with a discussion of Socrates' founding of political philosophy and moves to a preliminary discussion of the difference between the Socratics and Aristotle with respect to the possibility and desirability of establishing political science as an independent discipline. The core of the dissertation is a discussion of Aristotle's attempt to overcome the Socratic objections by demonstrating that the discovery of moral

virtue makes possible an independent political science and that a political science that preserves the perspective of the citizen or statesman is desirable not only from the point of view of the city but also from that of the philosophers. Aristotle's political science is an attempt simultaneously to protect the city from philosophy (including Socratic political philosophy) and philosophy from the city. More precisely, it is an attempt to protect philosophy from the city by protecting the city from philosophy. The dissertation concludes by returning to the difference between the Socratics and Aristotle. That difference is not completely intelligible in terms of any theoretical disagreement concerning the whole and its knowability, but must in large part be explained in terms of a practical disagreement concerning how the philosophers can best deal with the tension between philosophy and the city. Aristotle's independent political science can be understood as a practical complement to Socratic political philosophy.

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PREFACE

This dissertation has its genesis in two elementary questions that began to animate me during my first year of graduate study at Claremont:

1. What is political science? (What is the nature, what are the essential limits, of political science? What is political science about, what does it deal with, what does it treat of? What is the object of inquiry in political science? What is politics or what are the political things?)

2. Is political science good? (Is political science either necessary or desirable for the health of a political community? Why should any thoughtful human being devote his life to the science of politics? What is the proper relationship between the political scientist and the political community? What are the obligations of the citizen-political scientist to his political community?)

Any candid student must admit that the literature of present-day political science is characterized by a baffling mixture of confusion and silence on these seemingly simple but embarrassingly primary questions. Such a state of affairs compels one to wonder whether political science is or can be a rational enterprise.

With the help of my teachers, I discovered that my two questions were once at the center of the study of political things. I came to believe that the proper (not to say necessary) starting point for an inquiry into such questions was an examination of the foundations of the original form of political science and the source of the tradition of political science: Aristotle's political science. Aristotle was the founder of political science as an independent or autonomous discipline--as one discipline among a number of disciplines. As such he was compelled to raise and answer the most elementary questions as they emerged directly from political life. His answers were not mediated by a tradition of political science. He could not take for granted either the possibility or the necessity of political science.

Any attempt to clarify the nature and purpose of political science by returning to the origins of the discipline must come to grips with the power and peculiar charm of the writings of Leo Strauss. I need not discuss the importance of Strauss's work for the revitalization of the study of political philosophy within present-day political science. The core of that work was Strauss's attempt to recover and restore classical political philosophy. And the core of that core was Strauss's painstaking studies of the problem of the origins of political philosophy and political science. Strauss was the only contemporary thinker

who took that problem seriously. In fact, he devoted about half his scholarly life to its exploration. Within the discipline of political science, Strauss was best known for his critique of the "new political science" from the point of view of the "original" of the "old political science"-- that is, from the point of view of Aristotelian political science. But it is a remarkable fact that Strauss's huge corpus contains only one extended discussion of Aristotle's political science: "On Aristotle's Politics," the first chapter of The City and Man. The first section of that chapter is Strauss's only investigation of the origins and foundations of the original form of political science.

This dissertation takes the form of a close commentary on that unique part of Strauss's corpus. On the one hand, the commentary is intended to explicate and fill out Strauss's elusive and compressed interpretation. As such, it is an attempt to begin an investigation of Strauss's thought in its own right. But, as far as I am able to judge, Strauss's interpretation at least touches on every consideration relevant to an understanding of Aristotle's founding of political science and the problems inherent in that founding. Thus, on the other hand, I have attempted to use Strauss's interpretation of the origins and foundations of Aristotle's political science as a vehicle for setting out the themes and problems that must be treated in any comprehensive interpretation of the ground of Aristotle's political

science. As such, the dissertation is intended to be the prologomenon to a fresh inquiry into the nature and purpose of political science.

Translations from Greek texts are my own. There is, however, one exception to this general rule. When quoting from Plato's Republic I have almost always followed the excellent translation by Allan Bloom.

I owe a number of unrepayable debts.

I was blessed with an extraordinary assemblage of teachers at Claremont: Professors Martin Diamond, Harry Jaffa, Harry Neumann, and the late Leo Strauss. I know that I cannot adequately express my gratitude to these men, each of whom made and continues to make an invaluable and unique contribution to my education. Although his influence may not at first sight be visible in this dissertation, I must also mention the late Professor Douglass Adair.

At a critical moment in the progress of my work, Dean Allan Spitz of the University of New Hampshire and Professor Allan Bloom of the University of Toronto confronted me with a powerful but necessary mixture of compulsion and persuasion. Professor George Blair, Chairman of the Graduate Faculty of Government at Claremont, has, over many years, smoothed the path for me. The Haynes Foundation and the Earhart Foundation helped support my graduate studies. Dean Robert Banks and the Faculty of James Madison College,

Michigan State University, provided me with much needed leisure during the Fall Quarter of 1973. The members of the Madison Office Staff, and especially Mrs. Virginia Pifer and Mrs. Eunice Stoffs, have helped me in many ways--often in trying circumstances. For all this assistance I offer my thanks.

Although it may not be appropriate in such a preface, I cannot refrain from speaking of my mother--who taught me to love books--and my father--who taught me to love argument.

Finally, my wife sustained my efforts always. Without her perseverance, understanding, and comfort this dissertation would never have been completed.

In the past, for long stretches of time, writing commentaries was a way of expounding the truth. It still may be that.

Jacob Klein, A Commentary on Plato's Meno

Aristotle sees the perfection of man as Plato sees it and more. However, because man's perfection is not self-evident or easy to explain by a demonstration leading to certainty, he saw fit to start from a position anterior to that from which Plato had started.

Alfarabi, The Philosophy of Aristotle

INTRODUCTION

A NOTE ON THE PLACE OF "ON ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS" IN STRAUSS'S CORPUS

What we have been content to assert is the silence and confusion of contemporary political science, Leo Strauss earned the right to call the crisis of modern political philosophy or the collapse of modern political philosophy. Strauss was certainly not the only thinker of the highest rank to speak of the crisis of our time as the crisis of modernity or to argue that the crisis of modernity is peculiarly the crisis of the West. But while others identified the core of the contemporary crisis of the West with "the crisis of European sciences" or with "the ultimate abandonment of Being," it was Strauss's distinctive conclusion that the core of the crisis of modernity is the crisis of modern political philosophy.¹ Just as Plato wrote all of his dialogues in the shadow of the crisis of philosophy caused by the fate of Socrates, so Strauss wrote all his books in the shadow of the crisis of modernity caused by the fate of modern political philosophy.

¹Cf. Richard Kennington, "Leo Strauss and Modernity," paper presented at the New School for Social Research, Fall 1974.

Strauss's analysis of the collapse of modern political philosophy led him to pose a choice: ". . . one seems to be confronted with the choice between abandoning political philosophy altogether and returning to classical political philosophy." He immediately added: "Yet such a return seems to be impossible" (1).² Clearly Strauss was induced to undertake the seemingly impossible task of restoring classical political philosophy by his acute awareness of what was at stake in the crisis of modern political philosophy. But he never let the gravity of that crisis obscure the seriousness of the objections to such a restoration: "Certain it is that a simple continuation of the tradition of classical political philosophy--of a tradition which was hitherto never entirely interrupted--is no longer possible (2). "The return to classical political philosophy is both necessary and tentative or experimental" (11). The seriousness of the need for an overcoming of the crisis of modern political philosophy does not prove that the need can be satisfied.³

Strauss maintained that the question as to whether the return to classical political philosophy was possible

²The arabic numerals in parentheses in the body of the text refer to the "Introduction" and "On Aristotle's Politics" (chapter I) in The City and Man (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1964). The conventional footnote form will be used to refer "On Plato's Republic" (Chapter II) and "On Thucydides' War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians" (Chapter III) in The City and Man.

³Cf. Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 6.

could be answered only on the basis of a fresh understanding of classical political philosophy. He argued persuasively that the same diseases that had caused the death of modern political philosophy had infected the modern understanding of classical political philosophy. "Our most urgent need can . . . be satisfied only by means of historical studies which would enable us to understand classical philosophy exactly as it understood itself. . . ." ⁴ The recovery of classical political philosophy was the necessary first step in Strauss's tentative or experimental restoration.

The necessity of recovery largely determined what, on first thought, seems to be the unique manner of Strauss's philosophizing. For his books appear to be the work of a mere scholar, a mere interpreter, who cannot or will not speak in his own name. But Strauss's way, as he knew well, was not unique. It was the way of the only men he ever referred to as his teachers: Alfarabi and Maimonides. Strauss's recovery of the classics was mediated by his prior rediscovery of the mode of philosophizing employed by the great medieval Islamic and Jewish commentators on the classics--a mode which Strauss found to be the product of a crisis of philosophy not unlike our own.

The fruits of Strauss's Herculean labor of recovery are contained in his fourteen books and over eighty articles.

⁴Ibid., p. 33.

Almost every item in that huge and varied corpus either treats or touches on classical political philosophy. But his works on the classics can be conveniently divided into three categories:⁵

1. Those books, articles, and parts of books and articles which set forth a synoptic interpretation of the tradition of classical political philosophy and bring out its characteristic features (e.g., "On Classical Political Philosophy" [1945]; "The Origin of the Idea of Natural Right" and "Classic Natural Right," in Natural Right and History [1953]; "The Classical Solution," part II of "What Is Political Philosophy?" [1955])

2. Those which consist of separate commentaries on the works of individual classical authors (e.g., "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon" [1939]; On Tyranny [1948]; the three chapters of The City and Man [1964]; Socrates and Aristophanes [1966]; "On the Minos" [1968]; "Notes on Lucretius" [1968]; Xenophon's Socratic Discourse [1970]; "On the Euthydemus" [1970]; Xenophon's Socrates [1972]; "Preliminary Observations on the Gods in Thucydides' Work" [1974]; The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws" [1975]; "Xenophon's Anabasis" [1975]; "On Plato's Apology of Socrates and Crito" [not yet published])

⁵The complete facts of publication for the following works may be found in the Bibliography. The dates in brackets indicate when the work first appeared in print.

3. Those which, although primarily concerned with the Bible, medieval or modern political philosophy, include important discussions of the classics (e.g., Spinoza's Critique of Religion [1930]; Philosophie und Gesetz [1935]; The Political Philosophy of Hobbes [1936]; "Farabi's Plato" [1945]; "Political Philosophy and History" [1949]; Persecution and the Art of Writing [1952]; Natural Right and History, chapters I and II [1953]; Thoughts on Machiavelli [1958]; "An Epilogue" [1962]; Jerusalem and Athens [1967])

Reflection on all of Strauss's work on the tradition of classical political philosophy leads us to make the following observations.

The largest part of that work consists of separate commentaries. Strauss began his recovery by commenting on the "simple" Xenophon.⁶ He then sketched a synoptic interpretation of the tradition.⁷ He ended by writing nothing but commentaries: his last five books (excluding one collection of essays) were all devoted to commentaries on classical texts. These last five were immediately preceded by his final statement on the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns: Thoughts on Machiavelli. The first of the last five was The City and Man (see 11).

⁶See On Tyranny, rev. and enl. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 25-26.

⁷See "On Classical Political Philosophy," in What Is Political Philosophy? (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), p. 78.

"It is to be remarked," Allan Bloom has recently written, "that in The City and Man he [Strauss], a man over sixty who had studied Plato intensely for thirty years, permitted himself for the first time to publish an interpretation of a Platonic dialogue [the Republic]." Bloom also notes that Strauss's first book on Plato, an interpretation of the "last" dialogue, was his last book.⁸ Strauss nevertheless permitted himself to write commentaries on seven of the thirty-five Platonic dialogues. He wrote commentaries on seven of Xenophon's fifteen works. He wrote commentaries on all of Aristophanes' plays, on Thucydides' "history," and on Lucretius' poem. Bloom does not remark on the fact that Strauss never permitted himself to publish a book on Aristotle. He never even wrote a commentary on an Aristotelian treatise. He devoted seven pages of Natural Right and History to "the Aristotelian natural right teaching."⁹ He devoted two and a half pages of "An Epilogue" to a sketch of "Aristotelian political science."¹⁰ His only extensive published discussion of Aristotle, the essay "On Aristotle's Politics," was not, in fact, a commentary on that work. That essay was the first chapter of The City and Man.

⁸"Leo Strauss: September 21, 1899-October 18, 1973," Political Theory 2 (November 1974): 387.

⁹Pp. 156-63.

¹⁰In Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics, ed. Herbert J. Storing (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962), pp. 308-11.

Strauss, in more ways than one, was always concerned with the problem of origins. His final statement on the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns was also his final statement on the origins of modern political philosophy. He believed that the collapse of modern political philosophy coincided with its complete abstraction from "the world of common experience or . . . the natural understanding of the world," from the "radically prescientific or prephilosophic" world.¹¹ In fact, the crisis of modern political philosophy could be traced to its original failure to return to and begin from "the articulation which is inherent in, and natural to, political life and its objectives."¹² Modern political philosophy was, from the moment of its founding, derivative; it was always "related to political life through the medium of a tradition of political philosophy." It therefore "took for granted the necessity or possibility of political philosophy."¹³ Strauss learned--first from the falāsifa and then from the classical thinkers themselves--never to take either the necessity or the possibility of political philosophy for granted.

¹¹Natural Right and History, pp. 77, 79.

¹²"On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 80.

¹³Ibid., pp. 78-79.

All of Strauss's work on classical political philosophy was concerned with the problem of the origins of that original form of political philosophy. One could say that Strauss was not simply, perhaps not even primarily, concerned with recovering the teachings of classical political philosophy. His most characteristic concern was to uncover the origins of political philosophy in the pre-philosophic or common sense view of political things, to give an account of the emergence of political philosophy directly out of prephilosophic political life, and to demonstrate that the foundations of political philosophy were built on a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the common sense view of political things. In this way, Strauss's recovery of classical political philosophy was meant to refound political philosophy by resupplying it with the only foundation that could reestablish it as a rational enterprise.

Since all of Strauss's work on the classics at least touched on the problem of the origins of political philosophy, he necessarily "repeated" himself on that subject. In the original "Preface" to The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, the first of Strauss's works to appear in English, he refers to Hobbes as "the founder of modern political philosophy."¹⁴ In the same sentence he refers to Plato and

¹⁴Trans. Elsa M. Sinclair (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952, p. viii. But see the correction of this error in the "Preface to the American Edition" (dated August 1951), p. xv.

Aristotle as "the founders of traditional political philosophy." Near the end of that book he speaks of "the tradition founded by Socrates-Plato."¹⁵ In his first commentary on a classical text, "The Spirit of Sparta or the Taste of Xenophon," Strauss indicates that it would be more proper to simply speak of Socrates as the founder.¹⁶ In the first synoptic treatment of classical political philosophy, "On Classical Political Philosophy," Strauss unambiguously calls Socrates--and Socrates alone--"the founder of political philosophy."¹⁷ Thereafter, Strauss always speaks of classical political philosophy as having been "originated by Socrates."¹⁸ In the third and fourth chapters of Natural Right and History, his second synoptic treatment of the classical tradition, Strauss presented his first account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy. Near the beginning of chapter IV, Strauss wrote: "The full understanding of the classic natural right doctrine would require a full understanding of the change in thought that was effected by Socrates. Such an understanding is not at our disposal."¹⁹ During the rest of his life Strauss did his utmost to put such an understanding at our disposal:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁶Social Research 6 (November 1939): 531-32.

¹⁷p. 92.

¹⁸"What Is Political Philosophy?," in What Is Political Philosophy?, p. 38.

¹⁹p. 120.

in addition to the brief discussion in Natural Right and History,²⁰ Strauss devoted three entire books to "the problem of Socrates" (Socrates and Aristophanes, Xenophon's Socratic Discourse, and Xenophon's Socrates). These books were prepared by The City and Man, "which moved from Aristotle to Plato to Thucydides, from the fully developed classical teaching to its problematic formulation to the prephilosophic world out of which it emerged and which it replaced."²¹

But The City and Man contains the only discussion in Strauss's mature writings which seems to call into question the argument that Socrates was "the founder of political philosophy." The "Introduction" to that book ends with the contention that Aristotle's Politics contains the original form of political science" (12). The first chapter, "On Aristotle's Politics," begins: "According to the traditional view, it was not Aristotle but Socrates who originated political philosophy or political science" (13). The first section of that chapter (13-29) consists of what one could argue is the most important thematic discussion of the origins of political philosophy or political science contained in Strauss's corpus. The first main part of that section (13-21) reaches the familiar conclusion that Socrates was indeed "the founder of political philosophy" (19). The

²⁰ Pp. 120-26.

²¹ Bloom, "Leo Strauss," p. 386.

second main part of that section (21-29) is characterized by the strange conclusion that "Not Socrates or Plato but Aristotle is truly the founder of political science: as one discipline, and by no means the most fundamental or the highest discipline, among a number of disciplines" (21; also see 25, 27, 29).

The strangeness of the latter conclusion, despite first appearances to the contrary, does not reside in its apparent retraction of Strauss's often-repeated contention that Socrates is the founder of political philosophy. Even a cursory reading of the section makes clear that there is no retraction. There is no retraction because in that section Strauss makes a sharp distinction between political philosophy and political science "as an independent discipline among a number of disciplines" (25). It is in this distinction that the strangeness of the above conclusion truly resides. For nowhere else in Strauss's works on classical political philosophy does he make, much less discuss, such a distinction. In fact, the rest of the corpus is characterized by the consistent identification of political philosophy and political science.²²

This leads us to our last observation on Strauss's work on the tradition of classical political philosophy. One of the most remarkable features of that work, when it

²² See, e.g., "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 82-84; "What Is Political Philosophy?," pp. 9-27.

is viewed in the context of modern scholarship, is Strauss's tendency to present the tradition of classical political philosophy--the tradition founded by Socrates and continued by Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle--as a unified and undifferentiated whole. This tendency is clearly visible not only in the synoptic works where it might be expected, but also in the separate commentaries. Throughout the corpus Strauss prefers to draw no "clear distinction between Socrates and Plato,"²³ nor between Socrates and Xenophon. In his three books on Xenophon he is always and everywhere concerned to emphasize the fundamental agreement between the teachings of Xenophon and those of Plato. On those rare occasions when he does point to a difference between the two pupils of Socrates, that difference always concerns Xenophon's "bashfulness."²⁴ Most importantly, Strauss almost always prefers to emphasize the fundamental "kinship between Plato and Aristotle."²⁵ In opposition to all modern scholarship, Strauss follows Alfarabi who wrote a book entitled the Harmonization of the Opinions of the Two Wise Men: Plato, the Divine, and Aristotle and who, in his Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, was "more concerned

²³Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections, The City College Papers, no. 6, The Frank Cohen Public Lecture in Judaic Affairs (New York: The City College, 1967), p. 23.

²⁴On Tyranny, pp. 25-26; Xenophon's Socrates (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 3-4.

²⁵Jerusalem and Athens, p. 23.

with the purpose common to Plato and Aristotle than with the agreement or disagreement of the results of their investigations."²⁶ In Strauss's mature writings there is one--and only one--extensive discussion of the "difference between Plato and Aristotle" (21). Once again that discussion is found in the first section of the first chapter of The City and Man.²⁷

We fear that these observations have been tedious. They do, however, clearly point to the distinctive place of the first chapter of The City and Man in Strauss's interpretation of classical political philosophy and the problems of its origin. We hope that they demonstrate that a discussion of that chapter--or, more precisely, its first section--is a fitting introduction to a full-blown investigation of the Socratic background to Aristotle's political science and the proper starting point for an inquiry into the foundations of that political science.

²⁶Persecution and the Art of Writing (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1952), p. 12.

²⁷Cf. The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, pp. 138-51; Natural Right and History, pp. 151-52.

CHAPTER I

THE INTENTION OF "ON ARISTOTLE'S POLITICS" AND THE PLAN OF ITS FIRST SECTION

The City and Man is comprised of an "Introduction" and three chapters. The first chapter, "On Aristotle's Politics," unlike the succeeding chapters, "On Plato's Republic" and "On Thucydides' War," is not formally a commentary on the work in its chapter heading. Rather it takes its form from the contention with which the "Introduction" concludes.

The "Introduction" is an analysis of the relationship between "the crisis of our time" and "the collapse of modern political philosophy" (1). "The crisis of the West," Strauss argues, "consists in the West's having become uncertain of its purpose" (3). The purpose of the West, "the modern project," was originally conceived and stated by the founders of "the most successful form of modern political philosophy" (3). "The doubt of the modern project" coincides with--if it is not caused by--"the decay of political philosophy into ideology" (6, 7). That decay "may be said to form the core of the contemporary crisis of the West" (2). It is therefore obvious that decayed political philosophy--ideology in any of its forms--cannot

help us overcome the crisis of our time. But the place once occupied by political philosophy--the queenship of the social sciences--has been filled by logic and the new social science. Logic establishes the distinction between factual judgments and value judgments and the impossibility of making a valid transition from factual judgments to value judgments; it thereby shows the impossibility of political philosophy. The new social science takes the distinction between facts and values as its fundamental premise. The new dual queens thus give the decay of political philosophy into ideology and the doubt of the modern project "the status of scientific exactitude" (6). In doing so, however, they simultaneously reveal that they too are impotent in the face of the crisis of the West. For once the full bearing of the distinction between facts and values is grasped all hope that logic and social science, however perfected, can overcome the crisis must be abandoned.

This analysis leads Strauss to suggest a "tentative or experimental" "return to classical political philosophy" (11). The arguments that Strauss advances to establish the necessity of such a return are not solely or even primarily drawn from reflection on the crisis of our time and the impotence in the face of that crisis which follows from the acceptance of "the alleged insight into the radical difference between facts and values" (10). Strauss

prefers to demonstrate that that necessity is imposed on the social scientist "by the requirements of social science" (10). Social science claims to be able to establish "universal laws of political behavior." In order to live up to its claim it must study the politics, the ideologies, and therefore the political philosophies of "other climes and other ages"; it must "concern itself with a genuine understanding of political philosophy proper and therewith primarily of classical political philosophy" (8, 9). And of course the social scientist must concern himself with the presuppositions of social science. "Those presuppositions prove to be modifications of the principles of modern political philosophy, and these principles in turn prove to be modifications of the principles of classical political philosophy. One cannot understand the presuppositions of present-day social science without a return to classical political philosophy" (10). But Strauss reserves his most important argument for the necessity of such a return for the end of the "Introduction." Social science claims that the scientific understanding of political life is decisively superior to the understanding of political things embodied in the experience of the citizen or statesman. The crucial distinction between facts and values, for example, is not a distinction native to political life as such. It must be imposed on political life from the outside by a science that is not itself essentially

an element of political life. But however great the superiority of the scientific understanding of political things to the understanding inherent in political life, however radical the break between the social scientist's understanding and the citizen's or statesman's understanding, the scientific understanding is necessarily derivative from and necessarily remains dependent on the prescientific awareness of political things.

Hence, social science cannot reach clarity about its doings if it does not possess a coherent and comprehensive understanding of what is frequently called the common sense view of political things . . . ; only if it possesses such a coherent and comprehensive understanding of its basis or matrix can it possibly show the legitimacy, and make intelligible the character, of that peculiar modification of the primary understanding of political things which is their scientific understanding.

Strauss concludes this argument as follows:

We contend that the coherent and comprehensive understanding of political things is available to us in Aristotle's Politics precisely because the Politics contains the original form of political science; that form in which political science is nothing other than the fully conscious form of the common sense understanding of political things. Classical political philosophy is the primary form of political science because the common sense understanding of political things is primary (11-12).

Strauss concludes the "Introduction" by indicating the plan of the first chapter: "On Aristotle's Politics" will take the form of a series of responses to the objections to which the above contention is exposed.

Strauss considers five such objections and therefore clearly divides chapter I into five sections (13-29,

30-35, 35-41, 41-45, 45-49). We are concerned only with the first and longest section.

The first section begins with the following objection: "According to the traditional view, it was not Aristotle but Socrates who originated political philosophy or political science." The broad outlines of the plan of the first section are clearly visible and easily grasped. Strauss begins by making the traditional view more precise. He achieves this increased precision by reporting and carefully explicating Cicero's presentation of Socrates' origination of political philosophy or political science (13-14). Strauss then immediately reports a contemporary objection to the traditional view: not Socrates but the Greek sophists are now held to be the originators of political philosophy or political science (14). Strauss does not directly take up this new objection. Rather than turn to those contemporary works which set forth the claims of the sophists to priority, Strauss at once returns to the tradition. He uncovers the sources of Cicero's view in Plato and Aristotle and therewith reconstructs a more complete account of the traditional view. That reconstruction makes clear that the makers of the tradition speak with one voice about the origins of the tradition: Socrates was "the founder of political philosophy" (19). It should be noted that Strauss's elaboration of the traditional view does in fact contain a refutation of the contemporary

rejection of that view: the sophists may have raised that part of political skill which is the skill of speaking to the level of a distinct discipline but they were not for that reason the founders of political philosophy or political science (17; also see 23).¹ But Strauss's vindication of the traditional view also seems to be a confirmation of the original objection to Strauss's contention that Aristotle's Politics "contains the original form of political science" (12). The remainder of the first section is then devoted to establishing that "not Socrates . . . but Aristotle is truly the founder of political science" (21). We can thus say that the first section has two main parts: Socrates' founding of political philosophy (13-21), Aristotle's founding of political science (21-29).

The theme of the first section is not simply Aristotle's Politics or even Aristotle's founding of political science. The theme is the origins of "political philosophy or political science" (13). By placing the objection concerning Socrates at the head of the five objections he will consider, Strauss indicates that if we are "to reach a more adequate understanding of the Politics" (12) we must not begin with the Politics itself. The Politics is in need of an introduction. This is not surprising: Aristotle himself supplies the Politics with an

¹"On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 83.

introduction--the Nicomachean Ethics. In the first section Strauss devotes more space to the discussion of the Nicomachean Ethics than to the discussion of the Politics.

The plan of the first section clearly reveals that Strauss, in his considered response to the objection concerning Socrates, intends to establish the truth of both that objection and of that part of the organizing contention which maintains that the Politics contains the original form of political science. The key to the successful carrying out of this intention is the distinction Strauss makes between political philosophy and political science. Socrates, Strauss argues, was indeed the originator of political philosophy but Aristotle was the originator of political science.

The "Introduction" does not prepare us for such a distinction. In the first paragraph of the "Introduction" Strauss indicates that the subject of The City and Man is "the political thought of classical antiquity" (1, emphasis added). He does not use the term "political thought" again in the "Introduction." He probably uses this term to refer to the book as a whole because it is broad enough to encompass the work of Thucydides as well as that of Aristotle and Plato. In the second paragraph Strauss indicates that his intention in the book is "to show that political philosophy is the rightful queen of the social sciences, the sciences of man and of human affairs" (1, emphasis added).

This formulation, in its context, gives us the impression that Strauss considers political philosophy to be one of the social sciences--albeit the ruling social science. It certainly does not convey the impression that Strauss, if he makes any other distinction between political philosophy and social or political science, considers that distinction to be as radical as the distinction between queen and commoners. Our initial impression seems to be confirmed by the remainder of the "Introduction." In the third paragraph Strauss introduces a distinction between "classical political philosophy" and "modern political philosophy." At the beginning of the fourth paragraph he says that "modern political philosophy presupposes Nature as understood by modern natural science. . . ." (1, emphasis added). But when, in the course of the "Introduction," Strauss comes to make the argument that the purpose of the West was "stated originally by the most successful part of modern political philosophy" (3) he twice uses the phrase "philosophy or science" (3, 4; emphasis added) to describe the kind of thought that was at the basis of "the modern project" (3). Three pages later he explicitly states that "the originators of the project took it for granted that philosophy and science are identical" (7). This statement leads us to believe that the founders of the modern project took the identity of philosophy and science for granted because they inherited the

view that they are identical from the classics. Our belief is confirmed by the fact that throughout the "Introduction" Strauss refers to the thought of the classics as "classical political philosophy." The single deviation from this practice seems to prove the rule. At the end of the penultimate paragraph of the "Introduction" Strauss says: "Classical political philosophy is the primary form of political science because the common sense understanding of political things is primary" (12, emphasis added). Whatever the differences between the classics and the original moderns they agreed in maintaining that philosophy and science are identical. Their agreement on this point enables Strauss to distinguish them both from what he calls "present-day social science" (first at 6). Strauss argues that present-day social science is the result of a "change in the character of social science" the most important cause of which was the gradual acceptance by social scientists of a distinction between philosophy and science. That distinction was originally based on the distinction between "the rational Ought" and "the neutral Is." One could now speak of non-scientific philosophy and non-philosophic science and understand the former as supplying guidance to the latter. When logic transformed the rational Ought into the irrational Ought the new distinction between philosophy and science gave way to the radical separation of philosophy and science and the latter became

the authority for the former (7). Thus present-day social science is that social science which models itself on modern natural science. It is this state of affairs which enables Strauss to distinguish between classical political philosophy (or modern political philosophy) and that "non-philosophic political science which forms part of [present-day] social science" (8). The "Introduction" thus brings to our attention a distinction between political philosophy and political science but such a distinction seems to have no place in a discussion of the classics (or the proto-moderns). Indeed, Strauss, after having described the character of the Politics in the contention which forms the core of the conclusion to the "Introduction," remarks: "'Common sense' as used in this description is understood in contradistinction to 'science,' i.e. primarily modern natural science, and therewith presupposes 'science' whereas the Politics itself does not presuppose 'science'" (12).

As we have seen, Strauss begins "On Aristotle's Politics" with the sentence "According to the traditional view, it was not Aristotle but Socrates who originated political philosophy or political science" (13, emphasis added). We may say that the "Introduction" has prepared us to read the coordinating conjunction as an identity sign. It appears that Strauss does nothing in the first main part of the first section to prepare us for the crucial

distinction between political philosophy and political science. That distinction is introduced only near the very end of the first main part and its introduction is so abrupt that the reader cannot help but rivet his attention on that central passage. (If the reader takes for granted the identity of philosophy and science then the phrase "political philosophy or political science" strikes the eye as awkward because redundant. Yet Strauss repeats the phrase four times (13, 14, 19, 21) before he introduces the distinction between political philosophy and political science. Can we say that by transforming a seemingly awkward phrase into a formula Strauss does in fact prepare the careful reader for the distinction?)²

We have said that Strauss bids the reader to pay special attention to that passage near the very end of the first main part which serves as the transition to the second main part and therefore as the center of the first section as a whole. Strauss uses a second device to draw

²It should be noted that Strauss appears to invent or make use of another formula in the first main part of the first section. When explicating the Athenian stranger's account of his predecessors' teaching concerning the human things in the tenth book of the *Laws*, Strauss replaces the phrase "political philosophy or political science" with the phrase "the political art or science" (14, 15, 16). In this instance, however, it is clear that Strauss merely intends to faithfully mirror the ambiguity of the word used in Plato's text (τὴν πολιτικὴν; 889d7). But Strauss's reproduction of this ambiguity does prepare us for his important discussion of the problematic distinction between practical wisdom on the one hand and the sciences and the arts on the other (21-22, 23-25, 28-29).

our attention to that passage. Throughout the first main part Strauss refers to Socrates as the founder of political philosophy and supports this traditional view by drawing on the works of Plato and Xenophon and citing those works in the footnotes. He does not, however, refer to Plato or Xenophon as founders of political philosophy.³ But in the midst of the crucial long paragraph which concludes his discussion of Socrates as the founder of political philosophy Strauss suddenly moves from speaking of "Socrates' position" to speaking of "this Socratic or Platonic conclusion" (20, emphasis added). "Not Socrates or Plato but Aristotle is truly the founder of political science . . ." (21, emphasis added). By the end of the paragraph Socrates is either completely replaced by Plato or Socrates and Plato are considered as a unit.⁴

The introduction of Plato complicates the plan of the first section. Until the end of the first main part Strauss seems to be preparing the reader for the argument that Aristotle's political philosophy comes into being on the basis of and is in complete agreement with Socrates' political philosophy. The movement from "Socrates" to

³ Strauss never mentions Xenophon in the body of the text of the first main part and, until the concluding passage, mentions Plato only three times: twice as the author of a work under discussion (14, 18) and once when recounting a wise saying of Pascal (18).

⁴ Note Strauss's use of the phrase "Socratic philosophizing" (21).

"Socrates or Plato" immediately precedes the introduction of the distinction between political philosophy and political science. While Strauss does introduce that distinction at this point he does not elaborate it as such. Instead he elaborates "this difference between Plato and Aristotle" (21). It appears that Aristotle's political science comes into being on the basis of but in opposition to "Socratic philosophizing" (21). The movement from "Socrates" to "Socrates or Plato" is the necessary preparation for the proper treatment of Aristotle--a treatment which never forgets that the greatest pupil of Plato was also an opponent of Plato.

We can say that Strauss introduces his explicit discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science--the second main part of the first section--with his first discussion of a "difference between Plato and Aristotle." Twice in the body of the second main part Strauss, in passing, contrasts an Aristotelian procedure with a Platonic procedure (26, 27; cf. 23). In the body of the second main part he does not speak of "Socrates or Plato" but only of Plato or of Socrates (as the teacher of Xenophon [23]). He concludes the second main part with his second discussion of the "disagreement" between Plato and Aristotle (29). He introduces that second discussion by using the phrase "Socrates and Plato." The second discussion differs from the first in that its emphasis falls not simply

on a "difference between Plato and Aristotle" but on the agreement which is the basis for "their disagreement." The very end of the second main part and thus of the first section as a whole returns to "Socrates" and suggests why he did not become the founder of political science as well as political philosophy. That suggestion makes clear that "Socrates" is the basis of the agreement between Plato and Aristotle.

Strauss's discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science is then surrounded by his discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle. The first section of "On Aristotle's Politics" begins with an explanation of the traditional view that Socrates is the founder of political philosophy; it ends with what one may venture to call a novel suggestion concerning Socrates' failure to found political science. The first section is certainly a carefully unified whole.

Strauss's procedure with respect to the distinction between political philosophy and political science and the difference between Plato and Aristotle leads us to suggest that an inquiry into the teaching of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics" can best be organized around the following questions:

1. What, according to Strauss, are the presuppositions of Socrates' founding of political philosophy?

2. What are the presuppositions of Aristotle's founding of political science?

Since Strauss clearly maintains that Aristotle's founding of political science presupposes Socrates' founding of political philosophy it would seem that the additional presuppositions necessary for the founding of political science are identical with what Strauss understands to be the difference between "Socrates and/or Plato" and Aristotle. Heidegger has described Socrates as "the purest thinker of the West."⁵ One cannot help but wonder whether, according to Strauss, "Socrates and/or Plato" was not merely the first but the only political philosopher in the precise sense of the term.

⁵What Is Called Thinking?, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 17-18, 26-27.

CHAPTER II

SOCRATES' FOUNDING OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Strauss begins his account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy by commenting on parallel passages in Cicero (13-14).¹ Strauss paraphrases the first passage as follows: "Socrates was the first to call philosophy down from heaven, to establish it in the cities, to introduce it also into the households, and to compel it to inquire about men's life and manners as well as about the good and bad things." "In other words," Strauss remarks, "Socrates was the first philosopher who concerned himself chiefly or exclusively, not with the heavenly or divine things, but with the human things."² Strauss points out that in the second passage Cicero speaks of "nature" rather than of "heaven." Philosophy is older than political philosophy. The founding of philosophy required a revolution in human thought. Philosophy came into being when

¹Tusculan Disputations V 10, and Brutus 31.

²Strauss tells us that "The heavenly or divine things are the things to which man looks up or which are higher than the human things; they are super-human. . . . The divine things are higher in rank than the human things. Man manifestly needs the divine things but the divine things do not manifestly need man."

human beings turned away from the human things toward the heavenly or divine things and identified the divine things with the natural things, "the whole nature," "the kosmos," "the nature of all things." The philosophic revolution is the discovery of nature.³ Strauss, following Cicero, emphasizes that "no compulsion is needed or possible to establish philosophy in the cities or to introduce it into the households." It seems that philosophy by its very nature flees from the human things and pursues the divine or natural things. Socrates' founding of political philosophy required a revolution in philosophy. Like most revolutions, but unlike the revolution which brought philosophy into being, Socrates' revolution involved compulsion. Socrates founded political philosophy when he compelled philosophy to turn primarily back toward the human things and away from the divine or natural things. "Cicero," Strauss says, thus "draws our attention to the special effort which was required to turn philosophy toward the human things." The fact that philosophy had to be compelled to become concerned with the human things "indicates that political philosophy is more questionable than philosophy as such" (18). Perhaps the fact that Socrates, the master of the art of persuasion, was compelled to use "compulsion" in order to found political philosophy indicates that the greater questionableness

³See Natural Right and History, pp. 81-90.

of political philosophy is connected with "the sternness of politics" (23).

Strauss, in his discussion of Cicero, not only distinguishes the human from the divine or natural things, but specifically identifies the human things and thus the subject matter of political philosophy: "The human things are the things good or bad for man as good or bad for man and particularly the just and noble things and their opposites." Although Strauss does not at this point elaborate the meaning of the just and noble things, he does begin to delimit the subject matter of political philosophy by stating that the distinction between the human things and the natural things "implies that 'the human things' are not 'the nature of man'; the study of the nature of man is part of the study of nature."⁴ If the human things are not the nature of man, are the just and noble things not by nature but only by convention?

By the end of the first paragraph of "On Aristotle's Politics" Strauss has implicitly raised the basic question of political philosophy.⁵ That question immediately becomes

⁴Cf. Natural Right and History, p. 145: "Human nature is one thing, virtue or the perfection of human nature is another. The definite character of the virtues and, in particular, of justice cannot be deduced from human nature." But consider the following remark in the second main part of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics": "The natural end of man as well as of any other natural being becomes genuinely known through theoretical science, through the science of the natures" (26, emphasis added).

⁵See Natural Right and History, pp. 93-95.

an explicit theme when Strauss moves from his explication of the traditional view about the founding of political philosophy or political science to his defense of that view. That view is in need of a defense because it is now held that not Socrates but the sophists first turned to the study of the human things. Strauss indicates that the proper starting point for a resolution of the conflict between the old and the new views would be an examination of Socrates' own account of his relationship to his predecessors. But, Strauss remarks, "as far as we know, Socrates himself did not speak about his predecessors as such" (14, emphasis added). Whatever the bearing of the phrase "his predecessors as such," this seems to be a curious statement from the most careful modern student of "the problem of Socrates." "Socrates himself" abstained from writing speeches or books.⁶ Socrates himself does not speak about anything or anyone. Perhaps Strauss passes over the numerous conversations between Socrates and the sophists reported by Plato and Xenophon because they are speeches with rather than about his predecessors. And perhaps Strauss passes over Plato's presentation of Socrates' encounter with Parmenides and Zeno and of Socrates' "autobiographical" speeches about his encounters

⁶See "On Plato's Republic," p. 52.

with Diotima and Anaxagoras because the One, eros, and nous have nothing to do with the human things.⁷

Be this as it may, Strauss begins his defense of the traditional view by commenting on the account given by the Athenian stranger--"the man who takes Socrates' place in Plato's Laws"--of his predecessors--"all or almost all men who prior to him concerned themselves with inquiries about nature" (14-15). It should be noted that at the very end of the first section Strauss tells us that the Laws is "the only political work proper of Plato" and he almost tells us that it is the only Platonic dialogue "in which Socrates does not occur" (29). The special place of the Laws in the Platonic corpus is a favorite theme of Strauss's.⁸ In "What Is Political Philosophy?" Strauss boldly claims that "The character of classical political philosophy appears with the greatest clarity from Plato's Laws, which is his political work par excellence."⁹ That

⁷Of the 35 Platonic dialogues, 26 are performed dialogues and 9 are narrated dialogues. In "On Plato's Republic" (p. 58), Strauss points out that "The narrated dialogues are narrated either by Socrates (6) or by someone else mentioned by name (3)." We note that the three dialogues narrated by someone other than Socrates are the Parmenides, the Symposium, and the Phaedo.

On Anaxagoras and the human things, consider Strauss's reference to Anaxagoras' "effect" on Pericles ("On Aristotle's Politics," p. 28).

⁸See, e.g., "What Is Political Philosophy?," pp. 29-34; "Plato," in Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, eds., History of Political Philosophy, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1972), pp. 51-52; The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 1-2.

⁹"What Is Political Philosophy?," p. 29.

is, the character of classical political philosophy does not appear with the greatest clarity from Aristotle's Politics which "contains the original form of political science" (12). If the speech about wine in the first book of the Laws "appears to be the introduction to political philosophy,"¹⁰ Strauss so arranges things that the commentary on the Athenian stranger's speech about his predecessors in the tenth book of the Laws is the proper introduction to a discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science. Does the Laws, more than any other Platonic dialogue, prepare Aristotle's founding of political science?

Strauss's account of the Athenian stranger's speech brings out the first presupposition necessary for the founding of political philosophy. Only later does Strauss tell us how Socrates, as distinguished from the Athenian stranger, conceived of that presupposition (see 19-20, 29). According to the Athenian stranger, his predecessors

assert that all things which are have come into being ultimately out of and through certain "first things" which are not strictly speaking "things" but which are responsible for the coming into being and perishing of everything that comes into being and perishes; it is the first things and the coming into being attending on the first things which these men mean by "nature"; both the first things and whatever arises through them, as distinguished from human action, are "by nature." The things which are by nature stand at the opposite pole from the things which are by nomos (ordinarily rendered as "law" or "convention"), i.e. things which are not only not by themselves, nor by

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 31 (emphasis in the original).

human making proper, but only by men holding them to be or positing that they are or agreeing as to their being.

The starting point of the predecessors is the discovery or acceptance of "the fundamental distinction . . . between nature and convention" (15). It would seem that even if the predecessors were not the first philosophers, they were certainly philosophers. But Strauss does not call them philosophers. In fact, somewhat later, he seems to connect them with (not to say identify them with) the sophists (17). In that passage, Strauss provides us with the specific difference between a political philosopher and a sophist. One cannot help but wonder what he regards as the specific difference between a philosopher who is not a political philosopher and a sophist (cf. 17 and 19).

However this may be, the predecessors believe that the only serious things are the natural things and that the only serious pursuit is the pursuit concerning nature. Strauss indicates that their most important assertion is that "the gods are only by law or convention." Yet he immediately says: "For our present purpose it is more immediately important to note that according to these men the political art or science has little to do with nature and is therefore not something serious." Does Strauss imply that the political art or science has little to do with the gods? The political art or science has little to do with nature, the predecessors argue, because "the just

things are radically conventional and the things which are by nature noble differ profoundly from the things which are noble by convention: the way of life which is straight or correct according to nature consists in being superior to others or in lording it over the others whereas the way of life which is straight or correct according to convention consists in serving others." Do the predecessors admit that the political art or science has something to do with nature because there are things which are by nature noble?

It appears that the predecessors did not found political philosophy because they did not believe that the political art or science is something serious. The founder of political philosophy must have come to believe that the political art or science is something serious. If he accepted the distinction between nature and convention as his starting point, he must have come to believe that the political art or science is concerned with things which are by nature. But we have been told by Strauss that Socrates founded political philosophy when he compelled philosophy to turn away from the natural things toward the just and noble things. We have not yet achieved clarity about the relationship between nature and the noble and just things.

Strauss emphasizes that "The Athenian stranger disagrees entirely with his predecessors. He asserts that there are things which are just by nature. He can also

be said to show by deed--by the fact that he teaches legislators--that he regards the political art or science as a most serious pursuit" (14-15, emphasis added). Was the Athenian stranger the founder of political philosophy? Does Strauss, like Aristotle, take "it for granted that the chief character of the Laws is Socrates?"¹¹ Whatever the answers to these questions, Strauss next digresses to discuss the way in which "the classical distinction between nature and convention . . . has been overlaid by the modern distinction between nature and history" (15-16). At the beginning of that digression Strauss states that "despite the most important difference" between the Athenian stranger and his predecessors, "the distinction between nature and convention, between the natural and the positive remains as fundamental for him, and for classical political philosophy in general, as it was for his predecessors" (15, emphasis added). Immediately after the digression Strauss says: "The Athenian stranger . . . unlike his predecessors, takes the political art or science seriously because he acknowledges that there are things which are by nature just" (16). If the discovery of the distinction between nature and convention is the ground of the founding of philosophy, the discovery that there are

¹¹Ibid., p. 33. Cf. The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws," p. 2.

things which are by nature just is the ground of the founding of political philosophy.

But Strauss has just said that the Athenian stranger disagrees entirely with his predecessors. We can now see that this means that aside from his agreement with their fundamental distinction between nature and convention he disagrees entirely with his predecessors. It seems that this can only mean that he not only acknowledges that there are things by nature just, but that the gods are not only by convention and that the things which are by nature noble do not differ profoundly from the things which are noble by convention (see 14). We note, however, that Strauss, to this point, is silent on these last two assertions. His silence seems to reduce the difference between the Athenian stranger and his predecessors to the question as to whether there are things by nature just. We must see whether he breaks his silence on the status of the gods and the noble things when he discusses Socrates' founding of political philosophy and Aristotle's founding of political science.

Returning from his digression,¹² Strauss completes his discussion of the Athenian stranger and in so doing

¹²While a discussion of Strauss's digression is not necessary for our purpose, we do wish to call the reader's attention to two sentences in that digression: "The tracing of something to convention is analogous to the tracing of something to chance. However plausible a convention may appear in the light of the conditions in

mentions Aristotle for the first time since the first sentence of "On Aristotle's Politics" (16-17). Despite the great emphasis Strauss has just placed--by means of his silence as well as his words--on the difference between the Athenian stranger and his predecessors concerning whether there are things which are by nature just, he now reveals that according to the Athenian stranger himself that difference does not go to the roots. The Athenian stranger, Strauss says, traces his divergence from his predecessors to the fact that they "admitted as first things only bodies whereas, according to him, the soul is not derivative from the body or inferior in rank to it but by nature the ruler of the body." While the predecessors did not deny the existence of soul, the Athenian stranger indicates that they "did not recognize sufficiently the fundamental difference between body and soul. The status of the just things depends on the status of the soul." The body appears to be by nature private. If the soul is an epiphenomenon of the body, it appears that there are no natural things--or, at least no natural human things--which are by nature common. Above all, there is no natural common good, no natural justice. Were we mistaken about the ground of the founding of political philosophy?

which it arose, it nevertheless owes its being, its 'validity,' to the fact that it became 'held' or 'accepted'" (15).

Strauss does not, at this point, discuss Socrates' teaching concerning the status of the soul. Does he ever discuss that teaching?¹³ He does, however, mention an Aristotelian assertion which seems to be derived from Aristotle's understanding of the soul: "Aristotle goes to the end of this road by asserting that the political association is by nature and that man is by nature political because he is the being characterized by speech or reason and thus capable of the most perfect, the most intimate union with his fellows which is possible: the union in pure thought." Strauss's first mention of Aristotle concerns the great disputation with which the Politics begins and which sets the tone for the whole book.¹⁴ While Aristotle, in that discussion, prefers to limit himself to speaking about "the advantageous and the harmful" and "the just and unjust things" and to remain silent about "pure thought" or philosophy¹⁵ (he remains almost silent about such matters until Book VII), Strauss, at the outset of his discussion of Aristotle, brings out the fact that Aristotle teaches that man is by nature political because he is by nature capable of philosophy (cf. 26-27). It is true, however, that Strauss does not, at this point, choose to cite

¹³See "On Plato's Republic," pp. 109, 110-11, 137-38.

¹⁴Strauss cites 1253a1-18 and 1281a2-4 (17, n. 8).

¹⁵But consider Politics 1253a3-4, 27-29.

any passages in On the Soul in support of his interpretation (cf. 26, n. 30). When Strauss says that "Aristotle goes to the end of this road" does he mean to indicate that the Athenian stranger did not go as far down the road as Aristotle? How far down this road did "Socrates or Plato" go? Is Strauss's first reference to Aristotle a reference to a "difference between Plato and Aristotle" (21)?

Strauss continues his discussion of the tradition's account of its origins by moving from Plato's account to Aristotle's account. He makes the transition from Plato to Aristotle by noting that "the assertion of the Athenian stranger is confirmed by what Aristotle says about the sophists' manner of dealing with the political things" (17).¹⁶ While the predecessors of the Athenian stranger did not regard the political art or science as something serious, the sophists regarded that part of political skill which is the skill of speaking as "the only political art to be taken seriously." They regarded the other parts of political skill as "easy" to acquire and the non-speaking aspects of politics as "easy" to perform well. They thereby, according to Aristotle, reduced the political art or science to rhetoric or, at best, made it an instrument of rhetoric. Aristotle, in the passage under discussion, exhibits his characteristic sobriety by not revealing the full reasoning

¹⁶ Strauss cites Nicomachean Ethics 1181a12-17 (17, n. 9).

which led the sophists to their conclusion. Strauss, however, is not so reticent:

If there are no things which are by nature just or there is not by nature a common good, if therefore the only natural good is each man's own good, it follows that the wise man will not dedicate himself to the community but only use it for his own ends or prevent his being used by the community for its end; but the most important instrument for this purpose is the art of persuasion and in the first place forensic rhetoric (17, emphasis added).

We quote this passage in full because of the crucial importance of rhetoric in the remainder of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics"--Strauss's discussion of the founding of political philosophy and political science by the two wise men Socrates and Aristotle. We note here two points, the first of which Strauss chooses not to mention in "On Aristotle's Politics" and the second of which he mentions later in the first section. The rhetoricians, by taking the skill of speaking as a most serious pursuit, raised that part of political skill "to the level of a distinct discipline." "The classical philosophers," Strauss tells us in another place, "could meet that challenge only by raising the whole of 'political science,' as far as possible or necessary, to the rank of a distinct discipline. By doing this, they became the founders of political science in the precise and final sense of the term."¹⁷ Aristotle's denunciation of the sophists'

¹⁷ "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 83. Cf. "On Aristotle's Politics," pp. 21, 25, 27.

reduction of the political art or science to rhetoric occurs in that part of the Nicomachean Ethics which serves as the transition to the Politics. It almost immediately precedes the statement with which he introduces the "program" of the Politics: "Now our predecessors have left the subject of legislation (τὸ περὶ τῆς νομοθεσίας) to us unexamined. . . ." ¹⁸ Strauss's second reference to Aristotle leads us to Aristotle's claim to be the founder of political science--a claim the specific details of which Strauss himself does not discuss when he treats Aristotle's founding of political science (see 23 and 28-29). Does Strauss believe that the Athenian stranger did not leave the subject of legislation unexamined?

Despite the fact that Aristotle does not believe that the sophists were the founders of political philosophy or political science, he "does not deny that there was a kind of political philosophy prior to Socrates" (17, emphasis added). ¹⁹ With these words Strauss seems to turn to a thematic discussion of Aristotle's account of his predecessors (17-19). Strauss argues that for Aristotle, political philosophy is "primarily and ultimately the quest

¹⁸ 1181b13.

¹⁹ Cf. Nicomachean Ethics 1094b12.

for that political order²⁰ which is best according to nature everywhere and . . . always." In addition, Strauss maintains that Aristotle believed that "This quest will not come into its own as long as men are entirely immersed in political life, be it even in the founding of a political community, for even the founder is necessarily limited in his vision by what can or must be done 'here and now'" (17, emphasis added; see 28-29).²¹ According to Aristotle, Hippodamus was the first man not engaged in political life who attempted to speak about the best regime. Applying Strauss's interpretation of Aristotle's criterion, Hippodamus thus has a claim to being the first political philosopher. We can say that Strauss implies that Aristotle does not take seriously the possibility that either Minos or Lycurgus--the great founder-legislators of what Aristotle regards as the best actual Greek regimes and those founders whose legislation Plato makes the starting point of the Athenian stranger's dialogue on legislation²²--could have

²⁰"Political order" is a translation of πολιτεία. (See the beginning of each book of the Politics except the first; also see Politics 1267b30.) Strauss usually translates πολιτεία by "regime." (See Natural Right and History, pp. 135-37.) He prefers "political order" in this context because it is not until the last section of "On Aristotle's Politics" (45-49) that he establishes that "the theme of the Politics is the politeia (the regime)" (45, emphasis added).

²¹Cf. "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 82-84.

²²Laws 624b1, 630d9.

been the founder of political philosophy. Does Strauss wish to indicate that Aristotle does not take seriously the possibility of the complete coincidence of speech and deed, theory and practice?²³

²³ Harry V. Jaffa ("Aristotle," in Strauss and Cropsey, eds., History of Political Philosophy, pp. 93-94) notes that Aristotle, in his discussion of the best regimes other than his own in Book II of the Politics, moves from theory (Socrates-Plato, Phaleas, Hippodamus) to practice (Sparta, Crete, Carthage) to the "unity" of theory and practice (the nine legislators). In his discussion of Sparta, Aristotle mentions Lycurgus only in passing (1270a7). At the beginning of his discussion of Crete, Aristotle mentions that the Spartan regime appears to have been copied from the Cretan and reports that it is said that Lycurgus, when he went abroad, passed most of his time in Crete. He immediately adds that the Cretans even now believe that Minos first instituted their code of laws (1271b20-32). At the beginning of his discussion of the nine legislators, Aristotle unambiguously states that Lycurgus was one of those legislators who instituted both laws and regimes (1273b34-35). He does not mention Minos in the discussion of the nine legislators. (Cf. 1329b5-7, 25.) Jaffa notes that "the central of [the nine] is Onomacritus . . . , who was a Locrian who travelled in Crete, where he practiced soothsaying. According to a tradition (in which Aristotle himself places little credence), he was the first man who became skillful in legislation." Was Onomacritus the founder of political philosophy? Jaffa continues: "Apparently, however, he did not have any pupils, but had as a companion Thales, who in turn had Lycurgus and Zaleucus for pupils" ("Aristotle," p. 94). If Onomacritus had no pupils, Minos could not possibly have been his pupil. Could Onomacritus have been the pupil of Minos? Could Minos have been the teacher of the first man who became skillful in legislation? Could Minos have been the founder of political philosophy? Perhaps those who say these things give too little regard to the spaces of time (1274a31). We can certainly say that Aristotle, by the end of his discussion of his "predecessors" in Book II, has replaced the traditional Minos-Lycurgus connection (which he implies but does not explicitly report) with the "traditional" Onomacritus-Thales-Lycurgus connection. Minos has been replaced by Onomacritus-Thales. Now Aristotle believes that Thales was the founder of philosophy (Metaphysics 983b6, 20). The founder of philosophy was the companion of the first man who became skillful in

Strauss attaches the greatest importance to Aristotle's account of Hippodamus. His comments on the first part of that account (17-19)²⁴ are used to introduce the thematic discussion of Socrates' founding of political philosophy. His comments on the second part (21-22)²⁵ constitute the first part of his thematic discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science. Strauss speaks at some length about the account of Hippodamus' eccentric way of life that Aristotle uses to preface his presentation of the regime proposed by Hippodamus. In fact,

legislation. Was Thales the teacher of Onomacritus? Was Thales not only the founder of philosophy but also the founder of political philosophy? (In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle remarks that "it is said" [φασιν] that men like Thales have theoretical wisdom [σοφία] but not practical wisdom [φρόνησις] [1141b4-5]. In the first book of the Politics, Aristotle goes out of his way to rehabilitate Thales' reputation for practical wisdom. He relates a story about how Thales, when taunted with the uselessness of philosophy because of his poverty, made use of his knowledge of astronomy to display his wisdom. Although Aristotle twice uses the word σοφία to describe Thales' marvelous feat, one can only conclude that on this occasion Thales' σοφία was eminently practical [1259a6-18].) The replacement of Minos by Onomacritus-Thales seems to transform the section on the nine legislators into a section which demonstrates the preeminence of theory in any unification of theory and practice. Aristotle's procedure can perhaps only be fully understood when it is compared with the procedure Plato follows in the first book of the Laws. There Plato makes clear that the Cretan laws were believed to have their origins in Zeus by way of Minos and that the Spartan laws were traced to Apollo by way of Lycurgus. Aristotle is silent on Zeus and Apollo. Since Minos could not have been the pupil of Onomacritus, we cannot say that Aristotle replaces Zeus with Onomacritus. He merely replaces Apollo with Onomacritus-Thales.

²⁴On Politics 1267b22-1268b22.

²⁵On 1268b23-1269b22.

Strauss's discussion of that curious account is more than twice as long as his discussion of the scheme itself (see 17-19).

Strauss summarizes Aristotle's account of Hippodamus' way of life as follows: "Apart from being the first political philosopher, Hippodamus was also a famous town planner, he lived, from ambition, in a somewhat overdone manner in other respects also (for instance he paid too much attention to his clothing), and he wished to be learned also regarding the whole nature." Strauss is at pains to demonstrate that Aristotle's character sketch is not a piece of "slightly malicious gossip." The details of Strauss's completely convincing demonstration need not concern us at the moment.²⁶ Suffice it to say that he believes that Aristotle wishes us to draw a parallel between Plato's comic interlude²⁷ and his own comic prologue: "Whereas the first philosopher became ridiculous on a certain occasion in the eyes of a barbarian slave woman, the first political philosopher was rather ridiculous altogether in the eyes of sensible freemen." Strauss draws a most serious lesson from the comic parallel: "This fact indicates that political philosophy is more questionable than philosophy as such." Aristotle, Strauss maintains, uses Hippodamus'

²⁶But see pp. 53-54, n. 35; p. 118, n. 38, and pp. 222-24 below.

²⁷Theaetetus 173e1-174b7.

ridiculousness to convey "the same thought which Cicero expresses by saying that philosophy had to be compelled to become concerned with political things." The tradition of political philosophy is uniquely unified by the shared insight into the questionableness of political philosophy and thus of the tradition itself. And the tradition does not end with the classics: "Aristotle's suggestion," Strauss concludes, "was taken up in modern times by Pascal who said that Plato and Aristotle, being not pedants but gentlemen, wrote their political works playfully: 'this was the least philosophic and the least serious part of their life . . . they wrote of politics as if they had to bring order into a madhouse.'"

Perhaps most contemporary students of Plato and Aristotle may be called gentlemen; they certainly may be called pedants. But while at least a few have not allowed their pedantry to obscure the fact that the Republic and even the Laws were written playfully, has even one been bold enough to call the political works of "the soberest of the philosophers" playful?²⁸

Strauss has just given us a careful demonstration in Aristotle's playfulness in the Politics. We must note, however, that Pascal's remark that the political works of Plato and Aristotle were the least philosophic and least

²⁸ See Locke, The Reasonableness of Christianity, ed. I. T. Ramsey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), no. 238, p. 58.

serious part of their lives seems to stand in some tension with Strauss's twin observations that "Socrates was the first philosopher who concerned himself chiefly or exclusively . . . with the human things" (13) and that Plato's Athenian stranger "can . . . be said to show by deed . . . that he regards the political art or science as a most serious pursuit" (14-15). But, after all, Plato's only emphatically political work--his only "serious" political work--is the only dialogue in which he did not allow Socrates to participate. Did the Athenian stranger take the political art or science more seriously than Socrates? Did Aristotle take the political art or science more seriously than the Athenian stranger?

Is there another side to Aristotle's Hippodamus prologue as presented by Strauss? Hippodamus was not a gentleman. Can a teacher of the political art or science who is not a gentleman expect to be taken seriously by "sensible freemen?" Did the philosophers not only have to be compelled to become concerned with political things, but be compelled to become gentlemen? Aristophanes' Socrates was no less ridiculous "in the eyes of sensible freemen" than Aristotle's Hippodamus. Was Plato's Socrates much less ridiculous than Aristophanes'? Strauss does not mention Socrates' trial and execution by the "sensible freemen" of the disorderly "madhouse" that was Athens when he discusses the founder of political philosophy.

But he certainly never forgets that Plato wrote all his dialogues--including, if not especially, his only "serious" political dialogue²⁹--in the light of the events playfully presented in the Euthyphro, Apology, Crito and Phaedo.

If Hobbes--that great expert on philosophic and non-philosophic fear--is correct in his surmise that Aristotle wrote his theoretical works "fearing the fate of Socrates,"³⁰ is it not certain that his "more questionable" political works are composed in the same spirit?

Strauss's comparatively brief comments (19) on the first part of Aristotle's presentation and critique of Hippodamus' best political order make clear that Hippodamus was not the founder of political philosophy. While Hippodamus' scheme has the appearance of amazing clarity and simplicity, Aristotle reveals great confusion beneath the surface of his proposals. Aristotle does not explicitly expose the root cause of that confusion. He does, however, mention in passing that Hippodamus wished to be learned regarding "the whole nature." We have seen that Strauss is careful to reproduce that remark in his summary of Aristotle's account of Hippodamus' way of life (18; see 13, 19). Strauss locates the source of Hippodamus' great confusion in his desire to impose an alien kind of clarity and

²⁹ See "What Is Political Philosophy?," pp. 32-33.

³⁰ Leviathan, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1968), chap. 46, p. 692.

simplicity on his subject matter. He traces that desire to Hippodamus' apparent espousal of some mathematically oriented account of "'the whole nature.'" That account "enabled or compelled" Hippodamus to understand and search for the best regime as that regime "which is entirely according to nature" (19, emphasis added). Strauss's conclusion finally brings us to the heart of the first main part of the first section: Hippodamus, Strauss says,

merely arrived at great confusion because he did not pay attention to the peculiar character of political things: he did not see that the political things are in a class by themselves. In spite or because of his ambition, Hippodamus did not succeed in founding political philosophy or political science because he did not begin by raising the question "what is political?" or rather "what is the polis?"

Strauss does not stop to compare Hippodamus' scheme with the teachings of the Athenian stranger and his predecessors. It appears that the distinction between nature and convention remains as fundamental for him as it was for the Athenian and the men whom he opposes. Because Hippodamus sought that regime which is entirely according to nature, we can infer that he agrees with the Athenian against the predecessors that there are things which are just by nature. Did he believe that the gods are only by convention? Aristotle certainly reports that his scheme called for the division of the land into three parts, one part of which was "sacred land to supply the conventional

(τὰ νομιζόμενα) offerings to the gods."³¹ Did he believe that the things which are by nature noble differ profoundly from the things which are noble by convention? Aristotle certainly reports that his way of life was not noble by convention. We will not venture to speculate about what account this mathematical physicist would give of the relationship between and relative rank of soul and body. Would it resemble that of Plato's *Timaeus*?³² However these things may be, Hippodamus certainly regarded the political art or science as a most serious pursuit. It is now clear that even the combination of seriousness and the belief that there are things by nature just is not the necessary and sufficient condition for the founding of political philosophy or political science. That combination merely results in great confusion unless one sees that the political things are in a class by themselves.

Strauss tells us that "Hippodamus did not succeed in founding political philosophy or political science because he did not begin by raising the question 'what is political?' or rather 'what is the polis?'" The Athenian stranger begins the only serious political work of Plato by raising a question. Can that question be said to be identical with the question "what is political?" Can that

³¹Politics 1267b35.

³²See Seth Benardete, "On Plato's *Timaeus* and *Timaeus*' Science Fiction," Interpretation 2 (Summer 1971): 21-63.

question be said to necessarily compel the one who asks it to raise the question "what is political?"

We note that Strauss does not comment on the fact that Hippodamus, apparently unlike Socrates, regards both the inquiry into the natural things and the inquiry into the human things as most serious pursuits. Strauss does, however, leave open the possibility--if he does not imply--that Hippodamus' great confusion concerning the political things stems not from his wish to be learned regarding "the whole nature," but from his faulty account of "the whole nature."

The founding of "political philosophy or political science," Strauss has now revealed, coincides with or presupposes the raising of the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" "This question, and all questions of this kind, were raised by Socrates who for this reason became the founder of political philosophy." At this point (19-20),³³ Strauss ceases to rely on Aristotle's account of his predecessors and returns to Platonic (and Xenophontic) texts. That is, he does not make use of Aristotle's numerous references to Socrates.³⁴ He does not, for example, examine the account of "Socrates speeches"

³³Cf. Natural Right and History, pp. 121-24.

³⁴Strauss does however cite Metaphysics 987b1-2 in the first footnote to "On Aristotle's Politics" (13, n. 1).

which Aristotle presents shortly before speaking of Hippodamus.³⁵

Socrates, Strauss began by telling us, was the first philosopher who concerned himself chiefly or exclusively, not with the divine or natural things, but with the human things, i.e., particularly the just and noble things. It might seem that Socrates' study of the human things consisted chiefly or exclusively in raising the question "what is?" in regard to those things--e.g., the question "what is justice?" or "what is courage?" But Strauss does not introduce his account of the founding of political philosophy by telling us that Socrates raised the question "what is?" in regard to specific human things. He introduces his account by telling us that Socrates raised the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" Socrates' founding of political philosophy consisted in his raising the question as to what the human or political things as such are.³⁶

The "what is" questions [Strauss says] point to "essences," to "essential differences"--to the fact that the whole consists of parts which are heterogeneous, not merely sensibly (like fire, air, water, and earth) but noetically: to understand the whole means to understand the "What" of each of these

³⁵ Politics 1265a10-13. Strauss calls attention to this passage in his discussion of Aristotle's account of Hippodamus' way of life (18 and n. 11). See p. 118, n. 38 and pp. 222-24 below.

³⁶ Cf. Natural Right and History, pp. 121-22.

parts, of these classes of beings, and how they are linked with one another. Such understanding cannot be the reduction of one heterogeneous class of things to others or to any cause or causes other than the class itself; the class, or the class character, is the cause par excellence.

It looks as if Socrates' founding of political philosophy--no less than Hippodamus' failure to found political philosophy--presupposes "some account of 'the whole nature.'" (19). Contrary to appearances, Socrates' turn to the study of the human things is based not upon the complete disregard of the divine or natural things but upon a new approach to the understanding of "the whole nature."³⁷ The founding of political philosophy presupposes the discovery that the whole consists of heterogeneous parts; it presupposes the discovery of "noetic heterogeneity." This discovery makes it possible to see that the human or political things are not completely reducible to the divine or natural things. It makes it possible to pay attention to the peculiar character of the political things, to see that the political things are in a class by themselves.

But why did Socrates turn primarily away from the divine or natural things toward the human things? "The roots of the whole are hidden." Are they hidden by the gods? "The gods do not approve of man's trying to seek out what they did not wish to reveal, the things in heaven and beneath the earth." Strauss certainly regards Socrates'

³⁷Cf. *ibid.*, p. 122.

decision not to investigate the divine things and to limit himself to the study of the human things as "the greatest proof" of his piety. "His wisdom is knowledge of ignorance because it is pious and it is pious because it is knowledge of ignorance." Socrates' knowledge of ignorance is surely not ignorance: it seems to be his knowledge of the mysterious character of the whole or his knowledge of his ignorance of the roots of the whole or his knowledge of his ignorance of the things in heaven and beneath the earth.

But despite Socrates' unimpeachable piety, it appears that the discovery of noetic heterogeneity not merely permits but favors the study of the human things as such, i.e., of the human things in so far as they are not reducible to the divine or natural things. "While the roots of the whole are hidden, the whole manifestly consists of heterogeneous parts" (emphasis added). Socrates seems to have regarded his turn to the "what is" questions as a turn, or a return, to "sobriety" and "moderation" from the "madness" of his predecessors.³⁸ Strauss calls the change which Socrates brought about a return to "common sense" or to "the world of common sense."³⁹ It is a return to common

³⁸Cf. *ibid.*, p. 123. Also see Xenophon's *Socrates*, pp. 6-8 and Laurence Berns, "Socratic and Non-Socratic Philosophy: A Note on Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, 1.1.13 and 14," *Review of Metaphysics* 28 (September 1974): 85-88.

³⁹See *Natural Right and History*, p. 123.

sense because it is a turn to what Strauss sometimes calls the "surface" of the things: the question "what is?" points to the eidos of a thing--to that which is visible to all without any particular effort--to the "shape" or "form" or "character" of a thing. It seems that the madness of Socrates' predecessors consisted in their attempt to start from what is "first in itself" or "first by nature." Socrates' return to sanity consisted in his starting from "what comes to sight first" or is "first for us." The whole is the totality of parts. While the roots of the whole are hidden, the parts are manifest in their heterogeneity. Socrates' recovery of his common sense transforms the study of the whole into the study of the manifest articulation of the whole. Yet Socrates' new-found sanity seems to be the ground for a new kind of madness: "according to Socrates the things which are 'first in themselves' are somehow 'first for us.'" The "what" is, as such, the character of a class of things--of things which by nature belong together or form a natural group. The whole has a natural articulation.⁴⁰ But the "what" of things comes first to sight, not in what we see of them, but in what is said about them or in opinions about them. As Strauss says, "the things which are 'first in themselves'

⁴⁰Cf. ibid., pp. 122-23. Consider Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1958), p. 13: "The problem inherent in the surface of things, and only in the surface of things, is the heart of things."

are in a manner, but necessarily, revealed in men's opinions." Accordingly, Socrates started his quest for the natures of things from the opinions about their natures. Socrates, Strauss reports, discovered that

Those opinions have as opinions a certain order. The highest opinions, the authoritative opinions, are the pronouncements of the law. The law makes manifest the just and noble things and it speaks authoritatively about the highest beings, the gods who dwell in heaven. The law is the law of the city; the city looks up to, holds in reverence, "holds" the gods of the city (cf. 14, 15).

Socrates' approach to the whole not only makes possible but favors the study of the human or political things as such because the sphere of opinion is the essential starting point of that approach and the sphere of opinion is necessarily the political sphere. "In its original form political philosophy broadly understood is the core of philosophy or rather 'the first philosophy.'"⁴¹

But Socrates did not merely "take refuge"⁴² in the opinions about the natures of things. When starting from the opinions he could not help but recognize the fact that the opinions about what things are--and especially the authoritative opinions--contradict one another. Socrates'

⁴¹Cf. "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 94: "This question [the question of the nature of political things] marks the limit of political philosophy as a practical discipline: while essentially practical in itself, the question functions as an entering wedge for others whose purpose is no longer to guide action but simply to understand things as they are."

⁴²See Phaedo 99e.

specific approach is to "take refuge" in opinions in their contradictoriness. He is thereby forced to go beyond the contradictory opinions--even if, or especially if, they are authoritative opinions--toward a consistent view of the nature of the thing with which he is concerned, toward a view which is no longer opinion but knowledge.⁴³ "Even Socrates is compelled to go the way from law to nature, to ascend from law to nature." It might seem that Socrates' piety compelled him to practice a new kind of "natural" impiety which "sensible freemen" who held the authoritative opinions would have difficulty distinguishing from "conventional" impiety. But Strauss immediately assures us that Socrates knew that he must go the way from law to nature "with a new awakesness, caution, and emphasis." This knowledge would seem to be the ground of Socratic rhetoric. But Strauss says that Socrates knew that he must show the necessity of the ascent from law to nature "by a lucid, comprehensive, and sound argument which starts from the 'common sense' embodied in the accepted opinions and transcends them; his 'method' is 'dialectics.'" We must wonder whether most "sensible freemen" are capable of following or being persuaded by this kind of argument. Perhaps Socrates practices more than one kind of "dialectics."⁴⁴

⁴³Cf. Natural Right and History, pp. 124-26.

⁴⁴See "On Plato's Republic," pp. 53-54 and Xenophon's Socrates, pp. 29-31, 92-101, 116-23.

It might seem that although Socrates' procedure compelled him to turn first to the human things, his successful founding of political philosophy would enable or compel him to turn back toward the divine or natural things as such. Socrates' founding of political philosophy certainly required him to grasp the essential differences between the human things and the things which are not human, i.e., the divine or natural things. But this, in turn, seems to require and lead to an understanding of the divine or natural things as such.⁴⁵ While Strauss admits that the necessities governing Socrates' ascent from law to nature "modified" his position, he maintains that Socrates "still remains chiefly, if not exclusively concerned with the human things: with what is by nature right and noble or with the nature of justice and nobility." For it remains true that even Socrates' human wisdom is knowledge of ignorance: "there is no knowledge of the whole but only knowledge of parts, hence only partial knowledge of parts, hence no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion." It appears that Socrates' approach to the whole not only favors the study of the human or political things, but guarantees that political philosophy will always be "the first philosophy."

⁴⁵Cf. Natural Right and History, p. 122.

Strauss does not stop to compare Socrates' study of the human things with the teachings of the Athenian stranger and his predecessors. We need not comment on Socrates' teaching about whether there is a distinction between nature and convention, whether there are things which are by nature just, whether the political art or science is a most serious pursuit, or whether there is a distinction between soul and body and whether the former is by nature the ruler of the latter. But does Socrates believe that the gods are only by convention? Strauss indicates that Socrates discovered that "the city looks up to, holds in reverence, 'holds' the gods of the city." Earlier he had told us that the things which are by nomos are the "things which are not only not by themselves, nor by human making proper, but only by men holding them to be or positing that they are or agreeing as to their being" (14). Did Socrates, in his ascent from law to nature, discover gods "who are by themselves?" Did he "make" new gods?⁴⁶ Strauss is as silent about these questions as he is talkative about Socrates' piety. While Strauss assures us that Socrates remains chiefly, if not exclusively, concerned with what is by nature noble or with the nature of nobility, he is silent on whether he discovered that the things which are by nature noble differ profoundly from the things which

⁴⁶See "On Plato's Republic," pp. 98-100, 119-21.

are noble by convention. He certainly does not comment on Socrates' way of life.

Finally, we must note that while Strauss introduces his discussion of Socrates with the argument that the successful founding of political philosophy requires that one begin by raising the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?", that discussion does not, in so many words, tell us how Socrates answered that primary question.

CHAPTER III

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE (I)

Near the beginning of the thematic discussion of Socrates' founding of political philosophy, Strauss indicates that Socrates, like his predecessors, strives for knowledge of the whole. Near the end of that discussion, Strauss makes clear that Socrates' new (and, apparently, true) approach to the study of the whole compels him to admit that knowledge of the whole is unavailable. The whole is the totality of the parts; but we have only knowledge of the parts and therefore only partial knowledge of the parts. Socrates' wisdom remains human wisdom or political philosophy and political philosophy remains knowledge of ignorance (19, 20).

Strauss now characterizes this conclusion as "Socratic or Platonic" and thereby formally introduces Plato into his discussion of the origins of political philosophy or political science (20-21). The importance of this event compels us to quote Strauss at some length:

The elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of every part. Because of the elusiveness of the whole, the beginning or the questions retain a greater evidence than the end or the answers; return to the beginning remains a constant necessity.

The fact that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole, obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline.

It seemed, at first sight, that Socrates' or Plato's discovery of noetic heterogeneity, or the discovery that the whole has a natural articulation, would supply the basis for the division of philosophy into parts or for the distinction between the various sciences: the distinction between the various sciences would correspond to the natural articulation of the whole.¹ But the discovery that the whole is naturally articulated into the parts is, it seems, inseparable from the discovery "that each part of the whole . . . is in a sense open to the whole."² And the openness of each part of the whole to the whole "obstructs" the division of philosophy into parts or the founding of independent disciplines. Philosophy necessarily begins from "the sphere of opinion," the sphere of the human things, "the political sphere." Whatever the essential difference between the political things and all other things, that part of the whole which is the political sphere is like every other part of the whole in being "in a sense open to the whole." The openness of each part

¹Cf. Natural Right and History, p. 123.

²But cf. "What Is Political Philosophy?," p. 39: ". . . the human soul is the only part of the whole which is open to the whole and therefore more akin to the whole than anything else is" (emphasis added).

of the whole to the whole, and in particular the openness of the political sphere to the whole, makes it necessary for philosophy to constantly return to the political sphere and makes it impossible for philosophy to unqualifiedly transcend the political sphere. We can say that "this Socratic or Platonic conclusion" means that the nature of things requires not only that "'the first philosophy'" be political philosophy or that "the core of philosophy" be political philosophy but that philosophy be identical with political philosophy.³ The nature of things or the nature of the political things "obstructs" the establishment of any independent discipline or the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline.

It is at this point that Strauss introduces the pivotal distinction between political philosophy and political science:

Not Socrates or Plato but Aristotle is truly the founder of political science: as one discipline, and by no means the most fundamental or the highest discipline, among a number of disciplines.

Socratic or Platonic political philosophy is the only "discipline"; it is the only form of philosophy or science. Aristotelian political science is one discipline among a number of disciplines; it is, it would seem, one form of philosophy or science

³Cf. *ibid.*: The "understanding of the situation of man which includes . . . the quest for cosmology rather than a solution to the cosmological problem, was the foundation of classical political philosophy" (emphasis added).

among a number of forms of philosophy or science. Although Aristotle's political science is inferior in dignity to one or more other disciplines, it would appear that it is not necessarily subject to any other discipline--no matter how fundamental or how high: Strauss indicates that it is "an independent discipline."⁴

What, we may ask, are the preconditions or pre-suppositions of Aristotle's establishment of political science as an independent discipline among a number of disciplines? This is the question of the second main part of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics" and Strauss reserves his answer for the proper place. We can, however, venture to formulate some hypotheses on the basis of what we have learned to this point. On the one hand, it seems that, according to Socrates or Plato, the very nature of things prevents the establishment of any independent disciplines: "The elusiveness of the whole affects the knowledge of every part." If Aristotle is to establish any independent discipline, it appears that he must demonstrate that Socrates' or Plato's account of the whole is mistaken; he must demonstrate that knowledge of the whole is available. On the other hand, according to Socrates or Plato, "the fact that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense

⁴For the expression "independent discipline or science" see Nicomachean Ethics 1112a34-b1: ". . . τὰς ἀκριβεῖς καὶ αὐτάρχεις τῶν ἐπιστημῶν. . . ."

open to the whole, obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline." If Aristotle is to at least establish political science as an independent discipline, it appears that he must at least demonstrate that Socrates' or Plato's account of the political sphere is mistaken; he must demonstrate that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole. We again note that Strauss has not yet provided us with an explicit or complete account of Socrates' or Plato's account of the political sphere, with their answer to the question "what is political?". We must say that, to this point, it is not clear whether Aristotle can demonstrate that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole without also or first demonstrating that knowledge of the whole is available. We note, however, that Strauss uses the term "obstructs" rather than, for example, "prevents" or "makes impossible" in the key sentence which we have twice quoted. Some obstructions can be removed. At any rate, it certainly appears that what Strauss calls "this difference between Plato and Aristotle" turns wholly on different answers to "theoretical" rather than "practical" questions (if we may properly use this Aristotelian distinction in the present context).

Strauss illustrates "this difference between Plato and Aristotle" by drawing three contrasts: (1) While Plato's quest for the best regime (Republic) leads

immediately to the quest for cosmology (Timaeus), Aristotle's quest for the best regime (Politics) is "unqualifiedly separable" from his cosmology (Physics or On the Heaven). Strauss concludes his formulation of this first contrast with an extremely important remark: "Aristotelian philosophizing has no longer to the same degree and in the same way as Socratic philosophizing the character of ascent."⁵ We wonder whether Strauss would say that Aristotle's quest for the right way of life is "unqualifiedly separable" from that part of physics which constitutes the transition from physics to metaphysics (On the Soul; see 26). At the risk of belaboring the obvious, we note that Strauss's examples remind us that the Socratic teaching obstructs not only with the establishment of independent disciplines but also the grouping of such disciplines under the more general headings "theoretical" and "practical" philosophy or science. (2) "Whereas the

⁵See Natural Right and History, p. 156: "Plato never discusses any subject--be it the city or the heavens or numbers--without keeping in view the elementary Socratic question, 'What is the right way of life?' and the simply right way of life proves to be the philosophic life. Plato eventually defines natural right with direct reference to the fact that the only life which is simply just is the life of the philosopher. Aristotle, on the other hand, treats each of the various levels of beings, and hence especially every level of human life, on its own terms." But cf. "On Thucydides' War," p. 237: "All of this amounts to saying that Thucydides' thought is inferior to Plato's thought. Or could Thucydides have had a positive reason for stopping on his ascent earlier than Plato?" Also see ibid., pp. 239-40.

Platonic teaching presents itself necessarily in dialogues, the Aristotelian teaching presents itself necessarily in treatises." The Socratic dialogue is the literary form of the Socratic ascent. Can Strauss be said to indicate that the Aristotelian treatise is characterized to a lesser degree and in a different way by an ascent? (3) "As regards the political things, Aristotle acts directly as the teacher of indefinitely many legislators or statesmen whom he addresses collectively and simultaneously, whereas Plato presents his political philosopher as guiding, in a conversation, one or two men who seek the best political order or are about to legislate for a definite community." Does Strauss mean to indicate that Socratic political philosophy is less "transferable" than Aristotelian political science?⁶ Does he mean to indicate that even Aristotle's political science somehow transcends the sphere of opinion while the Platonic political philosopher is somehow limited in his intention by "what can or must be done 'here and now'" (cf. 20 and 17)? At any rate, we note that Strauss, in his formulation of the third contrast, seems to indicate that both the Aristotelian treatise and the Platonic dialogue are addressed to only one kind of addressee and that the Aristotelian political scientist and the Platonic political philosopher speak to the same

⁶Cf. "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 82-84.

kind of addressee. That is, Strauss does not, at this point, seem to consider the possibility that either or both the Aristotelian treatise or/and the Platonic dialogue simultaneously speak to more than one addressee. He does not therefore seem to consider the possibility that a part of the difference between Plato and Aristotle may be accounted for by the fact that the primary and secondary addressees of the Platonic political philosopher may be different from the primary and secondary addressees of the Aristotelian political scientist. Is Plato's primary intention--even in his only political work proper--identical with Aristotle's primary intention in the Politics (and the Nicomachean Ethics)?

Strauss completes his first discussion of Plato and Aristotle, and thereby the first main part of the first section, by reminding us that Aristotle was a student of Plato. Despite the above contrasts, "it is no accident that the most fundamental discussion of the Politics includes what is almost a dialogue between the oligarch and the democrat. It is equally characteristic however that that dialogue does not occur at the beginning of the Politics." Are there any "dialogues" in the Nicomachean Ethics?

CHAPTER IV

ARISTOTLE'S FOUNDING OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

We have seen that Strauss introduces his discussion of Socrates' founding of political philosophy by arguing that the successful founder must have begun by raising the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" We have also seen that Strauss's account of Socrates' successful founding does not explicitly or completely reveal Socrates' answer to that question. Socrates' success simultaneously obstructs the establishment of political science as an independent discipline. Strauss begins his account of Aristotle's founding of political science as one discipline among a number of disciplines by discussing Aristotle's understanding of "the nature of political things" (21-23). By the end of that discussion, Strauss has indicated that Aristotle and the pupils of Socrates give the same answer to the question "what is political?" (see 23; cf. 29).

Strauss brings out Aristotle's teaching on the nature of political things by commenting on the second part of Aristotle's discussion of Hippodamus--the famous critique of the proposal that those who invent something

useful to the city should receive honors (21-22). Aristotle, Strauss reports, is much less certain than Hippodamus of the virtues of innovation. It appears that Hippodamus--despite his concern with clarity and perhaps because of his concern with simplicity--had not raised and thought through the question as to whether there is a difference between innovation in the arts and innovation in law. Aristotle transforms his discussion of Hippodamus' proposal into a more general discussion of innovation¹ and in so doing brings out "a most important difference between the arts and law."

The arts [Strauss says] are susceptible of infinite refinement and hence progress and they do not as such in any way suffer from progress. The case of law is different, for law owes its strength, i.e., its power of being obeyed, as Aristotle says here, entirely to custom and custom comes into being only through a long time. Law, in contradistinction to the arts, does not owe its efficacy to reason at all or only to a small degree.

It seems that Strauss believes that Aristotle's reflections on the difference between the arts and law point to his deepest thought concerning the nature of political things. Strauss formulates that thought as follows:

". . . the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason. . . ." ²

¹See 1268b26.

²We can not help but remember Strauss's earlier use of the ambiguous phrase "the political art or science" (14, 15, 16). Is "the political one" (ἡ πολιτικὴ) an art or science? In the passage under discussion, Aristotle

At the center of his discussion of innovation Aristotle remarks that "on the whole, all men seek not the ancestral (τὸ πᾶτριον) but the good."³ But the very nature of political things, Strauss continues, requires that

The law, the most important instrument for the moral education of the many, must . . . be supported by ancestral opinions, by myths--for instance, by myths which speak of the gods as if they were human beings --or by a "civil theology." The gods as meant in these myths have no being in and by themselves but only "by law." Yet given the necessity of law one may say that the principle of the whole both wishes and does not wish to be called Zeus.

does use the phrase "ἐπι . . . τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν," but he immediately indicates that he is using ἐπιστήμη in its general sense by citing two arts as examples. Soon after he uses the phrase ". . . αἱ τέχναι πᾶσαι καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις" (1268b34-37). Throughout the rest of the passage, Aristotle speaks only of the arts. Aristotle makes clear that Hippodamus believes that ἡ πολιτικὴ is an art and an art no different than every other art. The two arts which Aristotle cites as examples are medicine and gymnastics. At the beginning of the fourth book of the *Politics*, Aristotle draws an extended analogy between ἡ πολιτικὴ and gymnastics and argues that a practical program for politics would model itself upon gymnastics (1288b10-1289a25). The first sentence of Book IV begins: "In all the arts (τέχνας) and the sciences (ἐπιστήμας) that are not partial but in relation to some one genus complete, it is one (art or science) that studies (θεωρεῖσαι) what is suitable concerning each genus. . . ." Soon after Aristotle unambiguously refers to the study of regimes as a science (ἐπιστήμη, at 1288b23). Strauss certainly refers to Aristotle as the founder of political science. "The arts," Strauss and Aristotle tell us, "are susceptible of infinite refinement and hence progress and they do not as such in any way suffer from progress." Is the same thing true of the sciences? However that may be, there can be no doubt that Aristotle, according to Strauss, is an innovator, not to say revolutionary, in ἡ πολιτικὴ.

³1269a4-5.

Strauss concludes that because of the city's recalcitrance to reason "it requires for its well-being a rhetoric different from forensic and deliberative rhetoric as a servant to the political art."

In a footnote to the passage quoted above Strauss, among other things, cites a famous passage in the Metaphysics.⁴ Does Strauss wish to indicate that that "theoretical" treatise is intended, in part, to contribute to the support of the laws by contributing to the establishment of a civil theology?⁵ Does the Metaphysics make use of a new kind of rhetoric in the service of the political art? We can certainly say that Strauss indicates that Aristotle's "practical" treatises make use of what we might call "civil rhetoric." Strauss says that "civil rhetoric" is different from forensic and deliberative rhetoric. In the first book of the Rhetoric Aristotle enumerates three kinds of rhetoric: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic.⁶ Reflection on his description of epideictic rhetoric⁷ could lead one to the conclusion that Aristotle's political treatises--and especially the Nicomachean Ethics--are the highest examples of the epideictic form of the art of

⁴1074b1-14. See 22, n. 20.

⁵Consider the passage from Hobbes's Leviathan quoted on p. 50 above.

⁶1358a36-1359a29.

⁷1358a36-1359a29 passim, 1366a23-1368a37.

persuasion. Do the political treatises support the laws with "ancestral opinions," with "myths?" Is opinion or myth the element of the political treatises? Does Aristotle's political science ever unqualifiedly transcend the sphere of opinion?

Strauss's discussion of rhetoric in connection with his account of Aristotle's understanding of the nature of political things reminds us of his first discussion of rhetoric.⁸ While the rhetoricians raised rhetoric to the level of a distinct discipline and made the political art or science a mere instrument of rhetoric, Aristotle, it seems, not only established political science as an independent discipline but also reduced rhetoric to an instrument of the political art. Aristotle certainly teaches that there are things which are by nature just or that there is by nature a common good. Did he therefore as a "wise man," "dedicate himself to the community?" Are his political treatises proof of his dedication to the community? Are they also designed to "prevent his being used by the community for its end?" It appears that "civil rhetoric" could, in the hands of a wise man, be a most powerful instrument in the service of both of these not incompatible ends. We note, however, that "sensible freemen" could not help but come to the conclusion that Aristotle, like the predecessors of the Athenian stranger and like the pious

⁸See pp. 41-43 above.

Socrates, believes that the gods of the city are only by convention.

Strauss next illustrates the maxim "'The very nature of public affairs often defeats reason'" with one example from the Politics (22-23). Strauss discusses the infamous contradiction between Aristotle's condemnation of conventional slavery in Book I and his easy acceptance of conventional slavery in his account of the best regime in Book VII. (Are there any parallel examples in the Nicomachean Ethics?) The discussion of the slavery example concludes with the remark that Plato directly expresses the same thought that Aristotle chooses to convey through self-contradiction by "admitting . . . that superiority in strength is a natural title to rule."⁹ "From this we understand," Strauss goes on, "why the nature of political things defeats to some extent not only reason but persuasion in any form and one grasps another reason why the sophistic reduction of the political art to rhetoric is absurd" (23, emphasis added). Strauss elucidates this point with an example from Xenophon's Anabasis¹⁰ and in so doing makes clear that all the Socratics share Aristotle's understanding of the nature of political things. Xenophon's companion Proxenus, a pupil of Gorgias, "was capable of ruling gentlemen by means of praise or abstention from

⁹ Strauss cites Laws 690b. See 23, n. 22.

¹⁰ II 16-20.

praise. Yet he was utterly incapable of instilling his soldiers with respect and fear of himself: he was unable to discipline them. Xenophon on the other hand, the pupil of Socrates, possessed the full political art" (23).¹¹ Strauss comes back to Aristotle (23) by pointing out that Aristotle denounces the sophists' reduction of politics to rhetoric in the same passage in which he demonstrates "the insufficiency of persuasion for the guidance of 'the many' and the necessity of laws with teeth in them." That passage serves as the transition from the Nicomachean Ethics to the Politics. While the Socratics and Aristotle "took refuge in speech" they did not believe in "the omnipotence of speech." While they made use of civil rhetoric they knew that "the sternness of politics" "defeats to some extent . . . persuasion in any form."

A three-fold distinction seems to emerge from Strauss's account of the Socratic and Aristotelian understanding of the nature of political things: the gentleman can be distinguished from the possessor of the full political art on the one hand, and from the many on the other.¹² The possessor of the full political art can practice that art on both the gentlemen and the many. The gentlemen can be ruled by praise and blame. The proper instrument for

¹¹See "Xenophon's Anabasis," Interpretation 4 (Spring 1975): 117-47.

¹²Cf. Aristotle's discussion of the three ways of life in the Nicomachean Ethics 1095b14-1096a10.

such rule is that kind of rhetoric which is an instrument of the political art. The many can be ruled by a combination of laws supported by a civil theology and laws with teeth in them. It appears that a civil theology can help produce "respect and fear" of the laws and/or the legislator(s) and thus allow some reduction in the ferocity of the laws or provide some mitigation of the sternness of politics. Laws with teeth in them are certainly the product of the political art. A civil theology seems to be the product of that kind of rhetoric which is an instrument of the political art.

From what class are the possessors of the full political art drawn? Can or should the possessor of the full political art teach it to the gentlemen and/or the many? If so, does the successful imparting of the political art to pupils require the same instruments as its successful practice?¹³ Socrates certainly taught the full political art to the young gentlemen Plato and Xenophon. (Did he teach it to Alcibiades, Charmides, and Critias?)

¹³ Consider Averroes' distinction between the demonstrative, dialectical, and rhetorical classes of human beings in his practical books. See, e.g., The Decisive Treatise in Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy, trans. George F. Hourani, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, n.s., vol. 21 (London: Luzac, 1961), pp. 6-7, 14-18, 19-24, 24-26.

But Socrates would not or could not "instruct" the many.¹⁴ Did Socrates abstain from writing speeches or books because he could not instruct the many? Plato and Xenophon wrote books. Did they address their books to more than one class? Did they have more than one intention? Aristotle is a severe critic of the Socratics' political philosophy. Who are the addressees of his political science? Strauss seems to indicate that Aristotle's "theoretical" books have more than one addressee and more than one intention: even the Metaphysics "addresses" the many. Once again we are compelled to ask whether the political treatises have more than one addressee and more than one intention.¹⁵

Hippodamus failed to found political philosophy or political science because he failed to begin by raising the question "what is political?" Socrates asked and answered that question and thereby succeeded in founding political philosophy and establishing political philosophy as "the first philosophy." Strauss has indicated that the Socratic philosophers and Aristotle agree as to the nature of political things. It would not be too much to say that he allows us to suppose that Socrates taught Plato and Plato taught Aristotle the nature of the political things. Yet the

¹⁴ See Alfarabi, The Philosophy of Plato in Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, trans., with an Introduction by Muhsin Mahdi (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), pp. 66-67.

¹⁵ See pp. 69-70 above.

Socratics deny and Aristotle affirms that it is possible to establish political science as an independent discipline. It seems that the Socratics deny that the discovery that there is a specific difference between the political things and the things which are not political and the correct understanding of that specific difference are sufficient conditions for the establishment of political science as an independent discipline. How did Aristotle, while accepting the Socratic answer to the question "what is political?," attempt to overcome the Socratic objections to an independent political science? Strauss now turns to this question. His treatment of it takes up almost the whole of the remainder of the first section (23-28). The core of those five carefully constructed and tightly argued pages appears to be an account of how Aristotle attempted to overcome the Socratic objections by demonstrating that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole.

Strauss begins by returning to Aristotle's discussion of Hippodamus' proposal that those who invent something useful to the city should receive honors (23-24). Strauss's initial elaboration of what seemed to be the crucial difference between the arts and law appeared to indicate that Aristotle believes that the arts are superior to law. But, Strauss now points out, the very fact that Aristotle criticizes Hippodamus seems to lead to the

conclusion that the arts must be ruled by law and hence are inferior to law. Yet how can law--which "does not owe its efficacy to reason at all or only to a small degree"--properly rule the arts? In his initial discussion, Strauss reduced the strength of law to its power of being obeyed and seemed to trace that power wholly to mythos. Strauss now makes clear that in order to bring out the specific character of law and hence the nature of the political things, he almost completely abstracted from the fact that law is always "meant to be a dictate of reason" and its makers always claim that it owes its dignity in some sense to logos. Aristotle teaches that law can properly rule the arts because, as Strauss puts it, "the reason effective in the arts is lower than the reason effective in law as law should be." In fact, Aristotle teaches that laws are themselves the product of an art: the legislative art. But the legislative art is the highest form of practical wisdom or prudence, the prudence concerned with the common good of the polis as a whole, as distinguished from the private good of an individual human being. "The difference between arts and law is then founded on the difference between arts and prudence." With this remark, Strauss moves to a discussion of Aristotle's account of the relationship between the arts and prudence. In so doing he is compelled or enabled to leave behind the Politics and rely almost completely on the

Nicomachean Ethics. This primary reliance on the Nicomachean Ethics characterizes the remainder of the first section. It appears that we must look to the Nicomachean Ethics rather than to the Politics if we are to discover and be able to read the plan of the foundations of Aristotle's political science.

Strauss proceeds to show that Aristotle, in his remarks in the Nicomachean Ethics on the arts and prudence, establishes that prudence is of higher dignity than the arts because every art is concerned with a partial good whereas prudence is concerned with the whole human good (24). While the artisan as artisan is unable to distinguish between genuine and sham arts and is unable to decide which use of his art is good, the possession of prudence enables one to make such distinctions and decisions. We can say that Strauss indicates that prudence can rightfully rule the arts because while the knowledge of the human good effective in the artisan as artisan is partial, the knowledge of the human good effective in the prudent man is comprehensive. This emphasis on knowledge leads us to wonder whether Aristotle teaches that knowledge of the whole human good is the necessary and sufficient condition for the right use of the arts or, more generally, that knowledge is the necessary and sufficient title to rule. It seems that Strauss is compelled to focus his attention, to this point, exclusively on knowledge because the relative rank of law and the arts turns on the relative rank of

the knowledge effective in each. Strauss continues:

The distinction between prudence and the arts implies that there is no art that tells me which partial good supplied by an art I ought to choose here and now in preference to other goods. There is no expert who can decide the prudent man's vital questions as well as he can. To be prudent means to lead a good life, and to lead a good life means that one deserves to be one's own master or that one makes one's own decisions well (emphasis added).

It appears that prudence bestows a kind of independence on the prudent man. Is prudence the ground for the independence of political science? We note, however, that as Strauss elaborates the difference between prudence and the arts he seems to forget that the highest form of prudence is an art. The prudent man would certainly seem to be subject to the legislative art. Is the knowledge of the human good effective in the legislative art partial?

In order to lay bare Aristotle's understanding of the nature of political things, Strauss first discussed the relationship between the arts and law. That discussion led him to the relationship between law and prudence and then to the relationship between the arts and prudence. In his discussion of the relationship between the arts and prudence Strauss carefully laid the groundwork for the next step (24-25) in his beautifully constructed argument: to be prudent means to lead a good life. Is prudence the necessary and sufficient condition for living a good life? "Prudence is that kind of knowledge which is inseparable from 'moral virtue,' i.e. goodness of character or of the

habit of choosing, just as moral virtue is inseparable from prudence" (emphasis added). It is now clear that prudence can properly rule the arts not simply because the knowledge effective in the prudent man is comprehensive knowledge of the human good, but also because such knowledge is inseparable from the habit of choosing the human good. In comparison with prudence, the arts as arts appear to be "morally neutral." Strauss emphatically says that prudence is a kind of knowledge. By doing so he leads us to ask "what is the cognitive status of the habit of choosing which is moral virtue?" Strauss's procedure to this point leads us to expect that he will now answer this question by presenting us with a complete discussion of Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between prudence and moral virtue. But he silently passes over that difficult problem and hurries on toward the conclusion of this part of his argument: "Prudence and moral virtue united and as it were fused enable a man to lead a good life or the noble life which seems to be the natural end of man" (emphasis added). This judicious sentence prepares us for Strauss's introduction of one final set of relationships that must be understood if one is to reconstruct the complicated procedure that Aristotle believes he must follow in order to establish political science in the face of the objections of the Socratics:

The best life is the life devoted to understanding or contemplation as distinguished from the practical or

political life. Therefore practical wisdom is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom which is concerned with the divine things or the kosmos, and subservient to it--but in such a way that within its sphere, the sphere of all human things as such, prudence is supreme. The sphere ruled by prudence is closed since the principles of prudence--the ends in the light of which prudence guides man--are known independently of theoretical science (emphasis added).

It appears that Aristotle has removed the obstruction preventing the establishment of political science as an independent discipline by demonstrating that the sphere ruled by prudence, the sphere of all human things as such, the political sphere, is closed.

Let us take a more careful look at Strauss's last four sentences. The practical or political life is the life characterized by the fusion of prudence and moral virtue. Such a life is the noble life but only a good life: the noble life is not the good life. Why is the noble life a good life? Why is the noble good? The noble life "seems to be the natural end of man." The noble life seems to be good because it is the life according to nature. But the good life, the best life is the contemplative life and not the political life. The contemplative life, it appears, is the natural end of man, the life according to nature. Is the noble life then only a life according to convention? Is the noble life good only by convention? The best life is not the noble life. Is the best life a noble life? Is it ignoble? What is the relationship between the good and the noble?

The noble life, the life characterized by the fusion of prudence and moral virtue, is concerned with the human or political things and devoted to practice or politics. The best life is concerned with the divine things or the kosmos and devoted to understanding or contemplation.¹⁶ It seems that the contemplative life is better than the noble life because the divine things are higher in rank than the human things (cf. 13). It is clear that because the noble life is less good than the contemplative life practical wisdom or prudence is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom. But the relative ranking of prudence and theoretical wisdom does not seem to fully determine their relationship. The sphere of prudence is "the sphere of all human things as such." The sphere of theoretical wisdom seems to be the sphere of "all things." On the one hand prudence is "subservient" to theoretical

¹⁶ We recall that Strauss begins his account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy by explicating parallel passages in Cicero. In the first passage, Cicero speaks of "'heaven'" and in explicating that passage Strauss speaks of "the heavenly or divine things." In the second passage, Cicero speaks not of "heaven" but of "'nature'" and in explicating that passage Strauss--quoting Aristotle and Xenophon (see 13, n. 1)--speaks of "'the whole nature'" (Metaphysics 987b1-2), "'the kosmos,'" "'the nature of all things'" (Memorabilia I 1.11-12). In summarizing the teaching of the two passages, Strauss speaks of "the divine or natural things" (13-14). In his second or thematic discussion of Socrates, Strauss speaks first of "the divine things" and then of Socrates' ascent to "nature" (20). In the passage now under discussion, Strauss chooses to speak only of "the divine things or the kosmos." (Cf. Nicomachean Ethics 1141a28-b9, which Strauss cites in the footnote [25, n. 27].)

wisdom but on the other hand prudence is "supreme" within its own sphere. This appears to mean that while prudence serves to promote the contemplative life it does not take orders from and is not dependent on theoretical wisdom. But prudence is supreme within the sphere of all human things as such. It would seem that the man of theoretical wisdom necessarily resides within the sphere of the human things and thus must take orders from the prudent man. But the prudent man is subservient to the man of theoretical wisdom and servants do not usually give orders to their superiors. We can only conclude that theoretical wisdom is not one of the human things as such. This conclusion does not, however, fully explain the relationship between prudence and moral virtue on the one hand and theoretical wisdom on the other. Does the man of theoretical wisdom himself need prudence and moral virtue? Prudence, we remember, is concerned with "the whole human good." Prudence seems to be supreme within the sphere of all human things as such because it is knowledge of the whole human good. The man of theoretical wisdom seems to know that the contemplative life is the best life. The answer to the question "what is the best way of life?" seems to require an investigation of the human things or knowledge of the whole human good. But theoretical wisdom seems to be concerned only with the divine things and not at all with the human things. Does the man of theoretical wisdom

need prudence in order to know that the contemplative way of life is the best way of life? Because prudence is inseparable from moral virtue, if the man of theoretical wisdom needs prudence then he also needs moral virtue. The conclusion that the man of theoretical wisdom himself needs prudence and moral virtue would be perfectly compatible with the facts that theoretical wisdom is higher in rank than prudence and that prudence is subservient to theoretical wisdom: superiors are often dependent on servants. It seems that one can escape this conclusion only by demonstrating either that the question "what is the best way of life?" can be answered by theoretical wisdom independently of prudence or that the contemplative life has, so to speak, nothing to do with the whole human good.

However this may be, we saw that Strauss says that "the principles of prudence--the ends in the light of which prudence guides man--are known independently of theoretical science." Even if the man of theoretical wisdom needs either prudence itself or the man of practical wisdom, it seems that the man of practical wisdom needs neither theoretical wisdom itself nor the man of theoretical wisdom. But how are the principles of prudence or the ends which guide prudence known to the prudent man? It seems that they are supplied by moral virtue, i.e. by "goodness of character" or by "the habit of choosing." We note that Strauss has

still not made clear what the cognitive status of moral virtue is.

It is because the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science that the political sphere is closed. Contrary to our first impression, it seems that it is not prudence but moral virtue that is the ground for the independence of the political sphere and hence political science. We are compelled to wonder whether the answer to the question concerning the cognitive status of moral virtue has an impact of the "closedness" of the political sphere and thereby the independence of political science.

Strauss now summarizes the entire argument of the second main part to this point in a single sentence:

Because Aristotle held that art is inferior to law or to prudence, that prudence is inferior to theoretical wisdom, and that theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the whole, i.e. of that by virtue of which "all things" are a whole) is available, he could found political science as an independent discipline among a number of disciplines in such a way that political science preserves the perspective of the citizen or statesman or that it is the fully conscious form of the "common sense" understanding of political things (25; cf. 12).

Is the founding of political science the work of practical wisdom or theoretical wisdom? From what Strauss has told us about the concerns of the two kinds of wisdom there seems to be no doubt that the establishment of political science is the work of practical wisdom and that the practical science embodied in the Nicomachean Ethics and the

Politics is the product of practical wisdom. We note that we are now in a position to understand why political science is "by no means the most fundamental or the highest discipline" (21): theoretical science is higher in rank than practical or political science and that part of theoretical science which studies that by virtue of which "all things" are a whole appears to be the most fundamental or the highest discipline. "First philosophy" does not seem to be "'the first philosophy'" of Socrates. But we cannot help but be surprised by Strauss's inclusion of the premise "theoretical wisdom . . . is available" in his recapitulation of the chain of reasoning that Aristotle uses to establish political science as an independent discipline. Everything that Strauss has said to this point in the argument of the second main part seemed to point to the conclusion that Aristotle attempts to overcome the Socratic objections to an independent political science by demonstrating that the Socratic account of the political sphere is mistaken because the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole. Everything seemed to point to the conclusion that Aristotle believes that he can demonstrate that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole without also or first demonstrating that knowledge of the whole is available.¹⁷ Is there anything in Strauss's

¹⁷ See pp. 66-67 above.

argument prior to the summary sentence quoted above which indicates that the independence of political science stands or falls with the availability of knowledge of the whole? Is there anything in the summary sentence itself which indicates that conclusion? Perhaps it is only because theoretical wisdom is available that Aristotle can know that prudence is inferior to theoretical wisdom. But how would the inability to determine the relative rank of prudence and theoretical wisdom obstruct the establishment of an independent political science? Or is the availability of theoretical wisdom a necessary precondition for the establishment of an independent political science because only theoretical wisdom--and not prudence--can demonstrate that the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science? But if an independent political science is dependent on theoretical wisdom for its foundation, how can the founding of such a science be the work of prudence or practical wisdom? Is the founding of political science the work of theoretical wisdom and its elaboration the work of practical wisdom? We shall have to return to these puzzles.

Finally, we note that the last part of Strauss's summary sentence returns to the language of the concluding part of the "Introduction" (12). Does Strauss merely wish to remind the reader that "On Aristotle's Politics" is a consideration of the objections to which the contention

which concludes the "Introduction" is exposed? Or does he mean to indicate that not only "present-day social science" but also "Socratic philosophizing" destroys "the perspective of the citizen or statesman" or obscures "the 'common sense' understanding of political things?" It certainly seems that only "the Aristotelian ascent" and not the more radical and different "Socratic ascent" can establish political science as an independent discipline.

Strauss next digresses by briefly returning to his account of the Athenian stranger: "The Athenian stranger may be said to assert that the men who preceded him conceived of nature as superior to art and of art as superior to law. Aristotle conceives of nature as superior to law-- for the good law is the law which is according to nature-- and of law as superior to the arts" (25). This remark reminds us that Strauss has, in the course of the discussion, revealed that Aristotle disagrees with the predecessors of the Athenian stranger about the relationship between body and soul (16-17) and agrees with them about the status of the gods of the city (22). We remember that the predecessors believed that there are things which are by nature noble but argued that those things differ profoundly from the things which are noble by convention. We cannot say that Strauss's discussion of Aristotle's understanding of the noble life reveals whether Aristotle agrees or disagrees with the predecessors about the relationship

between the things which are noble by nature and the things which are noble by convention.

After his short digression, Strauss discusses Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue in some detail. That discussion has three stages: First Strauss elaborates Aristotle's procedure with respect to moral virtue (25-26). He then allows us "to grasp the ground of Aristotle's procedure" (26-28). Each of the first two stages contains a single remark on a difference between Plato and Aristotle. Those two remarks seem to prepare the third stage in which Strauss reveals that Aristotle is compelled to admit that the political sphere is in a sense open (28-29). The third stage clearly prepares the conclusion of the first section--the second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle (29).

Strauss begins his elaboration of Aristotle's procedure with respect to moral virtue by making explicit a conclusion that he had earlier left implicit: "it is moral virtue that supplies the sound principles of action, the just and noble ends, as actually desired." But Strauss immediately goes on to provide us with a vital new piece of information or a fact which he had hitherto indicated only by his silence: "these ends come to sight only to the morally good man; prudence seeks the means to these ends. The morally good man is the properly bred man, the well-bred man. Aristotle's political science is addressed only to

such men. The sphere of prudence is then closed by principles which are fully evident only to gentlemen" (emphasis added). We remember that the gentlemen can be distinguished from the many on the one hand and from the possessor of the full political art on the other.¹⁸ It seems that we must now add the man of practical wisdom and the man of theoretical wisdom to our list. Is the man of practical wisdom identical with the possessor of the full political art? The answer to this question would be "yes" if the full political art is identical with political science and if political science is the product of practical wisdom. But whatever the answer to this question there is no doubt that the man of practical wisdom is a gentleman. If the principles of prudence, the noble and just ends, come to sight and are fully evident only to the gentleman, then they do not come to sight and are not fully evident to the many--the many are necessarily ill-bred. But it also seems to be the case that they do not come to sight and are not fully evident to the man of theoretical wisdom--unless he is necessarily well-bred or needs moral virtue. We can then say that the principles of prudence do not come to sight and are not fully evident to the man

¹⁸ See pp. 77-79 above.

of theoretical wisdom as man of theoretical wisdom.¹⁹

Does this conclusion mean that the sphere of prudence is not simply closed to theoretical science? But the man of theoretical wisdom would seem to have no interest in the sphere of prudence. We note that when Strauss explicitly tells us that moral virtue supplies prudence with the just and noble ends he also emphasizes that prudence seeks the means to those ends. Does he wish to indicate that prudence is concerned only with deliberating about the means and does not itself deliberate about the ends? If so, then while the principles of prudence (and thus "the whole human good") are indeed known to the man of practical wisdom "independently of theoretical science," practical wisdom does not itself "figure out" its principles--it merely "receives" them. But the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics do not appear to be limited to deliberation about the means to the just and noble ends or even to the elaboration of those ends--they appear to include deliberations about the ends themselves. If this observation is correct and if practical wisdom is in fact concerned only with the

¹⁹Cf. "Marsilius of Padua," in Strauss and Cropsey, eds., History of Political Philosophy, p. 267: "The cognitive status of the first principles of action in Aristotle's Ethics is obscure." Also cf. "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," in Persecution and the Art of Writing, p. 106, n. 32: ". . . the ethical teaching [of Aristotle], as distinguished from the theoretical teaching, is addressed, not to all intelligent people, but to decent people only, and only the latter can truly accept it."

means, then the practical science embodied in the political treatises is not--or is not wholly--the product of practical wisdom. Is it then a product of theoretical wisdom? Are the Nicomachean Ethics and the Metaphysics not only the products of a single man but the products of the perfection of a single faculty? Finally, it seems that we were wrong to suggest that Aristotle's political treatises might be addressed to more than one kind of addressee and might have more than one intention: Strauss emphatically says that Aristotle's political science is addressed only to gentlemen. Or can the genus "gentleman" be divided into more than one species? Are the Platonic dialogues addressed only to gentlemen? only to non-gentlemen?²⁰

While the sphere of prudence is closed because the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science those principles are fully evident only to gentlemen. Strauss continues: "In seeking for higher principles, one would raise the question 'why should one be decent?' but in doing so one would already have ceased to be a gentleman, for decency is meant to be choiceworthy for its own sake." It seems that we merely revealed our lack of breeding when we asked "why is the noble life good?"²¹ While there appear to be sound theoretical reasons for seeking for higher principles there appear to be urgent

²⁰ See pp. 69-70 , 78-79 above.

²¹ See p. 85 above.

practical reasons for not attempting such an ascent. Strauss goes on: "The gentleman is recognized as gentleman not only by other gentlemen but also by people of deficient breeding. Yet among the latter there may be men of great power of persuasion who question the goodness of moral virtue." (We remember that Strauss has indicated that the sophists, led by theoretical science to question whether there are any things which are by nature just, do not dedicate themselves to the political community but employ the art of persuasion to use the community for their own ends or to prevent themselves from being used by the community for its ends [17].)²² It now appears that there are in fact urgent and therefore sound practical reasons for seeking for higher principles. But can practical wisdom itself successfully complete the ascent to such principles and thereby defend its own principles (and sphere) against those powerful men of deficient breeding who have motives for questioning the goodness of moral virtue? Or is the gentleman in the delicate position of both needing the assistance of theoretical wisdom or the man of theoretical wisdom and of being endangered by theoretical wisdom and the man of theoretical wisdom? Strauss does not immediately answer these questions but he does emphatically reinforce the conclusion that gentlemanship is not enough: "It is . . . not sufficient to know that justice, magnanimity

²²See pp. 41-43, 75-76 above.

and the other virtues are and to be moved by their beauty; one must show that they are good. One must then transcend the sphere of prudence or of what one may call the moral consciousness. One must show that the practice of the moral virtues is the end of man by nature, i.e. that man is inclined toward such practice by nature" (emphasis added). We cannot yet decide whether these statements reveal that Strauss himself has ceased to be a mere gentleman or whether they reveal that he is a gentleman who is driven to transcend the sphere of prudence in order to defend it. We note that he carefully balances the three "onlys" which he had employed earlier²³ with three "musts." The need to transcend the sphere of prudence seems to be as great as the need to keep it closed. Strauss now makes clear that the position of the gentleman is indeed as precarious as this arithmetic seems to indicate. Showing that man is inclined toward the practice of moral virtue by nature "does not require that man by nature know his natural end without any effort on his part." Does Strauss wish to indicate that the man of practical wisdom "knows" the just and noble ends "without any effort on his part?" "The natural end of man as well as of any other natural being becomes genuinely known through theoretical science, through the science of the natures" (emphasis added). The principles of prudence, the just and noble ends, may be

²³See pp. 93-94 above.

"known" to the man of practical wisdom independently of theoretical science, but the natural end of man does not become genuinely known through practical wisdom. The question "what is the best way of life?" can in fact be answered by theoretical wisdom independently of practical wisdom. But prudence by itself is indeed defenseless. Prudence is therefore in need of a defense by theoretical science.²⁴ The man of practical wisdom either needs theoretical science or the man of theoretical science. Can the man of practical wisdom himself acquire the needed theoretical science? We remember that practical wisdom is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom because the political life is less good than the contemplative life. Can the man of practical wisdom acquire the needed theoretical wisdom without succumbing to the charms of the contemplative life and therefore abandoning the sphere of prudence? It appears that the man of theoretical wisdom could come to the aid of the man of practical wisdom. But how can he aid him without at the same time endangering him and his sphere? And does the man of theoretical wisdom have any reason to come to the defense of prudence? Is he a gentleman? It certainly appears that not all men of theoretical

²⁴ Cf. "An Epilogue," p. 309: ". . . prudence is always endangered by false doctrines about the whole of which man is a part, by false theoretical opinions; prudence is therefore always in need of defense against such opinions, and that defense is necessarily theoretical."

wisdom are gentlemen and that no man of theoretical wisdom can be a mere gentleman.

Strauss next states more precisely what kind of theoretical knowledge is needed to defend prudence: ". . . knowledge of the virtues derives from knowledge of the human soul: each part of the soul has its specific perfection. Plato sketches such a purely theoretical account of the virtues in the Republic. But it is characteristic of Aristotle that he does not even attempt to give such an account" (emphasis added). It seems that the moral virtues can be defended only by showing that they are by nature good and that they can be shown to be so only through a theoretical account of the parts of the human soul and their perfections. While Plato at least "sketches" such an account, Aristotle makes no attempt to provide such an account in any form. It might seem that while Plato attempts to come to the defense of the gentleman, Aristotle leaves him completely defenseless in the face of his enemies. Is Plato a better ally of the gentleman than is Aristotle? But it is Aristotle who, in the face of the objections of Plato, attempts to found an independent political science. And the intention of Aristotle's independent political science seems to be the preservation of the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman or of the gentleman's understanding of the political things. Is there a contest between Plato and Aristotle

for the favor of the gentleman? Does the difference between Plato and Aristotle involve a difference over how the man of theoretical wisdom can best come to the aid of the gentleman? Strauss surely does not indicate that there is any disagreement between Plato and Aristotle over whether the man of theoretical wisdom should come to the aid of the gentleman. But we must note that, to this point, it appears that while Aristotle's procedure preserves the perspective of the gentleman, it does not seem to provide an adequate defense of that perspective; and while Plato's procedure may provide a defense of moral virtue, it seems to do so at the expense of the destruction of the moral consciousness. Is it impossible simultaneously to preserve and defend the perspective of the gentleman?

Aristotle does not attempt to give a purely theoretical account of the virtues. How does he proceed? Strauss first tells us that "he describes all the moral virtues as they are known to the morally virtuous man without trying to deduce them from a higher principle; generally speaking, he leaves it at the fact that a given habit is regarded as praiseworthy without investigating why this is so." Given the fact that Strauss had described Plato's account as "purely" theoretical we might expect that Aristotle's account could be described as "partly" theoretical. But this does not seem to be the case: Aristotle's description, as Strauss has just

presented it, is not in any way characterized by an ascent. We note that the language of Strauss's initial description is taken almost directly from the Nicomachean Ethics itself. But Strauss now goes beyond Aristotle's words in order to better describe his deeds:

One may say that he [Aristotle] remains within the limits of an unwritten nomos which is recognized by well-bred people everywhere. This nomos may be in agreement with reason but is not as such dictated by reason. It constitutes the sphere of human or political things by being its limit or its ceiling. By proceeding differently, Aristotle would make political or practical science dependent on theoretical science (emphasis added).

When describing all the moral virtues Aristotle remains within the limits of an unwritten nomos recognized by well-bred people everywhere. The political sphere, we remember, is closed by the principles of prudence, the just and noble ends, supplied by moral virtue (25). The political sphere, we are now told, is constituted by an unwritten nomos which is its limit or ceiling. The political sphere is closed by an unwritten nomos. It seems that the unwritten nomos is either the source of the principles supplied by moral virtue or is identical with those principles. Let us assume that the unwritten nomos and the principles supplied by moral virtue are identical. The political sphere is constituted by an unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue. What constitutes the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue? Strauss tells us that the unwritten nomos "may

be in agreement with reason but is not as such dictated by reason." It seems that we may say that the principles supplied by moral virtue may be in agreement with reason but are not as such dictated by reason. The unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue are not as such dictated by reason, they are not as such dictates of reason. What are they dictated by? What are they dictates of? We remember that Aristotle believes that "law owes its dignity to the facts that it is meant to be a dictate of reason and that the reason effective in the arts is lower than the reason effective in law as law should be" (23-24). How should law be? We remember that Aristotle believes that "the good law is the law which is according to nature" (25). Nature is the standard for law, nature is the standard for the dictates of reason which should be embodied in law. If the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue may be in agreement with reason but are not as such dictated by reason, then, it seems, they may be in agreement with nature but are not as such dictated by nature. Can we conclude that Strauss understands the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue to be a set of conventional rules which, while recognized by well-bred people everywhere, can only metaphorically be called natural because they are dependent on human institution?

The unwritten nomos seems to be a nomos which may be rational in one sense but is not essentially rational. The principles supplied by moral virtue seem to be principles which may be rational in one sense but are not essentially rational. Is this the beginning of the answer to the question "what is the cognitive status of the principles supplied by moral virtue?" The unwritten nomos seems to be a nomos which may be natural in one sense but is not essentially natural. The principles supplied by moral virtue seem to be principles which are natural in one sense but are not essentially natural. Strauss has told us that "the things which are by nature stand at the opposite pole from the things which are by nomos" (14). Must we conclude that the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue are, of course, simply by nomos? Or can we say that they are in manner "between" the things which are by nature and the things which are by nomos?

The unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue constitute the political sphere or the city. If the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue are not essentially rational then it would seem that the city is not essentially rational. This conclusion is not surprising: Strauss has told us that "the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason" (22). If the unwritten nomos or the principles supplied by moral virtue are not essentially natural then

it would seem that the city is not essentially natural. Is the city as a whole characterized by a specific recalcitrance to nature (cf. 16-17)?

We remember that it is because of the city's specific recalcitrance to reason that "The law, the most important instrument for the moral education of 'the many,' must be supported by ancestral opinions, by myths . . . or by a 'civil theology'" and that the city "requires for its well-being" a civil rhetoric "as a servant to the political art" (22).²⁵ It now appears that because of such recalcitrance the unwritten nomos, the law which constitutes the political sphere and which seems to be the most important instrument for the moral education of the gentleman, must also be supported. The city requires for its well-being not only a defense of its heavenly gods but also a defense of "the god of this lower world"--prudence. Strauss has indicated that the man of theoretical wisdom must present his theoretical science in such a way as to support the civil theology, that he must present his theoretical science rhetorically. Can the man of theoretical wisdom who seeks to come to the defense of prudence dispense with civil rhetoric when he presents his political science?

²⁵ See pp. 73-75 above.

We remember that Aristotle teaches that "laws are the work of the legislative art" and that "the legislative art is the highest form of prudence or practical wisdom" (24). Is the unwritten nomos the work of the legislative art or practical wisdom? The unwritten nomos may be rational in one sense but it is not essentially rational. Is practical reason rational in one sense but not essentially rational? Or is the unwritten nomos in agreement with practical reason but not as such dictated by theoretical reason?²⁶

When presenting his account of the moral virtues Aristotle, unlike Plato, remains within the limits of the unwritten nomos. "By proceeding differently," Strauss tells us, "Aristotle would make political or practical science dependent on theoretical science." It seems that from Aristotle's point of view--a point of view which can accept a distinction between practical and theoretical science--Plato's procedure with respect to the virtues does make political science dependent on theoretical science and in so doing not only prevents the establishment

²⁶ It should be noted that Aristotle uses the term γράφος νόμος once in the Nicomachean Ethics (1180a34-b3) and once in the Politics (1319b40-1320a2). Consider the context of each of these occurrences. Aristotle uses the term rather frequently in the discussion of forensic rhetoric in the first book of the Rhetoric. See and compare 1368b6-10, 1373b1-18, 1374a17-b22, 1375a13-20, 25-1375b15. On the whole question of "rational" and "natural" nomoi see "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari," pp. 95-141.

of an independent political science but also destroys or endangers the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman, the "common sense" understanding of political things. Strauss's formulation seems to indicate that he believes that Aristotle could, if he wished, proceed differently. That is, Strauss indicates that although Aristotle chooses to remain within the limits of the unwritten nomos, he could present "a purely theoretical account of the virtues," he could "deduce them [all the moral virtues] from a higher principle." Strauss compels us to ask what such an Aristotelian account of the virtues would look like. Would it look like an Aristotelianized version of Plato's sketch in the Republic? Plato's sketch is based on the premise that "each part of the soul has its specific perfection." Aristotle presents eleven moral virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics. Could Aristotle demonstrate that the human soul has at least twelve parts? Or would Aristotle's purely theoretical account bear no strong resemblance to the account he does present in the Nicomachean Ethics?²⁷

²⁷ In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle employs an admittedly crude psychology. The use of such a psychology seems to be sanctioned by the recalcitrance of moral matters to accuracy and finish in their treatment. But Seth Benardete has suggested that such recalcitrance is perhaps partly due to the use of a crude psychology. Benardete, however, also argues that "Aristotle's de anima is not a treatise on the human soul. It is as silent about the virtues as it is about memory and empeiria"

By remaining within the limits of the unwritten nomos when he presents his account of the moral virtues, Aristotle prevents political science from being dependent on theoretical science and thereby preserves the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman. But we remember that the defense of moral virtue seems to require that one show that the moral virtues are by nature good or that the practice of the moral virtues is the end of man by nature. In refusing to transcend the sphere of prudence or the moral consciousness, Aristotle appears to be either unwilling or unable to meet the compelling need of prudence and the moral consciousness for a defense. Is it impossible to provide prudence and the moral consciousness with a defense or has Aristotle discovered a new way in which to defend them?

("Aristotle, De Anima III. 3-5," Review of Metaphysics 28 [June 1975]: 611).

Aquinas, in his Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics, attempts to provide a theoretical account of the moral virtues. In doing so, he may be said to begin from an occasional explicit statement by Aristotle, but his account surely goes beyond what is either explicitly or implicitly contained in the text. And Aquinas' account, whatever its intrinsic merits, does not seem to respect the tenor of Aristotle's text. It should be noted, however, that when Aquinas presents an account of the moral virtues in his own name in the Summa Theologica, he abandons the account of the Commentary in favor of a modified Platonic account and attempts to integrate Aristotle's eleven moral virtues into that Platonic framework. See Harry V. Jaffa, Thomism and Aristotelianism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) and Ernest L. Fortin, "St. Thomas Aquinas," in Strauss and Cropsey, eds., History of Political Philosophy, pp. 234-43.

Why does Aristotle choose to proceed as he does? Strauss turns to this question in the second stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue (26-28):

In order to grasp the ground of Aristotle's procedure, one must start from the facts that according to him the highest end of man by nature is theoretical understanding or philosophy and this perfection does not require moral virtue as moral virtue, i.e. just and noble deeds as choiceworthy for their own sake. It goes without saying that man's highest end cannot be achieved without actions resembling moral actions proper, but the actions in question are intended by the philosopher as mere means toward his end. That end also calls for prudence, for the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now (emphasis added).

We remember that the natural end of man becomes genuinely known through theoretical science, the science of the natures. Aristotle's science of the natures reveals that the "practice" of theoretical understanding or philosophy and not the practice of the moral virtues is the highest end of man by nature. Theoretical science does not respect the prohibition against raising the question "why should one be decent?," it does not obey the unwritten nomos. It reveals that philosophy is the only natural end choiceworthy for its own sake and therefore that "decency" or the just and noble ends are not by nature choiceworthy for their own sake. It reveals that on the highest level of human life decency or the moral virtues are reduced to mere means towards the end of philosophy. It may thereby "show that they are good"--instrumentally good. But such a "purely theoretical account" of the moral virtues would not

defend but destroy the moral consciousness. For "decency" or moral virtue "is meant to be choiceworthy for its own sake." Moral virtue is not intelligible as a means for man's highest natural end.

We note that Strauss has now fully explained the relationship between moral virtue and prudence on the one hand and theoretical wisdom on the other.²⁸ The contemplative life "does not require moral virtue as moral virtue." It does require "actions resembling moral actions proper." The philosopher is not a gentleman but he resembles a gentleman. We wonder how close the resemblance is or should be. We wonder whether the philosopher performs or should perform actions resembling the actions of all the moral virtues. Despite the fact that theoretical wisdom can answer the question "what is the best way of life?" without the assistance of practical wisdom or prudence, Strauss says that the philosopher needs prudence because he "must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now." The philosopher's prudence is clearly concerned only with deliberating about the means to his end.²⁹ The fact that the man of theoretical wisdom must concern himself with the conditions for his philosophizing here and now seems to indicate not only that he necessarily resides within the sphere of the human things but that he

²⁸ See pp. 85-88 above.

²⁹ See pp. 89-91 above.

must necessarily concern himself with the human things.³⁰ Although the man of theoretical wisdom is not a gentleman proper, it appears that he must take an interest in the sphere ruled by the gentleman.³¹ What are the conditions for philosophizing? Might one of them require that the philosopher "prevent his being used by the [political] community for its end" (17)? How can the prudent philosopher best secure the conditions for his philosophizing?³² Thus, according to Strauss, Aristotle teaches that while the highest end of man by nature does not require moral virtue proper it does require prudence. But Aristotle also teaches that prudence is inseparable from moral virtue proper (24). It would seem that if the philosopher does not require moral virtue proper he does not require prudence proper. In other words, it would seem to be more precise to call the "prudence" of the philosopher "cleverness" (δεινότης).³³

Aristotle's science of the natures also reveals that man--strange beast that he is--has a second natural end. Strauss continues:

³⁰See pp. 87-88 above.

³¹See pp. 95, 99-100 above.

³²See pp. 75-76 above.

³³See Nicomachean Ethics 1144a23-36, b14-17. The Liddel and Scott Lexicon, 1940 ed., lists "terribleness, . . . harshness, severity" as the primary meanings of δεινότης.

The moral virtues are more directly related to man's second natural end, his social life; one could therefore think that the moral virtues are intelligible as being essentially in the service of the city. For instance, magnanimity is praiseworthy because the city needs men who are born to command and who know that they are born to command. But it suffices to read Aristotle's description of magnanimity in order to see that the full phenomenon of magnanimity cannot be understood in that way. The moral virtues cannot be understood as being for the sake of the city since the city must be understood as being for the sake of the practice of moral virtue (emphasis added).

The moral virtues are more directly related to man's second natural end than to his highest natural end. But theoretical science is no more obedient to the unwritten nomos when it treats of man's second natural end than it is when it treats of his highest natural end. It seems to reveal that on the level of man's social life decency or the moral virtues are reduced to mere servants of the city, mere instrumental goods. Once again a "purely theoretical account" of the moral virtues seems to be destructive of the moral consciousness. For the practice of moral virtue "is meant to be choiceworthy for its own sake" and "the city must be understood as being for the sake of the practice of moral virtue." Moral virtue is not intelligible as a means for man's second natural end.

Strauss does not seem to fully explain why "the city must be understood as being for the sake of the practice of moral virtue." We suggest that the view that the moral virtues are "essentially in the service of the city" is identical with what we may call "Machiavellianism." Is

the Machiavellian view based on the science of the natures? The Machiavellian is surely an enemy of the gentleman. But we have seen that his view is not the only view which is destructive of the moral consciousness. The "must" in the phrase about the end of the city seems to have the same bearing as the "must" in the phrase "the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now." We can say that it is a "prudential" or "practical" rather than a "theoretical" "must."

We note that Strauss says that "the full phenomenon of magnanimity" cannot be understood by viewing magnanimity as essentially in the service of the city. Strauss thereby indicates that the phenomenon of magnanimity can in part be so understood. In so doing, he seems to provide us with a hint about how to study each one of Aristotle's descriptions of the individual moral virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics.

Strauss now draws the conclusion of his twofold analysis: "Moral virtue is then not intelligible as a means for the only two natural ends which could be thought to be its end." One could therefore think that Strauss would next say that "moral virtue is then simply unintelligible" or, more precisely, that "moral virtue is then not intelligible to the man of theoretical wisdom, the possessor of the science of the natures." Strauss in fact prepared

us for such a conclusion at the very beginning when he told us that "'the human things' are not the 'nature of man'; the study of the nature of man is part of the study of nature" (13). But Strauss instead says: "Therefore, it seems, it [moral virtue] must be regarded as an 'absolute'" (emphasis added). And Aristotle so "regards" it. This "must" like the last two "musts" is a practical rather than a theoretical imperative. "A purely theoretical account of the virtues" cannot provide an adequate defense of moral virtue but it can endanger the moral consciousness. The safest course, the most prudent course, seems to be to avoid such an account altogether. The man of theoretical wisdom who seeks to come to the aid of the gentleman must, it seems, present moral virtue as an "absolute"; he must present the perspective of the gentleman as the "absolute" perspective-- despite or because of his knowledge that it is not the most fundamental or the highest perspective. When presenting an account of moral virtue the man of theoretical wisdom must, it seems, completely dissemble his theoretical wisdom. The only possible defense of the gentleman's perspective seems to be one that wholly preserves that perspective. The defense of the gentleman seems to require the strictest obedience to the unwritten nomos.

But Strauss now tells us that "one cannot disregard" moral virtue's relations to man's two natural ends:

Moral virtue shows that the city points beyond itself but it does not reveal clearly that toward which it points, namely, the life devoted to philosophy. The man of moral virtue, the gentleman, may very well know that his political activity is in the service of noble leisure but his leisurable activity hardly goes beyond the enjoyment of poetry and the other imitative arts (emphasis added).

Does the perfect gentleman himself transgress the unwritten nomos? Or is the perspective of the gentleman somewhat broader than it hitherto appeared to be? Does the gentleman's knowledge (or potential knowledge) that "the city points beyond itself" provide the basis for a more adequate defense of the gentleman's perspective? For a defense that is at least "partly" theoretical?

Strauss does not immediately take up these questions. Instead he completes the second stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue with his second remark about Plato:

Aristotle is the founder of political science because he is the discoverer of moral virtue. For Plato, what Aristotle calls moral virtue is a kind of halfway house between political or vulgar virtue which is in the service of bodily well-being (of self-preservation or peace) and genuine virtue which, to say the least, animates only the philosophers as philosophers.

Aristotle could found political science as an independent discipline among a number of disciplines because he discovered moral virtue. The discovery of moral virtue is identical with the discovery that the political sphere is closed. The political sphere is closed because the principles of prudence--the principles supplied by moral

virtue--are known independently of theoretical science. The political sphere is closed because it has a limit or ceiling--the unwritten nomos. The political sphere is in fact constituted by its limit or ceiling. The discovery of moral virtue enabled Aristotle to found political science in such a way that it preserves the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman or that it is the fully conscious form of the "common sense" understanding of political things. But Aristotle's discovery of moral virtue does not seem to be a "theoretical" discovery like the discovery of the Pythagorean theorem or the discovery of nature or the discovery of noetic heterogeneity. It seems to be a "practical" discovery which is either the result of or identical with the decision to "regard" moral virtue as an "absolute." Plato, it seems, knows nothing of moral virtue or at least refuses to regard it as an "absolute." Plato knows only political or vulgar virtue and genuine virtue. He teaches that political or vulgar virtue is not intrinsically attractive or choiceworthy for its own sake but is good only with a view to its consequences; political or vulgar virtue is not noble but necessary. He teaches that genuine virtue is indeed choiceworthy for its own sake but that it is limited to philosophers as philosophers. Genuine virtue is knowledge--knowledge which, to say the

least, is not known independently of "theoretical science."³⁴ Plato's "purely theoretical account of the virtues" transcends the sphere of prudence or the moral consciousness. By refusing to obey the unwritten nomos, Plato's political philosophy endangers the perspective of the gentleman and substitutes a paradoxical understanding of the political things for the "common sense" understanding.³⁵ It appears that Aristotle and not Plato is the better ally of the gentleman, that Aristotle's independent political science and not Plato's political philosophy is the most practicable or useful supplement to the gentleman's perspective.³⁶

Moreover, to identify genuine virtue (and therefore happiness) with the perfection which consists of theoretical understanding or philosophy is tantamount to closing the very prospect of genuine virtue (and happiness) to the large majority of human beings.³⁷ In the midst of his critique of Plato's Republic, Aristotle remarks that the teaching of the Republic has a "philanthropic" appearance

³⁴See "On Plato's Republic," pp. 127-28.

³⁵See The Political Philosophy of Hobbes, pp. 136-51.

³⁶Cf. the end of Aristotle's discussion of the Platonic idea of the good (Nicomachean Ethics 1096b30-1097a15) with his discussion of the practical program for πολιτική at the beginning of the fourth book of the Politics (especially 1288b35-36).

³⁷See Nicomachean Ethics 1094b9-10 and 1099b18-20.

(" . . . φιλόνηθρωπος ἂν εἶναι δόξειεν. . . ").³⁸ Aristotle's discussion of the Republic seems to be designed to destroy that appearance. (And his critique of the Laws makes clear that its teaching leads back little by little

³⁸ Politics 1263b15. Strauss cites this passage in a note to his discussion of Aristotle's account of Hippodamus' way of life (18, n. 11). He does not, however, discuss Aristotle's critique of "Plato's political writings" or "'Socrates' speeches.'" See p. 54, n. 35 above and pp. 222-24 below. Strauss also calls attention to this passage in "Farabi's Plato," in Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945), p. 378, n. 50.

There is, if we are not mistaken, only one occurrence of φιλόνηθρωπος in the Politics. It also, we believe, occurs once in the Nicomachean Ethics--near the beginning of the discussion of φίλια: "Also, by nature it [φίλια] seems to be present in the parent for its offspring and in the offspring for its parent, not only in human beings, but also in birds and most animals; also in those of the same kind for one another, and especially among human beings, whence we praise τοὺς φιλονηθρώπους" (1155a16-20). Consider this preceding passage: "For without φίλων no one would choose to live, though he had all the other goods. Even rich men and those in possession of office and power seem to need φίλων most of all; for what is the use of such prosperity if it does not provide an opportunity for good deeds, which are done most of all and in their most praiseworthy form to φίλους" (1155a5-10).

On the occurrence in the Nicomachean Ethics see L'Éthique à Nicomaque, introduction, traduction et commentaire par René Antoine Gauthier et Jean Yves Jolif, deuxième édition avec une introduction nouvelle, 2 vols. (Louvain: Publications universitaires, 1970), 2: 661-63. The word also occurs in the Poetics (1452b38, 1453a2, 1456a21). See Gerald F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 367-71 and Laurence Berns, "Aristotle's Poetics," in Joseph Cropsey, ed., Ancients and Moderns: Essays on the Tradition of Political Philosophy in Honor of Leo Strauss (New York: Basic Books, 1964), pp. 75; 85, n. 11.

to the Republic.)³⁹ Is Aristotle more philanthropic than Plato? Does Aristotle's greater philanthropy compel him to "regard" moral virtue as an absolute and thereby show the possibility of genuine virtue (and happiness) to men other than philosophers? Is Plato a friend or lover only of the potential philosophers while Aristotle is a friend or lover of both the potential philosophers and the gentlemen?⁴⁰ (Perhaps it is Aristotle's philanthropy that explains his amazing silence with respect to philosophy in his discussion of the Republic.)⁴¹ Does Aristotle "read" Plato in the way that a gentleman would or should read Plato?)

Strauss tells us in passing that "we must beware of mistaking Aristotle's man of moral virtue or 'good man' who is the perfect gentleman for the 'good man' who is just and temperate but lacks all the other virtues, like the members of the lowest class in Plato's Republic" (emphasis added). But we must note that we could more easily mistake Aristotle's perfect gentleman for the "good man" who is a

³⁹Politics 1265a1-5.

⁴⁰Cf. "Farabi's Plato," pp. 377-81, especially p. 378. Also consider the beginning of Alfarabi's Philosophy of Aristotle: "Aristotle sees the perfection of man as Plato sees it and more. However, because man's perfection is not self-evident or easy to explain by a demonstration leading to certainty, he saw fit to start from a position anterior to that from which Plato had started" (emphasis added). The translation is from Mahdi's Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, p. 71. See Mahdi's note on "and more," pp. 143-44.

⁴¹Cf. "On Plato's Republic," p. 122.

member of the middle ("halfway") or warrior class in the Republic. The specific virtue of the warrior is courage. Yet despite or because of the fact that the warrior's virtue is supported by an education that supplies him with a civil theology and animates him with the eros for everything noble, Plato's Socrates is compelled to remark that the warrior's courage is only political courage and not courage pure and simple.⁴² Strauss comments in another place: "The courage of the warriors is not courage pure and simple because it is essentially dependent on law (cf. 429c7 with 412e6-8 and 413c5-7) or because they lack the highest responsibility."⁴³

At the beginning of the second stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue, Strauss told us that in order to grasp the ground of Aristotle's procedure one must start from the fact that moral virtue is not intelligible as a means for the only two natural ends which could be thought to be its end. In the third and

⁴²430c.

⁴³"On Plato's Republic," p. 108. Also consider Republic 619b-d. Aristotle, if we are not mistaken, does not use the phrase πολιτικὴ ἀρετὴ in the Nicomachean Ethics. He does, however, once use the phrase πολιτικὴ ἀνδρεία (1116a17). This phrase occurs in the discussion of the first of the five sham forms of courage which must be distinguished from the genuine courage of the perfect gentleman. Aristotle does use πολιτικὴ ἀρετὴ in the Politics (1280b5-6, 1281a8, 1283a20, 1340b42). What is the relationship between genuine virtue and political virtue in the Politics? See Jaffa, "Aristotle," p. 107.

final stage of his discussion (28-29), Strauss moves to the other facts that must be understood if we are to fully comprehend Aristotle's procedure and its ground. Strauss begins the third stage as follows:

When the philosopher Aristotle addresses his political science to more or less perfect gentlemen, he shows them as far as possible that the way of life of the perfect gentleman points toward the philosophic way of life; he removes a screen (emphasis added).

Plato's purely theoretical account of the virtues seems to lead to the two-fold distinction between political or vulgar virtue and genuine or philosophic virtue and thus to the conclusion that moral virtue is unintelligible to theoretical science. But such an account also seems to lead to the conclusion that man's second natural end, his social life, is not simply intelligible in terms of bodily well-being (of self-preservation or peace): bodily well-being points beyond itself to the well-being of the soul. Yet such an account has no place for moral virtue as an intermediate perfection between political virtue and philosophic virtue. Aristotle's practical account of the virtues recognizes the practical necessity of understanding the city as being for the sake of the practice of moral virtue or of regarding moral virtue as an "absolute." It is the recognition of this practical necessity which enables Aristotle to "discover" moral virtue and thus found political science. It is the recognition of this practical necessity that compels Aristotle to address his practical or political science

only to gentlemen and to present that science within the limits of the perspective of the gentleman. Yet, we remember, the gentleman--no less than Plato--"may very well know" that the city points beyond itself or that his political activity is in the service of noble leisure. The gentleman, that is, may very well know that his way of life--the practice of moral virtue--is not simply intelligible as choiceworthy for its own sake. While Plato clearly knows that toward which the way of life of the gentleman truly points, the gentleman as gentleman knows only that his leisureable activity consists of the enjoyment of poetry and the other imitative arts. Aristotle is in full agreement with Plato as to the facts that the city points beyond itself and that it points to the life devoted to philosophy. But it seems that Plato's purely theoretical account of the virtues cannot reveal these facts to the gentleman without endangering the perspective of the gentleman. Can Plato safely teach the gentleman? Can his political philosophy in any way be addressed to gentleman? However this may be, it seems that Aristotle's practical account can present these facts to the gentleman without endangering the moral consciousness because he begins his account from within the perspective of the gentleman and is able to use the gentleman's self-understanding as the basis for revelation that the way of life of the gentleman points toward the philosophic way of life. And it seems that

Aristotle's reliance on the gentleman's perspective not only enables him to safely teach the gentleman the facts of life but also provides him with the basis for making a more adequate, i.e., more "theoretical," defense of the moral consciousness.

We note that Strauss says that "the philosopher Aristotle" addresses his political science to gentlemen. The philosopher is the man of theoretical understanding, the man of theoretical wisdom. But it seems that if the philosopher is to safely address gentlemen he cannot speak simply as a man of theoretical wisdom--he cannot simply "remove" the screen, he can remove it only "as far as possible." Strauss seems to distinguish between "more or less" perfect gentlemen and the perfect gentleman "pure and simple." Are the former those gentlemen who "very well know" that the way of life of the gentleman points beyond itself and the latter those who believe absolutely that gentlemanly political activity is an end in itself? It seems that the genus "gentleman" may very well be divided into at least two species.⁴⁴ Strauss says that Aristotle addresses his political science to more or less perfect gentlemen. Can he safely address the perfect gentleman pure and simple?

⁴⁴ See p. 96 above.

The philosopher-political scientist removes a screen. How does he do it? Strauss continues:

He articulates for his addressees the unwritten nomos which was the limit of their vision while he himself stands above that limit. He is thus compelled or enabled to correct their opinions about things which fall within their purview. He must speak of virtues and vices which were "nameless" and hence hitherto unknown. He must deny explicitly or tacitly that habits as highly praised as sense of shame and piety are virtues (emphasis added).

Aristotle removes the screen by articulating the unwritten nomos for his addressees. He begins from and follows carefully and even scrupulously the articulation of the unwritten nomos which is inherent in political life. He thereby preserves the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman. But it seems that although that articulation may appear to be sufficiently clear and consistent for all practical purposes, it is not perfectly clear or absolutely consistent when viewed from a higher perspective. It seems that it is this lack of clarity and consistency that compels Aristotle "to correct their [his addressees'] opinions about things which fall within their purview." And it seems that the more or less perfect gentleman's half-conscious openness and Aristotle's refusal to abandon the fundamental perspective of the gentleman enables Aristotle to correct the gentleman's opinions safely. That is, Aristotle is not only able to preserve the gentleman's perspective but to think it through and present it as perfectly as possible. He thereby brings the gentleman's

perspective to full consciousness and his political science becomes the fully conscious form of the "common sense" understanding of political things.

We must ask, however, how does Aristotle proceed when in his quest for clarity and consistency he corrects the gentleman's opinions about things which fall within his purview? It seems that in order to remain within the limits of the gentleman's perspective Aristotle must correct the gentleman's common opinions only by means of other gentlemanly opinions which are equally common. But this means that Aristotle is compelled to maintain one part of common opinion and to give up the other part; he is thus driven to present a view that is no longer generally held, a paradoxical view, one that is generally considered "ridiculous" by "sensible freemen" (cf. 18, 20).⁴⁵ For to speak of "unknown" virtues and vices is to speak paradoxically and to deny that sense of shame and piety are virtues is to make a paradoxical denial.⁴⁶ Plato's political philosophy seems to replace the common sense understanding of political things with a paradoxical understanding. While Aristotle's political science is not so radically paradoxical it is by no means free from paradox. It does, however, seem to be characteristic of Aristotle that he

⁴⁵See "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 90-91.

⁴⁶See *ibid.*, p. 94.

explicitly denies that sense of shame is a virtue and tacitly denies that piety is a virtue. What else, we may ask, does Aristotle prefer to indicate tacitly?

Aristotle, Strauss tells us, shows the more or less perfect gentlemen as far as possible that the way of life of the perfect gentleman points toward the philosophic way of life. How far is it possible for Aristotle to safely go? How, in fact, does he show that perfect gentlemanship points to philosophy? Strauss does not take up these questions. For the moment the following remarks must suffice.

Aristotle articulates for the more or less perfect gentlemen the unwritten nomos which was the limit of their vision while he himself stands above that limit. The unwritten nomos, we remember, constitutes the sphere of human or political things by being its limit or its ceiling. To articulate the unwritten nomos is to articulate the limit of the human or political things as such. In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle brings to sight the limit of the political by bringing to sight his own way of life. The transpolitical, the suprapolitical, comes to sight as the life of the mind in contradistinction to the political life (see 49). It seems that Aristotle, in his quest to make the "common sense" understanding of political things fully conscious, is compelled or enabled to transcend not merely the dimension of common opinion, of political

opinion, but the dimension of political life as such; for in removing the screen he is led to show that the ultimate aim of political life cannot be reached by political life, but only by the life devoted to contemplation, to philosophy. Moreover, he tacitly implies that the highest subject of political science is the philosophic life. Ultimately, his political science is transformed into a discipline that is no longer concerned with political things in the ordinary sense of the term.⁴⁷

But how does Aristotle indicate that the philosophic life offers, as it were, the solution to the problem that keeps political life in motion? The attempt to render the gentleman's perspective fully conscious leads Aristotle not only to the recognition of unknown virtues and to the distinction between generally praised habits which are rightly praised and those which are not; it also leads him to the recognition of a certain hierarchy, unknown or incompletely known to the gentleman, of the different virtues.⁴⁸ It is above all by means of the order in which Aristotle presents the virtues that he "shows" the gentleman that the practice of the moral virtues points to the philosophic life. We cannot now discuss the problem of the order of the virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics. But no elaborate investigation is necessary to establish that

⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 91, 93-94.

⁴⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 94.

whereas Aristotle's account of the virtues may not "to the same degree and in the same way" as Plato's account have the "character of ascent" (21), it is, in its broad outlines, unmistakably marked by an ascent. It is crucial to note, however, that while Aristotle himself stands "above" the limit of the vision of the gentleman, he does "remain within the limits of an unwritten nomos" (26) as he presents his account of the virtues. That is, he does not explicitly make the order of the virtues a theme of his presentation, he does not explicitly present the reasons for his order. Furthermore, while Plato almost begins the ascent of the Republic by having Thrasymachus present the case for indecency, Aristotle never explicitly raises the question "why should one be decent?" While Plato makes the question "is justice good?" the question of the Republic, Aristotle almost never explicitly raises the question as to why the virtues are good. Aristotle's explicit procedure is to describe "all the moral virtues as they are known to morally virtuous men without trying to deduce them from a higher principle" and to leave it "at the fact that a given habit is praiseworthy without investigating why this is so" (26). There can be no doubt, however, that Aristotle tacitly provides his addressees with arguments that will enable those who are able to "deduce" the virtues and explain why they are praiseworthy. We shall have to see how it is possible for a careful more or less perfect

gentleman to overcome Aristotle's reticence by uncovering Aristotle's tacit procedure--a procedure that Aristotle points to with hints, silences, and deeds. Finally, we can now say that one reason that Aristotle's ascent is less radical and different from Plato's ascent is that Aristotle much more than Plato dissembles his theoretical wisdom as he makes his ascent.⁴⁹ Aristotle's extreme sobriety, his more or less strict obedience to the unwritten nomos, seems to be the core of a new kind of radicalism. Aristotle does indeed have "a positive reason" for proceeding as he does.⁵⁰

Aristotle can proceed as he does because the gentleman may very well know that his way of life points beyond itself. Strauss continues:

The gentleman is by nature able to be affected by philosophy; Aristotle's political science is an attempt to actualize this potentiality. The gentleman affected by philosophy is in the highest case the enlightened statesman, like Pericles who was affected by Anaxagoras. The moral-political sphere is then not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science (emphasis added).

This is Strauss's second explicit statement about the purpose or intention of Aristotle's political science. In the first explicit statement, Strauss had said that Aristotle intended to "found political science as an independent discipline among a number of disciplines in such a

⁴⁹ See p. 114 above.

⁵⁰ See p. 68, n. 5 above.

way that political science preserves the perspective of the citizen or statesman or that it is the fully conscious form of the 'common sense' understanding of political things" (25). In the subsequent discussion, Strauss had emphasized that Aristotle went to extraordinary lengths of avoid making "political or practical science dependent on theoretical science" (26) and thus to preserve and defend the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman. That discussion seems to lead us to the conclusions that Aristotle believed that the gentleman--the man of prudence and moral virtue--requires for his well-being an independent political science, that Aristotle founded such a political science as a service to the gentleman, and that he intended his political science to be "a servant to the political art" (22). Furthermore, it seems that this statement of Aristotle's intention can be formulated in a more general way. The gentleman is the prudent man. Prudence, we recall, rules "the sphere of opinion," "the political sphere," "the sphere of all human things as such" (20, 21, 25). Prudence, and thus the gentleman, rules the city. (Are the many incapable of ruling in their own right? Are the many always ruled or, at least, led by "gentlemen"?) Aristotle seems to believe that the city requires for its well-being an independent political science. It would not be too much to say that Aristotle seems to teach that the well-being of the political community depends

decisively on political science. And "the philosopher Aristotle" founds political science. The philosopher Aristotle seems to teach that the well-being of the city depends decisively on the philosopher, the man of theoretical understanding or theoretical wisdom. Strauss's first explicit statement of Aristotle's intention and his elaboration of that statement seem to be designed to lead us to this more general formulation of Aristotle's intention. But we recall that neither in the first explicit statement nor in the elaboration--in fact, at no point in the discussion of Aristotle up to this time--has Strauss explained why the man of theoretical wisdom would or should desire to found political science.⁵¹ The man of theoretical wisdom is clearly neither a perfect gentleman nor a more or less perfect gentleman; at most he is a man who resembles a gentleman.⁵² The first and dominant impression conveyed to the reader by Strauss's remarks on theoretical wisdom is that it is concerned only with the divine things and not at all with the human things and therefore that the man of theoretical wisdom would have no interest in the sphere of prudence and hence no reason to come to the defense of the gentleman or the city, no reason to perform a service for the city, no reason to place himself in the service of the city. This impression is weakened somewhat when Strauss

⁵¹See pp. 86-88, 95, 99-100, 110-11 above.

⁵²See p. 110 above.

reveals that the end of the man of theoretical wisdom "calls for prudence" because "the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now" (27). But if this remark makes plain that the man of theoretical wisdom is necessarily interested in prudence, it also seems to limit his interest to that "primary" form of prudence "which is concerned with a man's own good" and does not explain why he would or should concern himself with "the highest form of practical wisdom or prudence, the prudence concerned with the common good of a political society" (24).

Strauss's second explicit statement about the intention of Aristotle's political science seems, at first sight, to be in perfect harmony with his first statement and its elaboration. "The gentleman is by nature able to be affected by philosophy; Aristotle's political science is an attempt to actualize this potentiality." The philosopher, it seems, attempts to actualize this natural potentiality for the sake of the gentleman and the city: "The gentleman affected by philosophy is in the highest case the enlightened statesman. . . ." The well-being of the gentleman requires that he be made "fully conscious" or that he be enlightened; the well-being of the city requires that it be ruled by enlightened statesmen. Aristotle's political science is an attempt to fulfill both of these requirements for a healthy political life. The "highest"

addressees of Aristotle's political science are those gentlemen who are potential enlightened statesmen and the "highest" intention of Aristotle's political science is the production of enlightened statesmen. Who are the second highest addressees and what is the second highest intention of Aristotle's political science? We remember that the genus "gentleman" seems to be divided into two species: the more or less perfect gentleman and the perfect gentleman pure and simple.⁵³ It seems that every gentleman "is by nature able to be affected by philosophy." Are the more or less perfect gentlemen those gentlemen who are potential enlightened statesmen, while the perfect gentlemen pure and simple are those who cannot be enlightened? Can we say that the latter are the secondary addressees of Aristotle's political science and that Aristotle's secondary intention is merely to reinforce rather than to enlighten the sound opinions of the perfect gentleman pure and simple? Are the many the third addressees of Aristotle's political science? Are the many by nature able to be affected by philosophy? What would be the intended effect of Aristotle's political science on the many?

We note that the highest case of the gentleman affected by philosophy is the enlightened statesman--and not the philosopher-statesman or the philosopher-king. That is not surprising: Aristotle rarely mentions philosophy

⁵³ See pp. 96, 123 above.

and statesmanship in the same breath and goes out of his way to avoid mentioning philosophy and kingship in the same breath.⁵⁴ It seems that Aristotle's procedure requires that certain paradoxes not even be discussed. One might think, however, that the highest case of the gentleman affected by philosophy would not be enlightened statesman but the gentleman who is by nature the potential philosopher. After all, the philosophic life is the highest subject of Aristotle's political science and the Nicomachean Ethics and Politics can both be said to culminate in praise of the philosophic life. That is, one might think that the highest intention of Aristotle's political science is to attempt to lead qualified gentlemen--or their qualified sons--from the political life to the philosophic life.⁵⁵ In arguing that the highest case of the gentleman affected by philosophy is the enlightened statesman, does Strauss wish to exclude those gentlemen who are potential philosophers from the category of Aristotle's addressees or does he merely wish to indicate that such gentlemen are not

⁵⁴The word "philosophy" occurs only three times in the third and most fundamental book of the Politics (1279b13-14, 1282b19, 29). Aristotle refuses to discuss the philosopher-kings in his critique of the Republic and refuses to use the word "philosopher" to describe that Zeus-like man who has the highest natural title to rule. Cf. "On Aristotle's Politics," p. 37 and "On Plato's Republic," p. 122.

⁵⁵See "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 93-94.

Aristotle's "highest" addressees and that the "highest" intention of Aristotle's political science is not to actualize the qualified gentleman's potentiality for philosophy?⁵⁶

We note that the second explicit statement on Aristotle's intention, like the first, is silent on why the man of theoretical wisdom would or should desire to found political science. That is, Strauss does not explain why "the philosopher Aristotle" is concerned to actualize the natural potentiality of the gentleman to be affected by philosophy, why he is concerned to produce enlightened statesmen. If the highest intention of Aristotle's political science was to actualize the qualified gentleman's potentiality for philosophy, one might say that the man of theoretical wisdom founded political science out of love of one's own. But the highest intention of the founder of political science is to produce enlightened statesmen. Is the man of theoretical wisdom moved to found political science out of that kind of love of one's own which is patriotism?⁵⁷ Is he moved by a more general public-spiritedness? There is no doubt that Strauss has implied that Aristotle's political science is public-spirited but there is also no doubt that he has not explained why the

⁵⁶ See p. 119 above.

⁵⁷ Consider "On Plato's Republic," p. 128.

man of theoretical wisdom would or should be concerned with, much less love, the public or political things.⁵⁸

Strauss provides us with a single and apparently a singular example of a gentleman whose natural potentiality to be affected by philosophy was actualized by a philosopher: "The gentleman affected by philosophy is in the highest case the enlightened statesman, like Pericles who was affected by Anaxagoras." Perhaps reflection on this example will lead us to an understanding of the motive or motives which induced the philosopher Aristotle to found political science. We note first that Strauss does not say "like Alcibiades who was affected by Socrates," or "like Dion who was affected by Plato," or "like Alexander who was affected by Aristotle." Was Pericles but not Alcibiades or Dion or Alexander an "enlightened statesman?" Secondly, we note that Strauss chooses a "pre-Socratic" example--an example which antedates not only Aristotle's founding of political science but even Socrates' founding

⁵⁸The author of the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics was a "stranger" when he wrote those books. Cf. Politics 1273b27-32 and 1324a14-16. Consider the status of "fatherland" (πατρίς) in the practical treatises and Aristotle's position with respect to the controversy between the "patriot" (the man who believes that the good citizen is a man who serves his city well under any regime) and the "partisan" (the man who believes that the good citizen is relative to the regime). Cf. The Constitution of Athens 28.5 with Politics 1276b30-31 and see "On Aristotle's Politics," pp. 46-47. Also see Xenophon's Socrates, pp. 179-80.

of political philosophy. Finally, we note that Strauss does not say "like Lycurgus and Zaleucus who were said to be affected by Thales."⁵⁹ That is, Strauss seems to take his single example not from Aristotle but from Plato.⁶⁰ But a moment's reflection seems to explain why Strauss chooses Pericles as his single example of a gentleman who was affected by a philosopher. In the discussion of practical wisdom in the sixth book of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle says that "we believe (οἴομεθα) that Pericles and men like him have practical wisdom."⁶¹ This is the only example of a man of practical wisdom that Aristotle provides in the Nicomachean Ethics. It is also the only mention of Pericles in that book. Shortly thereafter, Aristotle mentions Anaxagoras and Thales as examples of men who are said (φασιν) to have theoretical wisdom but not practical wisdom.⁶² We have seen that in the Politics Aristotle rehabilitates Thales' reputation for practical wisdom.⁶³ Aristotle does not mention Anaxagoras in the Politics. He does, however, partially rehabilitate his

⁵⁹ See Politics 1274a29-30.

⁶⁰ He cites Phaedrus 269d-270a (28, no. 37). That passage should be compared with the Anaxagoras passage in the Phaedo (96e-100a) and Strauss's account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy should be reconsidered in the light of both passages.

⁶¹ 1140b7-8.

⁶² 1141b4-5.

⁶³ See pp. 45-46, n. 23 above.

reputation for practical wisdom near the end of the Nicomachean Ethics.⁶⁴ It might seem that Strauss merely wishes to complete that rehabilitation with his use of a Platonic example. But did Aristotle himself believe that Pericles was a man of practical wisdom or an enlightened statesman?

We have said that Aristotle mentions Pericles only once in the Nicomachean Ethics. He balances that single reference with a single mention of Pericles in the Politics. That reference occurs in the discussion of "the nine legislators" at the end of the second book. Aristotle almost begins that discussion with a brief account of Solon. He first reports that Solon is believed (οἶονται) by some to have been a good legislator (νομοθέτην . . . σπουδαῖον) because he put an end to an oligarchy that was too unmixed, liberated the demos from slavery, and founded the ancestral democracy (δημοκρατίαν . . . τὴν πατρίων) under which the Athenian regime was admirably mixed. Aristotle then seems to begin to state his own opinion and modifies Solon's claim to be the founder of the ancestral democracy: while Solon does appear to have set up the demos (τὸν δὲ δῆμον καταστήσαι) by enacting that all the citizens should be admitted to sit on the dicasteries, he did not found but merely abstained from destroying the already existing oligarchic and aristocratic elements of the mixed regime.

⁶⁴1179a12-15.

Aristotle goes on to report that some blame Solon's democratization of the dicasteries, arguing that he really dissolved the power of the other elements by making the dicasteries, whose members were appointed by lot, all-powerful. It is at this point in his account of Solon that Aristotle mentions Pericles. Aristotle tells us that as the dicasteries grew strong, men flattered the demos as a tyrant and so founded the present democracy (τὴν νῦν δημοκρατίαν); Ephialtes and Pericles curtailed the Council of the Areopagus (the oligarchic element) and Pericles founded payment for serving on the dicasteries; thus each of the demagogues in turn led the growth to the present democracy. Aristotle completes his account of Solon by remarking that this further democratization seems not to have been in accordance with Solon's intention, but rather to be due to a mischance. For the demos, having been the cause of the naval victory over the Persians, became presumptuous and took up worthless (or thoughtless?) demagogues (δημαγωγούς . . . φαύλους) when opposed by the men of decency (τῶν ἐπεικῶν). But, Aristotle says, Solon himself seems to have given the demos only the necessary minimum power, electing the magistrates and calling them to account.⁶⁵

We can then say that according to Aristotle Solon was the founder or helped found Athens' ancestral democracy

⁶⁵1273b35-1274a22.

while Pericles helped found "the present democracy." There can be no doubt that Aristotle himself approved of Solon's legislation. In a later passage, he remarks that the best legislators have come from the middle class and explicitly ranks Solon among the best legislators.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Aristotle recommends giving the demos the same necessary minimum power that Solon had given them when, in the fundamental reflections of the third book, he comes closest to arguing that a certain kind of democracy is the best regime.⁶⁷ He repeats that recommendation in his discussion of the best form of democracy in the sixth book.⁶⁸ On the other hand, there can also be no doubt that Aristotle himself disapproves--to say the least--of Pericles' legislation. "The present democracy," it seems clear, is an example of "the most recent" (τὴν νεωτάτην) or "the last" (τὴν τελευταίαν) and worst form of democracy which Aristotle compares with tyranny.⁶⁹ Pericles, according to Aristotle, can thus be said to be directly (but not completely) responsible for the transformation of an Athenian regime which had a claim to being the best practicable regime into a regime which is difficult to

⁶⁶1296a18-22. This passage occurs in the midst of Aristotle's discussion of the middle-class polity, the best practicable regime.

⁶⁷1281b21-1282a41.

⁶⁸1318b6-1319a4.

⁶⁹1293a1-13, 1305a28-35, 1319b2-33.

distinguish from the worst.⁷⁰ It seems that Aristotle himself did not believe that Pericles was a man of practical wisdom or an enlightened statesman.⁷¹

Aristotle presents a parallel account of Pericles' statesmanship in his discussion of the degeneration of the Athenian democracy in The Constitution of Athens.⁷² That account in one respect strengthens and in another weakens the indictment of Pericles in the Politics. On the one hand, Aristotle begins the account by telling us that it was Pericles who was most responsible for turning the city particularly toward naval power and thus for emboldening the many.⁷³ On the other hand, Aristotle ends the account by remarking that so long as Pericles was at the head of

⁷⁰ Commenting on the term τὴν νῦν δημοκρασίαν in the Solon-Pericles passage, Newman remarks: "It is implied that the Athenian democracy was in the writer's time a democracy of an advanced kind--perhaps a τελευταία δημοκρατία. The passage is noticeable, because Aristotle commonly avoids mentioning Athens in connection with his censures of extreme democracy. Some have doubted its genuineness because of its unwonted outspokenness." (The Politics of Aristotle, with an Introduction, Two Prefatory Essays and Notes Critical and Explanatory, by W. L. Newman, 4 vols. [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1887-1902], 2:374.) But Newman also believes that Aristotle "would hardly have applied . . . to Pericles: the expression δημαγωγούς φαύλους (ibid., 375).

⁷¹ Cf. Gorgias 455d-e, 471e-d, 503c, 515c-516d, 519a, 521d and see Strauss's discussion of Pericles in "On Thucydides' War," especially pp. 151-53, 161, 192-95, 199-200, 218-19.

⁷² 26. 3 - 28. 2.

⁷³ 27. 1.

the demos the condition of the regime was better, but when Pericles was dead it became much worse.⁷⁴ We note two other points made in this second account. First, Aristotle reports that the sophist Damonides of Oia was thought (ἐδόκει) to have suggested most of Pericles' measures and was later ostracized for that very reason.⁷⁵ Second, Aristotle connects Pericles' introduction of pay for those serving on the dicasteries with the subsequent corruption of the dicasteries caused by the bribery of the dicasts. For some reason, Aristotle mentions that Anytus--one of the accusers of Socrates--was the first to win an acquittal by means of bribery.⁷⁶ We can thus say that the Pericles section of The Constitution of Athens generally reinforces the judgment of Pericles conveyed by the Pericles passage in the Politics--and, in addition, connects Pericles somehow with the trial and death of the philosopher Socrates.

Now Aristotle certainly knew--if only from the Phaedrus passage--that Pericles had been "affected" by the philosopher Anaxagoras. Yet in the three Pericles passages we have just examined Aristotle is silent about Anaxagoras'

⁷⁴28. 1.

⁷⁵27. 4. On Damonides or Damon see Plato Alcibides I 118c, Republic 400b, 424c; Isocrates Antidosis 235; Plutarch Pericles 4, 9. 2.

⁷⁶27. 5.

effect on Pericles.⁷⁷ This silence is highlighted by the facts that in the passage on the legislators Aristotle does mention Thales' reputed effect on Lycurgus and Zaleucus⁷⁸ and that in the Pericles passage of The Constitution of Athens he does mention Damonides' reputed effect on Pericles. There are, of course, numerous references to Anaxagoras in Aristotle's corpus. If we are not mistaken, none of those references mentions Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles. Aristotle is absolutely silent on the Pericles-Anaxagoras connection. Strauss, rather than respect Aristotle's silence, forcefully brings Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles to our attention.

But Aristotle is not only silent about Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles; he is also silent about Pericles' "effect" on Anaxagoras. In the last chapter of The City and Man Strauss remarks: "Thucydides belongs in a sense to Periclean Athens--to the Athens in which Anaxagoras and Protagoras taught and were persecuted on the ground of impiety."⁷⁹ In commenting on Peisthetairos' beating and expulsion of the geometer-astronomer Meton ("Socrates")

⁷⁷If we are not mistaken, Aristotle's only other references to Pericles occur in the Rhetoric and merely use examples from Pericles' speeches (1365a31, 1390b31, 1407a1, 1411a2, 1419a2).

⁷⁸Thales, we recall, is mentioned along with Anaxagoras in the passage which closely follows the single reference to Pericles in the Nicomachean Ethics. See p. 137 above.

⁷⁹"On Thucydides' War," p. 161. Strauss cites Plutarch Nicias 23. 2-3.

from Cloudcucktown in The Birds, Strauss says: "What happened to Pericles on account of his connection with Anaxagoras can not happen to Peisthetairos."⁸⁰ Anaxagoras was the first philosopher to take up his abode at Athens. He was also, it seems, the first philosopher at Athens to be prosecuted on a charge (at least among others) of impiety.⁸¹ The εἰσαγγελία of Anaxagoras was based on the famous psephism of Diopieithes. That psephism, it seems, was directed at both Anaxagoras and his pupil Pericles and seems to have been designed by Pericles' political opponents to direct suspicion, by means of Anaxagoras, against Pericles himself.⁸² Although there is some disagreement among the ancient sources about the date and details of Anaxagoras' trial, it seems that we can safely say that Pericles was under suspicion at least in part because of his connection with Anaxagoras (not to mention his other teacher, the sophist Damonides) and that Anaxagoras was prosecuted at least in part because of his effect on Pericles; that despite Pericles' influence with the demos

⁸⁰ Socrates and Aristophanes (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 175.

⁸¹ Burnet argues that ". . . the εἰσαγγελία of Anaxagoras . . . marks the beginning of Athenian aversion to μεταωρολόγοι. . . ." (Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito, ed., with Notes, by John Burnet [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1924], p. 47 [comment on Apology 18b5].)

⁸² See Plutarch Pericles 32.1 and Socrates and Aristophanes, p. 318, n. 29.

(and despite, perhaps, a speech in Anaxagoras' defense by the great orator Pericles), Anaxagoras was found guilty and either fined and exiled or imprisoned and condemned to death in absence after he escaped with the help of Pericles.⁸³ Aristotle certainly knew much more about these events than we can ever hope to know.⁸⁴ Perhaps his silence on Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles and his remarks on Damonides and Anytus are not accidental.⁸⁵

We believe that we must draw the following conclusions from this overlong excursus: (1) Aristotle believed that Pericles, despite (although perhaps not because of) Anaxagoras' effect on him, was not an enlightened statesman

⁸³ See Plutarch Pericles 4. 4-6; 8. 1-3; 16; 32. 1, 3; Nicias 23. 2-3; Diogenes Laertius 2. 7, 12-13. Plutarch goes so far as to say that in consequence of the attack on Anaxagoras and similar attacks on Aspasia and Pheidias, Pericles--"fearing the dicasteries"--stirred up the Peloponnesian war (Pericles 30-32). Burnet connects the trial of Anaxagoras with the ostracism of the other teacher of Pericles, Damonides (Early Greek Philosophy, 4th ed. [Cleveland: World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, 1957], p. 256).

On the disagreement among the ancient sources about the date and details of Anaxagoras' trial, see Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, pp. 251-57; G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, The Presocratic Philosophers (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1971), pp. 362-65; W. K. C. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, vol. II: The Presocratic Tradition From Parmenides to Democritus (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1965), pp. 266-69, 322-23.

⁸⁴ See Plato Apology of Socrates 26d6.

⁸⁵ We note that Diogenes Laertius reports that according to some authors Socrates, like Pericles, was a pupil of both Anaxagoras and Damon (2. 19).

or that, if he was a statesman who became enlightened, his enlightenment by Anaxagoras did not result in his acquisition of that kind of practical wisdom which secures or produces the well-being of the political community.

(After all, Anaxagoras was not the founder of political philosophy or political science.) (2) Aristotle must have known that whatever the consequences of Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles for the political well-being of Pericles and Athens, its consequences for the political well-being of Anaxagoras and philosophy in Athens were disastrous. (We note that Anaxagoras did not respond to his persecution by founding political philosophy or political science.)

(3) Strauss was either very careless in his choice of the Pericles-Anaxagoras example or he carefully chose a "bad" example. Since Strauss was both famous and notorious for his carefulness, since it is unlikely that he would expound the doctrine of "logographic necessity" in one part of a book⁸⁶ and fail to employ it in another part, and since we have already provided ample evidence of his carefulness in "On Aristotle's Politics," we prefer to say that Strauss carefully chose his singular example. We suggest that that carefully chosen example is designed to induce the careful reader to reconsider and complete Strauss's explicit account of the intention of Aristotle's political science. We recall that the explicit account is incomplete because

⁸⁶"On Plato's Republic," pp. 50-62.

Strauss does not satisfactorily explain why Aristotle, the man of theoretical wisdom, would or should choose to found practical or political science. We further suggest that Strauss has tacitly provided us with all the information necessary for a satisfactory completion of his argument.

The problem of Aristotle's intention and motive seems to turn on his understanding of the relationship between the philosopher-political scientist and the gentleman or, more generally, between the philosopher-political scientist and the city. Why, according to Strauss, does Aristotle believe that well-being of the political community depends decisively on an independent political science and hence on the man of theoretical wisdom? Why does the city need political science and the political scientist? In the first place, the well-being of the city depends decisively on the law of the city: the highest opinions, the authoritative opinions, are the pronouncements of the law (19-20). The law is the most important instrument for the moral education of the many. But because the law does not owe its strength, its power of being obeyed, to reason at all or only to a small degree, it must be supported by a civil theology. "Because the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, it requires for its well-being a rhetoric different from forensic and deliberative rhetoric as a servant of the political art" (22).

Although Strauss clearly indicates that one function of such rhetoric is the support of a civil theology he does not exclude the possibility that it might have other functions as well. Furthermore, although Strauss does not exclude the possibility that the practitioner of the political art--the statesman--might develop and employ such rhetoric by himself, he clearly implies that the development (if not the complete employment) of such rhetoric is properly the work of the man of theoretical wisdom. In the second place, the well-being of the gentleman and therefore the city depends decisively not only on the law of the city proper, but also on the unwritten nomos. At first sight it seems that the unwritten nomos, unlike the law of the city proper, does not require the support of a civil theology and/or a civil rhetoric: the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science and are fully evident to the gentleman (25). The gentleman, it might seem, is fully equipped to rule and defend the sphere of prudence (24). But, we recall, Strauss says "the city as a whole [i.e., the gentlemen as well as the many] is [are] characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason." The principles of prudence are "fully evident only to gentleman"; the unwritten nomos "may be in agreement with reason but is not as such dictated by reason" (25, 26, emphasis added). Despite these facts, the gentleman is, it seems, well (if not fully) equipped to rule the

ill-bred many and other well-bred gentlemen and to defend the sphere of prudence against the many and other gentlemen. Yet the many are not the only people of deficient breeding with whom the gentlemen must contend: "among the latter [the people of deficient breeding] there may be men of great power of persuasion who question the goodness of moral virtue" (26, emphasis added). Strauss leads us to believe that because the gentleman is not adequately equipped to defend the sphere of prudence against such men, he and therefore the city require the assistance of the man of theoretical wisdom. Why is the gentleman, the man of practical wisdom, unable to overcome the danger posed by such men on his own?

There seems to be little doubt that Strauss wishes us to conclude that these "men of great power of persuasion" are the teachers of the art of persuasion--the sophists (see 17). Strauss seems to imply that the sophists question the goodness of moral virtue because they are men of deficient breeding. But Strauss has clearly indicated that the unwritten nomos is inherently questionable. Furthermore, the sophists may very well be men of deficient breeding but they are not the only men who, according to Strauss, question the goodness of moral virtue or disobey the unwritten nomos: the predecessors of the Athenian stranger and Plato (not to say Socrates) also seem to fall into that category. Strauss does not indicate that either

the predecessors or Plato are men of deficient breeding. We remember that while Strauss does not explicitly call the predecessors "philosophers" he indicates that they may properly be so called and that while he does seem to indicate that the predecessors can be identified with the sophists he himself never explicitly makes that identification.⁸⁷ We also recall that Strauss does explicitly distinguish the sophists from the pupils of Socrates (23). While we are in no position to solve the problem of Plato's Theaetetus-Sophist-Statesman trilogy, we are in a position to say something about the differences among the predecessors, the sophists, and Plato. The predecessors can be distinguished from both the sophists and Plato on at least one ground: the predecessors do not believe that the political art or science is something serious while the sophists and Plato (or, at least, his Athenian stranger) regard it as a most serious pursuit (14-15, 16). Moreover, the sophists can be distinguished from Plato on at least one ground: the sophists take seriously only that part of the political art or science that is the art or science of persuasion while Plato (and Xenophon) takes seriously the full political art (17, 23). Strauss may be said to suggest that the sophists combine the predecessors' teaching about the whole with serious attention to the political art understood as the art of persuasion. Although

⁸⁷ See p. 35 above.

the predecessors did teach "that the gods are only by convention," that "the soul is derivative from the body or inferior in rank to it," "that the just things are radically conventional," "that the things which are by nature noble differ profoundly from the things which are noble by convention," and therefore that "the way of life which is straight or correct according to nature consists in being superior to others or lording it over others whereas the way of life which is straight or correct according to convention consists in serving others," they nevertheless did not take the political art or science seriously (14, 16-17). It seems that while the predecessors did not practice a way of life which consisted of serving others they also did not attempt to demonstrate their superiority to others or to lord it over others by means of the political art. The sophists, on the other hand, begin by accepting the teaching of the predecessors but conclude from that teaching not only that the wise man should not dedicate himself to the political community, but that he should employ the political art or the art of persuasion to "prevent his being used by the community for its end" or to "use it for his own end." The sophists could not deny (but they may not have openly taught) that their argument leads to the conclusion that "the most complete form in which one could use or exploit the political community would be the exercise of political power and

especially of tyrannical power" (17). We suggest that Strauss indicates that the position of the sophists owes its origin to a corruption of the teaching of the predecessors of the Athenian stranger and that the difference between the predecessors and the sophists corresponds to what Strauss elsewhere calls the difference between "philosophic conventionalism and vulgar conventionalism."⁸⁸ Plato (or, at least, his Athenian stranger) "disagrees entirely" with the predecessors (14); he cannot, however, be said to disagree entirely with the sophists--he, like them, regards the political art or science as a most serious pursuit. But just as Strauss can be said to give an incomplete account of the reasons why Aristotle took the political art or science seriously enough to found political science, he can also be said to give an incomplete account of the reasons why Socrates or Plato (or Xenophon) founded political philosophy. If Plato "disagrees entirely" with the predecessors, it seems that he could not be moved by the same reasons which impelled the sophists to regard the political art or the art of persuasion as a most serious pursuit. Strauss does say that Socrates--like the predecessors and the sophists--was compelled to ascend from law to nature, but he also emphasizes that Socrates discovered that "he must go that way with a new awakesness, caution, and emphasis" (20). Does Strauss wish to indicate

⁸⁸See Natural Right and History, pp. 114-17.

that the Socratics can be distinguished from the sophists not only because they take the full political art seriously, but also because they, unlike the sophists, proceed with a new awakesness, caution, and emphasis? We recall that Strauss argues that the sophists' reduction of politics to rhetoric indicates that they believed in "the omnipotence of speech" or that they were blind to "the sternness of politics" (23). Now Aristotle was certainly able to distinguish between the sophists and the Socratics. But Strauss has left no doubt that Aristotle believed that the theoretical teaching of Plato as well as the theoretically-based practical teaching of the sophists poses a serious danger to the gentleman and the city. We might wonder whether the gentleman--not to mention the many--could distinguish between the Socratics and the sophists as easily as Aristotle no doubt could.

We conclude that the gentleman by himself is unable to meet the danger posed by either the sophists or Plato because in both cases their questioning of the unwritten nomos is based on a teaching about the whole or on a theoretical teaching and the gentleman as gentleman is merely a man of practical wisdom. If the gentleman is in need of a defense against such teachings, that defense must necessarily be theoretical and must necessarily be supplied by the man of theoretical wisdom. The city as a

whole therefore requires for its well-being the assistance of the man of theoretical wisdom.

We note that Strauss carefully says that among the people of deficient breeding "there may be men of great power of persuasion who question the goodness of moral virtue." He thereby seems to indicate either that a given political community may be completely free of such men or that it may be blessed with men of deficient breeding and great power of persuasion who are able to question the goodness of moral virtue but for some reason refrain from doing so publicly. That is, it seems that a political community may be blessed by either the absence of sophists or the presence of cautious sophists (if that be not a contradiction in terms). And there have certainly been political communities that have not been graced by well-bred Socratics. It might seem that the gentleman who lives in such a city does not require the assistance of the man of theoretical wisdom in order to successfully rule and defend the sphere of prudence. Indeed, it seems that if the gentleman who lives in such a city could by himself develop a civil rhetoric to support a civil theology, he could dispense entirely with the man of theoretical wisdom and his political science. We are driven to the conclusion that a political community can be healthy without either political science or political scientists and that political science, like medicine, is only needed when a political

community becomes diseased or is threatened by disease. It seems, in other words, that the well-being of the political community depends decisively on the man of theoretical wisdom and his political science only if men who have (or have access to) and teach certain kinds of theoretical wisdom are present in the community. Was Aristotle, the man of theoretical wisdom, moved to found political science only because the city was endangered by the teachings of other men of theoretical wisdom?

We must now return to the other side of the relationship between the philosopher-political scientist and the city and once more ask: Why does the philosopher Aristotle, a man of theoretical wisdom, choose to found an independent political science and thereby perform a great service for the city? We have already explained why we believe that Strauss's explicit account of Aristotle's founding does not contain a satisfactory answer to this question and why we believe that certain elements of Strauss's explicit account seem, in fact, to render Aristotle's act of founding inexplicable.⁸⁹ We will not repeat those arguments. We will, however, begin our reconsideration by arguing that Strauss's explicit account can be read in such a way as to make Aristotle's decision even more mysterious than it hitherto appeared to be.

⁸⁹ See pp. 86-88, 95, 99-100, 110-11, 131-32, 135-36 above.

We recall that Strauss argues that one reason that Aristotle could found an independent political science is because Aristotle held that "theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the whole . . .) is available" (25). We further recall that Strauss seemed to indicate that the only reason that Socrates, after his successful founding of political philosophy, did not turn back toward the divine or natural things, was because he held that theoretical wisdom was not and would never be available.⁹⁰ Strauss, in fact, begins "On Aristotle's Politics" by reminding us of the almost overwhelming difficulty which had to be overcome before philosophers could devote any serious attention to political things, to human things. "Philosophy," Strauss said, "turns primarily away from the human things toward the divine or natural things; no compulsion is needed or possible to establish philosophy in the cities or to introduce it into the households; but philosophy must be compelled to turn back toward the human things from which it originally departed" (14). In addition, Strauss quotes with approval Pascal's remark that Aristotle's writing of his political works was "'the least philosophic and the least serious'" part of his life (18). Aristotle himself describes his political science as "the philosophy concerning

⁹⁰ See p. 60 above.

the human things"⁹¹ and leaves no doubt that the divine things are of much higher dignity than the political or human things.⁹² If Aristotle believed that theoretical wisdom is available, it is difficult (if not impossible) to explain why he would voluntarily choose to do anything else but contemplate his own theoretical wisdom or why he would voluntarily choose to devote a substantial part of his life not to divine science but to political science--to his least philosophic and least serious pursuit. It seems that Aristotle must have been compelled to turn back toward the human things and therefore that he must have been compelled to found political science. Must we conclude that Aristotle had to be compelled to devote a part of his life to "serving others," that he was compelled to "dedicate himself to the community" (14, 17)?

We again recall that Strauss has explicitly provided us with only one Aristotelian reason why the man of theoretical reason would or should be in any way concerned with the sphere of all human things as such or with the sphere ruled by prudence. The end of such a man, Strauss says, "calls for prudence" because "the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his

⁹¹Nicomachean Ethics 1181b15.

⁹²Ibid. 1141a20-b9, 1145a6-11, 1177b31-33. See "On Aristotle's Politics," p. 13, n. 1 and p. 27, n. 27.

philosophizing here and now" (27).⁹³ We have already noted that Strauss does not go on to tell us what the conditions for philosophizing are.⁹⁴ However, shortly thereafter he does tell us that the gentleman "may very well know that his political activity is in the service of noble leisure" (27). Leisure then is the condition for that activity of the gentleman ("the enjoyment of poetry and the other imitative arts") which most closely resembles ("imitates") the activity of the philosopher. Moreover, the gentleman can secure the conditions for his trans-political activity only by securing (temporary) freedom from political activity, freedom from the cares of the city. We suggest that Strauss wishes to indicate that the general condition for philosophizing is philosophic leisure ("ignoble leisure"?) and that such leisure is identical with freedom from politics, from the city (cf. 49). We further suggest that in emphasizing the philosopher's need for prudence or the fact that the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now, Strauss wishes to indicate that the philosopher's leisure is normally endangered by politics or the city. Strauss, we believe, has also indicated why this is so.

⁹³ See pp. 131-32 above.

⁹⁴ See pp. 110-11 above.

We remember that Strauss argues that the founding of political philosophy or political science presupposes or coincides with the raising of the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" and that Aristotle and the pupils of Socrates answer that question in the same way (19, 23). In addition, we remember that Strauss first formulates Aristotle's answer by saying that "the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason" (22, emphasis added). He then immediately quotes the maxim "'The very nature of public affairs often defeats reason'" (22). If the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, then it seems that the city as a whole must be characterized by a specific recalcitrance to the philosopher, the man of theoretical wisdom, the man who is, so to speak, reason incarnate, and to his philosophic activity. It seems that such recalcitrance is neither an accidental nor an ephemeral characteristic of the city, but rather stems from the very "nature of political things" (23)--and, we may add, from the very nature of philosophy. The city, the political sphere, Strauss indicates, is necessarily the sphere of opinion (cf. 20 and 21). When Strauss discusses Socrates' founding of political philosophy he tells us that Socrates discovered that the city is constituted by its authoritative opinions (19-20). When he discusses Aristotle's founding of political science he tells us that the political sphere is constituted by an

unwritten nomos that is not as such dictated by reason (26). But Strauss also tells us that even Socrates--whose wisdom is only human wisdom--finds it "necessary to transcend the authoritative opinions as such in the direction of what is no longer opinion but knowledge." If even Socrates is "compelled to go the way from law to nature, to ascend from law to nature," then it seems that philosophy in any form is necessarily characterized by the attempt to transcend the authoritative opinions in the direction of knowledge. Strauss clearly indicates that Aristotle believes that such attempts--whether successful or not--endanger the city. The man of theoretical wisdom may be able to live well in the element of knowledge, but the city can live well only in the element of opinion--opinion which in the best case (ancestral opinions, myths, unwritten nomoi) may be in agreement with reason but which can never be simply dictated by reason. The city, Strauss's Aristotle may be said to admit, has good grounds for its recalcitrance to philosophic or theoretical activity. But whether its grounds be good or bad, there seems to be little doubt that Strauss's Aristotle also believes that the city is impelled by its very nature to attempt to defend itself against the danger posed by philosophy. The city, it seems, is necessarily driven to attempt to either prohibit or regulate philosophic activity in much the same way that it must prohibit or regulate certain of the arts (see 23-24). That

is, the city is driven to attempt to either deny the philosopher the freedom to philosophize or to render philosophic activity subservient to the end of the city as the city understands that end. It seems that the general condition for philosophizing, freedom from the city or from politics, is endangered by "'the very nature of public affairs'" or by "the nature of political things."

We therefore suggest that Strauss tacitly indicates that the discovery of the nature of political things provides the man of theoretical wisdom with a powerful reason to take a serious interest in the political or human things and to regard the political art or science as a most serious pursuit. We can say that the discovery of the nature of political things compels the philosopher to expand his interest in the primary form of prudence (the prudence which is concerned with a man's own good) into a most serious interest in the prudence concerned with the common good of a political society.⁹⁵ It would not be too much to say that "philosophic prudence" thereby becomes a special kind of "political prudence." We are thus led to suggest that Aristotle--the man who combines theoretical and practical wisdom in his own person--was compelled to found practical or political science because of the city's

⁹⁵Cf. "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 92: ". . . the political sphere is bound to advance into the focus of philosophic interest as soon as philosophy starts to reflect on its own doings."

specific recalcitrance to philosophy and that his act of founding is explicable, in large part, in terms of a desire to make the general condition for philosophizing as secure as possible by somehow mitigating that recalcitrance.

We note that Strauss's explicit account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy seems at first right to suggest that Socrates was led to compel philosophy to turn back toward the human things by purely theoretical considerations or that Socrates himself was compelled to turn toward the human things by purely theoretical considerations. It now seems that Strauss's explicit account should be reconsidered in the light of the above suggestions. We cannot undertake such an inquiry. We can, however, once again⁹⁶ remind ourselves that Strauss does tell us that although Socrates was in fact compelled to ascend from law to nature, he was compelled to make that ascent with a new awakesness, caution, and emphasis. Socrates or Plato, we recall, believed that knowledge of the whole is unavailable or that political philosophy remains knowledge of ignorance and hence that there is "no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion" or "the political sphere" (20, 21). Was Socrates' new awakesness, caution, and emphasis the result of his twin discoveries of the nature of political things and of philosophy's necessary and permanent relation to the sphere of

⁹⁶See pp. 152-53 above.

opinion and hence the political sphere?⁹⁷ Was Socrates compelled to found political philosophy, at least in part, because of the consequences for philosophy of Anaxagoras' effect on Pericles? Was Plato compelled to continue Socrates' founding, at least in part, because of the consequences for philosophy of Socrates' effect on certain young gentlemen? However this may be, if Aristotle, who unlike Socrates or Plato believed that knowledge of the whole is available, was also compelled to turn back toward the human things, there can be little doubt that he was convinced that the Socratic founding of political philosophy had not succeeded in making the general condition for philosophizing as secure as possible or had not sufficiently mitigated the city's recalcitrance to philosophy.

We must now reconsider Strauss's explicit account of Aristotle's intention in the light of the foregoing suggestions. Aristotle, Strauss indicates, believes that the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason and hence philosophy. How then can the philosopher Aristotle even approach, much less hope to moderate, the recalcitrant city? If Aristotle knows that the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, he also knows that the city is made up of qualitatively different parts: the many and the gentlemen. It seems that while the many and the gentlemen are

⁹⁷See pp. 57-59, 63-65 above.

both characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, they are also characterized by different relationships to philosophy. We have seen that Strauss, in various ways, indicates a difference between the many and the gentlemen (see 22, 23, 25).⁹⁸ In the third section of "On Aristotle's Politics" (which is devoted to a discussion of "Aristotle's alleged anti-democratic prejudice" [35]), Strauss suggests "that the ultimate reason why Aristotle has reservations against even the best kind of democracy is his certainty that the demos is by nature opposed to philosophy. Only the gentlemen can be open to philosophy, i.e. listen to the philosopher" (37, emphasis added). The demos, it seems, can only "listen" to "laws with teeth in them" or to laws that are supported by a civil theology (23, 22). If the demos is by nature opposed to philosophy, if the demos cannot listen to the philosopher, then philosophy cannot have a direct effect on the demos and the philosopher should not try to address the demos directly. But the many can be made to "listen" to the gentleman--if he possesses "the full political art" (23). Aristotle's political science, we remember, is addressed only to the gentleman (25). For if Aristotle is certain that the demos is by nature opposed to philosophy, he is also, according to Strauss, certain that "the gentleman is by nature able to be affected by philosophy" (28). If the philosopher desires to have an

⁹⁸Also see pp. 77-79, 94-95, 130, 133 above.

effect on the city, if he wishes, for example, to mitigate the city's specific recalcitrance to philosophy, he can do so only by affecting the gentleman. And Strauss, in his second explicit statement about the intention of Aristotle's political science, does indeed tell us that Aristotle's political science is an attempt to actualize the gentleman's natural potentiality to be affected by philosophy and that the highest case of the gentleman who has been affected by philosophy is the "enlightened statesman" (28). We believe that this formulation of Aristotle's intention can now be seen to take on a new and deeper meaning in the light of our reconsideration of the relationship between the philosopher-political scientist and the city. We recall that the first impression conveyed by both of Strauss's explicit statements about Aristotle's intention is that Aristotle chooses to found political science or attempts to actualize the natural potentiality of the gentleman simply for the sake of the gentleman and the city.⁹⁹ It now seems that Aristotle's intention is in fact more complex than Strauss first makes it appear to be. We suggest that Strauss indicates that Aristotle chooses to found political science or attempts to affect the gentleman not only for the sake of the gentleman and the city, but also (and perhaps primarily) for the sake of the philosopher

⁹⁹ See pp. 129-33 above.

and philosophy in the city. That is, we suggest that Strauss leads us to conclude that Aristotle's political science is designed at least as much to meet the pressing needs of philosophy as it is to meet the pressing needs of the city.

Strauss, we recall, tells us that the highest case of the gentleman who has been affected by philosophy is the "enlightened statesman." This formulation led us to conclude that the "highest" addressees of Aristotle's political science are those gentlemen who are potential enlightened statesmen and that the "highest" intention of Aristotle's political science is the production of enlightened statesmen.¹⁰⁰ At first sight, Strauss seems to indicate that the emphasis in this formulation should be placed on "statesman" rather than on "enlightened" or that the philosopher-political scientist seeks to enlighten the gentleman simply because the well-being of the city requires that the ruling gentlemen possess "the full political art" (23) or the full art of the statesman. We now suggest that the emphasis should be placed equally (and perhaps primarily) on "enlightened" and that the philosopher-political scientist seeks to enlighten the gentleman not only for the sake of the city's well-being but also for the sake of the philosopher's well-being. What does "enlightened" mean?

¹⁰⁰ See pp. 132-33 above.

What, according to Strauss, does Aristotle understand by a statesman who is "enlightened"? The gentleman can listen to the philosopher. What does the philosopher tell the gentleman? What does the philosopher want the gentleman to hear? The gentleman can be open to philosophy. How does the philosopher take advantage of that openness? What effect does the philosopher want to have on the gentleman?

There is no doubt that Aristotle does intend his political science to be "a servant to the political art" (22) or that he intends to convey "the full political art," the full statesman's art, to the gentleman. Furthermore, there seems to be no doubt that Aristotle believes that the gentleman can master the full political art only if his understanding, the "common sense" understanding, of political things is made "fully conscious." Aristotle's political science, therefore, in the first place enlightens the gentleman by raising his primary understanding of political things to full consciousness and by providing him with the full political art. The philosopher Aristotle thereby provides a great service to the gentleman and hence to the city. And in so doing, he shows those gentlemen who have eyes to see that the philosopher can be most useful to the gentleman and the city. Aristotle, we suggest, attempts to persuade the gentleman that the city needs philosophy; he attempts to justify philosophy in terms of the city or by

means of the kind of argument which appeals not to philosophers as such, but to citizens and statesmen as such.¹⁰¹

We can say that Aristotle attempts to show the gentleman that philosophy can be public-spirited (if not patriotic) and that "the wise man" can "dedicate himself to the community" and its end (see 17). Aristotle presents the political scientist to the gentleman as a "citizen-philosopher."

We note in passing that by providing the gentleman with the full political art, the philosopher seems to be able to have an indirect effect on the many. While the many cannot listen to the philosopher, they can be made to listen to the gentleman who has been enlightened by listening to the philosopher.

Aristotle carefully founds political science in such a way that political science preserves the perspective of the gentleman citizen or statesman (25). While making the gentleman's understanding of political things fully conscious and while providing the gentleman with the full political art, the philosopher Aristotle "remains within the limits of an unwritten nomos which is recognized by well-bred people everywhere" (26). Aristotle thereby shows those gentlemen who have eyes to see that the philosopher can behave in a gentlemanly manner and that philosophy

¹⁰¹See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 93.

can understand and may be in agreement with the moral consciousness. But it seems that even Aristotle's procedure cannot completely avoid reminding the gentleman (if he can in any way be said to need reminding) that some "wise men" are people of deficient breeding whose teaching genuinely endangers the moral consciousness or the sphere of prudence and thereby the gentleman and the city. We suggest that Aristotle in fact wishes to call at least some attention to such "wise men" and that he does so in order to make at least some gentlemen fully conscious of the facts that the gentleman and his sphere are in need of a defense and that that defense can only be provided by a philosopher or a man of theoretical wisdom. We assume that such gentlemen might very well notice and appreciate that Aristotle's political science is designed to provide the gentleman with just the defense he needs. Aristotle, therefore, in the second place enlightens the gentleman by showing him that the philosopher can act like a gentleman and that the gentleman-philosopher is the best ally of the gentleman in his war with the "wise men" of deficient breeding. If we are willing to exaggerate somewhat, we can say that Aristotle attempts to persuade at least some gentlemen that the citizen-philosopher is also a "citizen-soldier."

We believe, however, that Strauss indicates that the word "enlightened" in the phrase "enlightened statesman" has a third and primary meaning. The gentleman, we remember,

"may very well know that his political activity is in the service of noble leisure," he may very well know "that the city points beyond itself." But the gentleman does not know that his leisable activity is not the highest form of leisable activity because he does not know clearly that toward which the city points (27). When the philosopher Aristotle addresses the gentlemen "he removes a screen," he shows them as far as possible that the way of life of the perfect gentleman points toward the philosophic way of life" (28). At its peak, Aristotle's political science attempts to show those gentlemen who have eyes to see that the gentlemanly way of life, rather than being opposed to the philosophic way of life, is in fact completed by the philosophic life. Aristotle, we can say, attempts to persuade the gentleman that the city is somehow incomplete without the philosophic life; that the city, rather than being endangered by philosophic activity, is in fact made complete by philosophic activity. If the philosopher can be shown to resemble the perfect gentleman, the perfect gentleman can also be shown to resemble the philosopher. The philosopher, Aristotle seems to tell the perfect gentleman, far from being a less than perfect gentleman, is the pluperfect gentleman. We suggest that the "enlightened statesman" is above all that gentleman statesman who has been persuaded by the philosopher that the gentleman's political activity should be in the service of philosophic

lesisure--leisure that may be enjoyed by the gentleman himself, but that will certainly be enjoyed by the philosopher.

But the philosopher-political scientist shows the gentleman as far as possible that the way of life of the perfect gentleman points toward the philosophic life. Aristotle's political science is an attempt to justify philosophy before the tribunal of the gentleman. It therefore must attempt to justify philosophy in terms of the gentleman's perspective or, to alter an earlier formulation somewhat, by means of the kind of argument which appeals not to philosophers as such, but to gentlemen as such. Aristotle's political science is intended to introduce the gentleman to philosophy. That introduction must be a gentlemanly or political or popular rather than a philosophic introduction.¹⁰² We note, however, that while such an introduction is intended primarily to produce enlightened statesmen, it is also perfectly designed to lead qualified gentlemen--or their qualified sons--from the political life to the philosophic life.¹⁰³ The philosopher-political scientist takes care of his own in more ways than one. It does indeed appear that civil

¹⁰²See *ibid.* and pp. 123, 126-29 above.

¹⁰³See "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 93-94 and pp. 133-35 above.

rhetoric can be used for purposes other than the support of a civil theology.¹⁰⁴

We can now bring our long digression from Strauss's text to a close by reformulating the intention of Aristotle's political science. Aristotle, the man of theoretical wisdom, is compelled to found political science because of the city's specific recalcitrance to reason and hence philosophy. His political science is intended to make the general condition for philosophizing as secure as possible by mitigating the city's recalcitrance to philosophy. Aristotle, in his political science, attempts to mitigate the recalcitrance by addressing the gentleman and by undertaking to persuade the gentleman that the well-being of gentleman and hence the city is in various ways decisively dependent on the study of philosophy. The city's specific recalcitrance to reason impels it to endanger philosophy. But the city is driven to endanger philosophy principally because the city is genuinely endangered by philosophy. Aristotle's political science is an attempt to simultaneously protect philosophy from the city and the city from philosophy. In fact, it is an attempt to protect philosophy from the city by protecting the city from philosophy. Because the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, it requires for its well-being civil rhetoric. But Aristotle employs civil rhetoric not only

¹⁰⁴See pp. 73-76, 147-48 above.

as a servant to the political art but also as a servant to philosophy.

We must note, however, that Aristotle, unlike the sophists, does not believe that speech is omnipotent. He is not "blind to the sternness of politics." Aristotle knows that "the nature of political things defeats to some extent not only reason but persuasion in any form" (23, emphasis added). The city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason. The gentlemen can be open to philosophy, can listen to the philosopher. But Aristotle knows that the gentlemen do not always, and perhaps do not often, have supreme authority in the city. And Aristotle knows that the gentlemen may refuse to listen or may be unable to understand what they are told. Potentially "enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm." That is, Aristotle knows that his political science, his political introduction to philosophy, may well fail to mitigate the city's recalcitrance "here and now." But even if Aristotle should succeed in making the general condition for philosophizing as secure as possible, the individual philosopher would still require "philosophic prudence," for he would still have to deliberate about how he could secure the particular conditions for philosophizing "here and now." If, as Strauss says, political philosophy or political science is "more questionable than philosophy as such" (18), then there can be no doubt that the

philosopher-political scientist can never dispense with "philosophic prudence."

We can now return to the text and see how Strauss completes the third and final stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue (28-29).¹⁰⁵ We recall that immediately after giving us the Pericles-Anaxagoras example, Strauss draws the conclusion that "The moral-political sphere is then not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science" (28, emphasis added).¹⁰⁶ Theoretical science is the science of the whole, "i.e. of that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole" (25). If the moral-political sphere is not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science, then it appears that it is not unqualifiedly closed to the whole--that it is in a sense open to the whole. But we cannot help but remember that it is the Socratic or Platonic conclusion "that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole" which "obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline" (21).¹⁰⁷ What is more, Aristotle's success in founding an independent political science in the face of the objections of the Socratics seems to be

¹⁰⁵See pp. 93, 120-21 above.

¹⁰⁶See p. 129 above.

¹⁰⁷See pp. 66-67 above.

decisively dependent on his ability to demonstrate that the moral-political sphere, the sphere of all human things as such, "the sphere ruled by prudence is closed since the principles of prudence . . . are known independently of theoretical science" (25).¹⁰⁸ It now appears that even if the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science, the moral-political sphere is only qualifiedly closed to theoretical science and thus to the whole. Aristotle, according to Strauss, seems to believe that the moral-political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole and in a sense open to the whole. Does the ambiguous openness or closedness of the moral-political sphere render ambiguous the independence of Aristotle's political science? Does it render ambiguous the Aristotelian distinction between "practical" or "political" and "theoretical" science? Does it call into question Strauss's assertion that "Aristotle's cosmology, as distinguished from Plato's, is unqualifiedly separable from the quest for the best political order" (21, emphasis added)?¹⁰⁹

Strauss's first and only use of the term "the moral-political sphere" draws our attention to a transformation or development in his terminology that is visible throughout his discussion of Socrates and Aristotle in the first

¹⁰⁸ See pp. 84-85, 89 above.

¹⁰⁹ See pp. 67-68 above.

section. Strauss first speaks of "the sphere of opinion" (20). He then, in succession, speaks of "the political sphere" (21), "the sphere of all human things as such" (25), "the sphere ruled by prudence" (25), "the sphere of prudence" (25,26), "the sphere of human or political things" (26), and, finally, "the moral-political sphere" (28). It is Aristotle's discovery of moral virtue (27) that enables or compels Strauss to speak of "the moral-political sphere." We can say that for Aristotle the sphere of politics and the sphere of morality are coextensive. The Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics do not treat separate spheres and do not contain separate disciplines or sciences. They treat coextensive spheres and together form one discipline or science: political science or the science concerning the human things.

If the moral-political sphere is identical with the sphere of opinion, then the question concerning the independence of Aristotle's political science involves the independence of the sphere of opinion. Socrates or Plato, we recall, hold that because knowledge of the whole is unavailable, there is "no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion" (20). Aristotle holds that knowledge of the whole or theoretical wisdom is available. He is able to treat the sphere of opinion as if it were independent of theoretical science because he also holds that that sphere is closed by the

principles of prudence which are known independently of theoretical science (25, 26). It seems, however, that it is the partial openness of the sphere of opinion that prevents even "the wisest man as such," the man of theoretical wisdom, from unqualifiedly transcending the sphere of opinion. The partial openness of the sphere of opinion is the root cause of the man of theoretical wisdom's concern with the moral-political sphere. That concern eventually compels him to found political science.¹¹⁰

Strauss's discovery that Aristotle's political science is an attempt to actualize the natural potentiality of the gentleman to be affected by philosophy, and hence that the moral-political sphere is not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science, requires that he return to and reopen his discussion of Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the arts and prudence or practical wisdom (21-22, 23-25). Strauss begins his reexamination by reminding us that "One reason why it seemed necessary to make a radical distinction between practical wisdom on the one hand and the sciences and the arts on the other was the fact that every art is concerned with a partial good, whereas prudence is concerned with the whole human good" (emphasis added). We note that Strauss does not merely "repeat" himself. Whereas in his original formulation he

¹¹⁰ See pp. 154-55, 163 above.

speaks only of "arts" (see 24), he now speaks of "the sciences and the arts." In fact, in the first discussion of the relationship between the arts and prudence Strauss nowhere explicitly connects the arts and the sciences and does not explicitly array the arts and the sciences on the one hand against prudence on the other. Rather, at the beginning of that important discussion he is completely silent on the sciences (21-22, 23-24); he then explicitly tells us that the highest form of prudence or practical wisdom is the legislative art (24); and he concludes by implicitly connecting prudence or practical wisdom with political science and explicitly asserting that political science is independent of theoretical science (25). Strauss introduces the legislative art at a crucial juncture in the discussion. But, we now remember, almost immediately after introducing it into the discussion, he seems to "forget" that the legislative art is the highest form of prudence or practical wisdom.¹¹¹ The legislative art drops from sight. The subsequent discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue mentions only prudence or practical wisdom, political science, and theoretical science or philosophy. It is silent about the arts in general and about the legislative art in particular. We can say that Strauss's "repetition" leads us not only to discover that he initially

¹¹¹ See p. 81 above.

chooses to conceal the kinship between the sciences and the arts, but also to rediscover that he "forgets" the legislative art. Why does Strauss initially choose to conceal that kinship? Why does he choose to forget the legislative art? Let us first treat Strauss's concealment. We remember that Strauss is careful to point out that prudence or practical wisdom is distinguished from the arts because prudence is and the arts as arts are not inseparable from moral virtue (24-25). Strauss's first mention of theoretical science almost immediately follows his drawing of this distinction between the arts and prudence (25). If Strauss had begun by arraying the arts and the sciences on the one hand against prudence on the other, his first mention of theoretical science would have drawn attention to the fact that theoretical science is separable from moral virtue. Strauss prefers to conceal this fact for two pages (25-26). When he does reveal it, he is careful to argue that theoretical science cannot be practiced without actions resembling moral actions proper. He does not, however, mention that the same thing is true of the arts--e.g., the art of safe-cracking (26-27). But we believe that there is a deeper reason for Strauss's concealment. Strauss, we recall, begins his discussion of the relationship between the arts and prudence by arguing that Aristotle's critique of Hippodamus implies that the arts must be regulated by law and hence prudence and that

the arts are therefore subordinate to law and hence prudence (23-24). After elaborating the distinction between the arts and prudence, Strauss moves to the relationship between prudence or practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom and reveals that prudence or practical wisdom is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom and subservient to it. Prudence or practical wisdom is supreme within its sphere but is nonetheless subservient to theoretical wisdom. Prudence or practical wisdom is independent of theoretical science but is subservient to theoretical science (25). Strauss could not have so easily drawn this most important Aristotelian conclusion if he had initially linked the sciences with the arts and arrayed them both against prudence or practical wisdom. For if theoretical science is in the decisive respect (i.e., with respect to politics) akin to the arts, then it would seem that it, like the arts, must be regulated by law and hence prudence and that it is therefore subordinate to law and hence prudence.¹¹² We believe that parallel reasons account for Strauss's amnesia. If Strauss had not almost immediately forgotten that the legislative art is the highest form of prudence or practical wisdom, he could not have so easily argued that prudence can be clearly distinguished from the arts because prudence is and the arts are not inseparable from

¹¹² See pp. 86-88 above.

moral virtue. For if the legislative art is the highest form of prudence, then it must be inseparable from moral virtue and is therefore either not an art or is an art that is different from all other arts.¹¹³ That is, the ambiguous status of the legislative art or the ambiguous relationship between prudence and the legislative art would seem to call into question Strauss's whole account of the relationship between prudence (and hence law) and the arts. In addition, we recall that the clear distinction between prudence and the arts allowed Strauss to conclude that "There is no expert who can decide the prudent man's vital questions for him as well as he can" (24). But if the legislative art is the highest form of prudence, then the prudent man who does not possess the legislative art would certainly seem to be subject to the man who possesses that art. That is, if Strauss had not "forgotten" the legislative art, he would have been forced to admit that prudence appears to be ultimately subject to an art. And if the legislative art is an art like any other art, i.e., if it is separable from moral virtue, then the prudent man would appear to be subject to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" art. Finally, by forgetting the legislative art, Strauss is not immediately compelled to discuss the relationship between the legislative art and political science. Is the legislative art ultimately subject to a science?

¹¹³ See p. 72, n. 2 above.

We have seen that Strauss no longer wishes to conceal the kinship between the sciences and the arts. We next learn that he has not completely forgotten the legislative art:

Yet the highest form of prudence is the legislative art which is the architectonic art, the art of arts, because it deals with the whole human good in the most comprehensive manner. It is concerned with the whole human good by being concerned with the highest human good with reference to which all partial human goods are good. It deals with its subject in the most comprehensive manner because it establishes the framework within which political prudence proper, the right handling of situations, can take place.

Strauss seems to indicate that Aristotle's complete view of the relationship between the arts and prudence can be expressed in a kind of proportion: the arts: prudence = political prudence proper: the highest form of prudence. That is, just as prudence is superior to the arts because prudence is concerned with the whole human good while every art is concerned only with a partial good, so the highest form of prudence is superior to political prudence proper because the highest form of prudence is concerned with the whole human good in the most comprehensive manner while political prudence proper is concerned only with the whole human good in individual or particular situations. Yet the highest form of prudence is an art: the legislative art. The legislative art is indeed an art, but it is not an art like any other art. The legislative art is different from all other arts because it is the architectonic

art, the art of arts. But why is the legislative art an art and not simply another form of prudence? The greater comprehensiveness of the legislative art in comparison with political prudence proper does not, by itself, seem to explain why the highest form of prudence can and political prudence proper cannot be called an art. Strauss does not take up this problem. He has, however, told us that "Laws are the work of the legislative art. . . ." (24).¹¹⁴ When Strauss refers to the "work" of the legislative art he refers not to the "working" or the activity of the legislator, but to the "work" or the product of the legislator's activity. The legislative art "produces" the laws. The end of the legislative art is not the activity of legislating itself but the product of the activity of legislating. The artisan of the laws does not choose to legislate for the sake of legislating but for the sake of a product apart from his legislating activity. The prudent man, on the other hand, chooses to do just and noble deeds for their own sake (26, 27). His end is not a product apart from his activity but the activity itself. Can we

¹¹⁴ Strauss cites *Nicomachean Ethics* 1181a23: "Now the laws are as it were works (*ἔργους*) of the political art or science (*τῆς πολιτικῆς*); how then can one learn from them to become a man who possesses the legislative art or science (*νομοθετικῆς*) or to judge which are the best?" It should be noted that Strauss carefully repeats his citation of this passage in a footnote to that part of his own text which is now under discussion (see 29, n. 38).

therefore say that the highest form of prudence can be called an art because it, like all other arts, has as its end a product (the laws), while political prudence proper cannot be called an art because it has as its end an activity which is choiceworthy for its own sake (the right handling of situations)? There are, however, at least two difficulties with a solution which solves our problem by making use of Aristotle's distinction between production and action.¹¹⁵ First, it seems that not all arts have as their ends products which are distinct from the activity of the art. That is, the activity of some arts is choiceworthy for its own sake or is an end in itself.¹¹⁶ Secondly, we may wonder whether the right handling of situations is understood by the man of political prudence proper as choiceworthy for its own sake. For Aristotle himself says that "the principle care of πολιτικὴ is producing (ποιεῖται) a certain character in the citizens, namely to make them good and capable of performing noble actions."¹¹⁷ We note that Strauss calls our attention to this passage by citing it in the same footnote in which he repeats his citation to the passage in which Aristotle

¹¹⁵ See Nicomachean Ethics 1094a1-5, 1105a26-b9, 1139a27, 1139b1-4, 1140a1-24.

¹¹⁶ See Magna Moralia 1211b27-31, where the example is flute-playing.

¹¹⁷ Nicomachean Ethics 1099b30-31.

calls the laws works of the legislative art (29, n. 38). Strauss seems to believe that the former passage refers only to the legislative art and not to political prudence proper. Perhaps it does.¹¹⁸ But Strauss himself says that "the gentleman may very well know that his political activity is in the service of noble leisure" (27). The normal political activity of the gentleman would seem to be "the right handling of situations." It seems that the man of political prudence proper may very well know that the right handling of situations is not choiceworthy for its own sake. The distinction between the arts and prudence appears to be even more complicated than Strauss's second discussion indicates.

Strauss, by reintroducing the legislative art into the discussion, has now emphasized that there is a hierarchical relationship between the forms of prudence as well as between prudence and the arts. Political prudence proper is concerned with the right handling of situations--individual situations; its immediate "products" (if it can properly be said to have "products") would seem to be commands or decrees or advices, which are intended to cope with an individual case.¹¹⁹ Political life knows, however, a

¹¹⁸See *ibid.* 1099b29-30 and cf. 1094a26-b11.

¹¹⁹In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle subdivides political prudence proper into βουλευτική and δικαστική. See 1141b26-27 and 32-33. Strauss cites this passage in the footnote we have twice referred to above.

still higher kind of prudence or political understanding, which is concerned not with individual cases but, as regards each relevant subject, with all cases, and whose immediate "products"--laws and institutions--establish the permanent framework within which the right handling of changing situations by men of political prudence proper can take place.¹²⁰ Thus, while it may be true that "There is no expert who can decide the prudent man's vital questions for him as well as he can" (24), it is also true that political prudence proper is ultimately subject to an art. But if the legislative art may be properly called an art because it, like other arts, has a product as its end, it is nonetheless different from all other arts because it, like political prudence proper, is inseparable from moral virtue. The prudent man is subject to a man who possesses an art, but he is not subject to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" art.

We recall that, in addition to the legislative art and political prudence proper, Strauss has spoken of two other forms of prudence: "prudence in the primary sense which is concerned with a man's own good" (24) and what we have called "philosophic prudence" (27).¹²¹ While personal

¹²⁰See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 83.

¹²¹Aquinas, in his commentary, calls the former "personal prudence" and, on the basis of 1141b32 and 1142a10, also recognizes "domestic prudence" as a separate form. See Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics, trans. C. I. Litzinger,

prudence, like all other forms of prudence properly so called, is inseparable from moral virtue, we have seen that "philosophic prudence" "does not require moral virtue as moral virtue" (27).¹²² At first sight, it would seem that both personal prudence and "philosophic prudence" are clearly lower in rank than either the legislative art or political prudence proper and thus unambiguously subordinate to them. But two separate but perhaps related facts might lead us to question this conclusion. In the first place, if personal prudence, like political prudence proper, is necessarily concerned with right handling of individual or particular situations, then it seems that it too cannot be simply or unambiguously subordinate to the legislative art and political prudence proper. For the individual or particular nature of its concerns clearly indicates that there in fact can be no "expert" who can simply decide the individual prudent man's vital questions for him as well as he can. This difficulty becomes especially acute when we recognize that the most vital question that the individual prudent man must decide is what way of life is best for him in his particular situation. If this question is decided for the individual prudent man by either the legislator or the man of political prudence proper, then there can be

Library of Living Catholic Thought, 2 vols. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1964), VI lectio 7 (nr. 1199-1200).

¹²²See pp. 110-11 above.

little doubt that they will direct him to choose the political life (or a form of the political life) rather than a private life, e.g. the philosophic life. But Aristotle believes that "the highest end of man by nature is theoretical understanding or philosophy" (26). Considerations like these might induce one to argue that, from Aristotle's own point of view, personal prudence is in one sense the highest form of prudence. That is, it seems that the entire hierarchical edifice we have been discussing--an edifice which seems to presuppose that the private life is simply inferior to the political life--is tacitly called into question by Aristotle himself.¹²³ In the second place, Strauss has told us that while prudence is "supreme" within its sphere, it is also "subservient" to theoretical wisdom (25). It seems that we can say that the man of prudence proper--and especially the man of legislative prudence or political prudence--is "subservient" to the man of theoretical wisdom and mere "philosophic prudence." From this point of view, "philosophic prudence" is in one sense the highest form of prudence. The man of prudence proper may not be "subject" to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" art, but he seems to be "subservient" to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" science.

¹²³Cf., e.g., Nicomachean Ethics 1094b7-10 and 1141b33-1142a11 (note the word "τῶς" at 1142a10). Consider the problem of the relative ranking of the twin "peaks" of the moral virtues, magnanimity and justice.

Aristotle, Strauss has told us, "held that art is inferior to law or to prudence" (25) because "the reason effective in the arts is lower than the reason effective in law" or in prudence (24). "Prudence is of higher dignity than the arts because every art is concerned with a partial good whereas prudence is concerned with the whole human good" (24). Similarly, political prudence proper is inferior to the highest form of prudence because the reason effective in political prudence proper is lower, i.e., less comprehensive, than the reason effective in the legislative art. The legislative art "deals with the whole human good in the most comprehensive manner. It is concerned with the whole human good by being concerned with the highest human good with reference to which all partial human goods are good." But Aristotle also held "that prudence [in any of its forms] is inferior to theoretical wisdom" (25). It seems that the reason effective in even the highest form of prudence is lower than the reason effective in theoretical wisdom or that theoretical wisdom is of higher dignity than the highest form of prudence because the legislative art is concerned with a part--man--whereas theoretical wisdom is concerned with "the whole," i.e., with "that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole" (25).¹²⁴ It seems that Aristotle's complete view of the relationship among

¹²⁴ See Nicomachean Ethics 1141a22-b9. This passage is cited by Strauss on 25, n. 27.

the arts, prudence, and theoretical wisdom can also be expressed by a kind of proportion: the arts: prudence = prudence: theoretical wisdom. Aristotle may hold that there is no one wisdom which is concerned with the good of all living beings,¹²⁵ he may hold that there is no "idea of the good,"¹²⁶ but he does hold that there is a wisdom which is concerned with the whole.¹²⁷ But while the highest form of prudence is "subservient" to theoretical wisdom, it does not seem to be "subject" to theoretical science. "The principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science" (25).

Strauss, in reintroducing the legislative art into the discussion, is compelled or enabled to show that prudence is ultimately subject to an art. He is now compelled or enabled to discuss the relationship between the legislative art and political science:

Moreover, "legislative art" is an ambiguous term; it may mean the art practiced "here and now" by a legislator acting on behalf of this or that political community; but it may also mean the "practical science" of legislation taught by the teacher of legislators which is superior in dignity to the former since it supplies guidance for it. As practical science it differs from prudence in all its forms because it is free from that involvement the dangers of which cannot be averted except by moral virtue. Hence prudence appears to be ultimately subject to a science.

¹²⁵Nicomachean Ethics 1141a31-32.

¹²⁶See *ibid.* 1096a10-1097a14.

¹²⁷Consider *ibid.* 1096b26-31.

"Legislative art" may be an ambiguous term, but the relative rank of and relationship between the legislative art and "the 'practical science' of legislation" or political science is not ambiguous. Just as the legislative art is superior in dignity to political prudence proper since it establishes the framework within which the latter can take place, so political science is superior in dignity to the legislative art since it supplies guidance for it.

It seems that the legislative art points to the practical science of legislation or political science in much the same way that political prudence proper points to the legislative art. Every legislator is primarily concerned with the individual political community for which he legislates. But his legislating activity compels him to raise certain questions which regard all legislation. These most fundamental and most universal political questions are naturally fit to be made the subject of the most architectonic, the truly architectonic political knowledge: of that practical or political science which is the goal of the political scientist. Aristotle is the founder of political science so understood. The practical science of legislation is that truly architectonic political knowledge which is contained in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics. The political scientist who has reached his goal is the teacher of legislators: the highest addressee of Aristotle's political science is not simply the potential

enlightened statesman but the potential enlightened statesman who is also a potential legislator for a political community.¹²⁸ (Near the beginning of the discussion of "the nine legislators" in the second book of the Politics, Aristotle distinguishes between those legislators who have been makers [δημιουργοί] of laws only and those who have founded [κατέστησαν] both laws and regimes. The latter kind of legislator is obviously higher in rank than the former and is thus a "higher" addressee than the former. Aristotle does not seem to subdivide the class of legislators who are founders of regimes. It is therefore somewhat difficult to determine whether Aristotle's political science is a "wholly new" science addressed in the highest case to "wholly new princes in wholly new states."¹²⁹)

¹²⁸ See "On Classical Political Philosophy," pp. 83-84 and pp. 132-33, 166-73 above.

¹²⁹ Politics, 1273b32-34. See Machiavelli, Prince, chap. 6 and Thoughts on Machiavelli, pp. 70-84, 293. Cf. Politics 1283b16-23; 1284a3-8; 1284b13, 28-33; 1325b40ff. Cf. these Aristotelian passages with Plato Laws 709d10-710b2, 711a6-7, 735d2-e5. Also see Laws 690a1-c4 and cf. Politics 1327b39-1328a17; and see Laws 693d2-e8 and cf. Politics 1266a2-9.

It is interesting to note that while Machiavelli chooses Theseus as his Greek example in the famous sixth chapter of the Prince, Aristotle is silent on Theseus in both the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics. We have seen that Aristotle does mention Lycurgus in the Politics (1270a7, 1271b25, 1273b33, 1274a29, 1296a20; and see pp. 44-45, 45-46, n. 23, 137, 143 above). Did Machiavelli use Theseus rather than Lycurgus as his Greek example in the sixth chapter because Lycurgus' Sparta was not a wholly new state and Lycurgus was not a prince and did not found a principality? Machiavelli is completely silent about Lycurgus in the Prince. In the Discourses,

The difference between the legislative art and the practical science of legislation seems to be no more or no less ambiguous than the difference between the political understanding effective in the legislative activity of a Lycurgus and the political understanding effective in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics.¹³⁰ We must note, however, that whereas both the legislative art as employed by the founder of a regime and the political prudence proper employed by the excellent statesman are coeval with political life, the practical science of legislation had to be founded by the philosopher Aristotle. Yet it does seem that the practical science of legislation or political science grows out of reflection on political life or that there is a straight and almost continuous way leading from the prescientific to the scientific approach to political things. There can be no doubt that Aristotle's political science is related, and is intended to be related, to

however, he mentions Theseus in the first chapter and is silent on him thereafter. He mentions Lycurgus in the second chapter and again in I, 6, 9, 11; II, 3. But note that Athens rises as Sparta (and Lycurgus) falls in Machiavelli's argument. (See I, 9, 11, 40; II, 3, 10 and Harvey Mansfield, Jr., "Burke and Machiavelli on Principles in Politics," In Edmund Burke, the Enlightenment and the Modern World, ed. Peter J. Stanlis [Detroit: University of Detroit Press, 1967], p. 77, n. 31.)

¹³⁰ Recall the beginning of Strauss's discussion of the Hippodamus passage in the Politics (17). See pp. 43-44 above.

political life directly.¹³¹ Strauss, however, does call our attention to the fact that practical or political science "differs from prudence in all its forms because it is free from that involvement the dangers of which cannot be averted except by moral virtue." Political science is directly related to political life but is less intimately involved in political life than is the legislative art or political prudence proper.¹³² We have seen that even Aristotle ultimately transforms his political science into a discipline which is no longer concerned with political things in the ordinary sense of the term.¹³³ He prepares us for that transformation near the very beginning of the Nicomachean Ethics, when he tells us that the inquiry

¹³¹See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 81 and pp. 78-88.

¹³²Consider the contrast that Strauss draws between Plato's and Aristotle's approach to the teaching of legislators (21). Every Platonic dialogue has an "immediate" addressee. Aristotle's practical treatises may have "higher" and "lower" or primary and secondary addressees, but they do not seem to have an immediate addressee. (See p. 69 above.) Is it possible to distinguish between the kind of political knowledge possessed by Plato's political philosopher who guides, in a conversation, "one or two men who seek the best political order or are about to legislate for a definite community," and that kind possessed by Aristotle, the political scientist who teaches "indefinitely many legislators or statesmen whom he addresses collectively and simultaneously"? (See pp. 33-34 above.)

¹³³See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 91 and see p. 127 above.

contained in that book is πολιτική τις.¹³⁴ It seems that πολιτική, no less than νομοθετική, is an ambiguous term.¹³⁵

Strauss emphasizes that the practical science of legislation or political science "differs from prudence in all its forms" and indicates that the essential difference between prudence and political science is that the former is inseparable from moral virtue while the latter is, so to speak, "unqualifiedly separable" from moral virtue (see 24 and 21). Strauss leaves no doubt as to the meaning of his indication by citing (but not quoting) in a footnote (n. 38 on 29) the following passage from Aquinas' Summa Theologica: "Since judgment appertains to wisdom, the twofold manner of judging produces a twofold wisdom. A man may judge in one way by inclination, as whoever has the habit of a virtue judges rightly of what concerns that virtue by his very inclination towards it. Hence it is the virtuous man, as we read, who is the measure and rule of

¹³⁴1094b11. Also see 1130b26-29 and cf. Rhetoric 1356a25-26. Socrates calls his inquiries a quest for τῆ ὡς ἀληθῶς πολιτικῆ τέχνη (Gorgias 521d7). See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 91 and n. 18.

¹³⁵On the difference between political science proper and political skill or the political art see Aquinas, Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics, VI lectio 7 (nr. 1200-1201) and Alfarabi, The Enumeration of the Sciences, chap. v, trans. by Fauzi M. Najjar, in Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 24-27. See "On Classical Political Philosophy," p. 84, n. 6.

human acts. In another way, by knowledge, just as a man learned in moral science might be able to judge rightly about virtuous acts, though he had not the virtue."¹³⁶ Prudence is subject to the legislative art and the legislative art is subject to the practical science of legislation. The prudent man may not be subject to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" art, but the man who possesses the legislative art is subject to a man who possesses a "morally neutral" science.

Strauss has now clarified Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the arts and prudence, between prudence and the legislative art, and between the legislative art and the practical or political science of legislation. His procedure in the third stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue leads the reader to expect that he will complete that discussion by clarifying Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between practical or political science and theoretical science. But Strauss has not, does not, and will not reconsider that relationship. We recall that in his first discussion (25), Strauss first explicitly tells us that prudence or practical wisdom is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom and is subservient to it, and then seems to imply that practical

¹³⁶ *Summa Theologica*, trans. the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947-48), 1 q. 1. a. 6. ad 3.

or political science is a form of prudence. However, Strauss has now told us that practical or political science "differs from prudence in all its forms" (emphasis added). This remark seems to make a reconsideration of the relationship between practical and theoretical science not only desirable for the sake of completeness, but necessary or urgent. Strauss nevertheless refuses to "repeat" his initial formulation.

We note, however, that Strauss's procedure seems to imitate Aristotle's procedure in the sixth book of the Nicomachean Ethics--the text that serves as the basis for the third stage of Strauss's discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue. For in that book, Aristotle limits himself to indicating that practical wisdom in all its forms is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom,¹³⁷ and does not discuss the relationship between practical science and theoretical science. Aristotle avoids the necessity for such a discussion by failing to provide the minimum condition for such a discussion: while he is willing to use the term νομοθετική,¹³⁸ he chooses not to resolve the ambiguity inherent in that term. That is, Aristotle never explicitly distinguishes between the legislative art and the practical science of legislation and therefore need not discuss the relationship between the latter and

¹³⁷See 1141a21-b24, 1145a6-11.

¹³⁸See 1141b24-1142a11.

theoretical science. In fact, the sixth book is characterized by Aristotle's refusal to make the intellectual quality exhibited by Aristotle himself in the composition of his practical or political treatises an explicit subject of inquiry. Aside from his use of the ambiguous term νομοθετικῆ, Aristotle is completely silent on the practical science of legislation in the sixth book. Aristotle's silence could lead the reader (and has led almost all contemporary scholars) to conclude that the wisdom contained in the Nicomachean Ethics and Politics is simply identical with the legislative art or that it is simply the highest, most developed, form of prudence or practical wisdom.

We can now see that Strauss's imitation of Aristotle is not a perfect imitation: Strauss, unlike Aristotle, does mention the practical science of legislation and does explicitly distinguish between it and the legislative art (and hence between it and prudence in all its forms). Moreover, despite the fact that Strauss does not "repeat" his original discussion of the relationship between practical or political and theoretical science, he cannot be said to be absolutely silent on that relationship in the passage under discussion. For by calling our attention to the fact that the practical science of legislation is separable from moral virtue, Strauss points to a profound kinship between practical science and theoretical science

(see 26-27).¹³⁹ At first sight, Strauss's deviation from Aristotle's procedure appears to be designed to do nothing more than underline the kinship between all the sciences (practical as well as theoretical) and the arts and hence to underline the distinction between all the sciences and the arts on the one hand and all forms of prudence on the other (cf. 28). But two things indicate that Strauss has a deeper reason for leading us to the kinship between practical and theoretical science. First, by carefully distinguishing between practical science and prudence in all its forms, Strauss makes clear that he does not believe that Aristotle understands the practical science embodied in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics to be the product of prudence or practical wisdom. Strauss, as we have seen, thus breaks Aristotle's silence on the distinction between

¹³⁹ Aristotle, in the sixth book of the Nicomachean Ethics, is not compelled or enabled to discuss the relationship between moral virtue and the practical science of legislation because, as we have pointed out, he does not draw attention to the ambiguity inherent in the term νομοθετικῆ. In fact, in the sixth book Aristotle never explicitly says that theoretical wisdom "does not require moral virtue as moral virtue" (26-27). Rather, he merely "reports" that "it is said (φασιν) that men like Anaxagoras and Thales have theoretical but not practical wisdom" (1141b4-5). It should be noted that Aristotle makes this statement a number of pages before he explicitly concludes that practical wisdom is inseparable from moral virtue just as moral virtue is inseparable from practical wisdom (1144a6-9, b30-32). Aristotle, in fact, does not explicitly discuss the separableness of theoretical wisdom and moral virtue until the very end of the Nicomachean Ethics (1178a6-b7; note especially 1178a23).

the legislative art and the practical science of legislation. If Strauss had said nothing more on this point, the reader would be compelled to conclude that while Strauss rejects the view that the practical science of legislation is simply the highest form of prudence, he adheres to the view that the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics embody a practical science that can be clearly and unambiguously distinguished from both prudence or practical wisdom and theoretical science. But Strauss does make one further "statement" on the relationship between practical science and theoretical science. For in addition to explicitly distinguishing between practical science and prudence, Strauss also cites (but does not quote) a second passage from Aquinas' Summa Theologica (in n. 39 on 29). We believe that that passage deserves to be quoted at length:

Some knowledge is speculative only; some is practical only; and some is partly speculative and partly practical. In proof whereof it must be observed that knowledge can be called speculative in three ways: first, on the part of the things known, which are not operable by the knower; such is the knowledge of man about natural or divine things. Secondly, as regards the manner of knowing--as, for instance, if a builder consider a house by defining and dividing, and considering what belongs to it in general: for this is to consider operable things in a speculative manner, and not as practically operable; for operable means the application of form to matter, and not the resolution of the composite into its universal formal principles. Thirdly, as regards the end; for the practical intellect differs in its end from the speculative, as the Philosopher says (De Anima, III). For the practical intellect is ordered to the end of the operation; whereas the end of the speculative intellect is the consideration of the truth. Hence if a builder should

consider how a house can be made, not ordering this to the end of operation, but only to know (how to do it), this would be only a speculative consideration as regards the end, although it concerns an operable thing. Therefore knowledge which is speculative by reason of the thing itself known, is merely speculative. But that which is speculative either in its mode or as to its end is partly speculative and partly practical: and when it is ordained to an operative end it is simply practical.¹⁴⁰

It seems that Aquinas would call the knowledge embodied in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics partly theoretical and partly practical or that he would call the practical science of legislation a "theoretical-practical science." Furthermore, it seems that Strauss would agree with this judgment. And it should be noted that the proof that Strauss agrees with Aquinas and disagrees with the view that Aristotle understood the science set forth in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics to be simply a species of prudence or practical wisdom does not rest solely on the citation to the passage quoted above. For we recall that Strauss has, in his own name, emphatically declared that "The natural end of man as well as any other natural being becomes genuinely known through theoretical science, through the science of the natures" (26, emphasis added).¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Summa Theologica I q. 14. a. 16. c (emphasis in the original).

¹⁴¹ Strauss cites the following in support of this statement: "Aristotle, On the Soul 434a16-21 (cf. 432b27-30). Cf. Averroes, Commentary on Plato's Republic (ed. E. I. J. Rosenthal) I 23.5 and II 8.1; Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics VI lectio 2. (nr. 1131), S. th. 2 2 q. 47. a. 6. ad 3." (26, n. 30).

If the knowledge embodied in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics could be shown to be identical with the knowledge possessed by the man who has the legislative art, then perhaps those treatises could be said to present a merely "practical science." But Strauss leads us to conclude that those treatises could not even be written by a man who possessed only the legislative art. Aristotle, it seems, does not write his "practical" or political treatises in his capacity as a prudent man or as a man who possesses the legislative art, but as a man whose knowledge transcends prudence in all its forms--i.e. as a man who possesses theoretical science or the science of the natures. We suggest that just as Aristotle's psychology can be said to constitute the transition from physics to first philosophy, so his theoretical-practical science of the human things can be said to constitute the transition from the study of the human things to the study of the nature.¹⁴² After all, the highest theme of Aristotle's theoretical-practical science is the philosophic way of life--the way of life devoted to the contemplation of the whole.¹⁴³

¹⁴²See p. 68 above.

¹⁴³See pp. 133-35, 169-71 above.

Can any of Aristotle's treatises be called "practical" without qualification? Or is "practical science" a contradiction in Aristotelian terms?

We note that Aristotle uses the term πρακτικὴ ἐπιστήμη only once in his entire corpus. (See Topics 145a15-18 and consider the context. Cf. Nicomachean Ethics 1094b4, Metaphysics 1025b18-28.) We also note that Aristotle

uses the term πολιτικὴ ἐπιστήμη once. (See Rhetoric 1359b17-18, cf. b10-11; consider the context of the entire passage. Cf. Nicomachean Ethics 1094a27-1095a16; Politics 1288b10ff, especially b22.) When reflecting on these passages one must keep in mind the fact that ἐπιστήμη, no less than πρακτικὴ and πολιτικὴ, is an ambiguous term.

Furthermore, we must note that Aristotle never presents a division of the sciences into theoretical and practical (and productive) as a formal classification. (See the exhaustive collection of passages brought together by Eduard Zeller in the footnotes to the fourth chapter of his Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics, 3rd ed., trans. B. F. C. Costelloe and J. H. Muirhead, 2 vols. [London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1897], 1:161-90.) The passages usually relied upon to support the view that Aristotle accepted a simple division of the sciences into theoretical and practical and understood such a division to be the most fundamental or meaningful division are the following: Metaphysics 993b19, 1025b18-28, 1064a10-16; Nicomachean Ethics 1139a26-33. We note that nowhere in the so-called "logical" treatises does Aristotle present a "division of the sciences." (At Topics 105b19-29, he divides propositions [or premises] and problems into three classes: ethical, physical, and logical. Aristotle prefaces this division with the words ὡς τύπῳ περιλαβεῖν. This passage is usually explained as representing a provisional or oversimplified division or as an example of Aristotle's "Platonic period.") We believe that a careful examination of these passages would show that they do not constitute an adequate basis for the contemporary view of Aristotle's "division of the sciences."

Near the beginning of the Metaphysics, Aristotle presents a genetic account of the emergence of prudence, art, experience, and science. That account avoids the expressions "theoretical" and "practical" science. (See 980a22-982a1.) Near the end of that account Aristotle refers the reader to the Nicomachean Ethics for a discussion of the difference between art and science and "the kindred ones" (τῶν ὁμογενῶν). (See 981b25-26.) That is, Aristotle, in a most "theoretical" context, refers the reader to a discussion in a "practical" context. One is tempted to suggest that the simple division between practical and theoretical science is a "practical" rather than a "theoretical" division--and a "practical" division that must be modified in the light of reflection on the Nicomachean Ethics itself. But even this formulation may be misleading. For one may ask whether the division of the virtues of δίδωται in the Nicomachean Ethics (see 1138b35-1139a5) can properly be used, with further ado, to establish a division of the sciences.

In the long passage from the Summa Theologica quoted above, Aquinas supports his argument with only a single reference to an Aristotelian text: he refers to a passage in the third book of De Anima (the precise reference is 433a14). In that passage, Aristotle says that νοῦς πρακτικὸς differs from τοῦ λογίζομενος in respect of the end. Aquinas takes this to mean that the speculative or theoretical intellect differs from the practical intellect only in respect of the end and that they are therefore not separate powers or faculties of the soul. (See Aristotle's De Anima in the Version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries, with an Introduction by Ivo Thomas [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951], III lectio 15 [nr. 820-825]. Cf. III lectio 14 [nr. 812-815].) Aquinas adheres to this view throughout his corpus. (See Summa Theologica 1 q. 79. a. 11; cf. a. 9. Note especially Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics VI lectio 1 [nr. 1118-1123], lectio 2 [nr. 1132]. Also see pp. 95-96 above.

We suggest, however, that Aquinas could have supported his argument with a passage from the Nicomachean Ethics itself. Near the beginning of the sixth book, Aristotle makes a division of the rational part of the soul and says "let it be assumed (ὅποκεισθω) that there are two parts having reason (λόγον)--one by which we contemplate (θεωροῦμεν) those things whose first principles (ἀρχαί) do not admit of being other than they are, and one by which we contemplate those things which do admit of being other" (1139a6-8). In this division, both rational parts of the soul are called "contemplative" or "theoretical." Aristotle then says "let us call" (λεγέσθω) the former ἐπιστημονικόν and the latter λογιστικόν and adds that βουλευέσθαι and λογίζεσθαι are the same (1139a11-13). He does not, however, retract his statement that the second rational part of the soul can be called contemplative or theoretical. This seems to leave no doubt that Aristotle believes that those things which do admit of being other than they are can be made the object of theoretical understanding or that one can take either a purely theoretical or a partly theoretical attitude toward those things. A bit further on, Aristotle makes a second division. This time he distinguishes between contemplative or theoretical thought (τῆς δὲ θεωρητικῆς διανοίας) which is not practical nor productive (μὴ πρακτικῆς μηδὲ ποιητικῆς) and for which the good and bad state are truth and falsehood respectively, and practical thought (ἡ διάνοια πρακτικῆ) for which the good state is truth in harmony with right desire (1139a26-31). How did Aristotle understand the relationship between the division

of the rational part of the soul and the division of thought? Did he understand them to be strictly parallel divisions or cross-divisions? And how did he understand the relationship between these two divisions and the plan of the remainder of the sixth book? These questions could only be answered after a careful examination of the entire sixth book. (We note in passing that the class "things which do admit of being other than they are" appears to be a far larger one than the class "practical things," and the class "things whose first principles do not admit of being other than they are" appears to be a far smaller one than the class "non-practical things.") But whatever the answers to these questions, nothing in the passage which sets forth the division of thought prevents the conclusion that the objects of $\rho\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and $\rho\omicron\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ or $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\eta\eta$ can be approached in a purely or partly theoretical way. (Cf. 1139b18-25 and see Aquinas' commentary on this passage, VI lectio 3 [nr. 1144-1146].) The view that Aristotle understands the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics to contain a "theoretical-practical" science can thus be said to have a basis in, or at least to receive some support from, the text of the "practical" treatises themselves. (Consider Politics 1279b12-15 and cf. 1338b2-4.)

We cannot help but note that if theoretical science were confined to the contemplation of those things whose first principles do not admit of being other than they are, physics, or part of what Aristotle calls physics, would not be theoretical. But Aristotle insists that physics is a kind, though not the primary kind, of theoretical wisdom. (See Metaphysics 1005b1-2, 1025b25-28, 1026a6-7.)

On the issues treated and the questions raised in the above discussion see L. H. G. Greenwood's commentary on the sixth book of the Nicomachean Ethics (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book Six, with Essays, Notes, and Translation [Cambridge: At the University Press, 1909], especially pp. 21-26, 171-73; and an untitled paper by Miriam S. Galston, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas, on the description of theoretical science in the introduction to Alfarabi's Philosophy of Aristotle.

On "theoretical-practical" science see, in addition to Aquinas, Alfarabi, The Attainment of Happiness in Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, pp. 24-28 and Averroes, On Plato's Republic, trans., with an Introduction and Notes by Ralph Lerner (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 3-6. Also consider the location of the specific treatment of political science in Avicenna, Healing: Metaphysics, X, and the division of

Strauss, as we have seen,¹⁴⁴ draws the following conclusion from his discussion of the relationship between the legislative art and the practical science of legislation: "Hence prudence appears to be ultimately subject to a science." Strauss is compelled or enabled to reach this conclusion because he has shown that the highest form of prudence--and hence prudence in all its forms--is ultimately subject to a science. But Strauss indicates that the science to which prudence is ultimately subject is not simply a "practical" science but a theoretical-practical science or a quasi-theoretical science. The theoretical-practical science of legislation is necessarily the work of a man of theoretical understanding--it is necessarily the work of a philosopher (see 26). The prudent man is therefore ultimately subject to the philosopher. We may say that Strauss indicates that Aristotle "ultimately" replaces Socrates' or Plato's philosopher-king who rules openly in the perfect city by the indirect (not to say "secret") kingship of the philosopher-political scientist who lives privately as a member of an imperfect political community and who exercises his indirect rule by "affecting" the gentlemen.¹⁴⁵

moral philosophy by Roger Bacon in his *Opus Maius* into "speculative" and "practical" parts. (See Medieval Political Philosophy, pp. 96, 356.)

¹⁴⁴See p. 190 above.

¹⁴⁵See "Farabi's Plato," p. 384 and consider Nicomachean Ethics 1152b1-3.

With the statement that "prudence appears to be ultimately subject to a science" Strauss bring the third stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue to a close. Looking back over that discussion, we can see that Strauss leads the reader through an argument that can be divided into at least four clearly delineated steps: (1) the arts are subject to prudence, (2) prudence is subject to the legislative art, (3) the legislative art is subject to the practical science of legislation, (4) the practical science of legislation is a theoretical-practical science. We can see that Strauss has led us on an Aristotelian ascent--on an ascent whose path and peak cannot help but remind us of the path and peak of the ascent characteristic of "Socratic philosophizing" (see 21). That ascent may be more gradual than the Socratic ascent, it may follow a path which at various points diverges from the path followed by the Socratic ascent, but the fact that Aristotle is compelled or enabled to leave us traces of an upward path reveals that at the highest (and deepest) level of his political science he is compelled or enabled to return to a point of view that is difficult to distinguish from that of Socrates or Plato.¹⁴⁶ Strauss brings his discussion of Aristotle's political science around by degrees to Socrates' or Plato's political philosophy.

¹⁴⁶ See pp. 126-29 above and cf. Natural Right and History, pp. 156-57

CHAPTER V

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE (II)

The structure and movement of Strauss's argument in the third stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue leads us back to the beginning of the discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science (21).¹ More precisely, the third stage of that discussion leads us back to the theme whose discussion serves as the immediate preface to the discussion of Aristotle's founding: the relationship between Plato and Aristotle (21).² In fact, since each of the first two stages of the discussion of moral virtue contains a single pregnant remark on a difference between Plato and Aristotle (26, 27),³ we can say that Strauss has designed his entire discussion of the ground of Aristotle's political science in such a way that the return to the problem of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, while gradual, becomes inevitable and irresistible.⁴

¹See p. 71 above.

²See pp. 63-70 above.

³See pp. 24-28, 93 above.

⁴See pp. 63-70, 100-101, 115-20, 125-29, 149-53, 162-63, 174-75, 206-207 above.

Strauss emphasizes the continuity between the third stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue and his second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle by refusing to begin a new paragraph as he turns from the former to the latter (29). Rather, he moves without a paragraphic pause from a conclusion that Aristotle is compelled or enabled to draw but which he prefers to draw tacitly rather than explicitly ("Hence prudence appears to be ultimately subject to a science."), to conclusions that Socrates and Plato freely and openly draw from reflections which closely parallel those sketched by Strauss in the third stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue:

Considerations like these induced Socrates and Plato to assert that virtue is knowledge and that quest for prudence is philosophy. Just as the partial human goods cannot be known to be goods except with reference to the highest or the whole human good, the whole human good cannot be known to be good except with reference to the good simply, the idea of the good, which comes to sight only beyond and above all other ideas: the idea of the good, and not the human good or in particular gentlemanship, is the principle of prudence (emphasis added).

We recall that Strauss's first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle was devoted almost entirely to an account of "the difference between Plato and Aristotle" (21). Strauss begins his second discussion by once again emphasizing "the difference between Plato and Aristotle." But in order to complete his account of that difference he must also complete his account of "Socratic philosophizing."

We remember that Strauss traces Socrates' founding of political philosophy to the discovery of noetic heterogeneity--to the discovery that "the whole manifestly consists of heterogeneous parts" (19).⁵ Near the beginning of his discussion of Socrates' turn to the "what is" questions, Strauss indicates that Socrates believed that "to understand the whole means to understand the 'What' of each of these [noetically heterogeneous] parts, of these [noetically heterogeneous] classes of beings, and how they are linked with one another" (19, emphasis added). The Socratic science of the whole can thus be said to have two "parts." But at the outset of his discussion of Socrates (19-20), Strauss chooses to emphasize only the first "part" of the Socratic science of the whole. In fact, if the reader ignored or misunderstood the significance of the remark on the second "part" of the science of the whole, he would be left with the impression that Socrates holds that the whole is simply the totality of the parts and hence that to understand the whole simply means to understand all the parts of the whole. That is, the reader would be left with the impression that Socrates simply identifies the science of the whole, or of everything that is, with the understanding of "what each of the beings is."⁶ It is only at the very

⁵ See pp. 54-55 above.

⁶ See pp. 56-58 above.

end of the discussion of Socrates--or in that part of the discussion of Socrates which serves as the transition to the first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle (20-21)--that Strauss obliquely brings the second "part" of the science of the whole to the reader's attention. For it is only at that point that Strauss can be said to emphasize the whole as well as the parts. Socrates or Plato, Strauss says, holds that "there is no knowledge of the whole, but only knowledge of the parts, hence only partial knowledge of the parts" (20). "The elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of any part" (21). Thus when Strauss, in the discussion of Socrates, does emphasize the whole he does so in a negative way. Similarly, while Strauss in that discussion tells us that "Socratic philosophizing" has "the character of ascent" (21), he does not discuss or even mention the peak of that ascent. Or, to point to a different but related aspect of that discussion, while Strauss tells us that "even" Socrates is compelled to ascend from opinion to knowledge or from law to nature (20), he leaves us with the impression that the desired knowledge is simply knowledge of the noetically heterogeneous parts or that "the whole nature" (13, 18, 19) is simply the totality of the parts.

But now--at the beginning of the second discussion of Plato and Aristotle--Strauss speaks of "the good simply, the idea of the good, which comes to sight only beyond and

above all other ideas." In so speaking, Strauss immediately emphasizes the second "part" of the science of the whole--the "part" which treats "how they [the noetically heterogeneous parts] are linked with one another." "To be" means "to be something" and hence to be different from things which are "something else"; "to be" means therefore "to be a part." But if this is true, then the whole cannot "be" in the same sense in which everything that is "something" "is"; the whole must be "beyond being." The whole is more than the totality of parts and the science of the whole cannot understand the whole merely by understanding "what each of the beings is." The science of the whole must culminate in the understanding of "that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole" (see 25).⁷ In his commentary on the Republic, Strauss remarks that "the facts that there are many ideas and that the mind which perceives the ideas is radically different from the ideas themselves" indicates that "there must be something higher than the ideas: the idea of the good, which is in a sense the cause of all ideas as well as of the mind perceiving them (517c1-5)." Strauss adds that "it also becomes questionable whether the highest as Plato understands it is still properly called an idea; Socrates uses 'the idea of the good' and 'the good' synonymously (505a2-b3)."⁸ The ascent

⁷Cf. Natural Right and History, p. 122.

⁸"On Plato's Republic," p. 119.

characteristic of "Socratic" philosophizing is an ascent to "the good simply." Socrates' or Plato's science of the whole has as its highest goal the beholding of the cause or source of the whole.⁹

We recall that Strauss indicates that Socrates or Plato holds that the discovery of noetic heterogeneity is inseparable from the discovery "that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole" (21). While the former discovery is the necessary condition of the founding of political philosophy, the latter discovery "obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline."¹⁰ Why, according to Socrates or Plato, is each part of the whole in a sense open to the whole? Strauss, in the discussion of Socrates, has already provided us with a portion--or, rather, with the beginning--of the answer to this question. There he tells us that Socrates or Plato holds that the whole is "elusive" and indicates that the elusiveness of the whole is responsible for knowledge of the whole being "unavailable." But "the elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of every part": if knowledge of the whole is unavailable, then knowledge of each part can only be partial knowledge. "Each part of the whole is in a sense open to the whole":

⁹ See Republic 511b7; cf. 509b7.

¹⁰ See pp. 60, 63-67 above.

each part of the whole is open to the whole in the sense that knowledge of each part is partial because knowledge of the whole is unavailable (20-21). But is this the only sense in which each part of the whole is open to the whole?

We believe that Strauss has now provided us with the key to a more complete answer to our question. Strauss tells us that "the good . . . comes to sight only beyond and above all other ideas." In his commentary on the Republic, as we have seen, he tells us that the good "is in a sense the cause of all ideas." But Strauss also indicates that Socrates or Plato believes that the noetically heterogeneous parts are "linked with one another" by the good and that the good is "that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole." These remarks are illuminated by a crucial passage near the end of the central section of the Republic. The center of the Republic is of course dominated by two great "images": the "sun image" and the "cave image."¹¹ The sun image is Socrates' substitute for a speech about "the good itself." Socrates is unwilling and unable to speak about "what the good itself is," but he is willing "to tell what looks like an offspring of the good and most similar to it"--he is willing to sketch the sun image.¹² Socrates first presents the sun image and

¹¹509a and 514a.

¹²506d-e.

explicates it by the "divided line."¹³ He then sketches the cave image, correlates it with the sun image,¹⁴ and explicates the cave image in the "plan of studies" to be followed by the philosopher-kings.¹⁵ Finally, he correlates the divided line and the plan of studies and thereby correlates the explications of both images.¹⁶ The sun image--the substitute for the speech about the good itself--is thus intricately connected with all the other parts of the central section of the Republic.¹⁷ Towards the end of the discussion of the plan of studies, in the "song of dialectic,"¹⁸ Socrates says that "when someone leaves behind all sense perception to set out upon that itself which each thing is (ἐπ' αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστιν ἕκαστον) and does not leave off before he grasps by intellection that itself which is the good (αὐτὸ ὃ ἔστιν ἀγαθόν), then he is at the very end of the intelligible realm" (or "of the knowable").¹⁹ Brann provides the best commentary on this passage:

¹³509d.

¹⁴517b.

¹⁵521c-d.

¹⁶533a.

¹⁷On the plan of the central section see Eva Brann, "The Music of the Republic," AFON 1 (April 1967): 39.

¹⁸532a1.

¹⁹532a5-9, emphasis added.

Now the repetition of the phrase in which "the good" is substituted for "each thing" is clearly meant to catch Glaucon's attention and to convey to him something--actually the most pertinent thing in the dialogue--about the nature of the community governed by the good. For upon having grasped what "each thing" is in itself, one would expect to learn what "all things" are together, and it is in place of this expected phrase that "the good" occurs. This sentence then hints how the good as the "source of the whole" (517b7) will have to be understood: it is not simply a different being but precisely the oneness of all beings (cf. [Sophist] 244eff.), the All as that Whole which all wholes within mirror (cf. Theaetetus 205a), the Whole which comprises what each partial whole is as well as what it is not, that within which different things are at one. It is "the source which is the Whole" (ἡ τοῦ παντός ἀρχή, 511b7. . . .).²⁰

We can say that the homogeneous good links each of the heterogeneous parts of the whole to each other and to itself.²¹ It seems that each part of the whole is in a sense open to the whole above all because the good itself--"that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole"--causes "all things" to be a whole by pervading the parts of the whole.

The beginning of Strauss's second discussion of the difference between Plato and Aristotle thus seems to be designed to lead the reader to fill out Strauss's account of "Socratic

²⁰Brann, "The Music of the Republic," p. 78, emphasis in the original.

²¹Cf. Brann's remark on the divided line: ". . . the logoi relating certain aspects of the whole are one and the same throughout. . . ., on account of similarity or likeness (homoiótes, cf. Sophist 231a7, Statesman 285b6) there is one logos pervading the whole." ("The Music of the Republic," p. 67.) Also see Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 174-85; especially pp. 182-84, 189.

philosophizing." But it is clear that that beginning is more immediately intended to complete Strauss's account of the difference between the Socratics and Aristotle with respect to political philosophy or political science.

We remember that Strauss's first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle indicates that Socrates or Plato believes that it is impossible to establish an independent political philosophy or political science: "The fact that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole, obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline" (21).²² We can now say that, according to Socrates and Plato, "the good itself" obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline.²³ "The good itself" prevents the political philosopher or political scientist from stopping his ascent at any point on the upward path below the peak to which and towards which Socrates and Plato aspire.

Strauss, we recall, first indicates that Aristotle's counterposition with respect to political philosophy or political science can be formulated approximately as follows: Aristotle believes that he can establish an independent political science because he believes that he can

²² See pp. 63-67 above.

²³ See pp. 65, 66 above.

demonstrate that at least one part of the whole--the political sphere--is closed to the whole. He believes that he can demonstrate that the political sphere is closed because he believes that he has discovered that the gentleman knows the principles of prudence--the sound principles of action--independently of theoretical science. More precisely, Aristotle believes he has discovered that moral virtue supplies the gentleman with the principles of prudence and that it does so independently of theoretical science (25).²⁴ Aristotle can claim that he can establish an independent political science because he claims to have discovered moral virtue (27).²⁵ (We use the word "approximately" in the first sentence of this paragraph because we prefer--at least for the moment--to reconsider Aristotle's counterposition without discussing the relationship between his claim that he can establish an independent political science and his claim that theoretical wisdom [knowledge of the whole] is available.)²⁶

Strauss has indicated that Plato denies the existence of moral virtue as an intermediate form of virtue between political or vulgar and genuine or philosophic virtue (27). Strauss now makes it clear that even if Socrates and Plato "recognized" moral virtue, they would

²⁴See pp. 83, 84-85, 88-89 above.

²⁵See pp. 115-16 above.

²⁶See pp. 66-67 above.

deny that it can be the principle of prudence. For even if Socrates and Plato were willing to grant that what Aristotle calls moral virtue is a good, there can be no doubt that they--like Aristotle himself--would understand it to be a "human, all-too-human" good. But Socrates and Plato deny that the human good even in its highest or most comprehensive form can be the principle of prudence. They contend that the human good in any of its forms can be known to be good only with reference to the idea of the good. The idea of the good, and not moral virtue, is the principle of prudence.

More generally, Strauss indicates that Socrates and Plato would view the attempt to establish an independent political science as an attempt to deny the truth about the whole--or, more precisely, the truth about the relationship between the whole and its parts. From the point of view of Socrates and Plato, the attempt to establish an independent political science is, so to speak, an attack on "the good itself." It seems that they would predict that any such attack will "ultimately" be compelled to fall back before the power of "the good itself" and that "the good itself" will necessarily reestablish its supremacy over each part of the whole. And we have seen that Strauss does indeed reveal that Aristotle makes concessions to the point of view of the Socratics--if not to the good itself.²⁷

²⁷ See pp. 177-207, especially pp. 206-207, above.

Strauss begins his revelation by showing that Aristotle grants that the moral-political sphere is not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science (28). In fact, Strauss indicates that the intention of Aristotle's political science makes sense only if the moral-political sphere is not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science: Aristotle's political science is an attempt to actualize the natural potentiality of the gentleman to be affected by philosophy (28). We are tempted to say that, according to Strauss, Aristotle's political science makes sense only because the moral-political sphere is by nature open to theoretical science and thus to the whole. The discovery that Aristotle knows that the moral-political sphere is at least qualifiedly open to theoretical science compels Strauss to reconsider Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the arts and prudence (28). Strauss then reminds us that Aristotle readily grants that the arts are subject to prudence because the partial human goods cannot be known to be goods except with reference to the whole human good. Aristotle readily grants this point because the supremacy of prudence over the arts--like the qualified openness of the moral-political sphere to theoretical science--is an absolutely necessary condition of his political science. But Strauss next shows that Aristotle is compelled to admit that prudence is ultimately subject to the legislative art because the legislative art is concerned with the whole

human good by being concerned with the highest human good and because it deals with its subject in the most comprehensive manner. Finally, Strauss shows that Aristotle is also compelled to admit that the legislative art and hence prudence are ultimately subject to the practical science of legislation because the practical science of legislation is even more comprehensive than the legislative art. The practical science of legislation is in fact a theoretical-practical science which culminates in the praise of theoretical understanding or philosophy--in the praise of that more than human science whose concern is the treatment of the most comprehensive subject in the most comprehensive manner and whose pursuit is identical with a more than human good.

Strauss seems to indicate that it is at this point that Aristotle calls a halt to his ascent. If Aristotle is compelled to make any further concessions to the Socratics' point of view, Strauss is silent about them. If Aristotle believed that he could demonstrate that no further concessions are necessary or possible, Strauss is silent about such demonstrations. Aristotle, it appears, stops on his ascent at the point at which the Socratics move from the highest or the whole human good to the good simply, the idea of the good. Whereas Strauss seems to be willing to indicate that Aristotle's practical science of legislation is in fact a theoretical-practical science,

there can be no doubt that his account of Aristotle's ascent breaks off completely at the point at which one would expect a discussion of Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the theoretical-practical science of legislation and theoretical science pure and simple. That is, Strauss terminates his account without discussing Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between the science of the highest or the whole human good and the science of the whole.²⁸ It seems that such a discussion would necessarily have to include an account of Aristotle's critique of the Platonic teaching about the idea of the good.²⁹ Perhaps Strauss's refusal to present such a discussion should come as no surprise. For it is certainly characteristic of the entire first section of "On Aristotle's Politics": nowhere in the first section does Strauss discuss any of the numerous passages in which Aristotle criticizes Plato. (Strauss mentions--but does not discuss--two of those passages [see 18 and 23]. Strauss's treatment of the first passage is most revealing. He refers to the first passage just before explaining the significance of Aristotle's remark about Hippodamus' way of life. In order to demonstrate that Aristotle's remark is not a piece of slightly malicious gossip or that

²⁸ See pp. 196-202 above.

²⁹ Nicomachean Ethics 1096a11-1097a14; cf. Eudemian Ethics 1217b1-1218b29.

Aristotle had a good reason for making his remark, Strauss compares the characterizations that Aristotle includes in criticisms of Plato in the second book of the Politics³⁰ and of Eudoxus in the tenth book of the Nicomachean Ethics³¹ with that which he attaches to his criticism of Hippodamus. Strauss comments as follows on the Plato passage:

"Shortly before speaking of Hippodamus, when discussing Plato's political writings, Aristotle describes 'Socrates' speeches' [i.e. particularly the speeches occurring in the Republic and the Laws] by setting forth their high qualities; but he does this in order to legitimate his disagreement with those speeches: since the Socratic speeches, especially those about the simply best political order, exert an unrivaled charm, one must face that charm as such." The criticism of the Republic and the Laws in the Politics is the complement to the criticism of the idea of the good in the Nicomachean Ethics. Strauss discusses neither of these famous passages. It is baffling to reflect that while Strauss's account of Aristotle's founding of political science includes an extended discussion of Aristotle's criticism of his predecessor Hippodamus, it does not include any explicit discussion of Aristotle's criticism of his predecessors Socrates and Plato. Strauss never explicitly shows how Aristotle faced the charm of "Socrates'

³⁰1265a10-13.

³¹1172b15-18.

speeches." But then Strauss also does not show how Socrates--as distinguished from the Athenian stranger--faced the charm of the speeches of his predecessors.³²⁾

We are in no position to provide Strauss's missing account of Aristotle's critique of the idea of the good. We can, however, confidently say that Socrates and Plato would argue that the concessions that Aristotle is compelled to make to the Socratic-Platonic point of view are merely reflections of the truth of that point of view. Indeed, Strauss can be said to indicate that Socrates and Plato would contend that once Aristotle grants that the moral-political sphere is qualifiedly open to theoretical science and/or once he admits that the partial human goods cannot be known to be goods except with reference to the highest or the whole human good, he will ultimately be compelled to admit that theoretical science and the idea of the good (or its Aristotelian equivalent), and not moral virtue, supply the principle of prudence. In other words, Socrates and Plato would maintain that even those minimal concessions that are the necessary conditions of Aristotle's political science draw Aristotle into the dialectical whirlpool that will carry him far beyond the human good toward the idea of the good.³³

³²See pp. 32-33 above.

³³Cf. Natural Right and History, p. 156.

The Socratic-Platonic ascent, as presented by Strauss, culminates in the insight that the idea of the good, and not the human good or in particular gentlemanship, is the principle of prudence. Strauss indicates that Socrates and Plato drew at least two conclusions from this insight: (1) "virtue is knowledge" and (2) "quest for prudence is philosophy." We will discuss each of these conclusions in turn.

Aristotle maintains that moral virtue supplies the principle(s) of prudence and thus that prudence is inseparable from moral virtue just as moral virtue is inseparable from prudence (24). Socrates and Plato maintain that the idea of the good supplies the principle of prudence or that the idea of the good is the principle from which all forms of prudence and all prudential handling of situations must begin. Thus, for Socrates and Plato, prudence is inseparable from knowledge of the idea of the good. Socrates and Plato can therefore be said to replace moral virtue by the idea of the good and to contend that Aristotle's distinction between moral virtue and theoretical virtue is ultimately irrelevant. Genuine virtue is knowledge of the idea of the good or, more simply, virtue is knowledge.

We recall that Strauss concludes the second stage of his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of moral virtue by remarking that "For Plato, what Aristotle calls moral

virtue is a kind of halfway house between political or vulgar virtue which is in the service of bodily well-being (of self-preservation) and genuine virtue which, to say the least, animates only the philosophers as philosophers" (27).³⁴ Strauss's discussion of the idea of the good enables us to fill out this remark. Genuine virtue animates only the philosophers as philosophers because only the philosopher as philosopher can have knowledge of the idea of the good. Plato, we remember, presents a purely theoretical account of the virtues. It seems that such an account traces morality to two entirely different roots: the requirements of bodily well-being or of society and the requirements of man's first perfection, i.e. theoretical understanding or philosophy. The purely theoretical account of the virtues seems to lead to the conclusion that what Aristotle calls moral virtue is, in fact, either merely the highest form of political or vulgar virtue or a mixture of heterogeneous elements which has no clear or exact principle but which may be sufficiently consistent for almost all practical purposes. Plato would agree with Aristotle that "gentlemanship" "may be in agreement with reason but is not as such dictated by reason" (see 26). But Plato delights in emphasizing that what Aristotle calls moral virtue is δόξα not ἐπιστήμη. The gentleman's morality is "dictated" not

³⁴See pp. 115-23 above.

by nature but by an unwritten nomos (see 26).³⁵ We suggest that, from Plato's point of view, it is a mixture of those things which are good by nature and those things which are noble by convention. Thus, very near the surface of Plato's theoretical treatment of the virtues is the teaching that genuine virtue and the philosopher's morality simply transcend the gentleman's virtue and gentlemanship. The philosopher's morality is "beyond good and evil" or beyond the conventionally noble and base. It seems that, according to Plato, theoretical understanding or philosophy-- despite or because of the fact that it culminates in the quest for knowledge of the idea of the good--is unqualifiedly separable from what Aristotle calls moral virtue and thus appears to be "morally neutral" when viewed from within the perspective of the gentleman's morality.³⁶ Plato teaches that genuine virtue is that virtue which is by nature good: the philosopher's morality is the natural morality. If the good is identical with the noble, then the philosopher's morality is by nature noble and the things which are noble by nature differ profoundly from--and are in

³⁵Also see pp. 102-103 above.

³⁶We note that in the Republic the explicit consideration of the relation that human virtue and the human good have to the idea of the good is dropped from the conversation as soon as Glaucon reenters the discussion at 506d.

tension with--the things which are noble by convention (see 14).³⁷

Aristotle presents a non-theoretical or quasi-theoretical account of the virtues.³⁸ On the one hand, that account explicitly emphasizes that the perfect gentleman regards moral virtue as an "absolute" (i.e. chooses just and noble deeds for their own sake) and that the city must be understood as being for the sake of moral virtue. On the other hand, that account at first only tacitly indicates that theoretical understanding or philosophy does not require moral virtue as moral virtue and finally emphasizes that theoretical understanding or philosophy does require actions resembling moral actions proper (see 26-27).³⁹ That is, Aristotle's account seems to be designed to convey the impression that morality, insofar as it is required for the sake of the philosophic life, does not profoundly differ from or is essentially similar to the morality of the gentleman. Aristotle seems to teach that nature has so arranged things that the philosophic life and the city require roughly the same habits, roughly the moral virtues, and thus that there is a kind of natural harmony between the requirements of theoretical understanding or philosophy and the requirements of the city. Thus

³⁷See pp. 35-36, 38, 51-52, 61-62, 84-85, 92-93 above.

³⁸See pp. 101-102, 115 above.

³⁹Also see pp. 109-10, 170 above.

Aristotle's account appears to give the impression that Aristotle traces morality to a single root. We have seen that the philosopher Aristotle has a "positive reason" for wanting to convey such an impression--even if he believed that the purely theoretical account of the virtues is a truer account.⁴⁰

Strauss, we remember, emphasizes that Aristotle is compelled to grant that prudence is ultimately subject to a science--the practical science of legislation or political science. Strauss also emphasizes that that science--like theoretical science (in both its Socratic or Platonic and Aristotelian forms) and the arts and unlike prudence in all its forms--is separable from moral virtue as moral virtue. Prudence is ultimately subject to a "morally neutral" science (see 29, 24-25).⁴¹ If morality can be traced to one root, if the philosopher's morality is more or less in harmony with the gentleman's morality, then the "morally neutral" character of the practical science of legislation need not have any impact on the content of the teaching of the man who possesses that science and teaches it to legislators and statesmen--i.e. it need not have any political consequences. For if the requirements of theoretical understanding or philosophy are either identical with

⁴⁰ See Natural Right and History, pp. 151-52 and pp. 68, n. 5, 129 above.

⁴¹ Also see pp. 85-88, 110-11, 181, 185-86, 188, 196 above.

or at least in harmony with the requirements of the city, then the private good of the philosopher is either identical with or at least in harmony with the common good of the city. But if morality must be traced to two entirely different roots, if the philosopher's morality is essentially different from the gentleman's morality, then the "morally neutral" character of the practical science of legislation may have an impact on the content of the teaching set forth in that science--i.e. it may have political consequences. For if the requirements of theoretical understanding or philosophy are in a certain tension with the requirements of the city, then the private good of the philosopher may be in tension with the common good of the city. We have seen that Strauss leads us to the conclusion that Aristotle's understanding of the nature of political things includes the insight that there is a certain tension between philosophy and the city or that Aristotle recognizes that there is a certain tension between the "class interests" of the philosophers as philosophers and the interests of the city.⁴² Aristotle's political science is designed, in part, to reduce that tension. Strauss also makes clear that Aristotle's account of the virtues does not emphasize--to say the least--any tension that Aristotle may have perceived between the philosopher's morality and the gentleman's morality. But does the "morally neutral"

⁴² See Natural Right and History, p. 143.

character of Aristotle's practical science of legislation have any impact on the content of his teaching about politics? The inquiry into this question falls under the purview of "sociology of knowledge rightly understood." An adequate answer would require a comprehensive investigation into the relationship between philosophy and the city as it is explicitly and implicitly set forth in the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics. We cannot now undertake such an investigation. We can, however, remind ourselves of Strauss's remark, previously quoted, on Aristotle's teaching about democracy: ". . . we suggest [says Strauss] that the ultimate reason why Aristotle has reservations against even the best kind of democracy is his certainty that the demos is by nature opposed to philosophy" (37, emphasis added).⁴³

(We note that if "virtue is knowledge" then there must be a strict unity of both the individual virtues and of the various forms of virtue. That is, if virtue is knowledge then [genuine] courage = [genuine] moderation = [genuine] liberality, etc.; and the virtue of a slave = the virtue of a child = the virtue of a woman = the virtue of a man.⁴⁴ We can now begin to understand just how paradoxical the Socratic-Platonic moral teaching is and just how

⁴³See pp. 164-65, 168 above.

⁴⁴Cf., e.g., Meno 72-74 and Politics 1260a21ff; also see Nicomachean Ethics 1096b24-26.

antithetical such a morality is to the gentleman's morality.)

Let us now turn to the second conclusion that Socrates and Plato draw from the insight that the idea of the good is the principle of prudence: "quest for prudence is philosophy." Just as Aristotle maintains that there is an essential difference between moral virtue and theoretical virtue, so he maintains that there is an essential difference between prudence or practical wisdom ($\varphi\rho\acute{o}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) and theoretical wisdom ($\sigma\acute{o}\phi\iota\alpha$), between "practical science" and theoretical science, and ultimately between the practical or political life and the theoretical life. It appears, however, that Socrates and Plato would contend that since the idea of the good is the principle of prudence and since the idea of the good is the highest theme of philosophy, any distinction between the quest for prudence and the quest for theoretical wisdom is ultimately irrelevant. Aristotle is compelled to admit that prudence is ultimately subject to an art: the legislative art is the architectonic art, the art of arts (see 28). Aristotle is also compelled to admit that the art of arts is ultimately subject to a science: the practical science of legislation. Moreover, Aristotle indicates that the practical science of legislation is in fact a theoretical-practical science. Aristotle, however, clearly does not identify either the legislative art or the theoretical-

practical science of legislation with the highest form of theoretical wisdom--the science of the sciences. For Aristotle, "'the first philosophy'" is not identical with "first philosophy" (see 20).⁴⁵ But for Socrates and Plato the art of arts and the science of sciences coincide in philosophy. This series of paradoxes culminates in one final paradox: if there is no essential difference between the quest for *φρόνησις* and the quest for *σόφια*, then it seems that there is no essential difference between practice and theory or between the practical or political life and the theoretical or philosophic life. The highest practical activity and the highest theoretical activity coincide. The true statesman or king and the philosopher are identical.

After setting forth Socrates' and Plato's assertion that "the idea of the good, and not the human good or in particular gentlemanship, is the principle of prudence," Strauss continues as follows:

But since love of wisdom is not wisdom and philosophy as prudence is the never-to-be completed concern with one's own good, it seems impossible to know that the philosophic life is the best life.

Immediately after taking us to the peak of the Socratic-Platonic ascent, Strauss brings us down to earth--or perhaps to a place beneath the earth (see 13, 20). He does so by reminding us of a fact that he chose to make prominent at

⁴⁵ Also see pp. 58, 60, 65, 90 above.

the end of his account of Socrates--i.e. in that part of the account which serves as the transition to the first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle--but which he preferred to ignore at the beginning of his second discussion of that relationship. Socrates or Plato, we recall, holds that the whole is "elusive" and concludes that "there is no knowledge of the whole" (21, 20). Once again, however, Strauss does not simply repeat himself. Indeed, the reader cannot help but notice the striking difference between Strauss's first and second presentations of the consequences that, according to Socrates and/or Plato, flow from the conclusion that knowledge of the whole is unavailable. In the account of Socrates, Strauss first formulates those consequences as follows: Socrates' or Plato's wisdom is "human wisdom" and human wisdom is "knowledge of ignorance"; hence there is "no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion" (20). Strauss then adds: "Because of the elusiveness of the whole, the beginning or the questions retain a greater evidence than the end or the answers; return to the beginning remains a constant necessity" (21). But here in his second presentation, Strauss tells us that since "love of wisdom is not wisdom" or since knowledge of the whole is unavailable, "it seems to be impossible to know that the philosophic life is the best life" (emphasis added). The first formulation could

be said to lead to the conclusion that "the unexamined life is not worth living."⁴⁶ But the second formulation seems to lead to the conclusion that even "the wisest man as such" cannot know whether the life which is devoted to constant examination, to constant "return to the beginning," is better than the unexamined life. We suggest that it is the introduction of the idea of the good into the discussion that accounts for the difference between Strauss's first and second presentations. For there can be little doubt that Strauss now wishes us to conclude that Socrates and Plato hold that knowledge of the whole is unavailable because they hold that knowledge of the idea of the good is unavailable. The whole is elusive because the idea of the good is elusive. Indeed, it seems that Socrates and Plato would argue that to say that knowledge of the idea of the good--"of that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole" (25)--is unavailable is equivalent to saying that knowledge of the whole is unavailable.

We will develop our suggestion in a moment. But first let us set out those facts which support the conclusion that is so clearly implied by the movement of Strauss's argument. The Republic is the only dialogue in which Plato

⁴⁶ See Plato, Apology of Socrates 38a.

allows the idea of the good to be discussed.⁴⁷ Now in the Republic, Plato makes Socrates preface the presentation of the sun image by first "reminding" Adeimantus that "the idea of the good is the greatest study" and then immediately reminding him that "we don't have sufficient knowledge of it."⁴⁸ Socrates reemphasizes both of these points.⁴⁹ Glaucon, reentering the conversation, nevertheless implores Socrates--"in the name of Zeus"--"to go through the good just as you went through justice, moderation and the rest." Socrates replies that he would be quite satisfied to do so, but that he fears that he is not up to it.⁵⁰ Socrates, deciding for the group, says "let's leave aside for the time being what the good itself is." But, as we have seen above, he also says that he is "willing to tell what looks like a child of the good and most similar to it"--if it pleases Glaucon. "Do tell," says Glaucon. "Another time you'll

⁴⁷ The Philebus, the only other dialogue devoted to a conversation about the good, is "limited" to a discussion of the human good. See Jacob Klein, "About Plato's Philebus," Interpretation 2 (Spring 1972): 158.

⁴⁸ 504e-505a; also see 503b-504e.

⁴⁹ 505a-506d.

⁵⁰ 506d. The reader cannot help but note that Socrates has just finished explaining that the way in which they went through the soul and its virtues is radically deficient. If one is concerned with finding out precisely what the soul and its virtues are, one must take "another longer way around" than the way which is taken in the Republic (504b; cf. 435d, 611b-d).

pay us what's due on the father's narrative."⁵¹ Socrates then presents the sun image. But no explicit dialectical account of the idea of the good is given anywhere in the dialogue. What is more, Plato repeatedly makes Socrates say that he has only opinion about the idea of the good.⁵² Plato shows us that even "the wisest man" has only opinion about the idea of the good. He thus can be said to lead us to conclude not simply that knowledge of the idea of the good is unavailable, but that no knowledge--or no "sufficient knowledge"--of the idea of the good is possible.⁵³

We need not now discuss why and how Socrates and Plato come to this conclusion.⁵⁴ We will simply state that Strauss indicates that it is because the highest object of the quest for wisdom is not quite knowable or because the highest objective of the quest for wisdom is not quite attainable, that "love of wisdom is not wisdom" or that the

⁵¹ 506d-e, emphasis added.

⁵² 506c4, e2, 509c3, 517b7, 533a4. It seems, however, that Socrates' opinion is so well founded that Glaucon will not be able to follow him without a long course of study (506d-507a, 509c, 532d-533a).

⁵³ Indeed, there is in the Republic no power of the soul which corresponds to the idea of the good. This is signified by the fact that the idea of the good is off the top of the divided line. See Brann, "The Music of the Republic," p. 61 and Rosen, Nihilism, pp. 157-58 and n. 34.

⁵⁴ See Rosen, *ibid.*, pp. 171-72, 173, 175, 196-97.

love of wisdom can never be transformed into wisdom. But, as Strauss has emphasized, Socrates and Plato also believe that "The elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of every part" (21, emphasis added). If the Socratic ascent to the idea of the good cannot culminate in knowledge of the idea of the good, then Socratic science as a whole seems to culminate in complete theoretical skepticism. Moreover, as Strauss has just reminded us, Socrates and Plato maintain that the idea of the good is the principle of prudence. And it is because the Socratics hold that the idea of the good is the principle of prudence that they can argue that the Aristotelian distinctions between theoretical and practical wisdom and between theory and practice are ultimately irrelevant. It now appears, however, that because Socrates and Plato teach the inseparability of what Aristotle calls theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom, their theoretical skepticism is inseparable from practical skepticism.⁵⁵ If knowledge of the idea of the good is not available in its perfection, then not only can the love of wisdom never be transformed into wisdom but

⁵⁵ Consider Republic 505e: "Now this [the good] is what every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does everything. The soul divines that it is something but is at a loss about it and unable to get a sufficient grasp of just what it is, or to have a stable trust such as it has about the rest [the things that are opined to be just and noble (?). See 505d.]. And because this is so, the soul loses any profit there might have been in the rest" (emphasis added). Also see 517b-c.

"prudence is the never-to-be completed concern with one's own good." The Socratic-Platonic unity of theory and practice seems to lead to the irrational quest for the answer to that most urgent but never-to-be-answered question "What is the best way of life?"⁵⁶ "It seems to be impossible," as Strauss says, "to know that the philosophic life is the best life."

Aristotle's teaching, as presented by Strauss, does not even approach either theoretical or practical skepticism. On the one hand, Strauss has told us that Aristotle maintains that "theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the whole, i.e. of that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole) is available" (25). On the other hand, Strauss has also told us that Aristotle maintains that "the principles of prudence--the ends in the light of which prudence guides man--are known independently of theoretical science" (25). Does this second assertion allow us to conclude that even if Aristotle--like Socrates and Plato--should become convinced that knowledge of the whole is unavailable, he--unlike Socrates and Plato--could nevertheless maintain that it is possible to know that the philosophic life is the best life? In other words, since Aristotle's science of the whole--unlike that of Socrates and Plato--is not the basis of prudence, can we assume that Aristotle would maintain that

⁵⁶ See Republic 342d, 505d; cf. 344e, 578c, 618b.

theoretical skepticism need not culminate in practical skepticism? Strauss leaves no doubt that Aristotle claims to know that "The best life is the life devoted to understanding or contemplation as distinguished from the practical or political life" or to know that "practical wisdom is lower in rank than theoretical wisdom . . . and subservient to it" (25). But how, according to Strauss, does Aristotle know that "the philosophic life is the best life?" We recall that, at first sight, Strauss seems to indicate that Aristotle teaches that prudence or practical wisdom itself supplies the answer to the question "What is the best way of life?" After all, Strauss tells us that according to Aristotle, "the principles of prudence" are "the ends in the light of which prudence guides man" and that those ends are "known independently of theoretical science" (25, emphasis added). But almost immediately after making these remarks, Strauss sets forth a series of Aristotelian arguments which lead to a different conclusion:

- (1) Not prudence but moral virtue "supplies the sound principles of action" (25).
- (2) Those principles are "fully evident only to the gentlemen" (25).
- (3) "The natural end of man as well as of any other natural being becomes genuinely known through theoretical science, through the science of the natures" (26).
- (4) Man's highest end--theoretical understanding or philosophy--"calls for prudence, for the philosopher must deliberate about how he can secure the

conditions for his philosophizing here and now" (26-27). Can we therefore say that Strauss indicates that Aristotle teaches that genuine knowledge that the philosophic life is the best life is supplied by theoretical science, but that the right choice of a way of life "here and now" (and the right choice, "here and here," of the means to that way of life) is dependent on prudence--if only on "philosophic prudence"?⁵⁷ If so, then we would have to conclude that if Aristotle did not possess theoretical knowledge of the nature of man he could not know that the philosophic life is the best life. Does Aristotle believe that theoretical knowledge of the nature of man is dependent on knowledge of "the whole nature" (13, 18, 19) or

⁵⁷ See pp. 84-91, 93-96 above. Consider the conclusion to Strauss's discussion of "the Aristotelian natural right teaching" in *Natural Right and History*, pp. 162-63: "There is a universally valid hierarchy of ends, but there are no universally valid rules of action. . . . [W]hen deciding what ought to be done, i.e., what ought to be done by this individual (or this individual group) here and now, one has to consider not only which of the various competing objectives is higher in rank but also which is the most urgent in the circumstances. What is most urgent is legitimately preferred to what is less urgent, and the most urgent is in many cases lower in rank than the less urgent. But one cannot make a universal rule that urgency is a higher consideration than rank. For it is our duty to make the highest activity, as much as we can, the most urgent or the most needful thing. And the maximum of effort which can be expected necessarily varies from individual to individual. The only universally valid standard is the hierarchy of ends. This standard is sufficient for passing judgment on the level of nobility of individuals and groups and of actions and institutions. But it is insufficient for guiding our actions."

of the whole? Does Aristotle believe that it is possible to possess the science of the nature of man even if knowledge of the whole is unavailable? Strauss does not seem to provide us with the information that we would need in order to answer these questions. While he explicitly tells us that Aristotle holds that knowledge of the whole is available, he does not tell us whether Aristotle also held that genuine knowledge of all or any of the natures is dependent on genuine knowledge of the whole.⁵⁸ Let us assume that, for whatever reason, Aristotle was compelled to conclude that it is impossible to know that the philosophic life is the best life. Would he also conclude that such "theoretical-practical" skepticism must necessarily have an impact on political life? If "the sound principles of action, the just and noble ends, as actually desired," are indeed known to the gentlemen "independently of theoretical science," and if those principles are indeed "fully evident" to the gentlemen, then it might appear that the impossibility of knowing whether the philosophic life is the best life need not have any effect on political life as such (25). But surely Aristotle, the man of "philosophic prudence," would argue that such a conclusion is unduly optimistic. For the city may very well include "people of deficient breeding" who, when armed with both the arguments of theoretical-practical skepticism and "great power of persuasion," will

⁵⁸But see 25 and pp. 89-91 above.

not be content to allow the gentlemen to peacefully enjoy their dogmatic slumber (26).⁵⁹

Every schoolboy knows that Socrates chose to live the philosophic life and that Plato presents Socrates' way of life as the best way of life. Did Socrates--the philosopher par excellence--choose the philosophic life out of the kind of ignorance that is difficult to distinguish from faith? Strauss, who always pays careful attention to the knowledge of schoolboys, does not leave Socrates and Plato in the grip of theoretical-practical skepticism for very long. Socrates, he now tells us, could not know that the philosophic life is the best life

if he did not know that the only serious alternative to the philosophic life is the political life and that the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life: political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in the light of the sun; the city is the only whole within the whole or the only part of the whole whose essence can be wholly known.

Strauss indicates that the Socratic argument that culminates in the knowledge that the philosophic life is the best life rests on two premises: (1) the political life is the only serious alternative to the philosophic life, (2) the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life. Whereas Strauss points to the reasoning that Socrates uses to establish the second premise, he is silent about the way in which Socrates arrived at the first

⁵⁹ See pp. 96-100, 147-55 above.

premise. He writes as though Socrates believes that the superiority of the political life to all other forms of non-philosophic life is so manifest that it is not in need of comment.⁶⁰ We believe that Strauss can be silent about the argument that Socrates would use to establish that the political life is the only serious alternative to the philosophic life because he has already presented us with a detailed version of a similar argument. Socrates' argument, we suggest, would more or less parallel the argument that Aristotle uses to demonstrate that prudence is of higher dignity than the arts and that the highest form of prudence is the legislative art, the architectonic art, the art of arts (see 23-24, 28).⁶¹

Strauss tells us that Socrates' second premise can be traced to the discovery that political life is life in the cave. We can now see that the movement of Strauss's

⁶⁰We are tempted to say that Strauss thus suggests that if one subtracts Socrates' knowledge that the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life from the sum total of his knowledge, the remainder would be in agreement with the knowledge of the good citizen and the perfect gentleman.

⁶¹Also consider two passages from the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics: 1094a26-b11 and 1095a14-30, b13-1096a10. In the first passage, Aristotle employs uncontested common opinion to establish that politics is the most authoritative and most architectonic art or science. In the second, he examines contradictory common opinions about the end of politics and the best way of life and establishes, by means of opinions, that the political life is higher in dignity than the life of pleasure. Neither argument presupposes knowledge of the highest or whole human good--much less knowledge of the idea of the good.

argument in his second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle imitates the movement of Socrates' argument in the central section of the Republic: just as Plato makes Socrates move from the sun image by way of the divided line to the cave image, so Strauss moves from the idea of the good by way of the unavailability of knowledge of the idea of the good (the idea of the good, we recall, is off the top of the divided line) to the cave.

We note that this is the first passage in which Strauss speaks of the cave. We note, in particular, that Strauss is silent about the cave in that part of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics" in which we would most expect a reference to the cave image or in which such a reference would seem to be most appropriate--i.e. in the thematic account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy (19-21). For some reason, Strauss chooses to maintain his silence about the cave image throughout his account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy, throughout his first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, throughout his account of Aristotle's founding of political science, and to break that silence only in his second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle--i.e. in the concluding part of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics." The reasons for Strauss's seemingly strange procedure will become clear in the remaining pages of this commentary.

Despite the fact that Strauss has not previously discussed the cave image, he seems to assume that the reader has an adequate grasp of the meaning of that image. For he does not now provide us with an interpretation (much less a comprehensive interpretation) of the cave image but with what appears to be a summary of or the conclusion to an interpretation. He tells us only that Socrates knows that "political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in the light of the sun" and that "the city is the only whole within the whole or the only part of the whole whose essence can be wholly known" (emphasis added). There can be no doubt, however, that this characteristically condensed statement is packed with and points to Strauss's deepest thoughts on Socratic political philosophy and its relationship to Aristotle's political science. Let us try to unpack it and follow its directions.

If Socrates holds that "political life is life in the cave," then it seems that he must hold that the polis is the cave. And, indeed, as Strauss moves from the first to the second clause in the statement quoted above, he simply replaces "the cave" by "the city" or substitutes "the city" for "the cave." The cave and the city are interchangeable. Strauss, in fact, explicitly draws this conclusion in his one brief remark about the cave image in "On Plato's Republic." That remark occurs near the end of

Strauss's discussion of the question of the possibility of the just city.⁶² Strauss's inquiry into that question leads him to conclude that "the just city is not possible because of the philosophers' unwillingness to rule." "Why," Strauss asks, "are the philosophers unwilling to rule? Being dominated by the desire, the eros, for knowledge as the one thing needful, or knowing that philosophy is the most pleasant and blessed possession, the philosophers have no leisure for looking down at human affairs, let alone for taking care of them."⁶³ But how do the philosophers know that the philosophic life is the best life? Strauss, following Socrates' example, employs the cave image in order to answer this question.⁶⁴ The philosophers, Strauss says, "know that the life not dedicated to philosophy and therefore even political life at its best is like life in a cave, so much so that the city can be identified with the Cave."⁶⁵

"Political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in light of the sun" (emphasis added). Perhaps the underlined portion of this statement does not require any comment. But it is sometimes

⁶²"On Plato's Republic," pp. 115-27.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 124-25, emphasis added.

⁶⁴See Republic 517c-d, 519c, 520d, 520e-521b, 540b.

⁶⁵"On Plato's Republic," p. 125, emphasis added. We will quote the remainder of his passage shortly.

useful to state the obvious and we believe that this is one of those times. Immediately after presenting the cave image, Socrates correlates it with the sun image.⁶⁶ Neither the passage under discussion nor Strauss's commentary on the Republic contains a discussion of either the sun image or Socrates' correlation of the two images. But no reader of the Republic needs a commentary to tell him that in the sun image light is analogous⁶⁷ to truth (just as clarity of vision is analogous to knowledge), and that in the cave image the sun represents the good and the underground fire in turn represents the sun.⁶⁸ The light caused by the sun is analogous to the truth caused by the good and living in the light of the sun represents living "in the truth" of the good.

Strauss thus reminds us that in the cave image Socrates presents the philosophic life as a life lived in the element of truth. But how, according to Strauss, must that Socratic presentation of the philosophic life be understood? While Strauss clearly understands the cave image to

⁶⁶Republic 517a-c. But cf. 532b. See pp. 214-15 above.

⁶⁷See 508b13.

⁶⁸See 507a-509b, 514a-b, 516a-b, as well as 517a-c. Also see Brann, "The Music of the Republic," pp. 49-50, 81-89, especially pp. 83-84. Rosen argues that "There can scarcely be any doubt that, according to Socrates, truth, being, intelligible visibility, and goodness are all approximately equivalent in his [sun] icon." (Nihilism, p. 186.)

contain the argument that leads Socrates to the conclusion that the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life, we know that he cannot believe that that argument establishes the superiority of the philosophic life by showing that the love of wisdom can be fulfilled: Strauss has just told us that Socrates and Plato hold that "love of wisdom is not wisdom and philosophy as prudence is the never-to-be completed concern with one's own good." How then, according to Strauss, does the cave image establish the crucial second premise of the argument that enables Socrates to claim to know that the philosophic life is the best life? Strauss supplies us with the information necessary to answer this question in the passage in his commentary on the Republic which completes his discussion of the cave image. After arguing that the city can be identified with the Cave, Strauss continues:

The cave-dwellers, i.e. the non-philosophers, see only the shadows of artifacts (514b-515c). That is to say, whatever they perceive they understand in the light of opinions sanctified by the fiat of legislators, regarding the just and noble things, i.e. of fabricated or conventional opinions, and they do not know that these their most cherished convictions possess no higher status than that of opinions. For if even the best city stands or falls by a fundamental falsehood, albeit a noble falsehood, it can be expected that the opinions on which the imperfect cities rest or in which they believe will not be true, to say the least. Precisely the best of the non-philosophers, the good citizens, are passionately attached to these opinions and therefore passionately opposed to

philosophy (517a) which is the attempt to go beyond opinion toward knowledge. . . . [P]hilosophy and the city tend away from one another in opposite directions.⁶⁹

This passage clearly indicates that, according to Strauss, Socrates knows that the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life not because he discovered that the political life is life lived in the element of opinion while the philosophic life is life lived unqualifiedly in the element of truth, but because he discovered that political life is life lived in ignorance of ignorance while the philosophic life is life lived in knowledge of ignorance. This interpretation of Socrates' discovery that "political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in the light of the sun" is the necessary complement to Strauss's emphasis on the fact Socrates and Plato hold that knowledge of the whole or of the idea of the good is unavailable. For if "there is no knowledge of the whole," there is "no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion" and "return to the beginning [the sphere of opinion = the cave] remains a constant necessity" (20, 21). That is, if such knowledge is unavailable, the philosopher can, from one point of view,

⁶⁹"On Plato's Republic," p. 125, emphasis added. Also see ibid., p. 102, where Strauss, commenting on the noble lie, remarks: "The good city is not possible . . . without a fundamental falsehood; it cannot exist in the element of truth, of nature" (emphasis added). Cf. Strauss's comments on Socrates' critique of the poets in the tenth book (ibid., pp. 135-37).

be said to live--like the simple cave-dweller--in the element of opinion. From such a point of view, the specific difference between the men who live the political life and the men who live the philosophic life is that whereas the former "do not know that their most cherished convictions possess no higher status than that of opinions," the latter live in constant awareness of the fact that their convictions about "the greatest study" possess no higher status than that of opinions. Thus, Strauss leads us to conclude that when Socrates presents the philosophic life as the life lived in the element of truth (or nature), he ultimately understands this to mean that the philosophic life is the life lived in the element of the truth of one's ignorance.⁷⁰

We have noted that Strauss is silent about the cave in his thematic account of Socrates' founding of political

⁷⁰We cannot--and need not now--discuss Strauss's complete interpretation of the Socratic teaching that wisdom remains human wisdom or that knowledge remains knowledge of ignorance. It does seem, however, that Strauss believes that the argument contained in the cave image is not, by itself, sufficient to establish with certainty that the life lived in perpetual knowledge of ignorance is better (i.e., happier) than the life lived in perpetual ignorance of ignorance. Consider, e.g., "What Is Political Philosophy?," p. 40: "In spite of its [philosophy's] highness or nobility, it could appear as Sisyphean or ugly, when one contrasts its achievement with its goal. Yet it is necessarily accompanied, sustained and elevated by eros. It is graced by nature's grace." Cf. this passage with the passage from "On Plato's Republic" that immediately precedes Strauss's remark on the cave image (pp. 124-25; quoted on p. 247 above). Also consider the beginning of Aristotle's Metaphysics.

philosophy (see 19-21). If, however, we reexamine that account in the light of both Strauss's first reference to the cave and his remark on the cave image in "On Plato's Republic," we discover that in that account Strauss does in fact describe Socrates' discovery that political life is life in the cave, but that he does so without employing the iconographic language of the cave image.⁷¹ For to say that Socrates discovered that the city is constituted by the authoritative opinions pronounced by the law of the city (i.e. opinions about the just and noble things and the gods) and that those opinions necessarily contradict one another (and/or the authoritative opinions of other cities), is to say that Socrates discovered that the city is the cave and that political life is life in the cave. Moreover, to say that Socrates discovered that it becomes necessary to transcend the authoritative opinions as such in the direction of what is no longer opinion but knowledge, is to say that Socrates discovered that it becomes necessary to try to escape from the cave or that ordinary life in the cave (the political life) is subordinate to that extraordinary life which consists in the never-to-be-completed attempt to escape from the cave.

We must note, however, that Strauss's thematic account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy diverges in at least two important respects from Socrates'

⁷¹See pp. 55-60, 159-61 above.

presentation of the cave image. First, whereas Strauss concludes his account by emphasizing that Socrates' human wisdom is knowledge of ignorance--and hence that there is no unqualified transcending, even by the wisest man as such, of the sphere of opinion or that return to the beginning is a constant necessity, Socrates, when presenting the cave image, appears to teach that the philosophic life does (or can) culminate in the fulfilled love of wisdom. Socrates conveys this impression in the following ways: (1) He tells Glaucon how one of the cave-dwellers is successfully liberated from his bonds and how he is successfully "dragged up" out [of the cave] into the light of the sun."⁷²

(2) He speaks of the liberated man as "looking at the sun and the sunlight"; as being "able to make out the sun--not its appearances in water or some alien place, but the sun itself by itself in its own region--and see what it's like"; and finally as being able to conclude "that this [the sun] is the source of the seasons and the years, and is the steward of all things in the visible place, and is in a certain way the cause of all those things he and his companions had been seeing." The liberated man, says Socrates, "would consider himself happy for the change and pity the others [i.e., those still in the cave]."⁷³

⁷²_{515e}, emphasis added.

⁷³_{516a-c}, emphasis added. Cf. 509b-c.

(3) Socrates' liberated man does not liberate himself from his bonds by his own efforts. Rather, in Socrates' account, "someone" who has already successfully escaped from the cave goes back down and releases one of the cave-dwellers from his bonds, compels him to turn toward the light, and drags him up.⁷⁴ (4) What is more, Socrates' presentation of the cave image and especially his subsequent correlation of the two images,⁷⁵ implies that the successful escapee can make a permanent escape from the cave and that--unless he happens to be born and reared in Socrates' city of beauty--there is no reason why he need ever return to the cave or that there is no one who would or could persuade and/or compel him to return.⁷⁶ The cave image thus appears to allow Glaucon to conclude that the philosopher can "emigrate" to "a colony on the Isles of the Blessed" and take up permanent residence there.⁷⁷

We suggest that this first difference between Strauss's account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy and Socrates' own presentation of the cave image can

⁷⁴ See 515c-e.

⁷⁵ 517a-521b.

⁷⁶ See 519c-521b.

⁷⁷ See 519c. In fact, because Socrates' presentation and correlation--taken by themselves--do not explain why any escapee would ever voluntarily return to the cave, they do not explain why the "someone" in the cave image returns to the cave in order to help one of his former companions escape. See "On Plato's Republic," p. 128.

be explained as follows: The "dogmatic" appearance of the teaching of the cave image can be accounted for by means of an argument that parallels the argument that Strauss, in his commentary on the Republic, employs in order to account for the "dogmatic" appearance of the teaching of the Republic as a whole. Strauss points out that whereas "the other dialogues which raise the question of what a given virtue is" (e.g., Euthyphro, Laches, Charmides)⁷⁸ "do not answer the question with which they deal," in the Republic Socrates and his friends "surely succeed in stating what justice is." "This," Strauss remarks, "is perhaps the strangest happening in the whole Republic. That Platonic dialogue which is devoted to the subject of justice answers the question of what justice is long before the first half of the work is finished, long before the most important facts without the consideration of which the essence of justice cannot be possibly determined in an adequate manner, have come to light, let alone have been duly considered." Nevertheless, as Strauss says, "The Republic appears to be a dialogue in which the truth is declared, a dogmatic dialogue." Strauss suggests that the difference between the Republic and the dialogues which investigate virtues other than justice--i.e. the dogmatic appearance of the Republic--may be explained by the fact that justice is "the universal virtue, the virtue most obviously related to

⁷⁸See *ibid.*, p. 92.

the city." "The theme of the Republic," Strauss argues, "is political in more than one sense, and the political questions of great urgency do not permit delay: the question of justice must be answered by all means even if all the evidence needed for an adequate answer is not yet in."⁷⁹

Now the cave image is not simply a political metaphor. It is also an educational metaphor. Indeed, Socrates begins his presentation of the image by telling Glaucon to "make an image of our nature in its education and want of education."⁸⁰ We suggest that just as there are urgent and sound political reasons for the dogmatic appearance of Socrates' teaching about justice in the Republic as a whole, so there are urgent and sound pedagogical reasons for the dogmatic appearance of his teaching about the philosophic life in the cave image. For if one is willing to grant that the dramatic action of the Republic can be understood as a contest between Socrates and Thrasymachus for the soul of Glaucon or that the plot of the Republic can be explained in terms of Glaucon's choice between the philosophic life and the political or tyrannic life,⁸¹ then one must grant that there are powerful pedagogical reasons for Socrates

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 105-106, emphasis added.

⁸⁰ 514a.

⁸¹ See Xenophon Memorabilia III 6 and "On Plato's Republic," p. 65.

to present the philosophic life to Glaucon as the fulfilled love of wisdom rather than as mere knowledge of ignorance. Moreover, what we might call "pedagogical necessity" would seem to be most massively present in the central section of the Republic where Socrates most obviously attempts to "turn around" Glaucon or "convert" him from the political life to the philosophic life.⁸² It seems that Strauss, in "On Aristotle's Politics," believes himself to be free from the pedagogical necessity that governs Socrates' speeches and deeds in the Republic. This is not to say that Strauss understands himself to be free from all forms of pedagogical necessity as he unfolds his teaching about Aristotle's founding of political science.

There is, we said, a second important respect in which Strauss's account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy diverges from Socrates' presentation of the cave image. We have pointed out that Socrates' cave image does not present the self-emancipation of a cave-dweller but rather the emancipation of one of the cave-dwellers by "someone" who has previously escaped from the cave. This means that Socrates must presuppose either that there have always been human beings who live outside the cave (i.e. that philosophy is coeval with human life) or that there

⁸² See 514b, 515c, 518c-d. We note, however, that if Glaucon were fully attentive as Socrates related the cave image, he could have discovered that its dogmatic appearance is belied by the hypothetical language that Socrates employs throughout his presentation.

was at least one human being who somehow managed to escape from the cave by himself (i.e. that philosophy is not coeval with human life but--like political philosophy and political science--had to be "founded"). But if Socrates does hold the latter presupposition, his cave image surely does not deal with the problem of the "first" escapee (i.e. with the problem of the founding of philosophy). That is, just as the cave image does not by itself explain why any escapee would ever voluntarily return to the cave to liberate other cave-dwellers, so it does not by itself explain how "someone" could make an unassisted escape from the cave. In contrast, Strauss, in his account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy, is careful to describe and name the "method" that Socrates discovered and employed "to go the way from law to nature" or "to ascend from law to nature." Socrates' "method" is "dialectics": the movement from authoritative opinions, through authoritative opinions in their contradictoriness, toward what is no longer opinion but knowledge (see 19-20). Is there anything in Socrates' presentation of the cave image which prevents the reader from concluding that some one of the cave-dwellers could have discovered "dialectics" and employed it to first release himself from his bonds and then to drag himself "along the rough, steep, upward way . . . into the light of the sun"?⁸³

⁸³515e.

Strauss tells us that Socrates knows that the political life is subordinate to the philosophic life because he knows that "political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in the light of the sun" (emphasis added). But to say that Socrates knows that political life is partly closed off from life in the light of the sun is to say that Socrates knows that the city is partly closed to the whole. We recall that Strauss begins his first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle by indicating that Socrates' or Plato's discovery of noetic heterogeneity is inseparable from the discoveries that "each part of the whole . . . is in a sense open to the whole" and that "the elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of every part" (21, emphasis added).⁸⁴ Strauss now reveals that when Socrates discovered that the city is the cave, he also (or thereby) discovered that the city, while being like every other part of the whole in that it "is in a sense open to the whole," is in one crucial respect different from every other part of the whole: "the city is the only whole within the whole or the only part of the whole whose essence can be wholly known" (emphasis added). Strauss himself provides the perfect commentary on this wondrous and enigmatic passage. He concludes his interpretation of the Republic with the following remarks:

⁸⁴See pp. 63-65 above.

The teaching of the Republic regarding justice can be true although it is not complete, in so far as the nature of justice depends decisively on the nature of the city--for even the trans-political cannot be understood as such except if the city is understood--and the city is completely intelligible because its limits can be made perfectly manifest: to see these limits, one need not have answered the question regarding the whole; it is sufficient for the purpose to have raised the question regarding the whole. The Republic then indeed makes clear what justice is. As Cicero has observed, the Republic does not bring to light the best possible regime but rather the nature of political things--the nature of the city. Socrates makes clear in the Republic of what character the city would have to be in order to satisfy the highest need of man. By letting us see that the city constructed in accordance with this requirement is not possible, he lets us see the essential limits, the nature, of the city.⁸⁵

Thus, according to Strauss, while Socrates and Plato may believe that the elusiveness of the whole or the unavailability of knowledge of the whole somehow affects their knowledge of that part of the whole which is the city, they do not believe that that elusiveness or unavailability prevents the city from being "completely intelligible" or its essence from being "wholly known." The Socratic philosopher can give a completely sufficient answer to the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" (see 19).

Why is the city "the only part of the whole whose essence can be wholly known?" Why is the city in this one crucial respect different from every other part of the whole? Strauss tells us that Socrates or Plato believes that "each part of the whole . . . is in a sense open to

⁸⁵"On Plato's Republic," p. 138, emphasis added.

the whole" (21, emphasis added). But this would seem to indicate that Socrates or Plato also believes that each part of the whole is in another sense closed to the whole. If this inference is correct, then the special status or the uniqueness of the city within the whole does not consist in its being partly closed to the whole: every part of the whole is both closed to the whole and open to the whole. What then is the specific cause of the city's special status or uniqueness within the whole? Strauss does not directly answer this question. He does, however, tell us that "political life is life in the cave which is partly closed off by a wall from life in the light of the sun" (emphasis added). Strauss thus seems to indicate that the city's special status or uniqueness can be traced to the way in which the city is partly closed to the whole or, more precisely, to that by virtue of which it is partly closed to the whole--i.e. to the "wall" which partly closes off the city from the whole. How, according to Strauss, does Socrates understand the "wall" in the cave image?⁸⁶

⁸⁶At first sight, one might think that there are two walls in the cave image: (1) the wall that Socrates likens to "the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets" (514b), and which the commentators often refer to as the "screen wall" (see, e.g., Brann, "The Music of the Republic," pp. 81, 83); and (2) the "wall" of the cave on which the shadows are thrown (515a). But, in fact, Socrates refers only to the former as a "wall" (τεῖχος, 514b4, 7, 8; cf. 515a7). See, e.g., the figure Adam provides to illustrate the cave in The Republic of Plato, ed. with Critical Notes, Commentary and Appendices by James Adam, 2nd ed., with a new Introduction

Although Strauss does not provide us with a discussion of the details of the cave image, he leaves no doubt as to how he would answer this question. For in the passage from his commentary on the Republic which we quoted above, Strauss tells us that "The cave-dwellers . . . see only the shadows of artifacts. . . . That is to say, whatever they perceive they understand in the light of opinions sanctified by the fiat of legislators, regarding the just and noble things, i.e. of fabricated or conventional opinions. . . ." ⁸⁷

And in what we might call the parallel passage in his account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy, Strauss speaks not only of fabricated or conventional opinions regarding the just and noble things, but also of such opinions regarding "the highest beings, the gods who dwell in heaven." The city, Strauss there emphasizes, "looks up to, holds in reverence, 'holds' the gods of the city" (20; cf. 14). Socrates, according to Strauss, discovered that "The highest opinions, the authoritative opinions, are the pronouncements of the law." The "wall" is "the law of the city" (20, emphasis added). Thus to say that the cave is partly closed off by a wall from the light of the sun is to say that the city is partly closed off

by D. A. Rees, 2 vols. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1963), 2:65, fig. ii. But cf. Adam's commentary on 514b12, *ibid.*, 2:90.

⁸⁷ "On Plato's Republic," p. 125, emphasis added.

by nomos from "the whole nature" (13, 18, 19; emphasis added).⁸⁸

This conclusion may be illuminated by a cautiously worded passage in Strauss's commentary on the Republic. In that passage, Strauss attempts to explain why Socrates decides to proceed by investigating the coming-into-being of the city and hence the coming-into-being of the city's justice and injustice rather than to proceed by "looking at the idea of justice." Strauss offers the following suggestions:

Socrates' procedure in the Republic can perhaps be explained as follows: there is a particularly close connection between justice and the city and while there is surely an idea of justice, there is perhaps no idea of the city. For there are not ideas of "everything." The eternal and unchangeable ideas are distinguished from the particular things which come into being and perish, and which are what they are by virtue of their participating in the idea in question; the particular things contain then something which cannot be traced to the ideas, which accounts for their belonging to the sphere of becoming as distinguished from being and in particular why they participate in ideas as distinguished from being ideas. Perhaps the city belongs so radically to the sphere of becoming that there cannot be an idea of the city. Aristotle says that Plato recognized ideas only of

⁸⁸ We note that Socrates twice uses the word φύσις in the cave image. He begins, as we have seen, by telling Glaucon to "make an image of our nature in its education and want of education" (514a1-2, emphasis added). After describing the cave and the situation of the prisoners, he says "Now consider . . . what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them" (515c2-4, emphasis added).

natural beings.⁸⁹ Perhaps Plato did not regard the city as a natural being.⁹⁰

Does Strauss thus indicate that "the city is completely intelligible"⁹¹ because there is no idea of the city?!

That the "essence" of the city "can be wholly known" (29) because there is no idea of the city (see 19)?!⁹²

Before leaving the "cave passage" in Strauss's second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, we must comment on a striking peculiarity of that passage. We recall that Strauss begins the second discussion by speaking of Socrates and Plato: "Considerations like these induced Socrates and Plato to assert. . . ." But we now note that when he moves to the discussion of how--despite the unavailability of knowledge of the idea of the good--one could know that the philosophic life is the

⁸⁹ Strauss cites Metaphysics 991b6-7, 1070a18-20 ("On Plato's Republic," p. 93, n. 31).

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 92-93, emphasis added.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 138.

⁹² Cf. Natural Right and History, pp. 122-23. Consider Brann, "The Music of the Republic," pp. 87-88: "What is most characteristic of Socrates' mortal Hades is the wilfulness of its inhabitants, who resist and mock their liberator (517a) [T]hey seem to cherish their chains--in a certain engraving of the 'Antrum Platonicum' (1604 A.D.) the huddled prisoners very tellingly wear no visible chains at all. Perhaps, then, the most important aspect of the cave is that it is not a natural cavern but a 'cavelike underground chamber' (514a3, cf. Axiochus, 371a8), clearly an artificial prison made by men for men" (emphasis in the original).

best life, he speaks only of Socrates: "Socrates could not know this if. . . ." The "cave passage" follows. In the thematic account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy, Strauss follows the opposite procedure. He begins by speaking of Socrates alone (see 19) and only at the end of that account does he speak of "Socrates or Plato" (21, emphasis added; also see 20). We notice, however, that in those passages of the thematic account that parallel the cave image, Strauss speaks only of Socrates (19-20). We have seen that Strauss is very careful about such "details" in the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics."⁹³ Why does Strauss "drop" Plato when he moves to the discussion of the cave? Does he wish to indicate that whether or not the "scholarly" controversies concerning the "sources" of the other teachings associated with "Socratic philosophizing" (21) can be resolved, there can be no doubt that "Socrates" alone should be honored as the discoverer of the cave or for the discovery that the city is the cave? Perhaps Strauss's procedure can be explained by one obvious fact: Plato makes Socrates conclude his presentation of the cave image with a manifest allusion to Socrates' own death at the hands of the Athenian cave-dwellers.⁹⁴

We can now bring to a close our discussion of the complex but precise sentence in which Strauss reveals why

⁹³See pp. 24-27 above.

⁹⁴517a.

and how Socrates could claim to know that the philosophic life is the best life without at the same time claiming to know the idea of the good or the whole. It should be clear that that sentence contains two conspicuous conclusions: (1) Socrates holds that the political life is radically different from (as well as subordinate to) the philosophic life, and (2) Socrates holds that the city is closed to the whole (as well as open to the whole). It appears that the second Socratic conclusion could supply the basis for an independent science of the city or the political sphere and that the first Socratic conclusion could supply the basis for a distinction between political or practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom (not to say a distinction between "political" or "practical science" and theoretical science). We cannot help but conclude that Strauss has prepared a surprise ending for the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics."

We recall that the first section is clearly divided into two main parts: Strauss's account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy and his account of Aristotle's founding of political science (13-21, 21-29).⁹⁵ Strauss begins the last stage of his account of Socrates' founding by telling us that Socrates became the founder of political philosophy because he began by raising the question "what is political?" or "what is the polis?" (19-21). While

⁹⁵See pp. 18-19 above.

Strauss does not, in so many words, tell us how Socrates answered this question,⁹⁶ he does indicate that Socrates' successful founding is the result of his discovery that there is an essential difference between that part of the whole which is the polis and the other parts of the whole.⁹⁷ Strauss makes the transition from the first to the second main part by discussing the relationship between Plato and Aristotle (21).⁹⁸ Near the beginning of the first discussion of that relationship, Strauss indicates that Socrates or Plato holds that the discovery that there are essential differences between the parts of the whole is inseparable from the discovery that "each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole." The latter discovery, Strauss tells us, "obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline." Strauss then makes what could be called the pivotal statement of the entire first section of "On Aristotle's Politics": "Not Socrates or Plato but Aristotle is truly the founder of political science: as one discipline, and by no means the most fundamental or the highest discipline, among a number of disciplines" (21). In the remainder of his first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle,

⁹⁶See pp. 62, 67, 71 above.

⁹⁷See pp. 51-58 above.

⁹⁸See pp. 19-28 above.

Strauss illustrates "this difference between Plato and Aristotle" and certainly appears to indicate that whereas the Socratics deny that it is either desirable or possible to establish an independent political science, Aristotle affirms that the establishment of such a science is both desirable and possible. In fact, the emphasis on "this difference between Plato and Aristotle" in the first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle is so overwhelming that Strauss can be said to convey the impression that he believes that Aristotle founded his political science in direct opposition to Socratic political philosophy and that the premises, character, and form of Aristotle's political science are fundamentally incompatible with the premises, character, and form of Socrates' or Plato's political philosophy (21).⁹⁹ We have, however, just discovered that Strauss's second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle leads to the conclusion that Socrates himself made a discovery that could have enabled him to remove the obstruction to the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline.

Strauss now explicitly draws his surprising but artfully prepared conclusion:

In spite of their disagreement Plato and Aristotle agree as to this, that the city is both closed to

⁹⁹ See pp. 63-70 above.

the whole and open to the whole, and they are agreed as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole.

Before commenting on this, the penultimate sentence of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics," let us review the way in which Strauss's argument in the second main part unfolds towards its end.

Strauss begins his account of Aristotle's founding of political science by discussing Aristotle's understanding of "the nature of political things" (21-23). By the end of that discussion, Strauss has indicated that Aristotle and the Socratics are--in at least one crucial respect--in agreement as to the nature of political things.¹⁰⁰ Strauss thus seems to soften the impression that Aristotle's political science and Socratic political philosophy stand in absolute opposition to one another and to prepare the reader for the conclusion that Aristotle founded his political science in opposition to but on the basis of Socratic political philosophy.¹⁰¹ But even the careful reader could be excused if he failed to deduce all the consequences which follow from the way in which Strauss narrows the difference between Socrates or Plato and Aristotle. For the longest (and central) part of Strauss's account of Aristotle's founding of political science is manifestly devoted to explaining how Aristotle, while agreeing in an important

¹⁰⁰ See pp. 71, 76-77 above.

¹⁰¹ See pp. 79-80 above.

way with the Socratic understanding of the nature of political things, nevertheless attempts to overcome the Socratic objections to an independent political science (23-28).¹⁰² We have, however, seen that Strauss brings his discussion of Aristotle's political science around by degrees to Socratic political philosophy. The final stage of that discussion reveals that Aristotle, no matter how successful he is in his attempt to establish an independent political science, is ultimately compelled or enabled to admit that his political science includes (not to say rests upon) a set of teachings that is remarkably Socratic in content (28-29).¹⁰³

Strauss concludes the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics" by returning to his discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle.¹⁰⁴ Whereas Strauss ends his account of Aristotle's founding of political science by bringing Aristotle's position into close proximity to that of the Socratics, he begins his second discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle by once again emphasizing the "difference between Plato and Aristotle."¹⁰⁵ In fact, the beginning of the second discussion appears to radicalize the difference between Plato

¹⁰² See *ibid.*

¹⁰³ See pp. 93, 207, 208 above.

¹⁰⁴ See pp. 25-27, 208 above.

¹⁰⁵ See pp. 209, 216-17 above.

and Aristotle. For at that point Strauss introduces the idea of the good into the discussion and thereby points to that part of the Socratic teaching which stands as both the highest Socratic objection to an independent political science and as the absolute limit to the concessions that Aristotle is willing to make to the point of view of the Socratics.¹⁰⁶ But Strauss immediately indicates that the Socratics are compelled to admit that knowledge of the idea of the good is unavailable. This admission threatens to reduce Socratic philosophizing to complete skepticism.¹⁰⁷ In order to demonstrate how the Socratics avoid the abyss of skepticism, Strauss turns to the Socratic discovery that the city is the cave. But Strauss's discussion of that discovery reveals that the Socratic understanding of the city or of the nature of political things could itself provide the basis for the establishment of an independent political science. Strauss thus brings his discussion of Socrates' and Plato's political philosophy around by degrees to Aristotle's political science. In the penultimate sentence of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics," Strauss for the first time explicitly emphasizes the agreement rather than the disagreement between Plato and Aristotle. He thereby transforms his second discussion of the

¹⁰⁶ See pp. 218-24 above.

¹⁰⁷ See pp. 233-35, 237-39 above.

relationship between Plato and Aristotle into a "harmonization of the opinions of Plato and Aristotle."¹⁰⁸

We can now turn to the penultimate sentence of the first section. Strauss tells us that Plato and Aristotle, "in spite of their disagreement," (1) agree "that the city is both closed to the whole and open to the whole," and (2) "are agreed as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole." Let us discuss each of these areas of agreement in turn.

We recall that Strauss indicates that Socrates or Plato holds that the very nature of the whole prevents the establishment of any independent disciplines: "The elusiveness of the whole necessarily affects the knowledge of every part" (21, emphasis added). But Strauss emphasize the impact of the Socratic or Platonic teaching about the whole on the attempt to establish a particular independent discipline: "The fact that each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole, obstructs the establishment of political philosophy or political science as an independent discipline" (21, emphasis added). On the one hand, Strauss

¹⁰⁸We cannot refrain from noting that even in his first discussion of the relationship between Plato and Aristotle, Strauss--in a small way--prepares such a harmonization. For the first discussion, while emphasizing the "difference between Plato and Aristotle," almost concludes by pointing to a most important agreement between Plato and Aristotle (see 21 and p. 70 above).

thus implies that if Aristotle is to establish any independent disciplines, he must demonstrate that Socrates' or Plato's account of the whole is mistaken: he must demonstrate that knowledge of the whole is available. But, on the other hand, Strauss also implies that if Aristotle is at least to establish political science as an independent discipline, he must at least demonstrate that Socrates' or Plato's account of the political sphere is mistaken: he must demonstrate that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole. We have seen that Strauss does not immediately indicate whether he believes that Aristotle would argue that it is possible to demonstrate that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole without also or first demonstrating that knowledge of the whole is available. Moreover, Strauss does not immediately indicate whether he believes that Socrates or Plato would grant that such a strategy could be successful.¹⁰⁹ But when Strauss first presents the procedure that Aristotle follows in attempting to overcome the Socratic objections to the establishment of an independent political science, he clearly states that Aristotle could found political science as an independent discipline because he held both that knowledge of the whole is available and that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole (25). We have

¹⁰⁹ See pp. 66-67 above.

seen, however, that Strauss does not adequately explain why he believes that the availability of knowledge of the whole is a necessary precondition for the establishment of an independent political science.¹¹⁰

Strauss first argues that Aristotle maintains that the political sphere is closed to the whole because the principles of prudence are known independently of theoretical science: the principles of prudence are supplied by moral virtue (25). But Strauss eventually reveals that Aristotle is eager to admit that "The moral-political sphere is . . . not unqualifiedly closed to theoretical science" and thus to the whole. Aristotle undertakes to found political science only because he knows that "The gentleman is by nature able to be affected by philosophy" (28). Strauss thus shows that Aristotle, while maintaining that the city is in one sense closed to the whole, must admit that in another sense the city is open to the whole.

Strauss reverses this procedure in his account of Socrates and Plato. He first indicates that Socrates or Plato maintains that the city, like every other part of the whole, is in a sense open to the whole (20-21). But Strauss eventually reveals that Socrates and Plato are eager to admit that the city is partly closed to the whole: Socrates and Plato can know that the philosophic life is the best life only because they know that "the city is the only

¹¹⁰See pp. 89-91 above.

whole within the whole or the only part of the whole whose essence can be wholly known" (29). And Socrates and Plato know that the city is completely intelligible only because they know that the city is the cave. Strauss thus shows that Socrates and Plato, while maintaining that the city is in one sense open to the whole, must admit that in another sense the city is closed to the whole.

Strauss concludes not only that Plato and Aristotle "agree that the city is both closed to the whole and open to the whole," but also that "they are agreed as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole."

We recall that Strauss first explicitly mentions the Socratic teaching about the cave only near the very end of the first section. We have, however, seen that Strauss's account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy is in fact a partial interpretation of the cave image.¹¹¹ In retrospect, we can see that that account makes clear how Socrates and Plato understand "the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole." Socrates and Plato understand the wall to have the character of nomos (cf. 19-20 and 29).¹¹²

¹¹¹See pp. 251-52 above.

¹¹²We note that it should now be obvious why Strauss is silent about the cave in his thematic account of Socrates' founding of political philosophy. (See pp. 245, 251-52 above.)

Strauss begins his account of Aristotle's founding of political science by discussing Aristotle's understanding of "the nature of political things." Strauss indicates that Aristotle's understanding of the nature of political things leads him to conclude that "the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason" and that "the nature of political things defeats to some extent not only reason but persuasion in any form" (22, 23). But this is true because the city as a whole is decisively dependent on law and law "does not owe its efficacy to reason to all or only to a small degree" (22). While Aristotle knows that law owes its dignity to the facts "that it is meant to be a dictate of reason and that the reason effective in the arts is lower than the reason effective in law as law should be" (23-24), he nonetheless teaches that "the sphere of human or political things" is constituted by an unwritten nomos that "may be in agreement with reason but is not as such dictated by reason" (26). Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato, understands the wall to have the character of nomos.

To what extent does the agreement between Plato and Aristotle as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole soften their disagreement as to the status of moral virtue (see 27)? It seems that Plato would understand Aristotle's discovery of moral virtue to be the discovery of a very good--perhaps the best

possible--cave and would understand Aristotle's account of the moral virtues to be a description of the moral-political terrain of that cave.¹¹³ We can say that Strauss at least indicates that Aristotle would substantially agree with this formulation.¹¹⁴ Strauss's interpretation of the ground of Aristotle's political science thus points to the pressing need for a reinterpretation of Aristotle's "assertion" "that the political association is by nature" (16-17).¹¹⁵

If Plato and Aristotle agree that the city is both closed to the whole and open to the whole, and if they agree as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole, then it appears that their disagreement concerning an independent political science cannot turn wholly on their disagreement concerning whether knowledge of the whole is or will ever be available. That is, Plato must admit that even if knowledge of the whole is impossible, that impossibility does not make impossible an independent political science. Thus Strauss seems to lead us to the conclusion that the "difference between Plato and Aristotle" with respect to the founding of an independent political science (21) does not, in fact,

¹¹³See pp. 225-28 above.

¹¹⁴See pp. 101-106 above.

¹¹⁵See "On Aristotle's Politics," pp. 41-45.

turn wholly on their different answers to "theoretical" questions concerning the whole and its knowability, but must, in the last analysis, be traced to their different answers to "practical" questions.¹¹⁶ While Aristotle believes that an independent political science is both "theoretically" possible and "practically" necessary or desirable, Plato believes that such a science is "theoretically" possible but "practically" unnecessary or undesirable.

Plato and Aristotle agree as to the nature of political things or as to the character of the wall separating the city from the rest of the whole. They also agree as to the consequence of the nature of political things or the character of the wall. Because the city as a whole is characterized by a specific recalcitrance to reason, both the city and philosophy require for their well-being a new kind of rhetoric as a servant to both the political art and the philosophic "art" (see 22). But Plato and Aristotle seem to disagree as to the form of that new rhetoric. Plato's new rhetoric takes the form of the Socratic dialogue. Aristotle's new rhetoric takes the form of the "practical" or "political" and "theoretical" (or less-"political") treatise. The difference between the forms of the new rhetoric mirrors the difference between the content of Plato's political philosophy and Aristotle's political

¹¹⁶See p. 67 above.

science (see 21). But the differences in both form and content are not simply intelligible in terms of a "theoretical" disagreement about the answers to the highest questions. Rather, they must also be understood in terms of a "practical" disagreement about the answer to the most urgent question: How can the philosopher "secure the conditions for his philosophizing here and now" (27)?

But perhaps we have gone too far down this road. For there can be no doubt that despite the fact that Strauss's discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science seems to point to the conclusions that Aristotle attempts to overcome the Socratic objections to an independent political science by demonstrating that the political sphere is in a sense closed to the whole and that Aristotle believes that he can demonstrate the truth of that proposition without also or first demonstrating that knowledge of the whole is available, and despite the fact that Strauss has now revealed that the Socratics would agree with Aristotle's contention, Strauss has nevertheless clearly indicated that Aristotle's belief that "theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the whole, i.e. of that by virtue of which 'all things' are a whole) is available" is a necessary precondition for the founding of political science (25).¹¹⁷ In what sense is it necessary?

¹¹⁷See pp. 89-91, 217-18 above.

Strauss provides us with the answer to this question in the last sentence of the first section of "On Aristotle's Politics":

Given the fact that the only political work proper of Plato is the Laws in which Socrates does not occur, one is tempted to draw this conclusion: the only reason why not Socrates but Aristotle became the founder of political science is that Socrates who spent his life in the unending ascent to the idea of the good and in awakening others to that ascent, lacked for this reason the leisure not only for political activity but even for founding political science (29, emphasis added).

The only reason why Socrates did not found political science is that he lacked leisure. For some reason, the Athenian stranger was able to find enough leisure to engage in political activity (see 14-15)¹¹⁸ and/or Plato was able to find enough leisure to write at least one emphatically political work. Perhaps, because of Socrates' help, they came to believe that they had made sufficient progress on their ascent to justify a brief and playful respite from the most philosophic and most serious part of their lives (see 18). But it seems that they--no less than Socrates--did not believe that their progress was sufficient to allow them to engage in the highest form of political activity, or to allow them to undertake the arduous task of founding political science. Aristotle, on the other hand, found leisure for the founding of political science because he believed that "theoretical wisdom (knowledge of the whole

¹¹⁸ Also see The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws," p. 1.

. . .) is available." Strauss thus indicates that from a Socratic point of view we owe the founding of political science to a "theoretical-practical" error on the part of the Philosopher. But Strauss also indicates that that political science would be regarded by the Socratics as a welcome "practical" complement to "Socratic philosophizing" (21). Aristotle's political science is the completion of that part of the Socratic task which is in principle capable of being brought to completion.

Strauss has told us that "It is the greatest proof of Socrates' piety that he limited himself to the study of the human things. His wisdom is knowledge of ignorance because it is pious and it is pious because it is knowledge of ignorance" (20). Here Strauss tells us that Socrates' unending ascent prevented him from engaging either in ordinary political activity or in that extraordinary political activity which is the founding of political science. But "Socrates himself" (14) tells the Athenians that he was prevented by his daimonion from engaging in political activity.¹¹⁹ It seems that one demand of Socrates' piety compelled or enabled him to found political philosophy and that another demand of his piety prevented him from founding political science. Nevertheless, there was in the case of Socrates a marvelous coincidence between the demands of

¹¹⁹ Plato, Apology of Socrates 31c3-32a3. See The Argument and the Action of Plato's "Laws," p. 1.

piety and the eros for the good. The end of Strauss's discussion of Aristotle's founding of political science leads us back to the beginning of that discussion. Reflection on Aristotle's founding of political science leads us back to the problem of Socrates.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is for the most part a bibliography of works cited in the dissertation. It does, however, include selected editions and translations of, and commentaries on, some of the works of Aristotle and Plato consulted by the author but not cited in the dissertation.

The bibliography is divided into five sections:

1. Works of Leo Strauss
2. Works of Aristotle
3. Other Classical Works
4. Medieval Works
5. Other Works

In section 1, the "Introduction" and the three chapters of The City and Man are listed under separate entries. For a complete bibliography of the writings of Leo Strauss published between 1921 and 1964 see Joseph Cropsey, ed., Ancients and Moderns: Essays on the Tradition of Political Philosophy in Honor of Leo Strauss (New York: Basic Books, 1964), pp. 317-22.

In section 2, the works of Aristotle are arranged alphabetically, by title. The first entry for each title is the edition used by the author for citations and

translations. The subsequent entries for each title are modern editions and commentaries cited in the dissertation or consulted by the author, and modern translations consulted by the author. These entries are arranged chronologically, by date of publication.

In the list of Plato's works in section 3, the first entry is the edition of Plato's collected works used by the author for citations and translations. The subsequent entries are modern editions of and commentaries on separate Platonic works cited in the dissertation, and modern translations of separate Platonic works consulted by the author. These entries are arranged alphabetically, by title. Where there is more than one entry for a given title, the entries are arranged chronologically, by date of publication.

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