

# Leo Strauss

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (1964)

Seminar in Political Philosophy: Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

A course given in the spring quarter, 1964

Department of Political Science, The University of Chicago

Edited by Ronna Burger

With the assistance of Aaron Roberts, Brian Bitar, Lindsay Knight, Peter Walford, and Gayle McKeen.

Ronna Burger is Professor of Philosophy and Sizeler Professor of Jewish Philosophy at Tulane University. She is author of *Aristotle's Dialogue with Socrates: On the Nicomachean Ethics* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) and other works on ancient philosophy.

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## Table of Contents

Editor's Introduction, pp. i-vii

Note on The Leo Strauss Transcript Project, pp. viii-x

Editorial Headnote, p. x

Session 1: Introduction, pp. 1-12

Session 2: Book I, chapters 1-2, pp. 13-36

Session 3: Book I, chapters 2-5, pp. 37-62

Session 4: Book I, chapters 6-8, pp. 63-90

Session 5: Book I, chapters 9-11, pp. 91-114

Session 6: Book I, chapters 12-14, pp. 115-144

Session 7: Book I, chapter 15-Book II, chapter 3, pp. 145-170

Session 8: Book II, chapters 4-7, pp. 171-200

Session 9: Book II, chapters 7-11, pp. 201-220

Session 10: Book II, chapters 15-21, pp. 221-242

Session 11: Book II, chapters 22-23, pp. 243-266

Session 12: Book II, chapters 23-25, pp. 267-288

Session 13: Book III, chapters 1-7, pp. 289-312

Session 14: Book III, chapters 8-11, pp. 313-337

Session 15: Book III, chapters 12-15, pp. 338-364

Session 16: Book III, chapters 16-18, pp. 365-388

## Leo Strauss, Seminar on Political Philosophy: Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

Ronna Burger

In the spring quarter 1964 Strauss devoted his political philosophy seminar to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. In the fall '63 he had taught Plato's *Gorgias* and the previous spring Aristotle's *Ethics*. He begins the course on the *Rhetoric* by reminding students of the *Gorgias*, from which he drew a "tentative definition" of rhetoric as "politically effective speech on politically relevant matters."<sup>i</sup> Strauss recalls, at the same time, Aristotle's claim at the end of the *Ethics*—that the sophists display a deep misunderstanding of the political art by reducing it to rhetoric. In fact, this is just as much a misunderstanding of rhetoric: politically effective speech, no less than politically effective action, requires recognition of the limits of the powers of speech. For Strauss this proves to be an important key to the essential nature of sophistry and its contrast with philosophy.<sup>ii</sup>

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* clearly has its place in the context of Strauss's study of classical political philosophy. But the immediately preceding course (winter '64) from which he turned to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* was on Hobbes's *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. As he knew from the time of his early study of Hobbes, "It would be difficult to find another classical work whose importance for Hobbes's political philosophy can be compared with that of the *Rhetoric*." By a comparison of passages from works of Hobbes with Aristotle's account of the passions, Strauss demonstrates that "the central chapters of Hobbes's anthropology . . . betray in style and contents that their author was a zealous reader, not to say a disciple of the *Rhetoric*."<sup>iii</sup>

It is a contrast with Hobbes, on the other hand, that provides Strauss with one way of introducing the central issue of this course, which concerns the nature and status of rhetorical reasoning. Hobbes is held up as representative of the new political science, which "claims to have theoretical certainty regarding the most important practical questions, practical political questions."<sup>iv</sup> Now, rhetoric belongs to this sphere, since it deals with things about which we

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<sup>i</sup> This formula comes up for discussion in sessions 2 and 3, and again in sessions 10 and 15.

<sup>ii</sup> See *Nicomachean Ethics* 1181a12-15; cf. *Rhetoric* 1356a27--30. "So far from being -sts—believing in the omnipotence of speech—were blind to the sternness of politics" (*The City and Man* [Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964], 23). Cf. "Niccolo Machiavelli," in *History of Political Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), 291-292.

<sup>iii</sup> Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: its Basis and Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 35-43. Strauss highlights this analysis in a 1935 letter to Hans-Georg Gadamer and Gerhard Krüger, in *Hobbes's Critique of Religion and Related Writings*, trans. Gabriel Bartlett and Svetozar Minkov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 160-161. One ground for Hobbes's appreciation is suggested by a comment Strauss makes in this course about the tone of the *Rhetoric*: "In the *Ethics* Aristotle is concerned with the virtues and vices, and above all with the virtues. The seamy side of man does not come out clearly in the *Ethics*, and since the seamy side is politically very important, the student of politics has to learn quite a few things . . . this is a side we must never forget" (session 8).

<sup>iv</sup> Strauss offers this description in session 13 in the context of recommending a project to students: it would be of great interest, he advises, to use Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to approach a study of the *Federalist*

deliberate, for which there are no arts (*Rhetoric* 1357a3-6). What exactly is the nature of the reasoning rhetoric practices in this sphere and what makes it necessary? Would it ever be possible, or desirable, for it to be replaced entirely by a science that claims, or aims at, theoretical certainty?

Strauss comes to the course on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* with this guiding question of his own in mind. And as he pursues its thread throughout the term, his own familiar interests shine through: Churchill provides the evidence for Aristotle's claim that deliberative rhetoric is more serious and noble than forensic; Perry Mason and detective stories furnish support for Aristotle's insightful analysis of forensic argumentation.<sup>v</sup> Yet as one watches Strauss work his way, over sixteen sessions, through the text of the *Rhetoric* as a whole, one sees just what it means to try to understand an author as he understood himself.

Responding to a student's paper at the beginning of one session, Strauss observes that a truly philosophic interpretation would aim to go behind the established tradition and look at the *Rhetoric* freshly, trying to grasp the point of view from which Aristotle looks at the human things in this work.<sup>vi</sup> The few times when Strauss cannot accept a point of Aristotle's—for instance, the claim that hatred stands in contrast with anger and is never accompanied by pain (1352a1-13)—he makes every effort to explain it. When one of the students wonders if they aren't being presumptuous in doubting Aristotle's word, Strauss responds, "But you must admit it is extremely rare that I dare to say here Aristotle was not simply sound."<sup>vii</sup> In his writings, it is not always easy to discern Strauss's assessment of Aristotle. Commenting here on two chapters that are "very thorny," Strauss expresses amazement at Aristotle's intricate analysis of rhetorical logic: "I think one can also say that if he had written only the *Rhetoric* he would be one of the greatest men of science there ever were, even if only the *Rhetoric*. But it's of course the same quality of his mind which enabled him to write his other books."<sup>viii</sup>

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*Papers*, which, although "already influenced by Hobbean political science, remains an "eminently sober book." Strauss takes up this task himself, very briefly, in the final session of the term.

<sup>v</sup> Churchill first comes up in session 2, to illustrate the superior rank of deliberative rhetoric. In the final session Strauss praises a student for appealing to Churchill and thus trying to understand the political things by first looking to the highest—although, he adds, it is necessary to consider the lowest as well (session 16). Discussing Aristotle's account of what the lawcourt speaker must have in mind, Strauss encapsulates the point based on what he has learned from detective stories: "motive and opportunity" (session 6). "I have some rudiments of the poetics of the detective story," he later tells the students, "but I don't believe I will ever put them together" (session 14).

<sup>vi</sup> Session 10.

<sup>vii</sup> One hypothesis Strauss tries out—"Perhaps Aristotle was such a wonderful man that he never in his life felt hatred"—he rejects immediately as "not a very good excuse, for a philosopher not an excuse at all, but which at least may repair the damage which I have done" (session 8). Responding to a student's paper at the beginning of another class, Strauss offers this advice for interpretation: "There is one rule: don't try to be clever. I think that is rather obvious. But the more subtle rule, the more important rule, is this: Try *not* to be clever. Only then will you be truly clever where it is necessary to be clever, if I may use this somewhat derogatory word 'clever' now" (session 11).

<sup>viii</sup> Session 4. Strauss expresses particular enthusiasm when the class is examining Aristotle's account of the characteristics of youth and they come upon his definition of wittiness as "learned insolence" (1389b11-12): "Is this not a beautiful statement? I tell you this. I prefer this sentence to ten pounds of modern psychology"—which they had just been discussing (session 9). When the subject of "the

The central issue concerning the nature and status of rhetorical reasoning is introduced in the first session of the course, inspired by the opening sentence of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic; for both have to do with matters that are in a manner within the cognizance of all men and not confined to any special science."<sup>ix</sup> While rhetoric may have the specific function of producing persuasion, it shares with dialectic the character of reasoning based on generally accepted opinions, the *endoxa*, not restricted to any particular subject matter. Aristotle goes to great lengths to emphasize the artful character of rhetorical reasoning and its relation to dialectic by highlighting its essential instrument, the rhetorical syllogism or the enthymeme.<sup>x</sup> But for the successful use of such argumentation, the persuasive speaker must gain trust in his own character and elicit the appropriate emotional disposition in his listeners. The acknowledgement of that necessity leads Aristotle to revise his initial characterization of rhetoric: while it is "a sort of outgrowth of dialectic," it is also concerned with the study of character, "to which it is just to apply the name of politics."<sup>xi</sup> Rhetoric, as Strauss puts it, "has two roots. One foot it has in dialectics, so to speak, and the other in politics."<sup>xii</sup> Aristotle arrives at his conclusion about the political character of rhetoric on the basis of its concern with the means of persuasion—appeal to character and emotion—which could be applied to any subject matter; yet the most salient feature of the treatise is the restriction of its subject matter to public speaking in the city.<sup>xiii</sup> That territory is indicated by Aristotle's supposedly exhaustive analysis of three species: deliberative rhetoric, practiced in the assembly; forensic, which belongs in the lawcourt; and the ceremonial display speech of epideictic rhetoric. The three species are governed by the fundamental principles of the good, the just, and the noble or beautiful, but only insofar as they are applied to the kind of speech involved in particular political institutions. That is clear, at least, in the case of deliberative and forensic rhetoric, while epideictic rhetoric has a

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ridiculous" comes up later, Strauss analyzes youthful pranks, which he illustrates by recollecting an episode involving his fellow students and their dignified professor Edmund Husserl (session 14).

<sup>ix</sup> In the summary statement with which the second chapter begins, the claim of rhetoric to be universal takes a more explicitly theoretical form: "Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever."

<sup>x</sup> When the class comes, rather late in the term, to Aristotle's thematic analysis of the logic of the enthymeme, Strauss notes that they must treat it as the core of the treatise, "whether we like it or not. Someone might find the discussion of the passions much more interesting and rewarding, but from Aristotle's point of view there can be no doubt about that" (session 8).

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* 1356a25-27 (trans. Joe Sachs) (Focus Publishers, 2009). "This is why," Aristotle adds, "rhetoric even slips into a disguise in the shape of politics," using the verb, *hupoduesthai*, that Socrates uses to describe how rhetoric takes on the guise of justice, construed as the punitive art (*Gorgias* 464b ff.).

<sup>xii</sup> This statement is from session 14, where Strauss speaks of the "two roots" of rhetoric as "the most obvious difficulty regarding the whole work which we have observed." What especially puzzles him is a related problem: Why does Aristotle compare rhetorical with dialectical or demonstrative reasoning, which are theoretical, but not with practical reasoning, to which it would seem most closely related? In particular, as Strauss observes here and elsewhere, "Although Aristotle does not say anything about it, or because he doesn't say anything about it, he forces us to raise the question, what is the relation of rhetoric to prudence?"

<sup>xiii</sup> The contrast is illustrated by the difference between the description Plato's Socrates gives of his turn to a new *manner* of examining the truth of the beings (*Phaedo* 99d-100a) and Aristotle's description of Socrates' turn away from the whole of nature to the particular subject of ethical matters (*Metaphysics* I.987b1-2).

more indeterminate place, in keeping perhaps with the ambiguity of the *kalon*—the beautiful or noble.<sup>xiv</sup>

Strauss seems willing to accept, throughout the course, Aristotle's tripartite framework, presumably as the necessary premise for a study of the *Rhetoric* on its own terms. He does sometimes question whether Aristotle's categories are exhaustive.<sup>xv</sup> In particular, he asks a number of times whether Aristotle has any place for what one might call "exhortatory rhetoric," speech intended to make the listener more virtuous.<sup>xvi</sup> But he only hints at what seems to be the more fundamental question: what is Aristotle's intention in apparently restricting rhetoric to its political use in the narrow sense? Can that provide an adequate understanding of the art of speaking, or the art of writing?

This question is inevitably raised by the comprehensive view of rhetoric that Strauss himself expresses in *The City and Man*, published the same year as he gave this course:

There are two kinds of rhetoric, the erotic rhetoric described in the *Phaedrus*, of which Socrates was a master and which is surely not represented by Thrasymachus, and the other kind which is represented by Thrasymachus. That other kind consists of three forms: forensic, deliberative, and epideictic.<sup>xvii</sup>

Aristotle's tripartite set of forensic, deliberative, and epideictic can, then, or must be understood as one part of the art of rhetoric—the Thrasymachean part—over against the erotic rhetoric of Socrates described in the *Phaedrus*. In formulating this comprehensive view, Strauss seems to

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<sup>xiv</sup> Commenting on Aristotle's observation in his analysis of epideictic rhetoric that "men, seriously or not, often praise not only a man or a god but even inanimate things or any ordinary animal" (1366a28-32), Strauss concludes that "[t]here is no subject which is as such outside of the sphere of epideictic rhetoric" (session 5). He does think of the paradigmatic audience of Aristotelian epideictic speech as "a crowd in Olympia, or wherever it may be," addressed by a speaker like Isocrates or Gorgias, but he also notes Aristotle's claim that epideictic style is especially suited to writing (session 15).

<sup>xv</sup> Strauss advises the students, late in the course: "We must not accept without examination the now accepted pigeonholes . . . Nor can we accept without any further ado the pigeonholes of Aristotle, if we can use this loose word 'pigeonhole.'" But, he adds, "Aristotle's pigeonholes, to repeat this expression, have only one very great advantage. They are not our pigeonholes. And by considering them, by entering into their spirit, we achieve some liberation from the pigeonholes which otherwise would keep us under control. That is what I meant by the atmosphere, the air. We become aware of the air in which we live if we wander into a different air." To emphasize the difficulty of gaining that awareness, Strauss cites "a vulgar but very telling German, especially Berlinian, proverb: one does not taste one's own saliva" (session 15).

<sup>xvi</sup> Strauss recalls the experience Plato's Gorgias reports, about being able to help his brother the physician by using rhetoric to persuade the reluctant patient to do what the doctor prescribes as good for him. But he wonders whether Aristotle has a place for rhetoric that serves to promote moral virtue (session 5). In the discussion of shame, Strauss stops and asks, "Is this not perhaps the equivalent in Aristotle—it occurs to me just now—of the exhortatory rhetoric for which I was looking in vain?" (session 9). Later, to clarify what he has found absent in Aristotle's treatise, Strauss reads from Roger Bacon's account of the rhetorical function of "bending the will" toward virtue (session 12). Finally, he thinks he sees what he has been looking for when he reconsiders the role of epideictic rhetoric's praise of virtue (session 15).

<sup>xvii</sup> *The City and Man*, 134.

have in mind the categories he learned from Alfarabi, who understood Plato's recognition of the need to combine "the way of Socrates, which is appropriate for the philosopher's relation to the elite" with "the way of Thrasymachus, which is appropriate for the philosopher's relation to the vulgar."<sup>xviii</sup>

Strauss addresses the need for a kind of rhetoric that philosophy cannot itself provide near the end of *Thoughts on Machiavelli*:

The city understood in its closedness to philosophy is the *demos* in the philosophic sense . . . the philosophers and the *demos* in the sense indicated are separated by a gulf; their ends differ radically. The gulf can be bridged only by a noble rhetoric, by a certain kind of noble rhetoric which we may call for the time being accusatory or punitive rhetoric. Philosophy is incapable of supplying this kind of rhetoric. It cannot do more than to sketch its outlines. The execution must be left to orators or poets.<sup>xix</sup>

In a note to this passage, Strauss explains: "The quest for this kind of noble rhetoric, as distinguished from the other kind discussed in the *Phaedrus*, is characteristic of the *Gorgias*."<sup>xx</sup> On the Platonic understanding, that is, the punitive rhetoric of the *Gorgias* is the non-Socratic alternative to the erotic rhetoric of the *Phaedrus*.<sup>xxi</sup> How, then, is that non-Socratic rhetoric related to the sort that Strauss identifies in *The City and Man* with the political rhetoric, as Aristotle understands it, of assembly, lawcourt, or ceremonial display speech? Perhaps this is only a more general form of Strauss's particular question in this course—whether Aristotle has a place for accusatory or exhortatory rhetoric: at the conclusion of the *Gorgias*, Socrates' criticism of contemporary political rhetoricians turns on their failure to practice an accusatory rhetoric that would make the city better.<sup>xxii</sup>

After referring to the punitive rhetoric of the *Gorgias*, Strauss adds in the same note in *Thoughts on Machiavelli* one other reference, to *Metaphysics* 1074b1-4, where Aristotle speaks of the traditional, anthropomorphic gods and their political function. Strauss refers to this passage as well in a discussion, concerning Aristotle's *Politics*, of the need for the law to 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.'" Because of the city's specific recalcitrance to reason, Strauss explains, "it requires for its well-being a rhetoric different from forensic and deliberative rhetoric as a servant to the political art."<sup>xxiii</sup> In this role, at least, religion, or "civil theology," looks like the ultimate expression of the punitive non-philosophic rhetoric that is needed to

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<sup>xviii</sup> This Platonic correction of the way of Socrates, Strauss argues, is what first makes possible appreciation or legitimation of laws. See "How Farabi Read Plato's Laws," *What Is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 153.

<sup>xix</sup> *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), 296.

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid.* 345 n. 219

<sup>xxi</sup> This is the basis of Seth Benardete's book, *The Rhetoric of Morality and Philosophy: Plato's "Gorgias" and "Phaedrus"* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>xxii</sup> See especially *Gorgias* 502e- 503d.

<sup>xxiii</sup> *The City and Man*, 22.

bridge the gulf between philosophy and the city. Is there a place for it in the political territory of Aristotle's deliberative, forensic, and epideictic rhetoric?<sup>xxiv</sup>

Near the end of the last session of this course, Strauss stands back and reflects on the crucial role of rhetoric as *the* means of bridging the gulf between philosophy and the city. The issue comes up in the context of asking why the status of rhetoric has diminished so much in our time. Strauss offers the explanation that philosophy itself, as the tool of enlightenment and the servant of technological progress, bridges or even eliminates that gulf between itself and the city. This is a culmination of the problem he had been pursuing from the first session, when he spoke of contemporary social science and its aim to replace the need for practical wisdom with its own expertise. That aim would seem to entail, at the same time, dispensing with rhetoric, which puts to work the argumentation of practical reasoning for the purpose of leading an audience to a particular conclusion. But even if such practical argumentation could be replaced by scientific knowledge, the expert would still have to gain the trust of his audience, as long as their consent is required. We could do away with rhetoric, Strauss announces at one point, only if we gave truth serum to every speaker!<sup>xxv</sup> The indispensability of rhetoric is due to the need for persuasion, and persuasion is needed as long as participants in deliberation are free to come to a decision of their own. "The complete rule of science," Strauss concludes, "would be the destruction of freedom in every sense."<sup>xxvi</sup> In a lawcourt or deliberative assembly, he insists, scientists can never replace the judges. To understand this fully, Strauss admits, is a very long task, but "it has to do with the simple question, what is man? [and] whether man can be manipulated as brutes, plants, and other things can—and even if we could, whether it would be desirable."<sup>xxvii</sup> Rhetoric looks like a last resort when demonstrative argumentation is not possible; but Strauss's inquiry leads him to the conclusion that rhetoric and freedom are coextensive.

This course understandably ends with Strauss's reflections on the role of rhetoric in the context of the problematic relation of philosophy and the city. This is an issue more obvious, he notes, in Plato than in Aristotle. One wishes one could pursue with him the question of this difference: does Aristotle, in his treatise on the rhetorical art, deliberately ignore or suppress Plato's Socratic—that is, erotic—art of speaking and, if so, for what reason? If by that art Plato means philosophy, or an essential tool of philosophy, does Aristotle reject that understanding? Does Aristotle have his own way of practicing Socratic rhetoric as Strauss describes it in the broadest sense?

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<sup>xxiv</sup> While not explicitly addressing this question, the class on one occasion takes up a remark of Aristotle's about the rhetorician's appeal to the gods: why, they consider, does Aristotle speak only of confidence in the gods on the part of those who are angry about having been treated unjustly (1383b3-8), but not fear of the gods by those who think they are acting unjustly (1383b3-8)? Strauss offers the suggestion that the deliberative orator might have to speak of the gods in order to arouse confidence, and in support he calls on Thucydides' *History*, "which is after all a terrific document of rhetoric among other things . . . . It is the Spartans, who believed themselves to have been wronged, that are the ones who call on the gods all the time as the avengers of Athenian injustice. The Athenians do not do so" (session 8).

<sup>xxv</sup> Session 3.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Strauss reminds the students in this context of Tacitus's observation that the flourishing period of rhetoric was before the Roman emperors (session 3).

<sup>xxvii</sup> Session 16.

Socratic rhetoric is emphatically just. It is animated by the spirit of social responsibility. It is based on the premise that there is a disproportion between the intransigent quest for truth and the requirements of society, or that not all truths are always harmless. Society will always try to tyrannize thought. Socratic rhetoric is the classic means for ever again frustrating these attempts.<sup>xxviii</sup>

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<sup>xxviii</sup> Strauss, *On Tyranny*, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael Roth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 27.

## The Leo Strauss Transcript Project

Leo Strauss is well known as a thinker and writer, but he also had tremendous impact as a teacher. In the transcripts of his courses one can see Strauss commenting on texts, including many he wrote little or nothing about, and responding generously to student questions and objections. The transcripts, amounting to more than twice the volume of Strauss's published work, will add immensely to the material available to scholars and students of Strauss's work.

In the early 1950s mimeographed typescripts of student notes of Strauss's courses were distributed among his students. In winter 1954, the first recording, of his course on Natural Right, was transcribed and distributed to students. Professor Herbert J. Storing obtained a grant from the Reim Foundation to support the taping and transcription, which resumed on a regular basis in the winter of 1956 with Strauss's course "Historicism and Modern Relativism." Of the 39 courses Strauss taught at the University of Chicago from 1958 until his departure in 1968, 34 were recorded and transcribed. After Strauss retired from the University, recording of his courses continued at Claremont Men's College in the spring of 1968 and the fall and spring of 1969 (although the tapes for his last two courses there have not been located), and at St. John's College for the four years until his death in October 1973.

The surviving original audio recordings vary widely in quality and completeness. When Strauss moved away from the microphone the volume of his voice may diminish to the point of inaudibility; the microphone sometimes failed to pick up the voices of students asking questions and often captured doors and windows opening and closing, papers shuffling, and traffic in the street. When the tape was changed, recording stopped, leaving gaps. When Strauss's remarks went, as they often did, beyond the two hours, the tape ran out. After they had been transcribed, the audiotapes were sometimes reused, leaving the audio record very incomplete. And over time the audiotape deteriorated. Beginning in the late 1990s, Stephen Gregory, then the administrator of the University's John M. Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy funded by the John M. Olin Foundation, initiated the digital remastering of the surviving tapes by Craig Harding of September Media to ensure their preservation, improve their audibility, and make possible their eventual publication. This remastering received financial support from the Olin Center and was undertaken under the supervision of Joseph Cropsey, then Strauss's literary executor. Gregory continued this project as administrator of the University's Center for the Study of the Principles of the American Founding, funded by the Jack Miller Center, and brought it to completion in 2011 as the administrator of the University's Leo Strauss Center with the aid of a grant from the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The audiofiles are available at the Strauss Center website: <https://leostrausscenter.uchicago.edu/courses>.

Strauss permitted the taping and transcribing to go forward, but he did not check the transcripts or otherwise participate in the project. Accordingly, Strauss's close associate and colleague Joseph Cropsey originally put the copyright in his own name, though he assigned copyright to the Estate of Leo Strauss in 2008. Beginning in 1958 a headnote was placed at the beginning of each transcript, which read: "This transcription is a written record of essentially oral material, much of which developed spontaneously in the classroom and none of which was prepared with publication in mind. The transcription is made available to a limited number of interested persons, with the understanding that no use will be made of it that is inconsistent with the private

and partly informal origin of the material. Recipients are emphatically requested not to seek to increase the circulation of the transcription. This transcription has not been checked, seen, or passed on by the lecturer.” In 2008, Strauss’s heir, his daughter Jenny Strauss, asked Nathan Tarcov, who had been the director of the University’s Olin Center and later its Center for the Study of the Principles of the American Founding, to succeed Joseph Cropsey, who had faithfully served as Strauss’s literary executor for the 35 years since his death. They agreed that because of the widespread circulation of the old, often inaccurate and incomplete transcripts and the continuing interest in Strauss’s thought and teaching, it would be a service to interested scholars and students to proceed with publication. They were encouraged by the fact that Strauss himself signed a contract with Bantam Books to publish four of the transcripts although in the end none were published.

The University’s Leo Strauss Center, established in 2008, launched a project, presided over by its director Nathan Tarcov and managed by Stephen Gregory, to correct the old transcripts on the basis of the remastered audiofiles as they became available, transcribe those audiofiles not previously transcribed, and annotate and edit for readability all the transcripts including those for which no audiofiles survived. This project was supported by grants from the Winiarski Family Foundation, Mr. Richard S. Shiffirin and Mrs. Barbara Z. Schiffirin, Earhart Foundation, and the Hertog Foundation, and contributions from numerous other donors. The Strauss Center was ably assisted in its fundraising efforts by Nina Botting-Herbst and Patrick McCusker, staff in the Office of the Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences at the University. The transcripts based upon the remastered tapes are considerably more accurate and complete than the original transcripts; the new Hobbes transcript, for example, is twice as long as the old one. Senior scholars familiar with both Strauss’s work and the texts he taught were commissioned as editors, with preliminary work done in most cases by student editorial assistants.

The goal in editing the transcripts has been to preserve Strauss’s original words as much as possible while making the transcripts easier to read. Strauss’s impact (and indeed his charm) as a teacher is revealed in the sometimes informal character of his remarks. Sentence fragments that might not be appropriate in academic prose have been kept; some long and rambling sentences have been divided; some repeated clauses or words have been deleted. A clause that breaks the syntax or train of thought may have been moved elsewhere in the sentence or paragraph. In rare cases sentences within a paragraph may have been reordered. Where no audiofiles survived, attempts have been made to correct likely mistranscriptions. Changes of all these kinds have been indicated. (Changes to the old transcripts based on the remastered audiofiles, however, are not indicated.) Changes and deletions (other than spelling, italicization, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing) are recorded in endnotes attached to the word or punctuation prior to the change or deletion. Brackets within the text record insertions. Ellipses in transcripts without audiofiles have been preserved. Whether they indicate deletion of something Strauss said or the trailing off of his voice or serve as a dash cannot be determined. Ellipses that have been added to transcripts with audiofiles indicate that the words are inaudible. Administrative details regarding paper or seminar topics or meeting rooms or times have been deleted without being noted, but reading assignments have been retained. Citations are provided to all passages so readers can read the transcripts with the texts in hand, and footnotes have been provided to identify persons, texts, and events to which Strauss refers.

Readers should make allowance for the oral character of the transcripts. There are careless phrases, slips of the tongue, repetitions, and possible mistranscriptions. However enlightening the transcripts are, they cannot be regarded as the equivalent of works that Strauss himself wrote for publication.

Nathan Tarcov, Editor-in Chief  
Gayle McKeen, Managing Editor

August 2014

### **Editorial Headnote, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (spring 1964)**

This transcript is based upon existing audio files of the course and the original transcription (see general headnote). The course had sixteen sessions, for all of which audio recordings are available and can be found on the Leo Strauss Center website. The transcript includes a number of passages that were not derived from the re-mastered audiotapes but from the original transcription, and these passages are indicated in the transcript by footnotes on the relevant pages.

The course was taught in seminar form, with each class other than the first session beginning with the reading of a student paper, followed by Strauss's comments on it, and then reading aloud of portions of the text followed by Strauss's comments and responses to student questions and comments. The reading of the student papers in Strauss's courses was never taped nor transcribed, but the audiotapes and original transcript of this course on the *Rhetoric* record Strauss's comments on the papers.

When texts were read aloud in class, the transcript presents the words as they appear in the editions of the texts assigned for the course, and original spelling has been retained. Citations are included for all passages.

The text assigned for the course was Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. John H. Freese (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1926).

This transcript was edited by Ronna Burger, with the assistance of Aaron Roberts, Brian Bitar, Lindsay Knight, and Peter Walford. The audiofiles were remastered by Craig Harding of September Audio. The identity of the typist of the original transcript is unknown.

For general information about the history of the transcription project and the editing guidelines, see the general note to the transcripts above.

**Session 1: March 30, 1964<sup>i</sup>**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] The power of speaking is not the same as the art of speaking. The art of speaking is elaborated by the sophists.<sup>i</sup> As we learn from Aristotle at the end of the *Ethics*, the sophists view the political art as identical to rhetoric.<sup>ii</sup> Now what Aristotle proposes, that the art of statesmanship is more than rhetoric. What do you think of the giant error of the sophists—[At this point Strauss begins a discussion of the *Gorgias*, which is inaudible. It is primarily a summary of the class taught on the *Gorgias* in 1963<sup>iii</sup>]<sup>iv</sup>—

Now let us read a few passages from the *Topics* to get first an access to this. I have brought here for the benefit of the class, and more directly of Mr. Reinken, a copy. And we shall begin here<sup>2</sup> at *Topics* 101a25.

**Mr. Reinken:** “After the above remarks the next point is to explain for how many and for what purposes this treatise is useful.”

**LS:** “This treatise.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “They are three in number, mental training, conversations, and the philosophic sciences.”

**LS:** The philosophic sciences include for Aristotle what we now call natural sciences. Continue.

**Mr. Reinken:** “That it is useful for mental training is obvious on the face of it; for, if we have a method, we shall be able more easily to argue about the subject proposed. It is useful for conversations, because, having enumerated the opinions of the majority, we shall be dealing with people on the basis of their own opinions—”

**LS:** Let us say more literally “the opinions of the *many*.” That is not quite the same as “the majority.” The point of view is different. In other words what he meant—can you read the sentence again?

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<sup>i</sup> The authority for the dates of each session is the audio as received by the editor in CD-ROM format.

<sup>ii</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 73, 1926), Book X, chap. 9, 1181a12-17. Citations will be provided for works with editions currently available in print.

<sup>iii</sup> Strauss taught a seminar on the *Gorgias* at the University of Chicago in the fall quarter of 1963.

<sup>iv</sup> The material up to this point is not on the remastered tape, but on the original typescript as received by the editors. However, the paper version of the original transcript (which has been in limited circulation among Strauss's students) did not contain this section. Perhaps it is found on another old version of the transcript, or on the original audiotapes, but has since been lost in remastering or transfers.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is useful for conversations, because, having enumerated the opinions of the many,<sup>v</sup> we shall be dealing with people on the basis of their own opinions, not of those of others, changing the course of any argument which they appear to us to be using wrongly.”<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** But you take out one part that makes it somewhat clearer. “Every argument ad hominem is a dialectical argument.” Now what is an argument ad hominem? Some of you will know that. What is an argument ad hominem?

**Student:** An argument directed against an individual, rather than a topic.

**LS:** That is not precise enough. The premise from which you start is granted by the opposing member of the conversation. You argue from these premises and it is irrelevant for this argument whether these premises are true or not. But it is sufficient, however, for refuting it, if he grants you something. What he grants you is the premise. And then you will draw inferences from it; and, if the inferences are destructive of his position, then it is refuted. To that extent the argument can be very valuable, but it is not of course<sup>3</sup> a scientific argument proper, because it does not start from premises that are true. And therefore we see how<sup>vii</sup> . . . the connection with the Platonic dialogues. Is an argument within an individual, or a kind of individual? There is a give and take? In a scientific exposition there is not necessarily a give and take. There can be a coherent exposition without any exchange. Please go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

For the philosophic sciences it is useful, because, if we are able to raise difficulties on both sides, we shall more easily discern both truth and falsehood on every point. Further, it is useful in connexion with the ultimate bases of each science; for it is impossible to discuss them at all on the basis of the principles peculiar to the science in question, since the principles are primary in relation to everything else, and it is necessary to deal with them through the generally accepted opinions on each point. This process belongs peculiarly, or<sup>viii</sup> most appropriately to dialectic; for, being of the nature of an investigation, it lies along the path to the principles of all methods of inquiry.<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Now let us try to understand that. The scientific syllogism is the one which starts from true premises without any additional authority. But how do you arrive at the true premise? More radically stated: How do you arrive at the highest principles of the sciences? You cannot possibly derive them from something higher. Then they wouldn't be first principles. You can arrive at them only by ascending from what is generally accepted. Not that what is generally accepted is simply true, but it is the only starting point which you have. The argument leading up from generally accepted truths on the subject to the true principles is also dialectics. And therefore

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<sup>v</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “the many” what is rendered as “the majority” in Forster's Loeb translation of the *Topics* used in the seminar.

<sup>vi</sup> Aristotle, *Topics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick & E. S. Forster (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 391, 1960), I. 2, 101a25-30.

<sup>vii</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript made from the original reel-to-reel tape, which was lost in transfers or re-mastering. The re-mastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>viii</sup> End of passage from the original transcript. Remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>ix</sup> *Topics*, I. 2, 101a33-b4.

dialectic in an Aristotelian sense has this fundamental ambiguity. In one sense, take the enterprise as a whole, it is lower than science: it doesn't make use of scientific syllogisms. But in another sense it is higher than science because it is a way to arrive at the highest principles. This ambiguity is essential to the rest of Aristotle.

One can also say [that] what Aristotle means by dialectics is not identical, but has much in common, with what in the Middle Ages became the art of disputation. The art of disputation is also one which argues on the basis of what the other disputant admits. And therefore the famous negative principle: you cannot dispute against him who denies the premise. We will find already in the beginning of the *Rhetoric* some references to the art of dialectics, because for Aristotle dialectics and rhetoric are closely akin and one cannot understand right rhetoric properly if one does not consider dialectics. We could read a few more passages to give some explanation. But first I would like to know how far—yes, Mr. . . . ?

**Student:** Is dialectic the only way of getting to these principles? . . . .

**LS:** <sup>4</sup>[S]uperficially stated, if all science starts from premises, then there must be something else by which you arrive at those premises. This is clear. <sup>5</sup>That is too general to be helpful, but [it is] only provisional. Now let us look at political things, at political matters. There—how do you proceed, even today? Anybody? Where do you begin according to the now accepted methodology? I mean, I'm not speaking now about what a man does who studies elections in this country, because this is not necessarily in need of this kind of thing, but the whole enterprise, the whole enterprise. Where do we start?

**Student:** The average man?

**LS:** No, no, in political science. We can also address the concern of the average man that way.

**Student:** In this country, we start by looking at the Constitution.

**LS:** Yes, but still, if someone makes studies about the electoral process, sure you have to know the general framework within which the elections take place. But then these are not just the questions which—the Constitution doesn't supply to you the questions which the student of elections is studying. Or do they?

**Same Student:** No.

**LS:** The mere signs of the Constitution about the parties . . . but you have to go beyond the Constitution. Now what is the ordinary view of where to start? If we begin science from definitions, how do we get the definitions? What is the meaning of definitions? Now according to one view, which is now important, definitions are fundamentally arbitrary, but the only thing is you must never use the term later on in your reasoning except in the same manner you defined it. There is a book by—last name Kaufmann,<sup>x</sup> I [have] forgot[ten] now the title, which supplies such definitions. It was written about ten years ago. But still, how do we arrive at such

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<sup>x</sup> Mark Scott proposes that the book Strauss has in mind is Felix Kaufmann's *Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Oxford University Press, 1944).

definitions? How do we arrive at them? Must we not primarily start from usage? So in other words, that the definition of “political party” must not be made in such a way that it is the definition rather of roofs of houses, so that everyone would be reminded of the definition of roofs of houses when in fact you say “political party”—it would be absurd. So you start, in fact, from usage. Good.

But usage is of course covered, troubled by a certain ambiguity, by ambiguities of various kinds. You think only of such a key word, if you want to go into any detail, when you say the subject matter of political science is power. You must have heard that. Now what is the subject, what is power? I mean electric power is also a kind of power. Obviously that is not what the political scientist is concerned with. What is it? How do we go from here after we have said the word “power”? I mean how do we go from here? If we wanted to know what “to rule” should be understood to mean?

**Student:** If we want to know what “power” means in any particular instance, we should look for a common element of the various uses of “power.”

**LS:** Electric power?

**Same Student:** No.

**LS:** Why do you exclude electric power?

**Same Student:** Well, a common sense judgment in relation to political power.

**LS:** I see. And I think one would also say that in addition to electric power there are other kinds of power among human beings, like that of, let us say, the loan shark over his debtor. This is definitely a form of power of one human being over another human being. We also would not think particularly of that, I think, or of the power which a bully in a schoolyard or maybe elsewhere has over others. Somehow we have in mind political power, unless all power which men have over men is political. Good, but then what is “political” within this question? How do we go from here? We could not possibly begin to speak clearly about political matters without knowing what “political” is. Well since we are in great trouble in this, and not only Mr. Nicgorski, how did Aristotle proceed?

**Same Student:** He proceeded by looking first at smaller relationships, like the household—and then showing that this grew into a relationship among men that was self-sufficient for their needs. And that this particular relationship between men was a political relationship. And so it was around the experience of something called a “*polis*” that he identified what is political.

**LS:** Yes, of course, you forgot to say “tribe,” but I would say it much more simply and stupidly as follows: he started with the fact that “political” is an adjective derived from the noun “polis,” which we translate as “the city.” And then he said: I can’t answer the question what the political is if I don’t know what the city is, because political must be something which belongs to the city in one of the various ways of belonging, in one way or the other. Now you see here this throws some light on our difficulties. We still use the adjective as a matter of course.<sup>6</sup> And these people

who say they can speak of a department of government and others of a department of political science . . . is not enough—I think it's even worse than political science or politics simply. For what reason? Why can one not replace “political” by “government?” Politics has very much to do with government and perhaps government is the core of politics. But why cannot one leave it at that? Is there some simple reflection?

**Another Student:** Government should be understood as a restriction of political.

**LS:** In what sense?

**Same Student:** In the sense that government usually pertains to a legislative-executive relationship, whereas political still gives or implies more about human functions, what makes up the civic relationship.

**LS:** Well, in other words, everything leading to . . . say, elections, are related because they are the form in which the legislative and executive are formed. That belongs to government. But still what you say I think points in the right direction. Let me take the simplest example. I think everyone would admit that a war is a political phenomenon. Can it be called a relationship between governments? Is it sufficient for describing a war? No, I think it wouldn't work. In other words, you know that a declaration of war, breaking off of diplomatic relations and so on and so on is simply not sufficient. War is between the two *nations*, or more nations. So while government may be the core of political, it is not the whole.

So now these kind[s] of reflections which we make, which are very provisional in the first place, are the ones which are in a way *pre*-scientific. We start from what everyone, or everyone who is of sound mind, would admit and then we go on until we reach something where we have the feeling this is now the core of the issue, and here we concentrate. And then we must raise the question, we cannot avoid raising the question, since we<sup>7</sup> [no] longer [have] any polis: what is the present-day equivalent of the polis? To find our way . . . Clearly, there is some kinship between what we talk about when speaking of politics and what Aristotle is talking about. But the core, the polis, is no longer here. There must be some equivalent. And we would have to discover it and then we could go on from here.

These kind[s] of reflections are pre-scientific but obviously not rhetorical. They are obviously not rhetorical—there are no emotions involved at all. And this is what Aristotle means by dialectics, a certain kind of dialectics. This is in agreement with the Platonic procedure in the dialogues, only in the Platonic dialogues this is almost always linked up with another kind of dialectics into which I do not<sup>8</sup> go [now] in order not to confuse.

Now, I wonder whether there is someone here who would defend the thesis, regardless [of] whether he believes in it or not, [that]<sup>9</sup> it is possible to do away entirely with the need for rhetoric—in particular because otherwise we have no access to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Whether it would not be possible (not now, of course, as everyone would admit) but in a better future when we have a society in which rhetoric as rhetoric is wholly superfluous, in which all argument would be of a scientific or technical—<sup>10</sup>this notion is somehow in the world, the expectation is in the world. We must face that. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** . . . are pointed in that direction. Eventually through science and proper education, we will solve the problem.

**LS:** Perfect. What is proper education?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Using facts.

**LS:** I think that, but not only that. I mean after all, did you ever read *Human Nature and Conduct*<sup>xi</sup>?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Yes.

**LS:** This is not too narrow a view of human beings. Dewey is not a present-day positivist. Dewey has an ethics.<sup>11</sup> This ethics may not be satisfactory, but it is an ethical teaching, whereas what you have today is<sup>12</sup> merely a theory about the logical stages of ethical propositions, but no ethical teaching, no teaching about the good life. Dewey has a teaching about the good life. The present-day view is that there can be only a teaching about the various conceptions of the good life, or how to talk about the good life, but not about the good life itself. Dewey has such a teaching . . . .

**Mr. Butterworth:** Couldn't one say, Mr. Strauss, that you sell modern day social science much too short? You do not appreciate it—

**LS:** That is what I mean, that is what I mean—

**Mr. Butterworth:** You do not appreciate it because you want modern social science to know now what modern-day natural science has known after 500 years of work.

**LS:** Yes, this is exactly the argument against—

**Mr. Butterworth:** Not only that, but if you read Rousseau, as I'm sure you have [laughter], you realize what progress there has been for the noble savages. Take their own beliefs<sup>13</sup> about punishment, the only way of getting things done, and how we've progressed today to where<sup>14</sup> some abject criminal is released on some little technicality of being pushed by a police officer, or something like that. Look how far we've come today . . . .

**LS:** Sure. I acknowledge this view; but in such a situation rhetoric would have no place whatever.

**Mr. Reinken:** Can I make another contribution to the devil? Some forms of psychoanalysis are not rhetoric, but client-centered therapy where you just pay somebody to sit around and nod understandingly, where the criminal talks out all his difficulties. This is not rhetoric, but science.

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<sup>xi</sup>John Dewey, *The Middle Works of John Dewey, vol. 14, 1899-1924: Human Nature and Conduct, 1922, Collected Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008).

**LS:** I don't know about the criminal, but how about the patient?

**Mr. Reinken:** Well, he just talks and comes to remember everything; like a good Platonic soul he remembers his earliest childhood and is so liberated from his fears and goes and sins no more. And like a good Platonic soul he remembers his earliest childhood and he's so liberated from his fears and goes and sins no more. And failing that we give him tranquilizers.

**LS:** But still—however that may be true, no modern man would say that a man of the cross is a scientist. He is only an object of science. And with psychoanalysis, it is true, scientists have discovered a way of getting data which [was] hitherto unknown. And on the basis of the knowledge of this data, he can make a proper diagnosis and therefore develop a proper therapy. And so this would only confirm it. In other words, this is what you say. New provinces of life have been discovered or are in the process of being discovered, and we cannot begin to know—there may be some other individuals like Freud in the future who, not exactly in this sphere but in other spheres, make such radical discoveries. No one can predict them.<sup>15</sup> There will no longer be any need for rhetoric and all speech will be scientific speech. Now I believed you implied this poor fellow who has his troubles is wholly unable to speak scientifically about his troubles; he is only an object of science.

**Mr. Reinken:** He is in effect brought to scientific speech. Instead of being given the pep talk by the social worker, which would be persuasive, he is brought through unemotional speech to understand his own emotions dispassionately.

**LS:** By the way, do you know what I think some psychoanalysts know?<sup>16</sup> The key element of this thought, the core of this thought, [is] namely [that] exhortation or any other exhortatory devices are much less good for liberating us from the power of our passions than the scientific analysis of our passions. For example, if someone is in the grip of a passion, and then the tradition would say: "Remember that you are a human being. Think of the dignity of men. What a disgraceful thing to be a slave of your rage! And consider how worthless is the object about which you are so enraged," and so on and so on. But then people say: "No, simply analyze it: what are the efficient causes of your rage now? And by making this process of the genesis of your rage fully conscious, you have a clear and distinct idea of your rage instead of the confused idea . . ." That was Spinoza.<sup>17</sup> Some people know this already, that this whole idea is much older than Freud. And there is no place to speak of in Spinoza for rhetoric; he never wrote of rhetoric and I do not remember off-hand any passage where he affirms its necessity. But I wish only that we could realize that on the basis of the now-prevailing notions it is hard to see how rhetoric can<sup>18</sup> be [at all] legitimate. There is only one difficulty, and that is (as is also admitted by social science today) that the value judgments can[not] ultimately<sup>19</sup> be established by scientific reasoning.

**Student:** Yes, but what if the time comes when they're putting little things in the brain and using electric currents, and they can make all men do what they want them to do?

**LS:** Yes, sure, but I have no doubt. I adopt it as a perfect possibility that there will be brainwashing compared to which what we have seen is child's play. But the question is, these

fellows who brainwash you, super-brainwash you, will do this for some values whatever they may be. These values cannot be established rationally or else social science would have to undergo a radical reform—and I mean much greater than what Freud and such people achieved—so that value judgments, the highest value principles, are again capable of being rationally validated.

I believe therefore that the ordinary view that “let only psychology and such sciences or sociology catch up with physics and chemistry”—then we have got into trouble by the atomic bomb and similar things; and well, the troubles exist only because psychology has not yet caught up with physics and chemistry. But this is impossible because the same limitation of physics and chemistry, that they cannot say how to use the powers supplied by physics and chemistry, applies of course also to psychology and sociology. I mean, these famous conclusions of social science regarding discrimination and integration were of course not simply scientific, but based on certain value premises . . . which they cannot validate. If someone would simply say a healthy society, a . . . society, which has vigorous prejudices as social bonds; and then if something is proven to be based on a prejudice, it's not . . . they're refuted. You see that? The very principle that the society should be rational cannot be established by reason given the present-day view of the difference between factual and value assertions. This would be my reply to that. Mr. . . . ?

**Student:** Is your criticism of the impossibility of modern social science to rationally validate its value judgments—

**LS:** That is its own assertion.

**Same Student:** Yes. Is your criticism so clear against a man like Dewey, who has been mentioned here?

**LS:** No. It would be entirely different because Dewey<sup>20</sup> antedates the fact-value distinction which came to this country from Europe—and probably more via Max Weber than anybody else, though Max Weber did not originate it. Dewey is pre-Weberian. To use another language, Dewey is pre-critical. Dewey's ethical doctrine is in one respect a modification of utilitarianism, in one respect, but I think more clearly a modification of Aristotle. I mean the content is entirely different but the formal structure reminds us that the good life is a virtuous life, and the virtuous life is defined by assuming the theoretical . . .

<sup>21</sup>[Dewey] makes a fundamental distinction between custom and impulse. Now custom is the inherited. We always inherit custom, the inherited as proper and so on. But on the basis of custom and the idea of the specific inheritance of a given society, there are always individual impulses which differ from the merely customary and [from] what we would call the individuality of the given circumstance. Now to take the side of custom against impulse is reactionary. To take the side of the impulse against custom and the mores is anarchistic, destructive. So you must strike a balance between custom and impulse. And this balance will differ for different individuals in different situations. This is very crudely the Deweyan view.

So reason, judgment, is very important: striking the balance. And it is not very clear that this striking the balance is essentially the affair of science, as though one could very well say that

Dewey might admit that there are men of judgment and men lacking judgment, and the man lacking judgment must go then to some technician. For example, should they marry this girl? Some people say,<sup>22</sup> “I am the best judge of whom I should marry”; and others would have no faith in their judgment and they go to a marriage counselor who would, on the basis of the results of science on happy and unhappy marriages, hand down<sup>23</sup> advice.

But the key point by the way in Dewey's doctrine seems to me this: There is no . . . that there could be something like evil. The place of evil is rather taken by the vested interests, meaning the non-impulsive, the mere custom, the inherited. And this I believe is a serious defect. Aristotle took this into serious consideration, that there could be evil, and therefore there are kinds of problems which cannot be solved by mere judgment alone. Whether it is that of incontinence of oneself, where you simply have to put your foot down. And whether you have the will power to do it or not, not much can be said about it, not much can be done about it.

**Student:** My reflection on this was that if the assertion that was discussed is true, then the tendency of a teaching like Dewey's would be to do away ultimately with the necessity for rhetoric. If that is true, it's very interesting that it would be advanced by a man who would be considered a rhetorician of the first class.

**LS:** I believe that even the greatest admirers of Dewey, as far as I know, have never said that he is a rhetorician of the first class. He is a singularly ineffective writer. In *Human Nature and Conduct* (which gives Dewey's ethics) there is, if I remember correctly, not a single example. You know, in matters of conduct examples are absolutely necessary to teach everybody. No, I think Dewey never was regarded as a great stylist by anyone; and style and rhetoric have something in common. Mr. . . . ?

**Student:** I think that in talking about the study of psychology or psychiatry, we have to beware of attributing to psychology, or psychiatry or psychoanalysis, the views that are prevalent among only some practitioners in these fields. I had a conversation about a week ago with a very prominent psychiatrist who went out of his way in the course of the conversation to deny any belief at all remotely approaching the assertion that psychoanalysis was omnipotent. He regarded it as a rather perverse use of the methods or techniques of the field to do away with the notion of the criminal, or to do away with the need for rhetoric, coercion. And [he] asserted very strongly that psychoanalysis in his view was a method that could work only within a certain set of assumptions or beliefs about what's good, and such things.

**LS:** And also certain institutions.

**Same Student:** Yes, and [psychoanalysis] could not be used with just anybody. The mere fact that someone submits to that method of therapy is a sign of having accepted a whole host of institutions and attitudes without which the method just couldn't work.

**LS:** The<sup>24</sup> most obvious [institutions], of course—if some psychiatrist tried to set up shop in Moscow he would find it impracticable. So in other words you must have negatively a kind of government which is willing to accept the basic premise of psychoanalysis, which is not peculiar to psychoanalysis, and which can be stated as follows:<sup>25</sup> the solution of the social problem, of

society, is not the solution of the problem of the individual. This Marxism asserts. The Marxist would simply say: Of course there is no guarantee that if there is a world of communism<sup>26</sup> there would be no unhappy love. But they would simply say that if a man or a woman takes unhappy love too seriously, then this is a sign of a very great imperfection. There was a thing which they showed about Siberia—I do not know whether some of you have seen it—but they presented this problem, and quite impressively, of how a communist would get rid of this kind of problem by simply reminding himself of the duty to society and that this was a merely private problem.

So surely, of course, that is in Hayek.<sup>xii</sup> Or doubtless you know that in Freud himself there is this famous premise<sup>27</sup>—Freud was the opposite of an optimist regarding the future, as you know, and [he] especially held that there is in man a death urge, which as someone conversant with this kind of thing has told me has not been accepted by any of Freud's students. The existence of such a self-destructive thing which cannot be reduced to broken homes or any thing of this kind shows of course that Freud did not believe in the omnipotence of any technique. That's clear.

**Same Student:** This man was shocked by people who are students of political science who thought that the aim of political science was a reduction of the subject matter to psychology, or psychiatry.

**LS:** But you see then he should address his shock or his complaint to the men who did it. And I know only one thing. No one I believe has a greater significance in this respect than Harold Lasswell. And I heard to my great surprise from my colleague, Leites,<sup>xiii</sup> that he agrees fundamentally with Lasswell in this respect, and he had made a study along these lines on the subject. And he had some interest in publication. And I said: I'm so surprised, why can't you tell it to Lasswell, Lasswell being a very good . . . . He said that Lasswell no longer has the belief in psychoanalysis which he had 20 or 30 years ago. So today, I believe, who is there in social science, especially in political science, who has this great belief in psychoanalysis? In his earlier period—that was shown very well by Robert Horowitz in his critical analysis of Lasswell<sup>xiv</sup>—Lasswell's view amounted to this, that strictly speaking the people who should rule society would be the psychoanalysts, because they are the only ones who can judge whether someone is sane and sober and balanced or not. And this is of course incompatible with democracy. And it's a certain ultimate step<sup>28</sup> which Lasswell seems to have made basically, that every citizen should become a psychoanalyst—otherwise you have psychoanalytocracy, not democracy. But if every citizen is a psychoanalyst you have of course a synthesis of psychoanalysis and democracy. Of course I believe no one except Lasswell has ever entertained that, but one must also consider not what a reasonable psychoanalyst or for that matter sociologist says, but also what is implied in the general style or trend of modern science as a whole, and that was quite well stated by you

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<sup>xii</sup> F. A. Hayek, *The Sensory Order* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952); Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960).

<sup>xiii</sup> Nathan C. Leites (1912-87). Expert on the Soviet Union; applied principles of psychoanalysis to the study of political leaders such as Stalin. Worked at RAND from 1947 onwards; also served on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

<sup>xiv</sup> Strauss apparently refers to Robert Horowitz's essay, "Scientific Propaganda: Harold D. Lasswell," in *Essays on the Scientific Study of Politics*, ed. Herbert J. Storing (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 225-304.

[apparently the student who raised the previous points], this simple thing: We have science for the sake of power.

That science has increased man's power tremendously I think is an empirical fact if ever there was one. And therefore, since sociology and psychology cannot possibly compete in success with physics and chemistry, one can argue that they started much later—you know how long it took until laboratory psychology took the place of armchair psychology, to say nothing about . . . therefore it is only a matter of one or two centuries or three centuries at most when psychology and sociology will have caught up. This is a perfectly legitimate way of reasoning regardless of what the sane and sober individual psychologist and sociologist thinks. That remains. And the question is whether this reasoning by analogy is valid, and whether it is not undercut radically by the other consideration that the old notion, science for the sake of power, presupposed that the men who acquire that power, produce power, have knowledge of the legitimate uses of power. When Francis Bacon, Descartes, and such people spoke of this use of science, they were sure that there is knowledge that health is good, long life is good, and so on. There was no question—this was not merely an arbitrary value judgment; it is *known* to be good.

In the moment, however, when Rousseau (to whom some one of you referred), when Rousseau more than anybody else raised this question against the older social science: you older men (say, Descartes and Hobbes), you assume that there is an unchangeable human nature and [the ways of] finding the means of satisfying the needs of this unchangeable human nature vary infinitely. The needs do not change as such. Now when Rousseau said that there is no unchangeable human nature, then of course it was impossible to have any knowledge of the unchangeable needs of men [Strauss taps the table for emphasis]. And the ultimate outcome of this is the fact-value distinction. So I believe the analogy is not good, but it has a great *prima facie* rhetorical power.

So we will meet next Wednesday. Mr. Nicgorski will . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “, and by the—Aristotle calls.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “—yes.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “an argument—.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “If scientific steps.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “I mean—.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “do not any.” Moved “have.”

<sup>8</sup> Moved “now.”

<sup>9</sup> Changed from “whether.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

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<sup>12</sup> Deleted “strictly—.”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “their own beliefs.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “people are released.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “It will not be possible—.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “That.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>18</sup> Moved “at all.”

<sup>19</sup> Moved “not.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “does not—.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “He.”

<sup>22</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>23</sup> Deleted “an.”

<sup>24</sup> Moved “institutions.”

<sup>25</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>26</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>27</sup> Deleted “which.”

<sup>28</sup> Deleted “with.”

**Session 2: April 1, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —these first two chapters, from your point of view?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Yes, there is.

**LS:** Namely?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Well, I have some difficulty understanding precisely what he means when he says that artificial persuasive appeals, artificial proofs, are things that the current teachers of rhetoric ignore. I don't quite understand the relationship between those and enthymeme[s]. The first time he makes the argument, he says that it is [the] enthymeme that they ignore. The second time he broadens the argument, he says—

**LS:** Yes, but he means the same. In other words, the core of rhetoric is the enthymeme, whatever that may be, and we have to take it up, and this has been neglected by all these men. Whether Aristotle is right or wrong is hard for us to know, since nothing of this rhetoric has come down to us. But knowing Aristotle as an honest man, I would assume that he is right and wouldn't accuse his predecessors of a defect which they did not have.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** One other, perhaps larger, problem is that insofar as Aristotle criticizes the then-existing arts of rhetoric for putting too much emphasis on ways of appealing to the passions, the judges—

**LS:** More generally speaking, on the peripheral rather than—

**Mr. Nicgorski:** There is something of a problem in reconciling this with Aristotle's own teaching that most men, the many, do live in accord with passion. I tried to reconcile this to some extent, but it would seem that an initial reaction to Aristotle's statement is that if rhetoric is simply the art that intends to persuade, and if those who are to be persuaded live most by their passions, then the true center of rhetoric should be appeal to passions.

**LS:** I see. Well of course, but I was satisfied with your reconciliation: that in the first chapter, he overstates the case somewhat and says that it is wholly irrelevant. And then he says, after having made this point, [that] of course other rules are not wholly irrelevant—they are relevant but not as relevant as the question of proof proper, the enthymeme.

Now let me restate my question. I hope you make the effort—I've stated it more than once—to look at what you study from the point of view of present-day social science. Why do we not have teachers of rhetoric in political science departments, as we should have if Aristotle had his way? In other words, what would be the objection by present-day political scientists . . . Aristotelian terms?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Rhetoric is a form of deception. Insofar as it can be said that the dominant assumptions of our age are that there is not a permanent and inherent inequality of men such that

deception is necessary for political leadership, that all the truth all the time should be the concern of students of politics.

**LS:** For students of politics, all right, but what about the objects of politics? Subjects, citizens, comrades, however you call it?

**Mr. Nicgorski:**<sup>1</sup> It is fair to say that political science departments do not address themselves to the problem of political leadership. They address themselves only to political understanding, and thus do not teach the art of rhetoric.

**LS:** Surely, but political leadership is a theme of behavioral social science, just as propaganda in particular. And I think that a strict and correct or orthodox political scientist would not say these are immoral means—you know, flag-waving, propaganda, and myth-making—and would say we have to study the methods by which Mao or Stalin or Khrushchev ruled their subjects as well as those used by the democratic ones. This, of course, should also include rhetoric.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** But professors of rhetoric, if we had professors of rhetoric,<sup>2</sup> would not study the phenomenon of rhetoric. They would teach rhetoric.

**LS:** No, no, I mean that. All right, let me change: it would not be a normative science, as in Aristotle teaching one how to be a first-rate rhetorician, but strictly a descriptive one, an analytical one. How do democratic governments influence the governed? How do totalitarian governments influence the governed? You know, there are various kinds of propaganda. Perhaps, if someone takes the larger view, as I think we ought to [do] even from this point of view, to see how these things were handled in former times, in different societies.<sup>3</sup> You know, in order to have a truly universal theory you cannot limit yourself to twentieth-century phenomena. So, I mean, an analytical, descriptive analysis of rhetoric is essential from the point of view of behavioral social science. What would be the objection from this point of view? One I said implicitly: it would not be a normative science. Yes?

**Another Student:** I don't say that all political scientists hold this, but if you take the view that political decisions are merely the product of the various conglomerations of interests and so on, then it would be the case that speech is really not very important.

**LS:** In other words, it is not very important whether a particular interest group happens to have a good orator or not, it is very trivial. The main point is that—is that not the point?

**Same Student:** Yes, I think so.

**LS:** Yes, I think that makes sense. Now if we try to understand it somewhat more radically, we would be led back, as I think Mr. Nicgorski implied, to the question of what is the factual status of speech or reason. I mean not necessarily going to the question what is its rightful place, but what is its factual place? And social science or political science, as it is now constructed, generally says it is something derivative, as is indicated by a term like "rationalization." The real thing has nothing to do with reason, but for some reason or other, perhaps for sheer shame, people do not spell out what impels them and rationalize. If we go back to the root of it I believe

we would reach the following point. If I'm not mistaken this was the point we brought out and discussed in the seminar on Hobbes last time: the two fundamentally different views of reason.<sup>i</sup> Because, needless to say, social science is very much concerned with reason: after all, it claims itself to be a rational enterprise, but it is reason dealing with non-rational conduct. I mean, reason doesn't exist—I state it very crudely but not misleadingly—reason doesn't play any role on the political plane. Reason is present in the observer. This is not a matter which came up only in the last decade or so, or [last] generation or so. It has to do with the very origins of modern political thought.

For in order to understand Aristotle or Plato, one should always start from the simile of the charioteer. Reason is the charioteer. The body is the chariot. And then there are two horses: a noble and a base horse. That is the simile used by Plato in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>ii</sup> So reason is the charioteer: this is the primary work of reason, and whether it is in the individual or in the city, that is a secondary distinction. Now what is the radically different view which Hobbes implies? Because in Hobbes I think the change becomes particularly clear, although we can notice it in other modern thinkers. I mean, the ideal case would be to induce every citizen, if possible, to be such a charioteer, i.e., to control his horses, his [own] passions reasonably. But since this is unfortunately not possible, we need in addition laws. But then the laws should be reasonable, rational . . . and so on. Now what is the Hobbesian picture of this situation? Hobbes is as much concerned with reason as Plato and Aristotle, but in a radically different way. Yes?

**Student:** The passions are the charioteer, and the reason the horses.

**LS:** Yes, but where does reason come in?

**Same Student:** Reason becomes identified with the horses, driven by the passions.

**LS:** Not quite. That is not fair to Hobbes. That may be true in some stage of the argument, but it is not the overall picture.<sup>4</sup> Hobbes says [that] when commonwealths are destroyed by interest and disorder, this is due not to man as the matter but [to] man as a maker of conduct. Reason is present in man as a *maker* of commonwealths or of institutions. Reason must establish the tracks within which the horses have their race. This cannot be done by the horses, nor can it be done by the charioteer in the Platonic-Aristotelian sense. It is done by a kind of super-engineer who establishes the framework within which the passions can have their sway without ruining everything.<sup>5</sup> In other words, there is an outside reason, outside of the whole realm of politics, an outside reason which establishes the framework within which the passions can do what they like without doing any harm. There is no need for reason being present in the individuals within the race. One further step: <sup>6</sup>even this establishment of the framework cannot be done, reason can only be present as the outside observer, just as you have it in physics or chemistry. Yes?

**Student:** Isn't it also in Hobbes, though, that reason sets up one passion against another?

<sup>i</sup> Strauss taught a seminar on Hobbes in the preceding quarter, winter quarter of 1964.

<sup>ii</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 246a-254e.

**LS:** Yes, but the practical meaning of that is the institution. And you know, it means you set up a sovereign according to the prescriptions of the political art, and then you have this sovereign [who] generate[s] all the time that fear which keeps people within certain reasonable limits.

Now let me go on to one other point I want to raise. You made a distinction between rhetoric and dialectics, following Aristotle. But you also said that [the] specifically rhetorical argument, the enthymeme, is distinguished from the logical syllogism. Now this would seem to imply [Strauss goes to the blackboard] rhetoric—dialectic: rhetoric—logic.

**Student:** I think that it is fair to say for Aristotle that logic is a part of dialectic, so dialectic is a part of logic.

**LS:** Well, let us say that there is a certain ambiguity. I mean, when I stated last time the difference between the Platonic discussion, that Plato distinguishes rhetoric from dialectic, and the Aristotelian discussion, that Aristotle distinguishes rhetoric, dialectic, and scientific demonstration, this is true. But in this introductory discussion Aristotle frequently uses the simple bipartition: rhetoric-dialectic. This creates a minor difficulty, but not much more.

Now you said [that] Aristotle must show the insufficiency of his predecessors in order to justify his own work. This makes sense, because why does Aristotle speak of the insufficiency of his predecessors if he does not have a good reason for speaking of them? In other words, Aristotle is not a man who would say such things in order to show, “Look at me, what a wonderful fellow I am.” So there must be some substantive reason why he says this. Good,<sup>7</sup> that makes sense, but why did he not do the same in his *Politics*, or did he do that there?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** One can say that he did do it.

**LS:** Namely?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Because he finds occasions in his *Politics*. I recall only two, namely Plato and Hippodamus, the previous theorists on politics, whom he finds inadequate in the course of the book.

**LS:** The whole Second Book.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Yes.

**LS:** This is where Aristotle excuses himself, as Thomas puts it,<sup>iii</sup> for setting forth this book because of the deficiencies of the teachings of his predecessors. And even on the first page there is already a key remark. But the main point is in the *Ethics*. Do you recall the beginning of the *Ethics*? Does he say anything about the deficiencies of his predecessors at the beginning of the *Ethics*?

**Student:** When he talks about his friends?

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<sup>iii</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Richard Regan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2007), Bk. II, chap. 1, section 1 (first paragraph) and especially section 2, 80-81.

**LS:** At a certain point. When he comes to speak of the good,<sup>8</sup> he says he must not take up the question of the good in the way in which certain friendly men did it, namely Plato and so on.<sup>iv</sup> But still, the whole book doesn't begin with an assertion [that] there is something fundamentally defective in the previous treatments of ethics. Do you have a hypothesis? I have one which may sound crazy, but nevertheless I will say it. In the case of rhetoric there were books in existence which claimed to be treatises on rhetoric. There was no ethics prior to Aristotle.<sup>9</sup> We *call* certain reflections of Plato<sup>10</sup> and Socrates<sup>v</sup> ethical, but perhaps this is not so. There was no ethics. I would like to hear some objections to this suggestion, and I would be very much interested.

Another point, the last point: rhetoric belongs together with dialectic, it's parallel to it somehow, because it doesn't have a specific subject matter. Is that the point?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Yes, that is so. Likewise, all men are somehow capable—

**LS:** Now when we discussed the *Gorgias* I suggested tentatively the definition of rhetoric as the politically effective treatment of politically relevant matters, i.e., not of everything, but only of politically relevant matters. Now, does rhetoric deal truly with everything? Is it as universal as, say, logic is—logic in fact dealing with every kind of argument, regardless of subject matter? *Formal* logic. Is rhetoric—

**Mr. Nicgorski:** It is not as universal, but it is nearly as universal, insofar as reason is more universal than speech. Reasoning about matters can go on without speaking about matters—

**LS:** This would not be an Aristotelian view.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Well, if one considers that rhetoric, as Socrates in the *Phaedrus* defines rhetoric as influencing souls with words, it would seem that that could apply to—

**LS:** Ja, but you cannot quote that<sup>11</sup> simply because—you said, perhaps not quite rightly but plausibly enough, that rhetoric for Plato *is* dialectic, that is, the true rhetoric. Therefore he does make this distinction. So let me say this only in advance: I believe that it is cause for a great difficulty, perhaps not an insoluble one, that rhetoric is and is not universal. There is a wider sense of rhetoric according to which it applies to every possible subject matter, but this however is not the practically important view, because the practically important view of rhetoric is that it deals with politically relevant matter, things discussed before law court[s] and in deliberative assemblies rather than everything else. Good. Thank you again. Oh, may I ask Professor Mahdi, can I see your article?

Now Mr. Reinken, we begin. And I think we should study the first chapter somewhat more carefully in order to have the proper footing, because, according to a proverb liked by Aristotle,

<sup>iv</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* I. 6, 1098a11-17.

<sup>v</sup> Strauss says here “and Aristotle,” then immediately corrects himself to “and Socrates.”

the beginning is half of the whole. If we have made a proper beginning we can perhaps understand better the things that come later. Let us begin.<sup>vi</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “Rhetoric is a counterpart of Dialectic; for both have to do with matters that are in a manner within the cognizance of all men and not confined to any special science.”

**LS:** Good. Let us stop here. Aristotle seems here to suggest that rhetoric and dialectics are two unique pursuits—[they are] the only ones which are universal, and the reason is because the subject matter of both is within the reach of all men as men. It is universal regarding its subject matter, [which is] everything, and regarding the knowing subject, [which is] the knower. [It is] not, for example, like ontology which deals with everything, with being as being, and yet is therefore also in a sense<sup>12</sup> a special science; it deals with being as being and not with beings in other respects—I mean not as beings, say with plants as beings, but not with plants *qua* plants, which would be a subject of botany. Yes. Now the emphasis here on the universality of the knower, all men do that. Go on, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Hence, all men in a manner have a share of both; for all, up to a certain point, endeavor to criticize or uphold an argument, to defend themselves or to accuse.”

**LS:** So all men *attempt*. Aristotle doesn't say that they are very successful in this. And the first two examples refer to dialectics and the last two to rhetoric. All men attempt to some extent to *examine*. That means someone makes an assertion and someone else answers, “How can you say that?” And there develops an exchange. Or they may be at the receiving point—they are the ones who assert something and they are examined by the others. This belongs to dialectic in the somewhat narrower sense. And the other two things, defending one's self and accusing, belong obviously to rhetoric. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, the majority of people do this either at random or with a familiarity arising from habit. But since both these ways are possible, it is clear that matters can be reduced to a system, for—”

**LS:** Well, “system” is not good. “It is manifest that one can do this also methodically” would be somewhat more precise; and more literally, “in a *way*, following a way.” “Method” is derived from a Greek word, *methodos*, which is only a compound of the word for “way,” *hodos*.

Now what does he mean by that, since some men argue or deliver a speech at random? Some one who has never opened his mouth in a . . . session suddenly stands up and makes a speech, or he attempts to make a speech at random, and then there is one whom you know is one who will stand up on practically every occasion. He has a certain gift for that and his gift<sup>13</sup> becomes the basis for a habit because he does it all the time. Why does the fact that the two things are possible, [speaking] at random<sup>14</sup> and speaking on the basis of gifts plus habit, prove that it can be done methodically? Why does this prove it?

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<sup>vi</sup> All citations from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are from the Freese translation in the Loeb edition unless otherwise noted: *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, trans. John H. Freese (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 193, 1926).

Now we must consider this, because Aristotle says this: “*since* it can be done in both ways it is possible to reduce it to an art.”<sup>vii</sup> *Both* are necessary. If there were only [speaking] at random, it wouldn't be possible. If there were only the other, [by habit], it wouldn't be possible. How does Aristotle argue here? It is a characteristically Aristotelian argument, but here extremely telescoped. What is the key point? Are the two equal as conditions? The at random doing, and the habitual doing?

**Student:** Maybe, if it could only be done at random you evidently couldn't learn anything about it. If it could only be done systematically—

**LS:** “Systematically,” that doesn't exist. You mean by habit, by habit on the basis of a specific natural gift.

**Same Student:** But again, you couldn't be taught it, you couldn't learn it.

**LS:** But why not? Why not? Let us assume that only people that have a certain gift, and only if they have practiced, stand up and speak. Why would it not be possible then to do it on the basis of method? No, I think Aristotle argues differently, and you can easily see that this is his way of arguing from the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. Since there is a progress, a progress: it is possible at random, and then we see it can be done in a not-random manner. Therefore, it is possible to do it in the highest form, not merely at random nor merely habitual[ly], but in a perfectly conscious way as an art. That is the way in which he argues.

Now, you can look at other examples to see that this is necessary—for example, seeing. How do men see or hear? Do they do that at random [so] that we say, “Look, now he sees” and “Now another man, another day, hears”? And most of the time they don't see or hear. Or is it that some hear only at random and others hear because they have a special gift and have practiced hearing? Whatever the case of seeing and hearing may be, they are neither done at random nor on the basis of an acquired habit. That's perfectly clear. And the empirical proof of the other side: did you ever hear of schools or courses devoted to teaching people to hear or to see? No. People sometimes teach [how] to hear music, but that is a special thing, or to see paintings properly—but that's of course not hearing and seeing simply. So this kind of thing is presupposed by Aristotle here. Yes?

**Student:** How does it happen that you have a special gift—you say, a habit arising from a special gift? Is that said in the text, a “special gift”?

**LS:** From nature. It can surely mean that. In the circumstances it must mean it, because you know that from experience, it was known in old times, that some people do have such a gift and they are the ones most likely to develop it. I mean there are also people who wish to be a speaker and can't do it. We have seen such people.

**Same Student:** . . . such people with a special gift?

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<sup>vii</sup> Strauss's translation.

**LS:** No, no. Primarily from custom, from custom and practice. But starting from a *hexis*, from a habit. And this habit is, I would take it, primarily one which is—you are quite right, it is not here, he doesn't speak here of nature—but the simplest case would be that<sup>15</sup> because the one who has the natural gift will not speak merely at random. He will do it more frequently and therefore a habit will be developed. But just as there was a poet, a very good poet, who wrote only a single poem, there may be a man who made only once in his life a speech under very special circumstances, but there was no practice before, no sign of any particular gift, but at random. At any rate this difference in degrees point[s] to the completion.

Now what is the difference between the “*way*” . . . and the things which are not done in a way or according to method? Read the immediate sequel.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for it is possible to examine the reason why some attain their end by familiarity and others by chance; and such an examination all would at once admit to be the function of an art.”

**LS:** So in other words: the cause, the cause why this man succeeds and this one fails, and succeeds to some extent or fails to some extent—this alone makes it an art. Neither of the two know why they use this trick or this kind of argument and so on. So Aristotle has said up to now only that rhetoric and dialectic *can* be arts, can be reduced to arts, but he goes on to say they are not yet actually arts. And Aristotle will say why what we have as arts of rhetoric are not truly arts of rhetoric. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Now, previous compilers of “Arts” of Rhetoric have provided us with only a small portion of this art, for proofs are the only things in it that come within the province of art; everything else is merely an accessory. And yet they say nothing about enthymemes which are the body of proof, but chiefly devote their attention to matters outside the subject; for the arousing of prejudice, compassion, anger and similar emotions has no connection with the matter in hand, but is directed only to the dicast.

**LS:** Now, Aristotle has not stated the general defect. The core of the rhetorical art is what he says here, the proofs. We can perhaps say: the things which convince or which persuade, which truly persuade. And the body of that persuading thing is the enthymeme. Enthymeme, I'll write it [Strauss writes on the blackboard]. This word will occur now very frequently. You have to get accustomed to it.

Now the enthymeme is the name, as Aristotle made clear in the sequel, for the rhetorical syllogism as distinguished from other syllogisms. The clearest case of the other syllogisms is the demonstrative syllogism—that is to say a syllogism like “all men are mortal; there is a man; so there's mortal.” But that's not the rhetorical syllogism. What is a rhetorical syllogism? Let us take a single example. I remember from a time gone by that at the beginning of World War I the then-German emperor said: “Never was Germany defeated when she was united.”<sup>viii</sup> That is an enthymeme. It doesn't have the form of a syllogism but this is the reasoning which convinces.

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<sup>viii</sup> This must be a quote or paraphrase from Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941), the last German Emperor and King of Prussia (1888-1918). We have been unable to find the exact historical reference or quotation.

The conclusion is obvious. Everyone draws it: union, unitedness is a necessary and sufficient condition for Germany not being defeated. Everyone can see that. The emperor didn't say that because everyone knew it. Where the name enthymeme comes from is a dark question. I have a certain guess about it and we may speak about this later. In the moment you begin to think about it, then you see the difficulties, because in this case, if union is a necessary and sufficient condition for avoiding defeat, there are many nations which have been defeated although they were united. Now the emperor in his wisdom said *Germany*. So, in other words, the basis of the whole implicit reasoning was a very rapid survey of German history which seemed to confirm that. I deliberately chose a foreign example [laughter]. Good.

Now, Aristotle's chief concern is then<sup>16</sup> here with a kind of reasoning peculiar to rhetoric—[that is clear]. And then we understand immediately why Aristotle is the true founder of the art of rhetoric. Because this kind of reasoning peculiar to rhetoric cannot be understood, as Aristotle makes clear, if one does not know<sup>17</sup> the other kinds of reasoning. But the science dealing with the kinds of reasoning, the overall science, is called logic. And Aristotle is the father of logic, however much logic in certain respects might have been prepared by other men.

Now he speaks<sup>18</sup> briefly [here] of the externals with which the previous rhetoricians dealt: the creating of prejudice—more simply calumny, debunking someone else. This is one thing. For example,<sup>19</sup> in the case of a defendant, that he is a notorious crook—that does not belong to the proof, because we are not concerned with whether he is a crook or not a crook, [but] we are concerned with whether he committed that act of armed robbery or not. And the fact that he was a crook before does not prove, obviously, that he committed this act of armed robbery. And similarly, the fact that he was always honest doesn't prove that he did not commit this particular act. So that is clear. And the second thing:<sup>20</sup> passions of the soul, like compassion and anger. Generally speaking,<sup>21</sup> the external things are things which influence the judge or the jury—the distinction did not apply to Athenian institutions—in favor of or against the defendant.<sup>22</sup> The core of the speaker is that he enables the jury or the judge to pass a just verdict; anything which deflects from this doesn't belong to the substance of rhetoric. And Aristotle explains this in the sequel. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “The result would be that, if all trials are now carried on as they are in some States, especially those that are well administered, there would be nothing left for the rhetorician to say. For all men either think that all the laws ought so to prescribe, or in fact carry out the principle and forbid speaking outside the subject, as in the court of Areopageus, and in this they are right. For it is wrong to warp the dicast's feelings, to arouse him to anger, jealousy, or compassion—”

**LS:** Let us say “envy.” Because envy can of course influence the jury. This is clear. Let us assume that the defendant is a particularly wealthy man and the jury would ordinarily consist of less wealthy men, and obviously not immune to envious forces. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “envy<sup>ix</sup> or compassion, which would be like making the rule crooked which one intended to use.”

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<sup>ix</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “envy” what is rendered as “jealousy” in the Freese translation.

**LS:** You see here that Aristotle's radical reform of rhetoric, by virtue of which it becomes for the first time a true art, is called for by the requirements of decent jurisdiction. It is not only a theoretical progress, it is also a requirement of sound practice. You know, that's important. If you remember the *Gorgias*, and the bad light in which rhetoric could very well appear, then you can see how necessary it is that rhetoric be seen<sup>23</sup> not [as] a corrupt art essentially used by corrupt and corrupting people, but rather that it is necessary for the ennobling of public life, as is shown by this case. A rhetoric which puts a proper emphasis on proof, on argument, as distinguished from appeal to passions, will make possible decent . . . . Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Further, it is evident—"

**LS:** May I say one word for those who have never read Aristotle: that "further," *eti* in Greek, and similar words, these are crucial, [as they signal] a new argument, a new argument. Aristotle likes to have a *chain* of reasonings independent of one another, independent of one another.<sup>24</sup> I mean, we have been brought up in the modern tradition not to have this simple addition of arguments which Aristotle likes so much, but strictly speaking a chain: one thing following from the preceding, and so on and so on. That's not Aristotle. Aristotle has this way where he says to the reader, he makes a certain assertion, "That is strange, but look there, and look here, and look here," without being concerned with producing a systematic unity among the points to which he refers. That there may be a deeper unity is possible, but Aristotle is not always concerned with bringing that out. So, please, now what is this new argument?

**Mr. Reinken:** "it is evident that the only business of the litigant is to prove that the fact in question is or is not so, that it has happened or not; whether it is important or unimportant, just or unjust, in all cases in which the legislator has not laid down a ruling, is a matter for the dicast himself to decide; it is not the business of the litigants to instruct him."

**LS:** The dicast is that juryman-judge to which there is no direct modern parallel because we have a distinction between the jury and the professional judge. Now this new argument, in addition to the first: that one should not corrupt the judges by appealing to their passions. The litigant should not attempt to *teach* the judge—this is the point—and tell him, "This is important," and "This is the just thing." You have to say, "Did he, or did he not, commit that act or make that contract," or whatever it may be. The decision whether something is important and just is the judge's, not the litigant's. The litigant only has to show that the thing is or has happened, and he has to show this by proving it, but by a certain kind of proof, the rhetorical proof, to which we will come later.

Now in the sequel we find a kind of excursus on the relation between judge and law, partly to clarify what he said here, but partly in order to show the deeper reason why the litigants must limit themselves to the thing which happened or did not happen. Will you read that please?

**Mr. Reinken:** "First of all, therefore, it is proper that laws, properly enacted, should themselves define the issue of all cases as far as possible, and leave as little as possible to the discretion of the judges; in the first place, because it is easier to find one or a few men of good sense, capable of framing laws and pronouncing judgments, than a large number; secondly, legislation is the

result of long consideration, whereas judgments are delivered on the spur of the moment, so that it is difficult for the judges properly to decide questions of justice or expediency. But what is most important of all—”

**LS:** You see, that's the third point. “First,” “then,” and “that's the most important.”

**Mr. Reinken:**

is that the judgment of the legislator does not apply to a particular case, but is universal and applies to the future, whereas the member of the public assembly and the dicast have to decide present and definite issues, and in their case love, hate, or personal interest is often involved, so that they are no longer capable of discerning the truth adequately, their judgment being obscured by their own pleasure or pain.

All other cases, as we have just said, should be left to the authority of the judge as seldom as possible, except where it is a question of a thing having happened or not, of its going to happen or not, of being or not being so; this must be left to the discretion of the judges, for it is impossible for the legislator to foresee such questions.

**LS:** So you see, Aristotle establishes a kind of hierarchy. The legislator, the judge-juryman, and the pleaders; and pleaders have the narrowest function. And this is necessary to understand what the true function of rhetoric is. Aristotle raises the question why the litigants must limit themselves to the matter at hand, and why they must not try to teach the judge. That is no longer elaborated because there is a kind of proportion: legislator to judge equals judge to litigant. Now the litigants can of course still less be presumed to be impartial than the juryman and the judge. For it is very difficult to be impartial in one's own case. The difficulty<sup>25</sup> [of being] impartial is so great that one ought to leave as little discretion as possible to the very judges, let alone to the litigants.

Now the difficulties are clear: the rarity of men of judgment. Therefore we leave as much as possible to the legislator; the legislator here<sup>26</sup> understood [not] as a legislative assembly, but preferably [as] the man or men who made a code of law which was then adopted. Secondly, we have long time. Even if this were not true, even if judgment were very common, still when you apply your judgment for a long time to a matter your final judgment is likely to be better than if you judge on the spur of the moment. Men have a long time for preparing a law and a very short time for passing judgment. Why is that so, why is there only a short time, relatively speaking, for passing judgment? Yes?

**Student:** The trials only take one day.

**LS:** Yes, but this could be changed. One could say that it was a bad law.

**Student:** The nature of the Greek—

**LS:** Maybe they had bad laws. Why is it necessary that the time for making judgment is short, even if it is three days instead of one day, or five days?

**Student:** A man's life is at stake.

**LS:** But not all trials are for life. But think of a simple—I use a simple example: when Hamlet complained about the terrible things we suffer, he meant very few things—one of them was the law delayed. There may very well be delay in passing a bill; it could be a very complicated matter. But people must get their decisions very soon. But the most important thing for Aristotle is that the legislator does not think of any individuals in particular. He says *he* who commits this crime will be punished in a certain way. Or he who made a contract of a certain kind, this contract will not be valid, or whatever it may be. But the judge is concerned with Mr. Miller or Mr. Smith and there may be personal likes and dislikes; therefore one must leave as little as possible to these personal likes and dislikes. And therefore the judge should have a very narrow discretion. There are, of course, emotional attitudes also to groups. We know this. There can be class legislation, or race legislation—we know this. But disregarding this complicating fact, other things being equal, it is easier to be impartial when no individuals are involved, but only citizens. Yes?

**Student:** I don't know if this is still relevant, but why does Aristotle on the first page make emotional arousal so accessory and then later on—why does he overstate the case? Why doesn't he say the truth right way?

**LS:** <sup>27</sup>Rousseau was occasionally accused of the same kind of crime and he said simply: you can't say everything at the same time. Now Aristotle wants to make clear first of all that what has never been treated by the rhetoricians, by the teachers of rhetoric—namely, the proof—is the most important thing. And therefore he said, strictly speaking—he takes the most simple case in which there is only the question of fact and where every other consideration is immaterial, impertinent, and should not enter the matter at all. But we all do that, and must do it, in order to drive home something.<sup>28</sup> We ordinarily do not understand these propositions with long footnotes in fine print. You state first the massive thing and then you bring on later, preferably not in the form of footnotes, but of a separate paragraph, you can do that. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** How does this statement, that the litigant shouldn't do anything except say whether something is or is not so, square with the consideration that the litigant may admit that he did something but deny that it was a just or unjust act?

**LS:** Yes, but this is part of the facts. "I killed, but I did not murder." That's a defense. Now then, this is a matter of fact, because there is a distinction.<sup>29</sup> Well, murder is premeditated; [he can prove perhaps that] he did not premeditate. They [the murderer and the murdered] were always getting along very well. He never had said, "I will kill you"—this famous argument used in order to show that the killing was premeditated. And it was so that he was provoked for the first time in an incredible way by this man, and then he lost his head. That is then homicide and not murder, and it may even have been done in self-defense. These are all part of the facts. And the last point which Aristotle makes: there is one thing which even in the best case cannot possibly be settled by the legislator, and these are the facts at hand. This the legislator could not possibly have foreseen. That must be established by the judge, but the judge of course depends on the facts, partly on witnesses. But the central point, as far as the art is concerned, [is] the speeches of the litigants. Now let us go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “If this is so, it is obvious that all those who definitely lay down, for instance, what should be the contents of the exordium or the narrative, or of the other parts of the discourse, are bringing under the rules of art what is outside the subject; for the only thing to which their attention is devoted is how to put the judge into a certain frame of mind. They give no account of the artificial proofs, which make a man a master of rhetorical argument.”

**LS:** That is only a restatement of the conclusion. He repeats the previous conclusion. It is not the task of the orator to make the judge a man of a certain kind as Aristotle says—for example, a compassionate [one], or to make him a knower of right and wrong—but to prove facts in a way in which facts are proved to juries. And that means enthymematically. So the core of the orator is that he is an enthymematically, if I may coin this term, a master of the art of arguing rhetorically. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**

Hence, although the method of deliberative and forensic Rhetoric is the same, and although the pursuit of the former is nobler and more worthy of a statesman than that of the latter, which is limited to transactions between private citizens, they say nothing about the former, but without exception endeavor to bring forensic speaking under the rules of art. The reason of this is that in public speaking it is less worth while to talk of what is outside the subject, and that deliberative oratory lends itself to trickery less than forensic, because it is of more general interest. For in the assembly the judges decide upon their own affairs, so that the only thing necessary is to prove the truth of the statement of one who recommends a measure, but in the law courts this is not sufficient; there it is useful to win over the hearers, for the decision concerns other interests than those of the judges, who, having only themselves to consider and listening merely for their own pleasure, surrender to the pleaders but do not give a real decision. That is why, as I have said before, in many places the law prohibits speaking outside the subject in the law courts, whereas in the assembly the judges themselves take adequate precautions against this.

**LS:** So here Aristotle shows a further improvement which will come as a consequence of the emphasis on the proofs, on the rhetorical proofs as distinguished from the externals. The further improvement consists in the fact that it forces one to do justice to the order of rank among the various kinds of rhetoric. Previous rhetoric was limited to forensic rhetoric, although deliberative rhetoric, as we may call it, is nobler and more political. I will give you a rhetorical proof of one kind by an example. Winston Churchill never made any forensic oratory, whereas, as you know, he was quite good at deliberative oratory. And even today, while we admire a marvelous trial lawyer, we do not admire him as much, from the point of view of rhetoric, as we do a great speaker on public, political matters.

Now Aristotle begins a somewhat strange argument. In deliberative, political oratory,<sup>30</sup> extraneous things, things extraneous to the matter at hand, are obviously less important because the decisionmakers, the judges, are concerned in political oratory with their *own* interests, while in the capacity of judges or jurymen they are concerned with *other* people's interests. I mean, whether this conduct is favorable to that man is of no interest to them. And therefore they are

rather indifferent. Can this be true if we think of the outrageous things done in political assemblies? It sounds very strange, what Aristotle says. How can we understand that—that people in a political, deliberative assembly are less emotional, are more objective as they say, than as judges, jurymen? Well, Aristotle takes the highest case, the ordinary highest case, and ordinarily speaking we are more concerned with the truth when our own interest is at stake than when someone else's interest is at stake. But in a political, deliberative assembly *our* interest is at stake because it concerns the whole polis and therefore every citizen. But if we sit there in judgment on other people who are not our friends or relatives, we are not directly engaged and therefore we are less concerned with finding out the truth. That is what he means. Yes?

**Student:** Doesn't this presuppose a belief that there are, or that the political assembly is deciding, things that are of common interest to all people, and not that the assembly might be the representative of a class interest which would be a particular interest?

**LS:** This is why I said Aristotle was not a babe in the woods. Read his *Politics*. He knew that very well. But let us take the best case in both cases. People, generally speaking, are more concerned with getting sound advice, with getting the truth when<sup>31</sup> [their] interest is at stake than when<sup>32</sup> [their] interests are not at stake. Now in deliberations of the assembly our interest is at stake; whereas when there is a trial of *a* and *b*, and *a* and *b* are not friends or relatives of ours, we are indifferent or much less concerned. Aristotle doesn't say more. And that one should always start<sup>33</sup> [from]<sup>34</sup> the highest case in that particular field [in order to find one's bearing] is a sound principle.

**Student:** Then why do they want disinterested people to decide cases, if a person wants the truth more when his own interest is involved?

**LS:** Yes, but here his interest radically differs from the interest of another citizen in a forensic case. For example, let us assume the man accused of murder and the man accusing him of murder have interests of . . . Surely, the man accused of murder has an interest to be acquitted. But this interest differs from the interest of everybody else because his interest in not being killed is incomparable to [that of] anyone else. Everyone may generally be concerned with justice being done, but this is another matter. This is too abstract. But if they sit there, everyone knows that in a decision about war and peace everyone will be affected. Also, there are subtle differences: for example, the old man who has no male offspring is less directly affected in a brutal way than a man<sup>35</sup> who has<sup>36</sup> [fathered] five sons of that age. That's clear. But very roughly and broadly speaking there is no difference. The fate of the city does not depend on whether, [to] take a civil case,<sup>37</sup> *a*<sup>38</sup> or *b* wins the lawsuit. One may be dissatisfied and may curse the jury but this happens in any case. But in the other case it is different. Mr. . . .

**Student:** Wouldn't Aristotle's teaching about the proper role of the litigant and the relations with the judge have to be greatly modified upon considering the situation we have in America, where there is a tradition of judicial review where the guardianship in the nation of the laws in the highest sense takes place in the form of particular adversary situations between individuals? Where the court very often doesn't decide the question because the particular litigants haven't brought it out so that both sides have the benefit of—

**LS:** I know very little about American jurisdiction, but I know that Mr. Anastaplo, who is sitting behind you, pleaded his case up to the Supreme Court. So that would seem to suggest that pleading before a court is not avoided by the fact that you can appeal from a decision of a court to a higher court, or I did not understand you?

**Same Student:** No. What I meant is that Aristotle says that the litigant does not raise the broadest questions<sup>x</sup> . . . . In a political community where the highest questions of a regime's nature are decided in a highest court, and where the court itself recognizes the great value of having litigants bring out the highest questions implicit in the very particular matter under consideration, it would seem in the United States, anyway, the court wants a litigant to do the exact opposite of what Aristotle recommends.

**LS:** I see. That has something to do with the famous difference between the civil laws systems and the common laws systems. The civil laws—

**Same Student:** Adversary—

**LS:** No, I mean that the discretion of the judges is much more limited, and Aristotle is obviously in favor of, for the reason given, why the discretion of the judges should be limited as much as possible. Mr. Anastaplo, I would be grateful for your opinion on this question. You are our greatest expert on—

**Mr. Anastaplo:** We can pursue it after class.

**LS:** I see.

**Student:** A lawyer is technically an officer of the court. He has a dual responsibility: both to his client and to the court. And it is in that aspect that—

**LS:** These are speakers or professional orators, elaborate speeches, but only in Greece. If I remember well, the speeches were delivered by the defendants or by the parties to the case, and they were only written out for them by what here would be the lawyer. But this would not necessarily affect the fundamental issues. The fundamental issue is: should the judges have the minimum of discretion, the absolute minimum which is obviously necessary, to decide what the legislator could not possibly have foreseen, or should he go beyond this? I believe that is the question. A case of course can be made for the other view, but Aristotle starts from the premise, for the reasons given, why judicial discretion should be kept to a minimum. Then of course, regarding the whole issue, you would have to raise the question: Is it wise that judges should decide political issues? You know that this is very controversial in this country, whether [it concerns] ordinary judges or Supreme Court judges. And it seems that Aristotle would take the now less-popular side, that the discretion of the judges should be restricted. Aristotle, of course, is also not thinking of a legislator as a present legislator—because whether they take more time for making their decisions than the highest judges would be a long question.

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<sup>x</sup> The first side of the original tape runs out, and a portion of the student's question is missing.

**Student:** It could be argued that under American conditions the closest approximation to the ancient notion of a lawgiver would be something like the American judge at his highest.

**LS:** No, I think the closest approximation would be the fathers of the Constitution, because that is something which is meant to be much more permanent than any ordinary law.

**Same Student:** But it could be argued that the Supreme Court is in some sense its present<sup>39</sup> [carrier]-out.

**LS:** You know that it can be argued, but you know that it can also be argued the other way around. That is not a simple thing. Now let us go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:**

It is obvious, therefore, that a system arranged according to the rules of art is only concerned with proofs; that proof is a sort of demonstration, since we are most strongly convinced when we suppose anything to have been demonstrated; that rhetorical demonstration is an enthymeme, which, generally speaking, is the strongest of rhetorical proofs; and lastly, that the enthymeme is a kind of syllogism. Now, as it is the function of Dialectic as a whole, or of one of its parts, to consider every kind of syllogism in a similar manner, it is clear that he who is most capable of examining the matter and forms of a syllogism will be in the highest degree a master of rhetorical argument, if to this he adds a knowledge of the subjects with which enthymemes deal and the differences between them and logical syllogisms.

**LS:** I draw your attention here to the expression, “the subjects with which enthymemes deal”—more literally, “about what kind of things the enthymeme is concerned,” which would mean not with all<sup>40</sup> [kinds of things]. This is the question we discussed before.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For, in fact, the true and that which resembles it come under the purview of the same faculty, and at the same time men have a sufficient natural capacity for the truth and indeed in most cases attain to it; wherefore one who divines well in regard to the truth will also be able to divine well in regard to probabilities.”<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, let us stop here for the moment. So the perfect teacher of that art is the dialectician. Now dialectician is here understood in Plato’s sense. For the core of rhetoric is the enthymeme, and the enthymeme is a syllogism of a certain kind. Hence you cannot have a proper judgment if you do not know syllogisms of all kinds—what we would say is the logician. But here you saw also the question implicitly raised: is there not a particular subject matter of enthymeme, i.e., that enthymemes are not applied to all subjects? But the enthymeme is of a lower rank. It gives not truth but something “resembling the truth,” similar to the truth—in Latin, *verisimile*; in French, *vraisemblable*; [and] similarly in German. As far as I can see, you don’t have an exact equivalent to that in English. “Probable” comes from an entirely different sphere.

**Mr. Reinken:** We often use “likely,” a likely story.

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<sup>xi</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I. 1. 1-11, 1354a1-1355a18.

**LS:** This would be better than “probable,” I think. But here a great question arises, to which Aristotle alludes: Is not the truth in fact the preserve of very few men, so that the pursuit of truth on the one hand, and the study of rhetoric on the other, belong to entirely different faculties and men? Aristotle says no. Men are by nature sufficient for the truth, men in general. Therefore the study of the rhetorical syllogism, and of all other syllogisms, belongs to the same study. Here<sup>41</sup> he uses another term at the end—“since men are by nature sufficiently fit for the truth”; and he referred then in the last sentence, that men’s aptitude or ability to guess regarding the *endoxa* resembles their natural aptitude towards the truth. Now *endoxa* is not the same as “likely.” *Endoxa* is that which exists in opinion. One can say “accepted views”; as a provisional translation that’s good enough. The accepted views are plausible,<sup>42</sup> probable. To that extent the two things are identical, but the point of view is somewhat different.

Now<sup>43</sup> the argument is this: the accepted opinions, the authoritative opinions—and there may very well be contradictory authoritative opinions—are a reflection of the truth. Therefore since men have this openness to the accepted opinions and the willingness to ascend to them, this is a kind of parallel to openness to the truth proper even if they do not necessarily accept the truth. The opinions, the authoritative opinions, are a reflection of the truth that is underlying this argument—a Platonic assertion: that there is no opinion which is shared at least by a number of people which is wholly baseless, which is not a fragment of the truth. And therefore by looking at it carefully you can recover somehow the complete [truth], a part of which is available to in opinion. Something of this kind is underlying the Aristotelian argument here.

Now this has a great implication regarding rhetoric, because there are accepted opinions not only regarding such matters as are discussed before law courts or in public assemblies. There are accepted opinions about all kinds of things. Naturally they must be such kinds of things of which non-philosophers or non-scientists are aware. There are no accepted opinions, say, regarding electronic physics because the non-scientist, non-philosopher knows nothing of that. But, for example, regarding the gods, there are of course accepted opinions. Therefore [regarding] rhetoric, there is a difficulty. Rhetoric is in one sense limited to politically relevant matters, and that is the way which Aristotle deals with the subject throughout the work. But rhetoric also goes beyond that. Rhetoric, to the extent to which it is arguing about *endoxa*, or rather on the basis of *endoxa*, on the basis of accepted opinions, is all-comprehensive, because these opinions are all-comprehensive.

We cannot now read everything. I will give a brief survey of the rest of the argument of the first chapter. In the sequel he draws a conclusion. The neglect of the enthymeme and the ensuing concern with forensic rhetoric alone shows the necessity of Aristotle’s work, or rather that the right kind of rhetoric as here developed is necessary from the point of view of theory. I mean, in order to have a complete understanding of all possible syllogisms we must have of course also the theory of the rhetorical syllogism. Then he takes up the question that the true rhetoric is also useful, meaning practically useful. To some extent he had shown this before, when he spoke of the requirements of decent jurisdiction which must put the emphasis on proof or disproof of facts. Now what is this practical usefulness? In 12—we should read that, I think—in 12, “Rhetoric is useful”—two lines after you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Nevertheless, Rhetoric is useful, because the true and the just are naturally superior to their opposites, so that, if decisions are improperly made, they must owe their defeat to their own advocates; which is reprehensible.”

**LS:** What does this mean, that truth and right are by nature stronger? What can this mean? Would they not always be superior if they are by nature stronger? Well, in themselves they are stronger. And the simple proof we have is that if someone lies, he makes his life much more complicated because he must always think of that lie, otherwise he would contradict himself<sup>44</sup> [on] the point regarding which he had lied. There is an intrinsic strength of truth there implied. But this does not mean that they are in every respect superior and this is shown by the fact that clever liars, or swindlers, or cheats, can obscure truth and right. And therefore it is necessary that truth and right are supported by speech favoring truth and right as distinguished from deceiving speech. Since truth and right are by nature superior, their defeat in a given case can only be due to human ineptness. Therefore if there is place for human ineptness, there is also place for human aptness. Second argument.

**Mr. Reinken:** <sup>“xii</sup>“In dealing with certain persons, even if we possessed the most accurate scientific knowledge, we should not find it easy to persuade them by the employment of such knowledge. For scientific discourse is concerned with instruction, but in the case of such persons instruction is impossible; our proofs and arguments must rest on generally accepted principles, as we said in the *Topics*, when speaking of converse with the multitude.”

**LS:** Well you see he changes a bit. First he says “some” and then he says “many,” meaning *the* many, i.e., the majority. Speech supporting truth and right, which is necessary because truth and right will not always prevail if left to themselves. This speech supporting truth and right must be speech intelligible to the many, and therefore cannot be scientific speech. And the third point:

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, the orator should be able to prove opposites, as in logical arguments; not that we should do both (for one ought not to persuade people to do what is wrong), but that the real state of the case may not escape us, and that we ourselves may be able to counteract false arguments, if another makes an unfair use of them. Rhetoric and Dialectic alone of all the arts prove opposites, for both are equally concerned with them. However, it is not the same with the subject matter, but, generally speaking, that which is true and better is naturally always easier to prove and more likely to persuade.”<sup>xiii</sup>

**LS:** Now here’s the implication: The speech supporting truth and right can also support untruth and wrong. If you are very good at proving truth and right, you are also very good at the opposite. And the famous story developed by Plato in various places, especially in one of the two *Hippias*, the *Hippias Minor* if I remember well, where he shows that—or in the *Republic*, the same faculty which enables a man to be a first-rate guard enables him to be a first-rate thief. The cognitive elements of the arts of the guard and the art of the thief are the same. Well, you read it every day in the newspaper; the policemen have to know the same things which the burglar knows.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>xii</sup> The reader skips the first word of the Freese translation of this sentence, which reads: “Further, in dealing.”

<sup>xiii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 1. 12, 1355a21-38.

Now if we raise then this question<sup>46</sup>: What do we learn about the practical use of rhetoric which we have not learned prior to this whole passage? The central point, I think, is truly the central point—namely the fact that rhetoric is emphatically speech toward the many, toward those who are in no way men of science or philosophers. Toward the end of this chapter then Aristotle has shown, first, the universality of rhetoric—no special field like medicine, geometry, botany, and so on—and second, the usefulness of rhetoric.

<sup>47</sup>Since we have already lost so much time, or invested so much time I should rather say, we must discuss one passage which is very important in our capacity as political scientists. At the beginning of the next chapter, in 1355b25.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us now endeavour to treat of the method itself, to see how and by what means we shall be able to attain our objects. And so let us as it were start again, and having defined Rhetoric anew, pass on to the remainder of the subject. Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever.”

**LS:** You see here: universality, “to *any* subject.”

**Mr. Reinken:**

This is the function of no other of the arts, each of which is able to instruct and persuade in its own special subject; thus, medicine deals with health and sickness, geometry with the properties of magnitudes, arithmetic with number, and similarly with all the other arts and sciences. . . . But Rhetoric, so to say, appears to be able to discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given subject. That is why we say that as an art its rules are not applied to any particular definite class of things.<sup>xiv</sup>

**LS:** Yes. Now rhetoric is not limited then to political matters; it is universal. This point is clear. Now in the sequel, Aristotle makes then a distinction between what belongs to the art proper and what does not belong to the art proper. What is not technical [or] what does not require an art, are the things which the speaker presupposes: for example, contract, the contract on the basis of which it is to be decided.

The things which belong to the art are three things. First, the character of the speaker, which is crucially important. The speaker must, not by asserting it, because that would not carry conviction, but by his conduct show himself to be a trustworthy man. Otherwise how<sup>48</sup> is it possible to believe what he says? And the second: he has also to consider the disposition of the listeners, not necessarily in order to subvert their judgment, but in order to counteract their emotions. For example, if he knows they are unreasonably angry, he must know how to appease anger. If he knows they are unreasonably compassionate, he must know how to fight unreasonable compassion. You see,<sup>49</sup> it is in a way absolutely necessary to handle the passions, because there may be passions, pre-existing passions, which are averse to the jury or judge seeing the facts, and that must be handled. And then [third], of course, above all: the speech itself.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 1. 14 - 2. 1, 1355b22-34.

Now if you will turn to 1356a20, when he comes to speak about the three ingredients of rhetoric. "Since convictions are achieved by these things—"

**Mr. Reinken:** "Now, since proofs are effected by these means, it is evident that, to be able to grasp them, a man must be capable of logical reasoning, of studying characters and the virtues, and thirdly the emotions—"

**LS:** Now "logical reasoning," what kind of reasoning is there but logic? Say "reasoning," because Aristotle understands it here in the wide sense where it includes also rhetorical reasoning. Let us say "reasoning" simply.

**Mr. Reinken:**

the nature and character of each, its origin, and the manner in which it is produced. Thus it appears that Rhetoric is as it were an offshoot of Dialectic and of the science of Ethics, which may be reasonably called Politics. That is why Rhetoric assumes the character of Politics, and those who claim to possess it, partly from ignorance, partly from boastfulness, and partly from other human weaknesses, do the same. For, as we said at the outset, Rhetoric is a sort of division or likeness of Dialectic, since neither of them is a science that deals with the nature of any definite subject, but they are merely faculties of furnishing arguments.<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. So this is a partial explanation<sup>50</sup> of the ambiguity of rhetoric. Is it universal or is it not limited to certain subject matters? If it were simply a parallel to dialectic, it would be simply universal. But somehow rhetoric also belongs to politics, i.e., to a specific subject matter, and therefore the complication. Now, this error regarding politics is discussed at greater length by Aristotle at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The sophists, he suggests there, practically reduce politics to rhetoric.<sup>xvi</sup> And this implies of course that they believe that societies can be governed by speech alone, otherwise the art of politics could not be reduced to the art of rhetoric. A minimizing of the importance of coercion especially is characteristic of that. Politics is not identical with rhetoric. The question is: Is there a connection between the other error regarding rhetoric which Aristotle discussed earlier, and this particular error?<sup>51</sup> The other error was what? That they didn't know the nature of the enthymeme. That was the first point. The first error was that they didn't see that the enthymeme is the core of rhetoric. And what is the error here? Is there any connection between these two things? Is there any connection between these two errors? Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Aren't they both due to ignorance of the subject matter?

**LS:** Yes, but can you explain it?

**Mr. Butterworth:** The first one is due to ignorance of the way rhetoric works, the method of proof, and the second one—

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<sup>xv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 2. 7, 1355a20-33.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* X. 9, 1181a12-16.

**LS:** Yes, they didn't know that the core of rhetoric is the proof, and the proof is the enthymeme. How far is this relevant here? <sup>52</sup>Why could this error lead to the identification of politics and rhetoric? Yes, Mr. Dry?

**Mr. Dry:** If the core of politics were the end, they didn't consider the core; as in the other case, they considered the embellishment, the means . . . and that would relate to not considering the core as the enthymeme, but just considering the tricks or the other things.

**LS:** So that there would be a connection between the two errors. I do not believe that you stated it clearly enough, but you did better than I did. We have perhaps to take this up on another occasion. Well, there is one key point which I should at least mention and that is Aristotle's thesis in the sequel, that just as in science proper there are two things, induction and the syllogism—the induction by which you arrive at the premises and deduction by which you infer things from the premises—there is a similar parallel to both in rhetoric. The parallel to the syllogism, you know already, [is] the enthymeme; and the parallel to induction is the example. Aristotle gives a special discussion of these matters later on.

Now there was one more point which I think one should mention. This was a question which I raised before:<sup>53</sup> [Does] rhetoric [deal] with everything, or not with everything? Now there is a certain ambiguity in Aristotle and one sees this<sup>54</sup> very simply in retrospect. In Averroës' work—Averroës is a medieval Islamic commentator on Aristotle in the twelfth century—he defines rhetoric generally speaking in the general way, so there is no limitation to the political subject matter in the narrow sense of the term.<sup>xvii</sup> And, for example, if I remember well, the key assertion of Averroës in one of his writings is that the arguments used by the Koran are rhetorical arguments.<sup>xviii</sup> They are not scientific or dialectic in the Aristotelian sense. One can find the origin of that in Aristotle himself, but not so much in the *Rhetoric* as in the *Metaphysics*, in a famous passage in the twelfth book where Aristotle speaks about the popular notions of the gods at 1074b1ff. Now what does Aristotle say here?

It has been transmitted from the ancient ones in the form of myths, that these are gods [LS: meaning the stars] and that the divine—*periechei*? [Strauss consults with student on the translation]—holds together from the outside the whole nature. But everything else has been added to it, attached to it, in a mythical manner for the persuasion of the many

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<sup>xvii</sup> Averroës wrote, or at least there has survived from Averroës, a *Short* and a *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*. (There is no *Long Commentary*, as for many other Aristotelian texts). According to his students Charles Butterworth and Ralph Lerner (both eminent scholars of medieval philosophy), Strauss worked from a Latin translation, most probably the Aristotle-Averroës *Opera Omnia* (Venice: Thomas Junta edition, 1550-52). According to Butterworth, in the 1964 seminar Strauss worked principally from the *Middle Commentary* but may have also consulted the *Short Commentary*. Strauss's citations from Averroës' *Middle Commentary* in this seminar are apparently his own translations. Readers may wish to consult Averroës, *Commentaire moyen à la rhétorique d'Aristote*, ed. critique et trad. française par Maroun Aouad (Paris: Vrin, 2002).

<sup>xviii</sup> Averroës, *The Book of the Decisive Treatise: Determining the Connection Between the Law and Wisdom*, (trans. Charles Butterworth) (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2001), secs. 11, 26, 27, 39, and 44.

and for the use with regard to the laws and the expedient [LS: namely, the use of, the presentation of the gods as beings which look like human beings].<sup>xix</sup>

Good. Now here we have two things. First, tradition has been handed down. Secondly, these popular notions are used for the persuasion of the many. Traditions persuading the many are used for political purposes, but they are not themselves, of course, political.

Now this is, I believe, the direct link. In a treatise by Maimonides on logic, which is probably based on Farabi's writings, the following definitions are found. If we have a syllogism at least one of the premises of which is something generally accepted, the syllogism is dialectical. If at least one of the premises is vouched for by a tradition, the syllogism is rhetorical.<sup>xx</sup> One would not see any direct basis of that in Aristotle but if one takes into consideration the remark made in the twelfth book of the *Metaphysics*<sup>xxi</sup> one will see the connection. But the fundamental question, to repeat, is this: Is rhetoric strictly political, i.e., forensic and deliberative rhetoric, or is not rhetoric also used beyond these fields? Now we will see next time that there is a third kind of rhetoric, which Aristotle calls epideictic, and we must see whether this in itself leads beyond the political narrowly understood.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted "It would be fair to say that—."

<sup>2</sup> Deleted "they."

<sup>3</sup> Deleted "There was—."

<sup>4</sup> Deleted "When."

<sup>5</sup> Deleted "And that is—."

<sup>6</sup> Deleted "even this cannot be done."

<sup>7</sup> Deleted "but why did he not do it,."

<sup>8</sup> Deleted "then."

<sup>9</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>10</sup> Deleted "and Aristotle—."

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<sup>xix</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII. 1074a37-b6. Apparently Strauss's own translation. The Loeb translation: "A tradition has been handed down by the ancient thinkers of very early times, and bequeathed to posterity in the form of a myth, to the effect that these heavenly bodies are gods, and that the Divine pervades the whole of nature. The rest of their tradition has been added later in a mythological form to influence the vulgar and as a constitutional and utilitarian expedient." Trans. Hugh Tredennick. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 17 & 18, 1933).

<sup>xx</sup> *Maimonides' Treatise on Logic* (ed. and trans. Israel Efros) (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1938); Maimonides, *Traité de logique* (ed. and trans. R. Brague) (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1996).

<sup>xxi</sup> Strauss presumably refers to the passage he has read above from *Metaphysics*, XII. 1074a37-b6.

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- <sup>11</sup> Deleted “because—why, Mr. . . ., is this impertinent, immaterial? Oh, I misunderstood your shaking of your hand—well.”
- <sup>12</sup> Deleted “special—.” Moved “because.”
- <sup>13</sup> Deleted “is the basis,.”
- <sup>14</sup> Moved “speaking.”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleted “you know.”
- <sup>16</sup> Moved “that is clear,.”
- <sup>17</sup> Deleted “the other kinds of rhetoric—.” Strauss immediately corrects himself after this evident slip of the tongue.
- <sup>18</sup> Moved “here.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “in this case.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “are.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “things—.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “What the rhetoricians—.”
- <sup>23</sup> Moved “as.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “This is—.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “to be.”
- <sup>26</sup> Moved “not.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “Because you cannot—.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “People—.”
- <sup>29</sup> Moved “He can prove perhaps that—.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “where.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “our.”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “our.”
- <sup>33</sup> Moved “in order to find one’s bearing.”
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted “by.”
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted “of childbearing age.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “beared.”
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted “whether.”

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<sup>38</sup> Deleted “wins a law suit.”

<sup>39</sup> Deleted “carriers.”

<sup>40</sup> Deleted “of them.”

<sup>41</sup> Deleted “at the end.”

<sup>42</sup> Deleted “are.”

<sup>43</sup> Deleted “what Aristotle has—.”

<sup>44</sup> Deleted “regarding.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “Mr. Reinken: “Besides—.”

<sup>46</sup> Deleted “—forgive me [to Reinken]—.”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “I’m sorry, I would like,.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “can you.”

<sup>49</sup> Deleted “that’s the difference between what he means and—you know.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “of the fact—.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “Why people—.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “How—.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “deals.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleted “better—.”

**Session 3: April 6, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] Did you say at the beginning that the first two chapters deal only with deliberative rhetoric?

**Mr. Butterworth:** No, I didn't.

**LS:** Because if you did, you would be wrong. Then you said later on: "Rhetoric has as its subject things for which we do not have "quote systematic rules unquote." You are excused for the translation, but Aristotle says, "for which we do not have *arts*." In other words, say, what the shoemaker does or what the carpenter does is not as such subject of rhetoric, that's clear. The background of this is the Aristotelian distinction between making, the sphere of the arts, and doing, the sphere of practical wisdom. So rhetoric deals with subjects of practical wisdom rather than of the arts, i.e., of how to act. Now what this distinction (which in one way is quite obvious, but in another way very difficult) means, we may take up on another occasion. I only wanted to mention this right at the beginning.

Your remarks, especially on chapters 4 and 5 on the subjects of politics and on happiness, were very sound and very thoughtful. Clearly, rhetoric is subordinate to politics according to Aristotle—and according to the truth, we could say as well. You noticed the special status of legislation in the enumeration of political subjects in chapter 4. If I'm not mistaken, only in the case of legislation does he recommend the study of geographical and historical books, which he does not do in the other cases.

But the most important point which I would like to take up right away is the relation of rhetoric and dialectics. And you said<sup>1</sup> rhetoric differs from dialectics not only regarding the form or the addressees, but also in regard to subject matter.

**Mr. Butterworth:** That was a preliminary statement, which I then showed<sup>2</sup> couldn't be tenable, but which at the end came up again as being a possibility.

**LS:** Ja, but I believe it was all right [laughter]; it was a sound statement. But why is the discussion of this subject necessary? Why is the whole thing not 100 percent clear? Well, the very first sentence of the *Rhetoric*, where he says: "Rhetoric corresponds like an antistrophe to the strophe to dialectics"—and so, in other words, the only thing necessary to understand seems to be the difference between rhetoric and dialectics. But this is not quite true—why not?

Let us use a non-Aristotelian distinction between form and substance—because for Aristotle, as you know, form and substance are the same, but we are in the habit of distinguishing them and it makes some sense. Now if you take such a syllogism as: "All birds roar; but lions are birds; hence lions roar," this syllogism is in one way very bad because the two premises are manifestly wrong: neither are lions birds, nor do birds roar. But the conclusion is nevertheless sound. So that's to say the form, formally, this is a correct syllogism, but substantively it is of course absolutely wrong because of the wrongness of the premises. So therefore, with a view to these

and similarly well-known facts, people speak today—and I do not know since when—of formal logic, “formal” meaning dealing with only the *form* of reasoning, not with the substance.

Now what Aristotle<sup>3</sup> suggests at the beginning is that there are two kinds of *formal*—forms of reasoning. One he calls “dialectic,” and the other he calls “rhetorical.” Now “dialectic” is an ambiguous word in Aristotle. It may mean all non-rhetorical reasonings, all reasoning superior to rhetoric. It may also mean in particular one kind, I mean that kind of reasoning which starts, not from evident premises, but from premises backed by authority: like “all men,” “all wise men,” etc. Now we can leave the term “dialectic” in its ambiguity and can for our convenience simply call it “logic.” That doesn’t make any difference. So logic and rhetoric are both formal disciplines. They deal with all kinds of subjects but in a different way, because the rhetorician will address assembled multitudes and the dialectician deals with exchange between two or few individuals, not a public speech. This is one point. So this is perfectly clear. But then the whole thing becomes confused by another Aristotelian assertion. Rhetoric is related not only to dialectics, because of its formalism, but also?

**Mr. Butterworth:** In the beginning he says—

**LS:** No, no, later on he gradually—

**Mr. Butterworth:** That it’s related to the ethical part of politics —

**LS:** Let us say politics. So rhetoric has one foot in the formal discipline and another foot in a substantive discipline called politics. And since this is the case, it cannot be as universal as dialectics.<sup>4</sup> If it is understood as purely formal, then it is as universal as dialectics. But since this is not the case, since it [also] has one foot<sup>5</sup> in politics, it is limited to a specific subject matter, which we may provisionally call politics. Is this point clear?

But the ambiguity nevertheless remains. In other words, we must be open to the possibility that in spite of the fact that rhetoric for almost all practical purposes is political, nevertheless there is a possibility that one treats also trans-political things rhetorically. That is not excluded, and we must be open to this. We may take this up somewhat later in a somewhat different context. But<sup>6</sup> let us keep this in mind.

Now Aristotle has a very simple proof of the fact that rhetoric is not merely formal, because a purely formal discipline would not consist of parts distinguished from each other substantively. Formal logic may have all kinds of parts, but not parts distinguished from each other by subject matter, but only by a formal distinction. In the case of rhetoric, however, we have this distinction of rhetoric into three substantive parts: political rhetoric proper, [or] deliberative rhetoric; forensic rhetoric; and epideictic rhetoric, as he calls it, “showing” rhetoric. And this division alone shows that rhetoric is not a formal discipline, not merely a formal discipline, otherwise it could not have these subdivisions.

Now as Aristotle discusses this topic at the end of chapter 2, there are certain subjects which, using the terms I have now used, are formal, i.e., apply equally to all subject matters. For example, in all discussions in all fields “more” and “less” may have to be considered. And

inferences regarding more or less; say, if this little force is sufficient for driving a car, much more force will still be much more able to do it. This kind of thing. Similar relations of more and less would apply equally in all fields. Or other things: “possible” or “impossible” are considerations which come up in all fields. But you must distinguish from these formal considerations, which everyone must consider whether he is a dialectician or a rhetorician, whether he’s a botanist or a physicist or a political scientist. There are also such things, and they are much more interesting and relevant, which belong to a specific subject matter, like “useful” and “harmful” to political society, which would be the subject of deliberative rhetoric—in a sense also of course, in the highest sense even, of politics.

Now, we will return to this topic, but first of all I wanted to clear up a point which we had begun to discuss last time, I think the . . . of Mr. Dry, when I blacked out, so to speak. Now in the first discussion, we noticed two defects of pre-Aristotelian rhetoric. First, the disregard of the enthymeme, i.e., the specifically rhetorical reasoning. Incidentally, “enthymeme” is a term coined by Aristotle. It does not occur in Plato or anywhere else. We know that the pre-Aristotelian rhetoricians were concerned exclusively with the passions and this kind of thing. In other words they neglected deliberative, political rhetoric in favor of forensic rhetoric. That’s one point. And the other defect is [that] they reduced political science, the study of political things, to rhetoric. How are these two defects related? That was the question to which Mr. Dry began to give an answer, but I believe I can answer it better now, you tell me. Now what is the connection?

Now appealing to the passions—which such men as Thrasymachus, you know the hero of Plato’s *Republic*, specialized in—the appeal to passions, that means, if you use a very broad term, guiding souls wherever you wish to guide them: to make men compassionate, make them angry, or whatever it may be. In other words, these people implied that the political art is *the* form of guiding souls. “Influencing people” would probably be more present-day parlance, but the older expression is more telling somehow. But *is* politics [the] guidance of souls? No. In the first place, politics is also concerned with coercion pure and simple, which is not the same as guiding souls, although guiding souls somehow enters, as you know from the expression “carrot and stick.” [In] the second [place]: Politics is also concerned with reasoning, i.e., not appealing to the passions as passions, but to the reason—indeed a peculiar kind of reasoning, rhetorical reasoning, but nevertheless reasoning. This I believe is the connection between these two defects in pre-Aristotelian rhetoric as Aristotle analyzes it.

Now we have of course never to forget this fact: Why is it not possible to dispense with this kind of reasoning, rhetorical reasoning, altogether? Why can one not treat all subjects scientifically, i.e., non-rhetorically? This is of course what our social science, our modern social science, tries to do. Yet we have (as I have said before) a social science that asserts there is a fundamental difference in the status of factual judgments and of value judgments. And value judgments cannot be reasonably, rationally, validated or invalidated. The only way to make them stick is by propaganda, as they say. But the question is: is “propaganda” a good enough term? Does it mean only a maximum of noise and drums and this kind of thing, which doubtless contribute? But still how do they contribute without some rhythm? You know, it is not *mere* noise, it is a rhythmic noise which would be necessary, but I do not want to go into that. The question is: is what is loosely called “propaganda” not in the more interesting cases a kind of reasoning? Does it not

entail a kind of reasoning? And therefore<sup>7</sup> an analysis of propaganda would have to come back to the question raised by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*: What *kind* of reasoning is this?

Now, Aristotle's central argument, literally central argument, proving the usefulness of rhetoric, which you find in 1355a24ff, is very simple. It is impossible to argue scientifically in a public speech, in a speech addressed to the multitude. Of course you can induce experts to address, say, a town meeting, but the experts are of course only advisers. The town meeting itself must make up its mind. And then whether the expert succeeds or fails depends very much on whether he has the power of speaking, of rhetoric, in addition to being an expert, say, in de-fluoridation, or whatever the case may be. The decision is made by political men and political men are not necessarily experts. And that applies not only to this special kind of affair.

Now we can also put it this way. There are necessarily things in which we depend on trust. Now [the distinction between] trust and not-trust is clearly not something which is induced by scientific argument. I mean, you can listen to a scientific exposition and be fully convinced by it but that does not yet mean that you trust the man in question. He may have some axe of his own to grind although the argument is perfectly convincing or entirely convincing; you know this. But can we dispense with trust? If we could then it would be possible to dispense with rhetoric, because the trustworthiness of a person is established by the way in which he speaks and not insofar as it is a scientifically correct speech.

Can we entirely dispense with trust? I believe, in practical terms, that is the question of the truth serum universally applied to every speaker, to every witness, and of course to every defendant as well. So this would be a way to make<sup>8</sup> trust superfluous by scientific means, and therefore also to some extent to make rhetoric superfluous. Of course this would naturally require a law that everyone must be willing to have this injection. And there would [also] be a conflict<sup>9</sup> with the Fifth Amendment, obviously, were it to be applied to the defendant. In brief, there is one point which we may take up in another context: the complete rule of science would of course be the destruction of freedom in every sense. In every sense.

So freedom and rhetoric are coextensive. On a political basis, this was observed very well by Tacitus, when he said rhetoric had its flourishing period before the Roman emperors.<sup>1</sup> When Rome was run by the imperial household, including the wives and the mistresses of the emperors, there was no place any more for rhetoric to speak of. Perhaps when things were settled in the Forum, then it flourished. But we should always come back—and if I neglect it you should remind the class or even<sup>10</sup> [me]—<sup>11</sup>[of] this question: Why it is true, evidently necessary, that there is rhetoric as distinguished from scientific argument? That's absolutely crucial, as I hope I have shown. As long as there is freedom, there will be spheres in which only rhetoric can prevail.

<sup>12</sup>Let me now turn to the sequel and first to chapter 3, where Aristotle distinguishes the three kinds of rhetoric. And he does this in a characteristically Aristotelian way. There is a kind of rhetoric dealing with the past, with the future, and with the present. With the past: The judge—did he kill him or murder him, or did he not? Future: Shall we wage war or not? Present: As this

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<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *A Dialogue on Oratory*, trans. M. Hutton & W. Peterson, revised R. M. Ogilvie, E. H. Warmington & M. Winterbottom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 35, 1914), chap. 38.

is more complicated, I leave it out for the time being. There is a beautiful parallel to this kind of reasoning in the Third Book of the *Politics* when Aristotle tries to show, tries to make clear how many kinds of regimes there can be. Do you remember how he argues there? Yes?

**Student:** He said there were three true forms, and he called them monarchy, aristocracy, and polity.

**LS:** Yes, but how does he arrive at that?

**Same Student:** At the three true forms?

**LS:** Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** According to the number of rulers: one, few, many.

**LS:** Exactly: one, few, many. So in other words, this purely numerical consideration guarantees completeness, just as here—present, past, future. There cannot be a fourth. But what is the limitation of this procedure, as we could also see in the Third Book of the *Politics*?

**Student:** It doesn't say if these are good or better—

**LS:** No, apart from that. What do we not learn by being told democracy is the rule of the many, and oligarchy, or something like this, is the rule of the few?

**Student:** Is that the only way—

**LS:** Yes, apart from that now. What do we not learn about these three regimes which come[s]<sup>13</sup> out [obviously] when we make this division? Mr. . . ?

**Student:** The politically relevant thing is the wealth or poverty.

**LS:** In other words, that democracy is rule of the poor would never appear from the fact that<sup>14</sup> [democracy] is the rule of the many. You have to look at the politically many, and then you see that they are the poor. That is the point you were going to make? Good.

So Aristotle's procedure here is exactly the same. The tripartition into present, past, and future is in one way wonderful—it makes it certain that there cannot be a fourth. But we do not understand the substance of the three things. This is particularly clear in the case of the third, the present. How can we find out what [is] the subject matter of the kind of rhetoric<sup>15</sup> [that] deal[s] with the present? The present must be strictly understood. *Now* he speaks. What is the subject matter which is now, at present, decided by this speech? If you say the past may be a crime, then the subject matter is the past. Or if it is deliberative—what *shall* we do?—that is the future. But what<sup>16</sup> is [it] which is strictly present? Only the speaker himself: the speech itself [Strauss taps table for emphasis]. Is it a good speech or a bad speech? So as Aristotle puts it, while the addressee of the speech dealing with the past is a judge or jurymen, and the addressee of the speech dealing with the future is the assemblyman or the member of the deliberative body, the

addressee of the third kind of speech is the onlooker, a man who is merely an onlooker and does not make a decision as a judge or as an assemblyman makes a decision. In other words the epideictic speech, as Aristotle calls it, the “show speech,” does not have a practical purpose.<sup>17</sup> Surely not a strictly practical purpose. [A] Fourth of July speech: in a looser sense, of course it has a practical purpose. But narrowly conceived it has no practical purpose, because nothing is to be decided by that speech. That is, I believe, the simplest example from present-day America of what Aristotle calls epideictic speech. Also funeral speeches of course—funeral speeches have no practical purpose. No one will be condemned<sup>18</sup> by virtue of such a speech, nor will any measure be decided except accidentally. But one question: is the distinction between present, past, and future sufficient? Is there not a fourth possibility?

**Student:** Sir, I was wondering, where would he classify, perhaps connected with this question, where would he classify speeches of the “What are we doing” kind? For example people a few months ago would listen to various of Mr. Kennedy’s programs and show that they are self-defeating.

**LS:** Which speech?

**Same Student:** The speech, “What are we doing?”<sup>ii</sup> That is to say, for example, people would take various of Kennedy’s programs, like foreign policy, show that they are worthless on the basis of their own data—that is to say, they contradict their own purposes—and then ask the question, “What are we doing here?” I was just curious—

**LS:** Well, what do you mean? If we discovered that then this had nothing to do with rhetoric, it would be in a loose and broad sense of the word dialectical. We are analyzing, so that’s not rhetoric.

**Same Student:** I see.

**LS:** Well, if an orator uses parts of President Kennedy’s speeches, that is of course rhetorical, that’s clear, either in favor of them or against them. Good. But in Aristotle is the distinction between present, past, and future exhaustive? Is there or is there not something else of which one could think in this connection? Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** Well, I think most sermons purport to deal with God’s ways with man both now, then, and always. So that which simply is independent of—

**LS:** What is *always*, i.e., present, past, and future, taking the Aristotelian view of the sempiternal which is not identical with the eternal. Then,<sup>19</sup> where would it belong from Aristotle’s point of view?

**Student:** In philosophy.

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<sup>ii</sup> The student appears to be describing a type of rhetoric, giving the example of certain critical responses to JFK speeches. It is possible that the speech referred to is the “Peace Speech,” delivered in June 1963, in which Kennedy urged re-examination of America’s attitude to the Soviet Union. *Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1963*, 459-64.

**LS:** Yes, but since we cannot exclude the possibility of rhetoric being as all-comprehensive as dialectics is—and Mr. Reinken referred to a sermon, something not known to Aristotle but for which there must be some place<sup>20</sup> unless Aristotle's doctrine is deplorably inadequate.

**Student:** Then it would be under exhortative or dehortative, wouldn't it?

**LS:** To some extent, but still *qua* dealing with what is always and what is not subject to human action, I think it would be epideictic. And well, not every man who makes a sermon will like that, but you know also the first reaction that you remember is always, "This was a fine sermon or not a fine sermon"—a judgment of the quality of the speaker. Now I think it would belong primarily to<sup>21</sup> epideictic speech; although of course to the extent to which it exhorts and deports, or condemns or justifies, it would be deliberative and judicial in a modified manner.

Now, since you refer to Averroës, I am reminded of a fact which you surely knew. Mr. Mahdi must forgive me if I say anything in his presence about Islam, because I know practically nothing of it. But I remember that in Islam one of the truths, and the . . . of the divine mission of Mohammed was the beauty of the Koran, the beauty of the Koran which would be subject to the question of rhetoric. And therefore this is something which we must keep open, if only to understand Averroës, for his universal notion of rhetoric.

<sup>22</sup>For example, the question—if you take such a verse from Psalms 94 as: "He who has made the eye, should he not see? He who has made the ear, should he not hear?" Now, what kind of reasoning is that, if you apply Aristotelian distinctions? Is this an apodictic reasoning? Why not? Why not? If it is apodictic reasoning it would be: "He who has made a sense organ possesses the sensing," the corresponding sensing, not necessarily the sense organ. But it would follow of course that, "He who has made the nose, must he not have the sense of smelling," for example, which somehow no one would say. And the other premise into which I do not want to go now but which is of course implied, the premise that God made the ear,<sup>23</sup> is not established but simply presupposed. That is an enthymeme in Aristotle's sense.

A discussion of this particular subject which is of some interest for the higher reaches of the question of rhetoric you would find in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, Part three, chapter 19. This example incidentally is also helpful for understanding the literal meaning of the term enthymeme as Aristotle used it. It is derived from the Greek word *thymos*, which you know from Plato's *Republic*, usually translated by "spiritedness," but it has a broader meaning in Greek, especially in older Greek. It means simply "the heart," what is going on within the man. There is somewhere a discussion, I do not know where but maybe in Aristotle, that an enthymeme is an incomplete syllogism.<sup>iii</sup>

**Mr. Butterworth:** In Averroës.<sup>iv</sup>

**LS:** Is there? Yes, but it is somewhere in Aristotle I believe. But at any rate what I believe it means is [this]: something remains in the heart, i.e., it is not pronounced. Now a rhetorical

<sup>iii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 2. 13, 1357a7-18; 2. 22. 3, 1395b24-26.

<sup>iv</sup> Mr. Butterworth might refer to Averroës' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.1.11, or 1.2.25.

sylogism, in order to be transformed into a true syllogism, you would have to bring out the suppressed things, the suppressed things in that argument, and then you would have to examine them. This only in passing. Yes.

**Student:** By way of illustration, you gave the one about “a united Germany had never been defeated.” Was that the conclusion, or one of the premises of the—

**LS:** Ja, well, the syllogism? Well, the enthymeme of that was: “Never was Germany, when united, defeated.” But the conclusion, if you want to make a distinction is this: “We only need to be united and we will not be defeated.” But of course the question concerns even<sup>24</sup> the major [premise] here:<sup>25</sup> “A union is a necessary and sufficient condition of victory.” That [would have to be considered] *a*) in general,<sup>26</sup> and *b*) in particular, regarding Germany. And then if you have proof that it is true surely in the case of Germany, it would, of course, not yet follow that it will hold true of all the future. Perhaps there was never a Germany which was so much threatened by her neighbors as the Germany of 1914, and therefore the issue didn't arise. That would be one consideration. This can never be more than an enthymeme, this kind of reasoning.

**Student:** It must be defective logically by necessity. Is that it? Enthymemes almost by definition are defective logically?

**LS:** Yes, yes. Something is missing. But it may be—

**Same Student:** But what is missing is—

**LS:** Yes, yes, that is the point. Something is missing which would have to be established before it would be right. Now I put the emphasis on “missing” in order to bring us to the possible etymological origin of the term.

**Student:** You don't mean to say that it's necessarily defective logically. Something, because it isn't articulated, doesn't—

**LS:** Ja, but as stated, it is defective. But this doesn't mean that it is not susceptible of being transformed. Before we can go into this question, which was indicated by a remark of Mr. Butterworth—that there is something even of the sophistical in it, remember—<sup>27</sup> we would have to go into that by taking specific examples and preferably Aristotle's own examples. For example, why is the discussion regarding happiness [in] chapter 5—why does this necessarily lead to conclusions which, while plausible enough, are strictly speaking invalid? But we must see that later. Good.

Now, a few other points regarding chapter 3. We note here right from the beginning that Aristotle says that deliberation may be private. And it is therefore possible. This must be kept in mind. In other words, my simple definition, [that] rhetoric is politically effective speech about politically relevant matters, is good enough for most practical purposes, but it is not exact. And in order to show this I remind you only of the scene at the beginning of the *Gorgias*, when Gorgias says he goes to his brother's patients and the patients don't want to undergo any operation. The physician is completely helpless. He cannot do it. Then Gorgias steps in with his

great rhetorical power and persuades him to undergo the operation. And therefore this is private, private deliberation.

There is one minor difficulty in this chapter. When [Aristotle] speaks about deliberative rhetoric, he says deliberative rhetoric deals with what is expedient or harmful for the community, while the just and the unjust is the theme of forensic rhetoric. But of course that doesn't mean that the question of just and unjust doesn't come up in deliberative rhetoric. Aristotle makes this very clear. Otherwise you could accuse him<sup>28</sup> [of] think[ing] that deliberative rhetoric, say, about war and peace, or civil rights for that matter, [or] legislation, would have nothing to do with right or wrong. That's not Aristotle's . . . only the subordinate not the overall consideration. We might read one passage which I underlined, 1358b, that is in chapter 3 still, 29 to 37. It is on page 35 in your edition. "A sign."

**Mr. Reinken:**

A sign that what I have stated is the end which each has in view is the fact that sometimes the speakers will not dispute about the other points. For example, a man on trial does not always deny that an act has been committed or damage inflicted by him, but he will never admit that the act is unjust; for otherwise a trial would be unnecessary. Similarly, the deliberative orator, although he often sacrifices everything else, will never admit that he is recommending what is inexpedient or is dissuading from what is useful; but often he is quite indifferent about showing that the enslavement of neighboring peoples, even if they have done no harm, is not an act of injustice.<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** This is a characteristically Aristotelian argument—this very great precision, take the key case. Will a forensic speaker ever admit that the man whom he defends is guilty as charged without any extenuation? He may admit all kinds of things. He may admit that what he did was very inexpedient for him and even for the city, but he will not admit that he was guilty as charged. Similarly, the deliberative speaker<sup>29</sup> may admit that it is an unjust act but he will simply say, "right or wrong, my country," and he will say that it is conducive to the working of the city. Aristotle does not of course share this view, but he takes it only as<sup>30</sup> "a sign," as he puts it, that the ends of the two kinds of rhetoric are as he has stated.

Now let us turn<sup>31</sup> to chapter 4. He is still speaking about deliberative rhetoric. Deliberation deals only with such contingent things, which are things that could or could not happen, where the beginning of the thing is with us, i.e., a contingent thing. What is a contingent thing the beginning of which is not with us, a thing which as well could not be?

**Student:** For Luxembourg a contingent thing might be nuclear warfare. The beginning would not be with them. They could deliberate about nuclear warfare.

**LS:** Sure, that is true, but it is also very far-fetched. I mean there are much simpler examples.

**Another Student:** An accident.

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<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 3. 6, 1358b29-37.

**LS:** A tree. This particular tree could or could not be. It is contingent. And yet at the beginning of its being it's not with us, especially if you take a tree which has never been planted by human hands. And also what in fact by chance—I mean, that you find gold by digging<sup>32</sup> [and] trying to plant potatoes in your backyard. The beginning of this find was no way in you. You didn't dig for this reason. Good.

Here in this connection, he speaks of the sophistic ingredient in rhetoric of which Mr. Butterworth has spoken. Now these five things which he mentions here, which are the subject of deliberation, this goes back in all probability, as Mr. Butterworth has mentioned, to Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Book 3, chapter 6 where Socrates has a discussion with Glaucon, the hero of the *Republic*, about what a political man would have to know. Now the subjects are slightly different. Legislation is not mentioned as a subject by Xenophon or by Socrates, whereas it is mentioned here. That is anybody's guess why Socrates did not mention legislation as a subject—perhaps because he felt legislation should not be a subject. That's a very good question.

Now let us turn to 1360a17. This is the last page or so of the fourth chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:** “With a view to the safety of the State, it is necessary that the orator should be able to judge of all these questions, but an understanding of legislation is of special importance, for it is on the laws that the safety of the State is based. Wherefore he must know how many forms of government there are—”

**LS:** “Of regimes,” how many kinds of regimes there are. Why is this necessary? Why is it necessary for the sake of legislation to know how many kinds of regimes there are? It is not explained here.

**Student:** He has to know how many kinds there are so that he'll know what is proper to the conditions in which he finds himself.

**LS:** But why not, more precisely? You are right, but it is not precise enough.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** All laws are relative to the regime. And therefore you cannot give law—in order to say what's law in a democracy, [you ask], “Is a law conducive or compatible with democracy?” If it is not compatible with democracy, it is rejected on this ground alone. Good. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

what is expedient for each; and the natural causes of its downfall whether they are peculiar to the particular form of government or opposed to it. By being ruined by causes peculiar to itself, I mean that, with the exception of the perfect form of government, all the rest are ruined by being relaxed or strained to excess. Thus democracy, not only when relaxed, but also when strained to excess, becomes weaker and will end in an oligarchy; similarly, not only does an aquiline or snub nose reach the mean, when one of these defects is relaxed, but when it becomes aquiline or snubbed to excess, it is altered to such an extent that even the likeness of the nose is lost.

Moreover, with reference to acts of legislation, it is useful not only to understand what form of government is expedient by judging in the light of the past, but also to become acquainted with those in existence in other nations, and to learn what kinds of government are suitable to what kinds of people. It is clear, therefore, that for legislation books of travel are useful, since they help us to understand the laws of other nations, and for political debates historical works [literally translated, “the investigations of those who write about human actions”]. All these things, however, belong to Politics and not to Rhetoric.<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** But still, even if a man would merely be concerned with being a successful public speaker he would have to know these things. You see here how much Aristotle takes as a matter of course that one should study, if one is politically interested, the “laws of the nations” literally translated, i.e., of non-Greeks, barbarians. This must be emphasized with a view to those who still assert that Aristotle identified goodness with Greekness. He did not do that. I mean, he believed he would find more political goodness among Greeks than among barbarians, but by no means all.

Now what does this beautiful simile of the two kinds of noses mean, the aquiline nose and the snub nose? Is there someone gifted with the pictorial art and can draw the two noses? Are you good at that? Who is? No one? It can't be true. Then I must try [Strauss turns from class and goes to the board to illustrate the noses; laughter]. The one nose like this, and the other nose like this.

**Student:** That one looks like Cyrano de Bergerac's nose.

**LS:** Ja, sure, that's the aquiline, an overdone aquiline. Now what he says is this: If you have the snub nose, which as you know can be very beautiful, especially in girls, but if<sup>33</sup> [it is] overdone it might no longer be a nose. And similar[ly] with an aquiline nose, which is more beautiful in men I believe, again<sup>34</sup> [it] can be so much overdone that it would no longer be a nose.<sup>35</sup> One would no longer be able to smell with it [laughter]. Now what is then the right way, what is then the right nose?

**Student:** The mean.

**LS:** I.e., neither snub nor aquiline. Apply it to the political example.

**Student:** It would be neither monarchy nor polity.

**LS:** No, monarchy . . . democracy and oligarchy. One is like the snub nose; the other is like the aquiline nose. Now<sup>36</sup> the democrat wants to keep the snubbishness of the nose and the oligarch wants to keep the aquiline character of the nose. Now if they mitigate it, then they approach more to the normal nose, to what Aristotle would call aristocracy or polity. But if they overdo it in either direction, then it will no longer be not only a democracy or an oligarchy, but any polity. Any polity. In the one case it will become anarchy, if democracy is too much relaxed; and if

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<sup>vi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 4. 12-13, 1360a18-37.

oligarchy is too much concentrated, it will become a tyranny. So that is a perfect—I think it's a very nice simile, which is very intelligent.

Now let us turn to chapter 5, which deals with those subjects from which you start when building up deliberative enthymemes, enthymemes in deliberation. They deal with the harmful or helpful, the bad or good, and, since the sum total of all things good for man is called happiness, Aristotle begins with happiness. Now let us read this, Mr. Reinken.

<sup>37</sup>**Mr. Reinken:** From the beginning. "Men, individually and in common, nearly all have some aim, in the attainment of which they choose or avoid certain things."

**LS:** You see again the reference to private as well as public choice. It is possible to deliberate privately. Incidentally, also in a public deliberation you might deliberate about the well-being or the opposite of an individual. Perhaps. Yes?

**Student:** Doesn't he say that rhetoric is directed to classes of people? Concerning—

**LS:** Yes, I mean strictly understood—I mean not only does rhetoric consist in politically effective speech in a public assembly about politically relevant matters, but there are also other uses of rhetoric. It may not be merely in a public assembly and it may be about subjects which are not, narrowly understood, political. That cannot be changed, because rhetoric has this dual character. On the one hand it is simply a parallel to dialectics and therefore all-comprehensive; but on the other hand it has one foot in politics—

**Student:** Would you call the *Symposium* then an example, the early speeches—

**LS:** No, no, these are speeches. <sup>38</sup>How do you draw the line? If we have an exchange now, no one would call it a public speech. But if you have two friends with you at home and then at a certain moment you say, "Now I must explain this clearly," and you make a speech of 10 minutes, is this a public speech? No. But if they are seven and you speak for thirty minutes, is that a public speech? You know, the line is hard to draw.

**Student:** When you talk about the distinction between deliberative and forensic, what would you call Cicero's orations against Cataline?<sup>vii</sup> This definitely had a political end and yet it was accusatory.

**LS:** Yes, but that is a very special case because it was high treason and that is always at the borderline of the forensic and the political. This happens. You cannot change that. But on the other hand it is perfectly clear, say, if Bobby Baker would be indicted, then it would be clearly a forensic case.<sup>viii</sup> Although even in this case as you must have seen there are some political implications. But what would go on before the law court as such would be forensic.

<sup>vii</sup> Cicero, "Against Catiline," in *Orationes*, trans C. Macdonald (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 324, 1976).

<sup>viii</sup> Robert Gene "Bobby" Baker (b. 1928) came to Washington in 1943 as a Senate page; by 1953 he was the secretary to the Senate's Democratic majority. Mentored by Lyndon B. Johnson, Baker became one of Johnson's most important advisors. An investigation into his private dealings and alleged misconduct was

**Student:** Is there any significance to the fact that in this analogy of the nose the two extremes are oligarchy and democracy, so the mean would be polity rather than aristocracy?

**LS:** No, the same happens in the *Politics*, when he speaks of the factoid in Book 4, beginning roughly when he says that people ordinarily say there are two kinds of regimes, democracy and oligarchy. How come? Because the most simple and obvious perpetual cleavage within a polity is that between the rich and the poor. And this scheme of Aristotle's is very simple. [Strauss gets up to write on the board.] We have democracy and we have oligarchy, and then you can have that mean, neither snub-nosed nor aquiline, and he calls that polity. But you can also have this at a higher level and this is aristocracy. In polity the only virtue considered for citizenship as such is military virtue, soldiers, and the only thing which you omit here is monarchy, kingship; and this didn't fit with the polity as polity, but kingship was rather for nations. Now let us read, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:**

This aim, briefly stated, is happiness and its component parts. Therefore, for the sake of illustration, let us ascertain what happiness, generally speaking, is, and what its parts consist in; for all who exhort or dissuade discuss happiness and the things which conduce or are detrimental to it. For one should do the things which procure happiness or one of its parts, or increase instead of diminishing it, and avoid doing those things which destroy or hinder it or bring about what is contrary to it. Let us then define happiness as well-being combined with virtue—

**LS:** “Well-being” means here, in the vulgar sense of the word, “doing well”—now, not in the sense of acting nobly, but what we ordinarily call when we say of a fellow he is doing well, with virtue.

**Mr. Reinken:** “or independence of life—”

**LS:** “Self-sufficiency.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “or the life that is most agreeable combined with security, or abundance of possessions and slaves, combined with power to protect and make use of them; for nearly all men admit that one or more of these things constitutes happiness.”

**LS:** Now let us stop here for one moment. What is the one which you like least, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** I had taken literally “independence of life,” and so I just—

**LS:** No, “self-sufficiency.” That can be very exacting. But you see what Aristotle does here. You see immediately how it is impossible to build a scientific reasoning on happiness in this sense, because happiness is very ill-defined. I mean, the emphasis is very different in the four cases, but

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de-railed after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963. Baker later served 18 months in prison on tax evasion charges.

in a crude way people admit either the one or the other. The thing is somewhat vague: what is happiness in the ordinary understanding, but it is sufficient for political deliberation. For example, to be quite cautious: two years ago at least, the people in Red China were very unhappy and those in this country happy. This is a politically sound assertion. But here you don't need a sophisticated or precise notion of happiness. Now let us read a few more lines.

**Mr. Reinken:**

If, then, such is the nature of happiness, its component parts must necessarily be: noble birth, numerous friends, good friends, wealth, good children, numerous children, a good old age; further, bodily excellences, such as health, beauty, strength, stature, fitness for athletic contests, a good reputation, honour, good luck, virtue. For a man would be entirely independent, provided he possessed all internal and external goods; for there are no others. Internal goods are those of mind and body; external goods are noble birth, friends, wealth, honour. To these we think should be added certain capacities and good luck; for on these conditions life will be perfectly secure. Let us now in the same way define each of these in detail.<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** I think that is one of the many wonderful passages in Aristotle, this enumeration, simple enumeration. That he applies his powerful mind to such a subject which is hardly susceptible of philosophic or scientific treatment, and yet does his best. Now is this enumeration good enough?

**Student:** He omits philosophy.

**LS:** But when do people in assemblies speak about philosophy?

**Same Student:** When they condemn it.

**Another Student:** . . . as a list of happiness—

**LS:** But may I suggest this. That is so deeply true, what you say, that it is practically almost irrelevant. We will come back to that. But obviously,<sup>39</sup> Aristotle is speaking about what everybody regards as happiness. Look around, wouldn't you say that a man who has all these advantages—incidentally, virtue can include of course every one of them, why should it not include theoretical virtue, why should it not include philosophy? Now a man who had all these things, all the virtues moral and intellectual and all these other things, would you not say, "I wish I had that life"? Would you not envy it, not necessarily in the nasty sense of envy? Would not one say he is an enviable man? What's missing? Is there anything which you would—yes?

**Student:** A good wife?

**LS:** Very good. That is also what occurred to me first. Why not a good wife? I mean if he omitted that, it would be very grave and show a serious defect for Aristotle. And one would quote Proverbs 31<sup>x</sup> against him. Yes?

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 5. 1-4, 1360b4-30.

<sup>x</sup> "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies . . . ."

**Student:** I think arts are also necessary.

**LS:** That could also be counted among—it depends what arts, you know. No one is envied for being a shoemaker.

**Same Student:** Something of the order of being a good rhetorician.

**LS:** That could be said to be implied in virtue. But what about the wife, since we have here a clear example that Aristotle neglected something of utmost importance for human happiness. Why did he omit it?

**Mr. Reinken:** That could be implied from good children, couldn't it?

**LS:** Well, yes, but more directly. Do you know that the most famous utterance about<sup>40</sup> wives in Aristotle's time occurs in the funeral speech of Pericles? What does he say?

**Student:** I remember in one instance he tells them not to moan too much or make too much of—

**LS:** Ja, sure, when he addresses the wives, but what does he say about wives? What is a good wife?

**Student:** He says that it is better not to speak about it.

**LS:** Yes, the good wife is [one] about whom men among themselves would not speak much, either for good or ill. Now Aristotle follows that. So in other words, whether a man has a good wife would never be a matter of public knowledge, because if she is a good wife it wouldn't be mentioned. And Aristotle follows that. It's perfectly legitimate. But apart from that, it is quite true that when he speaks later on of daughters<sup>41</sup>—you know, because good children also includes good female children—he speaks by indirection of the virtues of the wife too. So is this really not an omission? Graver is the one which—if you have any doubt about it, look when he speaks later in the section on children, when he<sup>42</sup> [speaks] about female children. Do you have that? Shortly after the beginning of 1361a.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The blessing of good children and numerous children needs little explanation. For the commonwealth it consists in a large number of good young men, good in bodily excellences such as stature, beauty, strength, fitness for athletic contests; the moral excellences of a young man are self-control and courage.”

**LS:** Not the others. The others require a much higher degree of discretion which cannot be expected of young men. But that they have self-control with regards to the passions and are courageous can be expected. That is the reason behind it. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For the individual it consists in a number of good children of his own, both male and female, and such as we have described. Female bodily excellences are beauty and stature, their moral excellences self-control—”

**LS:** In other words, not strength and not athletic prowess. We see what he omits. That would not be so desirable because the girls most famous for athletic prowess were the Spartan girls who had a very bad reputation regarding chastity. And people said, "Well, it's the city of Helen." Helen was after all a Spartan girl, yes. And what about moral qualities of girls?

**Mr. Reinken:** "self-control and industrious habits, free from servility."

**LS:** So in other words, not courage or manliness, of course not, but utterly without sordidness of sorts. What does he mean by that? "Without illiberality" would perhaps be a better translation. I suppose less scrubbing floors, and more weaving and spinning.<sup>43</sup> This of course gives you an idea of what a good wife is by indication.

**Mr. Reinken:** "The object of both the individual and the community should be to secure the existence of each of these qualities in both men and women; for all those States in which the character of women is unsatisfactory, as in Lacedaemon, may be considered only half-happy."<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Yes. This is developed at great length in the *Politics*, in the Second Book, when he speaks about Sparta. So we see then the question of the good wife has been taken care of by implication perfectly by Aristotle and that should not be held against him. Mr. Richter?

**Mr. Richter:** Isn't this arrangement of stating first the commonwealth's considerations then the individual's considerations . . . .

**LS:** In the paragraph we read now?

**Mr. Richter:** Yes.

**LS:** That the commonwealth comes first seems to be very reasonable because we are thinking primarily in political terms. But of course you want to have a numerous and good young generation . . . . Now this means of course, since they are supposed to be legitimate children, that the individual citizens have numerous and good offspring. It may be that some have eight children and others two and it gives an average of five which would be good enough for the community as a whole. But still the man who has eight children, and good [ones], somehow cuts a better figure in the community, other things being equal, than the one who has only two. For example, if there should be some controversy and he is accompanied by, say, six sons and the other only has one, you know who will be likely to win.

**Student:** Does Aristotle ever speak anywhere about love between men and women . . . .

**LS:** Well, he speaks on love in the chapters on friendship at this point. Friendship would be the word for love. If you mean sex?

**Same Student:** No.

**LS:** Friendship.

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<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 5. 6, 1360b39-1361a11.

**Same Student:** I mean not sex alone, but the whole character of a man and a woman, a man and his wife—

**LS:** You see, that is such a long question. It is good you bring it up. But, you see, we take for granted that—for Aristotle, marriage is much more important than love. And that marriage should be based on love in the sense that the two uniting for marriage are in love with each other, Aristotle does not assume. I mean, I do not remember that he discusses it but, generally speaking, in former times this was not regarded as the most important thing. It was regarded as more important that they *fit* each other.

Now, that people in a state of emotional disturbance as love is said to be—you must have read the literature on this subject—are the best judges of mutual fitness for 30, 40, 50 years is of course a very open question [laughter]. No? And therefore this view that love is *the* basis is a relatively recent view. And the people who write what we call novels, and which is called in French and the other<sup>44</sup> [Romance] languages *roman*, *romances*, romantic—it was the writers of romances, of a certain kind of poetry, that were concerned with this, not students of political society,<sup>45</sup> because this was not regarded as a paramount consideration.<sup>46</sup> People were aware of this. They only had to read the Bible—the story of Jacob, the one whom he loved and the other whom he did not love—to see that this is a universal phenomenon. But the question of what importance to attach to it from a broad political point of view—the well-being of society, the well-being of the individual household—this is a very long question. If experienced and wise parents on both sides (which is of course a big if) would sit together and fix such a match—that this should be inferior to these young intoxicated beings— You must be open-minded, you know.<sup>47</sup> That the issue is now for practical purposes settled by the mores of this country and the modern world in general does not settle it theoretically. You would admit that? Good. Because things might change, you know [laughter].

**Student:** I think the question was raised earlier about this paragraph. I don't know if this is true of the Greek, but the structure of the English seems to be—he says you need to explain this point by good and numerous children more, and then he says if you look at it from the point of view of the commonwealth it's very important that the commonwealth has good young men. If we look at it from the point of view of the individual he is interested in both his male and female children. And then he concludes by saying, of course the commonwealth has to give some concern to women too because we don't want them to be like the Spartan women.

**LS:** Yes, but even from a strictly military point of view, what will the warriors do if they cannot trust the fidelity of the wives they left at home? In one war novel I read, I've forgotten which, I read the story of some fatal happening at the western front because one of the captains received a note that his wife was not loyal to him and he was very angry and he immediately began to shoot at the other front (whether it was Germany or not I don't know) and there were consequences. This is important of course.

**Same Student:** Yes, but it is of secondary importance from the point of view of the commonwealth.

**LS:** It may be [of] *secondary* importance, but it is important enough, it's important enough. And once you read the Second Book of the *Politics* you will see what Aristotle says there about the Spartan women—why this was a real harm to the city of Sparta that the women were no good.

**Student:** I think a Greek's reaction, however, if he was on the front and he received a letter that his wife was unfaithful, he'd probably demand some sort of money compensation. I don't think he'd be too much affected sentimentally.

**LS:** That is hard to say—

**Same Student:** In laws, especially the earlier Greek laws—we see that bloodshed was often prevented because one of the parties was willing to pay, make financial payments.

**LS:** But after all, adultery was a punishable offense for both the adulterer and the wife. so it was not so simple. People generally had a certain interest, disregarding everything else, in knowing<sup>48</sup> that they leave their property to their own offspring, not somebody else's offspring. This is very natural. The mere fact that Xanthippe was so famous for being a very difficult wife shows that the Greeks were aware of this problem, you know [Strauss laughs]. This was a kind of dragon . . . person, you know—a man spends his life [laughter]<sup>xii</sup>.

So let us return—although this is not irrelevant, because the fundamental question is, of course: Are such notions as those of happiness in all its parts, as Aristotle says—are they fundamentally variable to the extent to which it is now today asserted, or are they not fundamentally the same?<sup>49</sup> I would still say that I think we can recognize our lives and our evaluations in those stated by Aristotle. For example, he discusses good old age and [says] that a good old age does not consist in the fact that a man ages when he is 40 and lives very well—you know, [that he] has all the infirmities of old age when he is 40 but bears them well. This you would not call a good old age. If this happens when he was 60 or 70, that's a different story. These things have not changed. But another little point which has changed, in the paragraph before when he speaks of nobility.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Noble birth, in the case of a nation or State, means that its members or inhabitants are sprung from the soil, or of long standing; that its first members were famous as leaders, and that many of their descendants have been famous for qualities that are highly esteemed. In the case of private individuals, noble birth is derived from either the father's or the mother's side, and on both sides there must be legitimacy; and, as in the case of a State, it means that its founders were distinguished for virtue, or wealth, or any other of the things that men honour, and that a number of famous persons, both men and women, young and old, belong to the family.<sup>xiii</sup>

**LS:** Now is this still intelligible? Yes?

**Student:** If we take it outside of family considerations and say national considerations or something like that—

<sup>xii</sup> The laughter drowns out Strauss's words here.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 5. 5, 1360b31-39.

**LS:** No, there is a phenomenon in this country for which Aristotle doesn't seem to have provided, but which I believe can be easily integrated into this schema: the Mayflower families. How does this fit in?

**Student:** Now it fits in because many years have passed and—

**LS:** So there is no autochthony in this country. People can't say their ancestors and ancestors of ancestors sprung from this soil. No one can say that.<sup>50</sup> Since this is fundamentally an immigration country, the *oldest* immigrants, the first wave of immigrants, take the place of the autochthons. So there is perfect agreement between what Aristotle says and what is said in this country. Mr. Harrison?

**Mr. Harrison:** I think it is probably less popular now, the notion of aristocracy in this country, than it was, say, at the turn of the century when so many debutantes married members of the aristocracy, of the European aristocracy. And I think the reason for this is that during the '50s and late '40s it was brought out that many of the American aristocracy . . . two or three generations had developed power and so forth . . . . So today there's been an opposite reaction.

**LS:** Sure, but that doesn't affect, in other words, what constitutes nobility in a more precise sense. There are certain variations in former times, European nobility titles were in greater demand than they are now.

**Mr. Harrison:** What I can't understand—

**LS:** European nobility titles were in greater demand than they are now. I mean, if a descendant of the German emperor marries a girl in Texas—

**Mr. Harrison:** A man in Texas.

**LS:** I'm sorry, a man in Texas, and of a family of no particularly old standing, this is a sign that things have radically changed. But still, the difference between—for example, in Russia I believe that if Stalin didn't have this unfortunate fate which he did have, then I suppose to be the son of Stalin would be a distinction. [It is] only because of his famous actions<sup>51</sup> [that] this is no longer a distinction. That is inevitable. But we must not forget one thing of course, that the kind of society which Aristotle has in mind is a much more stable society, much less mobile than the kind of societies we know. Yes?

**Student:** I was going to say, what about the consideration of Britain? He's talking about what everybody thinks, you know, noble birth, etc. will make man happy. Does everybody in Britain today give any consideration to noble birth making a man happier, or not happier?

**LS:** No, it is not whether it makes a man happy, but whether it is regarded as something enviable. In other words, would you prefer it or would you not prefer it, if you could have it?

And this I think is still generally speaking true in a crude way. But now we come to this question, which was raised by Mr. Harrison by implication; and this we must answer in order to understand why the reasoning based on these kinds of things cannot be simply true. Now, why do people prefer noble birth to ignoble in the first place? After all there must be a reason for that. These are not simply hard blocks of stupidity or irrationality. There is some imperfect reasoning implied. What is it? Yes?

**Student:** If you have a good father, you're likely to . . . .

**LS:** <sup>52</sup>In addition, if there is a series of men who have—think of the family of Churchill. The sorry things we know about some of Churchill's children are another matter, we are speaking now of presumption. Winston Churchill, Randolph Churchill, and Marlborough, the founder of the family, and I suppose some in between—oh yes, a poet Churchill in the eighteenth century. At any rate, if a certain stock has been productive of excellent men and women we *suppose* that it will be productive of this kind of thing too. We also know that sometimes people without stock, so to speak, but out of the unknown multitudes, spring up and are better than these men. Abraham Lincoln is the most famous example. This we know. So we could go into all these things and see there is a kind of plausibility in favor of these preferences. But on reflection it proves to be of very questionable worth. But for ordinary purposes these considerations do play a role, and therefore you cannot simply disregard them because most men most of the time<sup>53</sup> will attach importance to this.

The truth has been stated a long time ago very simply in Plato's *Theaetetus*, when he says, if someone boasts of 50 ancestors, say, a Persian king or whatever it may be: Well, we all of us have many more than 50 ancestors, and whether these people who are so famous and so much spoken about are truly respectable men would need a thorough investigation in each case and many of these celebrities would not survive.<sup>xiv</sup> Surely that is perfectly true. But this means that happiness<sup>54</sup> as here understood, and here defined in its details, exists merely in the element of opinion; or to use the technical term of Aristotle, it is an *endoxon*, something which exists only in opinion. But it *does* exist in opinion, otherwise we could not recognize this thing.

If someone would say: "You can make a simple experiment—replace in each case the Aristotelian thing mentioned by its opposite and see whether people would agree that is a happy man." Now let us make this simple experiment: that someone would be of obscure or ignoble birth, would have no friends or few friends and all of them bad, would be poor, would have no children or if [any] only poor ones, and would age prematurely; would be sick, ugly, weak, short, and of no athletic quality whatever, have no respectability, and always be unlucky, and lack virtues altogether—*no one* would say that this is my notion of a happy man [laughter]. So in other words an *endoxon* does not mean that it is simply nonsense, [for] then it wouldn't be worth talking about, but it is something which is dubious, which is questionable. But it has some crude solidity for many practical purposes that it is good enough, therefore, to be taken into consideration by every politically active man.

There are of course always specific *endoxa* peculiar to the particular society. That's another matter. That is also true, but Aristotle is of course only concerned with the universal, what is

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<sup>xiv</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus* 174e-175b.

universally an *endoxon*. Surely if a society has abolished private wealth and inheritances and all this kind of thing, quite a few things would change. And then it would no longer be productive to be the son or daughter of Khrushchev, which I believe still carries some weight in Russia—if they want to have a passport or a loaf of bread I believe it is easier for them than for a simple factory worker. I have no evidence, but I swear that this is true [laughter]. But then you would be compelled to raise the question: is it a better arrangement altogether to cut out wealth, inheritance, and the other things which are not required for human happiness in the highest sense of the term? In other words, is this not a defective society where these things are completely absent, some of these things?

**Student:** Your mention of Lincoln calls to mind that Herndon in his biography of Lincoln says that Lincoln's mother had an aristocratic—<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** Well, if there are any reactionaries in this class, they would say, Of course [laughter]. But I'm sure there are not.

**Another Student:** It's also true that she didn't have a legitimate birth [laughter]. It's true.

**LS:** Yes, that is something grave. On the other hand, as you might learn from Shakespeare's *King John*, it is possible to be a born ruler while being an illegitimate child. But of course he had the right kind of father, Richard the Lion-Hearted.

So now I hope that one simple point, which is absolutely crucial to the whole *Rhetoric*, has become clear. Rhetorical arguments, generally speaking, start from such premises like these: things which are sufficiently clear and solid for most practical purposes. And you would make capital errors if you disregarded these. For example, if you started from the premises that most men<sup>55</sup>—should I repeat my list?—would love to be of obscure birth, have no friends or if friends only bad ones, poor, with no children or bad children, age prematurely, be sick, and so on, then you would make gross mistakes without any question. So the wisest thing is to start from this, but not to be deceived by it.

And the simplest case, which was indicated by Mr. . . .<sup>56</sup> Aristotle has made it perfectly clear that this is not true happiness. If Aristotle were confronted with a man who had a first-rate mind, a first-rate mind, and was of obscure birth, had no friends, and was poor, with no children, and so on and so on, he would of course prefer this man to a man who was happy in this [other] sense. Or, differently stated, this one little thing here not elaborated, virtue, is from Aristotle's point of view much more important than the whole galaxy of other things taken together. Is this not clear? Sure. That *is* so, and a man who is not aware of that will be a very poor fish. But still he cannot ordinarily act on this because the other goods are very much desired by men and not unreasonably desired by men, not unreasonably. And there is no better word as far as I know for the cognitive status of these things but *endoxa*, things existing in opinion wherever there are human beings, and [that are] not to be disregarded, but also [that] cannot be taken as the

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<sup>xv</sup> William H. Herndon & Jesse William Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life: the history and personal recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1889). Herndon includes in his work the assertion of Lincoln's mother's illegitimacy and rumors of Lincoln's own possible illegitimacy.

premises for a truly theoretical syllogism. And especially if you would assign equal weight to each of the things enumerated, then you would make fatal errors if you would not assign its proper weight to virtue in particular.

So is this point now clear? Because all the arguments which you will find later on have this character. But it is also important to realize that we cannot do without that, we cannot do without that. We find them even, for example, in welfare legislation [where] part of them come, of course, up. <sup>57</sup>How could there be this concern with care for the senior citizens, as they are now called, unless<sup>58</sup> a good old age is generally desired,<sup>59</sup> to say nothing of housing and the other things. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** From what you just said now about how all the arguments that we will encounter later will have the same character, and just considering the whole of this chapter, the fact that it is introduced, being given as an example, is it fair to say that we encounter here a rhetorical account of rhetoric? That it's not a demonstration of rhetoric, but it's a rhetorical account?

**LS:** Yes, that is a very important question. In other words, what is the cognitive status of that doctrine regarding rhetoric? While rhetorical speech is clearly essentially rhetorical, is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* rhetorical? What do you say?

**Mr. Butterworth:** I thought I saw one other index that it might be, where he, in chapter 4, says, "I give a sign."

**LS:** Signs can be used in science as well as in rhetoric.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Yes, except that he stressed so much that the enthymeme is made up of signs and probabilities.

**LS:** Yes, but that applies to the rhetorical speech, but what about Aristotle's speech about rhetorical speech? Is this rhetorical? Is it not clear? For example, a lyrical poem is a lyrical poem; an analysis of a lyrical poem is obviously not a lyrical poem but God knows what. And here there is no reason whatsoever that Aristotle's speech about rhetorical speech should be itself rhetorical. I would say it is not at all. I mean, there may be some minor concessions to rhetoric here and there, but that is another question. And as such, the simple fact that Aristotle begins with the simple sentence of the correspondence of rhetoric and dialectics and takes his time to let us in to the obvious secret that rhetoric has also one foot in politics—this is a kind of rhetorical device that every teacher does, you know. The teacher needs, of course . . . . But I would say, no; Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is a scientific speech about non-scientific speech—scientific now not in the sense in which it is defined at present by logical positivism of course, but scientific from Aristotle's point of view. He tries to make as clear and lucid as possible what this is, rhetoric.

**Mr. Butterworth:** One reason why I thought it would be, if it could be shown that it was rhetorical in any way, would be that this would be a definite and vivid example of how a rhetorician would proceed. And here he is proceeding about an important subject, about rhetoric itself.

**LS:** No, <sup>60</sup>I do not think that he does. I mean, I do not agree with that. On the contrary, what is so wonderful in Aristotle, and I believe which has never been surpassed and probably never rivaled,<sup>61</sup> is Aristotle's exactness regarding the inexact. You know what I mean? Such a thing<sup>62</sup> [as] "many good friends." This is a very inexact concept. And Aristotle tries to make it as clear [as possible] and not to distort it, not to touch it with clumsy hands [so] that something else comes out of it—to leave it as it is and yet to state it exactly as it is.

In our century a word was invented for this kind of delicate and cautious treatment of things which are not susceptible of mathematical treatment. It was called phenomenology. You may have heard of that word. This is part of what was meant and what remains, and what Aristotle had done in an absolutely marvelous way before. There was a historical connection between the emergence of phenomenology and Aristotle.

**Student:** Phenomenology?

**LS:** Yes, Husserl's phenomenology, and mediated by Franz Brentano, who was a kind of strange scholastic and so knowing, of course, Aristotle.<sup>xvi</sup>

Now there is one point which you mentioned in your paper: the question of envy, of envy. <sup>63</sup>I had defined [this] for myself in order to make intelligible what the Greek word *eudaimonia* means in terms which are not misleading, because happiness is of course also misleading. Well if someone is contented with the state of things, we call him happy. And we can easily see a moron who always smiles, but he's of course not happy in the Greek sense of the word. He doesn't have a good *daimon*, he's a pitiable fellow. So I added at least, at a minimum: an *enviable* condition of contentedness, enviable. No one envies a moron. No one would wish to be [one], unless in a state of great disturbance where he would prefer death to life he might say, "I wish I had no understanding of my situation." But an *enviable* condition. Aristotle speaks of this, and somewhere he says that chance is the cause of all good things<sup>64</sup> [for] which a man can be envied. Do you remember the passage? I cannot now find this. Let us discuss this very briefly and then we will call it a day.

We envy of course people only<sup>65</sup> [for] things which we regard as valuable or good, that goes without saying. But do we envy them<sup>66</sup> [for] all good things they have? What Aristotle means is [that] we envy them, or we may envy them,<sup>67</sup> [for] everything except those things which they owe entirely to themselves. One does not envy a man for his justice. One may envy him for the reputation he gets, but that is a different consideration. So we envy people not only for the goods of fortune in the narrow sense, let's say money or what not, but we envy them also for what they have by nature. For example, if someone is very beautiful, man or woman, which he or she does not owe to any cosmetics or any other efforts, but to nature—he or she is envied for that. So from this point of view, everything—even the natural gifts—are goods of fortune, while only the

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<sup>xvi</sup> Franz Brentano (1838-1917), Catholic priest until leaving the church in 1879; worked extensively on Aristotle and scholasticism; professor of psychology and philosophy at University of Vienna, where Husserl became his student in 1884. Author of *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Oskar Kraus, trans. A. Rancurello, D. Terrell and L. McAllister (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973 [1874]).

virtues cannot be goods of fortune, the moral virtues. The intellectual virtues, insofar as they are gifts, are of course also objects of envy.

<sup>68</sup>The question which we have to take up sooner or later and which is very important is this: there are two different reasons why political rhetoric cannot be scientific. The first reason is [that] political rhetoric presupposes specific *endoxa* (well I hope I do not have to translate it each time, “things being only in opinion”). And therefore political rhetoric cannot be scientific. The other reason, however, is because political rhetoric deals with particular things which are not subject to any art. Political rhetoric deals with objects of action, not with objects of the arts. That is left to the various artisans who may appear as experts, but only as experts, and do not have the vote, so to speak. Now the question is whether these are two radically different considerations. I mean the fact that rhetoric deals with objects of action and that it presupposes,<sup>69</sup> is based on, [specific] *endoxa*. The difficulty: why would it not be possible to deal with objects of action of any sort, anything you wanted to decide, in a scientific or technical manner? That in fact most of us most of the time make assumptions of this *endoxon* character does not yet prove that it is necessary to do so. I leave this with you now as a question and we must return to it as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “rhetoric in contradistinction to dialectics differs—.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “had to be—.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “says—.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>5</sup> Moved “also.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “we must—.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “we would have to come back.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “the.”

<sup>9</sup> Moved “also.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “myself.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>12</sup> Deleted “Now.”

<sup>13</sup> Moved “obviously.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “it.”

<sup>15</sup> Moved “is.”

<sup>16</sup> Moved “it.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “It has a purpose simply to—.”

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- <sup>18</sup> Deleted “by that.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “of course, that would be—.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “for it.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “the.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “There is another discussion—.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “which.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “regarding.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “that.”
- <sup>26</sup> Moved “would have to be considered.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “and.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “that he would.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “, he.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “a sign.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “now.”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “by.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “they are.”
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted “they.”
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted “It.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “in each case—.”
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted “Mr. Reinken: “Let us then define happiness as well-being—” LS: No, before.”
- <sup>38</sup> Deleted “I mean, in other words.”
- <sup>39</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>40</sup> Deleted “women—.”
- <sup>41</sup> Deleted “, he speaks.”
- <sup>42</sup> Deleted “says.”
- <sup>43</sup> Deleted “and you see.”
- <sup>44</sup> Deleted “Romantic.”

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<sup>45</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>46</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “that the property..”

<sup>49</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “Since this is the case.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “This is very general—yes, and.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “will pay—.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “are concerned.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “You know, I mean.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “there were not something, that.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “or.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>61</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>62</sup> Deleted “like.”

<sup>63</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>64</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>65</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>66</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>67</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>68</sup> Deleted “Now, there are a number of other things, but it would not be wise—.”

<sup>69</sup> Moved “specific—.”

**Session 4: April 8, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —and I think that it is absolutely necessary if only in order to be aware that the practice of rhetoric is of course much older than the theory of rhetoric, and was with the Greeks from the very beginning of their recorded history. Now you began your paper with a reference to the *Politics*, where the relation of the rulers and ruled is compared to that of the flute-player to the flute-maker. And what is the virtue which the flute-player, or ruler, has and which the flute-maker, or ruled, has?

**Student:** The virtue of the flute-player is that of practical wisdom; whereas the virtue of the flute-maker is that of true opinion.

**LS:** True opinion.

**Same Student:** At least that's what—

**LS:** Why is this opinion true, or correct? Correct opinion would be the more literal translation.

**Same Student:** It seems to be because the true opinion would enable the subject to follow the ruler.

**LS:** Now if you think first of the example, flute-player and flute-maker, now how does the flute-maker know what a good flute is?

**Same Student:** Well, in the *Republic* Socrates points out that the flute-player would inform the flute-maker—

**LS:** In other words, the man who knows it is the flute-player. The flute-maker has only opinion. But this is the opinion derived from someone who knows, thus it is correct opinion. But if this is so, if the relation of the ruler and ruled is that of the flute-player and flute-maker, or if the rhetorician is someone like a physician, what happens to the distinction between *praxis* and *poesis*, between acting and producing, which you rightly said is basic for Aristotle? The physician and the shoemaker are both men who produce something, the shoemaker shoes and the physician health. Then the rhetorician also produces something that is called a persuasion. Now, is then<sup>1</sup> rhetoric [therefore] not exactly an art, a *technē* like the other arts? And where does the distinction between producing, a matter of the arts, and acting, a matter of practical wisdom, come in? What happens to it? Well, we will take it up later coherently.

Now first there was a question by Mr. Dry. Political rhetoric cannot be scientific because it presupposes *endoxa*, authoritative opinion, and deals with objects of action. Yes, these are two different considerations. Your question: Why not deal with these objects of action in a scientific manner, as much as possible, i.e., with as much exactness as the matter permits? Does not the Aristotelian prudent man do this? Surely, but the question is: Is there not an essential difference

so that however far the scientific or theoretical treatment might go, it can never, *never*, however much social science might progress, supplant it? But we will take up this question at a later date.

Now first let us see, the first two chapters that we will discuss today are very difficult, *thorny*. And I was very glad that Mr. Hewitt made such a good, and on the whole successful, effort to understand the sequence of the book. Chapters 6 and 7 are much more abstract than chapter 5, because chapter 5 dealt with the end, happiness and its parts, all things known to every one of us from daily experience, whereas [chapters] 6 and 7 deal with the abstract principles: What *is* good—and good here in both senses: good as choiceworthy for its own sake, and as conducive to the things choiceworthy for <sup>2</sup>their own sake, and in the greatest generality. But indeed, as you said, Aristotle is primarily concerned with the things which are good *for* some end, or the “expedient” or “conducive,” or I don’t know how you might translate the word “*sumpheronta*.” We can only discuss a few passages which indicate the general character of Aristotle’s reasoning here. Let us turn to chapter 6, 1362b14-18. Yes, paragraph 10.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Health, beauty, and the like—”

**LS:** Meaning, “are good.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “are good, for they are virtues of the body and produce many advantages; for instance, health is productive of pleasure and of life, wherefore it is thought to be best of all, because it is the cause of two things which the majority of men prize most highly. Wealth, since it is—”<sup>i</sup>

**LS:** Namely,<sup>3</sup> [health] produces pleasure and life. So this is only another sign. You see here these things are not simply true, that health is the best. It is *thought* to be the best, held to be the best. And why? Because it is a cause of things, of two things, which are particularly esteemed by the many: pleasure and living, mere life. You see, this is not in any way a demonstrative argument which starts from that, but it is sufficiently good because when you address the many it is safe enough to start from what the many accept. You see that? This is just a simple example. There is another passage shortly before when he speaks about the virtues at 1362b2.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The virtues also must be a good thing; for those who possess them are in a sound condition, and they are also productive of good things and practical.”<sup>ii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, “practical” in the sense, as Mr. . . . explained, that they enable a man to act. Now you see here—this is also characteristic—<sup>4</sup>nothing is said at all about the intrinsic choiceworthiness of virtue, because of the vulgar view of virtue, [that] virtues must be good for something. We will take this up in another context later. “These are more or less—”

**Mr. Reinken:** “These are nearly all things generally recognized as good—”

<sup>i</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 6. 10-12, 1362b14-18.

<sup>ii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 6. 6, 1362b2-4.

**LS:** In the Greek, of course, there is no word “generally” in this context, but those things which are “agreed upon” to be good. But this agreement means naturally agreed upon by the generality of men.

**Mr. Reinken:**

in the case of doubtful goods, the arguments in their favour are drawn from the following. That is good the opposite of which is evil, or the opposite of which is advantageous to our enemies; for instance, if it is specially advantageous to our enemies that we should be cowards, it is clear that courage is specially advantageous to the citizens. And, speaking generally, the opposite of what our enemies desire or of that in which they rejoice, appears to be advantageous; wherefore it was well said:

:Of a truth Priam would exalt.”

“This is not always—”

**LS:** Meaning, from a Greek point of view. If Priam will be pleased, then . . . .

**Mr. Reinken:** “This is not always the case, but only as a general rule, for there is nothing to prevent one and the same thing being sometimes advantageous to two opposite parties; hence it is said that misfortune brings men together, when a common danger threatens them.”<sup>iii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, well that could be used as a commonplace for much of present-day foreign policy discussion. If the Russians like it, that’s a reason for not doing it: the wheat deal.<sup>iv</sup> But then there are things which the Russians like and we like: no thermonuclear war. As Aristotle puts it, the evil things, threatening equally both parties, bring the two parties together. So for example, what pleases Mao and is disturbing to Khrushchev might also be disturbing to us. This is one complication. But you see easily, here is a simple case why this kind of argument can never be demonstrative, because of the intrinsic ambiguity of the situation. But of course this will never prevent men, and rightly so, from using this argument: the others like it, the enemy likes it, that’s a good enough reason for rejecting it. In many cases it’s good of course, but not always, as Aristotle . . . . Now a little bit later where you left off, when he quotes again Homer.

**Mr. Reinken:**

“And they would [leave Argive Helen for Priam and the Trojans] to boast of,” and,

“It is disgraceful to tarry long,

and the proverb, ‘[to break] the pitcher at the door.’”

And that which many aim at and which is seen to be competed for by many; for that which all aim at was recognized as a good, and the majority may almost stand for “all.”

**LS:** “And the many come to sight as if they were all.” You see obviously this identification of the many and all is very dubious, because maybe the few—if you take all minus the many, equals few—this few might be the wise. But for many considerations that is wholly irrelevant.

<sup>iii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 6. 17-20, 1362b29-1363a1.

<sup>iv</sup> Strauss refers to the Russian Wheat Deal, America’s 1963 agreement to sell wheat to Soviet Bloc countries. The exports were terminated as part of America’s response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

But that is due to an ambiguity of “many” of course. “Many” might mean all normal human beings, those who are not deaf, blind, lame, or moronic, and so on and so on. But “many” might of course also mean all the non-wise. This is a necessary ambiguity here. If it means all normal human beings, then it’s sound. But if it means all non-wise, then it means in a way all abnormal human beings, if to be a normal human being is to be wise. This shows the difficulty. Go on, Mr. Reinken, where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And that which is the object of praise—”

**LS:** “The praiseworthy,” meaning always to act—the praiseworthy is good.

**Mr. Reinken:**

for no one praises that which is not good. And that which is praised by enemies; for if even those who are injured by it acknowledge its goodness, this amounts to a universal recognition of it; for it is because of its goodness being evident that they acknowledge it, just as those whom their enemies praise are worthless. Wherefore the Corinthians imagined themselves insulted by Simonides, when he wrote,

“Ilium does not blame the Corinthians.”

And that which one of the practically wise or good, man or woman, has chosen before others, as Athene chose Odysseus, Theseus Helen, the goddesses Alexander (Paris), and Homer Achilles.<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** Yes, these examples are particularly revealing because Alexander is, of course, Paris, you know, Helen’s second husband. Now Athena would not agree with that—no, Athena was one of . . . but say, Zeus would not agree with that, and quite a few other people also. So if you use this kind of argument—because some man or body of men of good judgment have approved of him or his actions, that’s all right, but there may be others who disapproved of him of course, and on better grounds. But still you see that these arguments are not entirely worthless. You see that there is no one who praised Theseus, this low character to whom Mr. . . . referred at the beginning of the . . . no one praised Theseus. So whatever may be wrong with Alexander or Paris, he is still superior to Theseus because the goddesses praised him or thought highly of him.

You see also that because the enemies praise something which formerly appeared as a reason for rejecting this thing, may also be a reason for accepting it. A simple present-day example: General MacArthur was highly praised by the Japanese because they saw he was an able general. So here the argument is this: if even the enemy praises, recognizes superiority, all the more is it praiseworthy.<sup>5</sup> You see also the way in which these arguments do have some weight, but they must be elaborated in order to be truly demonstrative, if they can be made demonstrative. This is all clear? Now let us look at a few other things in the next chapter. In 1363b19, begin to read here, bottom of page 69.

**Mr. Reinken:**

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<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 6. 22-25, 1363a6-19.

Since, besides, we call good that which is desirable for its own sake and not for anything else, and that which all things aim at and which they would choose if they possessed reason and practical wisdom; and that which is productive or protective of good, or on which such things follow; and since that for the sake of which anything is done is the end, and the end is that for the sake of which everything else is done, and that is good for each man which relatively to him presents all these conditions, it necessarily follows that a larger number of good things is a greater good than one or a smaller number, if the one or the smaller number is reckoned as one of them; for it exceeds them and that which is contained is exceeded.<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** Why does he say,<sup>6</sup> if you count also the one or the few? Why does he make this qualification?

**Mr. Reinken:** One steak is worth one hundred apples.

**LS:** Yes, good, but now a bit more in application to the human good par excellence, happiness.

**Mr. Reinken:** Virtue is better than a thousand concubines [laughter].

**LS:** And steaks, and so on. Good. In other words, if the other ingredients of happiness are all present, but virtue is not present, then it is a real question whether all the other ingredients have the value of the single thing. Therefore, Aristotle adds, you can take any item you want—say, many friends or whatever it may be, but if virtue is in it—I mean if you have virtue *plus* steak, it's better than virtue without steak. This can easily be said even if they are otherwise incommensurable, but it does add something.

Now, another example of this ambiguity in 1364a10.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And if one thing is a first principle, and another not; if one thing is a cause and another not, for the same reason—”<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:** In other words, here he speaks of what is preferable, the greater good. So that which is the principle is the greater good than that which is not a principle, and that which is a cause than that which is not a cause, for the same reason, namely:

**Mr. Reinken:**

And if there are two first principles or two causes, that which results from the greater is greater; and conversely, when there are two first principles or two causes, that which is the first cause or principle of the greater is greater. It is clear then, from what has been said, that a thing may be greater in two ways; for if it is a first principle but another is not, it will appear to be greater, and if it is not a first principle (but an end), while another is; for the end is greater and not a first principle. Thus, Leodamas, when accusing Callistratus, declared that the man who had given the advice was more guilty than the one

<sup>vi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 3, 1363b12-21.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric*, I. 7. 12, 1364a10-11. The reader is stopped before completing the sentence in Freese's translation: “for without cause or first principle nothing can exist or come into existence.”

who had carried it out; for if he had not suggested it, it could not have been carried out. And conversely, when accusing Chabrias, he declared that the man who had carried out the advice was more guilty than the one who had given it; for it could not have been carried out had there not been some one to do so, and the reason why people devised plots was that others might carry them out.

**LS:** This is a beautiful example of the ambiguity, of the inevitable ambiguity, and the legitimacy of both ways of reasoning. Well, I remember the reasoning of Lincoln—there must be some among you who remember much better—when he contrasts the guilt of the soldier boy on the one hand and the wily agitator on the other.<sup>viii</sup> The wily agitator was the one who said shoot this boy. But the wily agitator did not commit himself treason or whatever the crime was. The poor boy did commit the crime of treason. How to distribute here—obviously some case can be made for both points. And how would it be decided now, roughly? I believe from the point of view that<sup>7</sup> only actions proper, not speeches, [are punishable]. And therefore the wily agitator can do what he wants and only the action is punishable.

But this of course raises the question whether this line of distinction is not itself a mere *endoxon*, you know, a principle based on opinion which does not hold water if it is meant to be a rational principle. This is one of the few cases where Aristotle gives examples. And the difficulty of understanding these two chapters is that one does not always have the ready example for what Aristotle gives. And the ideal task of the interpreter would<sup>8</sup> of course [be] in each case to give an example, and preferably a telling one. Then this whole thing would be transformed from a kind of two-dimensionality into three-dimensionality where it becomes alive.

**Student:** Why didn't Aristotle do that?

**LS:** Because he thought that publicly, politically interested and able people would always find examples. But the terrific work implied here, alone in these two chapters, is absolutely amazing: to bring together all these ways of reasoning which are rhetorical.<sup>9</sup> I think one can also say that if he had written only the *Rhetoric* he would be one of the greatest men of science there ever were, even if only the *Rhetoric*. But it's of course the same quality of his mind which enabled him to write his other books. Now let us treat the immediate sequel.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And that which is scarcer is a greater good than that which is abundant, as gold than iron, although it is less useful, but the possession of it is more valuable, since it is more difficult of acquisition. From another point of view, that which is abundant is to be preferred to that which is scarce, because the use of it is greater, for ‘often’ exceeds ‘seldom’; whence the saying: ‘Water is best.’”<sup>ix</sup>

<sup>viii</sup> Strauss must be referring to Lincoln's comment on the court-martial sentence that came before him for approval in the case of a soldier-boy judged guilty of desertion and the agitator who apparently influenced the boy's action: “When a boy was sentenced to death for desertion, he [Lincoln] said: ‘Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, and not touch a hair of the wily agitator who induces him to desert? I think that in such a case, to silence the agitator and save the boy, is not only constitutional, but withal a great mercy.’” Henry Ketcham, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: A.L. Burt, 1901), chap. XL).

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 12-14, 1364a12-28.

**LS:** “Better” implies here better than gold and anything else. A case can be made for both views. There is no way to change that. There is one more presentation of it which I would like us to discuss briefly. In 1364b12-13.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And when the sciences are nobler and more dignified, the nobler and more dignified are their subjects; for as is the science, so is the truth which is its object, and each science prescribes that which properly belongs to it; and, by analogy, the nobler and more dignified the objects of science, the nobler and more dignified is the science itself, for the same reasons. And that which men of practical wisdom, either all, or more, or the best of them, would judge, or have judged, to be a greater good, must necessarily be such, either absolutely or in so far as they have judged as men of practical wisdom.<sup>x</sup>

**LS:** Now what does this distinction mean: absolutely or as they judged according to practical wisdom? Yes?

**Student:** Well, the man who is known for practical reason, practical wisdom isn't infallible; he isn't always going to make the judgment in accordance with it.

**LS:** He may not have made that judgment *as* a man of practical wisdom, but [he may have been] persuaded by some irrelevant thing or because he didn't regard the issue as important. I mean he doesn't have to be a fool. He may simply not have regarded the issue as important. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** Suppose a man of practical wisdom says, “The king is a good and wise man.” His practical wisdom tells him to do that because the safety of the state requires it.

**LS:** Very good. In other words you turn it<sup>10</sup> around [now]. So that<sup>11</sup> what they have said absolutely would mean what corresponds where there are no prudential considerations involved. In the other case . . . little bit further on when he speaks—what is available to the better man.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And what the better man would choose, either absolutely or insofar as he is better—”

**LS:** No, before. “What is available—”

**Mr. Reinken:** “So also are those things which better men possess, either absolutely, or in so far as they are better; for instance courage is better than strength.”<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, why? Why does he make the qualification, either simply or as better? I believe because the better men are not necessarily lacking in strength, but *qua* better men we have in mind courage rather than strength. But it might also happen that all better men are also strong. I believe that is so. A bit further on.

<sup>x</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 20-21, 1364b7-14.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 22, 1364b19-20.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And that which is more agreeable rather than that which is less so; for all things pursue pleasure and desire it for its own sake; and it is by these conditions that the good and the end have been defined. And that is more agreeable which is less subject to pain and is agreeable for a longer time. And that which is nobler than that which is less noble—”<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** And so on, and so on. Now here of course a question would arise: what if the pleasant is something different from the noble? This question is here not discussed, as you see. Now another point which is of some interest in 1365a, line 4 to 7.<sup>xiii</sup> “And which all possess is the greater good—”

**Mr. Reinken:** “And that which is chosen by all is better than that which is not; and that which the majority—”<sup>xiv</sup>

**LS:** Ja, not “chosen.” I understand it, “What all possess,” meaning all except we, “is the greater good, for it is a disgrace not to partake in it.” Yes? “But that which no one or few possess, that is higher because it is rarer.”<sup>xv</sup> This example occurred to me: all except<sup>12</sup> [us] have A-bombs, hence we must have A-bombs too . . . or, only we have sputniks, an example of the second case, and therefore that is something to be desired.

**Student:** He makes that same point earlier when he talks about men thinking good that which they need no matter how trivial it may be. In chapter 6—

**LS:** Well, here he repeats it only from the point of view of more and less, where the consideration of more and less arises. Now let me see if there is anything else. A bit before the beginning of 1365b. “And that which is true, *truthful* rather than the things which have reference to opinion only—”

**Mr. Reinken:** “And real things”; he calls them real things—

**LS:** All right.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And real things are preferable to those that have reference to public opinion, the latter being defined as those which a man would not choose if they were likely to remain unnoticed by others. It would seem then that it is better to receive than to confer a benefit; for one would choose the former even if it should pass unnoticed, whereas one would not choose to confer a benefit, if it were likely to remain unknown.”

<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 23, 1364b23-27.

<sup>xiii</sup> Strauss indicates 1365a, lines 4 to 7, but Mr. Reinken reads instead lines 1365b37-38 in the Loeb translation. Thus there will occur a misunderstanding between Strauss and Reinken, as Strauss corrects Reinken's translation of a different passage than the one Strauss has in mind and subsequently translates himself.

<sup>xiv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 28, 1365b37-38.

<sup>xv</sup> Apparently Strauss's own translation of I. 7. 29, 1365a4-6. The Freese translation of the same passage: “And sometimes a good is greater in which all participate, for it is a disgrace not to participate in it; sometimes when none or only a few participate in it, for it is scarcer.”

**LS:** So in other words, if the other receives a benefit and would never know who the benefactor was, yes. A kind of tough morality, isn't it?

**Student:** Ostentatious, perhaps?

**LS:** Ja, sure, but still that is part of popular morality. Yes, go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Those things also are to be preferred, which men would rather possess in reality than in appearance, because they are nearer the truth; wherefore it is commonly said that justice is a thing of little importance, because people prefer to appear just than to be just—”<sup>xvi</sup>

**LS:** In other words, they get all the benefit from the appearance of justice without possessing it; whereas if they possessed it without the appearance of it they would not get any benefit. Is this argument known to you?

**Student:** Thrasymachus.

**LS:** Not Thrasymachus, Glaucon. Glaucon develops it at great length.<sup>xvii</sup> He takes up the issue later on. We do not have to go into that. I would like to discuss in detail the last chapter, chapter 8, for the reason which appears from the very first sentence. Now you go on; will you begin, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** “These are nearly all the topics from which arguments may be drawn in persuading and dissuading; but the most important and effective of all the means of persuasion and good counsel is to know all the forms of government and to distinguish the manners and customs, institutions, and interests of each; for all men are guided by considerations of expediency, and that which preserves the State is expedient.”

**LS:** Let us stop here. So that is in a way more important than everything else. Not that the preceding things are *unimportant*, but these are most obviously important for any deliberation. And the subject is primarily the *politeia*, or as Adam<sup>xviii</sup> says, the regimes<sup>13</sup>. And why is this so? Because all proposals are made with a view to the expedient. But expedient to what or to whom? You can say to the community, to the polis, surely, but the community is always a specifically formed community—a democracy, an aristocracy or whatever it may be. And as Aristotle puts it, what is expedient is that which preserves the regime. There he shouldn't have translated “state.” That would be *polis*, but [Aristotle] says *politeia*. In other words, the politically neutral considerations which exist of course also—I mean something has to be done regardless of what the regime is—this is relatively rare and not a truly important thing. So the expedient par excellence is that which preserves the regime; therefore one has to know the regime. Now a second reason, introduced with a “furthermore,” or however we may translate that.

<sup>xvi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 7. 36-37, 1365a37-b7.

<sup>xvii</sup> Plato, *Republic* 357a-367d.

<sup>xviii</sup> It is unclear to whom “Adam” refers.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, the declaration of the authority is authoritative, and the different kinds of authority are distinguished according to the regime<sup>xix</sup>; in fact, there are as many authorities as there are regimes. Now, there are four kinds of regimes<sup>xx</sup>: democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, so that the supreme or deciding authority is always a part or the whole of these.”

**LS:** So that is an additional reason. That which is authoritative, that which you must try to persuade, depends on the regime. It could be this kind of order, say, a popular assembly consisting of all citizens, [of] practically all grown-up men: democracy; [or] of a part: an oligarchy; or it may be an individual man, it may be a king. So in order to speak effectively one has to know to whom to talk, and that depends on the regime. One has to know the regime. Now the conclusion of what you read is very hard and I have never found a satisfactory interpretation of that. I regard it as possible that this is an allusion to the possibility of a mixture of the regimes, but I'm not entirely happy with that. Now let us go on.

**Student:** I was just going to say, the question was raised last time or the time before why there are four kinds of happiness and three in the *Ethics* or the exact opposite; and there are only four regimes here too and there are six in the *Politics*. Is it possible that these four happinesses and four regimes—

**LS:** No, I think there would be no basis for that; I don't find any positive sign of it. But we have to take up this question briefly about the regimes.

**Student:** You say the regimes—persuasion?

**LS:** No, you persuade the government, but the government not now in our modern sense. Take a town. The government may be a town meeting where every resident of the town is a member. That would be a democracy. It may be that only people on the basis of a very high property qualification are full citizens. That would be an oligarchy. The body of citizens, the body of full citizens, differs according to the regime. If it is a democracy, all; if it is an oligarchy, a few; if it is an aristocracy, a few of a certain kind; if it is a monarchy, a single man. And every public speech, deliberative speech, is addressed to certain men constituting the regime. And therefore you have to know the regime. This will become clearer from the sequel. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Democracy is a regime<sup>xxi</sup> in which the offices are distributed by the people among themselves by lot; in an oligarchy, by those who possess a certain property-qualification; in an aristocracy, by those who possess an education qualification, meaning an education that is laid down by the law. In fact, in an aristocracy, power and office are in the hands of those who have remained faithful to what the law prescribes, and who must of necessity appear best, whence this form of government has taken its name.

<sup>xix</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader substitutes “the regime” for Freese's translation “forms of government.” The word is plural *politeias* in the Greek.

<sup>xx</sup> The reader substitutes “regime” for Freese's translation “government.”

<sup>xxi</sup> The reader substitutes “regime” for Freese's translation “form of government.”

**LS:** Now I suppose the difference between oligarchy and democracy is no question, with a property qualification or no property qualification. A somewhat difficult case is that of aristocracy, in which those figures of authority<sup>14</sup> [who] are in control [are so] by virtue of their education. Now when Aristotle says here “education,” that is not so different from what he ordinarily says in the *Politics* “according to virtue,” because education is that which is productive of virtue. But Aristotle uses this here in order to define what kind of education. Of course it has nothing to do with what we now call education at least in this country, because now education simply means instruction and not formation of character. And for Aristotle, and certainly for Plato, education means first of all formation of character.

But when Aristotle makes here clear what kind of education this is, namely the education laid down by the law, perhaps this implies there is an education which is not laid down by law and cannot be laid down. When Thucydides praises Nicias toward the end of the Seventh Book of his work and he speaks there,<sup>15</sup> he says that Nicias<sup>16</sup> was so praiseworthy because of his whole pursuit guided by law toward virtue. The position is ambiguous, one can also translate: “The whole pursuit directed toward virtue as understood by the law.”<sup>xxii</sup> And this is of course not virtue simply. “Law directs virtue” is not the same as “virtue simply”; “education according to law” is not the same as “education simply.” Aristotle surely does not say here that the characteristic of aristocracy is virtue. That he wants to avoid. The question of virtue will be taken up in chapter 9 next time. It is a much cruder version of aristocracy than the highest. That’s perfectly fitting. Now does this solve your difficulty, or is there a point which I have not considered?

**Student:** Yes, except, well, you just simply say it’s a much cruder version—

**LS:** Surely, it *should* be. After all, this is not the *Politics*. This is what you have to know. The kind[s] of aristocracies which you meet ordinarily are these kinds of aristocracies. Remember that in the *Politics* Aristotle makes a distinction between an aristocracy in the strict sense and what is ordinarily called “aristocracy.”

**Same Student:** Yes, but he makes the distinction along the principles of virtue, numbers, and wealth. And he says, well let’s look at the Spartan aristocracy and then he points out the principles that exist there—

**LS:** Yes, but this affects also the virtue which is intended. In the case of Sparta he makes it clear that the virtue intended is a very lopsided thing, military virtue.

**Same Student:** That’s true, but the thing is that while virtue still exists in some way here, the questions of numbers and wealth have both dropped out of the equation.

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<sup>xxii</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Thomas Hobbes, ed. David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 498 (Bk. VIII, chap. 86). Apparently Strauss’s own translations of this passage, which gives Thucydides’ final comment on Nicias after the narration of his surrender and execution on the Sicilian expedition. Grene’s rendering, in italics as added in a note to his edition of the Hobbes translation: “the man that, of all the Grecians of my time, *having least deserved to fall into such misfortune, having regulated all his life in accordance with what has been considered virtue.*”

**LS:** Yes, but I think not because Aristotle considers it irrelevant, but for a crude distinction that is sufficient. In an oligarchy, you know, the wealthy people, even if they were formerly (horrible to think) craftsmen—a case discussed by Aristotle in the *Politics* is [that of] thieves. If a man became rich—say, he was a butcher—<sup>17</sup> by having only the right kinds of steaks available, then he becomes a member of the oligarchy as soon as he has the property qualification, that's oligarchy. But an aristocracy is characterized by the fact that its members claim to be the better people, not the richer people. And this “better people” has very much to do with decency. They would not spit in the street and would not do similar things—you know, Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* gives a nice description of what Persian education was: that they always behaved in a dignified manner. That is what one ordinarily understands by better people, is it not? I mean they never make a mistake<sup>18</sup> [when] to use a fork and<sup>19</sup> [when] to use a knife. But also in a higher sense, I won't deny this, but the most visible . . . and<sup>20</sup> how high it reaches, whether it reaches very high is left open. And the strict case of aristocracy would of course see where it would reach to the highest. But these are extremely rare cases and you can disregard them for most practical purposes. Now the next point; go on, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In a monarchy, as its name indicates, one man alone is supreme over all.”

**LS:** In other words, in a monarchy that means you don't need rhetoric strictly speaking. You must be able to persuade that monarch in the closet. But this does not necessarily have to be a rhetorical power; on the contrary, it may be wholly undesirable. Remember what we read in Hobbes's *Leviathan* about this question;<sup>xxiii</sup> therefore this is very interesting. In a democracy you see it every day. A considerable oratorical power is needed to be an outstanding democratic statesman. The case of Eisenhower is the exception which proves the rule, rather than the typical case; whereas whether these great monarchical statesmen like Richelieu and Bismarck were good orators is a dubious—is a valid question. Yes.

**Student:** An interesting example of that would be Woodrow Wilson's classic essay on public administration, where he sets forth various reforms.<sup>xxiv</sup> He then explains why Prussia had a much better administration than the United States. And the important point is that it is much easier to persuade the monarch or the smaller group of people in control to implement these reforms than it is to persuade the people of the United States.

**LS:** Ja, that was one of the favorite arguments of the monarchists, and one can't help deploring that the president of a great republic should have adopted it [Strauss laughs]. It's almost like the famous story of President Eisenhower when he said it was so difficult to refute Zhukov. Remember that famous story? He couldn't say anything about Zhukov's argument in favor of communism [laughter], because Zhukov simply appealed to certain notions of military discipline which of course were natural to generals, and therefore Eisenhower didn't really have the answer. Bismarck says of himself that he would never have succeeded if he had not had the quality of a courtier. You don't have to have a courtier quality in order to be a successful democratic politician. On the other hand, you don't have to be an orator to be a successful monarchic politician. Yes, now how does he go on?

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Administration,” *Political Science Quarterly* 2 (1887): 197-222.

**Mr. Reinken:** “If it is subject to certain regulations, it is called a kingdom; if it is unlimited, a tyranny.”

**LS:** Well, if it is “according to *some order*” . . . .

**Mr. Reinken:** “Nor should the end of each regime<sup>xxv</sup> be neglected, for men choose the things which have reference to the end.”

**LS:** You see, hitherto he has not yet spoken of the ends, and the end is that thing which throws light. For example when he says offices are distributed by the lot. This is unenlightening in itself. Why by lot, or why give all the power to the people of wealth? That can be understood only when you look at the end. Is this clear?

**Student:** Not so clear. Why can't you define government by process, as many people do today? You know, democracies everywhere ha[ve] free consent, secret ballots, many candidates—

**LS:** But still, for the very simple reason—well, someone here must be able to answer that question at least as well as I can. Why is it not sufficient to define it as a process?

**Another Student:** Well it's not meaningful unless we understand what the process is supposed to attain. Why do we have . . . .

**LS:** That's the end, that's the end. What is the virtue of having so-called free elections as distinguished from a single list handed down by the government? What's the virtue of that?

**Student:** [same student who objected earlier in this exchange] The consent of the governed.

**LS:** Why is that good?

**Same Student:** Well, I could refer you to John Locke—

**LS:** Ja, ja. Well, that is a very good rhetorical argument [laughter] that we cannot use here. I believe there would be one simple answer even by Locke, a word, and that word is?

**Student:** Freedom.

**LS:** Freedom, which needs some elaboration, some definition, because freedom is an ambiguous term, but still it points in the right direction. Now what are these ends?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, the end of democracy is liberty, of oligarchy wealth, of aristocracy things relating to education and what the law prescribes<sup>xxvi</sup> . . . of tyranny self-protection.”

**LS:** All right. You see here how he avoids the word “virtue” when speaking of aristocracy. That's the point. He doesn't say here education and decency, as one could translate the other

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<sup>xxv</sup> As above, “form of government” in the Freese translation.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Footnote in Freese's translation of *Rhetoric* states that this section of Aristotle's text is missing (88).

word *ta nomima*, because this is not the end. Education is not the end. Therefore he says what is connected with education; he avoids the word “virtue,” that would be my interpretation of this; and he avoids it because he doesn’t want to open up the whole issue. Yes?

**Student:** I was struck by self-protection as the end of tyranny. I was thinking of—in Herodotus, after Salamis, the worry is the Persians. It’s not just [that] the worry is the leader because they’re aware the whole tyranny is constituted by the leaders. So everybody has to worry about *his* protection, because otherwise the whole state would collapse. So this self-protection as the end of tyranny here is not just the end of the tyrant.

**LS:** Well, “self-protection” literally translated, the end of tyranny is “guard,” “protection.” And of course it was implied that the tyrant’s end is to protect himself and his retainers, and so on and so on. But the striking thing here is he omits the end of monarchy, of kingship proper. Now how can one understand that?

**Student:** Well, it’s related to the partial omission about aristocracy: he doesn’t want to get into it.

**LS:** Yes, that is good, but still more—closer to the connection with the ends of aristocracy.

**Student:** Isn’t it the idea that this is a book written in a democratic regime and what he would have to say about the end of monarchy—

**LS:** No. But more simply, everyone can figure out the end of monarchy in contradistinction to a tyranny, because it will be something like aristocracy where there is only, for some reason or the other, a single ruler. It would be some notion of education or propriety. Yes?

**Student:** In the case of democracy and oligarchy he seems to give his standard characterization, but in the case of aristocracy and monarchy he wants to leave certain things out because he doesn’t want to get into a discussion of virtue. But wouldn’t this also apply to his characterization of democracy?

**LS:** Why not? Because these are much simpler things, simple from the point of view of ordinary understanding. Everyone knows what freedom is, what wealth is, although one may not have a proper appreciation of it. But you know that if there is no one who can boss you around, this is a free country. Everyone understands that—

**Student:** Can’t someone say the same thing about virtue?

**LS:** Not quite, because that is a very great ambiguity because virtue may be understood in a very crude way and in a special way. And there is also this strange difficulty: If you make virtue the condition of participation in government, then how will you go about it? How *will* you go about it? Then everyone who is a little bit ambitious will pretend to be virtuous, and this pretense to be virtuous is of course not virtue. What would you do? <sup>21</sup>Try to think of it in practical terms, how to select virtuous men. You must have virtuous men of very great discernment for the selection.<sup>22</sup>

You cannot habitually count [on this], because some of the crooks may be very clever and appear to be particularly virtuous.

So what you do is<sup>23</sup> take external criteria. Wealth is of course not virtue; we know that. But then we use such a criterion as *old* wealth: the good old families, where you can *presume* that they have received a proper upbringing. This is a presumption which is good enough as far as it goes, but it is of course only a presumption because in the best families there are also black sheep. And they may be very clever black sheep so they would . . . like Alcibiades, who was a black sheep, without any question, but cleverer than anybody else. Therefore aristocracy is a much more problematic thing. In a crude way, what ordinarily is understood by aristocracy is of course possible; there were many of them. But the question is whether<sup>24</sup> a single [one] of them [was] an aristocracy in the strict Aristotelian sense. Now, go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is clear then that we must distinguish the manners and customs, institutions, and interests of each regime<sup>xxvii</sup>, since it is in reference to this that men make their choice. But as proofs are established not only by demonstrative, but also by ethical argument—”

**LS:** Yes, what does demonstrative argument mean here?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** <sup>25</sup>Demonstrative is not meant here in the strict sense of the scientific argument, but the proof which you give, the substantive proof, and which in public speech would be an enthymeme. Yes, but also by ethical speech. What is an ethical speech? Aristotle doesn't mean you have to make one speech which is demonstrative, another which is ethical, but the same speech will fulfill both functions. The demonstrative speech will show that this is a wise course of action to take; the ethical element will show that this is a trustworthy man. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “since we have confidence in an orator who exhibits certain qualities, such as goodness—”

**LS:** Who exhibits himself as a man of a certain kind by his speech, not by protesting that he is a man of this kind. This<sup>26</sup> [would] not be convincing. That is not for people who are not easily taken in. But he must simply show it by deed.

**Mr. Reinken:** “such as goodness, goodwill, or both—it follows that we ought to be acquainted with the characters of each regime<sup>xxviii</sup>; for, in reference to each, the character most likely to persuade must be that which is characteristic of it.”

**LS:** In other words, in a democracy<sup>27</sup> the *ethos* [of the speaker]; his character must be that of a good democrat. <sup>28</sup>If he shows himself by his *ethos* as a good man in general but not of good will toward the common people, then he is out. Then he's out. Correspondingly, in an oligarchy he must show himself as a good oligarch. Or in old Prussia when one of the leading men said of the other, he is a good Junker, meaning a good representative of the landowning class. That makes

<sup>xxvii</sup> As above, “form of government” in the Freese translation.

<sup>xxviii</sup> As above, “form of government” in the Freese translation.

him desirable as a member of the ruling class. Just as in a democracy, a case with which we are more familiar and therefore this case is perfectly clear: if [a man] has manners which are undemocratic, say . . . patrician air, this is not so good. A certain kind of folksiness—Truman was I believe the greatest example of this I have been able to observe. That is a recommendation. And as for Roosevelt, who was emphatically a patrician, I remember one case which showed that he had this art, when Frances Perkins (she tells us in her book<sup>xxix</sup>) prepared for him a speech which ended with the sentence: “We want an all-inclusive society.” Roosevelt changed it into: “We want a society where no one is left out.” This shows a democratic ethos. Everyone can understand that; but “all-inclusive,” quite a few people would not know what that is. This is the ethical part of the argument, by using such phrases. Yes.

**Student:** It seems strange though that in Athens during the height of democracy you had the leaders who had a patrician background from Pericles down to Alcibiades, people who not only had the background, but they had the aristocratic manners, an Olympian aloofness—

**LS:** Well, that is true, especially of Pericles, but as for Alcibiades, he had a lot of troubles with this. When you read the speech in Thucydides how he had to explain away his racehorses, which were held against him. Pericles was a very special case. Pericles had identified with them. He was a traitor to his class and he had shown this by deed for many decades so that . . . . By the way, according to Thucydides Athens was not a democracy. That is, I think, a great misunderstanding of the Funeral Speech.

**Same Student:** He didn't actually state this. He said according to some—oh that's right, you're right—

**LS:** It was *in name* a democracy. So in other words, these people had also something else in mind which was represented by Pericles. Now, the last sentence.

**Mr. Reinken:** “These characters will be understood by the same means—”

**LS:** Meaning, if I know the regime and its end, and think a bit, articulate it a bit, then I will see how I must defend myself as a public speaker to an audience which is<sup>29</sup> democratic, oligarchic, or aristocratic. I think that is very clear.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for characters reveal themselves in accordance with moral purpose, and moral purpose has reference to the end.”<sup>xxx</sup>

**LS:** Well, more simply, because “moral” does not occur, “according to the choice, to the preference. And the preference relates to the end.” Good. “Deliberate preference” would perhaps bring it out because “preference” is now used in a very loose sense. That which is the end of a deliberation is a choice.

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<sup>xxix</sup> Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Harper & Row, Harper Colophon Books, 1946). The form of these lines in Roosevelt's actual speech was: “We are trying to construct a more inclusive society. We are going to make a country in which no one is left out” (113).

<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 8. 1-6, 1365b21-1366a16.

I read<sup>xxx</sup> . . . and especially for Mr. Butterworth's benefit and other students of the new nations, perhaps if they are in the same region as Mr. Butterworth's new nation is— makes this remark here, induced by the reference to monarchy or kingship which he is going to develop: "Kingship is that polity where the opinions and actions are as the speculative sciences would indicate," the speculative sciences. In other words, simply stated, it's the philosopher-king—that's the kingship. "But the second in rank is aristocracy, where the actions alone are decent, respectable"; in Greek *spoudaion*, "serious," which has the meaning of good. "But this is called priesthood," this is called priesthood. In other words, there the speculatively true opinions are not constitutive of the regime. "And<sup>30</sup> we are told that this priesthood was invented first by the Persians, as Abu Naṣr"—as the Latin translation has [it], but Abu Naṣr, I take it as Farabi—"told."<sup>xxxii</sup> I thought that this was interesting. That's the first striking remark I have found in Averroës' commentary.  
xxxiii

I would like now to turn to the question which I raised at the beginning, and which was at an earlier time raised by Mr. Dry, and that is this. Last time I was asked by Mr. Butterworth: Is it not possible that Aristotle treated rhetoric rhetorically? And my answer was no, but unfortunately I didn't think of the very simple reason why it must be no, namely [that] what Aristotle transmits here explicitly is an *art*, and therefore an art is as art never transmitted rhetorically. When you think of a shoemaker and an apprentice, that is not rhetorical, what he tells him. He might use some rhetoric, including some spanking, but that is of course used in a subordinate manner; if thoughts wander away from the leather to more attractive subjects,<sup>31</sup> he might be compelled to do some things to bring him back to the subject at hand. Aristotle wants to lift the practice of public speech to the level of an art, a *technē*.

Now when Aristotle speaks of arts he uses [the word], not always, but as a rule, in contradistinction to science. Sciences, theoretical sciences, deal only with understanding a subject, whereas arts have to do with production, with producing something which would not be without the art;<sup>32</sup> [whereas] in a theoretical science, like say ornithology, birds are not the product of arts. Now there may be an art connected with birds, the training of birds for various purposes, but this is of course not ornithology. One point we must always keep in mind: an art in the Aristotelian sense has nothing to do with what we call an applied science, because an applied science presupposes a theoretical science. We may call the applied sciences technologies, if you want to, but then technology is not an art. An art has no theoretical principle proper.

So this is then clear for the time being. But now we come<sup>33</sup> to a difficulty, because while rhetoric is meant to be raised to the level of an art, the subject matter of the art of rhetoric is things which are *not* subject to arts. Now let us read this passage which is earlier in the book, 1356b37ff.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Rhetoric will not consider what seems probable in each individual case, for instance to Socrates or Hippias, but that which seems probable to this or that class of persons."

**LS:** Just as medicine, as he made clear. Medicine as an art deals not with Socrates or Hippias, but with people suffering from pneumonia or suffering from hepatitis or whatever it may be, and

<sup>xxx</sup> The first side of the original tape runs out, and there is a portion missing from Strauss's response.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Strauss refers to Averroës' apparent usage of al-Farabi's first name, Abu Naṣr.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.8.6.

the individual to be treated is simply subsumed under that class by the treating physician. The same is true of rhetoric.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is the same with Dialectic, which does not draw conclusions from any random premises—for even madmen have some fancies—but it takes its material from subjects which demand reasoned discussion, as Rhetoric does from those which are common subjects of deliberation.”

**LS:** Yes, “which are already in the habit of being deliberated about.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “The function of Rhetoric, then, is to deal with things about which we deliberate, but for which we have no systematic rules.”<sup>xxxiv</sup>

**LS:** No, “no arts.” So this is the point which I had in mind. To repeat, the subject matter of the *techne*, of the art of rhetoric is things which are not subject to arts. Let us assume the subject is the building of a navy. We need shipbuilders; there is an art of shipbuilding. Rhetoric has nothing to do with the art of shipbuilding. The shipbuilder may have to explain his plans for building ships, but whether he has or does not have the art of rhetoric is purely accidental to being a shipbuilder. In the political debate, where the art of rhetoric is necessary and essential,<sup>34</sup> reference [is] made to what the experts say, but the rhetorician as such is not an expert. He is a political man. This should be clear.

So Aristotle implies here another distinction beyond that between science and art, namely the things regarding which we do not have arts but regarding which we deliberate. Now deliberation of course occurs also in the arts. We speak of a concilium of physicians, a deliberation of the physicians. But this deliberation is nevertheless only the application of the art to a special complicated case. The main body of medical knowledge is not subject to deliberation, whereas there is a whole sphere where there cannot be an art, where there can only be deliberation not guided by such canons or rules as the arts are guided by. And this is the sphere of what Aristotle calls action, action as distinguished from production. The arts are productive; and the light guiding action is neither science, nor art, but practical wisdom. This is a clumsy expression. In Greek it's a single word, *phronesis*; in Latin, *prudentia*. We could say “prudence,” if prudence hadn't acquired this low meaning, “merely prudential considerations.” So either I will use *phronesis* or “practical wisdom.”

Now the highest form of practical wisdom is that<sup>35</sup> practiced by the statesman.<sup>36</sup> Practical wisdom strictly understood is that of the individual concerned with *his* well-being, but the statesman is concerned with the well-being of the city and this surely requires more understanding, broader horizons. It's higher. But fundamentally the political art, if you can call it an art—or the political understanding, we should rather say,<sup>37</sup> is of the same character as practical wisdom. Is this clear? Otherwise the subject is very complicated, but the beginning is clear.

[Strauss goes to the board and writes.] So we have first, science, which is in Aristotle's view as such purely theoretical. Then we have art, which is productive. The simplest case is the

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 8. 11-12, 1356b33-1357a2.

shoemaker. But rhetoric is an art, the production of speech. Speech is also the product of art or may be [so]. If it is not a product of art but merely an improvisation by a gifted man, then it<sup>38</sup> may be better than that by a poorly gifted student of the art. That goes without saying. But other things being equal, it would be inferior to the speech made by a properly gifted man who has acquired the art. No theoretical premises as such. Think of the shoemaker: of course he must know something about the leather and other kinds of things, but he doesn't have to be a student of zoology, of the various animals with hides, or the uses of the various trees for the wood, in case he wants to make wooden shoes.

**Student:** But all the arts partake of science in some way. Medicine for example partakes of certain—

**LS:** Yes, that is a question to some extent. I mean the higher and more respected sciences, I was thinking now of the competent surgeon,<sup>39</sup> the physician was of course more respected than a shoemaker. Therefore Socrates was of course speaking to the physician . . . as a very competent shoemaker, I don't think that he did. But still the fundamental point is whether anatomy for example, the study of the human body, is strictly theoretical. You see already it is confusing, we know that. And therefore Plato has somewhere in the *Phaedrus* his own argument that the truly good physician would of course have a theoretical knowledge of the human body.<sup>xxxv</sup> But if you look at the physicians in Homer . . . but as art, as art.

**Student:** If the action of the state is practical wisdom, then there's no such thing as political science, is there?

**LS:** Sure, to begin with—no, let us see where it comes in. But if you are worried in any way about the dignity of our profession, never forget that Aristotle developed the political science. Generally speaking, practical wisdom (I don't want to call it the political art)—say the political understanding [Strauss writes on board], so political understanding is the peak of that. But it is nevertheless here possible in this case, in this special case, to teach something about the broadest generalities, and that becomes a quasi-theoretical science. That's political science. Now how can I explain this best? Now this was called—I may use the term “practical sciences,” as distinguished from practical wisdom.

**Student:** That's an applied science—

**LS:** No, it is not applied science. It is a science of the polis, of the various regimes. May I postpone the question now? It is very relevant and I will take it up, but let me first continue.

Now I would like to return to the subject of rhetoric. Now I repeat, then, rhetoric is such an art. It is a help to the political art or the political understanding, since rhetoric is necessary for the deliberation of political multitudes. It is not the political understanding, but it is a help to it. And the deliberation of political multitudes cannot as such be scientific, first, because of the character of political multitudes. We have read this passage more than once; the [multitudes] are not able to follow a scientific argument. But also because of the character of things which are essentially objects of deliberation or action, and in no way objects of an art.

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<sup>xxxv</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 270c-271a.

[Strauss gets up and writes on board] In order to understand this we must make clear another distinction. Arts are productive. Practical wisdom has to do with action. In Greek the word for “action” is *praxis*, from which the word “practical” is derived. But I will now use the word “action.” Action and production are clearly distinguished. Take the simple case of the shoemaker and what he does. Both *do* something, the acting man and the shoemaker, but at the end of the action of the shoemaker, that toward which all his processes tend, is the shoe—something independent of his action, it exists outside of the action. There is a work, a product, which is not an action, which is not a human activity, but a product of an activity. The action proper is something which has no end beyond itself. The action itself counts. Is this intelligible?

There are actions for the sake of something outside of the action: a shoe, a speech, whatever the case may be. This is art. And then there are actions for their own sake, which have no end beyond them[selves]; this is what Aristotle means. A decent action exists for its own sake. What the shoemaker does, does not exist for its own sake but for the sake<sup>40</sup> [of] there be[ing] shoes. One can state it also differently. All arts are partial: shoes, speeches, tables and whatever it may be . . . are dealing with partial goods. Action deals with the whole human good, however limited the individual action may be, [and] this whole or complete human good is called by Aristotle “happiness.” Happiness is not the concern of any art. Arts produce things which may be conducive to happiness, but they are not directly productive of happiness.

Now what does this mean? For example, shoes are of course made for being worn, for use. Now the *use* of things, that is what we ordinarily call “life,” the proper use of things most of which are produced by arts. There may be an art of moneymaking; whether it is genuinely an art or not is an old question, but let us assume it. It’s an art and there are rules, you can learn them; and if you are properly motivated, as the phrase goes, you may be quite successful. But of course a sensible man would say that acquisition must be in the service of the *use* of the money. This use of money is life, or at least an integral part of life. That’s action, what you do with it.

Now the distinction is I think known to all of you from everyday life, although we<sup>41</sup> no longer use these terms exactly. Now, what to do with your money? Is there an art which tells you that? The decisions which we make—strictly speaking the artisan makes no decision<sup>42</sup> . . . I mean he will prefer this leather to that leather, but that is not a decision in the sense in which decision is implied in our action. How to spend our vacation is one way in which you can use money, and there is no art which tells us that. Whom to marry? This is also a grave decision, as we discussed last time when we observed Aristotle’s silence about the good wife, but [his] non-silence about the good children. This is also such a decision. All these spheres—that was the common prejudice of mankind until a short while ago: there is no art or science which can guide us. In a subsidiary manner, yes—for example, someone might say I will not marry under any circumstances a wife suffering from a great disease. When they will go to a physician, you know, that can be done. But this doesn’t tell him *whom* to marry. It would tell him at<sup>43</sup> most whom not to marry, which is not sufficient to guide his choice.

This is what<sup>44</sup> I loosely call now “life” and that is what Aristotle means by action. There we decide frequently on whether and to what extent to *use* the arts. For example, should I invest this money in a pair of shoes or in a shirt? That means should I employ the shoemaker or should I

employ the shirtmaker? The shoemaker knows how to produce a shoe; the shirt-maker knows how to produce a shirt. And they offer them literally today but you make your choice and there is no art of the shirtmaker or shoemaker which can help you there, because you have to then decide which of them to employ. Is this clear? Now to the extent to which this is correct,<sup>45</sup> the man of practical wisdom, the man who makes wise decisions as it were commands the artisans.<sup>46</sup> He does not interfere in what they do with their workshops, because they know that much better than he. But he says, "I want your service and not your service." Good. That is clear.

Now the question which arises on the basis of the modern views is: Is it not possible to replace practical wisdom by arts? Is it possible to replace something which is essentially not teachable but into which you grow by practice, by something teachable? Would it not be wonderful if there were classes in which people were taught practical wisdom in the way in which they are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and some other things? Now that this is a real problem even from the older point of view, let alone from the point of view now prevailing, you see from the following consideration. I come<sup>47</sup> back [now] to your question.

[Strauss writes on the blackboard] Here we have practical wisdom, inside of a reasonable man, by the way it occurs you still know . . . the care which you must use in driving a car and such things. There is no hard and fast standard, but you point to it and everyone understands that . . . what a reasonable man would choose, that's what Aristotle means, a reasonable man. Now this reasonable man, of course, this is the man who takes care of his *own* happiness, to use . . . Then this on a higher level is that of the state. And then there is still something higher than the state from Aristotle's point of view, a thought which is easier to understand in this country than in European countries, and that is the legislator. But legislator doesn't mean what it means now. The American equivalent is not the legislators, but the Founding Fathers, the men who laid down the whole order within which<sup>48</sup> the individual statesman acts. So every political action takes place within a framework which is ordinarily not created by the acting statesmen.

Now the Greeks looked at it somewhat differently than we did. They didn't think in terms of a constitution as a fundamental law, but rather in terms of codes,<sup>49</sup> codes of law which would be changed only with great precautions. And of course the reason is given by Aristotle. You cannot find many wise men, and therefore—you remember the discussion about rhetoric at the beginning, why as little as possible should be left to the jurymen, i.e., to the men acting now . . . Therefore, if you have the good luck to have a first-rate wise man or group of wise men who could, after lifelong deliberation, lay down such a code, that would be preferable to improvisation on the spur of the moment when there was this calamity or that calamity, and you just respond to it. Good.

Now we have the legislator as the highest. And the art of the legislator may be called the architectonic art, the art governing directly or indirectly all the other arts. Because naturally the legislator will tell which arts should be employed or not. Or differently stated, what is the difference between art and flattery? For example, cosmetics: is this an art or is this not a swindle? Now the legislator will say no, to say nothing of such arts as the production of cigarettes and liquor.

And now we make a further step. The legislator for *this* city, for that city, for a third city, for *any* city in different times—but there are some questions which come up in every legislation. Each individual legislator is bound by the circumstances within narrow limits. His territory, his neighbors, his enemies—these and other considerations come in—poor soil, good soil, plains or mountains, or whatever it may be. So the individual legislator is limited in his choice by what is feasible here and now. But he must make a compromise between what would be most desirable in itself and what is feasible here and now. But in order to make an intelligent compromise, he must first know what is desirable in itself. Then, if you are reasonable, you will make the concessions, but you will know that these are concessions,<sup>50</sup> not things which are desirable in themselves.

So there must be an individual whom we will now call the teacher of legislators. That's Aristotle. Not necessarily in every case—it could be somebody else, but Aristotle is the outstanding example. Now the teacher of legislators, his light is not simply practical wisdom, but<sup>51</sup> what was traditionally called “practical science.” It is in a way a theoretical science, and why this is so is a long question but let me leave it at this for the time being only and pursue my argument.

So we can then visualize the following thing: that there must be such an overall practical science, the science of legislation, which of course will have to deal with the various regimes because different laws are required by the different regimes and so on—in brief, such a thing<sup>52</sup> [as] Aristotle's *Politics*. Now there is<sup>53</sup> a [possible] sub-case<sup>54</sup>, which is rejected by Aristotle but accepted by Plato, at least apparently—namely, that we have a situation in which the teacher of legislators and through him the legislators proper, will regulate everything so that there is no sphere of decisions for the individual. I took the example of the shirt and the shoe. Shall I invest my dollars in shoes or shirts? But it is possible to dispense of this effort naturally, and there is a beautiful word for that, “rationing.” Rationing: you can buy so many shoes a year, and just as many as you will need, so there is no question whether you will have choice. You know, [in a] communist order, a strict communist order where there would be no decision whatever; there is no place for practical wisdom. There the arts and the master art of the legislator via the subordinate arts of the administrators would make this perfectly superfluous. Is this clear?

Now here if you consider that, you see that in . . . you pay a price. In other words, it might be possible prior to any detailed consideration to dispense with practical wisdom and to have only arts in their hierarchy. But then you have no freedom. One would have to consider freedom—meaning here the right to make one's own reasonable decisions. And since it is impossible to give people the right to make reasonable decisions without giving them by implication the right also to make *unreasonable* decisions, unfortunately . . . therefore it means the right to make their own decisions.

Now of course there are other things to consider, with which you are familiar, because these decisions handed down by the administrators are in fact frequently less wise than those made by the untutored individuals. In the first place, because the individuals may know better what they need—really they should have, say, another pair of shoes rather than a shirt, or whatever their particular situation may be. And also it is undeniable that the administrators have much less of an interest in the individuals concerned than those individuals themselves. So there are . . .

However important these considerations may be for practical reasons, and that is exactly what Aristotle suggests in his criticism of Plato's *Republic* in the Second Book of the *Politics*, this whole consideration doesn't go to the root of the matter for the following reason. The root of the matter is [this]: can practical wisdom not be replaced by a *technē*, by an art? Could there not be an art of living, and everyone be his own artisan of living as distinguished from a man of practical wisdom? The reasoning which I sketched before does not refute the possibility that there can be an art of living,<sup>55</sup> [but] not in the sense in which<sup>56</sup> people [normally] speak today about an art of living. They *mean* what Aristotle meant by practical wisdom. When sometimes people say politics is not a science but an art (unless they mean to say, which would be terrible, that the statesman is something like a poet; I hope they don't mean that),<sup>57</sup> I think they mean what Aristotle meant: that practical wisdom cannot be reduced to science or art.

Now in order to explain that: life has to do with action, with action as distinct from production. One kind of action, and one very important part of it, is to act justly. We can divide up this sphere of action—for example, acting moderately, say, if you don't wolf down your food or take such a tiny little bit which looks awful as if you were a bird, and<sup>58</sup> you must give a mean between a wolf and a bird when eating, as you all know. But more interesting is the question of acting justly. Now acting justly means making just decisions. But what does it mean to make just decisions? Are just decisions not always made on the basis of something? On the basis of what Aristotle would call the just things, meaning what is known or supposed to be just? Whether it is just in itself or made just by the law is a distinction which we can disregard. In other words, there are some rules—does he not mean that to act justly is to act according to certain rules or canons?

But is then the case of the man who acts justly not fundamentally<sup>59</sup> like that of the physician? The physician also has general rules of healing and he knows quite well that these general rules must be modified. This particular case of pneumonia may be atypical and has never been described in the literature, and he must then make up his mind on the basis of what is generally known about pneumonia and kindred diseases. Now is the case of the just man fundamentally the same? And if the virtues have a certain kinship with each other, if what is true of justice is also true in a way of moderation, courage, and so on, is not practical wisdom then also reducible to a *technē* comparable to medicine? Never forget that what I loosely call the art of living was metaphorically called throughout the tradition, medicine of the mind. And a medicine of the mind must obviously<sup>60</sup> be an analogon to ordinary medicine. Naturally medicine of the mind wasn't the same as philosophy, but perhaps philosophy *is* this art of living, which is not the same as practical wisdom in the Aristotelian sense.

Now then it would be necessary to discuss, [to] make one thing clear,<sup>61</sup> assuming that this makes some sense: is there not a difference between what I call the art of living and all other arts? Let us now consider that.

**Student:** Well, with reference to medicine I thought that the argument took the exception in medicine and equated it to the rule in politics. The exception in medicine would be that if you had something different you wouldn't just follow out what had been done before. But that would be the rule in politics. There are always so many different things, Aristotle on justice in the *Ethics* considers, and they are changeable. That isn't true so much in medicine.

**LS:** Yes, but then the question would be: Why are the things much more changeable in politics than in medicine, or for that matter in pedagogy, in education? That would be the question.

Now let me start from the most obvious thing. There are arts. Most of the arts deal with non-human beings—I mean, including the art of shepherding, and of course<sup>62</sup> [shoemaking], and everything dealing with inanimate beings, or with human beings subject to the artisan for a limited purpose, say for instruction, children in school subject to the teacher but with a limit, or the soldiers to the general for combat. But then there are also arts dealing with human beings who are not in this way subject to the artisan. Here in the latter case, the acting and the acted upon are simply of the same kind. Teacher and pupil are not simply of the same kind because a teacher is trained [but] the pupils are not trained; and the shepherd obviously not, the man and the sheep, to say nothing of the shoemaker and his leather.

In this art of living, as I tentatively called it, the acting and the acted upon are simply of the same kind: *a*) within the individual,<sup>63</sup> there is something which he has to control, there are resistances to rational action within him; and then, of course, *b*) also on the part of other men, this is another kind of resistance. Human resistances are involved in this art of living, regardless of whether they are in the acting individual or in other individuals. So this seems to be then the key point. If there is an art of living, it will be an art of acting on beings of the same kind as the actor. Therefore—now I make a jump—the consideration of the noble and the just necessarily enters. I cannot discard obstructing material as we can do in the other arts. Take the case of the teacher in class. Of course he cannot bump off an undesirable student, but there are ways of getting rid of him. But this kind of situation with which we are concerned is where you cannot get rid of that being on whom or which you act, regardless of whether it's yourself or some other being.

So, considerations of justice and considerations of nobility. Noble and just: this corresponds to what we now call the moral. But since I speak about a Greek text, I have to use a Greek distinction which is not meaningless as we shall see on a later occasion. But if it is true that to act nobly and justly is more important than everything else, it follows that action is for its own sake, whereas production and so on is for the sake of something else. Now the radical difference between practical wisdom on the one hand, and science and art on the other, depends on the possibility that the principles of the noble and the just are known independently of science or art. Because if they are dependent on science or art, then you get into this Platonic problem of the teacher of legislators and so on and so on, where everything is ultimately subject to the super-artisan, or super-scientist. Now what does this mean? For example, the principles could be known by the conscience or by nature.<sup>64</sup> By the conscience or by nature would, from Aristotle's point of view, be the same, because conscience would then be a natural . . . but if they are not known by nature, how could they be known? Because in a way which we do not understand primarily, and which we do not have to understand for any practical purposes, they exist in opinion. This is the great difficulty of Aristotle's *Ethics*. And this question is never decided, what the cognitive status of the principles of action is.<sup>65</sup>

But it is clear that if the principles of action, if the principles of the noble and the just, are as such existing in opinion, then the sphere of action and the sphere of rhetoric will coincide—at least in all interesting respects, because rhetoric starts from what is generally accepted and all *praxis* will start from what is generally accepted. Now this precisely is the assertion of the sophists with

which Aristotle deals at the end of the *Ethics*. In other words, I believe I see now that what Aristotle has in mind—what I didn't see before—that what Aristotle says at the end of the *Ethics* about the sophists is much deeper than I thought. If the principles of action are *endoxa*, if [they are] only in opinion, then practical wisdom and even politics would really be fundamentally the same as rhetoric. Now Aristotle rejects this. And though Aristotle's argument is very complex,<sup>66</sup> how can one state Aristotle's case against the sophists very simply? Why cannot it be true that these things are merely in opinion? Well I will tell you. It is something which you do not say because it is so obvious. Aristotle's answer is: the city is *by nature* and not merely by virtue of human agreement or opinion. Therefore since the city is by nature—which then needs a long commentary, but the sentiment is there—then the common good is of course also by nature, because if [there is] a city there must be a common good.

Now if we take this thought of the natural character of the city and of the common good seriously, we arrive necessarily at the conception which is the peak of Aristotle's study of human things, [that] of the best regime. Because then there must be by the nature of things, by the nature of the polis,<sup>67</sup> a point to something in which the polis can fulfill its function most perfectly. That would be the best regime.

Now this best regime is delineated by political science in the Aristotelian sense on the basis of knowledge of the end of man; and this end of man could be known by theoretical science, science of nature. Then, however, the following difficulty arises and therefore we need rhetoric in a radical way: let us assume that the best regime is not available. But then we must rest satisfied with an imperfect regime, obviously. But what does this mean? We can perhaps say this: for all practical purposes, all human life according to Aristotle takes place in imperfect regimes. Now if the perfect regime is that which is based on the nature of man's perfection, on what wisdom dictates, then we have in fact everywhere a rule not based on wisdom simply but on something qualifying wisdom. We may call this consent.<sup>68</sup> In every political society in fact there are principles which are partly what wisdom, understanding the end of man, would dictate, and partly what is accepted or acceptable by the particular community. Now the concrete principles governing a society are this combination. Non-universal *endoxa*, non-universal because they differ, *endoxa* (I hope the word *endoxa* has now sunk in<sup>69</sup>)—means that which is in opinion, non-universal *endoxa* of one kind or another. And therefore while the sophistic view is wrong<sup>70</sup>—and therefore the sophists were wrong in reducing politics to rhetoric—one point is true: the principles to which we defer in the last analysis in any political debate are not simply true. Why? They cannot be.<sup>71</sup> But the political scientist in the Aristotelian sense differs from the rhetorician because he does not merely appeal to these principles but opens the whole issue of all possible regimes and their respective values, which the rhetorician would never do. The rhetorician would always argue on the basis of the established regime without raising the question of its relative rank. Mr. Dry?

**Mr. Dry:** I was wondering if we could then put the origin of the principles of the noble and just somewhere between both science and art, because it seems to be partially by nature, but not entirely, just as the perfect regime doesn't exist, and therefore partially by opinion.

**LS:**<sup>72</sup> Ja, that one would have to do, we will take up this question<sup>73</sup>—altogether what we will discuss next time and thereafter will in fact deal with the question, when Aristotle speaks of

virtue in general, virtue insofar as it is relevant for rhetoric, i.e., for ordinary politics, not for the founding politics. You know what I mean by founding politics—the laying down of the project. And when he also speaks of justice in particular, that we must see.

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<sup>1</sup> Moved “therefore.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “its.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “it.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “here.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “But.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “if you count the one.”

<sup>7</sup> Changed from “what is punishable are only actions proper, not speeches.”

<sup>8</sup> Moved “be.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>10</sup> Moved “now.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “what would be.”

<sup>12</sup> Deleted “we.”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “the regimes.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “which.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “how does he call it.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “possessed—.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “and became rich.”

<sup>18</sup> Deleted “where.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “where.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “whether.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>22</sup> Moved “On this.”

<sup>23</sup> Deleted “to.”

<sup>24</sup> Moved “was.”

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<sup>25</sup> Deleted "Yes, in this case it can only mean, in other words."

<sup>26</sup> Deleted "is."

<sup>27</sup> Moved "the speaker." Deleted "must."

<sup>28</sup> Deleted "you know."

<sup>29</sup> Deleted "either."

<sup>30</sup> Deleted "it is asserted—."

<sup>31</sup> Deleted "when."

<sup>32</sup> Deleted "whereas."

<sup>33</sup> Deleted "up."

<sup>34</sup> Deleted "there." Moved "is."

<sup>35</sup> Deleted "which is."

<sup>36</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>37</sup> Deleted "political understanding."

<sup>38</sup> Deleted "may be good."

<sup>39</sup> Deleted "medicine is of course."

<sup>40</sup> Deleted "that."

<sup>41</sup> Deleted "do."

<sup>42</sup> Deleted "strictly speaking."

<sup>43</sup> Deleted "most."

<sup>44</sup> Deleted "we—."

<sup>45</sup> Deleted "so."

<sup>46</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>47</sup> Moved "now."

<sup>48</sup> Deleted "the statesman."

<sup>49</sup> Deleted "of."

<sup>50</sup> Deleted "they are."

<sup>51</sup> Deleted "it is."

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<sup>52</sup> Deleted “like.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “a case possible,”

<sup>54</sup> Moved “possible.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “and now.”

<sup>56</sup> Moved “normally.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “the one.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “have something—must.”

<sup>61</sup> Deleted “even assuming—.”

<sup>62</sup> Deleted “shoemaker.”

<sup>63</sup> Deleted “within the individual.”

<sup>64</sup> Deleted “If they are not known—.”

<sup>65</sup> Deleted “Whether they are known—.”

<sup>66</sup> Deleted “what is Aristotle’s—.”

<sup>67</sup> Deleted “there must be.”

<sup>68</sup> Deleted “Wherever—.”

<sup>69</sup> Deleted “and I don’t have to—.”

<sup>70</sup> Deleted “, the element of—wrong.”

<sup>71</sup> Deleted “And therefore this—.”

<sup>72</sup> Deleted “Now the question is of course never—”

<sup>73</sup> Deleted “when we come to—the only discussion—no.”

**Session 5: April 13, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —Aristotle in the *Ethics* and the *Politics*—and even Plato, although you didn't mention him, I believe, and surely Xenophon. And the mass of the Aristotelian sentences in these three chapters was not discussed. I mean,<sup>1</sup> it would be perfectly satisfactory for me if you had interpreted only three sentences from the ninth chapter, that I wouldn't mind, but stick then to these three sentences, which you did not do. Nevertheless, since you have proper training, you made a number of remarks which are helpful. But first I must speak of the things where I do not believe you at all.

You say Aristotle in chapter 9 is silent on practical wisdom. I think that is simply wrong. He is as, if not more, silent on practical wisdom<sup>2</sup> as on justice, courage, or moderation which you also mention. He is silent on wisdom in a way, but not on practical wisdom. Now another point where I believe there is an intelligible misunderstanding. You made a distinction between praise and honor, and this is based, I suppose, on a remark in the First Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There Aristotle distinguishes the virtues as objects of praise and happiness as an object of honor, *timion*. And something to this effect also occurs at the end of chapter 9 of the First Book of the *Rhetoric*. Yes, but “honor,” while the literal translation, is misleading. Of course we honor people for their virtues and Aristotle says so often enough. But in this particular case when he speaks of the fundamental difference between happiness and virtue . . . what does he mean by that? Now people are praised for their virtues or for their virtuous actions, and praise is a proper thing. This is their merit. But happiness is more than a man's merit. I mean there is something which man does not owe to himself. The gods are honored; and when Aristotle speaks of happiness in this connection, he speaks of the fact that the gods are not praised—that was at least according to the Greek people—but honored. I would translate *timion*, the adjective derivative from “honor” in the First Book of the *Ethics*, by “venerable.” There is a kind of almost worship. Virtue does not deserve worship. Happiness in a way does, because it is some *eudaimonia*, a good *daimon*, a good god is with it. This is of no great help for understanding this section of the *Rhetoric*, but I thought I should mention it to you.

Now you made one point which could seem to be far-fetched, or speculative as I called it before, but which is nevertheless truly helpful.<sup>3</sup> I mean your long discussion about the fact that epideictic rhetoric has nothing to do with the military art.

**Mr. Glenn:** No, I didn't say that, I hope.

**LS:** That's the way I understood it.

**Mr. Glenn:** Not properly. It can be used for military art.

**LS:** I see. But this of course is not what Aristotle says. I thought you were building up to another point which is quite true and which would probably not have occurred to me without your speculations; therefore, I am grateful for them. And that is this: in Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*, which Mr. Glenn has read, there are quite a few speeches by generals to the troops before battle. And you find this also in the works of other ancient historians. And this is surely a work

of the art of rhetoric, and that is what Xenophon surely means. Did Aristotle provide for this kind of rhetoric?

Now let us call it with a broader term which is not limited to military things: exhortation and dehortation. <sup>4</sup>Exhortation to bravery and dehortation from cowardice; and this of course would also apply to other situations. Is there a place for exhortation and dehortation in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*? You attracted my attention to this question, and then I drew the conclusion: no, there is no place. And this is a very interesting point, because it is as important to see what is there as to see what is not there—according to the famous American military saying, “hit them where they ain't.” See, what “ain't” there is as important as what is there. And [this is] especially <sup>5</sup> justified because this concept of rhetoric, that it is a function of rhetoric to exhort and dehort, is obviously pre-Aristotelian. Proof: Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus*. Now, Mr. Butterworth, you have a point.

**Mr. Butterworth:** You don't mean exhortation and dehortation in general, do you? Do you mean this in a more limited sense, because wouldn't deliberative rhetoric be exhorting—

**LS:** Yes, but not to the noble as noble, but to the expedient: make war or make peace, and this kind of thing. Exhortation and dehortation—I think this was the fundamental mistake of Mr. Glenn, but a useful mistake, because it draws to our attention to a serious problem. <sup>6</sup> [Mr. Glenn] said that praise serves the function of promoting moral virtue. Now one can rightly say, and more generally speaking, there must be a branch of rhetoric which serves this function of promoting moral virtue. I agree with your contention in general, but I believe that Aristotle does not have this kind of rhetoric. And to that extent you were simply wrong. Epideictic rhetoric does not have the function of promoting moral virtue—indirectly, accidentally, yes, but not essentially. Now we have here some experts on rhetoric, especially Mr. Nicgorski. What do you say to this point? How far does Cicero discuss exhortative and dehortative rhetoric?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Well, he uses the same three-fold distinction as Aristotle does and makes no special provision for it. I am in doubt right now whether there is not some truth in Mr. Butterworth's assertion that perhaps Aristotle would understand such exhortation and dehortation as a form of deliberative rhetoric. If one of the distinguishing characteristics is speaking before groups, it may be that we'll come across—

**LS:** Policy-making groups, otherwise it wouldn't be deliberative.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Yes. It could conceivably be broader than that to—

**LS:** Well, I think it would be good if you were to watch that in Cicero.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** You yourself pointed to Gorgias' service to his brother, and convincing people they ought to do certain things. And this seems to be what Aristotle assumes about deliberative rhetoric, to persuade people they have to do this—

**LS:** But is this strictly speaking deliberative? Does Gorgias deliberate with his brother's patient [about] whether he should undergo the operation or not? Is it not rather also an exhortation? Here

we have the advice of the brother, of the physician: you must undergo an operation. Then we have the strong disinclination of the patient to undergo the operation, and the rhetorician bridges the gulf between the disinclination and what he should do. It is not deliberative, I would say, at least not necessarily. There *may* be, there may be—if he says, no I can't take the risk, you know I have a family, or this kind of thing, then he may go into this argument. But the main point I suppose would simply be something like fear, and then he has to exhort him. It is not necessary to deliberate.

**Mr. Reinken:** Aristotle refers at the beginning to manuals which existed, that other people have written and spoke of the passions. Surely those manuals must have taken the general's speech to his troops as—

**LS:** Apparently not. What did he say when he spoke about the earlier rhetoricians? What was their field of concentration?

**Student:** Forensic rhetoric.

**LS:** Forensic rhetoric. You know what forensic is? So, not this kind of thing. We have of course to raise the question and to answer it: what precisely is epideictic rhetoric according to Aristotle? But I would say off-hand, its function<sup>7</sup>, its essential function, is not to promote moral virtue. And I believe one reason which I would say off-hand is this, that Aristotle does not speak of moral virtue proper in the *Rhetoric*. That I believe is connected to that. In other words, what a father would say to his son, "pull yourself together," or something of this kind, an exhortation, or, "it's disgraceful to do that," and we can elaborate that and make a long speech on this remark—this is not deliberative rhetoric, nor of course forensic, nor epideictic.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** I remember one point in Cicero that, insofar as it could be true of Aristotle, may be somewhat saving for Mr. Butterworth's thesis. It is the following: Cicero argues that one of the reasons that epideictic rhetoric is important is that the deliberative rhetorician often must use it in the course of deliberation. If he is speaking before an assembly of Roman senators it is very good, as Cicero does say, to begin by exhorting them to their duties as the senatorial class and praising their ancestors and their past actions. In this way one would put the audience in the proper frame of mind for the reception of the point of the speech.

**LS:** Yes, but still that would be then a use of epideictic rhetoric, at the utmost one could grant, within the context of deliberative rhetoric. It would not be epideictic rhetoric proper. That's not its function.

**Student:** When Aristotle is speaking of the use of maxims, he quotes some general exhortations . . . grave danger . . . sacrifice—

**LS:** Where is that?

**Same Student:** Book 2, chapter 21.

**LS:** Then we will wait until we come to that point, but we are now concerned with the thematic,<sup>8</sup> explicit discussion of epideictic rhetoric. So we must see whether Aristotle has provided for all the kinds of rhetoric of which he knew. Now let us then turn to the text. Let us remember the context.<sup>9</sup> Where does it begin here? Now epideictic rhetoric is discussed in the center. He discusses first deliberative rhetoric, and thereafter, forensic rhetoric. The discussion of epideictic rhetoric is much shorter than the discussion of the two other kinds of rhetoric, as you can easily see. It would be good if we had statistical data, I mean if someone would count the lines of the three discussions (the chapter divisions are of no help) and then we would be quite precise about it. If you would go back to the chapter in which he discusses three kinds of rhetoric, then you would see that at<sup>10</sup> the end of chapter 3<sup>11</sup> he gives them in the order in which he discusses them: deliberative, epideictic, and forensic<sup>12</sup>. But before the order was different. So in other words, the statement at the end of chapter 3 is meant to prepare the actual discussion. I shall discuss them in this order which I give now. Before he discussed them in a different order.

Now the first point which strikes us at the beginning of the chapter on rhetoric . . . . Let us read the first paragraph.

**Mr. Reinken:** “We will next speak of virtue and vice, of the noble and the disgraceful, since they constitute the aim of one who praises and of one who blames; for, when speaking of these, we shall incidentally bring to light the means of making us appear of such and such a character, which, as we have said, is a second method of proof—”

**LS:** You see, that is an accident, incidental to the discussion—incidental because we are concerned above all with the proofs, the proofs proper, enthymemes and examples. But in a secondary way there is also the so-called ethical proof, the proof taken from the character of the speaker. And the speaker must present himself as an honorable man. You know, that contributes toward convincing or persuading the audience. And by speaking of virtue, Aristotle says, we will incidentally also bring out what it means to be an honorable speaker. That is incidental, not fundamental.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for it is by the same means that we shall be able to inspire confidence in ourselves or others in regard to virtue. But since it happens that men, seriously or not, often praise not only a man or a god but even inanimate things or any ordinary animal, we ought in the same way to make ourselves familiar with the propositions relating to these subjects.”<sup>1</sup>

**LS:** I will mention here only one point; we have discussed that before. It was not clear whether rhetoric is truly universal—as universal as logic, as formal logic, or [as] dialectics, or whether it was limited to specific subject matter: political matters. Now in the case of epideictic rhetoric it becomes quite clear: epideictic rhetoric is surely not limited to political matters proper. One can praise a god and even inanimate beings. There is no subject which is as such outside of the sphere of epideictic rhetoric and therefore of rhetoric in general. But this applies only to—clearly to epideictic rhetoric. Now the subject of epideictic rhetoric is primarily virtue and vice, the noble and the base. And this is to be considered for the immediate sequel. What is noble?

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<sup>1</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 9. 1-2, 1366a23-31.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The noble, then, is that which, being desirable in itself, is at the same time worthy of praise, or which, being good, is pleasant because it is good.”

**LS:** Now let us stop here. So the noble consists then of two kinds of things: of the praiseworthy things, of *certain* praiseworthy things, and of certain pleasures. Is this clear? Now this is a very difficult passage. It reminds of the discussion in Plato's *Gorgias*, 474d to 475a, where Socrates defines the noble or the beautiful (that's in Greek the same word, *kalon*) as *a*) useful, which corresponds to what Aristotle calls “good,” and *b*) pleasant things. And the true definition of the noble for Socrates is something which is both pleasant and useful. Pleasant and useful.. For example, a chest of drawers may be useful but not beautiful to look at, or something may be beautiful to look at but not useful. From the Platonic-Socratic point of view neither of these two things is beautiful or fine. It must be both. Is this not intelligible? In other words, the merely ornamental is not fine. The merely useful, say a hayfork or a fork used for loading manure on a wagon, is eminently useful, but it is not beautiful necessarily and therefore it would not be called beautiful or fine.

Now this definition of Socrates corresponds to Aristotle's second definition and not to the first. Let us give an example. What does this definition mean? While being good it must be pleasant, but its pleasantness must be connected with its goodness. In other words the pleasantness must not be merely accidental. For example, exile to a quiet island may be pleasant, but as such it is not intended as a punishment and therefore it cannot be called fine, beautiful, noble.

Now if we go back to the more primary meaning of the word “noble,” or “beautiful,” or “fine”—in Greek, *kalon*—it is the resplendent good, the glorious good. Something may be good but lack this resplendent character; then one would not call it noble or fine. A dinner cannot be noble, or fine, or beautiful. Socrates, when he got an excellent dinner in the wealthiest house in Athens, said it's blameless.<sup>ii</sup> He would never call it beautiful, or noble, because a dinner cannot be; it lacks this glory. But love, even bodily love, can have this glory. That's a different story. Paying one's debts is a just act, but no one would call it a glorious deed, unless under very special circumstances it was really something unbelievably great. Undergoing an operation can be good, but it cannot be noble, it cannot be *kalon*.

Now the interesting point is<sup>13</sup> that in this chapter Aristotle does not give a single example of something noble, which is *kalon*, which is noble because of its pleasantness. He discusses only things which are noble in the sense of being choiceworthy for their own sake and at the same being praiseworthy. That is very strange. It is hard therefore to understand what he means. This is a very difficult passage to divine and I have also not read anything about this which has been helpful to me. The best parallel I could think of is<sup>14</sup> in the *Gorgias*, the passage to which I referred and which reminds somehow of what is said here, but it's not identical. Now how does he go on?

**Mr. Reinken:** “If this is the noble, then virtue must of necessity be noble, for, being good, it is worthy of praise.”

**LS:** So it fulfills the first condition. It fulfills the first definition of *kalon*.

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<sup>ii</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 474d-475a.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Virtue, it would seem, is a faculty of providing and preserving good things, a faculty productive of many and great benefits, in fact, of all things in all cases. The components of virtue are justice, courage, self-control, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, practical and speculative wisdom.”

**LS:** Let us say “practical wisdom” and “wisdom.” Because in Greek these are from two different words, *phronesis* and *sophia*. So you have practical wisdom.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The greatest virtues are necessarily those which are most useful to others, if virtue is the faculty of conferring benefits.”

**LS:** Listen to that condition. The crucial qualification: the whole discussion of virtue given here is based on the premise that virtue is essentially benefiting others, which is not the definition of virtue given in the *Ethics*.

**Student:** Sorry to go back, but he says something is pleasant because it is good. Is everything that is good, pleasant?

**LS:** No. The operation is the simple example. Did you ever go to the dentist and have a tooth removed? That’s surely good, as long as the dentist did not commit a blunder, but you wouldn’t say that is pleasant.

**Student:** . . . there are many goods that are pleasant that wouldn’t be noble simply because they are pleasant and good at the same time?

**LS:** Perhaps it is with a view to this difficulty that Aristotle doesn’t give an example of the second case. I mean one would have to go back [to] the gloriousness of the matter which is essential for the noble. You know there are many things which are pleasant, of which one cannot possibly say that they have a kind of inner glory. For example, if you meant to allude to the enjoyments of love—I believe that is<sup>15</sup> what is implied in this. Therefore, a figure like Aphrodite was popular, and this is perhaps the reason why Aristotle is here silent about it.

**Student:** Is this difficulty involved in another work somewhere . . . .

**LS:** All the praises of *Eros*.<sup>16</sup> Compared to these enjoyments the pleasures of eating and drinking are pedestrian. There are cases in which a drink of water is the most wonderful thing in the world but this is accidental, not essential. Why does love in this perspective have this peculiar status in the poetry of the world? I mean, do you find dinner poetry or water-drinking poetry? [Laughter] And that is a simple and very good proof that this is so.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Pardon? No, it is possible that someone make[s] a poem of a dinner, but I think it would always be a bit of a . . . because there is a certain inappropriateness in that. Yes, now let us go on with the other virtues.

**Mr. Reinken:**

For this reason justice and courage are the most esteemed, the latter being useful to others in war, the former in peace as well. Next is liberality, for the liberal spend freely and do not dispute the possession of wealth [laughter], which is the chief object of other men's desires. Justice is a virtue which assigns to each man his due in conformity to the law; injustice claims what belongs to others, in opposition to the law. Courage makes men perform noble acts in the midst of dangers according to the dictates of the law and in submission to it; the contrary is cowardice. Self-control is a virtue which disposes men in regard to the pleasures of the body as the law prescribes; the contrary is licentiousness. Liberality does good in many matters; the contrary is avarice. Magnanimity is a virtue productive of great benefits; the contrary is little-mindedness. Magnificence is a virtue which produces greatness in matters of expenditure; the contraries are little-mindedness and meanness. Practical wisdom is a virtue of reason, which enables men to come to a wise decision in regard to good and evil things, which have been mentioned as connected with happiness.<sup>iii</sup>

**LS:** Ja, you see, so he defines briefly all the virtues mentioned with the exception of what?

**Student:** Wisdom.

**LS:** Wisdom proper. Aristotle I don't believe has forgotten that; it is somehow not worthy of consideration in this context, because in rhetoric, in public speech, there is no occasion, Aristotle seems to imply, to praise wise, theoretically wise men. There is no occasion: that he assumes, otherwise it wouldn't make sense. One can say he mentions wisdom in order to indicate the limitation of this discourse. So the virtues, while being good, meaning salutary,<sup>17</sup> are praiseworthy at the same time, but they have this splendor attached to them. "Good" is here so to speak the utilitarian side. They help, [they] are salutary, but they have in addition this splendor. They are good because they procure good things and they are beneficent in many and important matters, i.e., especially to other men—and, we may add as a nasty comment,<sup>18</sup> [are] therefore praised by them. In other words, this is not the true moral virtue of which Aristotle speaks in the *Ethics*.

Now the key point is beneficence.<sup>19</sup> The best we can say about the utilitarian doctrine is that they define virtue as beneficence, namely beneficence to others. And that's not only modern utilitarians, but throughout the ages. But classical morality, Socratic morality, is expressed very clearly by Xenophon somewhere in his Greek history (I've forgotten now the passage) when he speaks of a certain tyrant who was very much loved by his subjects because he had been very beneficent to them, and then Xenophon says many people identify the good man with their benefactor.<sup>iv</sup> The good man is *not* the same as the benefactor. The good man *may* be a benefactor, but a benefactor is not necessarily a good man. I suppose every one of you has occasionally received benefits from someone who was not a good man.

<sup>iii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 9. 3-13, 1366a33-b22.

<sup>iv</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, trans. Carleton Brownson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 89, 1921), 1 (Bk. 7, chap. 3, sec. 12).

Now in three cases, in the case of justice, courage, and moderation, as distinguished from liberality, great-mindedness—how does he translate the other, *megalopsykia*?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Magnanimity”

**LS:** Magnanimity, and munificence, and prudence—in the case of these four virtues he does not mention the law. Naturally the law does make prescriptions regarding justice, courage, and moderation of course, especially laws of marriage. But liberality cannot be prescribed by the law because then it ceases to be liberality and becomes simply paying your taxes. You know, that is the great complaint of the conservatives against confiscatory taxes. If they were Greeks, they would say the confiscatory taxes are bad because they destroy the virtue of liberality [for] it becomes simply justice, then, paying your taxes. And magnanimity cannot be prescribed by law obviously, nor [can] munificence, nor can practical wisdom in any strict sense be prescribed by the law—accidentally yes, drive carefully, or handle dangerous objects with the care of a reasonable man, that is true but it is only accidental. There cannot be a law regarding acts of practical wisdom as such. What’s your point?

**Student:** He also doesn’t seem to describe practical wisdom in terms of its contrary, as he’s been doing with the other virtues.

**LS:** Yes, that is true, that is true. Now a few more points. We cannot read the whole. A little bit later on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But since the signs of virtue and such things as are the works and sufferings of a good man are noble, it necessarily follows that all the works and signs of courage and all courageous acts are also noble. The same may be said of just things and just actions; (but not of what one suffers justly; for in this alone amongst the virtues that which is justly done is not always noble, and a just punishment is more disgraceful than an unjust punishment).”

**LS:** Is this clear? Practically, I am sure you all understand, but it is a paradoxical thing that something justly done should in a certain sphere be worse than unjustly done. This applies of course only when you are at the receiving end, but still it creates a minor difficulty at first glance. Good. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

The same applies equally to the other virtues. Those things of which the reward is honour are noble; also those which are done for honour rather than money. Also, those desirable things which a man does not do for his own sake; things which are absolutely good, which a man has done for the sake of his country, while neglecting his own interests; things which are naturally good; and not such as are good for the individual, since such things are inspired by selfish motives.

And those things are noble which it is possible for a man to possess after death rather than during his lifetime, for the latter involve more selfishness; all acts done for the sake of others, for they are more disinterested; the success is gained, not for oneself, but for

others; and for one's benefactors, for that is justice; in a word all acts of kindness, for they are disinterested.

**LS:** Yes, here is a somewhat different point of view<sup>20</sup> [of] why we praise actions, why those actions are praiseworthy. This is a kind of justification of the definition of virtue given before. What is *not* noble? Let us start from the negative side according to what we have read here.

**Student:** Punishment.

**LS:** Sure, that is a special case, but generally speaking?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** What is not noble is what is selfishly done. What is selfishly done is not noble; it lacks this splendor. The individual may enjoy getting it, but it lacks this peculiar splendor of the noble. This is the point. Let us go on then.

**Mr. Reinken:** "And the contrary of those things of which we are ashamed—"

**LS:** Is this also clear? If it is something of which you are ashamed, which you would like to hide away, not to expose to the public gaze, it cannot be something beautiful, noble, fine, obviously.

**Mr. Reinken:**

for we are ashamed of what is disgraceful, in words, acts, or intentions; as, for instance, when Alcaeus said:

"I would fain say something, but shame holds me back,"

Sappho rejoined:

"Hadst thou desired what was good or noble, and had not thy tongue stirred up some evil to utter it, shame would not have filled thine eyes, but thou would'st have spoken of what is right."

**LS:** Now what is the implication of this exchange between the two poets? What is the status of the sense of shame? After all, Alcaeus was a decent man; he had the sense of shame. So what does Sappho's reply imply?

**Student:** That what he had to say was blameworthy, or else he would have said it.

**LS:** In other words, the fact that he had the sense of shame speaks against him . . . shameful thoughts. This is of course something which is here only alluded to, but what does Aristotle teach about the sense of shame in the *Ethics*?

**Student:** That a mature and good man shouldn't feel shame—

**LS:** Yes, because he would never have anything—do or feel anything of which he would be ashamed. Here this is only implied. Now, the next point.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Those things also are noble for which men anxiously strive, but without fear; for men are thus affected about goods which lead to good repute.”<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** “Good repute,” that is also a sign of what is noble, for which they are concerned. Why not having fear? Why does he say that?

**Student:** Because fear is not virtuous.

**LS:** Ja, but this here is no direct reference to virtue. Now, where are people concerned while having fear, the simplest case?<sup>vi</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:**

Victory and honour also are noble; for both are desirable even when they are fruitless, and are manifestations of superior virtue. And things worthy of remembrance, which are the more honourable the longer their memory lasts; those which follow us after death; those which are accompanied by honour; and those which are out of the common. Those which are only possessed by a single individual, because they are more worthy of remembrance. And possessions which bring no profit; for they are more gentlemanly.

**LS:** He has spoken of that which brings no profit, however, before. That has to do with the liberality. When you have profited then you have your reward. But things where you have no reward but fame, reputation—they alone can bring a reputation.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Customs that are peculiar to individual peoples and all the tokens of what is esteemed among them are noble; for instance, in Lacedaemon it is noble to wear one’s hair long, for it is the mark of the gentleman, the performance of any servile task being difficult for one whose hair is long. And not carrying on any vulgar profession is noble, for a gentleman does not live in dependence on others.”<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:**<sup>viii</sup>—the beginning of chapter 10. Now, this is the beginning of the discussion of forensic rhetoric.

**Mr. Reinken:**

We have next to speak of the number and quality of the propositions of which those syllogisms are constructed which have for their object accusation and defence. Three things have to be considered; first, the nature and the number of the motives which lead men to act unjustly; secondly, what is the state of mind of those who so act; thirdly, the

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<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 9. 15-21, 1366b28-1367a17.

<sup>vi</sup> Beginning of a passage that is not present on the remastered audio tape, but comes from the original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 9. 25-27, 1367a23-33.

<sup>viii</sup> End of passage that is not on remastered tape, but on original transcript. The original tape was unintelligible for approximately twenty minutes from this point until the transcript resumes with “the beginning of chapter 10.” The remastered tape also resumes at this same point.

character and dispositions of those who are exposed to injustice. We will discuss these questions in order, after we have first defined acting unjustly.

**LS:** <sup>21</sup>That is important for them, the telling of the . . . sequence. He makes a tripartition here, but before he discusses any of the three things, he discusses, what does it mean to act unjustly? And why does he discuss acting unjustly and not acting justly?

**Student:** Accusation and defense are concerned with that—

**LS:** Surely, no one will appear before a law court if he has acted justly, very simple. That has no deep reason, but a very obvious practical one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let injustice, then, be defined as voluntarily causing injury contrary to the law. Now, the law is particular or general. By particular, I mean the written law in accordance with which the state is administered; by general, the unwritten regulations which appear to be universally recognized.”

**LS:** It is very dangerous to try and speak here of natural right, because this is a very cautious and provisional statement: things which being unwritten seem to be accepted by all—<sup>22</sup>or are thought to be accepted by all. He will speak about natural right later, but this is not a statement which is very helpful here. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Men act voluntarily when they know what they do, and do not act under compulsion. What is done voluntarily is not always done with premeditation; but what is done with premeditation is always known to the agent, for no one is ignorant of what he does with a purpose. The motives which lead men to do injury and commit wrong actions are depravity and incontinence. For if men have one or more vices, it is in that which makes him vicious that he shows himself unjust; for example, the illiberal in regard to money, the licentious in regard to bodily pleasures, the effeminate in regard to what makes for ease, the coward in regard to dangers, for fright makes him desert his comrades in peril; the ambitious in his desire for honour, the irascible owing to anger, one who is eager to conquer in his desire for victory, the rancorous in his desire for vengeance; the foolish man for having mistaken ideas of right and wrong, the shameless from his contempt for the opinion of others. Similarly, each of the rest of mankind is unjust in regard to his special weakness.

**LS:** One may say that the provisional answer to the question,<sup>23</sup> What is the state of mind of the wrongdoers?, but very provisionally, may be [this]: there must be wishes incontinent in one way or the other. But this is<sup>24</sup> by no means precise enough. Aristotle wants to say [that] what we have learned about the virtues is of some importance for understanding crime, because a virtuous man will by definition never commit a crime; and therefore there is a variety of vices which may be applied to crime. But the next discussion comes somewhat closer.

**Mr. Reinken:**

This will be perfectly clear, partly from what has already been said about the virtues, and partly from what will be said about the emotions. It remains to state the motives and character of those who do wrong and of those who suffer from it. First, then, let us decide what those who set about doing wrong long for or avoid; for it is evident that the accuser must examine the number and nature of the motives which are to be found in his opponent; the defendant, which of them are not to be found in him. Now, all human actions are either the result of man's efforts or not.

**LS:** All human actions, not only crimes. Crimes are obviously human actions; and therefore we must know something about human actions if we want to know something about crimes.<sup>25</sup> Therefore he speaks first about the cause of human actions.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Of the latter some are due to chance, others to necessity. Of those due to necessity, some are to be attributed to compulsion, others to nature, so that the things which men do not do of themselves are all the result of chance, nature, or compulsion. As for those which they do of themselves and of which they are the cause, some are the result of habit, others of longing, and of the latter some are due to rational, others to irrational longing. Now wish is a [rational] longing for good, for no one wishes for anything unless he thinks it is good; irrational longings are anger and desire. Thus all the actions of men must necessarily be referred to seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, anger, and desire.<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Now, in order to understand this, let us limit ourselves to the case of crime. What is a crime? Or an illegal action, rather, [one] committed by chance—and which, of course, if it is proved to have been committed by chance would no longer be punishable?

**Student:** Manslaughter.

**LS:** No. That I believe would be traced to anger ordinarily.

**Same Student:** Say in the case of a traffic accident.

**LS:** That could be. Say someone throws away a cigarette, a burning cigarette, in a situation in which he<sup>26</sup> had no reason to expect that it would have any consequence, and by some accident a truck passes with highly inflammable material. I mean wholly unforeseeable—it would be chance. Now what would be nature, an action which on the face of it would be against the law, but can be traced to nature, i.e., the man is not responsible?

**Student:** Stealing out of hunger?

**LS:** Absolutely, that would be the simplest example. Compulsion is clear. Someone forces you physically to use the trigger of a gun. This is clear. You're not responsible for that. Habit: a crime committed by virtue of habit where you do not have to refer to any presence or any other motive?

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<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 10. 1-8, 1368b1-1369a7.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Ja, or addiction of one kind or another. Reasoning is clear: a calculated crime. And anger: revenge, or sudden anger. And desire: because someone is attracted by something [by] which<sup>27</sup> he claims to be overpowered<sup>28</sup>. These seven causes, Aristotle makes clear in the sequel, are causes strictly speaking, *prima causae*, not accidental.<sup>29</sup> The example which he gives: there are actions which can be attributed to youth. Young people are in some respects more irrational than older ones, but Aristotle says it is not the youth which is the direct and essential cause. It's only an accident that young people ordinarily are more given to that than older ones, and other considerations of this kind. We can disregard them, although this is very interesting otherwise.

We turn now to another passage, in order to understand the argument, toward the end of this chapter, 1369b20. "Since what men do through themselves are voluntary—"

**Mr. Reinken:**

In short, all things that men do of themselves either are, or seem, good or pleasant; and since men do voluntarily what they do of themselves, and involuntarily what they do not, it follows that all that men do voluntarily will be either that which is or seems good, or that which is or seems pleasant. For I reckon among good things the removal of that which is evil or seems evil, or the exchange of a greater evil for a less, because these two things are in a way desirable; in like manner, I reckon among pleasant things the removal of that which is or appears painful, and the exchange of a greater pain for a less. We must therefore make ourselves acquainted with the number and quality of expedient and pleasant things. We have already spoken of the expedient when discussing deliberative rhetoric—

**LS:** I.e., the good in the sense of the expedient. That was the subject of deliberative.

**Mr. Reinken:** "let us now speak of the pleasant. And we must regard our definitions as sufficient in each case, provided they are neither obscure nor too precise."

**LS:** Therefore, in other words, when he speaks of the reasons<sup>30</sup> [for] crime he [also] has<sup>31</sup> to speak of course of the expedient. Sometimes people commit crimes for the sake of some assumed benefit, not only for the pleasant as pleasant. But since he has discussed that before, and only for this reason, he will now speak of the pleasant and thus that is his next subject.

Now in this chapter he does not speak about the virtues at all. Why? Is not, according to the *Ethics*, the virtuous man the man who derives pleasure from acting virtuously?

**Student:** I think the definition of ignoble is connected with his definition of virtue and also with the omission of virtue from considerations of the pleasant. He makes this distinction.

**LS:** I think the point is the same which I mentioned before. Aristotle does not speak here of the moral virtues strictly understood, and therefore he does not claim that these actions (the virtues of which he spoke before and the actions corresponding to them) are pleasant, intrinsically

pleasant. They are chosen for the sake of the glory, honor, fame following from<sup>32</sup> [them], but not because of their intrinsic pleasantness. Now first, the definition.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let it be assumed by us that pleasure is a certain movement of the soul, a sudden and perceptible settling down into its natural state, and pain the opposite.”

**LS:** So pleasure has clearly to do with nature, coming into our own. There was no mention made of nature in the definition of the good and the noble. Yes?

**Student:** This seems not only to do with the bodily pleasures, pleasures that come out of pain—it doesn't have to do with the pleasure of smelling a rose, does it?

**LS:** Pardon?

**Same Student:** This doesn't only have to do with pleasures that come out of pain. It doesn't have to do with pleasures from smelling a rose, does it?

**LS:** Well—oh, yes, he happens to speak of the pleasures of smelling—

**Same Student:** I saw that, but it doesn't fit the definition because whereas thirst—

**LS:** Nevertheless, Aristotle would say, according to this definition, that in smelling something pleasant our smelling organ . . . comes into its own, whereas if we smell something unpleasant, it's against our grain. If you use this common phrase, “against our grain,” you will understand immediately what Aristotle means in his connection by “against nature.” And if you brush your hair, or a horse's hair, you can do it against the grain, or following the grain. To go with the grain is much better because then the nature helps you. Now, there are things which fit our palate, [it is] just what our palate ordered when you get something very exquisitely done. I am not speaking now of when we are very hungry when almost anything might do. And then this is in accordance with the nature of the palate. And other things are against it, and therefore we are annoyed when we have to eat it.

**Student:** So everyday breathing, when we don't smell things pleasant—

**LS:** Aristotle<sup>33</sup> does not make here the distinction between the pure pleasures, which are not preceded by pain, and the impure pleasures, let us say, which are preceded by pain. He does not make the distinction, naturally, because he speaks of pleasure in a crude manner as he always does in this book. Yes?

**Student:** This is for a normal person, isn't it?

**LS:** Oh yes, that is always understood. If there may be people who are very abnormal, they may have very abnormal pleasures and pains, that is clear. There is another statement. Let us read on a few more lines.

**Mr. Reinken:** “If such is the nature of pleasure, it is evident that that which produces the disposition we have just mentioned is pleasant, and that that which destroys it or produces the contrary settling down is painful.”<sup>x</sup>

**LS:** That is only the confirmation of the importance of nature. There was no reference to nature, I repeat, in the discussion of the good and the noble. Now, he gives then special cases which are of some interest. For example, everything which is violent which is imposed on us, [is] against our nature<sup>34</sup>—the pleasant is that which is not violent.<sup>35</sup> Do you have that? Before the quotation.

**Mr. Reinken:** “That which is not compulsory is also pleasant, for compulsion is contrary to nature. That is why what is necessary is painful—”

**LS:** Necessary and compulsory, ja, all right. The next example.

**Mr. Reinken:**  
and it was rightly said,

“For every act of necessity is disagreeable.”

Application, study, and the intense effort are also painful—

**LS:** Ja, as we all know. And this word which he uses here, *spoudai*, the efforts—from this is [derived] in Greek the adjective *spoudaios*<sup>36</sup>: the serious man, used synonymously with the virtuous man. So the implication here is that these things which lead to virtue are not as such pleasant, but virtue has also its pleasant side as will come out later. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “for these involve necessity and compulsion, if they have not become habitual; for then habit makes them pleasant.”

**LS:** Yes,<sup>37</sup> they become pleasant not because of the content, but because we are accustomed to do them. Custom is a kind of second nature. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Things contrary to these are pleasant; wherefore states of ease, idleness, carelessness, amusement, recreation, and sleep are among pleasant things, because none of these is in any way compulsory.”

**LS:** Averroës makes here the remark, which I found amusing: “To be at leisure and the omission of measuring the actions according to the law is pleasant.”<sup>xi</sup> In other words, you do as you like and do not obey the law. This has a pleasant element in itself; therefore the pleasant is a cause for crime, obviously. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**  
Everything of which we have within us the desire is pleasant, for desire is a longing for the pleasant.

<sup>x</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 10. 18-11. 2, 1369b18-1370a3.

<sup>xi</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.11.4.

Now, of desires some are irrational, others rational. I call irrational all those that are not the result of any assumption. Such are all those which are called natural; for instance, those which come into existence through the body—such as the desire of food, thirst, hunger, the desire of such and such food in particular; the desires connected with taste, sexual pleasures, in a word, with touch, smell, hearing, and sight. I call those desires rational which are due to our being convinced; for there are many things which we desire to see or acquire when we have heard them spoken of and are convinced that they are pleasant.<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** This is clear. You see Aristotle does *not* call the bodily pleasures the natural pleasures. He says they are *called* natural. The others too are natural, but in their case, to see their naturalness, some *hearing* of them and some having become *persuaded* or convinced of them is necessary. Then he speaks about the pleasures of remembering and of anticipation, which leads to certain complications because we enjoy remembered pains or suffering, [but] not simply; this is a bit complicated.<sup>38</sup> When we think of someone near and dear to us who died, in one sense that is a kind of reviving of that human being; but on the other hand, when we think of his act of dying, that would be plainly unpleasant also in memory. But if you think of what he did when he was alive, this is pleasant. So this [Aristotle] develops in the sequel, supporting it with a number of poetic quotations. Now we cannot read everything. Let us turn to 1371a, when he speaks of playful things. Shortly after the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And since victory is pleasant, competitive and disputatious amusements must be so too, for victories are often gained in them; among these we may include games with knuckle-bones, ball-games, dicing, and draughts. It is the same with serious sports; for some become pleasant when one is familiar with them, while others are so from the outset, such as the chase and every description of outdoor sport; for rivalry implies victory. It follows from this that practice in the law courts and disputation are pleasant to those who are familiar with them and well qualified.

**LS:** Here Averroës remarks, when he speaks of these serious sports: “To begin with, they are followed only by effort, or labor, as is the gaining of science, or knowledge.”<sup>xiii</sup> But it looks different when it has been acquired, when we have acquired a mastery. So I think this is not far-fetched because Plato frequently (Plato, Aristotle usually not) uses the word “play” for the non-necessary things, non-necessary in the vulgar sense of the term [“necessary”], and counts philosophy among that: a serious play. Serious, obviously, but play also because it lacks the crude necessity that we have to do it<sup>39</sup> to keep alive. Yes. A bit later, where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Honour and good repute are among the most pleasant things, because everyone imagines that he possesses the qualities of a worthy man—”

**LS:** Let us stop here. That is something. Worthy men are *spoudaios*; that is the same as the virtuous man. So in a way men do desire virtues, but they are more interested in having the

<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 11. 4-5, 1370a9-a27.

<sup>xiii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.11.19.

reputation for the same. If they *could* be virtuous without any too great effort, they would like to be. There is no question of it. To that extent virtue is best.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and still more when those whom he believes to be trustworthy say that he does. Such are neighbors rather than those who live at a distance; intimate friends and fellow-citizens rather than those who are unknown; contemporaries rather than those who come later; the sensible rather than the senseless, the many rather than the few;—”

**LS:** You see there can be a cleavage. There can be all kinds of contradictions. A man may have<sup>40</sup> a reputation for goodness with a few, but with men of judgment. You see there can be a difficulty here in speaking. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “for such persons are more likely to be trustworthy than their opposites. As for those for whom men feel great contempt, such as children or animals, they pay no heed to their respect or esteem, or, if they do, it is not for the sake of their esteem, but for some other reason.”

**LS:** Casually, they might be concerned. For example, the child might tell other people what he did. That is what Aristotle means. In the case of the dog or any other animal, no ready example has occurred to me, but perhaps someone can think of something.

**Mr. Reinken:** If you're a postman, it is well to be well thought of by a dog.

**LS:** Yes, that is true. But there is of course the other reason that if someone makes a trip, say to Soviet Russia, and is not very well-liked there, he ordinarily is not very much concerned with that. But when he comes back to Chicago or wherever he lives, it's a different story. You see Aristotle spells it all out. Yes, now, “A friend.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “A friend also is among pleasant things, for it is pleasant to love—”

**LS:** In order to understand, the Greek word for “friend” is *philos*, from which there is a verb *philein*, which we translate ordinarily by “loving.” That must be understood. So there are two aspects of a friend, being loved and loving. If there are two friends: *a* loves *b*, and *a* is loved by *b*. Otherwise, one is not befriended. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for no one loves wine unless he finds pleasure in it—just as it is pleasant to be loved—”

**LS:** To *be* loved.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for in this case also a man has an impression that he is really endowed with good qualities, a thing desired by all who perceive it; and to be loved is to be cherished for one's own sake.”

**LS:** So if I love someone, Aristotle says, I imply that he is somehow worth loving, i.e., good. Does this make sense? Because we read in our age about so many strange loves that we do not directly recognize it and we would have to take the [individual] case. But there is always

something implied: that he's someone worth loving. And if someone says: "Well, a mother loves her child although she knows that he is no good."<sup>41</sup> What is the answer to that? There is something good nevertheless—it's *her* child, her child. We come to that later. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>42</sup> "And it is pleasant to be admired, because of the mere honour. Flattery and the flatterer are pleasant—"

**LS:** You see here in this context, where pleasure as pleasure is under consideration, it doesn't make any difference: the difference between the friend and the flatterer is not so important. Both are pleasant. Here Aristotle gives a mere enumeration. If we want to know the truth about the difference between friend and flatterer, we have to study the *Ethics*.

**Mr. Reinken:**

the latter being a sham admirer and friend. It is pleasant to do the same things often; for that which is familiar is, as we said, pleasant. Change also is pleasant, since change is in the order of nature; for perpetual sameness creates an excess of the normal condition; whence it was said:

"Change in all things is sweet."

This is why what we only see at intervals, whether men or things, is pleasant; for there is a change from the present, and at the same time it is rare.<sup>xiv</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. Do you recognize this as true? When someone whom you haven't seen for some years turns up, other things being equal, and then you see someone whom you see every day, where are you more pleased? With the change, because the other is no longer surprising to you. Do you see that? Good. But here this emphasis on change is at variance with a remark Aristotle makes in the *Ethics* which we might just consider, at the end of Book 7. Would you read that? The end of Book 7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Nothing, however, can continue to give us pleasure always, because our nature is not simple, but contains a second element which is what makes us perishable beings, and consequently, whenever one of these two elements is active, its activity runs counter to the nature of the other, while when the two are balanced, their action feels neither painful nor pleasant. Since if any man had a simple nature, the same activity would afford him the greatest pleasure always.

**LS:** So in other words, in that case, if men had a simple nature, identically the same act would always please us and we would not wish any change. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Hence God enjoys a single, simple pleasure perpetually. For there is not only an activity of motion: but also an activity of immobility, and there is essentially a truer pleasure in

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<sup>xiv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 11. 15-20, 1370b34-1371a31.

rest than in motion. But change in all things is sweet, as the poet says, owing to some badness in us—”<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** That is all we need. So, that change is pleasant is ultimately due to our defectiveness as mortal beings [is] a consideration which is not even alluded to here in the *Rhetoric* because this is not a subject which will come up before a law court. People do not commit crimes with a view to *these* pleasures. Here one can easily get the impression that sameness, and the pleasure from the sameness, is due only to habituation while change alone is by nature pleasant. But this is not the last word of Aristotle on this subject. Now go on.<sup>xvi</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “And learning and admiring are as a rule pleasant; for admiring implies the desire to learn, so that what causes admiration is to be desired, and learning implies a return to the normal.”

**LS:** “To nature.”<sup>43</sup> That is important—by learning we come into our own. Since we are rational creatures, by learning, we perfect our reason, we come into our own. Well,<sup>44</sup> without going into this question, I think you would all admit this: that if you have understood something, if it has become clear what was the . . . for, it’s very pleasant, very pleasant. Now Aristotle interprets this: here we are coming into our own. Yes. Next.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is pleasant to bestow and to receive benefits; the latter is the attainment of what we desire,—”

**LS:** I think that needs hardly any proof, that people enjoy being at the receiving end of benefits, generally speaking.

**Mr. Reinken:** “the former the possession of more than sufficient means, both of them things that men desire. Since it is pleasant to do good, it must also be pleasant for men to set their neighbors on their feet, and to supply their deficiencies. And since learning and admiring are pleasant—”

**LS:** Now let us stop here for one moment. So well-doing, “doing well”<sup>45</sup> is pleasant not because by being that we come into our own (he does not say that)—not because of a natural sociability but because it is a sign of one’s possessing some good and of one’s superiority. That sounds rather Hobbean, doesn’t it? In Cope’s commentary to the passage I read: “Aristotle, neither here nor elsewhere, takes any account of the benevolent affections as elements of human nature.”<sup>xvii</sup> This goes perhaps too far, but there is some element of truth in it. I would say as follows: philanthropy, loving human beings as such, is not a virtue in Aristotle. The Stoics speak of that, but Aristotle does not. So this we must keep in mind. But we will later on come to a passage which calls for a qualification of this statement. Yes? “Since learning is pleasant.”

<sup>xv</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* VII. 14, 1154b21-25.

<sup>xvi</sup> Strauss asks the reader to go on in the *Rhetoric* from the point previously reached prior to the *Ethics* citation.

<sup>xvii</sup> Edward Meredith Cope, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle, with a Commentary by the late Edward Meredith Cope*, ed. John Edwin Sandys (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1877), 1: 217.

**Mr. Reinken:** “all things connected with them must also be pleasant; for instance, a work of imitation, such as painting, sculpture, poetry and all that is well imitated, even if the object of imitation is not pleasant; for it is not this that causes pleasure or the reverse, but the inference that the imitation and the object imitated are identical, so that the result is that we learn something.”

**LS:** This seems to be very narrow and low, but is there not something to it, because Aristotle really thinks of all kinds of men? Have you ever been sitting with something else and looking at photographs, a collection of photos, and looking at all kinds of people, nice or un-nice people, but<sup>46</sup> the experience itself is pleasant. Yes. I think Aristotle means nothing higher than that. And of course this is pleasure from imitation on the lowest level surely, but this is not completely irrelevant for understanding the pleasure from imitation on the higher levels.

**Mr. Reinken:** How about a novel about life in the slums? It can be a great pleasure to read, but it's a great bore to live.

**LS:** Ja, for sure, but one doesn't even have to go so high. The very simple thing, especially if it takes you a minute to recognize—“Oh that's him”—then you learn in a way something. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**

The same may be said of sudden changes and narrow escapes from danger; for all these things excite wonder. And since that which is in accordance with nature is pleasant, and things which are akin are akin in accordance with nature, all things akin and like are for the most part pleasant to each other, as man to man, horse to horse, youth to youth. This is the origin of the proverbs:

“The old have charms for the old, the young for the young,  
Like to like,  
Beast knows beast,  
Birds of a feather flock together,”  
and all similar sayings.

**LS:** You see here Aristotle says, “man is pleasant to man.” So there *is* something here recognized by Aristotle. There is a bond uniting all men. Why does he not put a greater stress on that than he does here? Why doesn't he, as Cope puts it, take any account of the benevolent affections of human nature? Why doesn't he do that?

**Student:** Because men are very different. A man likes another man similar to him more than he likes justice.

**LS:** In other words, the variety within the human race is so terrific that this common thing, that man likes man, is more than balanced by the other. Surely. And also of course there are other things. There are so many divisive things which set man against man that this is balanced, but it is there. Aristotle does not deny that.

**Student:** If doing kindnesses is done because of the pleasure one gets from superiority—if it's selfish, why is it noble?

**LS:** From another point of view, because if a man forgets himself, his own interests, that's noble. I spoke of this before. Someone is a benefactor and this can be looked upon from two points of view: he neglects his own interests in favor of the others. And when you look at this you say, that is a noble character, not calculating, not petty. [But] if you look from the point of view that he gets some benefit out of it<sup>47</sup> for what they now call his ego (have you ever heard that word?) then it doesn't look so nice. It looks also, in a subtle way, petty. And it is in a given case impossible to decide for another, a spectator, what is the case. The solution which Aristotle proposes is to deny that beneficence as beneficence is virtue. It is an ambiguous phenomenon. The character of virtue consists in something else. Now we come to another point, which has very much to do with the question you raised.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And since things which are akin and like are always pleasant to one another, and every man in the highest degree feels this in regard to himself, it must needs be that all men are more or less selfish—”

**LS:** Literally, “self-loving.” But the word *philautos*, “self-loving”, did have in Greek a bad meaning, so that one may translate it by “selfish.”<sup>48</sup> Aristotle, in a passage in the *Ethics*,<sub>2</sub> says that it is wrong that we condemn self-lovingness altogether, only if it goes beyond this.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for it is in himself above all that such conditions are to be found. Since, then, all men are self-loving<sup>xviii</sup>, it follows that all find pleasure in what is their own, such as their works and words. That is why men as a rule are fond of those who flatter and love them, of honour, and of children; for the last are their own work. It is also pleasant to supply what is wanting, for then it becomes our work.”

**LS:** Do you see that? The other one has done the thing but then the next one makes corrections, completes it. But through this completion it becomes really what was intended. And that not only happens in merit of the whole; he also sets up his little completing thing against the thing which the other man has done and shows in this way his superiority.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And since it is most pleasant to command, it is also pleasant to be regarded as wise; for practical wisdom is commanding, and philosophy consists in the knowledge of many things that excite wonder.”

**LS:** You see, that is the other reference to wisdom in contradiction to practical wisdom. And what Aristotle indicates here is this: ruling is most pleasant, superiority. Now in order to be a ruler you must have practical wisdom, practical intelligence, but from the ordinary point of view, the only wisdom known in the marketplace is practical wisdom. Therefore the men who seem to be men of practical wisdom are regarded as wise. And to be regarded as wise is pleasant.

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<sup>xviii</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “self-loving” what is rendered as “selfish” in the Freese translation.

Wisdom itself is here distinguished<sup>49</sup> [by Aristotle from practical wisdom]. It is here popularly defined. The knowledge of many marvelous things, many things of which no one [has] ever<sup>50</sup> heard and need not know of—say, certain manuscripts in an Italian convent or some behavior of some small animals which no one has ever seen because you might need a very special microscope which is not always available and so on. That's wisdom: crude knowledge. It's of course not the Aristotelian notion of wisdom, but it is important that we know<sup>51</sup> what wisdom ordinarily means. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**

Further, since men are generally ambitious, it follows that it is also agreeable to find fault with our neighbors. And if a man thinks he excels in anything, he likes to devote his time to it; as Euripides says:

“And allotting the best part of each day to that in which he happens to surpass himself, he presses eagerly towards it.”

Similarly, since amusement—

**LS:** The last example,<sup>52</sup> from the verses, shows why not all men desire to blame their neighbors and why not all men desire to rule, because there can also be a form of ambition not to do something where we necessarily become ridiculous. Stick to your own thing, the field where you are competent. We can read the end.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Similarly, since amusement, every kind of relaxation, and laughter are pleasant, ridiculous things—men, words, or deeds—must also be pleasant. The ridiculous has been discussed separately in the *Poetics*.”

**LS:** Unfortunately, that has not been preserved. That would be very interesting to see what Aristotle has to say about the ridiculous.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let this suffice for things that are pleasant; those that are painful will be obvious from the contraries of these.”<sup>xix</sup>

**LS:** So, now we know what? Now we know the reasons why people commit unjust acts: for the sake of the pleasant and the profitable. And we have been given an analysis of the profitable in chapter 6, if I remember well, and of the pleasant here in chapter 11. And now we come to the more detailed discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “I have nothing—.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “than.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “And that is—.”

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<sup>xix</sup> *Rhetoric*, I. 11. 21-29, 1371a31-1372a3.

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<sup>4</sup> Deleted "You know."

<sup>5</sup> Moved "is this." Inverted order to "[this is]."

<sup>6</sup> Deleted "Because he."

<sup>7</sup> Deleted "is not."

<sup>8</sup> Deleted "discussion, the."

<sup>9</sup> Deleted "Epideictic rhetoric has to do—."

<sup>10</sup> Deleted "which is I think Chapter 3, yes"; deleted "the end of that chapter."

<sup>11</sup> Deleted "there."

<sup>12</sup> Deleted ", at the end of that chapter."

<sup>13</sup> Deleted "this."

<sup>14</sup> Deleted "the parallel."

<sup>15</sup> Deleted "implied, that is."

<sup>16</sup> Deleted "I mean in other words."

<sup>17</sup> Deleted "they."

<sup>18</sup> Deleted "and."

<sup>19</sup> Deleted "I mean the"; "we can say, I mean"; moved "utilitarian doctrine."

<sup>20</sup> Deleted "of."

<sup>21</sup> Deleted "Before he—."

<sup>22</sup> Deleted "that is.."

<sup>23</sup> Deleted "in what state of mind—."

<sup>24</sup> Deleted "not—."

<sup>25</sup> Deleted "And."

<sup>26</sup> Deleted "could not—."

<sup>27</sup> Deleted "—as."

<sup>28</sup> Deleted "of it."

<sup>29</sup> Deleted "For example, if someone,"

<sup>30</sup> Deleted "of."

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<sup>31</sup> Moved “also.”

<sup>32</sup> Deleted “it.”

<sup>33</sup> Deleted “does not link up here—.”

<sup>34</sup> Deleted “, after the quotation.”

<sup>35</sup> Deleted “violence which is imposed on us”; moved “against our nature.”

<sup>36</sup> Moved “derived.”

<sup>37</sup> Deleted “they become habitual—.”

<sup>38</sup> Deleted “But.”

<sup>39</sup> Deleted “for keeping.”

<sup>40</sup> Deleted “a reputation with a few—.”

<sup>41</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>42</sup> Deleted ““And to be loved—” Sorry.”

<sup>43</sup> Deleted “Mr. Reinken: “It is pleasant to bestow and to receive—” / LS.”

<sup>44</sup> Deleted “without any consideration—.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “is good—.”

<sup>46</sup> Deleted “the experiment itself—.”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “for his.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “only.”

<sup>49</sup> Changed from “from Aristotle, is not practical wisdom.”

<sup>50</sup> Moved “has.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “shows.”

**Session 6: April 15, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** I have here a competitor—that is what I was told, that someone would like to have Cope's commentary on the *Rhetoric*. I have been asked to return the volumes. I refuse to do so because I believe I have a greater right, being the teacher. Is the competitor here in class? I see we can perhaps make an arrangement while you prepare your paper.

You tried very reasonably to look for an order in the Aristotelian enumerations, and this is very good although, as you say, you did not very well succeed. But one should do this by all means. One thing I have not understood. Why did you link up the equitable man with the magnanimous man?

**Mr. Hartman:** Well, in the discussion of equity, Aristotle talks of the man who acts equitably and shows what sort of attitude he'd take towards various kinds of offenses against him. And it seems to be natural to ask whether the equitable man is the same as the just man. And it seemed to me that you would have to then go on and say that that's not adequate, so that—

**LS:** But the just man, as Aristotle describes him in the *Ethics*, is one who is willing to forgo quite a few things to which he is entitled. Does this go beyond what he says here?

**Mr. Hartman:** Perhaps not. The notion that the equitable man can forget harm done—

**LS:** Yes, but when you read the chapter on magnanimity in the *Ethics*, you see that this is not quite true. There are certain things the magnanimous man does not forget. The magnanimous man is the man who is concerned with high honor . . . and the point of view of equity is entirely different. The equitable man is a man who is concerned more with the intention of the legislator than with the letter of the law—a different consideration. But we may take it up later. And then there was another point which struck me: what you said about tyrannicide being a conflict between the just and the noble, and you gave also another example which I have now forgot[ten]. But does Aristotle speak about a conflict between the just and the noble? No. But why do you see a conflict there?

**Mr. Hartman:** Because it could be argued that the same act is noble, as tyrannicide may be noble, but at the same time<sup>1</sup> against the law, therefore unjust . . . .

**LS:** I see. But the question is: If you take the Aristotelian definition of tyranny, that it is a lawless regime, then it cannot be against the law.

**Mr. Hartman:** The other one was the man who<sup>2</sup> [avenges] his mother and father. Common opinion might hold that this is a noble act, although this might be a low understanding of the noble, and this would therefore conflict with, be against the law.

**LS:** Well, I believe the question of tyranny and tyrannicide is somehow present there, but let us see when we come to it. Good. And now let us then turn to chapter 12 and begin at the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Such are the motives of injustice; let us now state the frame of mind of those who commit it, and who are the sufferers from it.”

**LS:** So, let us see what the subject is. What are the things for the sake of which people commit crimes? What he has discussed before? What are these things?

**Student:** Pleasure and profit.

**LS:** Pleasure and profit. So we know that. And now he speaks of the state of mind of the wrongdoers and of the victims. Good. Now first, the state of mind of the wrongdoers.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Men do wrong when they think that it can be done and that it can be done by them; when they think that their action will either be undiscovered, or if discovered will remain unpunished; or if it is punished, that the punishment will be less than the profit to themselves or to those for whom they care.”

**LS:** Is this intelligible? This issue, I believe, is very well known to everyone from daily practice. I mean detective stories . . . motive and opportunity. Motives were discussed before, but Aristotle is somewhat more subtle in dividing up the opportunity. It must be possible and, in addition, they must be reasonably certain of not being discovered, this is another consideration. The opportunity means the opportunity of doing it secretly; otherwise there is no opportunity. Everyone has the opportunity to kill anyone in this class, but this is not what we mean when we speak of that. This, by the way, is the principle of the order here, at least in the first part of the chapter. And the other point is also clear. I mean, we have heard of people who commit acts of robbery and embezzlement, and while they are by no means sure that they will not be discovered, they can nevertheless bury their booty and it will be at their disposal after they come out from jail<sup>3</sup>. This is the third kind: so that the reward will be higher than the punishment. This is a very simple case. No go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “As for the kind of things which seem possible or impossible, we will discuss them later, for these topics are common to all kinds of rhetoric.”

**LS:** Meaning what is possible or impossible in general, for human beings in general. But that does not mean of course that it is possible for<sup>4</sup> [*him*], for this particular man's circumstances. About that he speaks now.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Now men who commit wrong think they are most likely to be able to do so with impunity, if they are eloquent, business-like, experienced in judicial trials, if they have many friends, and if they are wealthy. They think there is the greatest chance of their being able to do so if they themselves belong to the above classes; if not, if they have friends, servants, or accomplices who do; for thanks to these qualities they are able to commit wrong and to escape discovery and punishment.

**LS:** And to escape punishment. There are three considerations: they are capable of doing it, capable of hiding it, and capable of avoiding punishment.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Similarly, if they are friends of those who are being wronged, or of the judges; for friends are not on their guard against being wronged and, besides, they prefer reconciliation to taking proceedings; and judges favour those whom they are fond of, and either let them off altogether or inflict a small penalty.”

**LS:** I trust that there is no difficulty whatever in understanding this on the basis of ordinary reading of newspapers.

**Student:** Mr. Strauss, this discussion is limited solely to acts of calculation, whereas in chapter 10, he discussed seven causes of action. Reason, deliberate calculation, was only one of the seven—

**LS:** To some extent you are right. He speaks of wrongdoing. Now, wrongdoing strictly speaking is of course intentional wrongdoing. <sup>5</sup>Someone may be accused of a crime, which is not a crime—we will come to that later—but this is not strictly speaking wrongdoing. Now he takes it literally. And now he comes to the second place. He has spoken of those who are *capable* of committing a crime. But since the expectation of remaining undiscovered is important, he must speak of the things which enable a man to expect that he will remain undiscovered when he commits a crime. That comes now.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Those are likely to remain undetected whose qualities are out of keeping with the charges, for instance, if a man wanting in physical strength were accused of assault and battery, or a poor and an ugly man of adultery.”

**LS:** No comment needed. Good. Again?

**Mr. Reinken:**

Also, if the acts are done quite openly and in the sight of all; for they are not guarded against, because no one would think them possible. Also, if they are so great and of such a nature that no one would even be likely to attempt them, for these also are not guarded against; for all guard against ordinary ailments and wrongs, but no one takes precautions against those ailments from which no one has ever yet suffered. And those who have either no enemy at all or many; the former hope to escape notice because they are not watched, the latter do escape because they would not be thought likely to attack those who are on their guard and because they can defend themselves by the plea that they would never have attempted it. And those who have ways or places of concealment for stolen property, or abundant opportunities of disposing of it.

**LS:** Is there anything missing, or does he cover all the cases? I didn't find anything missing, but I have no great experience in this region.

**Mr. Reinken:** I thought the predicate of all these people was that they were likely to remain undetected?

**LS:** Yes. Later on—

**Mr. Reinken:** How would one find, in broad daylight, a means of concealment?

**LS:** Well, this is a very interesting case. There would be witnesses. I mean,<sup>6</sup> if you would shoot anyone in class or commit assault and battery, then you would not remain undetected. It's impractical to do it and you would surely be condemned unless you can bring, say, a psychiatrist and he can prove that you were under an unbearable stress because of the subject we are discussing [laughter], and therefore [you] committed a crime. That can be done. Or you are able to bribe the judges of course, the third possibility. Or, say, someone says: "I will take care of you for the rest of your days. You won't need a job." Say he will give you a trust fund of \$100,000 if you commit an act of assault and battery here against someone, maybe against your teacher. And then of course, you have the third. You are capable of doing it; you have the opportunity; you cannot remain undetected, but the reward<sup>7</sup> is greater than the punishment. So then you have the motive for doing it.

**Mr. Reinken:** Yes, that will explain motive, but I thought this paragraph was entirely concerned with the likelihood of remaining undetected?

**LS:** Up to this point.

**Mr. Reinken:** And the second item given was—the first sentence was reasonable, but the second one says "also." Is it also "likely to remain undetected . . . if the acts are done quite openly and in sight of all, for they are not guarded against"?

**LS:** No, I think, what he means is this: This is a good argument before a court. He cannot have committed it, because only a fool would do it. I believe he means that.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Or simply taking it out as if it were your bicycle. Yes, that could be. But I believe it is also the other point, that this is a good argument before a court. If you say, *who* would do that?

**Student:** Did you ask whether it wasn't possible . . . .

**LS:** Yes.

**Student:** Yes, I think there is one thing missing: crime done in a mob.

**LS:** Now let me see whether this is not covered here. Here he says, the last point: what is the possibility of concealment either by the manner in which they act or by the places. The places—[for example],<sup>8</sup> a good place to commit this particular crime; <sup>9</sup>the places he speaks of do not merely mean places where you can hide your booty, but it means also the place where you commit the crime.

**Student:** Well, the sentence says only the places where you conceal the stolen property.

**LS:** No, no. That is another—let me see. No, no, that is not that—where concealment is possible, concealment of the act. And I believe the last point, where the disposal is easy, that refers to fences and this kind of thing.

**Student:** Would you read the sentence, because our translation isn't very clear.

**LS:** “and for all those men who have at their disposal concealment either by their manners, circumstances, or by the places [namely, where they commit the crimes].”<sup>i</sup> Now the next point which he makes is where there is no secrecy possible, but no punishment to speak of. Let us read only the beginning of that, where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And those who, even if they do not remain undetected, can get the trial set aside or put off, or corrupt the judges.”

**LS:** Obviously, that is clear. They get off scot-free nevertheless, as though they had never been found out. In every newspaper, every day, you will find examples of this.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And those who, if a fine be imposed, can get payment in full set aside or put off for a long time, or those who, owing to poverty, have nothing to lose. And in cases where the profit is certain, large, or immediate, while the punishment is small, uncertain, or remote. And where there can be no punishment equal to the advantages, as seems to be the case in a tyranny.”<sup>ii</sup>

**LS:** Is it clear, the last example? The greatest crime you can commit is to become the tyrant. That is the only crime which is by definition<sup>10</sup> unpunishable. So therefore, someone who succeeds in that<sup>11</sup> is uncovered by the act of the crime, and at the same time escapes the possibility of punishment. So it's at the peak, you know [laughter]. Yes?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes, now there is a certain difficulty. I forgot now the details—these summaries printed in his works are not all of them by him. This was found out somewhere, I don't have the references here, but some Englishman found that out. *One* is by him, but I couldn't tell you which now. You would have to go into it. If you give me a ring at home where I have my copy I can give you the reference, if you're interested in this. Good.

Now we do not have to read everything. There is one case which is especially interesting. He goes on then and speaks without any clear order, at least any order which I could detect, of other people who are apt to commit crimes. Then he says [in line 11]: “For those for which the pleasure is immediate,<sup>12</sup> and the pain afterwards, or the gain immediate and the fine or punishment afterwards; for the intemperate are such people.”<sup>iii</sup> In other words, the temptation is too great at the moment and therefore they have not the capacity to resist this. Do you have that? Go on, read a few more lines.

<sup>i</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation. 1372a33-34.

<sup>ii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 12. 1-9, 1372a4-b2.

<sup>iii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 12. 12, 1372b11-13. Apparently Strauss's translation.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And when, on the contrary, the pain or the loss is immediate, while the pleasure and the profit are later and more lasting; for temperate and wiser men pursue such aims.”<sup>iv</sup>

**LS:** What does this mean? The temperate and wiser, or practically wiser. He does not say the practically wise—the practically wise would of course not commit crimes—but wiser than these intemperate people who cannot control themselves. Is this intelligible? For example (this is an example which I read somewhere), committing a crime in order to go to jail as an ordinary criminal in order to escape execution for a political trial. Even a practically wise man could do that, if this is the only way. I read it somewhere in one of these magnificent stories; it might have happened. Now let us then turn to the next section, b23, where he speaks of<sup>13</sup> [the] kind of people who are likely to suffer in that case. Now<sup>14</sup> the rest of the chapter is devoted to this subject. Let us read only a few specimens in 1373a27.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Men are ready to commit wrongs which all or many are in the habit of committing, for they hope to be pardoned for their offences.”

**LS:** Prohibition would be an example of this.

**Mr. Reinken:** “They steal objects that are easy to conceal; such are things that are quickly consumed, as eatables; things which can easily be changed in form or colour or composition; things for which there are many convenient hiding-places, such as those that are easy to carry or stow away in a corner; those of which—”

**LS:** You see how<sup>15</sup> informed<sup>16</sup> [Aristotle] was about this art of stealing. He had taken the trouble—but it is possible that some of the Sophists had readied such a collection [laughter].

**Mr. Reinken:** “those of which a thief already possesses a considerable number exactly similar or hard to distinguish.”

**LS:** That’s important, you see. If you have chickens already, say 517 of them, if you steal fifty more it would be practically undetectable unless the owner has branded them in one way or another. So it’s a very important activity, or I hope rather for our detecting such people, if we ever have the duty to do so. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Or they commit wrongs which the victims are ashamed to disclose, such as outrages upon the women of their family, upon themselves, or upon their children.”

**LS:** Surely, he means in all three cases sexual outrages.

**Student:** Why?

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<sup>iv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 12. 13, 1372b13-16.

**LS:** Well, it is somewhat indelicate, but have you ever heard that there are these—homosexuality? This would be possible. Again, we would have to assume that the victim would not be an old and ugly man, because that would be again utterly incredible.

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>17</sup> “And all those wrongs in regard to which appeal to the law would create the appearance of litigiousness; such are wrongs which are unimportant or venial. These are nearly all the dispositions which induce men to commit wrong, the nature and motive of the wrongs, and the kind of persons who are the victims of wrong.”<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** So<sup>18</sup> the discussion of<sup>19</sup> [these two subjects] is now finished. We come now in the next chapter to a subject of much greater importance. But Mr. . . ., did you have any observations in your paper which we have not considered now, on this chapter?

**Student:** I'd just like to ask about the case in the first section, at 1372b6 or 5, where the unjust act can be to our credit. Doesn't it seem that the unjust act is noble, honorable?

**LS:** Chapter 12?

**Mr. Reinken:** 1372b6, just before mentioning Zeno.

**LS:** Read this now.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And when the unjust acts are the real gains and the only punishment is disgrace; and when—”

**LS:** . . . .

**Mr. Reinken:** “on the contrary, the unjust acts tend to our credit, for instance, if one avenges father or mother, as was the case with Zeno, while the punishment only involves loss of money, exile, or something of the kind.”<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** Are there not people who are more prompted by praise, or avoidance of disgrace, than by money? Loss of money? The opposite case as well. You know some people are prompted by crime because the punishment is only disgrace. And what they get for their crime is monetary benefit. In other words, people who<sup>20</sup> wish to avoid both monetary loss and disgrace would not commit crime, but those who are concerned with only one of the two might commit crimes but of different kinds, of very different kinds. There would be people who are perfectly willing for the sake of what they regard as their honor to undergo all kinds of other punishments, say financial loss—since they are complementary, or supplementary to each another.

**Student:** So it's implied that there is something defective about this kind of honor?

**LS:** Yes sure, sure. Well, the ultimate question remains, which is here not even touched upon, and alluded to in the next chapter: What about unjust laws, and transgressing unjust laws? Is this

<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 12. 32-35, 1373a27-38.

<sup>vi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 12. 10, 1372b2-6.

an unjust act? That would be the question. But for all ordinary purposes the question doesn't have to be raised, because the question before a law court is *never* whether the law is just, but whether the individual has complied with the law or transgressed it. This belongs to some court of appeal, which may not exist in any society. Is this clear? But Aristotle is aware of the question as he shows in the next chapter where he takes up the question of the justice of the laws. Mr. Weiss?

**Mr. Weiss:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but if it's not—what is a frame of mind? How would you describe it?

**Mr. Weiss:** . . . disposition . . . .

**LS:** All right. What is a virtue or vice? I mean, the crudest thing one has to say about it. Well, let us even say it is a disposition of the mind, so both virtue and vice are dispositions of the mind, only one a good one and the other bad. And then there are some which are in a certain twilight zone. There is no difficulty. That Aristotle does not take virtue in the very strict sense in the *Rhetoric* we have seen last time. That is perfectly legitimate because he deals with rhetoric and not with the highest things.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** You know, there is this point that he discusses in the *Ethics*, in the Fifth Book, that a man who does wrong, commits a crime, is not necessarily a vicious man; and the man who does not commit legal crime is not necessarily a virtuous man.<sup>vii</sup>

**Student:** At the end of chapter 12, where he talks about the wrongs which the victims are ashamed to disclose, now doesn't that go contrary to what Machiavelli advises the prince? Namely, that the prince should never ravish the women of his subjects?<sup>viii</sup> And if it does, then what is the meaning of that passage?

**LS:** Oh, I mean there are<sup>21</sup> people—let us take the classic cases: Virginia and Lucretia. In this case, the men<sup>22</sup> are not ashamed to admit that the women were ravished. Why? Because they were ravished by a tyrant who misused his superabundant power. That is not any disgrace for anyone. But if it is done by another private man, that's a different situation. I mean, you must only think of the circumstances. It's a very different story. I know quite a few cases of women who met this kind of disgrace, you know, during the war, and this is something which is terrible, but which is not a matter of disgrace as it would be if it happened by another fellow citizen under ordinary circumstances in peacetime. That's a different story.

**Student:** Did I understand you to say that a habit is the same as a disposition?

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<sup>vii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* V. 13, 1137a5-25.

<sup>viii</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 17.

**LS:** No. There is a distinction. A disposition is much less ingrained as such than a habit is. But for these purposes, *diathesis*, the Greek word for “disposition,” is sometimes used by Aristotle synonymously with *hexis*, but when he speaks strictly, he distinguishes them.

**Same student:** Does he use the word *hexis* here?

**LS:** No. Not that I know of, but *diathesis* he uses, or the verbal form of that, which we translate by “disposition.” And by the way, it’s a quite good, almost literal, translation. Good. Now let us turn to this very important discussion at the beginning of chapter 13.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us now classify just and unjust actions generally, starting from what follows. Justice and injustice have been defined in reference to laws and persons in two ways. Now there are two kinds of laws, particular and general. By particular laws I mean those established by each people in reference to themselves, which again are divided into written and unwritten; by general laws I mean those based upon nature.”

**LS:** But let us be a bit more literal. He speaks of law in the singular: “I call law, the one particular, the other common; particular, one which each group [let us say] has defined in regard to themselves and this is subdivided into unwritten and written. And the common one is that according to nature.”<sup>ix</sup> Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In fact, there is a general idea of just and unjust in accordance with nature, as all men in a manner divine, even if there is neither communication nor agreement between them.”

**LS:** Why is this important even if there is no community or agreement among them?

**Student:** . . . John Dewey said that people have a common cultural . . .

**LS:**<sup>23</sup> Well, Aristotle—no, I think this is not very helpful, because Aristotle is much more straightforward and simple. If they have no connection among one another, they cannot possibly have agreed as to that particular thing. Therefore, it cannot have its origin in human agreement. It cannot be due to convention. That is what Aristotle means. So something which people have who have no connection or community whatever, and therefore it must be due to nature.

**Mr. Reinken:**

This is what Antigone in Sophocles evidently means, when she declares that it is just, though forbidden, to bury Polynices, as being naturally just:

“For neither today, nor yesterday, but from all eternity, these statutes live and no man knoweth whence they came.”

And as Empedocles says in regard to not killing that which has life, for this is not right for some and wrong for others,

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<sup>ix</sup> Strauss’s translation.

“But a universal precept, which extends without a break throughout the wide-ruling sky and the boundless earth.”

Alcidamas also speaks of this precept in his *Messeniacus*—<sup>x</sup>

**LS:** Now let us see—well, what does Alcidamas say in his *Messeniacus* speech?

**Mr. Reinken:** ““God has left all men free; Nature has made none a slave.””<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Now this is a discussion of natural right here, or natural law, in the *Rhetoric*. It will also be taken up<sup>24</sup> to some extent at the beginning of chapter 15 where Antigone is again quoted, but this will be taken up next time. Now what does this mean here? There is something by nature just, i.e., something just not by human agreement, not by human *position*, not positive law but natural? Aristotle calls it here “law,” not merely “just,” “the just.” He gives three examples. Now let us begin from the third. What is it? What is the assertion of Alcidamas regarding natural law?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Or, differently stated, slavery is always against natural right. Is this Aristotle’s view? What about the next example from the *Antigone*? That it is just to bury the brother, even against the prohibition of the positive law. We don’t know what Aristotle thinks about that.

**Student:** We know that Aristotle would say that the good man should go against the positive law.

**LS:** Ja, sure, but the question is—let us see here what the examples are.<sup>25</sup> What about Empedocles’ example? What does Aristotle think about the killing of animals?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Sure. So at least two of the three examples are not good examples of natural law from Aristotle’s point of view. That’s very strange. And the case of Antigone we must leave open because it is nowhere discussed.<sup>26</sup> I suppose from Aristotle’s point of view the duty to bury is surely ordinarily a duty, but not something overriding. Think of the end of the *Phaedo* where Socrates speaks about burying. That is of no interest to Socrates, what happens to his corpse.<sup>27</sup> In other words, whether it could not be lawfully declared that a traitor may not be buried, there is no statement of Aristotle denying that.

<sup>x</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 13. 1-2, 1373b1-17.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 13. 2. In the Freese translation, this line from Alcidamas is included in the following footnote to line 1373b17 in the text: “Of Elis, pupil of Gorgias. The oration is not extant, but the scholiast supplies his words: *eleuthērous aphēke pantas theos oudēna doulon hē physis pepoiēken* (“God has left all men free; Nature has made none a slave”). The Messenians had revolted from Sparta” (pp. 140-141). In Ross’s edition of the Greek, the same lines of Alcidamas are included as a variant within the main text of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotelis, *Ars Rhetorica*, ed. W.D. Ross Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 58 (1373b17-18a).

Two of the three examples certainly run counter to Aristotle's view of what is right. That's very strange. One cannot establish from this more than that Aristotle somehow admitted natural right, but he doesn't give us any inkling of any provisions of the natural law. One could of course say this: that while the last two examples contradict Aristotle's view, by the very fact that they contradict it, they confirm the assertion that there is natural right—namely that there is a natural right to enslave people who are by nature slaves, that there is a natural right to eat animals. This right is not a positive right, a right established by the human legislators. Man is so much superior to the beasts that<sup>28</sup> there is no question<sup>29</sup> [that he may] justly<sup>30</sup> [eat] animals fit for human consumption. So, in other words, this cuts both ways. Averroës discusses that by a misunderstanding in this case, unless the Latin translation mistranslates him, and says that the prohibition against eating animals is a positive law.<sup>xii</sup> He didn't mean in Islam, or in Greece, but among vegetarian nations. So it would under no circumstances be a natural prohibition.

**Student:** . . . he says that there is natural right, although men do not always agree on exactly what it is.

**LS:** Where does he say that? He only says all men divine that there is such a thing, something just by nature common to all men even if there is no community among them, so that agreement might derive, or their divining it might derive, from their culture, as someone said. It comes from human nature. That was all divined. Now in order to clarify this point, one would have to turn to Aristotle's discussion of this subject, which is of course not here; he merely refers to it. And that is in the Fifth Book of the *Ethics*, 1134b18 to 1135a5. I brought my translation with me, which we might be able to read, because that is really a very important subject. I have studied it *n* times; I have re-read it again. In the Fifth Book, 1134b18ff.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Political justice is of two kinds, one natural, the other conventional.”

**LS:** Now “political justice” means here the right which obtains among fellow citizens, as distinguished from members of the family, or people who are not fellow citizens. And this doesn't mean that there is no natural right among people who are not fellow citizens. It means only that<sup>31</sup> natural right in the fullest sense obtains only among fellow citizens. There is much more of rights and duties among fellow citizens than among any other people. Good. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “A rule of justice is natural that has the same validity everywhere—”

**LS:** Well, “rule,” Aristotle of course doesn't speak of “rule”; he says, “natural is that right which has everywhere the same power.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “and does not depend on our accepting it or not. Conventional [is that right] that in the first instance may be settled in one way or the other indifferently, though having once been settled it is not indifferent—”

**LS:** The simplest example is of course right or left driving. It does not make itself any difference, but once it is settled, you have to drive right or left, whatever the law says. Aristotle gives a somewhat different example.

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<sup>xii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.13.2.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for example, that the ransom for a prisoner shall be a mina, that the sacrifice shall consist of a goat and not of two sheep; and any regulations enacted for particular cases, for instance the sacrifice in honour of Brasidas, and ordinances in the nature of special decrees.”

**LS:** So the latter things are all merely positive. That is clear.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Some people think that all rules of justice—”

**LS:** “All just things”—

**Mr. Reinken:** “all just things<sup>xiii</sup> are merely conventional, because whereas a law of nature is immutable—”

**LS:** There is no “law of nature.” “Whereas that by nature,” meaning “the right by nature.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “is immutable and has the same validity everywhere, as fire burns both here and in Persia, rules of justice are seen to vary. That rules of justice vary is not absolutely true, but only with qualifications. Among the gods indeed it is perhaps not true at all—”

**LS:** In other words, “perhaps,” meaning if there is anything which could be called right among the gods, which Aristotle denies elsewhere, then there it would be unchangeable.

**Mr. Reinken:** “but in our world, although there is such a thing as natural right<sup>xiv</sup>, all just things are variable. But nevertheless there is such a thing as natural right as well as justice not ordained by nature; and it is easy to see which rules of justice, though not absolute, are natural, and which are not natural but legal and conventional, both sorts alike being variable.”<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** Is it easy to see? Give a single example. Aristotle gave some examples. For example, let us take the case, to sacrifice a goat but not two sheep, that's positive. But what is a natural example?

**Student:** To sacrifice.

**LS:** To sacrifice. And to ransom for one mina: positive. What is natural?

**Student:** To ransom.

**LS:** Perhaps, even more generally, to help fellow citizens who have suffered hardships by public service.

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<sup>xiii</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader retranslates as “all just things” what is rendered as “all rules of justice” in the Rackham translation.

<sup>xiv</sup> The reader retranslates as “natural right” what is rendered as “Natural Justice” in Rackham's translation. This applies to subsequent occurrences of “natural right” in this passage.

<sup>xv</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* V. 7, 1134b18-38.

**Student:** I think, from those examples, that the one of the reasons you could make an argument that Aristotle really does not give a natural right teaching in the *Rhetoric*—the examples in the *Ethics* suggest that natural right is political, i.e., that it is something that the polis, the community does by nature, whereas the examples in the *Rhetoric* seem to be objections, good forensic, good rhetorical arguments—

**LS:** If this was the case, then they would be of no relevance regarding Aristotle's own teaching. They would be only things that are popularly assumed, to which the forensic orator therefore will appeal, but the *Ethics* surely is not a rhetorical book. Let us first see what we get out of the *Ethics*.

**Student:** I have a question which has been bothering me a little bit, and it's sort of general, but it's specific in this case. That is this—

**LS:** No, why, it cannot be something general and become specific by the proper definition. I say this in your defense [laughter]—

**Same Student:** If these are not true examples of Aristotle, what Aristotle really thinks is natural right, then he seems to be going against something which I've read elsewhere, I don't remember where in Aristotle, which is that a teacher shouldn't teach anything that is false.

**LS:** Yes, but here he teaches rhetoric. In this particular case, he teaches what is the way of arguing before a law court. And then considerations come in which Aristotle would not necessarily regard as valid theoretically. After all, then you can say Aristotle shouldn't<sup>32</sup> even [have] made this remark about how to steal cleverly by having already 350 chickens before so that if you steal fifty more they cannot be discovered, which is also something which he shouldn't say.

**Same Student:** Well, that's what I mean. It's very general. It brings up the whole question, how can he teach rhetoric, because he's necessarily teaching something which is not is—

**LS:** Aristotle was, I believe, fully aware of that and therefore he wrote this long justification in chapter 1, which we have read, why a decent teacher can teach rhetoric in spite of . . . . He must do it in order to counteract the criminals. You see, this is an eternal verity which is made clear by Plato in the *Republic*, in the First Book, that the art of the thief and the art of the detective are identical. What the criminal has to know and what the detective has to know is the same; only, the detective has a different moral intention from the criminal. But the knowledge is the same.

Take any other example. If a general discusses the defense of the country (and he may write a book about it; in our age he would definitely write a book, think of de Gaulle),<sup>xvi</sup> he teaches, of course, the enemy how to conquer his own country. De Gaulle did this in fact, you know, by his famous teaching about what the Germans called then the Blitz war. He taught the Germans, who

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<sup>xvi</sup> Strauss must refer principally to de Gaulle's *Vers l'Armée de Métier* (*The Army of the Future*), which argues in favor of mobile armored forces as against traditional infantry (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1934). Translated as *The Army of the Future* (London & Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1940). Another relevant inter-war book of de Gaulle is *La France et son l'Armée* (Paris: Plon, 1938).

were more given to innovation at that time than the French military authorities were, how to conquer France. That cannot be helped. There are things which are by their nature ambiguous. Then one must not become a soldier in the first place—and of course one could say still less write books about it. But this cannot be helped. I mean de Gaulle surely was a very patriotic Frenchman in writing that book. No one has ever questioned that, but you see it is inevitable.

**Student:** Did he just read a sentence that said that it is easy to tell which laws are conventional and which are natural?

**LS:** Well, “laws” it doesn’t say—“which just things.” Yes, and he believes that anybody can figure it out on the basis of these few remarks. It is possible to reach some conclusions.<sup>33</sup> For example, sacrificing—or more generally, worshipping the gods—is natural, is practiced everywhere. But *how* to worship them, and to worship which gods, that’s positive.

**Student:** How about something like the act of a legislator setting up a democracy. Is he acting out a natural—

**LS:** That is another matter, because not everywhere are there democracies. It doesn’t have everywhere the same force.

May I be permitted to continue my brief summary of this statement in the *Ethics*? So there is, then, a distinction between natural and positive right, but even the natural right is *changeable*.<sup>34</sup> Both are equally changeable. Now this is a very paradoxical assertion and it is made without any qualification. Therefore Thomas Aquinas<sup>35</sup> interpretation, that only the principles are unchangeable and not the conclusions, which are changeable, is not what Aristotle says.<sup>xvii</sup> That is I think most interesting. Now<sup>36</sup> the possible interpretation on the basis of what follows—let us read where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The same distinction will hold good in all other matters; for instance, the right hand is naturally stronger than the left, yet it is possible for any man to make himself ambidextrous.”

**LS:** Now this is used as an example. We are<sup>37</sup>, most of us at least,<sup>38</sup> by nature right-handed, but we can become by training ambidextrous. Now it is hard to say, what is a man who has made himself, by his own efforts, ambidextrous? Is this better than to be only right-handed? Let us assume for one moment it is better to be ambidextrous. Then it would mean in the context that positive right is an improvement of natural right. Not every positive right, but some are improvements. And as a consequence of this we find sometimes the view that positive law is an improvement by being a modification of natural law.

A simple example is this: in the later Roman statements we find<sup>39</sup> that natural right is what nature taught all animals. Now nature taught all animals to raise their offspring, that’s one of the examples given. What does Aristotle teach about raising of offspring? Not universal. The exposure of infants is regarded by Aristotle as just. Here you have a modification by human

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<sup>xvii</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, 1993 [1964]), Bk. V, para. 1028, 327.

reason of what all animals including man are by nature prompted to do, and therefore a change in that. Nevertheless Aristotle implies without any question that there is a natural standard for positive law. But where do we find that? Now let's go on, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** "The rules of justice based on convention and expediency are like standard measures. Corn and wine measures are not equal in all places, but are larger in wholesale and smaller in retail buying."

**LS:** In other words, positive law considers the individual circumstances and is therefore necessarily variable.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Similarly the rules of justice ordained not by nature but by man are not the same in all places, since forms of governments are not the same—"

**LS:** "Since not even the forms of government are the same." Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** "though in all places there is only one form of government that is natural, namely, the best form."<sup>xviii</sup>

**LS:** All right. "But there is a single regime alone which is everywhere the best by nature."<sup>xix</sup> Now what does he mean by that? Someone gave democracy as an example. Laws in a democracy differ from laws in an oligarchy and so on, because they are meant to support the democracy, and other laws are meant to support the oligarchy and so on. So laws depend on the regime. This is a key premise of Aristotle's teaching. And regimes vary from place to place, and also from time to time. So <sup>40</sup>is there a complete relativism? No, Aristotle says. There is one regime alone the best everywhere by nature [Strauss taps the table for emphasis].

So I believe that Aristotle's doctrine of natural right can roughly be stated as follows, but it needs a long argument to support that: there is a kind of flooring, [the] minimum requirements of society. For example, the worship of gods, [or] the example here, that citizens have to take responsibility for their fellow citizens who have fallen in misfortune by serving the city, this kind of thing. The two examples here . . . there are some minimum conditions, there is the flooring, but this flooring is variable in many ways because of the variety of circumstances.

On the other hand, there is a ceiling, and that's the best regime, by nature the best. But you cannot always have it. That it is everywhere the best doesn't mean that it's everywhere possible. Not at all, not even literally. From Aristotle's point of view, the best regime would not be possible in intemperate climates, where it's too hot or too cold. In itself, it deserves to be established everywhere but it's not feasible. So there is in fact a very great variety, a changeability, and you cannot indicate any particular thing which is simply valid, and yet there are clear indications by the minimum and by the maximum conditions. Yes.

**Student:** Is it reasonable to ask<sup>41</sup>: Since it's changeable, how can we come to know what it is? The final solution—you would know principles, or be in doubt—if something specific came up

<sup>xviii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* V. 7, 1134b38-1135a4.

<sup>xix</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation.

you would know that—<sup>xx</sup>if natural right is changeable, is it a fair question how is [it] to be known, since it differs from one time to another—

**LS:** Sure, but you must not forget that this is one implication of the Aristotelian teaching regarding practical wisdom, that the question of what is just here and now must be decided by the man on the spot here and now. That's clear. But he must have standards, as you say. Aristotle leaves no doubt about them, but the question is this. The standards are there; there is a hierarchy of ends from Aristotle's point of view, and which is by nature [and] not in any way due to human arbitrary decision. But this is not sufficient for deciding what is to be done here and now, and the principle can be stated as follows. In all actions there are two considerations: one is the rank and the other is the urgency. In a given case, the less high [consideration] may have to be preferred to the higher because of the urgency. A simple example: to undergo an operation is not something high, but it may be the most urgent thing in a given situation. To study Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is something much higher than to undergo an operation. But in a given situation you have to sacrifice the study of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to this unpleasant necessity.

You can say that the highest principles guiding deliberation are potentially in a certain tension, and therefore no universal rule is to be given. Now how far this would go into details, into any particular rule—[for example], what we call the Ten Commandments or so on—that Aristotle has never discussed. Aristotle makes the general statement that stealing, and committing adultery, and murder, and so forth are always bad. And there is no question about that for all practical purposes, but then there come the subtle cases.

<sup>42</sup>Take an example from modern times: espionage. I think very few people will have the heart to say that this is a sinful act. But whoever says espionage is necessary and that it is just admits at least the necessity of deception, the moral legitimacy of deception. There may well be cases which are presented to us in the famous literature about it in which this cannot be achieved without killing people. Well, if you say that killing in war is not murder—but this is not killing in war, it is killing in peacetime. And the line is very hard to draw there in a given case.

Adultery seems to be something very different. Why should this ever be defensible? Well, I thought of a case which is not practical in our age but which could well be practical in former ages. If the only alternative to civil war in a given situation, owing to the fact that the reigning king has no issue because of inability to generate—and if this disaster can be avoided by his wife being induced (because he would never do that)<sup>43</sup> by a wise counselor who thinks of the misery ([think of the] wars of York and Lancaster)<sup>xxi</sup> ruining a country for a century—well, I would not have the heart to condemn that wise counselor. And, believe me, I mean I have no evidence in Aristotle, but I think that's the only interpretation compatible with this unqualified statement that natural right is changeable. What you can do is this. You can begin to define, to draw a line between killing and murder, but then the definition has to become ever more complicated to meet all cases. And then you must still say: there may be a case of which I didn't think, in which I would have to change it. That is the point.

**Student:** Then you would say that it is a rule which has to be altered to meet the circumstances.

<sup>xx</sup> The first side of the original tape runs out, and there is a portion missing from the student's question.

<sup>xxi</sup> The Houses of York and Lancaster were the two opposing sides in the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487).

**LS:** <sup>44</sup>What Aristotle means by the best regime is the rule—[that] those men ought to rule who are by nature best for ruling by their justice and by their intelligence. And he probably would make this as a standard in a given case. You have a regime which is not formally based on this principle, say oligarchy or democracy, but it is clear that democracy will be better the more it provides within its limits for this possibility. The same would be true of an oligarchy. So you have standards from Aristotle's point of view, but you do not have inflexible standards. That is Aristotle's view. This is the best which has occurred to me hitherto.

**Student:** In a way Aristotle would admit that you cannot make rules for practical application when circumstances vary. If other just men were there, they could see that the solution arrived at was just. But you can't tell anybody how to find that position or provide rules to give someone a guide.

**LS:** Exactly. And if one would go beyond what Aristotle says here, one would say that this is the highest function of the historian especially, because in many cases the wisdom of such a risky decision is not in a wholly novel situation. But the duty of the historian would be to make this distinction between a deviation from what is ordinarily right, a deviation which is just, and a deviation which is not just. Yes, Mr. . . .

**Student:** Do I understand that your interpretation would mean something like this? Supposing that Aristotle had been alive at the time of Henry VIII, would he then have advised the Pope not to give Henry a divorce for the sake . . . mistress . . . the evil that was going to result from—

**LS:** I see, <sup>45</sup> perhaps that would be a possibility, yes [laughter]. It would be less grave than adultery—no, no, well, according to the biblical notions of course adultery is both ways, but not from the Greek point of view, [according to which] it depends on the woman rather than the man. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** . . . flooring of natural right . . . Ibn Khaldun . . . thought it was possible to have a society without religion. That would mean no sacrifice.

**LS:** This is surely not the Aristotelian point of view.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Now this is accepted by . . . .

**LS:** Well, then he deviated from Aristotle. Aristotle is perfectly clear. When he enumerates the ingredients of a polis, divine worship is always one. Well, if you take very crude things—for example, there is no society possible in which there is no protection of the lives of the members of the society and generally speaking of their property; even in communist societies there is some property. When you have gone to that store and bought a pair of shoes, that's your property. It can be stolen from you. And of course the honor of the family, of wives. [There are] what Machiavelli calls these crude things which people everywhere demand: security for life, property, and the honor of their womenfolk. These *are* this flooring of a regime.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Would these things then replace worship?

**LS:** No, from Aristotle's point of view, no; I mean, Ibn Khaldun—we have *the* expert on Ibn Khaldun here. Professor Mahdi,<sup>xxii</sup> would you agree with what Mr. Butterworth says about Ibn Khaldun?

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . .

**LS:** I'm not speaking now about what Aristotle says in the First Book of the *Metaphysics*, but divine worship practiced by the polis. Does Ibn Khaldun believe that a particular society is possible without divine worship?

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . .

**LS:** Oh, I see. But this doesn't settle the issue, because there may be some other worship not based on divine revelation.

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . political community is a formal community, you can see in Ibn . . . community is either . . . .

**LS:** I see. So at any rate, I believe we can safely say that the case of Aristotle is different from that of Ibn Khaldun. Even if Ibn Khaldun was to some extent an Aristotelian, it does not follow that he was Aristotelian in this point.

Now we have to go on in chapter 13. He makes<sup>46</sup> first a distinction. Well, this is simple to understand: a crime may be a crime against a fellow citizen and may be a crime against the city. Theft is a crime against the individual; and high treason, or desertion, is a crime against the city. This is clear. Now the considerations, then, which enter accusation-defense are two: First, injustices from damage done to someone else, and in order to know what a damage is, we have to know what evils are, which has been stated in an earlier chapter; and the second point is that a crime is an act committed voluntarily and knowingly, knowing not only the law—that goes without saying—but also the circumstances of the case.<sup>47</sup> It is obvious that if you cannot possibly know the circumstances of the case, you cannot commit a crime. If someone enters his bedroom in the night and finds a woman there and having no light [he takes] it for granted that it is his own wife [and] he has intercourse with her, he does not commit adultery. Aristotle in his *Ethics* makes this subtle distinction, but it's very subtle. He must repent it when having found the facts of the case [laughter], but this is obviously not something which can be brought up before a law court. But still, at any rate this would be a case where<sup>48</sup> ignorance—not of the law, but of the facts—is a perfect excuse. And above all it must be not only knowing, but intention. Let us turn to 1373b38, immediately before 1374a.

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<sup>xxii</sup> Muhsin Mahdi (1926-2007), scholar of medieval Arabic philosophy and philology; studied with Leo Strauss at the University of Chicago in the Committee on Social Thought (Ph.D., 1954). Professor at University of Chicago at the time of this seminar, and at Harvard from 1969 onwards. Author of *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1957), *Alfarabi and the Foundation of Islamic Political Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), Mahdi also edited manuscripts including works of Alfarabi.

**Mr. Reinken:**

But since a man, while admitting the fact, often denies the description of the charge or the point on which it turns—for instance, admits that he took something, but did not steal it; that he was the first to strike, but committed no outrage; that he had relations, but did not commit adultery, with a woman; or that he stole something but was not guilty of sacrilege, since the object in question was not consecrated; or that he trespassed, but not on public land; or that he held converse with the enemy, but was not guilty of treason—for this reason it will be necessary that a definition should be given of theft, outrage, or adultery, in order that, if we desire to prove that an offence has or has not been committed, we may be able to put the case in a true light.

**LS:** Now who gives the definition? Who gives the definition of these things?

**Student:** The prosecutor?

**LS:** You mean the legislator? Does he necessarily do that, especially in older law? No. But then simply the orator would have to supply a definition sufficient at least for the case at hand; and on the highest level of course he would have to have a perfectly sufficient definition of that.

**Student:** In the case of treason, it would have to be quite specific because he could be thinking of someone like Themistocles for instance, who would always make provisions with the enemy and with his own city. If Athens lost a war, he could always go to Persia because he gave the king certain information—

**LS:** Yes, but you must also see what the situation is. Say, Themistocles is before a law court, and then there are witnesses who have seen him talking to the Persians. He cannot possibly deny that. And therefore he will say, “Yes, I talked with them, but I did not commit treason,” and then let us see whether they have any evidence of treason.

**Same Student:** But it's even more subtle than that because he told them to come in and he gave them information and this information . . . their defeat—

**LS:** In other words, he deceived them.

**Same Student:** But this information could also have . . . for victory. It was a matter of fortune.

**LS:** These are then very difficult borderline actions<sup>49</sup> which will look to a law court under one set of conditions perfectly good, and under another set of conditions very bad. These are very risky things without any question. But the principle I believe is very clear and we do not have to dwell on that. Now let us go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:**

In all such instances the question at issue is to know whether the supposed offender is a wrongdoer and a worthless person, or not; for vice and wrongdoing consist in the moral purpose, and such terms as outrage and theft further indicate purpose; for if a man has struck, it does not in all cases follow that he has committed an outrage, but only if he has

struck with a certain object, for instance, to bring disrepute upon the other or to please himself. Again, if a man has taken something by stealth, it is by no means certain that he has committed theft, but only if he has taken it to injure another or to get something for himself. It is the same in all other cases as in these.<sup>xxiii</sup>

**LS:** So the decisive point is intention or purpose. Now purpose is also the key point in Aristotle's definition of virtue in the *Ethics*. But there is of course a great difference because the intention of the moral man, the virtuous man, or of the vicious man, is not quite the same as the purposes spoken of here. If it is true that a man may be virtuous and yet commit a crime, and a man may be vicious and never commit a crime, then purpose as considered by the legislator is not the same as purpose considered from a moral point of view. Of course they can easily switch into each other, but it is a much cruder notion which is presupposed in a legal context. The examples, I believe, are clear. Is there any difficulty? Someone may have taken something stealthily, for example, what belonged to him: that's not theft. Or he may have taken something stealthily at the request of the owner who didn't wish other people to see that this thing could happen easily. Therefore the closer descriptions. Yes, Mr. . . .

**Student:** Is it true that the purpose . . . the statement in chapter 1, that we can only talk about what is or is not . . . .

**LS:** I don't remember that statement.

**Same Student:** It's in the sixth paragraph of chapter 1, at the end of 1354a: "Further, it is evident that the only business of the litigant is to prove that the fact in question is or is not so, that it has happened or not—" <sup>xxiv</sup>

**LS:** Yes, but these are circumstances of the *fact*, that he took away stealthily what belonged to somebody else; and he took it away for his own benefit, in order to appropriate it. This belongs to the fact.

**Same Student:** But how would one prove from the circumstances of the facts about intention, that he talks with the enemy with the intention of betraying the city?

**LS:** Well, that is a grave question, how to prove this. But still, the intention is—how to find out, that may be complicated, but the question is whether it is a factual intention or not. The distinction between easily knowable facts and facts which can be known only with difficulty is still a distinction within the realm of facts.<sup>50</sup> Here, the other thing is the law. Ordinarily—with a qualification which Aristotle mentions later—one cannot question the law, of course. One cannot question the definition of, say, theft, which the legislator makes explicitly or implicitly, but he can only show that the defendant did not commit theft as defined by the legislator. Then he is free. There is no difficulty in that. But there are great ambiguities about facts. In every lawsuit this difficulty comes to sight.

**Same Student:** You still maintain that it's a question of fact, whether he did that or not?

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 13. 9-10, 1373b38-1374a17.

<sup>xxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 1. 6, 1354a26-28.

**LS:** Ja sure. But you must not identify the distinction between fact and law with the distinction between fact and value.

**Same Student:** This might be my problem.

**LS:** Ja, sure. If intention belongs to fact, and if certain kinds of intentions prove viciousness, then viciousness is a fact. "This is a vicious criminal": it is then a factual judgment. I read elsewhere a statement which illustrates this issue again. Somewhere someone said,<sup>51</sup> "There are no funny facts." There are no funny facts. I deny that. I know many funny facts. But it is of course a consequence of the fact-value distinction, because "funny" is a kind of value judgment, a negative value judgment. Yes. Now let us go on where we left off, 1374a18.

**Mr. Reinken:** "We have said that there are two kinds of just and unjust actions (for some are written, but others are unwritten)—"

**LS:** Not "actions." "Things" I would translate. Leave it quite loose.

**Mr. Reinken:** "and have spoken of those concerning which the laws are explicit; of those that are unwritten there are two kinds."

**LS:** You see, it cannot refer to unjust or just actions. There cannot be unwritten or written just actions. It must refer to things in general. Sometimes it is translated "rules of justice" or "principles of justice," but this is too hard and fast to speak of rules or principles.

**Mr. Reinken:** "One kind arises from an excess of virtue or vice, which is followed by praise or blame, honour or dishonour, and rewards; for instance, to be grateful to a benefactor, to render good for good, to help one's friend, and the like."

**LS:** Yes, well, where does this belong? It belongs to the unwritten law. But the unwritten law, does it also belong to the natural law, to the common law, as Aristotle calls it?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but still whether they obey it is an entirely different question. But whether they wouldn't admit that this is the right thing to do, to praise people who do these things and blame them for doing the opposite—I believe Aristotle would have no doubt about that. That would then be an example of what belongs to the common law. Not everything unwritten is common, but what is common is necessarily unwritten and only by accident also written. Is this clear? The positive law as such is written law, but the positive law may embody natural law. But the natural as natural law isn't written. Mr. Mahdi?

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . .

**LS:** I would say, not necessarily. If this international law is based on treaties or agreements, then it's positive. And if there are some rules or principles which are universally recognized by all

cities or political societies . . . that<sup>52</sup> would be natural.<sup>53</sup> What would be such a thing? It's very hard to say, given the difference between Greeks and barbarians, between civilized and uncivilized peoples. You could say the right to enslave natural slaves—and this means of course that you have to make some expeditions, some slavery expeditions—that this belongs to the sphere of international law and would be naturally right from Aristotle's point of view. I think that if we can speak at all of international law there, it would be law based on treaties, on agreements, and therefore surely not natural.

**Professor Mahdi:** Supposing that there could be such . . . there would then be also . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but natural and unwritten is not identical. There may be unwritten customs of course, which are not natural. I do not believe that the question of international law, law between cities, plays any role in Aristotle, nor for that matter in Plato.

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . the laws within the city as having to do with certain rules and that common law . . . .

**LS:** <sup>54</sup>I do not believe [that] is what Aristotle means. No. *Idios nomos*—literally translated, of course, “private law.” But it means private to this particular city, so it is better to translated by “particular.”

**Professor Mahdi:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes,<sup>55</sup> I remember that. I only mentioned the single point that Aristotle did not regard this Empedoclean natural right as truly natural.

So there is first an unwritten law<sup>56</sup> which concerns actions so noble [or so vicious], [in which there is] an excess of virtue and of vice, where no punishment proper or reward proper is given, but only praise on the one hand and disgrace on the other. <sup>57</sup>Let us take a simple case. Ingratitude is generally regarded as something very nasty, but it is obviously impossible to make it a criminal offense. Because at this very moment you can no longer be grateful, but you simply pay your debt and there's no longer a place for vice. And gratitude from this point of view is an excess of virtue, something which cannot be legally demanded, and therefore also ingratitude [is] an excess of vice. And an excess of vice doesn't mean that it is a particularly murderous action, but [that it is] something which is impossible to reach by law proper. This is the unwritten law. This is one kind of the unwritten law, and the other:

**Mr. Reinken:** “The other kind contains what is omitted in the special written law.”

**LS:** Yes, “in the particular law”; which implies already that the preceding thing refers to the common law, to the universal law, to the natural law. And this refers to the particular law. The particular written law has an essential defect and the correction of this essential defect of written law is equity. So equity is for Aristotle nothing but that. That's the locus of equity. Put more cautiously, that is the primary meaning of equity for Aristotle. Now why is equity necessary?

**Mr. Reinken:**

For that which is equitable seems to be just, and equity is justice that goes beyond the written law. These omissions are sometimes involuntary, sometimes voluntary, on the part of the legislators; involuntary when it may have escaped their notice, voluntary when, being unable to define for all cases, they are obliged to make a universal statement, which is not applicable to all, but only to most, cases; and whenever it is difficult to give a definition owing to the infinite number of cases, as, for instance, the size and kind of an iron instrument used in wounding; for life would not be long enough to reckon all the possibilities. If then no exact definition is possible, but legislation is necessary, one must have recourse to general terms; so that, if a man wearing a ring lifts up his hand to strike or actually strikes, according to the written law he is guilty of wrongdoing, but in reality he is not; and this is a case for equity.

**LS:** The case is of course clear, because he has hit a man with iron, but the iron was minimal and couldn't have had any serious effect. What could the legislator do? The legislator could perhaps say, "iron of a certain weight." But then the weight must be defined again, by the judges now;<sup>58</sup> [and] it becomes in this way then a matter of equity. Now the details which follow are quite interesting.

**Mr. Reinken:**

If then our definition of equity is correct, it is easy to see what things and persons are equitable or not. Actions which should be leniently treated are cases for equity; errors, wrong acts, and misfortunes must not be thought deserving of the same penalty. Misfortunes are all such things as are unexpected and not vicious; errors are not unexpected, but are not vicious; wrong acts are such as might be expected and vicious, for acts committed through desire arise from vice.<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** Through desire, I think that must be emphasized. What is the alternative to actions not coming from desire?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** No, no.<sup>59</sup> Anger. Anger does not prove viciousness or meanness. Desire would. That is the point. Anger can be an extenuating circumstance in many cases, desire cannot. There is the clearest and simplest case. If someone kills a man and he says, "yes, I killed him but I did it from anger": extenuating; but if he raped a woman and he says, "yes, I did it but I did it from desire": not an extenuating circumstance. And therefore this is the clearest example because the greatest crime stemming from desire is rape, and the greatest crime stemming from anger is killing a man. Yes. Good.

Now is there any other point in this section on equity which we should discuss, Mr. Hartman? Because you had a difficulty in the next chapter. Then we will turn to the beginning of chapter 14. The next chapter deals with weighing what is a greater or lesser crime, the consideration of more or less, whereas hitherto he spoke only of what is a crime and what is not a crime. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

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<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 13. 11-16, 1374a18-b10.

Wrong acts are greater in proportion to the injustice from which they spring. For this reason the most trifling are sometimes the greatest, as in the charge brought by Callistratus against Melanopus that he had fraudulently kept back three consecrated half-obols from the temple-builders; whereas, in the case of just actions, it is quite the contrary. The reason is that the greater potentially inheres in the less; for he who has stolen three consecrated half-obols will commit any wrong whatever.

**LS:** What was your difficulty?

**Student:** If I understand that correctly it means that even a small violation of the law may . . . .

**LS:** If a man is dishonest regarding trifling sums, where the temptation is so small, how dishonest will he be if the reward is Bobby Baker-like? That's one point. On the other hand, it is not true the other way around. If a man can be proved to be honest regarding trifling sums, that does not prove that he will be honest if he's confronted with millions. Does that not make sense?

**Another Student:** It's not only trifling, it's that—it's like stealing from a blind man, or something like that.

**LS:** Yes, yes. Averroës refers to that in his commentary. Despoiling a poor man is a greater crime than despoiling a rich one.<sup>xxvi</sup> And if he cannot abstain even in that case, what will he do in other cases? Sure. There is of course also the other point we would have to consider: that the rich man is likely to be more on his guard than the poor man, but morally it makes it of course worse.

**Same Student:** Better protected too by the law.

**LS:** At least as some people say. Good. Now we come a bit later. Go on. The other case—

**Mr. Reinken:** "Wrong acts are judged greater sometimes in this way, sometimes by the extent of the injury done."

**LS:** You see that is obviously a very different consideration from that [of] whether the injustice, the meanness, is greater. Now, also, the damage is greater, which has nothing to do with the meanness.

**Mr. Reinken:**

A wrong act is greater when there is no adequate punishment for it, but all are insufficient; when there is no remedy, because it is difficult if not impossible to repair it; and when the person injured cannot obtain legal satisfaction, since it is irremediable; for justice and punishment are kinds of remedies. And if the sufferer, having been wronged, has inflicted some terrible injury upon himself, the guilty person deserves greater punishment; wherefore Sophocles, when pleading on behalf of Euctemon, who had committed suicide after the outrage he had suffered, declared that he would not assess the punishment at less than the victim had assessed it for himself.

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.14.2.

**LS:** . . . <sup>60</sup>These are cases where the damage is greater and therefore the crime is greater. Then he gives some other cases. The first one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “A wrong act is also greater when it is unprecedented, or the first of its kind, or when committed with the aid of few accomplices—”

**LS:** Now why is the man who committed the crime first worse than the imitator?

**Student:** He sets a trend.

**LS:** Yes, yes. In other words, his inventiveness so to speak shows a particular—*unheard-of* things. It is greater because it is unheard-of. And what was your difficulty? You made a remark on this case.

**Student:** I just asserted that this and the ones following parallel almost exactly the marks of a noble action given—

**LS:** In other words, an unheard-of noble action is also greater than a heard-of one, other things being equal. Averroës gives here the example of Cain, the first murderer, because all other murderers imitate him.<sup>xxvii</sup> That is what you have in mind?

**Student:** This is probably a good practical example: after the great train robbery in England,<sup>xxviii</sup> I was told by a postal worker on railroad mail service in this country, that they were armed and<sup>61</sup> also given courses of instruction in how to use their arms. So there's a case where innovation set everyone to think about this.

**LS:** Now this of course does not necessarily mean that the punishment must be more severe, because a certain equality of punishments is generally assumed in civilized countries. But it is a very strong point in the speech of the accuser, of course, to say no one had ever thought of this particular refinement, of this viciousness. Now let us read a few more points. Go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and when it has been frequently committed; or when because of it new prohibitions and penalties have been sought and found: thus, at Argos the citizen owing to whom a new law has been passed, is punished, as well as those on whose account a new prison had to be built.”

**LS:** That might go a bit far, but it points in the right direction.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The crime is greater, the more brutal it is; or when it has been for a long time premeditated; when the recital of it inspires terror rather than pity. Rhetorical tricks—”

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<sup>xxvii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.14.6.

<sup>xxviii</sup> At the time, the Great Train Robbery (1963) was the largest theft in English history. Most of the £2.6 million stolen was never recovered.

**LS:** Hitherto he has discussed only how to find out whether a crime is greater or less. This is finished at this point. And now he goes over to another subject, namely what an orator can do in order to enhance or minimize a given crime. “Trick” is of course an addition of the translator. Literally it translates: “the rhetorical things.” You can add any substantive you want.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Rhetorical things<sup>xxix</sup> of the following kind may be used:—the statement that the accused person has swept away or violated several principles of justice, for example, oaths, pledges of friendship, plighted word, the sanctity of marriage; for this amounts to heaping crime upon crime.”

**LS:** In other words, the accumulation of these crimes will be very impressive on the jury.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Wrong acts are greater when committed in the very place where wrongdoers themselves are sentenced, as is done by false witnesses; for where would a man not commit wrong, if he does so in a court of justice?”

**LS:** Do you get the point? There is a rhetorical element in it.

**Mr. Reinken:**

They are also greater when accompanied by the greatest disgrace; when committed against one who has been the guilty person’s benefactor, for in that case, the wrongdoer is guilty of wrong twice over, in that he not only does wrong, but does not return good for good. So too, again, when a man offends against the unwritten laws of right, for there is greater merit in doing right without being compelled; now the written laws involve compulsion, the unwritten do not. Looked at in another way, wrongdoing is greater, if it violates the written laws; for a man who commits wrongs that alarm him and involve a punishment, will be ready to commit wrong for which he will not be punished.<sup>xxx</sup>

**LS:** So here you see clearly the tricky element. It depends on which side you stand, whether you defend or accuse. You can argue both ways, and that is part of it. Someone, I believe Mr. Glenn, raised an objection to this whole slightly immoral element of it. But if you think [of] what is now regarded as the duty of the defender of the criminal, it goes very far, it goes very far. He must try his best to get him free, or at least a minimum of punishment. And yet it can very well be defended, simply saying the public prosecutor will state the case as strongly as possible against the defendant, and that must be balanced by an opposite statement of the defender; and then the jury has all the facts including the rhetorical embellishments on both sides in front of him. This would of course presuppose that the legal and rhetorical qualities of the two speakers<sup>62</sup> [are] roughly equal, otherwise there might be some harm done on this ground alone.

**Student:** You convinced me before, but there is a certain problem in what you just said, and that is that you would expect it coming from a class of men who had the reputation of public prosecutors, but you wouldn’t expect it from a teacher. That was my problem.

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<sup>xxix</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s previous comment, the reader retranslates as “Rhetorical things” what is rendered as “Rhetorical tricks” in the Freese translation

<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 14.1-7, 1374b24-1375a20.

**LS:** But still, must you not raise the question: How is it possible, given the well-known infirmities of human beings, to have the maximum guarantee that justice is done? I mean, the case against the defendant must be stated as strongly as possible in the interests of the law. But it must also be stated as strongly as possible for the defendant lest the law might be misapplied in this case. I think from this point of view it is perfectly defensible.

**Same Student:** Yes, I agree that it's defensible. It's just that the concession to the injustice bothered me.

**LS:** I would say to the infirmity of men, rather than their injustice. And that is the same as injustice only if you think justice requires not to have some indulgence in making some concessions to human infirmities. That's a very tough view which you argue for. Mr. Richter?

**Mr. Richter:** . . . .

**LS:** That is from his poems. I do not know now from which of his poems. He wrote two poems, one on the nature of things and one called *Katharmoi*, "purifications," a moral and religious poem, the other one.<sup>xxx1</sup> I do not know from which, but from one of the two; I suppose from the second, *Katharmoi*.

**Student:** . . . not being used originally rhetorically.

**LS:** Yes, yes. Not in a forensic context, yes surely, that's true. Mr. Hartman?

**Mr. Hartman:** Could you explain how Aristotle gets from equity, as first defined as defects or omissions in the law, to the much broader notion of equity as tolerating error?

**LS:** So this was your point? Where does he say this? What is the clearest passage on this point?

**Mr. Hartman:** 1374b.

**LS:** Yes, for example, the last case, that you would prefer arbitration to go[ing] before a law court. But he gives the reason in the last case. "For the arbitrator looks for what is equitable, whereas the judge looks at the law."<sup>xxxii</sup> 63 Let us see whether we cannot pursue that. A concern with justice which is not fettered by the letter of the law, corrects the letter of the law, and perhaps even disregards it. What about that? There would then be this difficulty, that the equitable would become identical in the highest case with what is by nature right because it would disregard law altogether. And equity is clearly defined as a correction of the positive law of this particular society.

Well, the word "equitable," and especially the plural, *epieikais*, was used very commonly for the decent man, the gentleman. [The gentlemen] were called also *kalokagathoi*, the noble and good men, and the *spoudaioi*, the serious men. They were also called the *epieikais*, the equitable men.

<sup>xxx1</sup> These comments refer to Empedocles' two poems, *Peri Physios* and *Katharmoi*.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Apparently Strauss's own translation. *Rhetoric* 13. 1. 19, 1374b. Freese's translation: "for the arbitrator keeps equity in view, whereas the dicast looks only to the law."

Now [in] the definition of that, one could say there was always a reference to law in the consideration of equitable, which was not necessarily present in these two other considerations. An equitable man is a man who completes the law, i.e., who goes beyond the law, and this going beyond the law may very well be disregarding the law—you know, in a case where the law prescribes something preposterous. What was your interpretation of that? You didn't use magnanimity in this context? You did not refer to magnanimity in this context?

**Mr. Hartman:** Well, I did, but I think that that was an error now. I thought that overlooking minor flaws was a reflection of magnanimity.

**LS:** No, I do not believe that this was the point because if you look at the end of justice, the disregard of the petty with a view to the ends of justice is not quite the same as disregard of the petty because one thinks highly of oneself as a magnanimous man would. But however this may be, we must now stop.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted "be."

<sup>2</sup> Deleted "revenges."

<sup>3</sup> Deleted "again."

<sup>4</sup> Deleted "*them*."

<sup>5</sup> Deleted "but this goes back."

<sup>6</sup> Deleted "if someone—."

<sup>7</sup> Deleted "is higher."

<sup>8</sup> Deleted "that's."

<sup>9</sup> Deleted "these"; moved "he speaks of."

<sup>10</sup> Deleted "is."

<sup>11</sup> Deleted "can very well be—."

<sup>12</sup> Moved "[in line 11]."

<sup>13</sup> Deleted "those."

<sup>14</sup> Deleted "this is—."

<sup>15</sup> Moved "Aristotle." Deleted ", how."

<sup>16</sup> Deleted "he."

<sup>17</sup> Deleted "'Or they commit wrongs—' Sorry."

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- <sup>18</sup> Deleted “are now—.” Moved “these two subjects.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “this.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “would.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “—but they don’t. There are.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “they.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “[Can you open that door?].”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “also.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “And the first is what? I’m sorry, I took the first—.”
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted “And.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “he is perfectly—.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “of his.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “eating.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “there are *more*—.”
- <sup>32</sup> Moved “have.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “you know.”
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted “There is no—.”
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted “statement—.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “one—.”
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted “by nature.”
- <sup>38</sup> Deleted “are.”
- <sup>39</sup> Deleted “for example.”
- <sup>40</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>41</sup> Deleted “that.”
- <sup>42</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>43</sup> Deleted “induced.”
- <sup>44</sup> Deleted “yes, but, for example for”; moved “Aristotle.”
- <sup>45</sup> Deleted “in the case of—.”

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<sup>46</sup> Moved “here.”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>49</sup> Deleted “and.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “about—.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “could be—.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “But I believe Aristotle—ja.”

<sup>54</sup> Moved “That.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “that is more—.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “which is..”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “for example.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “because you cannot—”; deleted “you know.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “This is not even—.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “So here the damage—.”

<sup>61</sup> Deleted “were.”

<sup>62</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>63</sup> Deleted “I mean, anything—.”

**Session 7: April 20, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —deliberative, but why is for Aristotle the enthymeme or the proof, the proof proper, the most important consideration?

**Student:** I would think for two reasons: one, that it is appealing to the higher faculty of men; the other, that since it comes second, if we start from the bottom, most people do not achieve it, and therefore it is the highest part of the state.

**LS:** Well, differently stated: Aristotle is a philosopher. Let us never forget that. And as a philosopher he is very much concerned with what is the right kind and sufficient kind of establishing something. We are constantly exposed to insufficient argument, and one kind of these insufficient arguments are the rhetorical arguments. And indeed this has to do—you stated it more radically—because reason as such is higher than the passions. It is a kind of reasoning.

Now to come to some more specific points, you were struck by the value-free or amoral treatment of torture, of evidence based on torture.

**Same Student:** Torture is the only one of the five that would be immoral.

**LS:** Yes, but on the other hand can you tell me what a conscientious man can do in a judicial system where torture is employed? I mean, if he would then say torture is something preposterous, absurd, as Aristotle surely thinks, it is absolutely impossible under such circumstances?

**Same Student:** The best that one can do is to use it for one's own use, whichever way it goes.

**LS:** And that's what Aristotle does. So in other words, look at the situation of the pleader. He has no choice. He cannot possibly attack the institution of torture when pleading before a court which is based on the principle of torture. Why did he not discuss such evidence as murder weapons, tangible things? I think he discussed it by implication. How does a murder weapon come up in a proceeding? Does it march in and say, "I am the murder weapon"?

**Same Student:** It comes in by way of a recent witness.

**LS:** The witness. Therefore, he discussed it: the murder weapon is not an independent item, I take it. Now these are only a few points where I think one should correct, but in the main it was a very good statement. Now, before—yes, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** When you asked why the enthymeme would be the most important consideration for Aristotle, were you lumping together with the enthymeme the example?

**LS:** Ja, sure. When we come to the details we will come to that, the proofs proper. Now I think we have to discuss one broad subject, which was implied in the whole First Book, and that is the following thing. We have discussed the three kinds of rhetoric (this was obviously the main theme of Book 1): deliberative, epideictic, and forensic. But in discussing each of these three

kinds [of rhetoric] Aristotle has a special discussion of one kind of thing—to use a very general term—in the first case, the good things; in the second case, the noble things; and in the third case, the pleasant things. This distinction—now how do we call these things? I said “things,” but we can perhaps do better than that.

**Student:** Values?

**LS:** “Values” they could be called, but I think one would have to be a bit more precise than that and say “kinds of values.” Yes, one might perhaps say: the highest kinds of objects of choice. You find a discussion of these three things in Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa*, Part I, Question 5, Article 6.<sup>i</sup> Thomas refers to the authority of Ambrose, not of Aristotle. This is of course not an Aristotelian statement, that there are the good things, and the noble things, and the pleasant things, there as consolation. It emerges from the way in which he casts his statements in the First Book of the *Rhetoric*. Now, this triad is not so familiar to us. We rather know of [this] triad: the true, the good, and the beautiful; that is more familiar to us than this one. Now one thing must be clear. The good here seems to be the useful, subordinate; but this is by no means certain. But this is the way in which Thomas understands it: the useful (the *honestum*), the noble (the decent, the moral); and the pleasant, *jucundum*.

I remind you of a passage in Hobbes’s *Leviathan* where he discusses the same subject in a very different way, chapter 6. Let me see if I can find it. I will read it to you.

The Latin tongue has two words, whose significations approach to those of good and evil; but are not precisely the same; and those are *pulchrum* and *turpe*. Whereof the former signifies that, which by some apparent signs promiseth good; and the latter, that which promiseth evil. But in our tongue we have not so general names to express them by. But for *pulchrum* we say in some things, *fair*; in others *beautiful*, or *handsome*, or *gallant*, or *honourable*, or *comely*, or *amiable*; and for *turpe*, *foul*, *deformed*, *ugly*, *base*, *nauseous*, and the like, as the subject shall require; all which words, in their proper places, signify nothing else but the *mien*, or countenance, that promiseth good and evil. [**LS:** This is in Greek of course the *kalon*, the noble.] So that of good there be three kinds; good in the promise, that is *pulchrum*; good in effect, as the end desired, which is called *jucundum* [**LS:** the pleasant], *delightful*; and good as the means, which is called *utile*, *profitable*; and as many of evil:<sup>ii</sup>

So this is a restatement from a hedonistic point of view of the Aristotelian Thomistic view. Here you have of course a “beautiful”—not merely noble, but the beautiful as beautiful, which is not necessarily in the Aristotelian-Thomistic construction. Because this can easily be proven in the following way:

<sup>i</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Timothy McDermott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 79; Part I, question 5, article 6: “It seems wrong to divide the good into the worthy, the useful and the delightful . . . . On the other hand, Ambrose divided the good this way.” Also see Ambrose, *De Officiis*, I, 9.

<sup>ii</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Part I, chap. 6. Strauss apparently refers to the Michael Oakeshott edition (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 33

[Strauss writes on the board.] We have the *utile*, the *honestum*, and the *jucundum*. Now, we translate it again as “the useful, or profitable,” always instrumental, always a means. “The noble,” as we say “the moral”; and “the pleasant.” The *pulchrum*, the “beautiful,” is not in here [Strauss points to the Thomistic triad on the board], because the *pulchrum* has not this relation, according to Thomas, to desire. *Pulchrum* is that which pleases merely as apprehended, the beautiful rose. The mere apprehension—there is no desire with that. Whereas here [Strauss points to the *pulchrum* within the Hobbean triad on the board], there is always desire. So the Hobbean scheme is this, that he omits this [Strauss points to the *honestum* on the board]. It never occurred to me, but it's as simple as that. The *honestum* as *honestum* is out. And you have the *utile*, the *pulchrum*, and this is the end, the pleasant [Strauss points to the *jucundum* on the board.] Naturally. And the noble, or the moral, comes in only as required for this purpose via his doctrine of natural right and natural wrong, which some of you may remember.

But now, to come back to Aristotle with whom we are concerned: this distinction you see three times is not of Aristotle's making, as you shall see very soon. It is ultimately even questioned by him. But—[and] this is implied by Aristotle's procedure—the distinction is sufficiently clear for the purpose of rhetoric. Now in order to understand it, I will read to you a passage. There is another *Ethics*, much less well known than the [*Nicomachean*] *Ethics*, and that other one is called the *Eudemian Ethics*. Why it is called that is of no interest to us; Aristotle had a son, Eudemus, and somehow this may play a role in it but no one knows this for certain.

Now at the beginning of the *Eudemian Ethics*<sup>iii</sup> we read:

The man<sup>iv</sup> who at Delos set forth in the precinct of the god his own opinion composed an inscription for the forecourt of the temple of Leto in which he distinguished the good, the noble [LS: noble can also mean the beautiful, of course] and the pleasant. His verses are:

Justice is fairest [LS: most noble, most beautiful], Health is best,  
But the most pleasant of all is to win whatever one desires, to get whatever one desires.<sup>v</sup>

So here we have a distinction long before Aristotle, and which we must . . . now what does this mean when he says: “health is the best; justice is the noblest or fairest; and to get what you want is the most pleasant”? Is this intelligible in spite of the change of orientation? Now if he takes this as the starting point, one would say the good does not here mean merely a means, merely the useful—health is more than that—but something solid, unspectacular, unexciting, solid. Bread and water. When Pindar says, “Water is best,” he could not have said, “Water is fairest or noblest.” Then he would have to take wine perhaps, but not water. But obviously water has a

<sup>iii</sup> *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 285, 1935). Strauss modifies Rackham's translation as indicated in our footnotes.

<sup>iv</sup> As per footnote *a* in Rackham's Loeb edition, p. 198: “Theognis (255 f. with slight variation, quoted also in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1099a 27).”

Theognis. The verses are at 255ff.

<sup>v</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* I. 1. 1, 1214a1-6. Strauss modifies Rackham's translation from the word “distinguished” onwards. Rackham's translation: “distinguished goodness, beauty and pleasantness as not all being properties of the same thing. His verses are: “Justice is fairest, and Health is best/But to win one's desire is the pleasantest.”

quality which wine does not have to the same degree—this solid, unexciting goodness. The noble has the quality of the admirable, and clearly we do not admire people because they are healthy. Well, we would admire perhaps a man of eighty-five who was healthy because that is an extraordinary case, and probably due to virtue. But ordinarily we don't do that. And the pleasant, the things which make us gay—this is a different point of view than that of solid, solid things as well as that of the admirable.

Now in this other understanding which Aristotle surely partly uses in the *Rhetoric*, the good as the useful, that is clearly something very important but always secondary: useful *for* something else. If we leave it at this understanding of the good, then the question is: What is the difference between the noble and the pleasant? Do we still understand that? "Duty comes before pleasure" is still a proverb. A duty may be unpleasant and it may be pleasant, as we all know. Hence duty is not pleasure. Duty is perhaps our closest analogue to what Aristotle means by the noble. But Aristotle thinks more of (as we have seen from these analyses of the noble) dedication to something other than oneself, and especially dedication to something higher than oneself. This is characteristic of the noble as noble, and therefore the connection with honor or fame, because people are praised for dedicating themselves to something other than themselves. No one is praised or admired, except in a somewhat questionable way, for being good at taking care of himself.

But still the three things overlap, as we could easily see if you would go over these lists. This one should do. Draw up the lists [in] parallel and then see which items occur in all three lists, and which only in a single list; and then of course you would get a better understanding of the distinction. For example, sleep occurs only among the pleasant things, naturally: sleep is not something admirable or grand, and it is not sufficient to say it is useful for the restoration of our forces. It is more characteristic of it that it is pleasant to surrender to sleep. On the other hand, it is also clear that the laughable, or ridiculous, occurs only in one list. In which?

**Student:** The pleasant.

**LS:** Sure. We don't have to belabor that. But honor and glory occur in all three. They are useful; they are splendid, resplendent; and they are also pleasant. So the distinction is not arbitrary in any way, but it has also certain difficulties as is shown by the overlapping. Well, one more point before I turn to an Aristotelian passage. And that is the Platonic way of looking at it. Which occupies the place of honor among the three in Plato's scheme?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** The good, sure. In the context it is made clear that the good is higher than the noble and just. So the good, yes. But this is fundamentally, I think, also Aristotle's view, although it is not so easy, so direct to see as it is in the case of Plato. The most important [and] clearest Aristotelian discussion of this subject which I know occurs at the end of the same *Eudemian Ethics*, and I would like to read to you a few passages from that. It's ordinarily not considered.

Being good and being noble are<sup>vi</sup> different not only in their names but also in themselves. For all good things<sup>vii</sup> have Ends that are desirable in and for themselves. Of these, all those are noble or fine<sup>viii</sup> which are laudable as existing for their own sakes, for these are the Ends which are both the motives of laudable actions and laudable themselves—justice itself and its actions, and temperate actions,<sup>ix</sup> but health is not laudable, for its effect is not, nor is vigorous action laudable, for strength is not—these things are good but they are not laudable [LS: they do not have the resplendence]. And similarly induction makes this clear in the other cases also. Now<sup>x</sup> a man is good for whom the things good by nature are good.

Is this clear, what this means? What are the things good by nature?

**Student:** The moral virtues?

**LS:** No, no. The things good by nature—he means such things as health, for example. Health is good for a decent man, not for a criminal. He would be better off if he were sick. Is this not obvious? So this is the definition of the good man then. A good man is a man for whom the things good by nature are good.

For the things men fight about and think the greatest, honour and wealth and bodily excellences and pieces of good fortune and powers, are good by nature but may possibly be harmful to some men owing to their characters. If a man is foolish or unjust or profligate he would gain no profit by employing them, any more than an invalid would benefit from using the diet of a man in good health, or a weakling and cripple from the equipment of a healthy man and of a sound one. A man is noble [LS: in contradistinction to merely good] because he possesses those good things that are fine for their own sake and because he is a doer of noble<sup>xi</sup> deeds for their own sake; and the noble<sup>xii</sup> things are the virtues and the actions that arise from virtue.<sup>xiii</sup>

Is this clear? In other words, a man who makes good use of the intrinsically good things is a good man, but the element of the noble is absent.

But there is also a state of character<sup>xiv</sup>, a political character, such as the Spartans have and others like them; and this character is of the following sort. There are those who think that one ought<sup>xv</sup> to possess goodness [LS: virtue], but for the sake of the things that are

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<sup>vi</sup> Rackham's translation reads: "Now being good and being noble are really"

<sup>vii</sup> Rackham: "goods."

<sup>viii</sup> Rackham: "all those are fine."

<sup>ix</sup> Rackham: "temperate actions, for temperance also is laudable; but health . . ."

<sup>x</sup> Rackham: "Therefore a man . . ."

<sup>xi</sup> Rackham: "of fine deeds even for their own sake . . ."

<sup>xii</sup> Rackham: "the fine things . . ."

<sup>xiii</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* VIII. 3. 3-6, 1248b16-37.

<sup>xiv</sup> Rackham: "state of character that is the 'civic' character, such as the Spartans have or others like them may have; and this . . ."

<sup>xv</sup> Rackham: "ought, it is true, to possess . . ."

naturally good; [LS: One should have, say, justice for the sake of well-being, good reputation, or whatever it may be. Look at the Spartans, or such like people] hence though they are good men (for the things naturally good are good for them) [LS: They do not misuse them. They do not suffer from their very use], yet they have not nobility, for it is not the case with them that they possess fine things [LS: the virtues] for their own sake . . . Therefore to the noble man the things good by nature are noble; for what is just is noble,<sup>xvi</sup> and what is according to worth is just, and he is worthy of these things . . . for the noble man the same things are both useful and noble; but for the many<sup>xvii</sup> these things do not coincide; for things absolutely good are not also good for them, whereas they are good for the good man.<sup>xviii</sup>

We have, then, two concepts of the good life: this crude political concept, and the moral concept proper, where nobility enters. Say, a very high-class utilitarianism is the one, and the other is more than utilitarianism. And now the question arises, which Aristotle discusses later toward the end, altogether the end [of the *Eudemian Ethics*], which I read to you:

But since a doctor has a certain standard by reference to which he judges the healthy body and the unhealthy, and in relation to which each thing up to a certain point ought to be done and is wholesome, but if less is done, or more, it ceases to be wholesome, so in regard to action and choices of things good by nature but not [LS: fine] laudable a virtuous man ought to have a certain standard both of character and of choice and avoidance; and also in regard to large and small amount of property and of good fortune.

In other words, this utilitarian man (in a sense a utilitarian man) needs a standard nevertheless. What is good? The amount of property good for me, the degree or kind in which I use my wealth, and so on?

In what preceded we stated the standard ‘as reason directs’ [LS: *hōs ho logos*]; but this is as if in matters of diet one were to say “as medical science directs<sup>xix</sup>,” and this though true is not clear [LS: it’s not clear because today they would say it’s too abstract]. It is proper, therefore, here as in other matters to live in reference to the ruling element in us<sup>xx</sup> . . . as for example slave must live with reference to the rule of master, and each one<sup>xxi</sup> with reference to the rule appropriate to each. And since man consists by nature of a ruling part and a ruled one<sup>xxii</sup>, and each would properly live with reference to the ruling principle within him . . . this is therefore the case with regard to the faculty of contemplation. For God is not a ruler in the sense of issuing commands, but is the End as a means to which wisdom gives commands . . . since clearly God is in need of nothing. Therefore whatever mode of choosing and of acquiring things good by nature—whether goods of body or wealth or friends or the other goods—will best promote the

<sup>xvi</sup> Rackham: “are fine; for what is just is fine . . .”

<sup>xvii</sup> Rackham: “both advantageous and fine; but for the multitude . . .”

<sup>xviii</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* VIII. 3.3-9, 1248b16-1249a14.

<sup>xix</sup> Rackham: “medical science and its principles direct . . .”

<sup>xx</sup> Rackham: “ruling factor . . .”

<sup>xxi</sup> Rackham: “person”

<sup>xxii</sup> Rackham: “a subject part.”

contemplation of God, that is the best mode, and the standard is the noblest<sup>xxiii</sup>, and any mode of choice or acquisition that either through deficiency or excess hinders us from serving or contemplating God—that is bad, or inferior.<sup>xxiv</sup> This is how it is for the soul, and this is the best standard for the soul<sup>xxv</sup>—to be as far as possible unconscious [LS: to notice least] of the irrational part of the soul,<sup>xxvi</sup> as such.

Let this, then, be our statement of what is the standard of nobility and what is the aim of things simply<sup>xxvii</sup> good.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Now what does this mean? It means that if you have this combination of the utilitarian, as I called it before, who however directs all his actions to the contemplation of God, and if you have, on the other hand, a man with a higher than ordinary citizen virtue, who is concerned with nobility without considering the contemplative life, which is the better? Do you see my point? Aristotle starts first from the utilitarian and the gentleman. Ja, let us call it the gentleman, the gentleman who is concerned with nobility for its own sake.

[Strauss writes on the board] Here you have the utilitarian, and here is the gentleman. And now we are confronted with a utilitarian who, calculating well, devotes all his powers to the contemplation of God. Contemplation. But I decided the issue for you by the place in which I put it, but I think that is what Aristotle means to say, that this is higher than the gentleman. So this indicates a problem of nobility, which Plato brings out by saying the idea of the good is higher than the noble.

I would like to read to you now again the beginning of the *Eudemian Ethics*. This inscription in Delos was this:

Justice is the most beautiful, the most noble, health is the best,  
But of all things the pleasantest is to get what one desires.

But for our part let us not agree with that [LS: Aristotle says]; for Happiness being the most noble and best of all is the most pleasant.<sup>xxix</sup>

Aristotle says then [that] at the highest level these three things coincide. And therefore human life is ultimately conflictless, however many accidental conflicts each of us may have. But ultimately the three considerations coincide. So therefore, no wonder that you find already some overlapping on the lower level, if they coincide necessarily at the highest. But even on the

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<sup>xxiii</sup> Rackham: “the finest.”

<sup>xxiv</sup> Rackham: “that is a bad one.”

<sup>xxv</sup> Rackham: “for the spirit, and this is the best spiritual standard—.”

<sup>xxvi</sup> Rackham: “spirit.”

<sup>xxvii</sup> Rackham: “simply.”

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* VIII. 3. 2-17, 1249a21-b25.

<sup>xxix</sup> *Eudemian Ethics* I.I.1. 1214a5-8. Strauss's translation. Rackham's translation reads: “Justice is fairest, and Health is best/But to win one's desire is the pleasantest.”/But for our part let us not allow that he is right; for Happiness is at once the pleasantest and the fairest and best of all things whatever.”

highest level the problem returns as appears from the end of the *Eudemian Ethics*. So this is a kind of general remark about the First Book of the *Rhetoric*. Yes, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Is part of this overlapping we see on the lower level tied into the fact that when Aristotle defines the noble or the beautiful he defines it as things both praiseworthy and pleasant? In the *Rhetoric*.

**LS:** You mean the overlapping is indicated already by the definitions?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Yes.

**LS:** Ja, that's surely true.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Then what does that do to the argument you set forth where you said duty, what is honorable comes before what is pleasant, and sometimes we can do our duty and it won't be pleasant?

**LS:** Yes, this shows a difficulty regarding duty.

**Mr. Butterworth:** That it might not be simply honorable, or simply noble?

**LS:** No, no, not that, but it shows that there is a conflict. And in Aristotle's view this conflict will not exist on the highest level. Contemplation is never unpleasant. I mean, learning is unpleasant, but learning is preparatory to contemplation proper: when you see. Yes, Mr. Richter?

**Mr. Richter:** Is there any connection between the breakdown you raised and the time involved? In other words, it would seem that the pleasant is the most ephemeral, and perhaps the good absolutely is most lasting. I'm not sure it can be worked out the whole way.

**LS:** You mean to say that Aristotle's coordination of the three kinds of rhetoric is in three modes of time? Is that what you mean?

**Mr. Richter:** No, I mean time in the sense of lastingness. What is pleasant appears to be that which passes away most quickly. And what is noble appears to last somewhat longer—

**LS:** I do not know whether that is true. For example, good reputation is also pleasant. That would be true of the bodily pleasures.

**Mr. Richter:** The pleasure of a good reputation may pass away.

**LS:** Oh, I see. The pleasure to be derived from it in this regard can always change. More radically stated, change is I think only one of the things which is mentioned only among the pleasant things, not among the good ones. That's the point. That is true, to that extent.

**Mr. Richter:** That would be my first . . . .

**LS:** It would be more literally true.

**Another Student:** Are these three subjects . . . would you call the principle of division in the First Book, or are they the three kinds of rhetoric?

**LS:** Not the three kinds of rhetoric—that is made clear because pleasant things are discussed in the context of crime. But crime is also elicited by the useful, as he says. So<sup>1</sup> in other words, it is not possible to coordinate these three things with the three kinds of rhetoric, that's clear. That would make it schematic and a mere construction. Things are complex, and we have to leave them with their complexity.

**Same Student:** You began by saying that you would speak about three kinds of rhetoric and I wondered whether these were meant to correspond to each kind or how they were related—

**LS:** No. There is no such simple connection. The only thing which is clear is that the noble as noble is discussed only in the context of epideictic rhetoric. But since the virtues, which are noble, are discussed also among the good things in the context of deliberative rhetoric as noble acts, there may be more in that than meets the eye, but I have not been able to discern it. But I thought the distinction in itself is important enough at least to be discussed.

Now let us turn to our assignment, and first [to] chapter 15 of Book 1. He discusses first the rhetorical rules of natural law, and here again the *Antigone* is quoted as before. We do not learn anything new about the natural law here; natural law is not the theme, but its rhetorical use. Now in spite of the merely rhetorical use, one point is clear when one reads that. To that extent this rhetorical use of natural law has an evident premise: human laws are not necessarily just. That is a solid starting point for the pleader who is dissatisfied with the ruling of the law in the case at hand. The rhetorical use is based on something which is not rhetorical. This we must not forget. Precisely because that is so evident, let us read then the case *for* the written law, arguments which have been repeated especially in the nineteenth century in the polemics against natural law. Will you read that, 1375b13 and following?

**Mr. Reinken:** “But if the written law favors our case, we must say that the oath of the dicast ‘to decide to the best of his judgment’ does not justify him in deciding contrary to the law, but is only intended to relieve him from the charge of perjury, if he is ignorant of the meaning of the law; that no one chooses that which is good absolutely, but that which is good for himself—”

**LS:** There must be a correspondence between the good simply, the natural law, and the good for oneself, meaning for this particular community.

**Mr. Reinken:** “that there is no difference between not using the laws and their not being enacted; that in the other arts there is no advantage in trying to be wiser than the physician, for an error on his part does not do so much harm as the habit of disobeying the authority; that to seek to be wiser than the laws is just what is forbidden in the most approved laws.”<sup>xxx</sup>

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<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 15. 12, 1375b13-25.

**LS:** That means Sparta—in the passage in the First Book of Thucydides, when the Spartan King praises the Spartans because they are opposed to those who try to be wiser than the laws. Averroës states it as follows: “The natural law is not specific, lacks determination, limitation, but the written law is complete.”<sup>xxxix</sup> This is this kind of argument. Now in the sequel he comes to the question of the use of the witness. This we might also read.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Witnesses are of two kinds, ancient and recent; of the latter some share the risk of the trial, others are outside it. By ancient I mean the poets and men of repute whose judgments are known to all; for instance, the Athenians, in the matter of Salamis, appealed to Homer as a witness—”

**LS:** Homer having said somehow that Salamis belongs to Athens.

**Mr. Reinken:**

and recently the inhabitants of Tenedos to Periander of Corinth against the Sigeans. Cleophon also made use of the elegiacs of Solon against Critias, to prove that this family had long been notorious for licentiousness, otherwise Solon would never have written:

“Bid me the fair-haired Critias listen to his father.”

One should appeal to such witnesses for the past, but also to interpreters of oracles for the future; thus, for instance, Themistocles interpreted the wooden wall to mean that they must fight at sea. Further, proverbs, as stated, are evidence; for instance, if one man advises another not to make a friend of an old man, he can appeal to the proverb,

“Never do good to an old man.”

**LS:** Because he cannot possibly requite you. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:**

And if he advises another to kill the children, after having killed the fathers, he can say,

“Foolish is he who, having killed the father, suffers the children to live.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

**LS:** You see,<sup>2</sup> Aristotle<sup>xxxiii</sup> can be as Machiavellian as Machiavelli. Only Machiavelli cannot be Aristotelian [laughter]. Ja, honestly.

But still, what kinds of things are these which we read here? “Witnesses”? The word is misleading today. To a considerable extent he is speaking, of course, of what we would call authorities, the use of authorities. And here in this context naturally proverbs too—the wisdom of the ages is embodied in them. But proverbs as such cannot settle it, as Herbert Simon has

<sup>xxxix</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 1.15.14.

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 15. 13-14, 1375b26-1376a7.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Strauss says “Hobbes,” then immediately corrects himself to “Aristotle.”

noted.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Aristotle has seen this a bit earlier. And here it is possible that this reflection is the basis of what Farabi and Maimonides say about the rhetorical argument being based on traditions, meaning on specific authorities. Yes. Why Aristotle chooses these particularly obnoxious proverbs I do not know, but perhaps in order to draw our attention to how little truly authoritative they can be, and yet how powerful are they, especially if expressed in perfect verse.

Therefore in the Middle Ages they spoke of the poetic syllogism. The poetic syllogism is a kind of reasoning which convinces by the metrical perfection of the statement. There is something to that. I know one beautiful case. In the *Iliad* somewhere, I think Hector says it: "Let war be the business of the men, *polemos d' andressi melēsei*."<sup>xxxv</sup> Perfect. When you read it, since it is metrically perfect, it can't be otherwise. Until Aristophanes came and played with the conceit of a city in which the women were in control in the *Assembly of Women*. And there the verse occurs, "*polemos de gunaiksi melēsei*,"<sup>xxxvi</sup> which is metrically as good as the first. This shows us that sometimes the mere metrical thing has a power of convincing. A more recent example: in one of President Roosevelt's campaign speeches he used the three names of his three opponents.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Do you know who they were?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** That has in itself a kind of convincingness which one can call poetic, or at least rhetorical. Yes.

**Student:** These two proverbs, they seem to be quite different in his choice. One is logical and one seems to be illogical, there's no sense to it: "Never do good to an old man," it has no reason to it, whereas the other one of course is quite pragmatic.

**LS:** But the other doesn't state the reason either. You have to . . . the reason. He is a fool who after having killed the father leaves the sons.

**Same Student:** But that's pragmatic—

**LS:** But you still have to spell it out to make it quite clear: because the sons are likely to avenge the father. Similarly, "Never do good to an old man"; the reason is not given [so] you must make

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> Strauss apparently refers to Herbert Simon (1916-2001), American political scientist, economist, sociologist, and psychologist. Author of *Administrative behavior: a study of decision-making processes in administrative organization* (New York: Macmillan, 1953 [1947]).

<sup>xxxv</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, Bk. VI, l. 492. It is indeed Hector who speaks these words to Andromache and their son before he leaves them to go into battle.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> This line is rather from the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes, trans. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 179, 2000), l. 538.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Campaign Address at Boston, Massachusetts, October 30, 1940. Roosevelt addressed the improvements in the lot of American farmers as the result of New Deal legislation. He enumerated the agriculture bills that congressional Republicans had voted against since 1933, and singled out for mention Congressman Joe Martin of Massachusetts, "one of that great historic trio which has voted consistently against every measure for the relief of agriculture: Martin, Barton, and Fish." *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1940* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 514-24, 523.

it clear: because he is not likely to be in a position to pay back the benefit you bestowed on him, because he will be dead before. But they are both life's maxims without any question.

**Student:** Wouldn't ancient witnesses be used before deliberative rhetoric as well as forensic rhetoric?

**LS:** Yes, but this I believe is not excluded, is it? Aristotle should have said so? But still, witnesses are necessary in forensic rhetoric. And then since he brings up witnesses in the narrow sense, he enlarges the issue and speaks of witnesses in general and also of the ancient witnesses. And then we see of course they will be used in epideictic rhetoric, obviously; but naturally they will also be used—the example of Themistocles is obviously taken from deliberative rhetoric, the context of deliberative rhetoric—you know, the wooden wall is of course the navy.

**Student:** Why does Aristotle just quote poets and statesmen, and no philosophers?

**LS:** Where does he mention it? Oh, in fact. Good question, but you should be in a position to answer that.

**Another Student:** Well, actually, the philosophers and the statesmen were one and the same for Aristotle, like Solon was a wise man and also a statesman, wasn't he?

**LS:** No, that is very un-Aristotelian. Solon was not a philosopher from Aristotle's point of view, under no circumstances—unless he uses the word “philosophy” in a popular, loose sense.

**Mr. Reinken:** Philosophers have no authority.

**LS:** Sure. There is somewhere in the passage—we haven't discussed it—where he says one must always praise properly; for example, when one speaks to Spartans. Which was the third example?

**Student:** Sigeans.

**LS:** Sigeans, the savages or barbarians from the north. And then the third he says, not the Athenians, but philosophers, to indicate a problem. The Athenians are of course not philosophers, but there are philosophers *in* Athens, which is a different story. No, I think what Mr. Reinken said is the only possible explanation.

Now, the next point which he discusses then are the ordinary witnesses. We will not read that. This passage, 1367a33 at the end of the section,<sup>3</sup> reminds me of an extreme statement of course occurring in a comedy: that a man who can win (and he's a true rhetorician)<sup>4</sup> even if he has not a single witness on his side and the adversary has a thousand witnesses—that is a true rhetorician [laughter]. Good.

Then we come to contracts, where Aristotle says that the situation is fundamentally the same as<sup>5</sup> in the case of laws. And this [only] confirms<sup>6</sup> what we said about the use of the natural law or the written law. I mean taking the contract as a kind of written law, as Aristotle says, we insist on the

sacredness of the contract when it is useful for us, and we treat it from a natural law point of view when it is not good for us. This is a purely pragmatic use of natural law in the *Rhetoric*. The contract is a kind of law. The law itself is a contract, as is here asserted in 1376b7-10.<sup>7</sup> The same<sup>8</sup> segment occurs in the *Politics* somewhere in the Third Book, but there it is said [that] the sophist Lycophron says law is a contract, which amounts to a rejection by Aristotle of this view.<sup>xxxviii</sup> But in the *Rhetoric* it's all right. It's good enough as a popular argument.

Which contract to choose in case of conflict depends entirely on what is useful. Yes, but where does the morality of that pleader come in, if he is so unscrupulous? Well, he defends a man of whom he is certain he is innocent. If this is so, think of that famous representative of integrity, Perry Mason. He defends people who seem to be absolutely guilty and he knows they are innocent [laughter]. Therefore, if he commits all kinds of irregularities like breaking and entering, and so forth (this is what, I think, Aristotle has in mind)—he cannot help it if his means will also be used by unscrupulous rhetoricians. That is possible in every art. That's the famous thing with boxing, you remember from the *Gorgias*. The boxing teacher teaches an art which can of course be misused. But this doesn't mean that the art of boxing is not a legitimate art. The same is true of rhetoric. But it can be used even in its immoralities, or quasi-immoralities, by just men. The same appears also in the use of oaths, which has also its exhilarating side. Let us read that, at the end of the Book, 1377b3.<sup>xxxix</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:**

As to the oaths four divisions may be made; for either we tender an oath and accept it, or we do neither, or one without the other, and in the last case we either tender and do not accept, or accept and do not tender. Besides this, one may consider whether the oath has already been taken by us or by the other party. If you do not tender the oath to the adversary, it is because men readily perjure themselves, and because, after he has taken the oath, he will refuse to repay the money, while, if he does not take the oath, you think that the dicasts will condemn him; and also because the risk incurred in leaving the decision to the dicasts is preferable, for you have confidence in them, but not in your adversary. If you refuse to take the oath yourself, you may argue that the oath is only taken with a view to money; that, if you had been a scoundrel, you would have taken it at once, for it is better to be a scoundrel for something than for nothing.<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** You see, you get here a notion of it, but let us turn to 1377b3, the last paragraph or so.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, since we have shown how we must deal with each case individually, it is clear how we must deal with them when taken two and two; for instance, if we wish to take the oath but not to tender it, to tender it but not to take it, to accept and tender it, or to do neither the one or the other. For such cases, and similarly the arguments, must be a combination of those already mentioned. And if we have already taken an oath which contradicts the present one, we may argue that it is not perjury; for whereas wrongdoing is voluntary, and perjury is wrongdoing,

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 264, 1932), III. 5, 1280b11-13.

<sup>xxxix</sup> The reader subsequently begins rather from 1377a8.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 15. 27-29, 1377a8-17.

what is done in error or under compulsion is involuntary. Here we must draw the conclusion that perjury consists in the intention, not in what is said. But if the opponent—”

**LS:** In other words, he swore, he said the wrong thing, but he did not commit perjury, just as in the other cases he took away secretly, but he did not steal. You remember that.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But if the opponent has taken such an oath, we may say that one who does not abide by what he has sworn subverts everything, for this is the reason why the dicasts take an oath before applying the laws.”<sup>xli</sup>

**LS:** Well, it's only another illustration of this great free-wheeling character of the pleader [laughter] . . . but which is then justified.<sup>9</sup> Take the simple case; torture is a good example of that because no one can deny that if torture is an accepted practice, then the most conscientious pleader must face that, must argue on the basis of that, and similarly in the case of the other things. This is one of the complexities of human life [by] which we cannot help being amused<sup>10</sup>, but if you are caught in these things they are not so laughable.

Now we turn<sup>11</sup> to Book 2, where Aristotle makes the general point [that] the speaker must make himself and the audience human beings of a certain kind. Now the disposition of the speaker is most important in deliberative speech and of the audience in forensic speech. Why? Why is the disposition<sup>12</sup> of the speaker most important in deliberative speech?

**Student:** Well, because deliberative pertains to the future and that element of trust in the speaker's character is much more important than in forensic rhetoric.

**LS:** So the authority of the adviser is greater than that of the pleader. In forensic speech, the speaker is much less important, but everything depends surely on the mood of the jury, and therefore the emphasis is on them. Now<sup>13</sup> the ethos of the speaker consists of three elements: practical wisdom, virtue, and benevolence. It is clear [that] if he doesn't show himself to be a man of practical wisdom, that speaks against his advice. If he shows himself untrustworthy as a character—think of Alcibiades—it speaks against him. But if he<sup>14</sup> shows himself clearly to be [both] very intelligent and very virtuous, but not benevolent—say, coming from an enemy city and speaking for it, or being not a democrat and speaking for the *demos*, this has to do with benevolence. There is a parallel to that in Plato's *Gorgias*, 487a, where Socrates claims to be impressed by what Callicles tells him because Callicles has the three qualities required. Do you remember what they were?

**Student:** Good will in the center, and frankness, and a good education, therefore intelligence.

**LS:** Very good. Yes, intelligence which corresponds to practical wisdom, benevolence, and frankness. Frankness is not mentioned here. Why not by Aristotle? And Socrates doesn't mention virtue. Otherwise it's the same thing. I think it is because virtue takes the place of frankness. The virtue of which Aristotle speaks takes the place of the frankness of which Socrates speaks. There is even some evidence for that in 1378a11-12: when he says, “either they do not opine correctly because of stupidity—”

<sup>xli</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 15. 32-33, 1377a29-b10.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For either through want of sense they form incorrect opinions, or, if their opinions are correct, through viciousness they do not say what they think—”<sup>xlii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, they do not say what they think. That is a dishonesty, a lack of virtue. This is what I meant. Not to say what one thinks, this is part of injustice, as Aristotle suggests in the *Topics* somewhere.<sup>xliii</sup> This explains, incidentally, a difficulty in the First Book of Plato's *Republic*, which I have never understood before. When Socrates says to Thrasymachus: you must say what you think; and a few pages later<sup>15</sup> Thrasymachus<sup>xliv</sup> says, it doesn't make any difference whether you think it or not, discuss the thesis by itself. And Socrates accepts it then. Now this has to do with the question of justice. To say what one thinks is just; and to say something which one does not think—for example, saying we'll discuss the thesis in itself—you know, is in a way unjust. This only in passing.

But the key point is [this]: Since we know already, or are supposed to know what virtue is—the excellence by which a man establishes authority—we have to consider the other thing, passion or emotion, especially with a view to, say, a jury. Now, where is that<sup>xlv</sup>—1378a19ff.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The emotions are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgments, and are accompanied by pleasure and pain—”<sup>xlvi</sup>

**LS:** . . . opinions are those by which men, changing, differ from what they were before in regard to their judgments, and then there are those affections which are followed by pain and pleasure. And then he gives a few examples to make this clear. So there must be a change, they are productive of changes and it must be followed by pleasure and pain. Now the orator must produce these changes in the audience. We know that. And the first subject Aristotle takes up is anger, quite naturally because this is the most visible thing going on in assemblies and the most dangerous for . . . ways to fight against it. The word *orgē*, “anger,” is used for example by Thucydides frequently in the sense of “passionate,” altogether without having anger in particular in mind. But because of the kinship, when you speak of an excited multitude it is most likely to be anger. Think of demonstrations and such. The key point in the definition of anger is what?

**Student:** Slighting.

**LS:** Slighting. Not merely hurt, this is implied of course. That leads to a difficulty, doesn't it?

**Student:** The difficulty would be: What's the difference between slight and hurt?

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<sup>xlii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 1. 6, 1378a11-12.

<sup>xliii</sup> Probably the following citation from *Topics*, VIII. XI, 162a34: “What is objectionable in this? Is it not that it causes the ground on which the argument rests to be hidden?” (Forster translation).

<sup>xliv</sup> Strauss mistakenly says “Socrates” then clearly corrects himself to “Thrasymachus.”

<sup>xlv</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript made from the original reel-to-reel tape, which was lost in transfers or remastering. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 1. 8, 1378a19-21.

**LS:** Well, hurt, for example, is when someone cheats you of money. You are hurt, or if he does something else he doesn't slight you. If he spits in your face, that is slighting you, or if he doesn't say hello when you say hello to him. There can be greater cases, but you can be hurt by a man without being slighted by him. I mean that is already . . . that you say, "he cheated me, he regarded me as a sucker, a fool." But then you make a little psychology: he didn't think of you as a sucker, a fool, he merely wanted your money. Are not such cases possible? I mean one must be very self-conscious if one says, "he regards me as a sucker." One can be hurt in many ways without being slighted. To say nothing of the fact that when you are hurt by some inanimate thing, you cannot possibly speak of slight. In many cases, someone hits you by accident. He hurts you, might even blind you or kill you, and yet [you] cannot possibly call it slight. So there is a difference between hurt and slight. What they now call the ego is not necessarily affected by hurt, but it is necessarily affected by slight. Is that clear? Good, but there is a difficulty connected with that. Now there are a few difficult passages. Let us see, after the quotation from Homer at the beginning of chapter 2.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Slighting is an actualization of opinion in regard to something which appears valueless—"<sup>xlvi</sup>

**LS:** "Actualization of opinion," literally an actuality, *energeia*, of opinion. What does this mean? You have an opinion about the valueless[ness] of a thing or [of] a man but it does not become actual. You can regard someone or something as utterly irrelevant and [be] indifferent to it, but it doesn't become a theme. Doesn't that happen all the time when we pass by people and don't pay any attention? The *doxa*, the opinion, is not actual, [it] is potential. But if the potentiality is actualized we say, "yes, I regard him as irrelevant, immaterial, worthless," then it becomes a slight. So without this actualization no slight takes place. No one is hurt, unless he is crazy, if all the people whom he meets, say, on State Street downtown do not pay any attention to him. I'm sure there are people who are hurt by that, but we can dismiss them as nuts. Good. Then he discusses in the immediate sequel the three kinds of slight: contempt, spite, and outrage. Is the distinction clear? Let us read it.

**Mr. Reinken:**

[Now] there are three kinds of slight: disdain, spitefulness, and insult. For he who disdains, slights, since men disdain those things which they consider valueless and slight what is of no account. And the spiteful man appears to show disdain; for spitefulness consists in placing obstacles in the way of another's wishes, not in order that any advantage may accrue to him who spites, but to prevent any accruing to the other. Since then he does not act in this manner from self-interest, it is a slight; for it is evident that he has no idea that the other is likely to hurt him, for in that case he would be afraid of him instead of slighting him; nor that he will be of any use to him worth speaking of, for in that case his thought would be how to become his friend.

Similarly, he who insults another also slights him—

**LS:** Yes, the Greek word for "insult" is *hubris*, which has more implication than insult has. "Insolent pride" would come somewhat nearer.

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<sup>xlvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 3, 1378b10-12.

**Mr. Reinken:**

for insult consists in causing injury or annoyance whereby the sufferer is disgraced, not to obtain any other advantage for oneself besides the performance of the act, but for one's own pleasure; for retaliation is not insult, but punishment. The cause of the pleasure felt by those who insult is the idea that, in ill-treating others, they are more fully showing superiority. That is why the young and the wealthy are given to insults; for they think that, in committing them, they are showing their superiority.<sup>xlviii</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here. So this is in ascending order, isn't it? Contempt, spite, insult. But one can of course raise this question: Is this, in every respect, an ascending order? Generally speaking, of course. But is not contempt more insulting from another point of view than spite and insult? The trouble which the spiteful man and the insulter takes is a kind of concern and a kind of refutation of this contempt, is it not? If he were truly . . . he wouldn't go to the trouble of the spiteful or insulting action. From this point of view, contempt is much worse than the two others. But this of course is not recognized by a legal code quite rationally, because contempt cannot be a punishable crime; [it] can never be.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** There *are* ways in which people feel that, and these are the real insults.

**Student:** Isn't that some sort of an insult?

**LS:** Well, not quite. It surely is nothing which could<sup>16</sup> [ever] be brought home before a court of law—never. And therefore from this point of view it is of course the lowest, the weakest, because it cannot be proven. A man can look at another man when he makes a certain statement which can be much more expressive of contempt than if he spits into his face. But this look, which doesn't have to be a so-called dirty look, can never be brought home. Now the difficulty of this discussion appears from the sequel, 1379a10. Let us read that.

**Mr. Reinken:**

It is now evident from these considerations what is the disposition of those who are angry, with whom they are angry, and for what reason. Men are angry when they are pained, because one who is pained aims at something; if then anyone directly opposes him in anything, as, for instance, prevents him from drinking when thirsty, or not directly, but seems to be doing just the same; and if anyone goes against him, or refuses to assist him, or troubles him in any other way when he is in this frame of mind, he is angry with all such persons. Wherefore the sick, the necessitous, [those at war]<sup>xlix</sup>, the love sick, the thirsty, in a word, all who desire something and cannot obtain it, are prone to anger and are easily excited, especially against those who make light of their present condition; for instance, the sick man is easily provoked in regard to his illness, the necessitous in regard to his poverty, the warrior in regard to warlike affairs, the lover in

<sup>xlviii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 3-6, 1378b14-29.

<sup>xlix</sup> These words occur within the Loeb text in square brackets: “[those at war]”; that is, this is not an insertion of the reader's or Strauss's asides, which we usually place in square brackets within a citation.

regard to love-affairs, and so with all the rest; for the passion present in his mind in each case paves the way for his anger.

**LS:** What is a passion present in each way? Give one example.

**Student:** Desire?

**LS:** Yes, desire. So this is a very important discussion here. Anger is necessarily founded on desire. It is always secondary. Now this is the basis of the famous discussion of spiritedness,<sup>1</sup> which is the Platonic term for anger in the *Republic*, but Plato . . . that spiritedness is higher than desire because it is founded on desire. That's of course a spurious argument, as this whole argument is. Aristotle surely does not mean that anger is higher. The Platonic argument, by the way, is this: that anger is compatible with authority whereas desire is not. But we cannot go into this question. So we are angry whenever we are thwarted in the fulfillment of our desires. This underlies the traditional distinction between the concupiscible part of the soul, the concupiscible, and the irascible. The concupiscible is desire; that [always] comes<sup>17</sup> first. But if the fulfillment of the desire encounters resistance, then anger and its kin arise. It's always derivative. That is developed, for example, in the *Summa*.<sup>ii</sup>

**Student:** What happens when slight isn't involved? You gave the example—

**LS:** That is a point I was going to make. That's a difficulty. If this is so, then slight is not necessary. And do we not have many cases where people, because they are hurt but not slighted, get angry? For example, someone doesn't get something but his competitor gets it. He doesn't have any thought of being slighted. For example, it could be a roulette of sorts, so there would be no slighting, but he didn't get it [and] he gets angry. The reduction of anger to slight is too narrow. And Aristotle knows this as we shall see.

**Student:** Might not one be slighted by providence?

**LS:** That is a very good point. That is a possibility (we will come to that), but not by providence, by chance. That could very well be the case. Sure.

**Student:** Doesn't he attempt to take care of this partially by saying that it's not necessarily a slight but a comprehended slight?

**LS:** No, I believe that Aristotle admits this point, that anger is aroused by simple hurts, and I will give you some proof. Is anger limited to the human being? Aristotle himself refers to angry dogs. Now slight is something of which only human beings are capable, a sense of slight. I also like dogs, that is not the point, but we must not make them entirely human. You know, you see jealousy, repentance, and all these things you can easily believe you can find in dogs, but this is not the reason at all. I mean, [dogs] do not strictly repent if they make this beautiful gesture, or they are not truly jealous, although we believe they are. They do not smile as some people say, although when you see a puppy play you can't help believing that he is smiling, but he doesn't

<sup>1</sup> *Republic* IV, 440a-e.

<sup>ii</sup> *Summa Theologica*, First part of part II, questions 26-48.

smile because he is not a rational animal. Dogs are angry, but they do not feel slight. And so anger is really a broader phenomenon. Aristotle admits it; we have only to read in the immediate sequel and then we will find it.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Again, men are angry when the event is contrary—”<sup>lii</sup>

**LS:** I’m sorry, no. “Men are angry when they desire and do not get what they desire, especially against those who slight the present predicament, the present concern.”<sup>liii</sup> A bit before, when he gives the examples of the sick man, the poor, the lovers, the thirsty, and altogether who are in a state of desire.

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>18</sup> “Men are angry when they are pained, because one who is pained aims at something . . . . Wherefore the sick, the necessitous, [those at war], the love sick, the thirsty, in a word, all who desire something and cannot obtain it, are prone to anger and easily excited, especially—”<sup>liv</sup>

**LS:** The “highest degree,”<sup>lv</sup> more literally translated; i.e., slight is more anger-provoking than hurt, but hurt is also anger-provoking. That is what Aristotle means. And then in the immediate sequel we come to the point which our Canadian friend<sup>lvi</sup> made—I still have a problem with your name, although Aristotle says it is a sign of slight not to remember names, but you know it is not a sign of slight but because of the difficulty. Now, read the sequel.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Again, men are angry when the event is contrary to their expectation,—”<sup>lvii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, but here . . . is involved. When the opposite takes place, happens, there can be anger against . . . and therefore even against God. Curse God and [die]<sup>19</sup>, say[s] Job’s wife. Yes, a little bit later before 1379b, when he speaks of the serious people. What is that?

**Mr. Reinken:**

But these acts must be of such kind that they are neither retaliatory nor advantageous to those who commit them; for if they are, they then appear due to gratuitous insult. And men are angry with those who speak ill of or despise things which they themselves consider of the greatest importance; for instance, if a man speaks contemptuously of philosophy or of personal beauty in the presence of those who pride themselves upon them, and so in all other cases. But they are far more angry if they suspect that they do not possess these qualities, either not at all, or not to any great extent, or when others do

<sup>lii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 9-11, 1379a10-24.

<sup>liii</sup> Apparently Strauss’s own translation.

<sup>liv</sup> Strauss interrupts the sentence to comment on the translation; the sentence continues in Freese: “especially against those who make light of their present condition . . . .”

<sup>lv</sup> Strauss apparently retranslates Freese’s “especially” more literally as the “highest degree.” Since the tape is lost for this section, it cannot be verified whether or not Strauss refers to the Greek word *malista* in his comment (the earlier transcriptions sometimes left out Strauss’s words in foreign languages).

<sup>lvi</sup> Presumably a student in the class.

<sup>lvii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2.11, 1379a24.

not think they possess them. For when they feel strongly that they do possess those qualities which are the subject of mockery, they pay no heed to it.<sup>lviii</sup>

**LS:** Is not that very wise, what he said? Now, b7, a bit later.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And with those who do not return their kindnesses nor requite them in full; and with those who oppose them, if they are inferiors; for all such appear to treat them with contempt, the latter as if they regarded them as inferiors, the former as if they had received kindnesses from inferiors.”<sup>lix</sup>

**LS:** So in other words, in the case of inferiors, people get more angry than [in the cases of] equals or superiors. That is also part of the picture. The only thing which is a bit difficult for me here in this enumeration is when he says in 1379b20 [that] people are angry at the bringers of bad news because they think these bringers do not worry about their hurting us, their paining us. I do not know whether Aristotle is right on this particular point. I believe it is a kind of simple association. I mean we are really angry at the bad news and the bringer has to suffer for it. It is not necessary that it have this implication.

**Student:** Maybe it's something like blaming the weather forecaster for the weather.

**LS:** Yes, something like this.

**Student:** It seems to me he implies<sup>lx</sup> something more, not just that someone brings the bad news, but that it would be all right if someone brought the bad news and then offered sufficient respect, or condolences—

**LS:** But it won't help. There are so many scenes in tragedies or in Shakespearean histories where very humble servants bring this bad news and suffer for it.

**Student:** Later on he makes use of an episode in *Antigone* when one of the soldiers brings news to Creon that Antigone has buried her brother against the King's wishes. And before the messenger even gives the information he first of all starts telling Creon that he's not a bad fellow, that he's doing this against his will, that he didn't want to bring the news, he wanted to run away. He diverts him about ten minutes before he finally tells him.

**LS:** Yes, this was an awareness of this fact. He was a shrewd fellow [laughter]. Now the difficulty here in this discussion is this. When he speaks about<sup>20</sup> what disposition men are [in] when they become angry, there is no emphasis on slight. But when he speaks of the man at whom they are angry, the emphasis is altogether on slight. Did I make the difficulty clear? In the first enumeration, 1379a11-29, no emphasis on slight, on contempt; in 1379a30-b37, emphasis on slight. Why? I believe he had an answer in 1380a2-5, if you'll read that.

<sup>lviii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 12-14, 1379a33-b2.

<sup>lix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 17, 1379b6-10.

<sup>lx</sup> End of passage from the original transcript. Remastered tape resumes at this point.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is evident then that it will be necessary for the speaker, by his eloquence, to put the hearers into the frame of mind of those who are inclined to anger, and to show that his opponents are responsible for things which rouse men to anger and are people of the kind with whom men are angry.”<sup>lxi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, now I think that is the answer. If you wish to make your audience truly angry, you must show that the defendant or the opposed party, domestic or foreign, not only thwarted you but slighted you. Therefore the emphasis is on slight. A good example is, I think, Cleon's speech in Thucydides, Book 3, chapter 39, sections 4 and 5, when Thucydides argues<sup>lxii</sup> against the Mytileneans. You know, the Mytileneans had deserted Athens. The Athenians wanted to kill the whole male adult population. Cleon was in favor of that measure. He brings in the subject of the hubris of the Mytileneans: not merely that they damaged the Athenians, but that they insulted them. This makes the treaty false. I believe that is what people generally do, because if they only took care of their interests and this hurts your interest, that's too bad, [but]<sup>21</sup> that does not make you angry. But if you are told, “it is because they wanted to hurt us,” then you get angry. That explains why from a theoretical point of view anger is not limited to slights, but the rhetorically interesting kind of anger is that which is aroused by slight.

**Student:** Does the reference to which you just referred in Thucydides have anything to do with Aristotle's example of the individuals who are being angered and directed on page 173? He says the angered man must always be angry with a particular individual.<sup>lxiii</sup>

**LS:** Some individual. But individual of course does not necessarily mean Cleon or whoever it might be. It may also mean an individual city.<sup>22</sup> Obviously, you can be angry at a nation in war. Aristotle means individual as something named with a proper name, whether it is an individual or<sup>23</sup> an individual group of men. You are not angry at a *kind* of thing. This will become clear later when he discusses hatred. There, he contends, we may hate *kinds*. For example, a woman-hater: a man is not angry at woman, he may be angry at this or that woman, but he may hate woman. And the case of the dogs who are said to be angry at mailmen, not at this or that mailman, would of course show us a lower level of doggish anger, because they cannot make this distinction. Good. So let us keep this in mind. Aristotle uses frequently brachylogy, expresses himself laconically, very laconically. But this one must understand, Aristotle meant that.

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<sup>lxi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2.27. 1380a2-5.

<sup>lxii</sup> Strictly speaking, Strauss must mean to say not that Thucydides himself “argues against the Mytileneans” but that Thucydides presents the argument of one of his characters, in this case Cleon, against the Mytileneans (immediately followed by the argument made by Diodotus, against the harsh treatment of the Mytileneans favored by Cleon). For Cleon's speech, see *The Peloponnesian War*, Book III, chaps. 37-40; the section to which Strauss refers, 39. 3-5, reads as follows in Hobbes' translation: “But with cities that come to great and unexpected prosperity, it is usual to turn insolent; whereas most commonly that prosperity which is attained according to the course of reason is more firm than that which cometh unhop'd for; and such cities, as one may say, do more easily keep off an adverse, than maintain a happy, fortune. Indeed we should not formerly have done any honour more to the Mytileneans than to the rest of our confederates, for then they had never come to this degree of insolence. For it is natural to men to contemn those that observe them and to have in admiration such as will not give them way.”

<sup>lxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 1-2, 1378a30-b2.

This is, by the way, a question, since I mentioned Thucydides—I believe he is never mentioned by Aristotle. [Strauss takes a moment to check the index.] The index—no, he is never mentioned. Aristotle must have had quite a few examples from orators and from historians and from poets for all of these points, but he gives an example in only a very few cases. This is a question which would deserve some study, but we cannot go into that. One would have to know much more than we know. Yes, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** You posed a paradox at the end of the last meeting. You said that, in contrasting desire—one would commit something which is a crime based on desire even though the ultimate end of a crime committed on desire is only rape, and that if one created a crime out of anger even though the ultimate end of that crime is murder—

**LS:** No. If the end was murder, then the anger was only played. I have no doubt that clever people can pretend to be angry without being angry. No, you misunderstood me. I said this: what is the greatest crime coming from anger, ordinarily speaking of course, not taking far-fetched cases?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Manslaughter.

**LS:** Yes, the killing of a man. What is the greatest crime coming from desire? Rape. Now if you look at it practically (i.e., how it happens in real life). if a man pleads before a court that he killed a man in anger—extenuating circumstances; if he is accused of rape and he says, “Yes, I committed the crime, but I did it out of lust”—he will get a contempt of court in addition [laughter]. So this shows that desire is not an extenuating circumstance, and one can infer from this that anger is nobler than lust. One can even give additional evidence. An authority, whether it's a father or teacher or whatever it may be, does not lose his authority by the mere fact of anger. I mean he may lose it if it's foolish anger. But think of Moses angrily destroying the tablets. Does this take away anything from his impressiveness? No. But if a man in authority shows himself to those subject to authority in a state of lust, he will lose something of his authority. These are the empirical bases for Plato's sweeping assertion that spiritedness is higher than desire—which, however, if you go into it and analyze it properly, you will see it's not true universally stated. But there is some element of truth as is shown by these examples.

**Mr. Butterworth:** The reason I asked this is because when we see today that anger is based or founded on desire, I wonder if that doesn't—

**LS:** Yes, this creates a certain difficulty, but this is exactly what Plato does not bring out in the *Republic*. Plato's argument runs roughly this way (that is of course implied also here): *slight*. In one of the passages which we have not read, Aristotle says (and Mr. Richter knows that) that we are not angry if we know [that] we deserve that evil inflicted on us. He gives the example of the slave. The slave is to be whipped. But the wise master will tell him first that he deserves to be whipped, and explain it to him, and if the slave is satisfied he will not get angry at the master, at least hopefully [laughter]. Good. So we are angry only if we believe to be in the right, if we believe to have been hurt *wrongly*. So slight goes together with—it's not universally true, but there is an element of truth. If you—

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Oh no, a low man surely not, but tolerably decent men get angry when they have the feeling some wrong has been done to them—I mean not mere hurt, but some wrong. Therefore anger implies a sense of right. Desire does not imply a sense of right. Therefore, anger is higher than the other parts of the bodily element. So there is something to that. Anger is a more respectable passion than mere desire, especially the bodily desires. And therefore Plato can build up his beautiful construction of the *Republic*, but it is nevertheless a questionable thing. And the simple sign of this is that in the highest case it makes sense, and it is even necessary, to speak of a desire for knowledge, desire for knowledge, of course both Aristotelian and Platonic. But anger does not enter here. To the extent to which a man gets angry in a theoretical discussion he disqualifies himself, which doesn't mean that it can always be helped. I mean, there may be a high degree of stupidity, which is of course the least . . . or there may be a very perverse assertion, but strictly speaking we must not do that. We must not get angry. Good.

Now, a few words about the last chapter of today's assignment, chapter 3, where Aristotle deals with the mitigation of anger, with producing gentleness, mildness. Now in the *Ethics* mildness is treated as a virtue. Here it is treated in the context of passions. Whether it is truly a passion according to what Aristotle says here is hard to say, but the main point is unimportant for the rhetorician. This is too subtle for him. It is enough that he is constantly confronted with the necessity of appeasing an angry audience in a deliberative or judicial assembly. Now what has to be done in this respect is in a way simple to say, because if you know what makes men angry you know also what takes away that anger. A few passages which we might read—about the dogs, this by all means we must read. Aristotle says so<sup>24</sup> [few] things about man's best friend that we must read it [laughter], 1380a22.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Even the behavior of dogs proves that anger ceases towards those who humble themselves, for they do not bite those who sit down. And men are mild toward those—”<sup>lxiv</sup>

**LS:** Yes, you know, they cease to be angry if a man shows fear of them. That is Aristotle's interpretation. I can easily see how he comes to that, but I wonder whether it is right, whether they regard it truly as<sup>25</sup> the man now<sup>26</sup> [admitting] the dog's superiority [laughter]. That such cases occur is quite obvious. I remember a very tough old dog—when we as children passed, when we go to school we [ran]<sup>27</sup>, but when we came to this house we walked very circumspectly and very, very slow[ly] [laughter]. I think this shows how little has changed in this respect but it does not necessarily prove that Aristotle is right. Aristotle speaks of those who are angry; what we do when we are angry at a slave.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Evidence of this may be seen in the punishment of slaves; for we punish more severely those who contradict us and deny their offence, but cease to be angry with those who admit that they are justly punished. The reason is that to deny what is evident is disrespect, and disrespect is slight and contempt; anyhow, we show no respect for those for whom we entertain a profound contempt.”<sup>lxv</sup>

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<sup>lxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 3. 6, 1380a24-26.

<sup>lxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 3. 5, 1380a16-21.

**LS:** Yes, but this is of course here a difficulty. Is it not? That those angry at a slave do not despise the slave? That cannot go together—those angry at the slave do not despise the slave, they take him seriously. Yes, but if you think of Aristotle's great-souled man, the magnanimous man, the truly superior man, could he be truly angry because he despises almost everything? That's another point. Oh yes, the passage which I had in mind occurs here in 1380b16-18. No anger occurs—when men believe to be in the wrong and to suffer justly.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And if they think that they themselves are wrong and deserve what they suffer, for anger is not aroused against what is just; they no longer think that they are being treated otherwise than they should be, which, as we have said, is the essence of anger.”<sup>lxvi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, you see that's it. Therefore, that there is a sense of right is implied or may be implied (that's a correction for your sake), may be implied in anger, and more necessarily than in the case of desire. That is a kind of superiority. There<sup>28</sup> [are] also some nice cases of the irrationality of how men get rid of their anger in b14-15, shortly before you read now, when the man at whom they are angry has suffered an evil greater than that they wanted to inflict upon him. They wanted only to beat him, but then he became blind. Then the anger ceases, at least ordinarily. There is another example also later—for example, therefore men are not angry at people who are dead, because they have suffered the extreme, and in addition they can never get at them any more. And satisfaction of anger being impossible, the anger atrophies or ceases. Yes?

**Student:** That last definition of anger, though, the essence being to be treated otherwise than one should expect. That's very general isn't it? Because that would suggest that anger would be the reaction to any unjust treatment; slight would not have a chief role at all. You would be treated otherwise than you expect to be if when you are robbed by someone who wanted your money, nothing more.

**LS:** Ja, that depends. You see, Aristotle says anger is necessarily preceded by desire. Now which desire precedes our being slighted and our feeling of being slighted, and therefore [our] getting angry? Our desire to be recognized as something very important, I suppose. And then of course the more a man has this desire, the more inflated he is, the more does he have a chance of getting angry. At least if he has no means of enforcing it, of enforcing his own estimate of himself on others by having power, then he can counteract it.

**Same Student:** Yes, I just thought that this definition was broader than slight, that slight need not be included in that definition, that it merely meant that you were treated otherwise than you expected to be. You expect to be treated justly. You can be treated unjustly without being slighted.

**LS:** Yes, but the broadest definition, I think, which Aristotle gives is that anger arises whenever we are thwarted. And this thwarting may take the form of slighting where our estimate of ourself is thwarted, or it may be when our desire for an apple is thwarted—you know, another fellow gets there first. Yes?

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<sup>lxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 3.15, 1380b16-18.

**Another Student:** Could you elaborate on why it is that for those people for whom you have contempt, you don't have anger, or will not have anger. Can't you be angry at someone who's beneath you?

**LS:** Sure, but this creates a certain difficulty, doesn't it?

**Same Student:** You mean you shouldn't get angry at someone—

**LS:** Ja, ja, sure. In other words, by being angry at him you pay<sup>29</sup> attention to him, which is not easily compatible with your alleged superiority. Sure we get angry, but take the other case: we get angry when we hurt our shin here. Have you never had this experience? Good. This is, by the way, another sign why anger is higher than desire. When we<sup>30</sup> [have] this experience, we hurt our leg here [Strauss apparently taps the table leg] and then we "ah!" [Strauss exclaims as if in pain]. We treat that leg here [Strauss apparently indicates the table leg] as an animate being which wants to hurt us, we personify it. And this is, I believe, another point why anger can be said to be higher than desire. This poetic element is absent from desire. You can desire an apple without making any personification of the apple. That's all for this time.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted "this will not—."

<sup>2</sup> Deleted "Hobbes—."

<sup>3</sup> Deleted "this."

<sup>4</sup> Deleted "and he can win."

<sup>5</sup> Deleted "that."

<sup>6</sup> Moved "only."

<sup>7</sup> Deleted "without giving any."

<sup>8</sup> Deleted "passage—."

<sup>9</sup> Deleted "just as."

<sup>10</sup> Moved "by." Deleted "them."

<sup>11</sup> Deleted "now."

<sup>12</sup> Deleted "of the audience—." Strauss immediately corrects himself to "of the speaker."

<sup>13</sup> Deleted "the points to be considered are—."

<sup>14</sup> Moved "both."

<sup>15</sup> Deleted "Socrates says it doesn't make any difference whether you think it—no."

<sup>16</sup> Deleted "never."

<sup>17</sup> Moved "always."

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<sup>18</sup> Deleted “Wherefore—.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “thy.”

<sup>20</sup> Moved “in.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “the other.”

<sup>22</sup> Deleted “What Aristotle—.”

<sup>23</sup> Deleted “it is.”

<sup>24</sup> Deleted “little.”

<sup>25</sup> Deleted “—that.”

<sup>26</sup> Deleted “admits.”

<sup>27</sup> Changed from “run.”

<sup>28</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>29</sup> Deleted “an.”

<sup>30</sup> Deleted “make.”

**Session 8: April 22, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:**<sup>1</sup> Well, Mr. Richter, I thank you for giving me that *Arthashastra*. I looked at it but I cannot say anything about it, knowing almost nothing about . . . .

**Mr. Richter:** I didn't know if it was pertinent or not—

**LS:** Ja, it is of some interest. But there is a somewhat different emphasis, more in favor of desire than of anger. But this case I think can be made even in our "culture." I mean not only today; I think it is a part of the liberal lore that desire has a better note than anger. Is it not almost a definition of a liberal that he is more in favor of desire than in favor of anger? I mean for an operational definition of course. But it has deeper roots.<sup>2</sup> Deeper roots: the fundamental point, that desire is a fundamental thing, anger always being preceded by desire; and second, desire leads you much higher than anger. I mean, love of God is a form of desire. Good.

Now I turn to the subject of today. What you said about the difference between the *Ethics* and the *Rhetoric* in the treatment of the moral phenomena is of course quite correct, but it has an important implication. In the *Ethics* Aristotle is concerned with the virtues and vices, and above all with the virtues. The seamy side of man does not come out so clearly in the *Ethics*. And since the seamy side is politically very important, the student of politics has to learn quite a few things [and] not only exaggeration. Not only exaggeration. This is a point with which Mr. Nicgorski is particularly concerned. This is a side we must never forget.

Now to come to a special point: *charis*, how to translate that? Well, I think some light is thrown on this if one considers that it is the opposite of compulsion. What you do under compulsion is not a gracious act. At the beginning of Thucydides when he speaks of the Trojan War, he says the Greek princes did not go against Troy out of graciousness but from compulsion, because Agamemnon was so strong. In Xenophon's *Hiero*, I observed that in the first part in which the author discusses tyranny at its worst, I think the proportion of compulsion and grace is roughly sixteen to four, and when tyranny is brought up to its best, it's equal. There is as much *charis*, graciousness, as there is compulsion. This may also be helpful.

When you say that in the discussion of shame and disgrace he mentions first the throwing away of one's shield, and you reminded us of Hobbes. But Hobbes is in entire agreement with that. Oh, you know that.

**Student:** He says it's disgraceful, not unjust, but disgraceful.

**LS:** I see, and I agree, but Aristotle would not allow this simple distinction between the honorable and the just. Good. You mentioned also the discussion of fear, that the disfavor of the gods is not mentioned and that is a very good point. We will have to take this up. You said Aristotle is silent on death being the most fearful thing. And that is true. He mentions it of course, but it is not so emphatic—<sup>3</sup>when he says we fear destructive evils, and surely death is destructive. But why no such emphasis on fear of death in the *Rhetoric*? It's very practical: because death as such is never an object of deliberation. Perhaps [it is an object] of forensic rhetoric, in order to say, "he must be killed because that is the extreme punishment and the only

one we can find”—but not in deliberative as such. But, for example, we fear thermo-nuclear destruction. This would be a way in which fear of death would come up. But fear of death is not as such a political thing, although it is implied in many political things. There are other details which we can propose. You stressed properly the political importance of *philia*, friendship, love, however we translate it. But it must be understood of course that the friendship (as you also indicated) which is of importance in rhetoric is not friendship of the highest kind, [it is] not what Socrates calls the good friend. Political societies are never good friends to that extent, however friendly to each other they may be. One point from the *Ethics* might be of some help: the difference between friendship and benevolence. Do you remember that?

**Same Student:** Benevolence, or good will, is a part of friendship. Benevolence or good will is shown between friends.

**LS:** But benevolence is not friendship. I mean you can be benevolent to someone without being friendly to him.

**Same Student:** There must be this recognition.

**LS:** Yes, for example you can wish that boxer *a* will win the next bout, and to that extent you are benevolent to him. But that is of course not friendship. Now the most fundamental point which you raised concerns the general character of the discussion in the *Rhetoric*. You said it is not a theoretical discussion, and you referred to the discussion of the passions in the *Ethics*. Does he discuss passions in the *Ethics*?

**Same Student:** He discusses virtues, and within those virtues there will be discussed—for instance, courage, he discusses the virtue of courage and then discusses the emotion of fear—

**LS:** But the discussion of fear is extremely brief compared with that in the *Rhetoric*. So we cannot say that we find the discussion of the passions in the *Ethics*. Their knowledge is somehow presupposed, but they are not discussed.

Only one minor last point. You referred to Aristotle's "modesty" when he says "this is about everything" and there is no reason to doubt that this is complete. Yes, this is true. I would not call it that so much as a kind of urbanity, you know, not to be very heavy, professorial . . . as he frequently says "perhaps" when he has not the slightest doubt and no reasonable man can have the slightest doubt, he only says "perhaps." This is a part of that Attic urbanity which Aristotle, while not coming from Athens, nevertheless acquired. And this creates<sup>4</sup> difficulties, because sometimes the "perhaps" may be a real perhaps, and you must make up your own mind.

But I would like first to say something about this subject of Aristotle's discussion of the passions. Aristotle was attacked for that by one of his most famous enemies, original enemies, Francis Bacon. In his *Advancement of Learning*, in the Everyman's Library edition on pages 171-72, we find the following remark regarding "the inquiry touching the affections"<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. G.W. Kitchin (London: J.M. Dent, Everyman's Library, 1915 [1605]), Bk. II, XXII. 6, 171-72.

For as the ancient politiques in popular states were wont to compare the people to the sea, and the orators to the winds; because as the sea would of itself be calm and quiet if the winds did not move and trouble it; so the people would be peaceable and tractable if the seditious orators did not set them in working and agitation: so it may be fitly said, that the mind in the nature thereof would be temperate and stayed, if the affections, as winds, did not put it into tumult and perturbation. And here again I find it strange, as before, that Aristotle should have written diverse volumes of ethics, and never handled the affections, which is the principal subject thereof; and yet in his Rhetorics, where they are considered but collaterally, and in the second degree, as they may be moved by speech, he finds place for them, and handles<sup>ii</sup> them well for the quantity; but where their true place is [LS: in the *Ethics*] he pretermitteth them. For it is not his disputations about pleasure and pain [LS: which are in the *Ethics*] that can satisfy this inquiry, no more than he that should generally handle the nature of light can be said to handle the nature of colors [the parallel being: light—pleasure and pain; and colors—affection]; for pleasure and pain are to the particular affections as light is to particular colours. Better travails, I suppose, had the Stoics taken in this argument, as far as I can gather by that which we have at second hand [LS: Cicero and Seneca]; but yet, it is like, it was after their manner, rather in subtilty of definitions,<sup>iii</sup> . . . than in active and ample descriptions and observations.<sup>iv</sup> . . . .

But the poets and writers of histories are the best doctors of this knowledge; where we may find painted forth with great life, how affections are kindled and incited; and how pacified and refrained; and how again contained from act and further degree; how they disclose themselves; how they work; how they vary; how they gather and fortify; how they are inwrapped one within another; and how they do fight and encounter one with another, and other the like particularities: amongst the which this last is of special use in moral and civil matters; how, I say, to set affection against affection, and to master one by another; even as we use to hunt beast with beast, and fly bird with bird, which otherwise percase we could not<sup>v</sup> easily recover: upon which foundation is erected that excellent use of *praemium* and *poena* [LS: reward and punishment], whereby civil states consist: employing the predominant affections of fear and hope, for the suppressing and bridling the rest. For as in the government of states it is sometimes necessary to bridle one faction with another, so it is in the government within.

Now with this remark Bacon has written the program for the political philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, without any question, and you see that he states it here in clear opposition to Aristotle. Now what do we have to say to that? Why did Aristotle not treat the passions in the context of his moral and political philosophy? Why did he not do that? Well we would have first to address, what is the political philosophy about?

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<sup>ii</sup> Strauss modernizes the forms of “findeth” and “handleth” into “finds” and “handles.”

<sup>iii</sup> Strauss omits the following material in Bacon’s text: “(which in a subject of this nature are but curiosities)”.

<sup>iv</sup> Strauss omits the following material in Bacon’s text: “So likewise I find some particular writings of an elegant nature, touching some of the affections; as of anger, of comfort upon adverse accidents, of tenderness of countenance, and the other.”

<sup>v</sup> In the edition of Bacon’s text used: “we could not so easily recover.” Strauss does not read the “so.”

**Student:** What is the best state—

**LS:** “State”<sup>5</sup>—well, let us say the variety of regimes, and of course with a view to the question what [is] the best regime<sup>6</sup>. But the passions exist of course under all regimes. In all regimes you find fear and hatred and envy and friendship and so on. The only difference is this, that in the best kinds of regimes, the leading men, the rulers, would be men who control their passions properly [Strauss taps the table for emphasis], i.e., who have virtues. Therefore virtue is an immediate subject of political philosophy, whereas the passions are not. Passions are politically neutral. They occur in every regime. Therefore, they are not a fit subject of political philosophy.

For the purpose of control of the passions, especially in one’s own life but also politically, ordinary knowledge of passions is sufficient. In other words, in order to be moderate regarding food and drink you do not have to have a profound analysis of the desire for food and drink. You know that’s not necessary. You do not have to enter into the spirit of these desires, and anger, or whatever it may be. You know quite well that you must control it. That’s good enough. Too sympathetic understanding of these things might even be harmful to control. And every attempt at understanding requires some sympathy with the subject matter. It might be a good idea not to know too much about it and simply say to these savage dogs—to hit them over the head so to speak. Good. But nevertheless there is no question that a theoretical man, as Aristotle was, must be interested in the passions beyond the practical use by the rhetorician. Where would he treat them then? Not in the *Ethics*.

**Student:** *On the Soul?*

**LS:** Psychology. And<sup>7</sup> there [are quite a few] at least general references to the passions<sup>8</sup> in *De Anima*.<sup>vi</sup> But the discussion of the soul is indeed—the *De Anima* is a very short book, comparatively speaking—but<sup>9</sup> if Aristotle had thought of elaborating the points made<sup>10</sup> in the psychology<sup>vii</sup> there would have been the place for that. This is surely true. Good.

Now let us then turn to our text and begin with chapter 4. And we might as well read the beginning. The first sentence.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us now state<sup>11</sup> who are the persons that men love or hate, and why, after we have defined love and loving.”<sup>viii</sup>

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<sup>vi</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul (De Anima)*, trans. W.S. Hett (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 288, 1957). Regarding the passions, see especially I. 1, 403a2-b19; I. 4, 408b18-29; III. 9, 432a15-433a8.

<sup>vii</sup> Strauss says here “in the *Ethics*,” then clearly immediately corrects himself to “in the psychology.” It is uncertain whether “in the psychology” here should be understood as 1) “in the *Psychology*” as the literally translated title of *De Anima*, in Greek *peri psychē*; or 2) “in the psychology” in the sense of elaborating the points made in Aristotelian psychology in *De Anima* or other texts involving psychology, namely the *Ethics* and *Rhetoric*.

<sup>viii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 1, 1380b36-36.

**LS:** Now let us stop here for a moment. He says, “who are the men loving and why do they love,” but in the case of all the other passions he adds a third point. Let’s turn to the beginning of Chapter Two, for example. Any other will do; there is always a third consideration.

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>12</sup> “Let us then define anger as a longing, accompanied —”<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** No, no. I mean where he makes this general statement. I looked it up. Say chapter 6, the beginning. I looked it up, it is in all other cases the same . . . .

**Mr. Reinken:** “What are the things of which men are ashamed or the contrary, and before whom, and in what frame of mind, will be clear from the following considerations.”<sup>x</sup>

**LS:** Yes. “In what frame of mind” is here missing, and only in the section on friendship. That is very strange. Why does he do it? Let us go on first and read a few more lines.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let loving, then, be defined as wishing for anyone the things which we believe to be good, for his sake but not for our own, and procuring them for him as far as lies in our power. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return, and those who think their relationship is of this character consider themselves friends.”<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here. “Those who believe to be disposed in this manner toward each other believe to be friends.” This “believing” occurs here three times in the beginning statement. It occurs in the case of no other passion. That<sup>13</sup> may be a solution to this question why the state of mind is not mentioned here as it is in the case of all the other passions. Well, a man believes to be a friend of someone else and yet he is not a friend. Does this make sense? There is a beautiful discussion of that in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, I believe in chapter 21—no, it must be earlier, when he says (a sentence which they usually do not dare to translate because it is a bit complicated, but not too complicated for any man or woman of eighteen I would say of normal intelligence, but some older men have strange notions of what they can expect) that we believe to be friends to those by whom we believe to have been benefited. [There is] a double “believe.”<sup>xii</sup> In other words, a man may believe to be a friend of someone else without being one. He may believe to have been benefited without having been benefited if the thing is not—take a drug addict: he believes to have been benefited by someone who gave him this stuff, and then he may say, he’s my friend. But he believes him to be his friend, he is not truly his friend; he only regards him as a useful man, and he is not truly useful.

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<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 2. 1, 1378a30.

<sup>x</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 6. 1, 1383b11-12.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 2, 1380b36-1381a3.

<sup>xii</sup> Strauss refers to a line of Socrates from Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, trans. E. C. Marchant & O. J. Todd. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 168, 1923), XX. 29. A more literal translation would be: “All men by nature believe that they love those things by which they believe they are benefited.” Though friendship, which Strauss includes in his recollection of the citation, is not explicitly the topic of Socrates’s statement (rather, love of cultivating and reselling neglected farms provides the immediate context of the remark), still the principle of believing to love what one believes to benefit oneself could evidently apply to friendship. Indeed, in this sentence the verb “love,” *philein*, shares the same root as friendship, *philia*, and includes the meaning to love as a friend.

Now this element of delusions is perhaps not as powerful in the other passions. I mean, we are angry all right. We can play the angry man without being angry, but then we know it of course. But<sup>14</sup> there is no delusion about our being angry, whereas we can be deluded about our being friends, and both can be deluded about it. Yes?

**Student:** Isn't there a question whether the slight, the impetus is a real or not a real slight, and then—

**LS:** <sup>15</sup>It may only be an apparent slight—that's all right, but the anger is the genuine stuff. But here the friendship is not genuine [and] that is, I think, the difficulty. Now one can perhaps also state it as follows: there is no special *hexis*, no special disposition required for loving, whereas a special disposition is needed for the other passions. This would be the case if we are always disposed to love and to hate, if there is no special occasion needed—if, in other words, it were true that to be a human being simply means to have friends and enemies, no special condition required. In b34, shortly before 1382a, when he says, "Kinds of friendship—"

**Mr. Reinken:** "Comradeship, intimacy, kinship—" <sup>xiii</sup>

**LS:** Well, everyone has kindred, hasn't he, because he is born from human beings? He may be a foundling, I know that, but generally speaking he will belong to families. And hence they have the friends and enmities belonging to the families—whether they are personal or on the basis of social class, or race, that's unimportant. And therefore when they say in these famous presentations of the deepest human problems, "He didn't have a single enemy"—you know, when a man was murdered—that is not so simple. We all have friends and enemies. <sup>16</sup>In a crude sense it may be true, but not in a deeper sense. Surely this science is strange and needs interpretation. Now let us go on. Well, why don't you continue, Mr. Reinken, where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** "This being granted, it necessarily follows that he is a friend who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason. For all men rejoice when what they desire comes to pass and are pained when the contrary happens, so that pain and pleasure are indications of their wish. And those are friends who have the same ideas of good and bad, and—"

**LS:** Well, "ideas" of course is not there: "for whom the same things are good and bad." One can translate it if one wants to, "who regard the same things as good and bad," but "ideas" shouldn't be in. That is a Lockean notion of ideas, wholly alien to Aristotle.

**Mr. Reinken:** "and love and hate the same persons, since they necessarily wish the same things; wherefore one who wishes for another what he wishes for himself seems to be the other's friend."

**LS:** The "seems" is not unimportant. Yes?

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<sup>xiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 28, 1381b34. The complete sentence in the Freese translation: "Companionship, intimacy, kinship, and similar relations are species of friendship." Strauss, in his preceding comment, starts to make his own translation following the word order of the Greek with "Kinds of friendship."

**Mr. Reinken:** “We also like those who have done good either to us or to those whom we hold dear, if the services are important, or are cordially rendered, or under certain circumstances, and for our sake only; and all those whom we think desirous of doing us good. And those who are friends of our friends and who like those whom we like—”

**LS:** Wait a moment. Is this so simply true, that the friends of our friends are our friends? Well, I remember a case of a student who loved—I think he genuinely loved me, I have no reason to doubt; we have remained friends for twenty years. But he also loved someone else, another teacher, and this other teacher and I did not love each other at all [laughter]. And he was very unhappy about that, which was a very charming thing. But this is a crude experience. I believe that you must have<sup>17</sup> [had] that experience, that you can have two different friends and they are not friends to each other. This is possible. It may be impossible on the highest level of friendship, but this highest level is of course not the subject here. It is only a rhetorical topic of some plausibility. It is true in foreign relations: the allies of our allies are to some extent our allies, and this may also be true in domestic politics. But simply it cannot be said to be true. And then he also says the same thing about the beloved.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and those who are liked by those who are liked by us—”

**LS:** “Loved,” one should say. “Liked” is too little. This is a different case here, not the same as that of the friends. For example, our friend’s father is loved by him, but he is not his friend in the ordinary sense of the word, the father, [though he is] in a wider sense, yes, so these cases are not identical.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and those whose enemies are ours, those who hate those whom we ourselves hate, and those who are hated by those who are hated by us; for all such persons<sup>18</sup> hold the same things as we of what is good,<sup>xiv</sup> so that they wish what is good for us, which, as we said, is the characteristic of a friend. Further, we love<sup>xv</sup> those who are ready to help others in the matter of money or personal safety; wherefore, men honour those who are liberal and courageous and just.”

**LS:** Do you see the change from love to honor? “We love those who are beneficent regarding . . . therefore men honor the liberal, and the courageous, and the just.”<sup>xvi</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “And such we consider those who do not live upon others; the sort of men who live by their exertions, and among them agriculturists, and, beyond all others, those who work with their own hands.”<sup>xvii</sup>

<sup>xiv</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s previous comment, Mr. Reinken, after first reading “have the same idea,” immediately corrects himself and modifies the translation to: “hold the same things as we of what is good.” The Freese translation of this clause: “have the same idea as ourselves of what is good.”

<sup>xv</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s previous comment, Mr. Reinken modifies the Freese translation “like” to “love.”

<sup>xvi</sup> Apparently Strauss’s translation.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 3-9, 1381a3-23.

**LS:** Ja. Is this not interesting? Because for political oratory this is an important consideration. Aristotle does not make such a remark in the *Ethics*. First of all, we note the moral qualities here mentioned are treated by Aristotle of course as factual, and as factual as whether men are tall, or lame, or whatever observable qualities people may have. These are facts which everyone knows. People love the farmers, peasants. “Agriculturalist” is a strangely complicated translation. “The tillers of the soil”—I think “farmers” would be better as a translation.<sup>19</sup> Then you derive as it were something which is a very elementary phenomenon from a complicated technique, not to say technology. Do you see what I mean—“agriculturalists”? Good.

So people love the farmers and those working with their own hands. What do you say to the assertion? I think it is a very profound remark. There is no such animosity against these kind[s] of people on which you can count in an assembly or in a jury as there can be against traders, bankers, politicians, highbrows, the rich, the king. There is no such presupposed animosity toward the [farmers]. That’s I think of some importance. Aristotle doesn’t pay too great attention to that in his political or moral teaching, but in his *Rhetoric* it’s of some importance. A whole branch of poetry, bucolic poetry, draws on that somehow. It’s a very wholesome thing. But Aristotle mentions it as far as I know only here. Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Does the switch from love to honor in the sentence that we just read indicate that they’re relative? That everything we love, we honor?

**LS:** Not quite. I mean we surely do not honor strictly—well, I believe it is impossible to combine love with contempt. There are people who are, how do they call it, a kind of perversion,<sup>20</sup> someone who is completely—there is a word which these fellows use when someone despises a woman and is completely her slave, they have a word for that—

**Mr. Reinken:** Neurotic, masochist.

**LS:** No.

**Another student:** Misogynist.

**LS:** No, misogyny would not—no, no. This kind of servility, of inner dependence—there is a word for that, but I do not know what [word] they use. At any rate this of course exists but it is a morbid phenomenon. Normal human beings cannot love someone without respecting him or her to some extent. But still, between some respect in this sense and honor there is a great difference. For example, a mother loves her child but one cannot really say she honors her child. That could be misleading. We surely respect respectable people. We honor the liberal, and the courageous, and the just. We do not necessarily love them. Even if we can only love a virtuous man, which one can doubt, strictly a virtuous man, one cannot possibly say that one loves<sup>21</sup> every virtuous man whom one knows. That’s impossible, because that would make friendship something very watery if you can have so many friends; and Aristotle also observes in the *Ethics* that usually two men or very few can be friends. Now what is your point, Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** That the notion of friendship is beginning to be watered down, because at the very start of this sentence, beginning in the Greek with *eti tous* in our text, “further, we like those who are ready to help others in the matter of money or personal safety—”

**LS:** Well, I think if we start from the fact that we like those who are beneficent in this respect, <sup>22</sup>we will also understand why men honor those who have these qualities to a higher degree—the liberal man, the courageous man, and the just. Ja, I think if we start with that fact. <sup>23</sup>Now we cannot go on through the examples; that must now suffice. Let us turn to 1381b14-16.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And we like those who resemble us and have the same tastes, provided their interests do not clash with ours and that they do not gain their living in the same way; for then it becomes the case of

“potter [being jealous] of potter.”

**LS:** I think that is very neatly put, that he adds this qualification: if people have the same interests as us, if they have much in common with us, that’s a bond. But then of course in the moment [that] competition for livelihood enters or something of this kind, that may bring about just the opposite. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And those who desire the same things, provided it is possible for us to share them; otherwise the same thing would happen again. And those with whom we are on such terms that we do not blush before them for faults merely condemned by public opinion, provided that this is not due to contempt; and those before whom we do blush for faults that are really bad.”

**LS:** Let us first get the terms straight. To be ashamed in regard to those things referring to opinion, as distinguished from those things referring to the truth. What does he mean by that?<sup>24</sup> Give a case, give an example.

**Student:** Among close friends, what other people think won’t make too much difference; it’ll just be what our friends think and they’ll only be concerned about the true things. My fault that is true, I’ll blush in front of a friend, but what other people are going to talk about, public opinion, rumor, and things like that won’t make any difference between my friends.

**LS:** Now what is an example?

**Mr. Reinken:** Say, the early eighteenth century in England when there is an excessive punctilio with regard to the *code d’honneur*, and with your friends you can despise the sort of honor that makes two people go out and get killed over a matter of who goes into a theater first.

**LS:** Sure, but it is not so immediately accessible to us because we have to travel back two centuries, but otherwise all right. Yes?

**Student:** The only thing I could think of was that if you spilled something on your tie or something and didn't know about it, people generally speaking would say that's wrong but your friends wouldn't.

**LS:** Ja, well [laughter]. That is of course a clear sign that you are all young people, but some of you will know the tremendous importance of the cosmetics industry now. If someone colors his hair or beard, this disgraceful thing that he conceals his age is not disgraceful if it is a good friend—whereas he would of course be ashamed to admit that he has defrauded someone, which is a true disgrace. One can also take this [example]: take two Russians who are not ashamed to talk to each other about Khrushchev's crimes, which, if it were done in public, would be very unpleasant. But this is only something which is disgraceful according to opinion, it is not disgraceful in itself. So the distinction makes some sense. Now what has this to do with the remark made by Father Henriot<sup>xviii</sup> in the *Ethics*?

**Student:** I was just going to say that this should show that Aristotle's discussion of friendship here, though maybe not the highest friendship, is still above the lowest friendship. The lowest friendship would be one when someone would do something for you.

**LS:** No, that is not friendship in his sense, in any sense.

**Same Student:** Isn't that one of the listings in the *Ethics*? There are three types of friends—

**LS:** Oh, you mean the business friendship. No, this he doesn't take seriously as friendship.

**Same Student:** You mean here it's not friendship.

**LS:** No, I mean even in the *Ethics* it's not treated as genuine friendship. It's discussed only in order to exclude it. I mean, two business people are connected *only* by the fact that it is advantageous to both to have this business relationship. They are not friends. Friendship can develop from this, but as such it is spurious friendship because it lacks the true motive. Each thinks entirely of himself and he uses the other as a means; and since this is done mutually, it is mutually satisfactory, but this still doesn't make it friendship. In the moment<sup>25</sup> [one] would regard the other as an end, it would change. That can happen of course, but it's not necessary. That means more than that.

But what about the passage in the<sup>26</sup> *Ethics* that a man, a truly virtuous man, would never do anything which is base, even conventionally? You remember this statement?<sup>xix</sup> He would never do anything which is base in itself, intrinsically base, but also never do anything which is base conventionally—base, or low, or dishonorable.

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<sup>xviii</sup> Apparently Father Peter Henriot, Director of Center of Concern in Washington, D.C. (1978-88). He co-authored *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Orbis Books, 1983) and also established the Loyola Jesuit Secondary School in Malawi in 2010.

<sup>xix</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* IV. 9, 1128b19-29.

**Student:** Consequently, he says the truly virtuous man would never experience shame. And he says that is why old men, who should be more virtuous than young men, would never experience shame, but for young men it would be a good thing—

**LS:** Very great old men, older men: very great [men]—only them, not the others. But still this is a very interesting question. I think that in reading the Fourth Book, at the end of the Fourth Book of the *Ethics* where this passage occurs, we<sup>27</sup> already [came] up against difficulties there when we turn to Book Five. Now a virtuous man is also, of course, a just man. Now Aristotle makes it quite clear a man can be just and yet commit (very rarely, naturally) an unjust action. Just as a man can be unjust and commit quite a few just actions. So if this is so, if the just man doesn't cease to be just if he commits, under very special situations, an unjust action, of which as such he must be ashamed naturally, then it cannot be so simple. I believe it is a very extreme statement about this virtuous man who will never do anything improper to the slightest degree ever. Surely, in a way, for a public figure that can be done. It has been shown frequently. But for someone who knows this man very well, it is hard to say. So we have perhaps to limit it to public knowledge, you know. Yes?

**Student:** This passage here though, he's thinking of the case where it's sort of on a regular basis and not just the result of negligence or forgetfulness if a friend does something which is conventionally wrong. He's not thinking here of the case of the virtuous man who slips up in a particular case. I mean isn't he talking about the sort of—

**LS:** I see, a habitual thing you mean. That may be. That is possible.

**Same Student:** At least not a rare thing.

**LS:** Well, for example, if someone would be embarrassed to show a bodily defect of his, which [due to his] having a good tailor is invisible to the public, but he changes his jacket in the presence of a friend because it is only conventionally disgraceful. No sensible man will look down on another because he has a physical defect, although for the one who has the defect it may be somewhat embarrassing to show it. That's possible.

**Same Student:** What about worship of the gods? That might be—

**LS:** Ja, but this is a subject of great delicacy. Aristotle doesn't mention it here. He mentions the gods in a later passage to which Father Henriot referred.<sup>28</sup> Well, I suppose that Plato and Aristotle alone would not hesitate to say that the gods worshipped by the city of Athens, as they are meant by the city of Athens, do not exist. Surely this is so.<sup>29</sup> How would this refer to the remark at the end of the Fourth Book? This would again prove the fictitious character, the extreme character of the statement there, because it is unthinkable that people who are really good friends would not express to each other frankly their opinions on this subject, on an opinion condemned by the public. Yes. Now, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Would Aristotle ever say that that which has to do with the gods is conventional?

**LS:** Well, he says so. Read Book Lambda, Book 12 of the *Metaphysics*, the passage quoted in the Middle Ages, *sententia patrum*—that was the way in which it was quoted—1074b.<sup>xx</sup> I have quoted it here once in class. Now let us go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And those whose rivals we are, or by whom we wish to be emulated, but not envied,—these we either like or wish to be friends with them. And those whom we are ready to assist in obtaining what is good, provided greater evil does not result for ourselves. And those who show equal fondness for friends, whether absent or present; wherefore all men like those who show such feeling for the dead.”<sup>xxi</sup>

**LS:** Is this not interesting? That it is a sign of good character that men do not forget their dead? Also an implication only, but still not altogether negligible. One other thing which has not changed, which is not so peculiar to one particular culture. Now let us turn to what he has to say about hatred, which is rather difficult in some points. Yes, 1382a1.

**Mr. Reinken:** “As for enmity and hatred, it is evident that they must be examined in the light of their contraries. The causes which produce enmity are anger, spitefulness, slander.”

**LS:** “Slander” one can also translate “calumny,” but it is perhaps the same.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Anger arises from acts committed against us, enmity even from those that are not; for if we imagine a man to be of such and such a character, we hate him. Anger has always an individual as its object—”

**LS:** “Individual” properly understood, also individual groups designated by name: Spartans, Thebans, and so on. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “for instance Callias or Socrates, whereas hatred applies to classes;—”

**LS:** “Also to classes,” we may hate individuals also. Otherwise, it’s absurd. How many cases do we find where an individual hates another individual?

**Mr. Reinken:** “for instance, every one hates a thief or informer.”

**LS:** Is this not strange? Will not the social scientist relativists say that is not true? We know people, the thieves themselves—do they not love the thieves? What is the answer? Of course not. Why?

**Student:** The same reason that people who hijack trucks or cars get the trucks stolen from them by other thieves.

**LS:** I see. The same is true: the informer hates of course people who inform on him, naturally. So you see how wise Aristotle is.

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<sup>xx</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 17 & 18, 1933), XII, 1074a37-b6.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 21-26, 1381b14-26.

**Student:** The potter is jealous of the potter.

**LS:** Yes, but in this particular case, that's important. So Aristotle says that everyone hates them, sure.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Anger is curable by time, hatred not; the aim of anger is pain, of hatred evil; for the angry man wishes to see what happens; to one who hates it does not matter. Now, the things which cause pain are all perceptible, while things which are especially bad, such as injustice or folly, are least perceptible; for the presence of vice causes no pain. Anger is accompanied by pain, but hatred not; for he who is angry suffers pain, but he who hates does not. One who is angry might feel compassion in many cases, but one who hates, never; for the former wishes that the object of his anger should suffer in his turn, the latter—<sup>xxii</sup>

**LS:** Suffer, i.e., suffer . . . as much . . . as much, and therefore he can have pity if he suffers more. That's the idea, whereas [he] who hates wishes the extinction—wishes that the hated one *be not*, wishes his extinction. Now this creates some difficulties. I would first like to state them. Aristotle seems to say that hatred and anger are mutually exclusive. While he admits that hatred may arise from anger, yet if you are actually hating, you are no longer angry, and vice versa. But on the other hand, if you look at such masters of hatred as the Nazis, did they not both desire the destruction of the Jews and to make them feel pain, and both equally<sup>30</sup> [strongly]? This I mean only as an indication of the difficulty. Hatred, Aristotle says, is without pain: [it is] a settled, quiet determination. One wishes the hated being not to be [i.e. to exist], but its being does not cause pain. Is this possible? Is it possible to regard something as a great evil—otherwise one wouldn't hate it—without being pained by it? Aristotle's answer in lines 10 to 12 is to this effect: one may possess a great evil without being pained by it. For example, one may be foolish, which is a great evil, without being pained by it. Everyone knows such people. A man may be unjust without being pained by injustice. Everyone knows such people. It is possible. But in that case one doesn't know that this is an evil.

If Aristotle misinterprets hatred, as he would seem to do, what is the reason for his error? Perhaps as follows: I think that would be along the lines of Aristotle's thinking, which in this respect is the same as Plato's. He starts from the highest form of hatred. Now what is that? That of the wise man, of course, who hates vice and folly, i.e., he wishes vice and folly not to be, without however being *pained* by [their] being. Whether that is possible if the hatred is intense, that it would go without pain is truly difficult to understand for me nevertheless. Surely, I don't see how hate on any lower level, i.e., on the only level which we practically meet, can be without pain; and on this ground, on this general ground which I believe is very strong, for there is no *pathos*, no passion, without pleasure or pain. That belongs to its definition as we have seen. And hatred is surely not accompanied by pleasure; therefore it must be accompanied by pain.

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<sup>xxii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 30-32, 1382a1-15. The sentence finishes: "the latter, that he should perish."

Now<sup>31</sup> in the meantime, I thought a little bit more about it and this occurred to me. If we hate a man (we should never do that, but unfortunately we are not perfect) then it is perfectly true we wish his non-existence, at least (which is practically the same thing) we wish him to be where we don't be<sup>xxiii</sup>,<sup>32</sup> [in] another place. Say, if someone in a factory (I deliberately don't use the example of a faculty) hates a fellow worker, he wishes him to be in another factory. That's all right, he doesn't have to see him. To that extent it's true, to that extent it's true. Perhaps only in the extreme case he wishes his extinction. But is he pained if he is not around? I mean the pain arises when you see that man, when you meet him. Perhaps Aristotle thinks of the exclusive case of one's actually being confronted with the hated individual. Now this is all I have to say. Mr. Devereaux?

**Mr. Devereaux:** I was wondering about earlier in the discussion of friendship, the disposition being absent—and also on reading the definition I expected there would be some reference to pleasure in accordance with the definitions of the other emotions. Pleasure is not included in the definition and I wondered if this had any relation to the absence of pain in—

**LS:** Yes, but in the case of friendship there is doubtless pleasure.

**Mr. Devereaux:** But he doesn't mention—

**LS:** But he makes it very clear. I mean, if you do not like the presence of someone else, to be with him, then you are not his friend. You may respect him very highly but if the mere being together with him is not pleasant to you and vice versa, then it's not friendship. So on the contrary, this would precisely show—perhaps his silence about pleasure (that is the point which you make which is very sound) is connected with his silence about pain, but this would only<sup>33</sup> confirm the difficulty. Passions without pleasure and pain cannot be, and hatred must be painful.

**Mr. Devereaux:** In connection with this, you said earlier that passions were not discussed in the *Ethics*, but how is friendship discussed in the *Ethics*?

**LS:** A virtuous passion, shall I say so. Friendship is both virtue and passion. One can say as follows: the relation of friendship to justice as the highest virtue is comparable to that between love and obedience to the law in the Christian tradition. This<sup>34</sup> affective element, which does not necessarily belong to justice, is essential to friendship. Friendship is both noble and pleasurable, whereas the pleasurable of the virtues, this is not so simple. Of course, Aristotle says the virtuous man derives pleasure from virtuous actions but it is not as powerfully present as it is in the case of friendship. That is the reason why Aristotle discusses friendship after the conclusion of the virtues. You know, the virtues are finished in Book 6, then there comes a discussion of pleasure<sup>35</sup> and related subjects, then there comes the subject of friendship in Books 8 and 9, and then a new discussion of pleasure. Aristotle surrounds the discussion of friendship by discussions of pleasure, which underlines what I said before. Yes, but still I must say: Can anyone save Aristotle's assertion about hatred? Mr. Dry?

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<sup>xxiii</sup> That is: where we are not.

**Mr. Dry:** Well, I think it's somewhat related to what you said about the highest form of hatred. From his examples, it seems that Aristotle is thinking of hatred in terms of things or follies, and anger in terms of individuals. For instance, the fight for integration in this country, people who are very intense about this personify the evils and make the government figures, take Governor Wallace<sup>xxiv</sup>, they make them the evil things, the people. But people who just, say, think about theoretical foundations of the arguments and maybe then conclude, "yes, this is a bad thing, we hate segregation"—they would like to see this removed, but they don't have the identification of evil with people, people trying to do bad things—

**LS:** But are they not pained by this lack of integration?

**Mr. Dry:** It would certainly be a less intense pain, yes, pain if there are some unfortunate things around, but we don't feel there is some kind of conspiracy of evil people. That I think would be the more personal one related to anger—

**LS:** I see you have in mind [that] when Aristotle says everyone hates a thief, he does not think of this individual or that, but he hates really *thievery*.

**Mr. Dry:** Right.

**LS:** And not the thief. Yes?

**Another student:** But you wonder if rabid segregationists don't get pleasure out of just hating . . . .

**LS:** Yes, I thought of that too, but still if people hate<sup>xxv</sup>—I know other cases of people who—. The hate doesn't have to be this particularly exciting thing but people hate something, perhaps some dead man, a composer or philosopher. You know, I hate—but is this truly hate? Is this truly hate? Mr. Richter?

**Mr. Richter:** It seems to me a possibility that Aristotle combines pain and pleasure each with love and hate. At the beginning of chapter 4 he says that we feel pleasure when our friends feel pleasure and pain when our friends feel pain; and perhaps then reversing this in the case of pain, we feel pleasure when our enemies feel pain and pain when our enemies feel pleasure.

**LS:** I see. In other words, Aristotle does mention pleasure and pain in this discussion. I had forgotten that. You are quite right. Mr. . . .

**Another student:** You mention that . . . includes malevolence among the dozen or so primitive passions.

**LS:** Malevolence as pleasurable?

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<sup>xxiv</sup> George Wallace, Governor of Alabama 1963-67, 1971-79, and 1983-97.

<sup>xxv</sup> There is a portion missing from Strauss's response on both the remastered tape and the original transcript, apparently because the first side of the original reel-to-reel tape runs out at this point. After this ellipsis, Strauss's response resumes on both the re-mastered tape and the original transcript.

**Same student:** Malevolence as pleasurable, yes. I think I can imagine very well—

**LS:** Ja, sure—

**Same student:** —hating Governor Wallace, for example, and desiring not his extinction but his humiliation—

**LS:** But his extinction as a governor [laughter].

**Same student:** Well, his humiliation . . . .

**Mr. Reinken:** May I try to pick up the argument?

**LS:** Ja, please.

**Mr. Reinken:** From what was said, and perhaps borne out by our bungling translator's omission of the "also," which this edition didn't omit [laughter].

**LS:** Who is the translator of the *Rhetoric* for the Loeb?

**Mr. Reinken:** Freese in the Loeb.

**LS:** Because the translator of Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics*, Rackham, is quite good in the Loeb translation.

**Mr. Reinken:** But in omitting the "also" from the matter of classes, it struck me that hatred, as he translates it, applies to the class, hence to the potential. The hatred of thieves and informers is *in potentia*, and as long as . . . I hate all kinds of injustice, as I state this it causes me no pain. And if we say when we see a particular act of injustice, or someone goes and rats to the English police in Ireland, then anger is considered to have joined in with the hatred—

**LS:** I see what you mean. In other words, that has something to do with what I said, we must start from the highest case. Now if the highest case is truly the hatred of vice or folly, i.e., of something which is not a characteristic peculiarity of this or that person, if in this sense the object of hatred is the class and not individuals, then in this case the pain may not become actual. But it would become actual in the given case. This might be. I do not know.

**Mr. Reinken:** Christians are taught to hate the sin but not the sinner, which is an antidote to the pain.

**LS:** Yes, I know. Yes, but would the Christian not feel pain about the fact of sin? I think he would. Well, we have here an authority [Strauss apparently refers to someone in the class]. Not hatred, but would he not suffer from the fact that there is sin?

**Another Student:** Did you say that the pain associated with hatred followed upon the seeing of the hated one?

**LS:** Of the sight? Well, I speak only of this point, which I believe you must have observed, I observed that there are some people whom I dislike, but if I don't see them my dislike is entirely dormant and in no way unpleasant. But I do not know how far we can go. It's a pity we do not have commentary by Thomas on this passage. It would help us very much.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but I must say it struck me as a greater difficulty than the other remarks Aristotle makes about the various passions. That's all I can say. Yes?

**Student:** I was thinking with regard to this point that pain is a potential injustice or a potential; folly, and therefore there is no pain associated with it. Can't there be pain about anticipated injustice? Can't you be pained about—

**LS:** Well, that is a difficulty which we still would have. And I can only say of the highest case where we hate sin but not the sinners—but of course not in the Christian sense, therefore I said vice and folly—one can hate it without being pained by it, namely by simply saying that the world is a kind of zoo and there must be all kinds of animals in it. You know this is a kind of quote philosophic quote posture towards these things. Yes?

**Mr. Levy:** Although it may sound funny to ask this at the present time, can we actually say at our level of thinking that Aristotle was wrong?

**LS:** Why not?

**Mr. Levy:** Isn't that presumptuous of us?

**LS:** Well, sure, we must consider—but you must admit, Mr. Levy, that it is extremely rare that I dare to say, "Here Aristotle does not seem to be sound."

**Mr. Levy:** I admit that. [Laughter]

**LS:** <sup>36</sup>There could be one thing which is not a very good excuse—for a philosopher not an excuse at all—but which at least may [Strauss laughs slightly through his words] repair for the damage which I have done. Perhaps Aristotle was such a wonderful man that he never in his life felt hatred, and therefore—but it would be . . . [laughter]. Yes, Mr. Devereaux?

**Mr. Devereaux:** There seems to be a problem similar to this in his discussion of virtue. It seemed that virtue, the highest point of virtue is some sort of beneficence, or doing good towards others, concern for others. Then in his discussion of pleasure, he says the most pleasurable things are those closest to ourselves, those that help us. He says at that point I think that all men are selfish, and I think this would imply—

**LS:** All men—ja, in what sense? Selfishness—I mean, the Greek word doesn't have such a bad connotation as the English word: *philautia*, self-love.

**Mr. Devereaux:** This would seem to imply that beneficence would somehow be more pleasurable, but somehow painful and—

<sup>37</sup>**LS:** Beneficence as such? Why should this be painful?

**Mr. Devereaux:** Because it is defined as unselfish, and the most pleasurable things are those which—

**LS:** Oh, but it can very well go together with self-love. I do not see any difficulty there. Mr. Mackenzie?

**Mr. Mackenzie:** Is it possible—Aristotle doesn't seem to mention the connection at all between hatred and power here, and the possibility of hatred deriving from the object hated, its potential or its power for inflicting a point of view or a punishment contrary to the desire of the person hating. You mentioned the individual who can hate a composer because, perhaps, this composer had the power to change the course of music after him.

**LS:** In other words, if I understand you correctly, we cannot hate somebody who does not have power of one kind or another. Is that what you mean? And Aristotle does not mention that.

**Mr. Mackenzie:** Well, I think for him it depends more on just the pain.

**LS:** Well, now let us see.<sup>38</sup> But does he speak of power as power when he is speaking of friendship?

**Mr. Mackenzie:** No he doesn't.

**LS:** The opposite. Perhaps this is not so important, whereas in the case of fear, whether the fear is . . . power is obviously very relevant. Good. Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** I think Aristotle would respond to our objection that in all these examples we give of hatred, where we think there is pain, that this is anger also, and that wherever there is pain, and what we call hatred, anger is also present; hence, the example of the presence of a man you hate would be said to revive anger at him.

**LS:** No, no. I think that would be simply wrong if Aristotle would say that. If I think of certain cases from that factory, there is never any anger. It's just a deep dislike, which we can very well call hatred and which Aristotle would call hatred. There is no question. That will not do. But we must go on because I have to discuss also the sequel.

Now let us turn to another passage in the next chapter, 1382b8-9. That was the passage which Father Henriot quoted: men as a rule do wrong when they can, and similar remarks in the neighborhood [of that]. So men generally are bad. There's no question this was Aristotle's view.

Aristotle was not a babe in the woods, or what they now call an optimist. Is this not the same? I do not know. In the whole discussion of people whom we fear, one point I believe is implied: that the good men are not fear-inspiring to good men. It's not stated but if you look at it, this is tacitly excluded. And this is of some importance because in foreign policy the situation is <sup>39</sup>never present because of the complications. No polis, however good, is simply good, or its adversary doesn't have to be simply bad. But in the case of the individuals I think that is true. We do not fear a good man, do we? Provided [that] we are tolerably good ourselves, otherwise we might have to fear him. Yes.

**Mr. Bernard:** Most good men are . . . .

**LS:** Extreme case, extreme case [laughter]. And that is one of the most pernicious habits, Mr. Bernard, to watch always the extreme cases and then believe we can get excuses for ordinary cases.

**Mr. Bernard:** I'm very sorry [laughter].

**LS:** Ja, ja, I am glad to hear that [laughter]. Good. Now a bit later on in 1382b29, the fear-inspiring things and what people fear are—

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us now state the frame of mind which leads men to fear. If then fear is accompanied by the expectation that we are going to suffer some fatal misfortune, it is—”

**LS:** Yes, “some destructive affliction,” destructive either of our lives or of something very important to us, our health, our fortune, and so on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “it is evident that none of those who think that they will suffer nothing at all is afraid either of those things which he does not think will happen to him, or of those from whom he does not expect them, or at a time when he does not think them likely to happen.”

**LS:** Now watch Aristotle's precision here. This covers, I think, the whole drama.

**Mr. Reinken:**

It therefore needs be that those who think they are likely to suffer anything should be afraid, either of the persons at whose hands they expect it, or of certain things, and at certain times. Those who either are, or seem to be, highly prosperous do not think they are likely to suffer anything; wherefore they are insolent, contemptuous, and rash, and what makes them such is wealth, strength, a number of friends, power. It is the same with those who think that they have already suffered all possible ills and are coldly indifferent to the future, like those who are being beaten to death; for it is a necessary incentive to fear that there should remain some hope of being saved from the cause their distress.

**LS:** This is the flooring and the ceiling: those who believe [themselves] to be beyond evil and those who have lost all hope, neither of which will fear. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “A sign of this is that fear makes men deliberate—”

**LS:** Does this remind you of something, this statement [that] “fear makes men”?

**Student:** Hobbes.

**LS:** Ja, ja, sure. That is in a way the starting point of Hobbes.

**Another student:** Also the biblical injunction, “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

**LS:** Sure, but this is not—that is limited to the fear of the Lord. But in a looser, wider sense one can say that. This is a key point in Hobbes’s definition of fear: fear is eminently rational.

**Another Student:** I think Johnson had a quote that said, “Hanging concentrates a man’s mind marvelously.”<sup>xxvii</sup> [Laughter]

**LS:** That is in one way true, but of course he can no longer fear, can he? As we learn from Aristotle.

**Mr. Reinken:** “whereas no one deliberates about things that are hopeless. So that whenever it is preferable that the audience should feel afraid, it is necessary to make them think they are likely to suffer, by reminding them that others greater than they have suffered, and showing that their equals are suffering or have suffered, and that at the hands of those from whom they did not expect it, in such a manner and at times when they did not think it likely.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

Remember Pearl Harbor?

**LS:** Yes, and also the whole situation before the Second World War altogether gives beautiful illustrations. The argument at that time: what happened to Austria may happen to Czechoslovakia; and what happened to Czechoslovakia may happen to Poland; and what happens to Poland may happen to France. And yet no one believed it. Yes? Mr. Glenn?

**Mr. Glenn:** In regard to this passage on the top of page 207 where he gives the reason why wealthy people are all these nasty things—that struck a bell, though I couldn’t find the reference, but it was earlier in the *Rhetoric*. He gave us reasons for people acting unjustly, and he explicitly said just the opposite of this. He said that, for example, young people tend to act intemperately, but it’s not because they’re young, it’s because they’re intemperate. And here he says that wealthy people act in an insolent, and contemptuous, and rash [manner] because they’re wealthy.

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<sup>xxvi</sup> *Proverbs* 1:7.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Samuel Johnson’s full quote as related by James Boswell: “Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully,” *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed. C. Hibbert (London: Penguin, 1986 [1791]), 231. This was Johnson’s response to disbelief that the condemned William Dodd’s *The Convict’s Address to his Unhappy Brethren* could plausibly have been written by Dodd himself, rather than by Johnson its real author.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 5. 12-15, 1382b28-1383a12.

**LS:** Yes, but still, would this not still make the intemperance, the moral defect, the proximate cause? . . . .

**Mr. Glenn:** No, it's not that they're intemperate here—

**LS:**<sup>40</sup> No, but that is of course implied. The proximate cause of their<sup>41</sup> vicious actions [is] a vicious habit, but the vicious habit is *fostered* by stations in life—by age, and so on and so on. This is a secondary consideration. To trace it to a vicious habit is always sound. To trace it to these other things is never sufficient because that is not universally true. Not all young men are of this kind, not all rich men are of this kind, and so on. We will come to the question of the various age groups and social groups later in the Second Book. Now let us turn to this passage about the gods, in 1383b3ff, at the end of chapter 5.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And if we have never done wrong to anyone,<sup>42</sup> or only to a few, or not to such as are to be feared; and, generally, if it is well with us in regard to the gods, especially as to intimations from signs and oracles, and everything else of the kind; for anger inspires confidence, and it is the wrong that we suffer and not that which we inflict upon others that causes anger, and the gods are supposed to assist those who are wronged.”<sup>xxix</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here.<sup>43</sup> The gods had not been mentioned among the things which inspire fear or confidence, except here. So this case is very interesting, because this is a case of a cooperation of anger and vulgar piety. When people are angry, and they are angry if they believe they are in the right, that they have been wronged—and this cooperation with piety is here discussed. Now as it was observed [earlier], he is silent on the effect of fear of the gods in the case of one's having acted unjustly, of one's having done wrong. Only, if people believe the gods are on their side because they acted rightly. Why is he silent about<sup>44</sup> the other case—that people believe the gods are on their side, and yet they acted unjustly?

**Student:** I don't have an answer. But in the list of good things, besides the absence of a good wife, one would have thought that such a list might very well have . . . the favor of the gods as something that we acknowledge—

**LS:** Yes, but Aristotle mentions them only here. The wronged party believes he has the gods on his side.

**Mr. Reinken:** It would be impious to suggest that the gods favor the—

**LS:** Sure, absolutely. The unjust men are of course also impious. And therefore, that's the simple connection. Yes, that is quite true. Let us read the following sentence.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The fact is that anger makes us confident—that anger is excited by our knowledge that we are not the wrongers but the wronged, and that the divine power is always supposed to be on the side of the wronged.”

**LS:**<sup>45</sup> No, the next [sentence] following.

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<sup>xxix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 5. 20-21, 1383b3-8.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Also when, at the outset of an enterprise, we believe that we cannot and shall not fail, or that we shall succeed completely.”<sup>xxx</sup>

**LS:** Here he does not refer to the rightness or wrongness, to the justness or injustice. You see, he makes this quite clear. If people attempt something in the belief that they will win, the question of the gods does not arise in that connection. I believe that is the connection between the two statements. Mr. Barber?

**Mr. Barber:** How is it possible, after what he has said in the preceding chapter about the association of pain . . . with anger, to make the gods now angry over vice, that is injustice? This was not a subject for anger in chapter 4. Doesn't the anger of the gods depend on the perceptibility of vice?

**LS:** But you must see the context. Aristotle suggests by his silences elsewhere that the gods will be used by the deliberative orator (perhaps also by the forensic orator, but especially by the deliberative orator) if he wants to inspire confidence. He doesn't need the gods in order to inspire fear. This at least is Aristotle's implicit suggestion [here], not in the other cases; but here it is obviously a common topic. I think if one would read Thucydides' *History*, which is after all a terrific document of rhetoric among other things, this would be confirmed. The Spartans, who believed [themselves] to have been wronged, are the ones who call on the gods all the time as the avengers of Athenian injustice. The Athenians do not do so. So if we were wronged, and in order to (as we would call it today) to build morale—that is, I think, what Aristotle means. It is surely strange that it is mentioned only here.

Now we must say a few words about the following two chapters. Now first, chapter 6: the sense of shame. The objects of sense of shame are evils which bring disgrace, not other evils like death, illness, and so on. The destructive evils are the object of fear. Here you have a good example for the difference between the good and the noble, by starting from their opposites. The destructive evils correspond to the good, and the disgraceful evils correspond to the noble. Is this clear? The examples which he gives are quite interesting, and some [are] also very amusing. For example, to profit from little things is disgraceful—you know, penny-pinching in business—and of course flattery, softness, lowness, and boasting. These are the main examples. Let us see in 1384a towards the end, at the transition to b, this sentence—

**Mr. Reinken:** About the eyes—

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<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 5. 22, 1383b8-9. This citation is not from the Freese translation; it is from the W. Rhys Roberts translation (New York: Modern Library, 1954; reprinted from the Oxford translation of Aristotle, Clarendon Press, 107). No explanation is given for the shift from Freese to Roberts here. As Strauss's interjection indicates, the reader begins by repeating (in the Roberts translation) the sentence previously read above in the Freese. The Freese translation of the following sentence is as follows: “Lastly, we feel confidence when, at the beginning of any undertaking, we do not expect disaster either in the present or future, or hope for success.” It is possible that Strauss preferred the Robert translation of this particular sentence over that of Freese. In any event, the reader returns to the Freese for all following citations.

**LS:** Ja, after he has quoted this beautiful “proverb” as he calls it, that the seed of the sense of shame—

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>46</sup> “That is why they feel more ashamed before those who are likely to be always with them or who keep watch upon them, because in both cases they are under the eyes of others.”<sup>xxx</sup>

**LS:** This has something to do with the theme of Professor . . . to which you referred. Do you see the connection?

**Student:** We’ll be on our better behavior when there are friends around who we would be ashamed in front of.

**LS:** They even only have to be acquaintances.

**Same Student:** But in a city where we can lose ourselves—

**LS:** That’s an important consideration. It may be very unpleasant to be always watched by old maid aunts and this kind of thing, but it has also great virtues from a social point of view. Let us read a few more passages. Oh yes, 1384b22, the other cases of sense of shame. Men are ashamed also of those who will tell what they have seen, like servants. In other words, men would not be ashamed<sup>47</sup> [before] their servants but the servants might tell the tale, and then in this indirect way they would be ashamed<sup>48</sup> [before] the servants.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Similarly, men are ashamed not only before those who have been mentioned, but also before those who will reveal their faults to them, such as their servants or friends. In a word, they are not ashamed—”

**LS:** I just wonder whether “friends” does not mean friends *of them*, meaning of the servants, because this *toutōn* is there. It doesn’t make sense. I believe “friends” wouldn’t make sense.

**Student:** It would mean also friends of your friends [in front of whom] I would be ashamed<sup>49</sup> because they would tell you, rather than<sup>50</sup> [because] they’re my friends or not.

**Mr. Reinken:** Friends in the loose sense, say friends for utility—

**LS:** No, I will tell you why this wouldn’t work. This *toutōn* over here must have something on which it depends, and the only word on which it can depend in this sentence seems to be—

**Another Student:** Couldn’t it say “friends of these?”

**LS:** “Friends of these,” ja, but of whom, of whom? Who are the “these”?

**Same Student:** Is there only one “these” in the sentence that could work?

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<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 6. 18, 1384a34-b1. The reader has resumed use of the Freese translation.

LS: “Servants,” that is how I understand it. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In a word, they are not ashamed either before those whose opinion in regard to the truth they greatly despise—for instance, no one feels shame before children or animals—or of the same things before those who are known to them and those who are not; before the former, they are ashamed of things that appear really disgraceful, before strangers, of those which are only condemned by convention.”<sup>xxxii</sup>

LS: Yes, this was mentioned before, this distinction. But it is quite interesting. Now he uses the word *nomos*, which more literally translated is “law.” In the first case he called it *doxa*, which we ordinarily translate by “opinion.” But we must always keep in mind that in this kind of discussion, opinion (*doxa*), and *nomos* are the same. They are not simply the same, very far from it, but in this opposition they are the same. This incidentally is another proof—a refutation of the common view that the opposition of truth and *nomos*, or of nature and *nomos*, is a peculiarity of the so-called sophists. That’s not true. That is much broader. The peculiarity of the sophists would have to be defined much more precisely.

And now a few words about the last chapter about grace: perhaps be the best translation<sup>51</sup> [would be] “graciousness,” something of this kind. And then of course it includes also gratitude, which we still recognize in the English: grace, graciousness, and gratitude. This chapter seems to be the center of the discussion of the passions. It is unusually brief. Perhaps it is needed not for oratorical purposes, but chiefly for the sake of magnification or (how does he translate it?) *auxēsis*, “amplification.”<sup>52</sup> These are of course not things which are as such important in forensic rhetoric. It’s not a crime not to be gracious, nor is it a crime to be ungracious. But in order to show up what kind of fellow that is, you might mention this . . . and also in order to present yourself as a respectable man you may reveal—not of course by mentioning your gracious acts but in a more subtle way—that you are yourself gracious.

There is one point which is a bit difficult, it seems, after 1385b. Perhaps you have to read the whole context. Well, let us say there is a discussion between Athens and one of her allies. And then one has said: they have acted so graciously towards you and therefore you must not take such a dim view of this unpleasant thing they have done now. Where does he begin with that? In chapter 7: “If it is clear, with regard to whom and on what basis and in what mood, or what state of mind, a graciousness occurs.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:**

Since then it is evident on what occasions, for what reasons, and in what frame of mind a feeling of benevolence arises, it is clear that we must derive our arguments from this—to show that the one side either has been, or still is, in such pain or need, and that the other has rendered, or is rendering, such a service in such a time of need. It is evident also by what means it is possible to make out that there is no favour at all, or that those who render it are not actuated by grace<sup>xxxiv</sup>; for it can—

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 6. 22-23, 1384b20-26.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Apparently Strauss’s translation.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s previous remarks, the reader has re-translated as “grace” what is rendered as “benevolence” in the Freese translation.

**LS:** In other words, to show them up as non-gracious. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for it can either be said that they do, or have done so, for their own sake, in which case there is no favour; or that it was mere chance; or that they acted under compulsion; or that they were making a return, not a gift, whether they knew it or not.”<sup>xxxv</sup>

**LS:** Now what does it mean? That seems to be a difficulty: “whether they knew it or not.” In other words, the other party claims [to have been] or has been presented as being gracious to this city, and then you say, they were not gracious at all, they owed it to us. So now they owed it to us, that’s clear. But regardless of whether they knew it or not, how would you argue? Well, if they knew it, of course it cannot be grace. If they knew that they owed it, it was not an act of grace on their part. But if they did not know it, how would you argue in that case?

**Student:** They should have known it.

**LS:** Sure, it is still worse. They owed it to us and they have forgotten it. Now these are the kind[s] of things which Aristotle, I believe, supposes us to figure out for ourselves, because he felt that they were quite obvious. Now I thought when reading this of the case of Russian gratitude or ingratitude to the West. That would be a good example. But how to state the case [first],<sup>53</sup> that they owed us gratitude, and [then] the opposite case, that they did not owe us? Here you have all the materials together. They were surely in great need at that time, this much is sure. But on the other hand, the question whether the West acted for the sake of the Russians entirely—that would be complicated. And one would have to have great rhetorical gifts—as Churchill did—to make that case, but it can be done. I think it can be done very easily by simply showing that if one knew that the Russians were these terrible fellows they [have] proved to be since and it was only perfectly with their eyes open—as Churchill, by the way, made clear at the time of his first speech in 1941<sup>xxxvi</sup>—so it was seen as an act of grace. He could well have said, “Let Hitler and Stalin slit each other’s throat.” Good. Now is there any other point you want to bring up?

**Student:** Is there any significance to the fact that at the end of the chapter on shame he simply directs us to draw the contrary of the arguments for shame in order to find out what shamelessness is? Is this once again his unwillingness to discuss subjects which might be—

**LS:** I doubt that; no, surely not. On the contrary, what Aristotle means is something very harmless. In order to show that certain people were shameless—of course if it suits you, I mean if it’s a criminal [who] was shameless or that this foreign city which formed certain alliances was shameless simply—I don’t have to repeat all this. When he speaks so fully about the opposite in the case of hatred, that is easily explained. Why?

**Another Student:** Because it’s not simply the opposite.

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<sup>xxxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II, 7. 4-5, 1385a29-b4.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> We have been unable to confirm definitely to which speech of Churchill Strauss refers, though it is likely to be the speech of June 22, 1941 in reaction to the German invasion of Russia.

**LS:** Oh yes, hatred is the opposite of friendship. But why does he speak much more about hatred than about shamelessness? Because he wants to make clear the difference between hatred and anger. And there is no such problem here. But the question which you raise is of course an excellent one. But he says quite a bit about confidence; about confidence he speaks quite clearly. Now there is only one point in the confidence section which has no parallel in the fear section, and that is that about the gods. Whether that is sufficient as an explanation, I doubt that.

**Student:** Couldn't you argue then that all he has to do is to put in that which is different?

**LS:** There could be a simple reason: because he has gone out of his way in the case of the opposite of fear, namely confidence, he is no longer under such a compulsion when he comes to the next passion, namely a sense of shame. You see that? Well, this is of course subject to the question that this explains the rest. I mean in the following cases. Whoever reads that paper should keep this in mind as a question.

**Same Student:** But one thing that came to me just now when you mentioned . . . both these questions . . . and when he speaks about the gods . . . anger, when he does discuss fully their opposites, the opposites of these two emotions. Now is it possible that there's nothing connected with shamelessness where anger would be part of it?

**LS:** No, shamelessness has surely nothing directly to do with anger, has it?

**Same Student:** I can't think of anything. So maybe that would be the sense, that it is nothing to do with anger and . . . to distinguish—

**LS:** No, I believe the simplest explanation is [that] since he has spoken of how to switch from one passion to the opposite and how to use the material regarding one passion for the treatment of the opposite, since he has done it so well in the case of confidence, he does not have to do it in the case of shamelessness. Yes?

**Another Student:** Would you care to comment on why there isn't a moral virtue in the *Ethics* with respect to grace?

**LS:** Yes, but the question is raised on a virtue. Is it a disposition, a habit, in the way in which the virtues are a habit?<sup>54</sup> Is it a habit? This would be the first question. Now if it is not a habit, it could not be [a virtue].<sup>55</sup> In other words, is not graciousness something, as meant here, not based on a habit, but some way of acting which arises without connection, so to speak? No habit is formed. If the habit were formed, then it would become something different. I do not know what. Then it would be friendship perhaps or something.

**Another Student:** Is it clear that Aristotle regarded grace as unqualifiedly something good? I was wondering if this might be a reason?

**LS:** But what would it be? The translator seems to speak of benevolence, which is part of the story. Now if we limit ourselves to benevolence, I think benevolence is surely not a virtue according to Aristotle. Something like benevolence may go with certain virtues, but it is not

simply a virtue. Now let me see, how can I make this clear? Where do we find a discussion of it? To some extent in the First Book of Plato's *Republic*, I think.<sup>56</sup> Polemarchus had said justice consists in helping friends and hurting enemies; and Socrates tries to show that the just man will not hurt anyone, but he doesn't even attempt to show that the just man will help everyone. Now such a thing like benevolence or grace, if we take it as a virtue, would be universal beneficence. That [i.e. beneficence] Aristotle did not regard as a virtue. The Stoics later on did that, but Aristotle did not regard this as a virtue. I mean, in the sense of a general mild kindness, an absence of viciousness, surely, but this would not be a virtue. It would be too nondescript.

There is no equivalent in this stage to something like universal love as we know it especially from the biblical tradition.<sup>57</sup> The Stoics have that, *beneficentia*, and have it as a virtue, but not Plato and Aristotle. The reasons are complicated. The usual explanation I regard as simply nonsensical, that Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and the polis lost its importance, and therefore universal feelings have been [adopted]. But<sup>58</sup> every man with sense knew that Alexander didn't conquer the whole globe, or the whole earth. I mean, he went into India but there was something beyond that, and how long did this empire last? If you take the whole lifetime, how long did Alexander reign? Thirteen years. I don't not know—when was Issus? It was in 333, when he defeated the Persians?<sup>xxxvii</sup> Let us grant that this empire lasted for 10 years.<sup>59</sup> Flatterers of kings said of course that he ruled the whole earth, but no serious man can be taken in by that. In other words, the particularism of the polis, like Athens or Sparta, is simply replaced by the particularism of the Seleucid Empire, or the Ptolemaic Empire, if we call it that way, and that's all.<sup>xxxviii</sup> This does not explain it. The reasons are deeper.

Plato indicates in the Fourth Book of the *Republic*, in this famous noble lie,<sup>xxxix</sup> that<sup>60</sup> the fraternity which is in a way expected of us, would be universal. [It] would be universal. But in fact it will be only the fraternity of fellow citizens. He does this in a simple way. He uses a word for earth in Greek, *gē*, which may mean of course first the earth as a whole and then it may also mean—no, he replaces it by *chōra*, territory, which can also mean the specific territory, this and not this. That is a simple way in which Plato indicates a problem. Plato knew, and so did Aristotle, that there is a kind bond among all human beings—but this bond, being so universal, is very nondescript so to say. People have to live together in one way or the other in order to have a full obligation, to say nothing of the fact that there are of course conflicts between these various cities or whatever it may be, which are very important and prevent any factual universal beneficence. This, I think, was the true reason for that.

*Eunoia*, well, “benevolence” Aristotle discusses in the *Ethics*. Benevolence is of course not beneficence. If you wish well that this boxer should win the next match, you don't *do* anything for him. And this is not something praiseworthy. I mean if someone wishes well only to worthy people and worthy causes, this is surely a sign of practical wisdom and virtue, no question. But still if he doesn't do anything for them, and in most cases he cannot do anything for them, it's not something admirable.

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<sup>xxxvii</sup> The Battle of Issus took place in 333 BC.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Successor states to Alexander's Empire.

<sup>xxxix</sup> The passage on the noble lie to which Strauss refers occurs rather in the Third Book of the *Republic* (414b-417b).

I wonder whether Aristotle's remarks about hatred are connected with that—that he speaks about hatred somewhat more favorably than we would do. This just occurs to me. I mean we are struck, at least that is my case, that hatred is something petty. Petty; and hating means—if it is serious, and not in the rather loose way we speak of hatred—it is a kind of being quasi-enslaved by him or those whom we hate, a kind of inner dependence. Aristotle must have known that. I have no doubt about that. But politically speaking, on a lower level hatred is of course a very common phenomenon both within the city and among cities. Say the demos and the better people: there was a considerable degree of hatred between them in Greek cities as we know; Aristotle refers to it himself. Now whether it was really so that they loathed each other, wished the extinction of the other party without being pained by that—perhaps. I mean, if someone hates the Soviet Union, is he pained by that? And I think you would have to say no. It's not strictly speaking pain. You would have to think of a special situation and then it would become anger. Perhaps this is the way to solving this difficulty, that we start from this kind of phenomenon. Perhaps this is altogether a good way to consider what they thought about universal beneficence or benevolence, in order to come to that point. But I'm not satisfied with that.

Now was there anyone else? If not, we will meet again next Monday.

<sup>1</sup> Deleted “You are Mr. Barber? Who's Mr. Barber? I see. Well I shall read of course the paper, but did we arrange that you read this paper on this subject. I do not find you in my list of papers. I see, alright.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “Very—.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “because.”

<sup>4</sup> Moved “sometimes.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “is.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “are.”

<sup>8</sup> Moved “occur quite a few.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “in an elaborate—.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “in the *Ethics*—.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “[page 193].”

<sup>12</sup> Deleted “[page 173].”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “is—.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “this delusion that we—.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “But still our anger—that he may, Aristotle says so.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “made.”

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- <sup>18</sup> Deleted “have the same idea—.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “you know.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “how do they call it?”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “every one.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “if we start from this.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “yes.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “I mean, if we are—what does he mean by that?”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “the other.”
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted “*Rhetoric*—in the.”
- <sup>27</sup> Moved” came.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “This would be, let us assume—.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “Now of course—.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “strong.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “let us take—.”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “to.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “aggravate, I mean would only.”
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted “element—the.”
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted “—then the long discussion of—.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “but it is possible that Aristotle was such a.”
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted “LS: Beneficence as such?”
- Mr. Devereaux: Pardon?”
- <sup>38</sup> Deleted “To what extent—.”
- <sup>39</sup> Deleted “of course.”
- <sup>40</sup> Deleted “Ja, but that is of course implied.”
- <sup>41</sup> Deleted “action is a vicious habit—of the.”
- <sup>42</sup> Deleted “[page 209].”
- <sup>43</sup> Deleted “This is the only—.”

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<sup>44</sup> Deleted “that, I mean.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “Yes, that—.”

<sup>46</sup> Deleted “[215, bottom].”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>49</sup> Moved “in front of.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “whether.”

<sup>51</sup> Moved “would be.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “In other words, because.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “for—I mean.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleted “Is it not simply—.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “And then the question would be—.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “Thrasymachus had said—no.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “But it exists of course also—.”

<sup>58</sup> Changed from “because.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “That is not something that—.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “the primary intention—I mean, no.”

**Session 9: May 11, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:**<sup>1</sup> [in progress] —are not . . . of the kind discussed in the section on love and hatred. That is surely true. Now let me see whether one cannot perhaps say something about it; some points I must<sup>2</sup> reserve until we come to the passage. Aristotle doesn't discuss, you say, shamelessness. He only refers to it as the opposite of shame.

**Student:** He says it can be described in terms of shame.

**LS:** Yes, but is there not a simple reason for that? The orator is compelled to make the people sometimes naturally *shameful*, filled with shame. Is he<sup>i</sup> ever under the compulsion, provided he is tolerably decent, to make them shameless?

**Same Student:** Well, as I said in my paper, it didn't seem to me that there would be much occasion for the rhetorician to rouse shamelessness in his audience as there would be, say, in the case of mildness, the opposite of anger.

**LS:** There are, of course, shameless orators. The classic example is . . . but this is not something that Aristotle would recommend, although he was quite successful for quite some time as you know.<sup>ii</sup> But on the other hand, how to instill people with shame—this he must know. And is this not perhaps the equivalent in Aristotle—it occurs to me just now—of the exhortatory rhetoric for which I was looking in vain? To fill the public, the deliberative body, or the jury with shame is of course an indirect way of appealing to their . . . .

**Another Student:** Things which you feel ashamed about are those which—you are ashamed when you don't have a share<sup>iii</sup> in the honorable things, so this is—

**LS:** But if they are shameless, they are, so to speak, unaware of their defects, and if they become shameful<sup>iv</sup> they become aware of their defects, and therefore become better men. So this one would have to consider in the context of this broad question regarding exhortatory rhetoric which was taken up before. Now a few points. Pity: you emphasize the fact, and I believe I know the reasons, that for Aristotle pity is not *the* passion, [but] just one among many. And you said this with an obvious polemical intent because there must be a man or body of men who made pity *the* passion.

**Student who gave the paper:** Yes, well it would seem even today in our society pity is regarded as more<sup>v</sup>—more stress is placed on pity—

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<sup>i</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript made from the original reel-to-reel tape that was lost in remastering or transfers. The re-mastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>ii</sup> End of passage from the original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>iii</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>iv</sup> End of passage from the original transcript. Remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>v</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

**LS:** This is what I thought you meant. But you are perfectly correct when you say for Aristotle pity is in itself just one passion among others and it has its good side and its bad, and we must go into it before we make a wholesale accommodation of pity. I will take this up later.<sup>vi</sup> The appeal to pity by sight—this was of course very common in Athenian forensic rhetoric.<sup>3</sup> Socrates in the *Apology* refers to that. The defendant brought his kids in so the poor kids would influence the jury. I have seen in this country, not in reality but on the screen—say, a bar girl appearing as a witness<sup>vii</sup> and looking<sup>4</sup> [like] the most modest housewife you could imagine. This is also sight, sure. This has not changed. You had the greatest difficulty with indignation and you found that our view of indignation is broader or deeper than Aristotle's view.<sup>viii</sup> Can you repeat your definition of indignation as you understand it?

**Same Student:** Well, it seemed to me that we feel indignation, or what we consider to be righteous indignation, also at occasions on which there is an injustice or an injury done; as, for example, an insult.

**LS:** In other words, to someone else?

**Same Student:** Not merely indignation felt at someone else's good fortune, but also at another's wrongdoing.

**LS:** But this, I believe as you partly said, is anger.

**Same Student:** Well, it does seem that they are different,<sup>ix</sup> though. Aristotle says that anger involves desire for revenge, whereas it doesn't seem necessary to the other.

**LS:** Well, revenge in the wider sense as redress, surely he implies that, doesn't he? I mean indignation.

**Same Student:** To make things right again.

**LS:** One point: Aristotle doesn't know indignation as<sup>x</sup> a general indignation; I mean indignation which is not indignation at individuals or even groups. You know, it is not an indignation at injustice as such<sup>xi</sup> or at society.

**Same Student:** Well, the example I had was abuse of public office. We feel indignant.<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, we call this indignation, but perhaps *nemesis* is not quite the same thing as what we call indignation. The question is how Aristotle would describe that. I think he would probably say,

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<sup>vi</sup> End of passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>vii</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>viii</sup> End of passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>ix</sup> Beginning of a passage from the original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>x</sup> End of passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xii</sup> End of passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

you are rightly angry at . . . .<sup>xiii</sup> I believe he limits indignation to that particular case where we find a<sup>xiv</sup> disproportion between desert and fate—

**Same Student:** He looks at it, you know, in a positive way as his undeserved good fortune. Or another example, we are indignant at somebody who commits a shameful crime.

**LS:** Then one would have to make fully clear what we mean today by indignation, and then confront it with Aristotle and see in the first place what [is] the root of the difference<sup>5</sup>. And only then could one settle the question who is right or wrong.

The last point regarding old and young: Now this is in Athens before the Sicilian expedition; the young generation was enthusiastic for that war, and the older generation was opposed to it.<sup>xv</sup> The younger didn't know what war means, they had not been in a war and the older ones knew what a war means. Therefore<sup>xvi</sup> if you have such a split audience you have to speak in such a way as to speak the language of the young and the old at the same time, [to] speak as it were out of the two corners of your mouth. That is quite an art. Now needless to say, the same applies also to other subjects, because the split into the old and the young is not the only one. There are also the rich and the poor. Mr. Vance<sup>xvii</sup> asked: How is it possible for the orator to persuade men against their hatreds, given the fact that hatred never ceases? Take Churchill in 1941. He hated Hitler as well as Stalin. In other words, people may hate different people and this variety alone gives the possibility of affecting one hatred<sup>xviii</sup> against the other—this is one thing which can be done. The main point however is in 1382a17.<sup>xix</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is evident, then, from what we have just said, that it is possible to prove that men are enemies or friends, or make them—”

**LS:** To “show up” men as being enemies or friends.

**Mr. Reinken:** “or to make them such if they are not; to refute those—”

**LS:** In other words, you can arouse love or hatred, obviously.

**Mr. Reinken:** “to refute those who pretend that they are,—”<sup>xx</sup>

**LS:** “Who say that they are.” This is a part of an answer to Mr. Lyons' question.<sup>xxi</sup> Some people say they hate, but they don't hate, at least not sufficiently. This, I think, is an indication of this difficulty. But here's a more basic question: What does Aristotle think is the cause of hatred? For

<sup>xiii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xiv</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xv</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xvi</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xvii</sup> Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977-80.

<sup>xviii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xix</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xx</sup> *Rhetoric*, II. 4. 32, 1382a16-18.

<sup>xxi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

he says so little about it. He says so little about it, that is true, but on the other hand<sup>xxii</sup> by saying that hatred is the opposite of love, of friendship, he says quite a bit. If you turn to the end of<sup>xxiii</sup> 1381b, where he speaks of the kinds of friendship.<sup>xxiv</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “Companionship, intimacy, kinship, and similar relations are species of friendship.”<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** Yes, we only need that and then we know that those who are not comrades and relatives and belong are potential enemies. This is the transition to your next question.<sup>xxvi</sup> Would race prejudice be an example of what Aristotle considers hatred? I would say, not necessarily—not necessarily, especially if both parties accept the situation. Think of what they now call the<sup>xxvii</sup> Uncle Tom Negro and nice plantation owners. There is clearly race prejudice. Race prejudice has in itself nothing to do with hatred. It may lead to hatred from conflicts of interest.

Now look at the antagonism of the Greeks and the Turks on Cyprus; that would be very clear because there is such a long history of centuries, of terrible things done, it goes without saying. One can perhaps say that a general cause of hatred is that people hate others who deprive them, especially if there is no hope of speedy recovery of the good in question. Then he will get angry and he will get it back . . . but if someone has taken away, say, a girl from a man, the frequent reaction is hatred; and if there are no changes, other things remaining equal, this hatred may remain until the end of his life. This is I think so obvious and is so much implied in what Aristotle says that . . . .

But now the chief point in your statement was to draw my attention to how a certain<sup>xxviii</sup> kind of modern psychology deals with this kind of question in contradistinction to Aristotle. Well, since you have taken such psychology courses at least in college you know these things much better than I do. I make only a few points. In . . . we read: “The fundamental aim in life is to live and to live pleasurably.”<sup>xxix</sup> . . . that’s science.<sup>xxx</sup> [Laughter] How do these two ladies know? I thought of two entirely different people. One is the Cosa Nostra people who surely have this fundamental aim. And the other would be this most pleasant character, I hope you know him, Bertie Wooster, in Wodehouse’s novels; [he is] this beautiful character, a drone who goes out of his way for everyone who wears the same school tie, a charming man. Good.

Now let us see, she says a lot about aggression: “Aggression and sexuality, being integral parts of human nature, are bound to function, for either good or ill, while life<sup>xxxi</sup> lasts.” I suppose so. “If the attempt is made to deny their rights [meaning the rights of aggression and sexuality] and

<sup>xxii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xxiv</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 4. 28, 1381b34.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xxvii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xxix</sup> From Melanie Klein and Joan Riviere, *Love, Hate, and Reparation* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1964), 4.

<sup>xxx</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. Remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

exclude them from participation in life for good, they must flow into channels of hate and destructiveness.<sup>»xxxii</sup> Yes, but what are these rights? That would be exactly the interesting question of aggressiveness and sexuality. And of course I do not even raise the question whether concern with honor and glory—this of course<sup>6</sup> would lead [much further] beyond<sup>7</sup> that.

“Hate expresses hostility and something deeper than anger.”<sup>»xxxiii</sup> That is also what Aristotle says, only he doesn't use the word hostility because that expresses hostility. Then the hostility precedes therefore hate. But what is hostility? Let us forget that. “Hate expresses hostility and something deeper than anger. Hate, like hostility, implies hurt to others, expresses enmity and seeks directly no socially constructive end.”<sup>»xxxiv</sup> That leads to certain questions—for example, the Turks and the Greeks. Is national hatred incompatible with constructive social ends? That's at least an open question. All these<sup>xxxv</sup> wars of liberation waged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which are animated by a hatred without any doubt—<sup>8</sup>surely a value-free social science cannot pronounce on this subject with any dogmatism. Hostility is an essential evil in people. Even an amoeba can have hostility. Now since amoebas are beings without any responsibility—(as I know without biology—)<sup>xxxvi</sup> therefore this essential evil is not an evil for which people are responsible, I take it. It is stark.

“It is because of the high proportion of individuals filled with feelings of inferiority and with reactions to it of pride, power -seeking,<sup>xxxvii</sup> and hostility that we have so many of this world's problems.”<sup>»xxxviii</sup> But the question arises simply, are not these feelings of inferiority justified in many cases?<sup>»xxxix</sup> [Laughter] That I call democratism, which of course has nothing to do with an intelligent adherence to democracy but is namely a stupid egalitarianism which has no basis either in fact or in reason. “Basically, it is the internal factors which are the sources of hostility.”<sup>»xl</sup> Well, I have observed once James Baldwin, the well-known Negro author, in action and he<sup>xli</sup> had a lot of hostility. I would not assume for one moment, because I think it would be absolutely indecent, to find out whether he has internal factors . . . but it was quite clear that the Negro situation as it is, which is an<sup>xlii</sup> external factor, is productive of hostility. Now of course the more intelligent social scientists therefore don't leave it at Freudian psychology as you know, but also add Marx—the external factor and the internal factor, both.<sup>xliii</sup> Now Aristotle did not know of Freud and Marx, but he does it in advance, he provides for both things, the external and the internal factors, and perhaps for something else.<sup>xliv</sup>

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Love, Hate, and Reparation*, 47. The “she” here refers specifically to Joan Riviere, author of the chapters in which these citations occur.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Strauss changes the source of his psychology citations without mentioning the author or work: Leon J. Saul, *The Hostile Mind* (New York: Random House, 1956), 4.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Hostile Mind*, 4.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The re-mastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> *Hostile Mind*, 44.

<sup>xxxix</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xl</sup> *Hostile Mind*, 61.

<sup>xli</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xlii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xliii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xliv</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

Now here a more general point. Well, of course, this question doesn't come up here: Did they say anything about the fact-value distinction?

**Student:** No.

**LS:** That, I believe, is generally so. You see, in some respects psychology, I believe, is less advanced and less sophisticated methodologically, owing to the connection with medicine and the obvious necessity of making a distinction between health and sickness. Psychopathology also shares this common-sense prejudice, and this switches then over also into social psychology. So therefore, they are simply not up to date. [Laughter] Now a behaviorist psychology in the sense of a value-free psychology is really impossible. But unfortunately, if this is done with such a naïveté that people do not even think about it in our age, then of course it is no good. Some assumption as to the fundamental aim in life, as they call it, i.e., the end of man, is absolutely necessary. Needless to say, this fact is not a solution, the end as it were,<sup>xlv</sup> but only the beginning. The complexity of life and its goals makes it necessary to go much deeper, much beyond this simple assertion that there are ends and aims in life. And of course one [also] has<sup>9</sup> to consider here the variety of levels, and that is exactly<sup>10</sup> [what] we have to do in reading the *Rhetoric*. If you compare the *Rhetoric* and the *Ethics* you see the variety of levels. The demands are much higher in the *Ethics* than in the *Rhetoric*.

Something that was mentioned earlier reminded me of . . . distinction between true virtue and presumptive virtue. Now, rhetoric has chiefly to do with presumptive virtue. But<sup>xlvi</sup> while<sup>11</sup> [it] must be emphasized that the *Ethics* has a higher level—and one sees this particularly when comparing the treatment of happiness in both works—one must not be blind to the possibility that many things in the *Ethics* will be elucidated through the *Rhetoric* because the passions, which are<sup>xlvii</sup> the subject matter of ethics (at least as the matter on which we act), may throw some light on the virtues themselves.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Surely, as we have seen from the example of indignation today, what is accepted by opinion today is not in all points identical with what was accepted by opinion in Aristotle's times. This is true. One must realize that and take this very seriously. But why is there such a difference? Which means: what are the reasons given for this understanding of indignation and the reasons given for that understanding of indignation? And then of course, once we know that: Which reasons are the best? But before we can understand that, we must first know the reasons. I think<sup>12</sup> it is necessary to see the manifest or superficial.<sup>xlix</sup> This is absolutely necessary. The dogmatism which consists in disregarding all reasons as mere rationalizations cannot be tolerated, from no point of view: even if I happened to be a Freudian or a Marxist, I would regard this as an outrageous dogmatism. One must begin with the manifest, as both these schools say, but you must take the manifest very seriously. It is . . .<sup>1</sup> this understanding of indignation, that

<sup>xlv</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xlvi</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>xlviii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>xlix</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>1</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

understanding of indignation, and [only] then<sup>13</sup> can you explain it Marxistically, psychoanalytically, or what have you. But without this qualified or provisional acceptance of the opinions, there is no possible beginning of meaningful study.

And these opinions are of course prejudices, there is no question. Prejudice, *praejudicium*, means every *judicium*, every judgment antedating sufficient examination. The wholesale rejection of prejudices was Descartes' notion, you know: the universal doubt once in one's life, and then you get rid of the whole stuff forever. This is a fantastic thing that's absolutely impossible. The trouble is that we do not know our opinions. How can we get rid of them by simply condemning them? The best thing is to start from the critique of specific questions—say, the race prejudice. But <sup>14</sup>if the race prejudice is attacked, it is attacked on the basis of another prejudice.<sup>li</sup> Either race is irrelevant regarding intellectual and moral virtue, or it is our duty to regard race as irrelevant. These two prejudices are distinguishable but are not always distinguished. Now even if there were genuine knowledge regarding this matter, it would not be genuine knowledge in the case of the citizens acting upon it. He would not know. He hasn't made a study of races. He is told that professor so-and-so at Princeton has said this, and a professor at Columbia has said that. That's only opinion, that's not knowledge. And democracy means that the scientific experts advise but do not rule. Even if democracy were the rule of debate—which is not quite true because debate must end sometime because we need decision—<sup>liii</sup> but even if democracy were the rule of debate, the debate would not be scientific but rhetorical. Here we are back at Aristotle.

Now I would like to make two additions to what we discussed last time. And first regarding chapter 7<sup>liii</sup> on grace, or how was it translated here?

**Student:** Benevolence.

**LS:** Yes, “benevolence” is not quite good. This is the central chapter of the discussion of passion.<sup>liv</sup> Now Aristotle had said earlier at the beginning, 1378a8: the speaker must be thought to be prudent, good, and benevolent—*eunoia*, not *charis*.<sup>lv</sup> Now this benevolence is akin to friendship. You remember what he means by that? If the speaker is regarded as very shrewd, and very fair and so forth, he is not necessarily benevolent to the addressees. Think of a Spartan gentleman addressing an Athenian deliberative assembly. He may be very wise; he may be very virtuous; but he is of course not an Athenian. So he must be presumed to be benevolent. Benevolence is akin to friendship, but not identical to it. As we have seen, you can be benevolent without doing anything for the one to whom you are benevolent. You are benevolent to that jockey, i.e., you wish that he wins, but you can't do anything about it. And of course there is no necessary reciprocity in the case of benevolence; whereas in the case of friendship, reciprocity is essential.

<sup>li</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>liii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>liii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>liv</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>lv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 1.5. 1378a8. Freese's translation: “These qualities are good sense [*phronēsis*], virtue [*aretē*], and goodwill [*eunoia*].” Strauss here lists the corresponding adjectives as “prudent, good, and benevolent” but this seems not a translation but a recounting of the argument. Strauss does not usually refer to *aretē* as good or goodness, but rather virtue (as subsequently in this paragraph) or excellence.

Now here we understand better the peculiar character of *charis* ["benevolence"], as it is here<sup>lvi</sup> called—"grace" we might translate. It is, like benevolence, possible without reciprocity and yet implies doing something for the other. And this is, I believe, what the orator needs. He must show that he has not only a cold, languid benevolence, but that he has done something for the city—especially of course if he is a foreign ambassador, as is particularly clear. But in the other case of mere benevolence . . . . And on the other hand, the unpopular speaker must try to gain the benevolence of his audience by referring<sup>lvii</sup> to what he has *done* for them and not merely to what he feels for them, because words are cheap. And on the other hand, no reciprocity is required. Think of the speaker who is respected because of his virtue but distrusted because of his origin or whatever it may be—or his family, or connections, so there is no reciprocity. There cannot be friendship. Therefore, this I believe is the reason why grace is the central thing. It is *the* thing required in addition to [the] practical wisdom and virtue of the orator.

Now another point which we discussed at some length last time:<sup>15</sup> Aristotle's analysis of hatred in contradistinction to anger. Aristotle says hatred is without pain whereas anger is with pain. And this didn't seem to us, at least not to me, to agree with our own experiences. I believe one can understand this perhaps as follows:<sup>lviii</sup> anger does not go without pain. Now let us consider the context—of course, rhetoric, and more particularly, forensic rhetoric, the judicial context. Anger attenuates—he killed a man, but he did it in anger. Why? Because it is painful. That is the point there. He acted under this pain; whereas desire is not attenuating because it is not painful as such. We discussed the example[s] of homicide and rape, the two characteristic things. You remember also that according to Aristotle in the *Ethics* unjust actions which are committed in error are of course—if they are committed from error about facts, they are not unjust actions. But what is the criterion that it was done by error? The commission has been followed by repentance, i.e., pain. He's sorry for having done it.

Now let us come to the practical issue, the most interesting question connected with hatred: murder. Murder from hatred is inexcusable because hatred is not painful. It follows from this kind of legal logic, because pain is a sign of dissatisfaction. The killing from hatred must be understood as sheer satisfaction. There is no excuse. Since this is so, since he did not suffer at all, since he had sheer satisfaction, this is particularly revolting. And this element of revoltingness belongs to the element which we can call punitiveness, which is such a large part of human life. I wonder whether that is not of some help for understanding what Aristotle says? In other words, not to take it as a general psychological analysis, but as an analysis within the context of judicial logic—I mean the principles on which the people sitting in judgment act. These things have partly changed—not completely—they've partly changed, and this has something to do with compassion. This subject we will come back to.

I know I am very nasty if I don't allow discussion now, but we have now to go on. Let us turn to chapter 8, and read the beginning. Mr. Reinken.

<sup>lvi</sup> In the Freese translation, *charis* is translated as "benevolence."

<sup>lvii</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>lviii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>16</sup> “Let this suffice for grace<sup>lix</sup> and the opposite. We will now state what things and persons excite pity, and the state of mind of those who feel it. Let pity then be a kind of pain excited by the sight of evil, deadly or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it; an evil which one might expect to come upon himself or one of his friends, and when it seems near.”<sup>lx</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here. Now the obvious kinship with fear is noticeable because fear has also to do with a destructive or painful evil. This by the way is important, this kinship between pity and fear. Does anyone here think of it at this moment? Sure, tragedy. The combination of pity and fear is the combination of tragic passion. But of course the kinship with anger is also noticeable because of the unworthy, of the man who does not deserve it. You remember in the case of anger there was said to be a sense of slight? We are not angry if we feel we deserve the evil. Yet of course there is anger also on the basis of any obstruction. We know that. Hence, there is also compassion with people who deserve what they got. That is I think a necessary inference<sup>lxi</sup> from the situation [in regard to] anger and, in addition, an obvious fact. Hobbes says something about people who have compassion (no, it's not in the *Leviathan*) when a young murderer is sent to the gallows, which at that time was a public festival—and then the women, especially the older ones, see this handsome fellow and have very great compassion.<sup>lxii</sup> From their point of view he doesn't deserve it because he's good looking. Sure, this is the wrong kind of compassion from Aristotle's point of view. Aristotle's analysis of the passions has clearly normative implications. Indiscriminate compassion, that he rejects as not worth considering.

Now compassionate men are, among others, the educated men, as we see in line 27 of the same section, and those who believe in the existence of decent men, that is the transition of 1386a1. In other words, you must believe in the existence of decent men, because if you think all men are indecent you can't have pity<sup>17</sup> [for] them. They would all deserve their fate. That's what Aristotle means. Now the question of compassion is of course crucial, especially since the days of Rousseau. Compassion has been said to be the virtue, or the rule, of all good men. Aristotle, of course, does not agree with that at all. The discussion of *miser cordia* in the *Summa*, Second Part, question 30, especially on the basis of Augustine and Cicero, but without any reference to Aristotle, because Aristotle would not be useful for this purpose, is only in fact against Aristotle. And here compassion is treated as a virtue. For Aristotle there is not even a virtue *regarding* the passion of compassion. There is a virtue, but . . . regarding the passion of anger. But there is no virtue regarding the passion of compassion. What is more characteristic for Aristotle is admiration for virtue *in* suffering, rather than compassion *with* suffering. Compassion with suffering is there, but that's not the decisive point. Say Priam, who is taken as an example in the

<sup>lix</sup> In accordance with Strauss's above comment, Mr. Reinken re-translates as “grace” what Freese renders as “benevolence.”

<sup>lx</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 8. 1-2, 1385b11-16.

<sup>lxi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The re-mastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>lxii</sup> Strauss perhaps refers to this passage in Hobbes's *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), Part I, chap. 9, sec. 10, 53: “And therefore men are apt to pity those whom they love: for, whom they love, they think worthy of good, and therefore not worthy of calamity. Thence also it is, that men pity the vices of some they never saw before; and therefore every proper man finds pity amongst women, when he goeth to the gallows.”

*Ethics*, he is not so much an object of compassion.<sup>lxiii</sup> At least equally important is the fact that his virtue shines through his sufferings.<sup>lxiv</sup>

[Now] Hobbes. You mentioned Hobbes in *Leviathan. De Cive*, chapter 3, paragraph 10 is a bit stronger, because compassion is there presented as *commanded* by the natural law, and hence as a virtue.<sup>lxv</sup>

**Student:** In the chapter I quoted he put it the opposite way, that the opposite feeling was not natural.

**LS:** You mean?

**Same Student:** To take pleasure in another's pain is unnatural unless there are problems.

**LS:** . . . I mean, what you may say can never be—it always requires a further reason.

**Same Student:** But the implication is that compassion is more natural.

**LS:** Ja, that is perfectly possible, that Hobbes—<sup>lxvi</sup>but in *De Cive* he goes beyond that. He says in effect that it is a virtue. Now this of course in Hobbes is very simple<sup>18</sup> since *the* root of all virtue is a passion, and the whole problem of the difference between *pathos*, passion, and *ethos*, character, does not exist in Hobbes. Consequently . . . Now let us read the beginning of the next chapter.<sup>lxvii</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now what is called indignation [*nemesis*] is the antithesis to pity; for the being pained at undeserved good fortune is in a manner contrary to being pained at undeserved bad fortune and arises from the same character. And both emotions show good character, for if we—”

**LS:** “They both are the passions of a decent character, or good character.” In other words, bad men do not have that. They can have a kind of spurious compassion, a kind of silly soft-

<sup>lxiii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* I. 9, 1100a9-10; I. 10, 1101a8.

<sup>lxiv</sup> End of passage that is not on the remastered tape, but on original transcript; the remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>lxv</sup> Hobbes, *On the Citizen (De Cive)*, trans. R. Tuck & M. Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), III, 10. This section is titled in the original table of contents as “the Fifth law of nature, on pity,” 43; in the original Latin, “de misericordia,” *Opera Latina (OL)*, ed. W. Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1840), 2: 181. This actual chapter 10 on the fifth law, while not using the word pity or compassion (*miseriordia*), concerns “pardon” (*venia*) or forgiveness of an offence, as “granting of peace,” to “one who repents and gives a guarantee for the future” (III. 10, 48-49; *OL*, 187). Also later in *De Cive* Hobbes invokes pity/compassion (“take pity,” *misertus est*) with reference to citations from scripture presented in support of the fourth law, on being considerate (IV. 7, 61; *OL*, 202) and in relation to the conscience, the justice of internal motive of obedience to the law for the sake of the law, which renders man worthy of God's having pity, “*miserebitur*” (IV. 21, 65; *OL*, 207).

<sup>lxvi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>lxvii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

heartedness. And similarly in indignation, like that fellow who brought his horn into the courtroom, I forgot his name—

**Students:** <sup>lxviii</sup> Stefan. <sup>lxix</sup>

**LS:** Yes. That is also indignation; I mean, that could be construed as indignation, but Aristotle would not allow it.

**Mr. Reinken:** <sup>lxx</sup> “for if we sympathize with and pity those who suffer undeservedly, we ought to be indignant with those who prosper undeservedly; for that which happens beyond a man’s deserts is unjust, wherefore we attribute this feeling even to gods.”

**LS:** Namely “nemesis,” what he calls indignation. All right, let us leave it at that. So the gods have *nemesis*. Well, you know it plays a great role in the ordinary Greek notions. [*Nemesis*] is even made a kind of goddess. <sup>lxxi</sup> But they bring down the high and mighty, which is also said to be the envy of the gods. But the more noble view, which Aristotle suggests, is that they bring down only those high and mighty who do not deserve to be high and mighty. And therefore it is clearly not envy, but indignation, or *nemesis*. The implication is that the gods do not possess compassion . . . . Does this make sense from Aristotle’s point of view? <sup>19</sup>For example, Nicias, a famous man, speaks of <sup>20</sup> the gods <sup>21</sup> [having] pity, somewhere in Thucydides <sup>lxxii</sup> . . . but not from Aristotle’s point of view. And why not? I think this is indicated. <sup>22</sup> Well, very simply: Who has compassion? [He] who knows that he is not invulnerable to evil. And the gods, being deathless, are invulnerable, they are blessed and deathless by nature. Let us read the next paragraph, where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:**

It would seem that envy also is similarly opposed to pity, as being akin to or identical with indignation, although it is really different; envy also is indeed a disturbing pain and directed against good fortune, but not that of one who does not deserve it, but of one who is our equal and like. Now, all who feel envy and indignation must have this in common, that they are disturbed, not because they think that any harm will happen to themselves, but on account of their neighbor; for it will cease to be indignation and envy, but will be fear, if the pain and disturbance arise from the idea that harm may come to themselves from another’s good fortune. <sup>lxxiii</sup>

<sup>lxviii</sup> More than one student provides the answer.

<sup>lxix</sup> Reference unknown; apparently to an event of the day.

<sup>lxx</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>lxxi</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>lxxii</sup> Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Bk. VII, chap. 77. Nicias attempts to encourage his dejected army amidst the increasing misery and danger of their Sicilian expedition. “My hope is still confident of the future, though these calamities, as being not according to the measure of our desert, do indeed make me fear. But they may perhaps cease. For both the enemies have already had sufficient fortune, and the gods, if any of them have been displeased with our voyage, have already sufficiently punished us. Others have invaded their neighbours as well as we; and as their offence, which proceeded of human infirmity, so their punishment also hath been tolerable. And we have reason now both to hope for more favour from the gods (for our case deserveth their pity rather than their hatred) . . . .”

<sup>lxxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 9. 1-3, 1386b8-24.

**LS:** Now the point: *nemesis* too is of course a disturbance, a *perturbatio animi*, a disturbance of the mind. That is true of all passions. All passions are forms of disturbance, of intoxication. It may not be a pleasant drink. It may be a very painful drink. But all are forms of interference. That is understood, only Aristotle thinks they nevertheless fulfill a necessary function in human life. Perhaps we read this a little bit later, shortly before 1387a.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And all these feelings arise from the same character and their contraries from the contrary; for he who is malicious is also envious, since, if the envious man is pained at another's possession or acquisition of good fortune, he is bound to rejoice at the destruction or non-acquisition of the same. Wherefore all these emotions are a hindrance to pity, although they differ for the reasons stated; so that they are all equally useful for preventing any from feeling of pity.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

**LS:** Surely the last is the consequence for the use of these things by the orator. He must show, for example, that the defendant deserves his misery. He says, "I am a poor man," then<sup>23</sup> [the orator] shows that he is poor by his own fault—that takes away that [appeal for pity]. Or that he is not in misery: he claims to be in a condition of starvation, but then he shows that he has quite a big banking account and by perversity he pretends to live in poverty, and so on. But the more important point, I think, is this: why does the decent man feel pleasure at the misery of the wicked and pain at the felicity of the wicked, and pleasure at the felicity of the good and pain at the misery of the good? Shortly before this passage which you read, Aristotle says: "He necessarily expects that what happens to other good men may happen to him too,"<sup>lxxv</sup> i.e., he knows that there is no necessary connection between desert and fate. That is the background.

I believe we come now to that passage where you had some difficulty about the wise man. Do you remember the passage? Let us proceed step by step. In 1387a13-15, which we do not have to read, men are not indignant at the possessors of virtue—I mean, no one is indignant that someone possesses virtue, but at the possessors of wealth and such like things of which the good men are worthy; and the men of good birth, and the noble.<sup>lxxvi</sup> If we try to state Aristotle's views—that the favorites of nature and chance deserve good things—this is the position on which are divided acts in Thucydides, in the speeches. I come from an old, wealthy family; it's owed to me. Now let us . . . from here. Why is this so?

**Mr. Reinken:** "And since that which is old seems closely to resemble that which is natural, it follows that, if two parties have the same good, men are more indignant with the one who has recently acquired it and owes his prosperity to it; for the newly rich cause more annoyance than those who have long possessed or inherited wealth."

**LS:** Through inheritance, that's the key point. In other words, we make a transition, which may be impossible in logic and inevitable in practice, from the good to the well-born, from nature to

<sup>lxxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 9. 5, 1386b33-1387a5.

<sup>lxxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 9. 4, 1386b32-33. The Freese translation of this line: "He [the worthy man] cannot help hoping that what has happened to his like may also happen to himself."

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

the ancients—well-born means of course ancient families. That happens in all societies, even in democratic societies, of course. I mean, think of the Daughters of the American Revolution. What is implied in this (and disregarding any particular group) is the respect for the founders. And old injustice, like Spartan oppression of the . . . was not regarded as oppressive in the way in which new oppression . . . Here you see the difference between modern times, especially the twentieth century, and earlier times, because there is now no longer any recognition officially of any prescription.<sup>lxxvii</sup> 24 Now let us go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The same applies to offices of state, power, numerous friends, virtuous children, and any other advantages of the kind. And if these advantages bring them some other advantage, men are equally indignant; for in this case also the newly rich who attain to office owing to their wealth cause more annoyance than those who have long been wealthy; and similarly in all other cases of the same kind.”

**LS:** In other words, Aristotle refers here to a phenomenon: this dislike of the newly rich, that has not changed, that has not changed. In other words, a certain prejudice in favor of possession, prescription, still survives. And if our Communist enemies or friends (or whatever line you may take) say that this has radically changed, one only has to remind oneself of what a Polish, somewhat heretical Communist<sup>lxxviii</sup> seems to have called MELS, m-e-l-s, which means Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, the initials. They become a simple unit.<sup>lxxix</sup> In other words, the reverence for MELS, or let us even drop Stalin for the time being . . . defer to them, just as Marx had to defer to . . . in one way or the other this is inevitable. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The reason is that the latter seem to possess what belongs to them, the former not; for that which all along<sup>lxxx</sup> 25 shows itself in the same light suggests a reality, so that the former seem to possess what is not theirs.”<sup>lxxx</sup>

**LS:** So what is the reason then? These fellows of the old families are born wealthy, and therefore it seems to belong to them.<sup>26</sup> No prejudice of antiquity is recognized anymore, and that goes further and further of course. And that here is a fundamental difference. But Aristotle still takes this older one as the natural one.

By the way, if the favorites of nature deserve good things, this would of course [be] still more<sup>27</sup> true of the gods than of Alcibiades. Can one be indignant at Zeus and Hera outside the theater (that's another matter)? Can one do that? Is it possible? Think of a public speaker. It's impossible. In other words, I believe one must consider these points, you know, the gods coming in in the background of the rhetorical discussion. The old is distinguished from that which is by nature; the good is something different from the old. This is a thesis which Aristotle states so simply in his discussion of Hippodamus in the Second Book of the *Politics*, a terrific sentence:

<sup>lxxvii</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>lxxviii</sup> It is possible that Strauss is referring to Leszek Kolakowski; see *Main Currents of Marxism*, trans. P. S. Falla (Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>lxxix</sup> Beginning of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape breaks off at this point.

<sup>lxxx</sup> End of a passage from original transcript. The remastered tape resumes at this point.

<sup>lxxx</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 9. 9-10, 1387a15-26.

We do not seek the ancient, but the good.<sup>lxxxii</sup> This is, one can say, the most revolutionary principle which exists. And to that extent Aristotle was not a conservative. Only Aristotle said that there is a presumption in favor of the old contrasted with the untried new—a presumption, not a necessity.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>29</sup>What is natural in this? . . . Well, was he not also born with his property? Hence this is natural. That the situation is somewhat different does not escape Aristotle, but still it has a certain plausibility on which people act. Yes. We have now to proceed with the chapter. We turn now to chapter 10. Let us read 1387b23, the beginning of that chapter.<sup>30</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is equally clear for what reason, and of whom, and in what frame of mind, men are envious, if envy is a kind of pain at the sight of good fortune in regard to the goods mentioned; in the case of those like themselves; and not for the sake of a man getting anything, but because of others possessing it.”

**LS:** So here then the consideration is similar people, not good people: good or bad people, and to that extent, envy as such is morally neutral. I mean the envious man is not concerned with the goodness or badness of him whom he envies. He is only concerned with his belonging to the same group. I mean, no American farmer—no, that would be a bad example. Say [that] no Brazilian farmer is envious of a Chinese farmer. But in that village, the farmer who does badly is likely to be envious of the other man. We take our terms—envy presupposes this term of comparison.

<sup>31</sup>There are differences, and I believe the difference between the two sexes is not uninteresting because, I believe, that envy and jealousy are somewhat more common among the female sex than among the male, I mean especially the extent. Because femininity is here the term of comparison, whereas in the title of men, not all men are particularly concerned with masculinity . . . well, there are many exceptions and the ladies in this class of course do not share this weakness [laughter], but I only wanted to bring it in as one sign of what Aristotle means: that man is not simply envious of man. That is the point he wants to make. It must be a group. The group can be very large, but it is a subdivision of the human race. If there should be universal envy, then this<sup>32</sup> might be a consequence of the democratic principles: “I deserve the same as the best,” if this is a possible thought. But this is not that natural envy which Aristotle has in mind. Now let us read only a few points. In 1387b, you may go on where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For those men will be envious who have, or seem to have, others ‘like’ them. I mean like in birth, relationship, age, moral habit, reputation, and possessions. And those will be envious who possess all but one of these advantages; that is why those who attempt great things and succeed are envious, because they think that everyone is trying to deprive them of their own. And those who are honoured for some special reason, especially for wisdom or happiness.”<sup>lxxxiii</sup>

**LS:** I think<sup>33</sup> this is a starting point of the view that the gods are envied because the gods have everything. But then there are certain honors, special honors given, say, to Pericles and then *they*

<sup>lxxxii</sup> *Politics* II. 5. 12, 1269a4-5: “And in general all men really seek what is good, not what was customary with their forefathers.”

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 10. 1-3, 1387b22-31.

should have this honor. And especially people who are honored for wisdom and bliss. The mere being honored, say, for wealth—that would not be important, because every sane being knows that wealth is not the greatest good. But wisdom is a superior good, and happiness or felicity or bliss of course is also.

**Student:** Doesn't this imply that those who are honored for wisdom and happiness are base?

**LS:** Where? They are envious, that's how I understand this.

**Same Student:** But envy, isn't that characteristic of base men?

**LS:** Now let me see. Or maybe you are right, because he gives an enumeration of those who are envious. Yes, that is true. That would mean—ja, I think you are right. Those who are honored<sup>34</sup> on the ground of wisdom are envious. But still, the question is whether, assuming . . . are those who are honored on the grounds of wisdom or felicity in fact wise? That was the point you made.

**Same Student:** But they apparently aren't wise or happy.

**LS:** But here he takes the loose—you remember when he speaks here of happiness, you have to read the chapter on happiness and see what happiness means, and then you will find a long piece in which wisdom is practically absent. You remember that wisdom was mentioned at the beginning—

**Same Student:** He defines happiness in terms of all these things we discussed.

**LS:** Without wisdom.

**Same Student:** Yes, without wisdom.

**LS:** So they are envious, but those who are honored are envious, not the wise as wise. And then he says, who are anxious to be regarded as wise, because they are ambitious in regard to wisdom. Or was there something in the sequel you had in mind? This was the passage?

**Same Student:** This was the passage.

**LS:** Now, we have to read a few more passages at the beginning of the next chapter about emulation. What Aristotle has in mind is fundamentally this simple distinction. When someone is confronted with a more or less equal man—I mean socially equal, age, this kind of thing—who is superior to him, there are two possibilities: either envy or emulation. Envy is base; emulation is noble. In other words, envy only would like to prevent the other from doing his work, whereas emulation would induce the fellow to surpass him. In other words, that is compatible with the free recognition of the merits, whereas the other leads to denigration. The distinction is in itself I think clear enough. Whether they are so radically distinguished<sup>35</sup> that one can say that there is not a possibility of envy in the man who is emulous, that's a long question. But for crude practical purposes the distinction is clear. Just as the difference between engaging in an open fight and shooting a man in the back. In other words, one wants to win honestly, and the other

does not want to,<sup>36</sup> he can't see the superiority of the other and wants to extinguish him, that's all. Now read this, Mr. Reinken, the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** "The frame of mind in which men feel emulation, what things and persons give rise to it, will be clear from the following considerations. Let us assume that emulation is a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to obtain, in the possession of those who naturally resemble us—"

**LS:** "Naturally" is here of course very ambiguous—"who are similar to us by nature."

**Mr. Reinken:** "pain not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not. Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one, owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbour possessing them. Necessarily, then, those are emulous who hold—"<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

**LS:** We cannot read that, but the main distinction still Aristotle develops there.<sup>37</sup> We must not forget one point: When Aristotle speaks of these nice passions like emulation and compassion and indignation, these are all forms of perturbation,<sup>38</sup> respectable one[s] but nevertheless something eating a man (you can put it this way), and this eating takes away from your intellectual energy. However, here one point comes in which is I think of great importance: If the passions are ingredients of moral virtue, for example, that the moral man controls fear, controls emulation or pity or whatever it may be, but he is not free of them, then moral virtue as moral virtue cannot be strictly speaking serenity. To the extent to which I can trust the rather good index of the *Ethics* by Bywater,<sup>lxxxv</sup> the word "perturbation," *tarachē* (which Aristotle uses here) never occurs in the *Ethics*, but it would require a very thorough check. I would not trust any index completely.

Now the last three chapters deal with the three forms of age: youth, old age, and the middle age. And the middle age is of course the best from Aristotle's point of view, because always the mean is the best, it's the peak. The young are lovers of honor and victory, rather than lovers of money. A greedy and stingy young man is more conspicuous than a greedy and stingy old man. They are good-natured, full of hope, and trusting people, especially regarding . . . 1389a20.

**Mr. Reinken:** "full of hope, for they are naturally as hot-blooded as those who are drunken with wine, and besides they have not yet experienced many failures. For the most part they live in hope, for hope is concerned with the future as memory is with the past."

**LS:** Youth have their whole life before them.

**Mr. Reinken:**

For the young the future is long, the past short; for in the morning of life it is not possible for them to remember anything, but they have everything to hope; which makes them

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 11. 1-2, 1388a31-1388b1.

<sup>lxxxv</sup> Ingram Bywater, *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea—recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit I. Bywater* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890).

easy to deceive, for they readily hope. And they are more courageous, for they are full of passion and hope, and the former of these prevents them fearing, while the latter inspires them with confidence, for no one fears when angry, and hope of some advantage inspires confidence. And they are bashful, for as yet they fail to conceive of other things that are noble, but have been educated solely by convention.

**LS:** Let us stop here for one moment. Now, first: the hopeful character. It can also be stated, youth is the age of illusion—of noble illusions, but of illusion. Young people know only the things which are noble by convention. Now is this not an exaggeration? Aristotle, I think, would argue this way: Even the things noble by nature they still know only through authority, through having listened to their elders; and to that extent, even the things by nature noble are for them noble by convention. And therefore, because of this fact, they are given to feeling shame. I believe what Aristotle means, [that] because it is only by *nomos*, the noble—no true convictions, many lapses. Or the judge regarding things which are in the element of opinion is [itself] opinion, public opinion—outside of oneself, and therefore the sense of shame. Aristotle could have said of course that young people are given to sense of shame because they cannot possibly have acquired that firmness in virtuous action which requires long experience, as he says in the *Ethics*. But he doesn't say that here, and one would have to balance these two different statements and see which comes closer. Now go on a bit.

**Mr. Reinken:**

They are high-minded, for they have not yet been humbled by life nor have they experienced the force of necessity; further, there is high-mindedness in thinking oneself worthy of great things, a feeling which belongs to one who is full of hope.

In their actions, they prefer the noble to the useful; their life is guided by their character rather than by calculation, for the latter aims at the useful, virtue at the noble. At this age more than any other they are fond of their friends and companions, because they take pleasure in living in company and as yet judge nothing by expediency, not even their friends.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. Yet the difficulty is this: Youths do have character, don't they, or virtue? And when he says here, "they live more by ethos than by calculation"—the youths have character or virtue, but no practical wisdom. The virtue which they have is a kind of what Aristotle calls in the Sixth Book of the *Ethics* natural virtue—not virtue strictly speaking. It's something which goes naturally with youth. Aristotle is of course thinking of youth at its best, I don't have to tell you that.

What Aristotle describes here is now, or at least when I was young (I couldn't say if that has changed or not) was called the well-known idealism of youth. They do not have a sufficient awareness of how many things are impossible, at least practically impossible. Of course the word "idealism" doesn't exist in Aristotle, nor in Plato for that matter, because there are no ideals from their point of view. But <sup>39</sup>what Aristotle means is something similar: the love of the noble and the disdain of all prudential considerations, and this is of course the source of everything.

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<sup>lxxxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 11. 8-13, 1389a18-1389b2.

He speaks in the sequel also of the cocksureness of young people. They believe<sup>40</sup> [they] know everything and they swear it is so. Nor do they know how soon they will see something else which will render questionable what they now firmly assert. Let us read this absolute beauty, which we must read together, line 10-12 of this same page 1389b. "They love laughter."

**Mr. Reinken:** "And they are fond of laughter and therefore witty; for wit is cultured insolence."<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

**LS:** Is this not a beautiful statement?<sup>41</sup> I prefer this sentence to ten pounds of modern psychology [laughter].<sup>42</sup> I don't believe that you find anywhere a more perfect formulation, also aesthetically, because the element of insolence of course belongs to that.<sup>43</sup> Well, in the case of teasing it's obvious. "Culture" is of course not properly in the word *pepaideumenē*; "educated" is better. Wit is educated insolence. Yes, that is the better translation.

Now the old men ([that is the next chapter], we don't have to labor the point) are nasty and grumpy, low-minded and stingy, loquacious and moaning [laughter]—these are things which are in a general way true. Why does Aristotle put this? Aristotle is compelled to counteract the common opinion regarding the venerability of what are now called the senior citizens [laughter]. You see, there is . . . after Aristotle had gone so far as to say the good is not identical with the old; and since the premise, the good is the old, necessarily leads to the fact that the senior citizens are regarded as at the peak of wisdom—because they are the transmitters of the old, they are closer to antiquity than the later ones, by 30 years, that's a lot of time—therefore Aristotle is under compulsion I think to counteract that, that's his point.

Now, middle-aged is of course the best time for virtue. It's the prime, the peak. Where to put it is hard to say: Aristotle says up to 49. Well, the time when you can be, if you are lucky, a senior executive—you know, with some grey hair here [laughter] . . . Now what would be necessary, which we cannot do here, would be a close comparison, especially of chapters 12 and 13, namely which items in the discussion of youth are paralleled in the discussion of age and vice versa, and then see some more subtle things. I have not done it, but someone, some George, should.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted "A minor change in our proceedings for the foreseeable future: stop at 5:15 sharp [tape breaks off, then subsequently resumes after some time]."

<sup>2</sup> Deleted "refer—."

<sup>3</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>4</sup> Deleted "as."

<sup>5</sup> Moved "is."

<sup>6</sup> Deleted "that."

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<sup>7</sup> Moved “much.” Deleted “more.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “this is an open question whether they.”

<sup>9</sup> Moved “also.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “the point which.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “this.”

<sup>12</sup> Deleted “this is—.”

<sup>13</sup> Moved “only.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “this is always of course.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “and that was.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “[top of 245].”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “with.”

<sup>18</sup> Deleted “because.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “I mean there may have been.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “—that.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “have.”

<sup>22</sup> Deleted “—and this is one of the passages which you had in mind I believe, in Chapter Five towards the end. No, no, this was his old discussion which we have discussed before.”

<sup>23</sup> Deleted “he.”

<sup>24</sup> Part of another Strauss comment was improperly inserted here at some point. The excerpt, beginning “No prejudice of antiquity...”, has been correctly repositioned on the following page, as indicated by endnotes.

<sup>25</sup> A comment of Strauss was improperly inserted here on the re-mastered tape and previous transcript, apparently due to some splicing of the tape. This section occurs between two breaks in the tape. This section does cohere in this place in the Session with the subsequent sequence of readings and comments. This section, beginning “What is natural...” has been correctly repositioned below as indicated by endnotes.

<sup>26</sup> Beginning of a passage that had been incorrectly inserted into one of Strauss’ earlier comments in this session (see endnote 53). This excerpt has been returned to its original place.

<sup>27</sup> Moved” be.”

<sup>28</sup> End of a passage that had been incorrectly inserted into one of Strauss’ earlier comments in this session.

<sup>29</sup> Beginning of a passage that was out of sequence on the re-mastered tape and previous version of this transcript, and has been repositioned in its proper place. (The original tape breaks off immediately before and after this section, so it is detached from the recorded flow of the session. There appears to be an incorrect splicing/sequence on the tape. On the re-mastered tape, after the break in the end of the original reel-to-reel at the end of this paragraph, we jump directly into Reinken’s reading “shows itself in the same light...” but such a sequence makes no sense, since

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that reading is chapter 9, whereas here there must follow the reading which Strauss clearly introduces, Chapter 10.1, 1387b23. Therefore this section has been moved to its only conceivably correct place immediately prior to the reading of chapter 10.1, 1387b23, "It is equally clear...", which also begins after a break in the tape on the re-mastered version. This corrects what were implausible sequences in both places (the previous tape/transcript sequence before the reading of chapter 10 is implausible though not evidently incoherent).

<sup>30</sup> Beginning of a passage that was out of place on the re-mastered tape and previous version of this transcript, and has been placed in its proper position.

<sup>31</sup> Deleted "And this is of course—."

<sup>32</sup> Deleted "would—."

<sup>33</sup> Deleted "this would lead—."

<sup>34</sup> Deleted "on wisdom."

<sup>35</sup> Deleted "there are not—that."

<sup>36</sup> Deleted "he only wants to—."

<sup>37</sup> Deleted "But it is also made clear—."

<sup>38</sup> Deleted "a."

<sup>39</sup> Deleted "there is something"; moved "something similar."

<sup>40</sup> Deleted "to."

<sup>41</sup> Deleted "I think this—."

<sup>42</sup> Deleted "Now the old men." Moved "that is the next chapter.." to the following paragraph, again placed after "Now the old men.", which Strauss repeats there (after making a false start with this phrase in this paragraph before continuing on with commentary on the young).

<sup>43</sup> Deleted "If you—."

<sup>44</sup> The original reel-to-reel tape ends abruptly, and possibly prematurely, only to start again in the midst of another of Strauss' comments. This appears to be the start of a new session, as Strauss is discussing a paper written by a student as he generally does at the opening of each session. It is also possible that Strauss is commenting at the end of this session on a student paper given earlier or to be given in the next session.

**Session 10: May 13, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —how necessary it is, what you did not even pretend to do, but what should be done someday by someone, to give a truly philosophic interpretation of the *Rhetoric*. Meaning this: To [first] make<sup>1</sup> clear, without relying on the fact that rhetoric is a well-known part of our great tradition, without relying on that—in other words, going behind the establishment of rhetoric in the Aristotelian sense, just look freshly at it and see in the first place (and this means by having read the book *n* times): What is the point of view from which Aristotle looks at the human things in writing the *Rhetoric*? And there are of course many phrases [and] catchwords available for that, but I'll avoid using these catchwords.

And the only flaw which I discerned, and which is absolutely trivial, was this: that you omitted the second subdivision of imagined examples, the fables. You started subdividing them and then you mention that—but this is really a trivial thing, and the only tiny external flaw which I could discern. But, good.

Now to begin with the last point or one which came rather late: Why does Aristotle discuss only possibility, and to some extent impossibility, and not necessity? I mean, I do not wish to quibble and say that impossibility is of course necessity in reverse. Why is he concerned with the possible and not with the necessary?

**Mr. Grant:** Well, in public speaking, I don't think we can very often reach the necessary.

**LS:** More simply. Yes?

**Another Student:** We don't care about something that is done by the necessary assumptions—

**LS:** But look at any debate. If the one answer were evidently necessary, there wouldn't be a debate. There must be at least a show of reason on the other side. A man is accused. If it were settled before the trial that he is guilty, there would be no argument.

**Another Student:** . . . discussing the possible and the impossible, don't they invoke necessity quite often?

**LS:** Yes, but they are not the burden, that could come in only in a subsidiary fashion. For example, that all men are mortal is tacitly presupposed in every discussion. But this is not the theme. People don't argue about it.

Now a few more points about what you said. The question about wealth and piety we must discuss. You discerned the importance of that point. We must discuss this coherently when we come to that question. You saw quite rightly that the most striking feature of Aristotle's discussion of noble birth is a critique of noble birth. So if you read in some historians of ideas that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries people began to doubt<sup>2</sup> the virtues of the feudal order based on noble birth and that this is a terrific event, they haven't read this chapter of the *Rhetoric*, one can say. This was only simply restored as something very trivial. Well of course there are many other passages. Plato says it very simply in the *Theaetetus*:<sup>3</sup> this man says he has

64 ancestors on both sides and all this kind of thing, a beautiful pedigree, and Plato simply says every one of us [has this].<sup>i</sup> So I mean there is a silly prejudice in favor of—that Aristotle is not, how should I say, a Jacobin, goes without saying, but this is not a peculiarity of Jacobinism to doubt the respectability of nobility as such.

At the beginning of your paper you raised the very grave question, namely regarding the goods of fortune with which Aristotle is concerned in these chapters 15-17: What precisely is a good of fortune? And Aristotle mentions here only noble birth, wealth, and power, political power here, and not for example health and beauty. And you saw that the definition of goods of fortune in other places differs from the one used here.<sup>4</sup> But if we look at the context I believe we can understand the reason. Now let us first take the rich and the poor as one example.<sup>5</sup> When he discussed the old and the young, Aristotle came up with a conclusion [as to] which is the best age. Do you remember that?

**Mr. Grant:** Middle age.

**LS:** What would be the analogy regarding the issue of rich and poor?

**Mr. Grant:** A man with enough to live, but not too much.

**LS:** The middle class, we can say. And is there any external evidence that Aristotle held this view?

**Mr. Grant:** Well yes, I think his own life—

**LS:** No, I mean this is not enough. I mean writings. We are here—what is done in the writings is . . . the work.

**Another Student:** The *Politics*?

**LS:** *Politics*—a long discussion that the middle class is the best.<sup>ii</sup> Good. But interestingly enough, Aristotle does not make this remark here regarding the rich and the poor. Now if we look at these things we will see [that] in the case of the rich and the poor, and the noble-born and the base-born, it is perfectly clear. What is the difference between such things as the noble and the base, the rich and the poor on the one hand, and the beautiful and the ugly, or the healthy and the sick on the other?

**Mr. Grant:** Responsibility.

**LS:** Why responsibility? Are people responsible for their noble birth? Of course not.

**Mr. Grant:** Oh, I meant noble character . . . .

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<sup>i</sup> *Theaetetus* 174e-175b.

<sup>ii</sup> *Politics* IV. 9, 1295a36-1296a22.

**LS:** Do you mean whether a man is say six feet tall or four feet tall is not properly called a good of fortune? He is born to that. Still, don't we speak of the accident of birth still, which seems to indicate that from one point of view nobility and so on can be called goods of fortune? No, but something very obvious. The noble and the base are distinct parts of society. The rich and the poor are distinct parts of society; whereas the ugly and the beautiful are not distinct parts of society, except by accident. It might be that a very fine-looking conqueror race becomes the ruling society by conquest, and then<sup>6</sup> by accident the noble-born would be the beautiful ones and the ugly ones would be the lower class. It could [be so], but that is accidental, not essential. But<sup>7</sup> it is obvious that, whatever you may think about beauty, it is not as such politically relevant. I have mentioned more than once the case of McNutt, of now-forgotten greatness, who was notorious for his being handsome. And it didn't prove to be an asset in political life.<sup>iii</sup> People now say even that one of the advantages of the present president compared with his predecessor is that he is not so attractive, or at least not so photogenic.<sup>iv</sup> I believe photogenic is one subdivision of beauty [laughter]; I have never given it any thought.

So I believe this, in other words: Aristotle picks those differences which are as such politically relevant, and those between the men in power and those who have no power is obviously politically relevant too. These are the goods of fortune which are politically relevant. The others he disregards here. Whether that is sufficient to clarify this matter is another question. The ordinary distinction is the distinction between internal goods, or goods of the soul; bodily goods, to which of course health and beauty would belong, and strength; and external goods. The most simple case: wealth is of course external. But also, for example, the reputation is external to you insofar as it is not a part of your immediate being as a living being. Good. I will leave it at these remarks and turn right away to chapter 15.

Now these chapters 15-17 deal with the goods from fortune which as such have an effect on character. That is Aristotle's principle of selection. Now whether beauty and ugliness have as such an effect on character is at least a question, whereas in a broad consideration wealth and poverty do have such an effect, because there are certain group characteristics. We cannot well speak of group characteristics of the beautiful on the one hand and the ugly on the other. Good. Now chapter 15, noble birth, and this deals indirectly with the question of the relation of the good and the ancient—obviously, because noble birth is ancient lineage, you know. This question of the good and the ancient has been taken up last time in 1387a16 and 24-25. We cannot read that now. Let us turn now to chapter 15, 1390b, near the beginning of the paragraph. Here when he<sup>8</sup> [says] that these men of noble birth are in the habit of despising, of looking down on those men, those contemporaries of theirs, who are similar to their own ancestors. Do you have that?

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<sup>iii</sup> Paul V. McNutt (1891-1955), Governor of Indiana 1933-37, held various posts under Franklin D. Roosevelt's administrations. McNutt lost his bid for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency in 1936 when FDR decided to seek a second term; FDR, recalling McNutt's dismissive opposition to him at the 1932 Democratic Convention, denied McNutt the Vice-Presidency. Roosevelt referred to McNutt as "that platinum blond S.O.B from Indiana." *The Governors of Indiana*, ed. L. Gugin & J. St. Clair (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2006), 291. See also I. George Blake, *Paul V. McNutt: Portrait of a Hoosier Statesman*, (Indianapolis, 1966).

<sup>iv</sup> Strauss refers to Lyndon B. Johnson compared with his predecessor, John F. Kennedy.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Such men are prone to look down even upon those who are as important as their ancestors, because the same things are more honourable and inspire greater vanity when remote than when they are recent.”

**LS:** Again, this is the prejudice of antiquity. What he translates by “vanity” is more literally translated, “a good subject of boasting,” one could say. A good subject of boasting. The ancient has a certain glamour; and this glamour of the ancient is because this famous ancestor who founded that ducal house—say, under Henry VIII by [de]spoiling monasteries as some people say—may be far inferior to, say, the present Lord Russell,<sup>v</sup> for all I know. Maybe. And yet<sup>9</sup> the founder has a reputation which the present lord, in spite of his liberal principles, can never acquire, because—400 years [laughter]. Now read on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The idea of noble birth refers to excellence of race, that of noble character to not degenerating from the family type—”

**LS:** I.e., that’s to say<sup>10</sup> the implication is that a true nobleman would have both virtuous ancestors and himself virtuous. But there is no necessity of course for that. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “a quality not as a rule found in those of noble birth, most of whom are good for nothing.”

**LS:** Or are “cheap” is more literally translated. Very few nobleman are themselves noble. Yes. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For in the generations of men there is a kind of crop as in the fruits of the field; sometimes, if the race is good, for a certain period men out of the common are born in it, and then it deteriorates.”

**LS:** The famous families like that of Bach, some families of mathematicians, some ruling houses. After all, look at the Hohenzollern house: you had the Great Elector and Frederick the Great, a relatively short succession. And there are other ruling houses which produced very outstanding men. But this is only for a time. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Highly gifted families often degenerate into maniacs, as, for example, the descendants of Alcibiades and the elder Dionysius; those that are stable into fools and dullards, like the descendants of Cimon, Pericles, and Socrates.”<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** Isn’t that interesting?<sup>11</sup> The reason for this whole thing, in other words, is *nature*, nature. [In our time]<sup>12</sup> people would say the laws of heredity. Surely a bit more is known about these matters now than was before, but the fundamental . . . remains. Precisely on the basis of the

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<sup>v</sup> Lord Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), British philosopher and Third Earl Russell. Considered a founder of the school of analytic philosophy. Russell’s prominent social criticism was liberal and pacifist. (Russell’s ancestors did rise to the peerage under the Tudors and apparently participated in, or at the least were prominent during, the Dissolution of the Monasteries. It is unclear whether Strauss is aware of this historical fact or merely refers to the historical plausibility of the comparison he suggests).

<sup>vi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 15. 2-3, 1390b19-31.

Mendelian laws, you know, you cannot be sure which abominable great grand-uncle will assert himself into your first-born son. The gamble remains therefore fundamentally the same.

It is interesting here that here Alcibiades is more gifted than Pericles from this remark—which incidentally is, I think, also the suggestion of Thucydides in his *History*. But more strange is that he is even more gifted than Socrates, because he belongs to these steady fellows—steady and not gifted. And what Aristotle thought of is not clear. Perhaps he lacked that brilliance which Alcibiades had. That is possible. It is dark to understand this passage. But what he thinks of here is what Plato meant by the distinction between the manly and the sedate, sober, moderate—a favorite distinction of Plato. Only Aristotle reinterpreted it for a reason which is not so clear.

Now this much about noble birth. But you were perfectly right, Mr. Grant. The criticism of the very notion of nobility, of noble descent, is surely important, and in Aristotle's case it is perfectly free from all the envy and all these kinds of thing which have played such a great role in modern criticism of hereditary nobility.

Regarding wealth, discussed in the next chapter, we may limit ourselves to a statement towards the end. What is the ethos<sup>13</sup> of wealth? In lines 13-14: "In a word."

**Mr. Reinken:** "the character of the rich man is that of a fool favoured by fortune."<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, that's all he says of the rich man as rich man, which doesn't mean that there are not rich men who are sensible and decent and virtuous, but *qua* rich, that's it. I mean, if Aristotle was anti-democratic,<sup>14</sup> [which] in a sense he doubtless was, this had nothing to do with vulgar prejudice. This can be shown by such passages. He regarded a certain amount of wealth as highly desirable for office-holders, which is a defensible position because<sup>15</sup> how would they have the leisure if they do not have independent means? And if these independent means are supplied by a party, then he is at the mercy of the party vehicle. He is no longer an independent man. One simply should forget about these idiotic explanations of Aristotle's non-democratic view in terms of mere class prejudice. That goes without saying.

Now let us come to the last chapter about power,<sup>16</sup> here surely meaning political power. Let us read this brief chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:** "In regard to power, nearly all the characters to which it gives rise are equally clear; for power, compared with wealth, exhibits partly identical, and partly superior characteristics."

**LS:** So in other words, power *qua* power is better than wealth *qua* wealth, contrary to the view which one hears sometimes ascribed to Lord Acton that power corrupts.<sup>viii</sup> Power corrupts less than wealth according to Aristotle. It *may* corrupt, surely, but it doesn't necessarily. Yes.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 16. 3, 1391a13-14.

<sup>viii</sup> John E. E. Dalberg-Acton, Lord Acton (1834-1902), English Catholic historian and politician, wrote his most famous line in an 1877 letter critical of Pope Pius IX's promulgation of the doctrine of papal infallibility: "All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." *Essays on Freedom and Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), 364.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Thus, the powerful are more ambitious and more manly in character than the rich, since they aim at the performance of deeds which their power gives them the opportunity of carrying out.”

**LS:** In other words,<sup>17</sup> the rich as rich do not have this incentive. They want to enjoy their wealth. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And they are more energetic; for being obliged to look after their power they are always on the watch. And they are dignified rather than heavily pompous; for their rank renders them more conspicuous, so that they avoid excess; and this dignity is a mild and decent pomposity. And their wrong doings are never petty, but great.”<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Ja, which is in a way something good. <sup>18</sup>They would not forge checks and this kind of thing, and are not likely to . . . the case of Bobby Baker would probably prove that he doesn't even belong to the powerful but to the rich rather, or to the would-be rich. Good.

Now this remark about “dignity” is especially interesting. The word is in Greek *semnotēs*. One could also translate it by “solemnity” and “stateliness.” It's a “soft and decent-looking heaviness, importunity, pomposity”; in other words, a mitigated pomposity; a decent form of pomposity is dignity. You see Aristotle can be very nastily epigrammatic if he wants to [be]. Think back<sup>19</sup> [to] the definition of wit, which we discussed last time, as educated insolence. I believe it is more true to present-day English, if I can be trusted in this matter, to translate it as “civilized insolence.” I think the word “civilized” has taken over much of the meaning of “educated.” Now we must not mistake the description of the rich and the powerful for describing the businessman and the politician. That is absolutely clear, because it wouldn't be true of the businessman. The businessman is not as such a man concerned with just enjoying his wealth. That's clear. And the politician is also not necessarily concerned with this kind of deeds, conspicuous deeds, which Aristotle has in mind.<sup>20</sup> A wheeler and dealer is also a politician. That one must warn [against]—I mean one must keep this in mind, otherwise one can make a mistake.

What is now here translated “dignity” is not mentioned or discussed in the *Ethics*. The magnanimous man, who is a perfectly virtuous man, does not have this quality of dignity. But it is treated as a virtue in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the smaller ethics, 1233b35ff, and is there presented as a mean between self-willedness and obsequiousness—in other words, [between the] self-willed [one] who is completely unconcerned with the others, and the obsequious [one] who is too much concerned with the others. But characteristically in the more perfect *Ethics* it is not mentioned. What is the definition of dignity given by La Rochefoucauld, a man notorious for his malicious tongue?<sup>x</sup> I forgot what it is, but it was also a nasty remark about the pomposity implied in it. That's a truth that was obviously known to Aristotle, as you see from here.

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 17. 1-4, 1391a20-29.

<sup>x</sup> Strauss may be referring to La Rochefoucauld, Maxim 285: “Magnanimity is tolerably defined by its name; nevertheless one could say that it is the good sense of pride, and the noblest way to see praises.” *Maxims*, trans. Stuart D. Warner and Stéphane Douard (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001).

Now we must now come to the passage a bit later; it is<sup>21</sup> at the transition from 1391a to b, what he says about this kind of people, where he comes to the question of the gods. “These people are too arrogant and too unreasonable because of their good luck.”<sup>xi</sup> Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, although men are more arrogant and thoughtless owing to good fortune, it is accompanied by a most precious quality. Fortunate men stand in a certain relation to the divinity and love the gods, having confidence in them owing to the benefits they have received from fortune.”<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** Now there is only one thing which must be changed: “One most excellent character, *ethos*, follows good luck,”<sup>xiii</sup> and that [is] namely what we can loosely call piety, at least a piety of sorts. This love of the gods is not treated as a virtue, i.e., as a good *ethos*, a good character, in the *Ethics*. Now this is of course very strange, as Mr. Grant did observe, and we cannot help thinking of the diametrically opposed tradition in which we were brought up—just to mention the very common views of the term “the poor ones,” in the sense of the pious ones, in the Psalms.<sup>xiv</sup> Now in his comment on the passage, Cope says, “‘lovers of the gods’ (God-fearing, we say).”<sup>xv</sup> But he doesn’t reflect sufficiently about the very crucial difference between god-loving and god-fearing. Now Aristotle must have known the fact to which you referred, that people frequently in misery or distress turn to the gods. I mean, there is sufficient evidence from other Greek writers that this was very common [and] very known to them, but why does Aristotle speak only of this side of the matter? What position could, say, a Greek (but not merely Greek) take towards his wealth with a view to thinking of the gods?

**Student:** Well, he could think that the gods had given him this wealth.

**LS:** Well that’s what they do, that’s fine. But they could also take another view, especially if they are very wealthy and everything goes fine. If they are not thoughtless people, what apprehension—

**Another Student:** The gods might be jealous of them.

**LS:** Envious. Envy. And this is what Aristotle thinks is a lower kind of piety than to be grateful to the gods and love the gods because they have been good to them. This does not completely dispose of the other, but the fearing of the gods I think Aristotle would have disliked as fearing. There is a Greek word for fearing gods, a very common word, *deisidaimonia*: fearing of divinities, not of demons, because demons is then understood in the Christian sense, but fearing of divine beings. That is the equivalent to what is now called superstition, and that I think indicates the Aristotelian reason. The fear of the gods he doesn’t want. But the best thing possible (without going to the question whether the popular gods exist at all) once one accepts the [gods], then the best position possible is that one loves them. And this is easier for the lucky

<sup>xi</sup> Apparently Strauss’s translation of the beginning of the passage about to be read.

<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 17. 6, 1391a33-b3.

<sup>xiii</sup> Apparently Strauss’s translation of II. 17. 6, 1391b1-2.

<sup>xiv</sup> See, e.g., Psalms 10, 34, 72, 74.

<sup>xv</sup> *Rhetoric with Commentary*, 2: 170.

ones. This is a very sober statement of Aristotle. I do not know whether this satisfies you, Mr. Grant, as a statement of the truth—no?

**Mr. Grant:** It doesn't seem quite—

**LS:** But is it not reasonable as a position of Aristotle?

**Mr. Grant:** Yes.

**LS:** And you are—in other words, what is the provision for the poor?

**Mr. Grant:** Right.

**LS:** We are absolutely left to our own devices to figure out Aristotle's answer to that, absolutely left to our own devices. Would he wish to take away a comfort, perhaps the only comfort which the poor and the distressed have?

**Mr. Grant:** No.

**LS:** Why not?

**Mr. Grant:** It's obvious.

**LS:** Well, I would like to spell out this obviousness—

**Mr. Grant:** Politically it would help—

**LS:** No, no, simpler. One thing which I think we simply must assume and which will be confirmed: Aristotle was a decent man.<sup>22</sup> I think he generates [a] kind of trust and this must also not be abandoned for slight and transient causes. So if we are confronted with such a question, we should say how would a decent man, a man who says that compassion belongs to a decent character (you remember, it's not a virtue but it belongs to a decent character) [regard it]? From compassion he would tolerate it but he would say this, and this is I think crucial: since this kind of thing belongs to the poor, it is also stricken with the essential defect of the poor.

Well, I give you another example where I make this clear to myself, because these things are really not easy to find. Some of the most important presuppositions are of course not stated because they never became an issue for anyone. For example,<sup>23</sup> when the Greek democracy<sup>xvi</sup>—and Aristotle only formulates that—defines itself as “rule of all,” and in fact Aristotle says [it is] the rule of the poor. Now that it defined itself as the rule of all is clearly demonstrable because they did not exclude the rich and the gentlemen from citizenship. If they said “rule of the poor,” the [rich and the gentlemen] would be excluded.<sup>24</sup> They are in a way excluded, because they are in a minority (you know this famous objection to formal democracy), this is true. But why did they not argue: “We are those who are underprivileged, poor, and the only way in which we can redress the balance is by political power.” The others have what now would be called economic

<sup>xvi</sup> Strauss initially says “when Aristotle,” then immediately corrects himself to “the Greek democracy.”

power. Why did they not do it? I think a very simple reason, which we can all understand, although it is no longer of any use in present-day political discussion: you cannot base a right on a defect. Poverty is a defect, *sterēsis*. It's a defect; it may have some accidental advantages, that's another matter, but in itself it's a defect. But freedom—being a free-born son of the country, that's an excellence, you know? This kind of approach is underlying that, so that what belongs essentially to the poor, what is at home in poverty, is by this very fact discredited. This doesn't mean that it can't be abolished and that one should be callous regarding it. But<sup>25</sup> I mean poverty goes together according to Aristotle with lack of education, especially formation of character. And this is not an abstract statement; this is based on a very simple consideration: The women-folk of the poor have to work in other people's houses; they cannot be guarded and watched by the father and brothers as the women-folk of the well-to-do can. Therefore their reputation cannot be that of the well-to-do. This is the kind of thing which Aristotle thinks. I hope this has been of some help to make clear these few points.

To claim a right on the basis of defects—"I am underprivileged, I come from a broken home, I have been given a raw deal,<sup>26</sup> and therefore"—it's absolutely impossible. You may claim something more for yourself from others on the basis of merit, of course. I mean, if Pericles did what he did for Athens for so many years, he can raise a claim to higher honor, [a] higher consideration than Cleon can, of course—I would not even call it hard-hearted, but hard-headed. And I think that is also at the bottom of this statement. Aristotle likes better a piety coming from gratitude than a piety coming from need. You can put it this way.

**Student:** Now what is the difference between piety coming from gratitude and piety that extends from fear of envy on the part of the gods?

**LS:** This Aristotle would dismiss as superstition. He says so. The poets say that the gods are envious, [Aristotle states] in the *Metaphysics*, First Book, but the poets say many lies.<sup>xvii</sup> It's absurd that the gods can be envious. We are supposed to respect them. Do you respect an envious human being? No. Hence how can you respect an envious god? It's absurd. It's as easy as that for Aristotle. Good.

**Another Student:** Couldn't you also consider that he doesn't mention the piety of the poor because to mention it would be to describe this defect and to take away their last solace, which might lead to political instability?

**LS:** Sure, but you must not forget another point. You must not forget that there was one event which had a very great impact on everyone concerned, and that was the death of Socrates. Now Socrates was condemned and executed by the democracy, by the demos, not by the oligarchs. They also didn't like Socrates, but they never condemned him. This was a general view; I have written occasionally about it. It is generally not sufficiently considered<sup>xviii</sup> that the lower classes could be particularly dear to the intellectuals—I deliberately use this abominable word now, but

<sup>xvii</sup> *Metaphysics* I, 982b29-983a5.

<sup>xviii</sup> In light of the argument that follows, Strauss must mean "not sufficiently considered" here in the sense that this modern notion "that the lower classes could be particularly dear to the intellectuals" is not given sufficient *critical* consideration, or reconsideration.

you know when meeting an issue you have to also use the terms. It's<sup>xix</sup> sheer nonsense. This happened in the nineteenth century, this famous alliance (of which the greatest representative was of course Marx) of the intellectual with the lowest proletariat. The general view in the past was that the middle class and especially the urban middle classes are<sup>27</sup> more open to philosophy than any other part of society. Kings are too undependable, you know: one may be open, another not, and so on. This kind of study has never been made because the problem of philosophy and society is not seen<sup>28</sup> because this simple word—how do they call it, “culture,” or whatever they say—conceals the difficulty. That's a very long question. And if someone wants to be a sociologist he has here a practically untouched pasture and can make terrific (how do they say?) historical contributions. I mean historical in the sense in which they say the Test Ban Treaty was historical. Good.

Now we turn to chapters 18ff and we have quite a few things to say. I have already neglected my iron rule not to permit questions. So we have now finished the sections on passions and characters, because the last six chapters dealt with characters, and we have spoken about characters<sup>xx</sup> before. Now these are two of the three concerns of the rhetoricians: passions and character, as we have seen, 1356a1-4, for example. But the most important subject[s] are the convictions, the beliefs; and the core of these convictions are the enthymemes (as we were told at the beginning, 1354a12-15, etc., the rhetorical syllogism). And now we gradually approach this core of the problem in the next few chapters.

We do not know what an enthymeme is, except that it's a rhetorical syllogism. But one little thing we know already: the addressee of rhetoric is presumed to be simple-minded, whereas the addressee of other syllogisms is not to be presumed to be simple-minded. The passage is 1357a11-12. But the difficulty is this: this simple-minded fellow (which doesn't mean that he doesn't have a lot of horse sense, but I would say that he's not sophisticated, that would be a good American translation)<sup>29</sup> is not merely the addressee, as in a sermon, but the judge. In a sermon, whether he says afterwards that this was a good or bad sermon—that is not, strictly speaking, to be a judge. It's absolutely irrelevant, this judgment of his, whereas the judgment of the member of the jury (guilty or innocent) or of the member of the deliberative assembly (let us make war or not make war) is of course a judgment with teeth in it. In this sense he is the judge. Now, this is stated by Aristotle in a very dark way at the beginning of chapter 18, and it is perfectly possible that there is something wrong with the text. I will give a very brief summary.

Aristotle distinguishes here in fact between a strict meaning of rhetoric and a large meaning. In the strict sense, only politically effective speeches on political matters, forensic or deliberative, belong to rhetoric. In the large sense, even the persuasion of an individual belongs to rhetoric.<sup>30</sup> We have discussed [that] in connection with the relation between the *Rhetoric* and the *Gorgias*; he refers to that. Now he goes on to say that the opinions peculiar to each of the three kinds of

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<sup>xix</sup> In light of Strauss's argument, “it” must refer to the notion “that the lower classes could be particularly dear to the intellectuals” (rather than merely to the immediate antecedent “intellectuals,” the usage of which term Strauss also criticizes in the course of his main argument on the “problem of philosophy and society”).

<sup>xx</sup> Strauss perhaps means to say “passions” here and makes a slip of the tongue (to correspond to the reference in the first clause of this sentence to “passions and characters,” and as the earlier sessions did cover the sections on the passions in the *Rhetoric*).

rhetoric—forensic, deliberative, and epideictic—from which the proofs are derived have been given in Book 1. Now we turn to what is common to all three kinds of rhetoric. This is the general description of the subject of chapters 19ff. There is a certain ambiguity here which we will take up when we come to chapter 20.

Now, what are these things which come up everywhere? These are things like possible and impossible; did it happen or will it happen; and large or small—in other words the arguments *a fortiori*, and so on. We should dwell for a moment on some of these examples because hitherto we haven't had a single example of an enthymeme. That was your difficulty, Mr. Grant. Here we get the first taste of this kind of thing. Now let us turn to chapter 19, at the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us first speak of the possible and the impossible. If of two contrary things it is possible that one should exist or come into existence, then it would seem that the other is equally possible; for instance, if a man can be cured, he can also be ill; for the potentiality of contraries *qua* contraries, is the same.”

**LS:** Now let us stop here for one moment.<sup>31</sup> Aristotle demands really from us a relatively great effort because these examples are not necessarily examples pertaining to forensic and deliberative rhetoric. We have to take other examples more pertinent to the subject matter. Now what is the situation in a forensic situation? [Take] a defendant. Some people enter the courtroom with a certainty he is innocent—or let us take the more interesting case, with a certainty he is guilty. Now then, the first thing which the orator has to do is to show that he *may* not be guilty, that it is only possible that he is guilty. And if it is possible that he is guilty, it is possible that he is innocent. Do you see the point? Or take the other case. He is innocent. He has an unblemished record. He comes from a fine family and all this kind of thing. Yes, but for everything there is a first time, is of course the answer.

What I try, rather poorly now I think, we would have to do in all cases in order to make alive what is here reduced to the most severe[ly] abstract formula. (But Aristotle thought of course of these kinds of things.) [We would have to] what I call in another connection, with somewhat different meaning, transform the two-dimensional into the three-dimensional. That we must do. We have not very great help from Aristotle here, [so] that would be the task of the commentator. Otherwise we do not understand him properly.

Or in deliberative [rhetoric]: “We may win the war,” i.e., it is not *necessary* to win the war. In the moment<sup>32</sup> there will be “We *must*,” there is no question, “We will run them over.” The first outcome is when it is made clear [that] it is not necessary that we win this, i.e., it is *possible* that we win the war, and [in] that moment the other fellow has already admitted it is possible we lose the war. I mean, if the question is so that there is absolute certainty, no debate arises, it is trans-rhetorical, so to speak.

Now let us take a few more examples a little bit further on. Perhaps you should go on just where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Similarly, if of two like things the one is possible, so also is the other. And if the harder of two things is possible, so also is the easier. And if it is possible for a thing to be made

excellent or beautiful, it is possible for it to be made in general; for it is harder for a beautiful house to be made than a mere house.”

**LS:** That's obvious. You see, some of these things are not merely rhetorical: that is exactly the point. The rhetorician uses some arguments which are not limited to rhetoric, but the point is that the difference between these various kinds of *topoi* is of no interest to the rhetorician as rhetorician. At least I do not see any general difficulty on this point.

By the way, regarding possible and impossible we must never forget that the Greek word translated by “possible” is in many circumstances translated<sup>33</sup> better by “feasible” or “not feasible.” Something may be possible on the North Pole, and therefore it is absurd to say it is impossible. But of course this never enters—we don't make the distinction who is deliberating on the North Pole. And so “possible” means in practice feasible for us here and now—and not logical possibility, not even general possibility for human beings. Good. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Again, if the beginning is possible, so also is the end; for no impossible thing comes, or begins to come, into existence; for instance, that the diameter of a square be commensurable with the side of a square is neither possible nor could be possible.”<sup>xxxi</sup>

**LS:** Here is of course a minor difficulty. That example is all right, but it is not very political. You may be able to start a war at your wish, but it does not follow that you can end it at your wish. This is a dubious premise, but sufficient nevertheless in rhetoric. A little bit later. “These things are possible for which either *Eros* or desire is by nature.”<sup>xxii</sup> Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And things which we love or desire naturally are possible; for as a rule no one loves the impossible or desires it.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

**LS:** Ja, the opposite end of Goethe's *Faust*: “Him I love who desires the impossible.”<sup>xxiv</sup> For Aristotle, that is a fool who desires the impossible. Aristotle is in no way a modern man. Ja, but is this so? For example, here he makes a crucial qualification, that no one desires or loves the impossible *generally speaking*. There *are* cases where people love the impossible. The fact that all desire it does not in any way prove that it is possible, and still less that it is possible for you. For example, <sup>34</sup>to build up a big empire is perfectly possible for China but not for Albania, to take a very trivial example. This all needs a certain . . . . And the last point which I want to mention here is at the end of 1392a<sup>xxv</sup> and the beginning of b. “And when the genus—”

<sup>xxi</sup> *Rhetoric* II.19. 1-5, 1392a8-18.

<sup>xxii</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation of II. 19. 7, 1392a22-23.

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 19. 7, 1392a22-23.

<sup>xxiv</sup> “I love him who desires th' impossible,” Goethe, *Faust*, trans. John Anster (London: George Routledge and Sons, Morely's Universal Library, 1889), 114 (Part II, Act II, l. 7488). Original: “Den lieb ich, der unmögliches begehrt.”

<sup>xxv</sup> Strauss says, by mistake, “end of 1391a,” but he evidently refers here to the end of 1392a.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And if the whole genus is among things possible to be made, so is the species, and if the species, so the genus; for example, if a vessel can be built so can a trireme, if a trireme can so can a vessel.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

**LS:** Of course, the difficulties here are patent. Albania may be able to (I like to use Albania as an example because that is so wholly outside the pale that nothing can happen to anyone)<sup>35</sup> build a bomb, but hydrogens are a species of [the genus] bombs, and [Albania]<sup>36</sup> cannot produce,<sup>37</sup> fortunately,<sup>38</sup> this species. Is this clear? Good.

Now let us take now the examples regarding facts, as we can say, probably the next paragraph: whether something has happened. This is of course most important in forensic rhetoric. Did he kill, did he commit murder, or did he not? Lines 19-20: “All, when they have made a decision and have the power, do it; for nothing is in their way.”<sup>xxvii</sup> Let us consider for a moment the character of this reasoning. He said: I kill that fellow. And he really hates him. In addition, he has the opportunity, apart from the motive, the gun, and all the other things. Does it prove that he committed the murder, the favorite theme of Perry Mason? [Laughter] And I think that this is not just the invention of this great novelist, Erle Stanley Gardner,<sup>xxviii</sup> but it is a serious question. Of course it does not follow. He may have changed his mind at the last minute [tapping the desk for emphasis]. You see,<sup>39</sup> it is very plausible. It can be even beyond the shadow of reasonable doubt, as we say. But this is only—in other words, beyond the shadow of plausible doubt. It’s not impossible.

Now let us take a famous case, the case of Hitler. Hitler had written *Mein Kampf* and shown what he planned. He had overrun Austria, Czechoslovakia. Would it truly follow, as Churchill above all others said, this famous formula, “one by one” [Strauss taps the desk for emphasis]. He will attack next, say Poland or whatever it is, and then France, and overcome the West. Strictly speaking it was only a probability in spite of that.<sup>40</sup> Not only could he have died or be[en] paralyzed<sup>41</sup> [and so on], but<sup>42</sup> there was no certainty, because people change their minds. Even if he wrote *Mein Kampf*—that was the other argument against Churchill—the only thing one could say from a strict point of view in favor of Churchill, whom I admire very much, was [that] it was a safe assumption, a safe assumption; it was no certainty. Similarly today, it is possible, I think no one can deny [it], that Soviet Russia will become more liberal.<sup>43</sup> Of course it is possible but one cannot bank on it. One cannot base one’s decisions in such matters on certainties, but only on possibilities. And then it is indeed a good, safe, and wise maxim: bank on the worst possibility. Bank on the worst possibility in such a way as not to preclude, if you can help it, the emergence of a better possibility. But the priority I think in this case is perfectly clear.

Now these kinds of things<sup>44</sup> have always to do, as we say, with possibilities; and if the possibility is high, we call it probability. And since probabilities can be made the subject of a mathematical discipline, a calculus of probabilities, one could say, “Well, let us give<sup>45</sup> the matter [over] to mathematicians.” Aristotle does not mean that at all. And the fact that there was no probability calculus in his time was the least important reason.<sup>46</sup> The key point is simply this: the most

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II.19.7, 1392a31-b3.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Apparently Strauss’s translation of *Rhetoric*, II. 19. 18, 1392b19-20.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Erle Stanley Gardner (1889-1970), lawyer and author of detective novels, including over 80 involving his most well-known television character, Perry Mason.

probable is in a sense the least probable to be chosen by the enemy, because both sides know somehow what the most probable is and protect themselves against it. Therefore what the least probable or the intermediate probability is, this is impossible to figure out and could not be figured out but only be found out by timely defections. If someone in the inner council of the enemy would defect, this would make superfluous reams of figurings-out done by . . . ologists<sup>xxix</sup>. Would you admit that in spite of the fact that you are a mathematician? [Laughter] Good.

Now the last item discussed here, the greater and smaller, was already discussed in chapter 7 of the First Book—we don't have to speak about that. I have now to proceed rather fast. Now, the next chapter, 20. The subject matter of chapter 19 was already the common, what is common to all kinds of rhetoric, but this was still in a way non-common, or peculiar—*idion* in Greek. We might say that Aristotle means now by the common: the formal. This is not Aristotle's language, but just for convenience's sake. Because the consideration of possible and impossible—did it happen or did it not happen, will it happen or not—are still substantive considerations. Now, he deals only with the *forms* of proof, and he speaks first of examples because in a way examples precede the enthymemes. Every enthymeme is based on premises as every syllogism is based on premises, but the premises are reached primarily, ultimately, by induction. And therefore induction comes first, but induction in rhetoric is the example, as Aristotle puts it. Now he distinguishes between two kinds of examples: actual examples and invented examples. Actual examples are what we now call historical examples, say, particular cases with proper names:<sup>47</sup> the Persian king and Greece.<sup>48</sup> The invented ones are either “comparisons,” more literally translated “juxtapositions,” *parabolē* (from which parable is derived<sup>49</sup>) [or] speeches. Speeches means here fables, like those of Aesop for example—you establish something by telling a fable. Let us see. We will discuss perhaps the example of Socrates, which is quite interesting (1393b4-8) as an example of parable, of one form of invented examples.<sup>50</sup> Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Comparison is illustrated by the sayings of Socrates; for instance, if one were to say that magistrates should not be chosen by lot, for this would be the same as choosing as representative athletes not those competent to contend, but those on whom the lot falls; or as choosing any of the sailors as the man who should take the helm, as if it were right that the choice should be decided by lot, not by a man's knowledge.”<sup>xxx</sup>

**LS:** Why is this not true induction, but only rhetorical induction? That would be the question that is implied by Aristotle, of course.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** For [an] example, but later on, he takes the pilot. You don't choose a pilot by lot, and the pilot is also responsible for your life in a way. Well, but you are of course on the right track. What Aristotle has in mind is [that] the specific difference between the political ruler and the so-called ruler of a ship is not considered in the argument, and therefore it is rhetorical. In other

<sup>xxix</sup> It is not clear what “ologists” Strauss is referring to.

<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 20. 4, 1392a31-b3.

words, there may be some element of truth in what Aristotle<sup>xxx1</sup> says, but<sup>51</sup> it is not established by that. It is superficial, but impressive.

May I give you another example, which struck me more than this: that is Socrates' argument to his son Lamprocles—when Lamprocles complained about Xanthippe, his mother, that she was unbearable. Then Socrates asked him (you know, Socrates is one of these poker-faced men, obviously) and he says: "What, did she bite you?" "No." Then Socrates: "Well, it can't be too bad if she didn't bite you." "But she said terrible things to me which no one can hear without getting indignant." "Have you been to the theatre?" "Yes." "Have you heard what terrible things the actors throw at each other in the theater?" "Yes." "But they don't mean it. Does your mother mean it?" [Laughter] You see, and the boy was of course completely helpless. But the ambiguity of meaning: the actors do not mean it in one sense and the mother does not mean it in another. This logical swindle is the effectiveness of this argument, of course. Good.

By the way, Mr. Mahdi: for the fables, Averroës—you have seen the *Kalila wa Dimna*,<sup>xxxii</sup> the first . . . I thought I should mention that.

Now let us come now to the next point which is the *gnomē* in Greek, chapter 21, which is translated here by "maxims." The traditional translation into Latin was *sententia*, the "sentence." Now, is it still used? You still speak of a sententious author, don't you? Yes. This is a part of the enthymeme. Now a *gnomē*, or maxim, is a general statement regarding objects of actions, but not a syllogism regarding them. The syllogism would be an enthymeme. But either the premises or the conclusions of an enthymeme, without the syllogism itself, is a maxim. And so we come here closer to the subject of enthymeme than ever before. Now if we turn to 1394a29<sup>xxxiii</sup>—that is immediately before the first verse quotation in this chapter—if you would read that.

**Mr. Reinken:**

but when the why and the wherefore are added, the whole makes an enthymeme; for instance,

"for, not to speak of the charge of idleness brought against them, they earn jealous hostility from the citizens."

Another example,

"There is no man who is happy in everything;"

or,

"There is no man who is really free."

The latter is a maxim, but taken with the next verse it is an enthymeme:

"for he is the slave of either wealth or fortune."

<sup>xxx1</sup> Strauss apparently means what Aristotle says or relates as "sayings of Socrates."

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Kalila wa Dimna* "is a set of animal fables that came to Arabic from Persian and into Persian from one of the Indian sources." (The Strauss Center thanks Charles Butterworth for this statement, made in an email to its managing editor.)

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Strauss seems to have intended the reader to begin at 1394a29 (not 1394a31 where he subsequently begins), which indeed seems the logical starting point for this citation. From 1394b29: "For example: 'No man who is sensible ought to have his children taught to be excessively clever,' is a maxim; but when the why and the wherefore are added . . ."

Now, if a maxim is what we have stated, it follows that maxims are of four kinds—<sup>xxxiv</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. <sup>52</sup>Here we have the first explicit examples of enthymemes in the *Rhetoric*, if I'm not mistaken, and therefore we should particularly observe them. Do you see why these enthymemes are not strict syllogisms, and yet have the form of syllogisms? For example, educated men are envied; but envy is something bad; hence, you should not become educated. That's a perfect syllogism. What's wrong with it?

**Student:** There is more to being educated than just having envy come—

**LS:** Exactly. But something of this kind, some one defect or other of this kind, this we would always find. This, incidentally, is said by Medea in Euripides' tragedy. Now the other thing, too: no man is free; hence, no man is happy. What would Aristotle say, or Plato for that matter?

**Student:** He would say that the premise, no man is free, is a mistake, because there are men who are substantially not dependent on chance or on—

**LS:** Sure, something of this kind, because we know that Plato regarded Socrates as a happy man, and therefore he must have assumed that men can be happy. In other words, these are all crude statements which have a great popular plausibility, but they don't hold water. This is the point. Now let us see the next point, when he comes to the next quotation, which is very shortly after. Read the intermediate thing. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Now all those that state anything that is contrary to the general opinion or is a matter of dispute, need demonstrative proof; but those who do not, need no epilogue, either because they are already known, as, for instance,

“Health is a most excellent thing for a man, at least in our opinion,”  
for this is generally agreed—

**LS:** No, no. “To the many, to the many.” So this is perfectly good enough. If the many agree with it, you can make it as a major premise of the syllogism. It doesn't have to be true. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

or because, no sooner are they uttered than they are clear to those who consider them, for instance,

“He is no lover who does not love always.”<sup>xxxv</sup>

**LS:** Yes, this was said by Hecuba, the wife of Priam, to Menelaus in the *Trojan Women* of Euripides in a very special situation.<sup>xxxvi</sup> She does not believe that Menelaus has ceased to love

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 21. 2-3, 1394a31-b8.

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 21. 4-5, 1394b8-16.

Helen despite his saying so. You know, once a lover of Helen, always a lover of Helen—[and] more generally, once a lover of a woman, always a lover of that woman. This is clearly not true, clearly not true, but the mere perfect metricality of the statement acts itself as an additional proof. That is what we spoke of as the poetic syllogism which convinces merely by its perfect expression. Yes. Here in 1395a8-18, in the context where the verses from Homer are quoted.

**Mr. Reinken:** “To express in general terms what is not general is especially suitable in complaint or exaggeration.”<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**LS:** You see what he calls here “exaggeration,” *deinōsis* in Greek from *deinos*, awesome, terrible—that corresponds to the Latin word *indignatio*, indignation. Mr. Weiss, for your special information, *deinōsis*—that can be seen from Cicero’s and Quintilian’s use. They call that, you know, to create this kind of indignation. *Nemesis* for Aristotle is not strictly speaking indignation. That’s the whole difficulty which we couldn’t solve last time. It is badly translated by “indignation.” We have to find a better word for it.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** I do not know, “vindictive justice,” or something of this kind. I do not know,<sup>53</sup> I do not claim that I can answer this question. That takes a very long time to find a proper equivalent. But this only in passing. This also may be of interest to you, Mr. Nicgorski, [that] <sup>54</sup>*deinōsis* is used by Cicero and Quintilian, translated by *indignatio*. Good. But this only in passing.

He says here, because he thinks these maxims are common since all agree to them, they are thought to be correct. They are *thought* to be correct. That doesn’t mean that they are correct. But we don’t want more in rhetoric. It would be unreasonable.

Let us read b, and that must be the end of it. By the way, I didn’t get any questions in writing from any of you. Either you will give me such questions or I will be able to return to my bad habits. Good. Now read this, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, maxims are of great assistance to speakers, first, because of the vulgarity of the hearers—”

**LS:** Now, listen with what ease Aristotle makes such an atrocious statement [laughter], with which everyone is of course but too familiar. But this is crucial; it goes for the whole book. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “who are pleased if an orator, speaking generally, hits upon the opinions which they especially hold.”

**LS:** This “especially” must be emphasized. In particular, he expresses universally what they sense particularly in the case at hand. They could not express it universally and they get it then from him. Yes.

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> Euripides, *Trojan Women*, trans. David Kovacs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 1999), vol. 10, l.1051.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 21. 10, 1395a8-10.

**Mr. Reinken:**

What I mean will be clear from the following, and also how one should hunt for maxims. The maxim, as we have said, is a statement of the general; accordingly, the hearers are pleased to hear stated in general terms the opinion which they have already formed in particular.<sup>xxxviii</sup> For instance, a man who happened to have bad neighbors or children would welcome any one's statement that nothing is more troublesome than neighbors or more stupid than to beget children. Wherefore the speaker should endeavor to guess how his hearers formed their preconceived opinions and what they are, and then express himself in general terms in regard to them. This is one of the advantages of the use of maxims, but another is greater; for it makes speeches ethical.

**LS:** "Ethical" meaning expressive of character and giving a notion of the character of the speaker. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Speeches have this character, in which the moral purpose is clear."

**LS:** The "choice," the choice is clear, the *proairesis*.

**Mr. Reinken:** "And this is the effect of all maxims, because he who employs them in a general matter declares his moral purposes. If then the maxims are good, they show the speaker also to be a man of good character."<sup>xxxix</sup>

**LS:** This is sufficient. The crudity of the hearers is crucial: they cannot express generally what they think or feel in the particular case, and therefore this is where the orator comes in. He can say what they only sense. We can say that the orator gives them a good conscience for the generalization, and that makes them very happy because man is a rational animal—of course within his irrationalities, and he wants to have a good conscience based on maxims.

This is of some importance also for judging the influence of writers, because the distinction between speakers and writers is ultimately not tenable. Most are the authors of public utterances addressed to the public. The famous question of Nietzsche's influence on Germany and how far this prepared the terrible things which happened afterward has very much to do with that. There is always (not only in Germany) a lot of actual, and more of potential, bestiality among human beings. But to give it a good conscience the bestiality as such is wholly unable to do. When Nietzsche wrote his terrific pages—in a German which could not be improved—about cruelty versus compassion, quite a few people—cruelty became, so to speak, respectable. It never was before. It's impossible to find out by any statistical or other studies how great the effect was. But it must have been terrific: that something which was hitherto regarded as absolutely impossible was praised.

I'm sure one could make similar studies about the changes in American sexual behavior, of which I heard a report last night over the TV,<sup>55</sup> that sees things as of course not due to these poor

<sup>xxxviii</sup> In accordance with Strauss's previous comment, the reader re-translates as "formed in particular" what is rendered as "specially formed" in the Freese translation.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 21. 15-16, 1395b1-17.

fish of high school boys and girls but to some writers, some speakers, who make it possible. And there are a number of them, surely Freud but also some more recent. Men are always acting on authority. Those who act against all authorities are a tiny part of the population: the criminals. Surely they exist and they are unconcerned, but the non-criminals always are deferential people. The trouble is that they are sometimes deferential to the wrong kind of people.

The question is whether one can do anything about that. And this is, I think, somewhat<sup>56</sup> an illustration, a slightly tangential illustration, of what Aristotle has in mind. The fundamental thing is the same: the need for universalization or generalization by which the speaker satisfies the people. Now of course Aristotle in his wisdom and his decency says these maxims establish the character, the moral character of the speaker, and if the maxims are moral then they establish him as a moral man. But who is the judge of the morality of the maxim and of the morality of the speaker? The same crude people whom he addresses [Strauss taps desk for emphasis throughout previous two sentences]: That's a difficulty. There is no easy solution to this difficulty. The judges of the decency of the orator are of course these crude people of which he spoke here.

So I think I have now acted within the limits of what I am supposed to do, meaning not to stay too long here. I had a rather lengthy statement, which I suppressed, on the question of the absolute necessity of rhetoric as a parallel to the question of the absolute necessity of practical wisdom. Rhetoric is of course not practical wisdom, and vice versa, but they belong to the same sphere: the sphere of action. And what we have today, scientific social science, is opposed on the same ground to both—to rhetoric and to practical wisdom because ideally science and expertise are to replace the need for practical wisdom and for rhetoric [Strauss taps desk for emphasis throughout sentence]. This question we must always keep in mind.

The statement which Mr. Grant quoted, the concern with the authoritative character of the particular: that is the decisive point. Even if there should be a science or art higher in rank than practical wisdom, it could never make superfluous practical wisdom. If the science which gives us our true maxims of action is higher in rank than the application of the maxims, theoretically<sup>57</sup> it would never make superfluous this application. Simply stated, in all action the question arises sooner or later, whether it is as a member of a jury or in any other connection: whom to trust and whom not to trust? A witness . . . there is no possibility of settling that<sup>58</sup> [in] any other way except by practical wisdom, i.e., theoretically, the element of probability, but a probability which<sup>59</sup> cannot be handled by probability calculus.

Rhetorical reasoning is necessary not only [because] of the character of the addresses (their crudeness) or the judges (they are crude), but of the subject matter as well. All reasonings on<sup>60</sup> [these] kind[s] of things, deliberation or forensic, cannot transcend the probable and therefore rhetoric can never be superseded by science. In this sphere the scientists can never be the judges. I do not speak even now of the problem of democracy: in other words, to replace the jury by an agreement of psychoanalysts, which is from a certain point of view an imaginable suggestion. But I disregard this, even.

How to trace that and how to understand that fully—that is of course a very long question. That has surely to do<sup>61</sup> ultimately with the simple question: What is man, and whether man can be

manipulated as brutes,<sup>x1</sup> plants, and inanimate things can—and even if he could, whether it would be desirable. And without raising this question, I think, and clarifying it, one cannot even begin to discuss this matter. I think I will leave it at this.

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<sup>1</sup> Moved” first.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “that everyone—I mean.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “Now—.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “, the rich and the poor.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “there would be.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “is this not—.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “speaks.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “this old—.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “there are—.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “In other words.”

<sup>12</sup> Changed from “now.”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “of rich.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “what.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “—how should they make their trips around—.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “meaning.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “and.”

<sup>18</sup> Deleted “I mean, in other words.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “of.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “He can be a very—.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “around.”

<sup>22</sup> Deleted “I mean I think”; moved “kind of trust.”

<sup>23</sup> Deleted “when Aristotle—.”

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<sup>x1</sup> Strauss begins to say “animals,” but then, presumably since “animals” would include “man,” immediately corrects himself according to the sense of this sentence to “brutes.”

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- <sup>24</sup> Deleted "That."
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted "it is not—."
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted "and what's the other one."
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted "close—."
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted "you know."
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted "but this simple-minded fellow."
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted "you know"; moved "that."
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted "Now."
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted "you know."
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted "more by—."
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted "say."
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted "if now Albania may be able to."
- <sup>36</sup> Changed from "they."
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted "it."
- <sup>38</sup> Deleted "not."
- <sup>39</sup> Deleted "it is only a general—."
- <sup>40</sup> Deleted "I mean."
- <sup>41</sup> Deleted "or so."
- <sup>42</sup> Deleted "even—."
- <sup>43</sup> Moved "but."
- <sup>44</sup> Deleted "can of course—."
- <sup>45</sup> Moved "over."
- <sup>46</sup> Deleted "Because these probabilities, these kinds of things are—."
- <sup>47</sup> Deleted ", yes."
- <sup>48</sup> Deleted "And the other are—."
- <sup>49</sup> Deleted "and."
- <sup>50</sup> Deleted "is the one—"; deleted "what Socrates did."
- <sup>51</sup> Deleted "it cannot be—."

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<sup>52</sup> Deleted “now.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “And.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “—is.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “by.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “cannot be replaced by—.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “this.”

<sup>61</sup> Deleted “with the very simple—.”

**Session 11: May 18, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** I don't have to tell the class anything about the quality of your paper, but<sup>1</sup> the delivery was very hard to follow. Therefore, I must make sure that I understood you correctly. Now if I understood you correctly, you mean to say that not all of these topics discussed in these chapters are merely rhetorical. Aristotle transcends the boundaries of rhetoric.

**Student:** He transcends them or strains them.

**LS:** Yes, but first let us leave it at that. Would this be altogether surprising? I mean, let us look at it from a practical point of view. Is it not possible that for an orator in a given situation a rather strict argument might be the rhetorically best? If he can do with a better syllogism and can get it across and convince with it, why shouldn't he use it? Yes?

**Another Student:** Still, that seems to me to be a revision, a change in emphasis from what he led us to believe in the first two chapters of the *Rhetoric*. There is a considerable difference between rhetoric and dialectic even though they are counterparts to each other.

**LS:** Yes, but<sup>2</sup> the fundamental difference would still remain: why between dialectics and rhetoric, even if a certain kind of reasoning would occur identically in a dialectical argument and a rhetorical argument?

**Same Student:** Well, there are two reasons. One is that the rhetorician is speaking to the many and the dialectician to . . . .

**LS:** Although this difference may not affect the doings of the two men in every point, <sup>3</sup>in principle this would still remain. I am very grateful for your attempt to show in various cases why these particular forms of reasoning discussed in chapter 23 are not strict arguments, but only enthymemes. I was reminded not only by your paper now, but also by some other things<sup>4</sup> [of] Mr. Butterworth's question, which he raised (where are you Mr. Butterworth? oh, yes) quite some time ago: Does Aristotle's *Rhetoric* not deal rhetorically with its subject? This cannot be dismissed. When I was so rude to you at that time, I had a very good reason. We should try to be subtle only if compelled to do so, you know, because otherwise you get a raise which is very dangerous.

I had once a simple formula for this commonsensical rule of conduct. Let me see whether I can remember it. There is one rule: Don't try to be clever. I think that is rather obvious, that this is a sound rule, don't try to be clever. But the more subtle rule, the more important rule, is this: Try not to be clever. Only then will you be truly clever where it is necessary to be clever, if I may use this somewhat derogatory word "clever" now.

But what Mr. Lyons pointed out about the density of Socrates in this particular section is surely something which I had not observed. It surely is something which one has to consider, and there may be other things. For example, we have seen quite a few references to the gods, especially this quite extraordinary statement about the people who are in good luck—meaning the noble, the rich, and the powerful—that they at least, whatever defects they may have, have at least a

decent posture towards the gods. And the other remark . . . whether one should not have to take them all together and compare the message of the *Rhetoric* regarding the gods with the message, say, of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, to say nothing of the *Metaphysics*; and then one gets into a deeper stratum. This I cannot now discuss.

Well, I have here a quote from Mr. Butterworth: "Aristotle has consistently argued that the enthymemes are the most convincing proofs in rhetoric." Strictly speaking, they are *the* proofs in rhetoric, not only the most convincing.

**Mr. Butterworth:** What about examples?

**LS:** Yes, but the question is: Are they proofs? "His commentator Averroës argues that examples are more persuasive in rhetoric than are enthymemes," and you refer to the passage in the commentary.<sup>1</sup> I don't remember it, but I take it for granted, I assume your facts. "How do you account for this difference?" Well, I believe if Averroës says so.<sup>5</sup> I wouldn't see any difficulty in this because examples are no proofs, strictly speaking. The relation is this: examples are related to enthymemes as induction is to demonstration. And now the leading up to a general proposition through examples is of course in this way simpler to follow—provided the examples are reasonably chosen, I mean, not from Alaska and Patagonia but from the things people know generally, because the particular cases falling within man's experience are the most obvious things. There would be no difficulty on this point, I believe, unless you use the word "proof" in a looser sense so that you call both the induction and the demonstration proofs, then it would be different. But there is no reason to assume that.

**Mr. Butterworth:** The reason you say there is no need to do this is because Aristotle is more restricted with his examples.

**LS:** Yes. And one would have also to look up the passage—and preferably, since it's in Arabic, which term he uses and whether the term would ever include examples or induction, and would not always refer to demonstration.

**Mr. Butterworth:** I couldn't understand you, Mr. Strauss.

**LS:** Whether the term used by Averroës in the Arabic original is ever used for induction in contradistinction to demonstration,<sup>6</sup> I cannot know, so you would have to go into that.

**Mr. Butterworth:** I don't understand why you would put that condition down.

**LS:** Because if he means it in the way in which I suggested it, then there is no reason why examples should not be more persuasive because the examples lead up to premises from which you deduce the enthymemes. Good.

Now first I have to return the papers from last time. Here, Mr. Orfield, thank you; I have only one point which you will easily find. And here I have Mr. Devereaux's paper, where there are a few points. This paper is quite speculative but it is also very subtle—so in other words it is

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<sup>1</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, perhaps 1.2.19f.

nothing to be ashamed of. Now here you say: “The passions of the audience are changed by the speaker, whereas the character of the speaker is determined by the audience.” However<sup>7</sup> the latter is doubtful, whether the character of the speaker is determined by the audience . . . . “Our examination suggests that the speaker’s character is like a mask which he wears in order to appear as much as possible like his audience.” I think that Machiavellianizes Aristotle a bit. As to the specific evidence which you use here, you say in a note: “The fact that friendship and hatred are essential to the discussion of character is indicated at the beginning of Book Two.” Well, strictly speaking, Aristotle says that they are essential to the discussion of being trusted. Now being trusted is not exactly the same as virtue or character. This distinction would have to be considered.

And then you make another point in this connection: “Friendship and good will, *charis*, are the only passions whose definitions contain no reference to pain or pleasure.” I am grateful to you because you drew my attention to this point and so I looked it up. And it is very interesting: I saw to my surprise that in seven cases of the eleven passions there is reference to pain—only to pain, not to pleasure. Seven of these eleven are surely painful passions and there is in no case a reference to pleasure alone. No passion is discussed which is regarded as simply pleasurable. When he discusses mildness (the opposite of anger) in chapter 3, there he also says nothing about pain and pleasure. Now this of course can be understood because it is not strictly speaking a passion but a virtue although it is not stated here. As regards friendship, you would have to consider the following fact: that it is explicitly said to be being enjoyed and feeling pain *with* the friend.<sup>ii</sup> So friendship is not simply, of course, beyond pleasure and pain—I mean, a friend who does not feel sorrow for his friend’s sorrow and pleasure for his friend’s pleasure is of course not a friend. The question is a sound question. There are some other points which I made, very few, which you will easily find. Now let us then turn to<sup>8</sup> our assignment.

This section which we are discussing today is, as we have seen from the very beginning, the core of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, whether we like it or not. Someone might find the discussion of the passions much more interesting and rewarding, but from Aristotle’s point of view there can be no doubt about that; that is what Aristotle said at the beginning. And the enthymeme is of course akin to the dialectical syllogism, not to the scientific syllogism, but the difference [is that] the dialectician talks to one or a few. And another point which is crucial: in a dialectical discussion—think of a Socratic conversation, the highest case—there are no deadlines. No deadlines. There is only one Platonic dialogue with a deadline, with a clear deadline. Which is that?

**Student:** The *Phaedo*.

**LS:** Why?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** So it’s really literally a deadline [laughter]. But otherwise there is no reason why this conversation shouldn’t go on. In the *Protagoras* Socrates pretends that he has some business, so

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<sup>ii</sup> Strauss refers to *Rhetoric* II. IV. 3, 1381a3-5: “he is a friend who shares our joy in good fortune and our sorrow in affliction, for our own sake and not for any other reason.”

they must stop it. But immediately after they left, where did he go—I mean, to his banker or what? No, he stands on the street corner or something like that and tells for four or five hours these people the conversation of four or five hours he had had within. So that was really why Socrates pretended that he had no time—this we must figure out for ourselves.

So in dialectical discussions there is no deadline, and there is of course essentially a deadline in rhetoric. I mean, if someone says, “Well there are filibusters”—well there were no filibusters in the Athenian assembly, and in addition even filibusters can be stopped, as we have been taught; and also of course in the dialectical discussions the addressee talks back, naturally. There is an exchange. The dialectician may be defeated. Not everyone is as good a dialectician as Socrates. He’s surely not the superior of the addressee or authoritative for him. He may be by nature superior to him but he has no legal superiority, obviously, whereas the rhetorician addresses a crowd, there is a deadline, the addressees do not talk back. They may heckle him . . . but they are the judges, the authorities. They will decide whether the defendant will be declared guilty or innocent or whether we will wage war or not. The orator, the rhetorician, doesn’t decide. So the difference is of course fundamental. Now perhaps we will begin in 1395b34<sup>iii</sup>,<sup>9</sup> at the beginning of the chapter.

### **Mr. Reinken:**

Let us now speak of enthymemes in general and the manner of looking for them, and next of their topics; for each of these things is different in kind. We have already said that the enthymeme is a kind of syllogism, what makes it so, and in what it differs from the dialectic syllogisms; for the conclusion must neither be drawn from too far back, nor should it include all the steps of the argument. In the first case its length causes obscurity, in the second, it is simply a waste of words, because it states much that is obvious. It is this that makes the ignorant more persuasive than the educated in the presence of crowds; as the poets say, “the ignorant are more skilled at speaking before a mob.” For the educated use commonplaces and generalities, whereas the ignorant speak of what they know and of what more nearly concerns the audience. Wherefore one must not argue from all possible opinions, but only from such as are definite and admitted, for instance, either by the judges themselves or by those whose judgment they approve. Further, it should be clear that this is the opinion of all or most of the hearers; and again, conclusions should not be drawn from necessary premises alone, but also from those which are only true as a rule.

**LS:** Because otherwise you could never have a practical argument. So in other words, the rhetorician moves in a kind of middle region. A middle region: he mustn’t go too high regarding the premises, the highest premise, and he must not go too low, as it were, in establishing the facts of the case. For example, to take a simple case, the assumption underlying all murder trials is that when there is someone killed in a certain manner then he must have been killed by somebody else. He cannot have died, nor can it be suicide. This presupposes ultimately a principle of causality of course. If he would first go into a discussion to prove there is causality—you know, that’s absurd. And also regarding some crude facts, meaning that human beings are either men or women, which can be subject to some qualification in the light of this

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<sup>iii</sup> Strauss gives a Bekker number that differs slightly (1395b34 vs. 1395b21) from the point at which the reader begins.

famous case a few years ago—I've forgotten now the name . . . this is wholly irrelevant, immaterial. Good.

The theoretical man is concerned also with the remote and the obvious. Perhaps the remote and the obvious are ultimately the same, insofar as the problems inherent in the obvious may be the most concealed thing and thus the most remote thing. This I believe is clear and doesn't cause any difficulty I trust. Now let us see what he says in the sequel.

**Mr. Reinken:**

First of all, then, it must be understood that, in regard to the subject of our speech or reasoning, whether it be political or of any other kind, it is necessary to be also acquainted with the elements of the question, either entirely or in part; for if you know none of these things, you will have nothing on which to draw a conclusion. I should like to know, for instance, how we are to give advice to the Athenians as to making war or not, if we do not know in what their strength consists, whether it is naval, military, or both, how great it is, their sources of revenue, their friends and enemies, and further, what wars they have already waged, with what success, and all similar things?<sup>iv</sup>

**LS:** Well, I believe Aristotle also proceeds here like a theoretician. He tells us the obvious. But<sup>10</sup> that is the point. A theoretician must state it, as we know, and in this passage here he gives a kind of commentary on that.

A little bit later, in 23-25, he<sup>11</sup> alludes again to that quasi-universality of rhetoric by<sup>12</sup> [saying] that gods are as much a theme of rhetoric as human beings. The question of course is, then, [that] if this belongs to the definition of rhetoric—this I believe is something you meant, if I could follow your very quick development—if rhetoric is defined by this universality so that it deals with gods as well as with men, then of course the cognitive status of rhetoric would be affected by the fact that the rhetorician talks about gods because then the cognitive status of the knowledge regarding gods would of course affect the status of rhetoric as a whole. This is what I believe you meant.

**Student:** I didn't think that in connection with the gods, but later on in connection to . . .

**LS:** I see. But the main point you stated.

**Same Student:** Yes.

**LS:** Good. And here he gives in the sequel another problem of this kind, a little bit afterward when he speaks regarding injustice, whether it is good or not good. It may be necessary for a rhetorician to face a conflict between the just and the good—the good means here the expedient. Of course it may. For example, in the discussion in Thucydides: Should the Athenians kill the Mytileneans or not?<sup>v</sup> And the question is [whether] it may be just for Athens to do it, but it is not expedient. In some cases it is even possible that the<sup>13</sup> injustice would not bother the assembly,

<sup>iv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 22. 1-5, 1395b21-1396a12.

<sup>v</sup> *Peloponnesian War*, Bk. III, chap. 36-49.

and nevertheless the question would have to be used. Good. Now let us turn to 1396b19, the transition. “Now one way of selection, the first way.”<sup>vi</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “and this the first, is the topical. Let us now speak of the elements of enthymemes (by element and topic of enthymeme I mean the same thing)—”<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:** Now what does “topic” here mean? Now when he speaks first of topic, what does he mean by that? The first principle of selection,<sup>14</sup> the point of view of selection must be that it is topical.

**Student:** I think this has reference to the . . . he has made of rhetoric up to this point in Book 2, i.e., all that precedes in the substantive part is the subject matter, the substance of enthymemes.

**LS:** Yes, but here he speaks of selection. You have this long enumeration of the good things, the pleasant things, the noble things, and so forth, but the rhetorician of course can't use all these topics in a single speech. He must select. From which point of view must he select in the first place? What's the most urgent consideration?

**Another Student:** The matter at hand.

**LS:** Exactly. The “topical” as it is still used, in England or in this country, I do not know. No, in England—in this country one says “timely,” I was told, instead of “topical,” [meaning] belonging to the matter at hand [Strauss taps the table for emphasis]. It must be relevant to the fact that this is a trial for life on a man's circumstances, and so on. That's the first consideration. And then there is another way in which we must select, and these are the elements of enthymemes or the *topoi*, the . . . of enthymemes. What does he mean by that now? Commonplaces. Well, the commonplaces are considerations which are of course not limited to the particular case at hand. They are universal. Now these have however been discussed before, as he says in the sequel (and as we know) in all the chapters on the good, pleasant, and noble things, and on the possible and other things. What does he have in mind now? In 1397a1?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Let us now endeavor to find topics about enthymemes in general in another way—”<sup>viii</sup>

**LS:** In another way. What is that other way? Not in the way in which we look, for example, at the possible and how to establish a past fact or to create a presumption in favor of a future fact. Here we have to deal with something radically different. Yes.

**Student:** . . . from the point of view of the principles of logic.

**LS:** Ja, this is surely correct.<sup>15</sup> This is a good word but such good and readily available words are also dangerous. What do we know—what do we mean by logic? Now look at the situation of an orator. Say he has to defend a man accused of murder. Of course he has to know the law, he has to know the broad considerations which are adduced for getting a man free, the famous things

<sup>vi</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation of the beginning of the passage to be read.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 22. 13, 1396b19-20.

<sup>viii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 22. 17, 1397a1.

like he didn't have a motive, and this kind of thing. That we know; these topics have been discussed. But he needs something else.<sup>16</sup> For example, that it was not possible for him to have murdered that man because he was in Chicago at the time when the murder was committed in Los Angeles—an everyday topic, as you know. But what are the topics which Aristotle means now?

**Another Student:** He has to know what form his argument will take, how it will unfold itself . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but how does it look in practice? Think of yourself confronted with such . . . . Take a political subject: Should we invade Cuba? We have to know the facts of the case. You have to know the broad considerations about expediency and justice which have been supplied. Now,<sup>17</sup> if you know these two things, the most particular and the most general, you [do]<sup>18</sup> not yet [have] a speech. And Aristotle is now speaking of this which transforms the commonplaces as well as the facts at hand into a *speech*—into an argument, into an argument which can convince a popular audience. Here we are not concerned with the particular arguments of the case nor are we concerned with the substantive commonplaces discussed before in Books 1 and 2, but with how to build up an argument which carries conviction. Yes.

**Student:** All right, how would we make an argument that we should go to war with Cuba? Well, we could take the first topic. That would be a place of looking for an argument, opposites, and we could say, well, if we look at opposites: What would be the result if we didn't do it?

**LS:** Yes, for example, very strongly, how to proceed. Or if you take similarities: appeasement is wrong, but not to get rid of Castro is appeasement, hence . . . and of course that needs some elaboration. The deeper difficulty will be discussed at the end. Now we only try to understand what it is in general about, so that we see it is truly necessary and a reasonable statement of Aristotle to say [that] this is the core of rhetoric. What is the use of the commonplaces [on the one hand] (that you know the considerations regarding just, expedient, noble, pleasant, and what have you, and what is possible and so on) and on the other hand of the particulars of the case, if you cannot bring the two together? That is what makes a rhetorician a rhetorician more than anything else. Aristotle would not deny that he should have also the right kind of style; he speaks about that later. But that's not the core. The core of the rhetorician is that he brings together these things. He brings to *bear* the universal on the particular by mediating between them, and this mediation is the enthymeme. Now let us turn to the first example at the beginning of chapter 23.

**Mr. Reinken:** "One topic of demonstrative enthymemes is derived from opposites; for it is necessary to consider whether one opposite is predicable of the other, as a means of destroying an argument, if it is not, as a means of constructing one, if it is; for instance, self-control is good, for lack of self-control is harmful—"<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. Why is this not demonstrative? Why is it enthymematic? Is it not a very sound argument?

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<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 1, 1397a7-10.

**Student:** The general principle is that self-control is good and that's sufficient for rhetoric. However there are cases where self-control is not sufficient . . . .

**LS:** Yes, but in what context would it make sense? There is a beautiful example of this—

**Another Student:** Didn't Machiavelli say the rash hope—of Julius was it, who did things rashly, impetuously, with lack of self-control—succeeded where a rational, self-controlled man would not have?

**LS:** But these are not the specific connotations of the Greek words here. They refer to intemperance in a cruder sense. Now we have fortunately an example of that, namely<sup>19</sup> the defense of Alcibiades in the Sixth Book of Thucydides' history, when the argument is made that Alcibiades, a notorious profligate—because that's the meaning of that—cannot be used as a general. How can you entrust the fate of Athens to a notorious profligate? Everyone admits that profligacy is bad and [that] temperance and moderation [are] good. The question is: Does it settle the issue? Does Alcibiades deny his profligacy? He does not deny it. I mean, it was too obvious a fact. He does not deny it, but what he tries to show is that it doesn't settle the issue.<sup>x</sup> Therefore that is the defectiveness of the argument if you apply it.

**Student:** By analogy self-control doesn't settle the issue of goodness—

**LS:** Ja, it's funny, because no one was more moderate and temperate than Nicias, and there are other generals who were very moderate throughout the ages and they were very unsatisfactory generals. Alcibiades says something along these lines: sowing one's wild oats belongs to spirited youth, and this is also generally accepted. And therefore he kills one *endoxon* with another, and therefore these are not demonstrative arguments. Now we cannot possibly discuss all of them. Let us take a later case after the quotations of the verses, when he comes to the next point.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another topic is derived from similar inflections, for in like manner the derivatives must either be predicable of the subject or not; for instance, that the just is not entirely good, for in that case good would be predicable of anything that happens justly; but—”<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Only for the explanation of the term. “Inflections,” he says. Well, it means this: what is true, say, of the word itself in the nominative singular, “the just,” is true also of all inflections, of all cases. What is true of “the just” is also true of the genitive, the dative, the accusative, and also of course of the adverb, “justly.” This is the meaning of the phrase here. Good. But now the next point.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another topic is derived from relative terms. For if to have done rightly or justly may be predicated of one, then to have suffered similarly may be predicated of the other; there is the same relation between having ordered and having carried out, as Diomedon the tax-gatherer said about the taxes, “If selling is not disgraceful to you, neither is buying disgraceful for us.””

<sup>x</sup> *Peloponnesian War*, Bk. VI, chaps. 12-13 (Nicias' argument on Alcibiades' profligacy and unsuitability for command); chap. 15 (Thucydides' comments on Alcibiades); chaps. 16-17 (Alcibiades' response).

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 2, 1397a20-22.

**LS:** Is this a strict argument, an absolutely irrefutable argument? Why not?

**Student:** Some sellers are put in jail or punished for selling, while the buyers of the things they sell are not punished at all.

**LS:** But still, let us take an example closer to the example here. It may not be base to license houses of prostitution,<sup>20</sup> there is plenty of evidence from famous states for that. Nevertheless it would always be base to take out such a license. In other words, the argument can be easily defeated rhetorically, but it has a certain show and therefore it must be met. Now the next point.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And if rightly or justly can be predicated of the sufferer, it can easily be predicated of the one who inflicts suffering; if of the latter, then also of the former. However, in this there is room for a fallacy. For if a man has suffered justly, he has suffered justly, but perhaps not at your hands. Wherefore one must consider separately whether the sufferer deserves to suffer, and whether he who inflicts suffering is the right person to do so, and then make use of the argument either way—<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** Why does Aristotle here state that this is paralogism, i.e., an invalid argument? In a sense all rhetorical arguments in the strictest sense are invalid. But why does he stress here that this is an invalid argument?

**Student:** Well, in this case there is another difficulty that comes in, in this particular example, which he also will mention later. It's not<sup>21</sup> just because all rhetorical arguments are not necessary, that they're all equal. The others were probable in the sense that there wasn't force to them. But here there is another problem because it could be that the person . . . the example, the son is not the right person to avenge the father—

**LS:** Or a private citizen may not be. Think of the Ruby-Oswald case<sup>xiii</sup>.<sup>22</sup> Oswald, for all we know, might have deserved capital punishment, but really not at the hands of a private citizen. It is not the logical defect from the strict point of view which Aristotle has in mind but, given the judicial situation, this argument [of course] comes of course up<sup>23</sup> on the level of the purely forensic argument: Had he a right to do that? This is, I think, the point.

Now another example,<sup>24</sup> in the next paragraph here, after he has spoken of the gods. If even the gods do not know everything, how could men? And the general argument is the argument from the more or less.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Another topic is derived from the more and less. For instance, if not even the gods know everything, hardly can men; for this amounts to saying that if a predicate, which is more probably affirmable of one thing, does not belong to it, it is clear that it does not belong to another of which it is less probably affirmable. And to say that a man who beats his

<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 3, 1397a23-b1.

<sup>xiii</sup> On November 24, 1963, Jack Ruby shot and killed Lee Harvey Oswald, who had been arrested and charged with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963.

father also beats his neighbors, is an instance of the rule that, if the less exists, the more also exists. Either of these arguments may be used, according as it is necessary to prove either that a predicate is affirmable or that it is not.<sup>xiv</sup>

**LS:** Now, if we look at this argument strictly, there are of course very strict and stringent arguments from the more or less. Say, if a car can carry two very obese people it can surely carry two small children. There is no quarrel with that. But why is it in its rhetorical use not simply true, as given in this example: that he who beats his father will surely beat his neighbor?<sup>25</sup> What is the reason behind that inference?

**Mr. Reinken:** Father-beating is more heinous.

**LS:** Sure. He who commits the greater crime will not hesitate to commit the lesser crime, which is not universally true of course.<sup>26</sup> There are quite a few people who commit murder and would not commit a petty theft, for example, because that would be below them. They might be perfectly willing to commit armed robbery but not petty theft. But more specifically, the opportunities of annoying a man are much greater for the nasty father than for the nasty neighbor. This is clear. Now a bit later, after he has spoken of Patroclus and Achilles and Alexander: “And if not even the other artisans are despicable, then also not the philosophers.” Ja? “And if”<sup>xv</sup>—how does he go on?

**Mr. Reinken:** “If generals are not despised because they are frequently defeated, neither are the sophists.”<sup>xvi</sup>

**LS:** This is some difficulty regarding the text here. Let me see what it was. Some manuscripts read: “And if the generals are not to be despised because they are frequently put to death,” put to death, which makes more sense I believe.<sup>xvii</sup> You know, in some countries the generals are put to death as traitors or whatever. Think of the French Revolution, when this kind of thing can happen also in modern times.

Now, why does this not follow:<sup>27</sup> If art as art is respectable, but philosophy is the art of arts, hence philosophy is the most respectable art. Aristotle uses this kind of argument; Plato too. Now, what is the defect of this argument in rhetoric? Look at the other artisans and look at the philosophers. No other art in the strict sense of the word investigates the things in heaven and beneath the earth, unless you would say, as a character of Aristophanes, that a man who digs potatoes [Strauss laughs] (or onions, to use his example) investigates the things beneath the earth. Good. But in other words, the specific objection against philosophy from the polis—that it is dangerous to the traditional beliefs—is not met by that argument. This is, I think, the defect here. Now a little bit later, from time—a few lines later.

**Mr. Reinken:**

<sup>xiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 4, 1397b12-19.

<sup>xv</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation of 1397b25-26. Freese's translation of these lines: “if no other professional men are contemptible, then neither are philosophers; if . . .”

<sup>xvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 5, 1397b26-27.

<sup>xvii</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation.

Another topic is derived from the consideration of time. Thus Iphicrates, in his speech against Harmodius, says: "If, before accomplishing anything, I had demanded the statue from you in the event of my success, you would have granted it; will you then refuse it, now that I have succeeded? Do not therefore make a promise when you expect something, and break it when you have received it." Again, to persuade the Thebans to allow Philip to pass through their territory into Attica, they were told that "if he had made this request before helping them against the Phocians, they would have promised; it would be absurd, therefore, if they refused to let him through now, because he had thrown away his opportunity and had trusted them."

**LS:** Well, what would you say? The second argument, I think it is simple to see the difficulty: the changed situation. Yes. But it is nevertheless an impressive argument.

**Student:** I thought this topic showed the insufficiency of rhetoric . . . .

**LS:** Can you state that more clearly?

**Same Student:** Well, rhetoric doesn't work because, as you say, you don't need it any more. You promise something, but you don't have to make the deal anymore, because you have already obtained what you want. Mere words isn't going to win—

**LS:** Yes, but the situation is this. It is very hard for people, unless they are tyrants or quasi-tyrants, to confess openly principles of indecency or injustice. You must not forget that.<sup>28</sup> And this is of course an inducement for unjust people to be good rhetoricians or to hire good rhetoricians, or call them speechwriters, you know, because the open confession of injustice is unbearable. Think that even Hitler had developed a kind of science (and what is more respectable in our age than a science?) in order to justify his proceeding. So that is necessary. Now, the next point, where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Another topic consists in turning upon the opponent what has been said against ourselves; and this is an excellent method. For instance, in the *Teucer*<sup>xviii</sup> . . . and Iphicrates employed it against Aristophon, when he asked him whether he would have betrayed the fleet for a bribe; when Aristophon said no, "Then," retorted Iphicrates, "if you, Aristophon, would not have betrayed it, would I, Iphicrates, have done so?"

**LS:** Meaning of course, you, a louse like you. [Laughter] Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** "But the opponent must be a man who seems the more likely to have committed a crime; otherwise it would appear ridiculous—"

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<sup>xviii</sup> As per the footnote to Freese's Loeb translation: "The illustration is lost or perhaps purposely omitted as well known. The *Teucer* was a tragedy of Sophocles" (p. 302).

**LS:** Yes. This doesn't have to be labored, I take it. For example, if Sol Estes,<sup>xix</sup> who appeared again in the newspaper, would occasionally<sup>29</sup> use this argument against a man—say, against Dwight Eisenhower—then it would be ridiculous. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “if anyone were to make use of such an argument in reference to such an opponent, for instance, as Aristides; it should be used to discredit the accuser. For in general the accuser aspires to be better than the defendant; accordingly, it must always be shown that this is not the case. And generally, it is ridiculous for a man to reproach others for what he does or would do himself, or to encourage others to do what he does not or would not do himself.”

**LS:** Now again this throws very much light on the situation of rhetoric. You see also the defect of rhetoric, because the fact that the accuser is an unsavory fellow is perfectly compatible with the accusation being just. In a way he is irrelevant and yet very, very powerful. The unsavory accuser is ridiculous, surely.<sup>30</sup> If he talks of decency when everyone knows what kind of fellow he is,<sup>31</sup> this doesn't do away with the fact that he might in this particular case state the truth. That is clear. This is naturally an exclusively rhetorical argument, this kind of turning the tables.

**Student:** Iphicrates was a mercenary was he not, and one who sided against Athens at one time?

**LS:** Yes. I mean, I know not more than what you know about that, at the time when Philip of Macedon was already in power. Yes.

**Same Student:** But he was acquitted and a juster man than he was condemned to death.

**LS:** This I do not know. Of course, this kind of thing one would have to consider. By the way, in all the other cases also when he quotes from dramas, if the dramas have been preserved, one should see the context and one would find quite a few things which do not appear by just reading the Aristotelian text. This is another specimen of what Mr. Butterworth meant by his earlier remark [about] the rhetoric employed by Aristotle. Good. Now let us go on. The definition.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another topic is derived from definition. For instance, that the *daimonion* is nothing else than a god or the work of a god; but he who thinks it to be the work of a god necessarily thinks that gods exist.”

**LS:** Now here this is a good example where we happen<sup>32</sup> to have Plato's *Apology* and therefore we can reconstruct the argument. We have the complete argument. If we did not have that, we wouldn't understand it. This is *the* argument, the central argument, of Socrates in his refutation of the charge. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

When Iphicrates desired to prove that the best man is the noblest, he declared that there was nothing noble attaching to Harmodius and Aristogiton, before they did something noble; and, “I myself am more akin to them than you; at any rate, my deeds are more akin

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<sup>xix</sup> Billie Sol Estes (1924-2013), financier convicted of fraud (conviction later overturned on technicalities), accused President Lyndon Johnson of a variety of crimes, including various improprieties and involvement in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

to theirs than yours.” And as it is said in the *Alexander*<sup>xx</sup> that it would be generally admitted that men of disorderly passions are not satisfied with the enjoyment of one woman's person alone. Also, the reason why Socrates refused to visit Archelaus, declaring that it was disgraceful not to be in a position

**LS:** Literally translated, “hubris,” “it would be hubris.” “Insolence,” we can translate it.

**Mr. Reinken:** “insolence<sup>xxi</sup> not to be in a position to return a favour as well as an injury. In all these cases, it is by definition and the knowledge of what the thing is in itself that conclusions are drawn upon the subject in question.”<sup>xxii</sup>

**LS:** It must of course be understood (Aristotle does not even mention it) that these definitions don't have to be scientific definitions. That goes without saying. Here we have a complete example of Paris, you know (Aristotle calls him Alexander all the time),<sup>33</sup> who was a terrible fellow, who took away the wife of Menelaus, Helen, and had a very bad reputation. And here someone defends Alexander's, or Paris', decency in such matters by saying, “A decent man is a man who is satisfied with the enjoyment of a single woman.” Paris was never in love with any other woman but Helen; hence he is the model of decency. There are some other considerations suppressed [Strauss laughs], but still it makes some impression. But you see also how a definition of moderation or decency is here used. That is what Aristotle has in mind.

Now here we have also in Socrates' case, which naturally interests us most—you saw that this section begins and ends with a Socratic statement, although in the first case Socrates is not mentioned, but everyone knew that. Now what is, according to Aristotle, the chief contribution of Socrates the philosopher? The definitions. I had not thought of it, but on the basis of what you said I wonder whether there is not something going on, more than meets the eye immediately. In this section on definitions there are four examples, two Socratic.

Now to come to the last point: here Socrates has an unusual definition of hubris. Now in order to understand it, one must consider the fact that *hubris* is sometimes used in opposition to moderation—*sōphrosynē* in Greek. And Socrates says, therefore, he does not go to Archelaus. (Do you remember Archelaus from Plato's *Gorgias*? This super criminal, according to Polus. There is no evidence outside of Plato's *Gorgias* that he was a super criminal, but Polus is a rhetorician [so] he has the right to exaggerate.) Now Socrates doesn't go to Archelaus from *sōphrosynē*, or rather justice, because *sōphrosynē* and justice can be used synonymously and are frequently used synonymously.

Now, what is justice? What is the implied definition of justice? Justice is a will to requite good with good and bad with bad. This is the definition which Aristotle gives in the *Ethics*, Fifth Book, when he speaks of reciprocal, *antipeponthos*<sup>xxiii</sup>—I do not know what, tit for tat. But the will is not sufficient. If you wish to requite good for good and bad for bad, you are not yet just.

<sup>xx</sup> The footnote to Freese's Loeb translation: “Polycrates' *Alexander*” (p. 305).

<sup>xxi</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader retranslates as “insolence” what is rendered as “disgraceful” in the Freese translation.

<sup>xxii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 6-8, 1397b30-1398a27.

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* V. 5. 5, 1132b21-1133b1.

You must be able to do it. Here you have Socrates' implicit definition: justice consists in being *able* to do good to those who have done good to you and bad to those who have done bad to you. I mention this in passing for those who like to understand Plato's *Republic*. The second definition of justice given in the First Book of the *Republic* is what?

**Student:** Helping friends and hurting enemies.

**LS:** Justice consists in helping friends and harming enemies. In the *Cleitophon*, the short dialogue preceding the *Republic* in the traditional order of the dialogues (a dialogue now naturally declared to be spurious<sup>xxiv</sup>), Cleitophon says that the only definition of justice which Socrates makes is that. Now [it]<sup>34</sup> is a very long story whether he should do [i.e. say] that but we have to consider it and take it seriously. This would be in my opinion a confirmation of that. But this only in passing, it has nothing directly to do with the issue with which we are concerned.

Now let us skip the next two points. In the next place he speaks of the many meanings of words, which has been discussed in the *Topics*. Certain parts of the *Rhetoric* are identical, so to speak, with the *Topics*. That we know already, for the very simple reason<sup>35</sup>: Why should one not use the really stringent argument, more than a rhetorical argument, if you have it? Obviously. But it is not of the essence of rhetoric to do that. Good. Now the next one, when he speaks about induction.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Another, from induction. For instance, from the case of the woman of Peperethus, it is argued that in matters of parentage women always discern the truth; similarly, at Athens, when Mantias the orator was litigating with his son, the mother declared the truth; and again, at Thebes, when Ismenias and Stilbon were disputing about a child, Dodonis declared that Ismenias was its father, Thettaliscus being accordingly recognized as the son of Ismenias. There is another instance—<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** And therefore they accepted him, *enomizon*. They regarded him as the son of Ismenias. Now you see here, the proposition to be established is: Women always recognize the truth regarding their offspring. Well, good, how do you know? Can there not be mistakes and all these kind[s] of thing[s]? And here, examples. Perhaps Aristotle had in mind this kind of thing here too, where it is used as a kind of proof. This is established by examples. And this is patently inconclusive, of course. Why?

**Student:** . . . the argument on the other side.

**LS:** No, no, more specifically.

**Another Student:** The biological . . . .

<sup>xxiv</sup> Contemporary classical scholars and philologists have questioned and generally reversed this dismissal of the *Cleitophon* as a spurious dialogue. Thomas Pangle argues in favor of the authenticity of the *Cleitophon* and other dialogues previously judged spurious in his introduction to *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 1-17.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 11, 1398a33-b5.

**LS:** No, then that would be trans-rhetorical. We would have to get in experts and so forth.

**Another Student:** . . . other examples . . . .

**LS:** No, but the most obvious, the most obvious.

**Another Student:** Well, she can lie about it.

**LS:** Exactly, exactly. Sure she can lie, simply because she wants to have the offspring legitimate. And therefore that's clear. What Xenophon alludes to in the *Cyropaedia* when he speaks of Cyrus' parents—his mother was Mandane, his father was generally said to be (I forgot his name) Cambyses.<sup>xxvi</sup> Strictly speaking, the father is less knowable than the mother. But here, since we argue legally and where such principles obtain, the marriage contract reveals the identity of the father. For the purposes of the law it is sufficient that the woman gave birth to a child while being married to that man. That settles it and therefore we do not have to go into biology.

Averroës gives here this example, which of course is a bad use of rhetoric: one can prove that obedience to the Sharia, the divine law, is not necessary, for these and these men transgressed the law and lived very well after.<sup>xxvii</sup> You can also prove the opposite. You can prove that those transgressors came into misery. In other words, that's a subject that cannot be treated except rhetorically.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Then, in the sequel, he takes the argument from authority, in 21ff.<sup>xxix</sup> And this interesting example, which is here in this context, to which Mr. Lyons referred: the trouble into which the Delphic oracle came because Apollo cannot gainsay his father Zeus. Now if the oracle of Zeus in Dodona said this, then Apollo cannot prevent it. Needless to say, there is no way of having a scientific argument here. We do not have to read that. Now let us rather turn to 1399a11.<sup>xxx</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** "Another topic is that from enumerating the parts, as in the *Topics*: What kind of movement is the soul? for it must be this or that. There is an instance of this in the *Socrates* of Theodectes: 'What holy place has he profaned? Which of the gods recognized by the city has he neglected to honour?'"

**LS:** Ja. And which of course would not settle the issue made in the charge, that Socrates did not recognize, did not believe in the existence of the gods of the city. But it would be good enough for getting an acquittal because only overt facts can be brought home. Now the sequel.

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<sup>xxvi</sup> Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 51, 1914), Bk. I, chap. 2.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 2.23.8. This is Strauss's paraphrase of Averroës' example.

<sup>xxviii</sup> First side of the original tape runs out; there may be a portion missing from Strauss's commentary.

<sup>xxix</sup> It is unclear why Strauss refers to "21ff." The passage on Zeus and Apollo which he subsequently summarizes is II. 23. 12; then he directs the reader to II. 23. 13-14. Perhaps Strauss meant "23ff."

<sup>xxx</sup> The reader begins from 1399a7; the Bekker number given by Strauss, 1399a11, refers to the next paragraph in the Greek, probably by mistake.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Again, since in most human affairs the same thing is accompanied by some bad or good result, another topic consists in employing the consequence to exhort or dissuade, accuse or defend, praise or blame. For instance, education is attended by the evil of being envied, and by the good of being wise; therefore we should not be educated, for we should avoid being envied; nay rather, we *should* be educated, for we should be wise. This topic is identical with the “Art” of Callippus, when you have also included the topic of the possible and the others which have been mentioned.<sup>xxx1</sup>

**LS:** Now if we take here this example, I think one can say that this issue cannot be settled in the popular discussion because the two opinions invoked are equally evident for the simple mind. I mean both: it is terrible to be envied (don't do anything which makes you envied) and the other, wisdom is of course good. But he cannot settle that. Socrates uses this argument in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Book 4, chapter 2, where he proves to the interlocutor called Euthydemus—and that means “straight to the demos, on his way straight to the demos”—that wisdom is not the highest good because people have come into very great troubles because they were wise.<sup>xxxii</sup> You might read this occasion when you think of it. Now of course that there are such issues which cannot possibly be settled by this kind of argument is a kind of justification of the fact-value distinction. If issues of this kind cannot be settled in popular discourse, let us keep them out, let us leave them entirely open. What would Aristotle say to this reasoning?

**Student:** He might say something like: If two mountains, the peaks of which you can't tell the difference as to which of the two mountains whose peaks are buried in the clouds is higher, can't you say that Jezebel is not as virtuous as Caesar's wife? Can't you still know the difference?

**LS:** Ja, but no, no, it's something else. I noticed by the way that you quoted someone close to me [laughter]. Good. But Aristotle would simply say this: Are factual questions any more easily to be settled in popular discussions? What is good of these value questions is at least as good regarding factual questions—I mean, any question of astronomy, biology, and so forth is as little to be settled in popular discourse as this one is.

Now of course there is another implication which we must not forget [and] which we must not leave unmentioned. This argument seems to be particularly foolish for the following reason. No one can escape envy except by lacking every possible distinction. I mean, if a man is ugly, weak, poor, unconnected (no friends, no family), lacks all moral and intellectual virtues, and [is] in addition sick (because he might be of amazing health, that would also be . . .), then of course that's the only way in which one can avoid envy. Therefore the real strength of the argument derives from the fact that wisdom is invidious to a particular degree. People are not afraid of being envied for being wealthy and powerful, and not only because wealth and power give them a kind of protection, not only for that. This would all belong to the kinds of things to which we were referred by Mr. Lyons, when he put this emphasis on Socrates, the person of Socrates here. A little bit later, the topic after the next.

<sup>xxx1</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 13-14, 1399a7-18.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, trans. E. C. Marchant & O. J. Todd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library vol. 168, 1923), IV. 2, 33-34.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Again,<sup>36</sup> since men do not praise the same things in public and in secret, but in public chiefly praise what is just and beautiful, and in secret—”

**LS:** “And noble,” just and noble.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and noble,<sup>xxxiii</sup> and in secret rather wish for what is expedient, another topic consists in endeavoring to infer its opposite from one or other of these statements. This topic is the most weighty of those that deal with paradox.”<sup>xxxiv</sup>

**LS:** Did we come across this theme in an earlier reading? Of course we did; the question is a purely rhetorical one—but where?

**Student:** The *Gorgias*.

**LS:** Can you state more precisely how the issue came up there—the true issue, I mean, which is not the same as that explicitly stated? Yes.

**Another Student:** Callicles. It came up in the discussion with Socrates and Callicles.

**LS:** Surely. What is it? What was it? How was it stated there?

**Student:** . . . say things that they act upon, the principles that they act upon.

**LS:** In other words, all men say decent things and all men choose from a different point of view. Exactly. So you see how good it is to have read the *Gorgias* if one want to—I mean, Aristotle had read it naturally. Yes. Now let us go to another passage here, in 1399b5.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another topic consists in concluding the identity of antecedents from the identity of results. Thus Xenophanes said—”

**LS:** Xenophanes was of course a famous philosopher.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Xenophanes said: “There is as much impiety in asserting that the gods are born as in saying that they die; for either way the result is that at some time or other they did not exist.” And, generally speaking, one may always regard as identical the results produced by one or other of any two things: “You are about to decide, not about Isocrates alone, but about education generally, whether it is right to study philosophy.” And, “to give earth and water is slavery,” and—

**LS:** Which was a demand made by the Persian King on the Athenians. To give in to this demand means to be enslaved.

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<sup>xxxiii</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “noble” what is rendered as “beautiful” in the Freese translation.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 16, 1399a30-34.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and, ‘to be included in the common peace implies obeying orders.’ Of two alternatives, you should take that which is useful.”<sup>xxxv</sup>

**LS:** Yes, the same conclusion follows from different premises. You choose the more useful premise. For example, meaning this in this particular case<sup>37</sup>: you praise Socrates the individual rather than philosophy if in that audience the respectability of Socrates is more acceptable than philosophy. If however the situation is such that there is a prejudice against Socrates, but you can hope to convince your audience of the decency of philosophy, then you try to take the philosophy angle and that simply subsumes Socrates. This is what he means. Yes. Now 1400a5.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Another topic is derived from things which are thought to happen but are incredible, because it would never have been thought so, if they had not happened or almost happened. And further, these things are even more likely to be true; for we only believe in that which is, or that which is probable: if then a thing is incredible and not probable, it will be true; for it is not because it is probable and credible that we think it true. Thus, Androcles of Pitthus, speaking against the law, being shouted at when he said “the laws need a law to correct them,” went on, “and fishes need salt, although it is neither probable nor credible that they should, being brought up in brine; similarly, pressed olives need oil, although it is incredible that what produces oil should itself need oil.”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

**LS:** Yes. Now here the very improbability is used as proof, and this is a very good example of an enthymeme. After all, what is improbable is admittedly possible and therefore you can under certain conditions precisely use the very improbability. If your examples are equally good for your audience as these examples were for an Athenian audience, you can bring it home. Now let us read only one more point and then I would like to make a general remark at this time. In 1400b toward the end, the last example in chapter 23, 1400b26.<sup>38</sup> Here, page 323, bottom.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Enthymemes that serve to refute are more popular than those that serve to demonstrate, because the former is a conclusion of opposites in a small compass, and things in juxtaposition are always clearer to the audience. But of all syllogisms, whether refutative or demonstrative, those are especially applauded, the result of which the hearers foresee as soon as they are begun, and not because they are superficial (for as they listen they congratulate themselves on anticipating the conclusion); and also those which the hearers are only so little behind that they understand what they mean as soon as they are delivered.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**LS:** Now that’s a good illustration of the simplicity of a good rhetorical argument. Good. Now I would like to bring up a question in the very short time which we still have. I thought what one should do of course for a full interpretation—one would have to have a very good knowledge of the Greek orators, not all of whom have been preserved, but quite a few, many great ones [have].

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 18, 1399b5-14.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 22, 1400a5-14.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 30, 1400b26-33.

The commentary by Cope which I use while I go is based on constant consideration of these orators, including Demosthenes himself, but I am not very familiar with them and so I turned to consider only the few speeches which I happen to know and which are of course on the highest possible level of art: the speeches in Thucydides.

I reread for the occasion Pericles' first speech in Thucydides, Book 1, chapter 140 and following. Now the issue was this: should we give in to the Spartan demand to rescind the Megarian decree? The Megarian decree was a decree regarding the city of Megara. The Athenians kept bidding their neighbors, the Megarians,<sup>39</sup> to visit markets in the Athenian empire, and the argument was this: "After all, the Megarian thing is a small thing." As they said before the Second World War, "*la Yugo chose*"—you know, Yugoslavia, the French, *chose*, "thing." Who will fight for Danzig? But they couldn't make "Danzig" mean "*chose*," whereas with Yugoslavia they could. So Megara is a trivial thing, and war with Sparta is a big thing; hence, we do not go to war for Megara, for the Megarian decree.

This was the state of the discussion, and Pericles replies as follows: The Megarian decree is *not* a small thing if viewed properly, because it is a test of your firmness, and then the demand is in itself an infringement of your sovereignty. So,<sup>40</sup> small thing, no; it's a big thing. Not to give in to<sup>41</sup> the Spartan request probably means war. Pericles admits that. He would be a very lousy fellow and not a statesman if he would say it is riskless. He says there will be war, which is a question to which he returns. Can we win the war? And then he has a magnificent survey of the power of Athens on the one hand and the enemies on the other in order to show the Athenians: We can win. Of course, we can win means we may lose, naturally. But the implication is [that] we would not be worse off by losing the war than by giving in now, because one demand accepted would lead to other demands, and so on.

Now, it is a masterly statement. What is rhetorical in it, i.e., not strictly reasoned? Only subordinate things. For example, when Pericles proves Athens' power, and power to resist, by saying, "We are like an island." Of course like an island, possessing a navy, and we can guarantee our imports of foodstuffs and this kind of thing. Of course that is not quite the same, to be like an island and to be an island. But this is really trivial. The main point is: it is a very strict and powerful argument. Fundamentally the reasoning of Pericles is of the same character as that of a first-rate state paper, only here presented to a popular audience—which is a great compliment by the way to the Athenian audience.

I have never read George Kennan's famous articles, but you know that was also an attempt to reason out a political problem and arrive at a rational conclusion.<sup>xxxviii</sup> There was a very famous statement of an editor of the London *Times* (I forgot his name, maybe 1907) which led to a radical change in British foreign policy, Britain turning against Germany and toward France.<sup>xxxix</sup> Does anyone here remember the name? It was printed later on in a history of the London *Times*.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> George Kennan (1904-2005), American diplomat and historian, a leading cold war strategic advisor. Kennan's writings in the 1940's are considered the basis of the U.S. policy of Soviet containment and the Truman doctrine.

<sup>xxxix</sup> It is not clear to which editor and editorials Strauss may refer. In 1914, Wickham Steed, who that year became foreign editor of *The Times*, wrote several editorials in July 1914 along apparently similar anti-German lines urging the entrance of the England and her empire into the First World War.

And there are other famous—I happen also to remember Bismarck's argument, which changed the Prussian policy very radically against Austria: no longer in subordination to Austria but taking the side of the German<sup>42</sup> national unity movement under the leadership of Prussia. The argument against the opponents, the real Prussian conservatives, was a masterpiece of reasoning. So these things exist. Why can there not be rhetoric of this caliber? That it is rarely possible, that is clear. But it leads to a deeper question.

Now the fundamental issue would seem to be this. Either all political reasoning is ultimately rhetoric, rhetorical reasoning, because ultimately it appeals to opinions, which can never be simply true; or else, the core of political reasoning as practical reasoning is indeed not scientific, theoretical reasoning but it belongs to the sphere of practical reason. It lacks theoretical certainty but it has moral certainty—moral certainty in the old sense of the term that you can be sure that you act rightly, justly in taking this course. I remember the discussion of this issue by Yves Simon in his work on democratic government, I believe in the first chapter, which states the Thomistic view very clearly.

**Student:** Which book?

**LS:** *Principles of Democratic Government*. I remember it well. It was brought out by the University of Chicago Press.<sup>x1</sup> This is the only work of Simon with “democratic government” in the title.

Now here I come up with an observation which I find of some importance. When Aristotle discusses rhetorical reasoning in the *Rhetoric* he compares it with dialectical reasoning and scientific reasoning. He does not discuss the relation between rhetorical reasoning and the reasoning belonging to practical wisdom—prudence, *phronesis*.<sup>43</sup> That is of course what makes it so difficult and I do not believe that this is an accidental failure but [that] it is connected with one of the greatest difficulties of the *Ethics*. The fundamental obscurity there is that the cognitive status of the principles of action is not made clear. It is only said that the principles of decency become evident only to the decent man. But how they are related to what man knows by nature, every man knows by nature—that is not made clear.

Now if I may say a word about the view now prevailing in the social sciences. The view, as you all know, is of course this. Political reasoning (say, even in a first-rate state paper) is hypothetical, theoretical reasoning: if we want this and this, then we must do that and that. But the if, the condition, is supplied not by reason but by a decision—[by] values, perhaps; so in other words, the whole reasoning is ultimately dependent on something which cannot be rationally established. This is a third alternative which we would have to consider.

Aristotle does speak of practical syllogism in the *Ethics* once, in the Sixth Book.<sup>xli</sup> But this statement is one in which the practical syllogism—there is the end and given that end, this and this means are the right means—right not merely from the point of view of efficiency, but also of decency. But he makes it clear at the time that the end comes to sight only to decent people. Now

<sup>x1</sup> Yves Simon (1903-1961) French Catholic political thinker and supporter of the resistance. Author of *Philosophy of Democratic Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

<sup>xli</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 8, 1141b10-23.

in a state paper as such, I believe the limitation of the reasoning to decent people would not be very helpful. You may have read what may happen to Charles Percy for his decent action regarding the West Side bloc.<sup>xliii</sup> Some people believe he may lose the election because of this virtue. But surely, especially in foreign policy, where things are so tough, that is . . . .

Now, I believe that this is an important point which I submit to your consideration. It is not sufficient to understand the relation between rhetorical reasoning and dialectical reasoning, but it is also important to understand the relation between rhetorical reasoning<sup>44</sup> and prudential reasoning, to use “prudential” now in the Aristotelian sense of the term. Now the strict Aristotelians of the Middle Ages, men like Farabi and so, they held that the principles of all action, at least of all social action, do have the character of *endoxa*—they use [the] Arabic translation of *endoxa*: of things which are only in opinion, i.e., they are not strictly speaking rational.

Now, in ordinary political discussion, for example, if you take say such a great example as Bismarck's state paper, what is the ultimate premise? The preservation of monarchy, more particularly of the Prussian monarchy, which is of course not an evident truth because there were quite a few people even at that time in Germany who were not so sure that the Prussian monarchy [was] indispensable for the well-being of Germany, and other things. If the politically effective principles have this character, which is now called ideological or mythical or what have you, then of course this would be of crucial importance. And even the strictest and most rational belief or policy would still rest ultimately on such considerations, which are not simply rational.

But to clear up not merely the truth, not even to aim so high, but only what Aristotle says about it—*aut secundum veritatem aut secundum Aristotelem*—we would have to have a much better understanding especially of the *Ethics* and of the cognitive status of the principles of action than we can presume to have. Aristotle can be very specific. We have seen he can be even unnecessarily specific, one could say, in some cases we have seen. In quite a few cases he has said things we knew before we opened the book, for example that you have to know the facts of the case if you want to argue about them. We do not need a man of Aristotle's mind to learn that. But Aristotle can also be of a most annoying and intriguing laconism. The Spartans were known for their brevity . . . verbiage. And I believe that is one of the cases in which Aristotle is very laconic. Yes. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** We're done?

**LS:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Butterworth:** The thing that I have a question about is does Aristotle ever discuss practical reasoning as such?

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<sup>xliii</sup> Charles Percy (1919-2011) lost the election as Republican candidate for Governor of Illinois in 1964. He served in the U. S. Senate from 1967-1985. Percy purged his party of any members of the “West Side bloc,” a group with the Illinois House of Representatives owing allegiance to Democratic Mayor Richard J. Daley; the bloc, consisting of both Republicans and Democrats, were known for voting against anti-crime legislation. Percy lost the 1964 election to Democratic Governor Otto Kerner, Daley's favored candidate.

**LS:** Sure, Sixth Book of the *Ethics*, some passages in *De Anima*. Sure.

**Mr. Butterworth:** You mean when he tries to discuss what prudence is?

**LS:** And also when he speaks of practical knowledge, practical wisdom, in the Third Book of the *Ethics*, he also says something about this, but it is very brief.<sup>xliii</sup> I mean these developments which you find very conveniently in Yves Simon—and this [of course] goes<sup>45</sup> back to the Thomistic tradition, and John of St. Thomas<sup>xliv</sup> and Cajetan<sup>xlv</sup> are his chief authorities, and ultimately of course Thomas—there you find a rather full discussion. Now Simon (using present-day terminology, which is always a risky thing) calls this practical knowledge “affective knowledge.” That is not entirely without basis in Aristotle. You know, where you are not detached, you are concerned, affected—*engagé*, as some other people call it [laughter]. But affective knowledge—and where therefore, it is implied, only he who is engaged or committed and so will see it. It is not theoretical certainty, but still this has something to do with what Aristotle means, but it is not identical.

Well, one important link in this argument is this. There is not in Aristotle a *habitus* of practical principles, which Thomas calls *synderesis* and which can be loosely called the conscience. That does not exist in Aristotle, but is a crucial part of the Thomistic tradition. That doesn't mean that it is incompatible with Aristotle, but it is not simply Aristotelian, unqualifiedly Aristotelian. That has to be cleared up.<sup>46</sup> I did not see before that this question is very pertinent in order to understand the *Rhetoric* as a whole. To repeat:<sup>47</sup> Aristotle is very specific about the difference between rhetorical reasoning and the other kinds of theoretical reasoning, dialectical and scientific, but the relation of rhetorical reasoning to prudential reasoning is not discussed as far as I can see. And that is one point where one should try to *approfondir les choses*, to deepen . . . . So next time we will have the rest of Book 2.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “you—.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “this would not—.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “that.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “in other words.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “which.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “this—.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “our discussion—to.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “that's following—.”

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<sup>xliii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* III. 3, 1112b13-1113a14.

<sup>xliv</sup> John Poincot (1589-1644), Spanish theologian.

<sup>xlv</sup> Thomas Cajetan, or Gaetanus (1469-1534), Italian cardinal. He opposed Luther as the Pope's Legate in Wittenberg. He wrote one of the earliest commentaries on the *Summa* of Thomas.

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- <sup>10</sup> Deleted “still—.”
- <sup>11</sup> Deleted “mentions—.”
- <sup>12</sup> Deleted “speaking.”
- <sup>13</sup> Deleted “argument—the.”
- <sup>14</sup> Deleted “must be.”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleted “But can we not perhaps—.”
- <sup>16</sup> Deleted “and also.”
- <sup>17</sup> Deleted “this would not get produced—.”
- <sup>18</sup> Moved “have.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “the discussion—.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “that—.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “you know.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “after.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “I mean, you see.”
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “in other words.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “say.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “but.”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “to know—.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “and.”
- <sup>34</sup> Changed from “that.”
- <sup>35</sup> Deleted “that.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “[page 313].”

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<sup>37</sup> Deleted "here."

<sup>38</sup> Deleted "[Strauss and Reinken take a moment to locate the place in the text, Reinken making a false start in another passage]."

<sup>39</sup> Deleted "to come to markets."

<sup>40</sup> Deleted "you know."

<sup>41</sup> Deleted "to Sparta."

<sup>42</sup> Deleted "unity."

<sup>43</sup> Deleted "and."

<sup>44</sup> Deleted "and the reasoning of—."

<sup>45</sup> Moved "of course."

<sup>46</sup> Deleted "and I believe that is of very great."

<sup>47</sup> Deleted "because."

**Session 12: May 20, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] —or rather the mere fact that he adapts it to the mood, the capacities, and the prejudices of the audience shows that the speech itself will not simply be a state paper. What is the objection which one could make to Mr. Dry's concluding remarks?<sup>1</sup> I did not want to go into the question, which as far as I know has not been properly handled hitherto<sup>2</sup> in the speeches of Thucydides (of course the use of rhetorical means learned by Thucydides from Gorgias and other rhetoricians, you know—antithesis and similar devices which will be discussed in<sup>3</sup> [Book]<sup>i</sup> 3 of the *Rhetoric*, this of course is very well-known) but in the analyses of the speeches, where is the line between the truly prudential and the adaptation? This must also be done. Now you referred to the speech [in Thucydides] to which I referred last time. To what extent is that speech rhetorical?

The only thing which strikes me immediately and which I mentioned last time, is the comparison of Athens to an island, which is of course a dubious thing.<sup>4</sup> It is understood [that] an island has a strong navy (say, Great Britain until a short while ago—or until the Corn Laws,<sup>ii</sup> one should rather say, that's better) so they can prevent foreign invasion and they can produce their [own] food. But the Athenians, closed off from upstate or downstate however you call it, by the Spartan invasion, depended absolutely of course on import. And, in addition, the fact that<sup>5</sup> the rural population was compelled to live in Athens and had to look [on] impotently at the ravaging of their country places and their lands by their enemy, would not have had happened in an island. So this is the only clear case in this speech as far as I can see of a purely rhetorical argument.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Yes, that he says at the beginning, which is rhetorically quite impressive but it is more than merely rhetorical when he says: “I do not change my mind, I come back always to the same point: no concessions to the Spartans.” And then he contrasts himself with the proceedings of human beings, by which he of course implies that he is in a way super-human, that he is not a pick<sup>iii</sup> and simply follows the broad line of the policy without any deviation caused by momentary complications and by momentary impressions. I would hesitate to call this unqualifiedly rhetorical.

**Same Student:** Well, I thought it was rhetorical in the sense that he could not have made such an absolute statement until he had decided that in this particular case the right policy was to go to war.

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<sup>i</sup> Strauss says “chapter 3” but must be referring to Book 3 of the *Rhetoric*.

<sup>ii</sup> The Corn Laws (1815-1846) were import tariffs protecting domestic British grain prices against foreign import competition. It is unclear whether Strauss refers to the Corn Laws merely to mark a time period or whether he implies that the Corn Laws contributed to or reflected a declining naval supremacy. Perhaps Strauss implies that the repeal of the Corn Laws made Britain less of an island, less self-sufficient and enclosed, in this sense of relying on the navy to “prevent foreign invasion” while they “produce their food.” The most evident political significance of the repeal of the mercantilist Corn Laws was the reduction of the wealth and power of landowners.

<sup>iii</sup> A term from basketball.

**LS:** Yes, but this was a prudential judgment.

**Same Student:** That was, but then the statement itself as the whole speech is an organization of the material in order to make his case shine up the best, which is not what he did originally when he was thinking it out himself.

**LS:** Sure, but that would refer not to the quality of the arguments, the logical character of the arguments. It would refer to choice of the proper words, and having this beginning and this end, and not bringing in the most powerful things in the middle where the attention is lagging, but at the end. Real oration, you know. This is of course rhetorical but this has nothing to do with the logical character of the argument. Now, what is then the shortcoming of Mr. Dry's otherwise clear and very good statement? I mentioned it last time.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Well, whatever that may be worth and for the time being I am still impressed by that: that Aristotle<sup>6</sup> describe[s]<sup>iv</sup> the character of rhetorical reasoning by distinguishing it from scientific and dialectical reasoning, and not from prudential reasoning. And I believe, and no one knew better than Aristotle, that in rhetoric, which is a very political thing, the comparison with prudential arguments would<sup>7</sup> be [at least] as relevant as that with dialectic and scientific arguments. This leads to further questions.

Now in the case of one argument—I mean the fallacy of *non causa pro causa*, “not a cause, a cause”<sup>v</sup>—the same example occurred to me which occurred to you, namely the argument against the democratic parties, because that is the most obvious case in this country. But I'll try to think of other examples also because sometimes<sup>8</sup> the examples of Aristotle look to us far-fetched. They were surely not far-fetched for his immediate audience, but very rarely do they succeed. But I'm glad that you tried at least. And one last point: Aristotle deals here with fallacious enthymemes. Now, I will state the difficulty as simply as I can. Are not all enthymemes fallacious? How would Aristotle reply to that?

**Student:** I think a real enthymeme will be one in which the givens may be open to question, but once you assume the givens, the reasoning is strict, the conclusion will follow. There is no trickery in it. There's not a false connection. The question may well be—an absolute statement is not absolutely true, but assuming, taking it to be true, the conclusion will follow.

**LS:** Well, Aristotle gives of course, as you pointed out, this simple argument: since the enthymeme is a syllogism, and since wherever there is a syllogism there is also the possibility of syllogizing falsely, there must also be the possibility of false enthymemes. But how does it look in practice? Let us remind ourselves of an earlier passage in this book, in the Second Book, 1398a3-14, that's in chapter 23.

<sup>iv</sup> Strauss says here “does not describe,” but the meaning of the sentence requires that he use the positive (it seems plausible that he starts with this “does not” in anticipated (negative) reference to Aristotle's *not* distinguishing rhetorical from prudential reasoning, which comes at the end of the sentence, but only after the (positive) reference to the distinction from scientific and dialectical reasoning).

<sup>v</sup> Latin expression for causal fallacy. Another literal translation may be “non-cause for cause.”

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>9</sup>

Another topic consists in turning upon the opponent what has been said against ourselves; and this is an excellent method. For instance, in the *Teucer* . . . and Iphicrates employed it against Aristophon, when he asked him whether he would betray the fleet with a bribe; when Aristophon said no, "Then," retorted Iphicrates, "if you, Aristophon, would not have betrayed it, would I, Iphicrates, have done so?" But the opponent must be a man who seems the more likely to have committed a crime—

**LS:** To make it a bit more emphatic: who has the reputation.

**Mr. Reinken:** "otherwise, it would appear ridiculous, if anyone were to make use of such an argument in reference to such an opponent, for instance, as Aristides—"

**LS:** Who was famous for his justice.

**Mr. Reinken:** "it should only be used to discredit the accuser. For in general the accuser aspires to be better than the defendant; accordingly, it must always be shown that this is not the case. And generally, it is ridiculous for a man to reproach others for what he does or would do himself, or to encourage others to do what he does not or would not do himself."<sup>vi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, this is "inept." Now here we have two words, "ridiculous" and "inept." However questionable rhetorical arguments may always be from a strict point of view, not all rhetorical arguments are ridiculous and inept. And this is a sign, we can say, that there are bad and hence false enthymemes. Now what Aristotle discusses in chapter 24 are of course not defects of enthymemes from the point of view of the content, as in these cases here, but from the point of view of the form . . . .

By the way, this discussion now going on about this . . . or what is his name, reminds of this issue. When they accused this man, who has been tortured by gangsters, that he is a crook. Now of course he may be a crook but it comes with bad grace from people, lawyers habitually engaged in defending crooks. And apparently this is what Aristotle would call inept or ridiculous, but it seems that it doesn't do any harm to these people . . . .

Mr. Lyons raises this question<sup>vii</sup>: "If the cognitive status of rhetoric is obscure, does this mean that the principles of rhetoric are not demonstrable? What counterparts to the ends given in the *Ethics* are there in the *Rhetoric*? Finally, is the cognitive status of political science similarly obscure?" These are admittedly three questions, although it is stated only in the third case "finally." But it is a fair inference that there are three questions. Now, I deny the "if." The cognitive status of rhetoric is not obscure. It's made perfectly clear. These are arguments based on *endoxa*, on things which are not known, and not strictly speaking knowable. I mean, in other words, the transformation of opinion into knowledge is<sup>10</sup> not [here] possible without leaving the whole sphere. That doesn't mean that the things might not be knowable, but then we would no longer speak about rhetoric. So the cognitive status of rhetoric is clear and the principles of

<sup>vi</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 23. 7, 1398a3-14.

<sup>vii</sup> Strauss may be referring to Mr. Lyons' paper, or to a question that had been submitted in writing.

rhetoric *are* demonstrable. That is, they are demonstrable because they make quite clear the peculiar status of these principles.

Let us take a simple example: the enumeration of the parts or ingredients of happiness in the First Book. You remember that long list? Many children, good children, wealth, and so on and so on.<sup>11</sup> Aristotle would simply say: Is something missing? Tell me, and tell me whether this thing you regard as missing is as generally admitted to be an ingredient of happiness as the other things I have mentioned. So from this point of view it *is* demonstrable. But the authority or the tribunal to which he defers is opinion. But on this basis it is not obscure at all.

“What counterparts to the ends given in the *Ethics* are there in the *Rhetoric*?” Well, we know that (chapters 1-4 and following), when he speaks about the just things, the good things, the noble things. And compare—we have discussed this on a few occasions—what he says about the virtues in the *Ethics* and what he says about them in the *Rhetoric* differs. The emphasis on *benefiting*, which is so strong in the *Rhetoric*, is absent from the *Ethics*; and also which virtues are not mentioned at all [in the *Rhetoric*], which are mentioned in the *Ethics*. The *Ethics* is concerned with bringing up gentlemen, or confirming gentlemen in their gentlemanliness. This is not the function of rhetoric. The function of rhetoric is primarily to persuade political multitudes of what is expedient in deliberative assemblies and of what is just in forensic matters, but this is not a difficulty.

“Finally, is the cognitive status of political science similarly obscure?” Well, since I have shown that the cognitive status of rhetoric is not obscure, they<sup>12</sup> could only be similarly clear. The question properly phrased would be: how is the cognitive status of political science related to the cognitive status of the principles appealed to by the orator? Well, you only have to compare the very brief discussion, if we can call it a discussion, of the regimes in the *Rhetoric* with that in the *Politics* to see that the *Politics* is much more “quote scientific unquote.” You know the detailed discussion of which institutions fit which regime? For example, that in itself election by lot is characteristic of democracy follows strictly from the democratic principle: equal freedom of all citizens—and no property qualification, that’s of course understood. Now if this is so, since all are equally free they must all have equally the chance of becoming elected. Now this chance is practically destroyed if men are elected by vote, because when voting for people one considers the qualities of the candidates—<sup>13</sup>wisely or unwisely is another matter, but one doesn’t vote for a man merely because he is an American citizen. That is obvious. But if the election goes by lot, then every man by the mere fact that he is an American citizen has the same chance as every other, and therefore there is a necessary connection between<sup>14</sup> [the institutions and the regime].

But the whole discussion—after all, the *Politics* begins with the assertion that the polis is by nature and therefore this is not a matter of opinion. Secondly, a moment’s reflection shows—and Aristotle extends that reflection so that it is unintelligible how it could ever be forgotten—that the polis is necessarily a specific polis, meaning specified by the regime. It is democratic, oligarchic, monarchic, or whatever it may be and this regime is really the decisive thing which gives a polis its character. And there difficulties arise because there it is no longer so simple as that men have to live in a society of a sufficient size in order to develop their potentialities. But in what *kind* of a polis? That becomes a big question.

But even here you simply have one opinion against the other. Wealth is the most important for the oligarchs; therefore they limit citizenship to the wealthy. Free birth is decisive as the democrats say; therefore they give citizenship to every free-born man. That meant always, of course, no easy naturalization. The ordinary thing is that the citizen is the son of a citizen-father and citizen-mother, generally speaking, but both principles are from the point of view of reason, as Aristotle understands it, wrong. Now therefore these two regimes, which are politically the most interesting, are based on false opinion—but to be more general, on opinion. And all arguments within these regimes ultimately defer to an authoritative opinion and do not question that.

There are people of course who are patriots who would say: I don't care for oligarchy or democracy, but whichever makes the city greater. And therefore they are perfectly willing to make revolutions, as they are now called, or rebellions as they were called in former times, or changes of regimes. But the question is [about] this general patriotic notion: "Let our city be as powerful, wealthy, and respectable as possible, regardless of what the regime is"? Max Weber argues that way, by the way, against Prussia, against the Bismarckian regime.<sup>viii</sup> This regime is worse for Germany's power than the Western democracies—proof: the First World War. That is a political argument. What would Aristotle say to this argument? Weber wrote some state papers on this basis. What would Aristotle say<sup>15</sup> about this, let us call it patriotic not partisan, proposal: "I don't care for the regime, I'm only concerned with the greatness"—by the way, de Gaulle of course holds the same view. De Gaulle has no particular preference for democracy or for monarchy—perhaps he has more for monarchy [laughter]. But the point of view is what makes France great and respected.

**Student:** Well, he would probably be against this notion.

**LS:** On what grounds?

**Same Student:** On the grounds that, first of all, he is more interested in the internal harmony of the state—say the middle, the *ton meson* . . . .

**LS:** But still, we speak now in the very greatest generality. Therefore, let us not enter into this particular point. What would Aristotle simply say? And what he in fact says in the Third Book [of the *Politics*] very clearly? What is wrong with this notion [that] the regime is irrelevant, [that] the greatness of the polis is the only thing which counts? . . . .

**Another Student:** He would say you couldn't separate the two.

**LS:** Which?

**Same Student:** The kind of regime from, say, the greatness, its wealth. It would have to follow—

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<sup>viii</sup> Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* [*Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*] (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1921-22).

**LS:** It is not true under certain conditions that have been shown in a number of cases—say, that either oligarchy did not work anymore, the city could no longer expand; or, in another case, democracy. Mr. . . .

**Another Student:** Does it have something to do with the distinction between the good man and the good citizen?

**LS:** Yes, it has to do, but it would be too complicated to go into. Surely it has to do with that, because the good citizen is simply a man relative to the regime. So the good democrat is the bad oligarch, and vice versa. The good communist is the bad liberal democrat, and vice versa.

**Same Student:** Therefore the regime that . . . .

**LS:** No, no, let us disregard—we are trying now to find a scientific politics by disregarding the regimes and simply say the patriotic point of view, which means independence of foreign domination, no oppression within, wealth, and [being] respected, perhaps even feared, by the neighbors—I mean, crude goals which are as important today as they were in Aristotle's time. Now what would Aristotle say to that? Something very simple.

**Another Student:** Such a regime would need rulers, and the question would be what—

**LS:** . . . Machiavelli gives the very answer: efficient, shrewd fellows. People like Henry IV of England, he was a usurper and so on, but he did it, especially after he was blessed with such a son. Yes?

**Student:** Could there be a disagreement about the ends or goals?

**LS:** Yes, but why are you so complicated?

**Same Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Well, the distinction is not denied. But it is simply said: the regime is only a means for an end. The end is independence and power, freedom and empire, as someone has said, that's the end. And which regime is conducive to that, that will exist. And if at a certain stage—say, the oligarchy, as in England, was no longer conducive to freedom plus empire, then they changed it to democracy.<sup>16</sup> But now Aristotle says: this enumeration, my dear fellow, of the ends of politics is incomplete. It is not true that this enumeration is complete. Your enumeration, Machiavelli, he would say, omits the most important point. And what is the most important point according to Aristotle?

**Student:** The good life?

**LS:** Let us say virtue, ja, because the word is now in such disrepute that even sticklers for proper expression may use it again. So virtue is excluded. But if you exclude virtue what you leave is then an arbitrary selection. That is simply absolutizing an opinion, however plausible that opinion [may be] to the multitude.<sup>17</sup> That doesn't make it any better. So we reach then [this]

conclusion: we cannot disregard the question of the regime, [which is what] you all meant, of course. We have to raise the question of the good regime, the best regime, and this best regime is again according to nature. This is no longer merely a matter of opinion. This is a very rough draft of Aristotle, but I think you should remember it.

Therefore political science, or political philosophy, is not mere opinion because it begins with the natural character of the polis and culminates in the naturally best regime. But in between, these other regimes—if I use the language now of Farabi and others, especially Farabi, one would say this: that the best regime alone aims at true felicity; the others aim at imaginary felicity, of which there are various cases. But imaginary felicity is by definition of course something only in opinion, which doesn't mean that it cannot be very powerful in what we call reality but it is nevertheless an opinion bred, an opinionated thing and not the truth. So this would be roughly my answer, I would say.

But the difficulty comes in—well, I have sketched<sup>18</sup> [for] you this well-known Aristotelian argument. This is not the end of the story because let us assume the best regime is not possible, or at least very rarely possible; then you arrive at the conclusion that in all regimes which you are likely to find in this imperfect world you will have ultimately a dedication to principles which cannot claim higher cognitive dignity than opinions. One might have to live with that. And yet I think the difference would be this.<sup>19</sup> The political scientist, the political philosopher, would see that, whereas the political man as political man would not necessarily see it because he would simply absolutize the accidental. But by seeing this, surveying the whole thing, he is not himself thinking in the element of opinion, and to that extent his reasoning will not be rhetorical. For example,<sup>20</sup> when Aristotle describes in Book Six [of the *Politics*] the institutions most conducive to democracy and oligarchy, these are all political proposals, proposals based on prudential reasoning. But the question of how to sell these institutions to the democrats, to the oligarchs—that would be the part for the rhetorician to recommend them in a politically effective manner. That is not his concern. So the distinction between political science and rhetoric is absolutely in tact, from Aristotle's point of view. But we will have to take this up somewhat later again. Good.

Well, Aristotle speaks first at the beginning of chapter 24, to which we turn now, of cases in which we have the mere appearance of a rhetorical syllogism or an enthymeme, which is caused by the way of speaking. In other words, there is not even an appearance of an attempt to prove something. That's the first case, 1401a3. Let us read only the end of this paragraph.

**Mr. Reinken:** “This fallacy appears to be the result of the form of expression. For the purpose of using the diction to create an impression of syllogistic reasoning it is useful to state the heads of several syllogisms: ‘He saved some, avenged others, and freed the Greeks’; for each of these propositions has been proved by others, but their union appears to furnish a fresh conclusion.”

**LS:** Now what does this mean here? This example is not entirely convincing, is it? Aristotle makes a presupposition which we must add. Aristotle says nothing new follows. These three things have been proved before: “He saved those, he avenged several others, and he liberated the Greeks.”<sup>ix</sup> The putting together of the [three] doesn't change anything. But could it not be that the man wants to prove that he is a good man, a benefactor, and this may follow<sup>21</sup> [from] the

<sup>ix</sup> Apparently Strauss's translation.

putting together of the three things? What Aristotle implies is that in the speech in question—I believe he refers to a speech by Isocrates<sup>x</sup>—this was not made. I have not even taken the trouble to look it up. Now let us turn to the next one.

**Mr. Reinken:**

The second kind of fallacy of diction is homonymy. For instance, if one were to say that the mouse is an important animal, since from it is derived the most honored of all religious festivals, namely, the mysteries; or if in praising the dog, one were one were to include the dog in heaven (Sirius), or Pan, because Pindar said,<sup>xi</sup>

“O blessed one, whom the Olympians call dog of the Great Mother, taking every form,”  
or were to say that the dog is an honourable animal, since to be without a dog is most dishonourable. And to say that Hermes is the most sociable of the gods, because he alone is called common—

**LS:** Well, that goes back to a Greek proverbial phrase, which is explained in the footnote.<sup>xii</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “and that words are most excellent, since good men are considered worthy, not of riches but of consideration; for *logou axios* has a double meaning.”

**LS:** Now what does it mean? “The good men are worthy of *logos*,” “worthy of consideration”—literally translated, “worthy of speech”? Now if this is so, if<sup>22</sup> the highest thing we say in praise of the good men [is], “they are worthy of speech,” hence speech must be the most respectable thing. But why are the good men regarded as worthy of speech in ordinary understanding?

**Student:** Because of their riches.

**LS:** No, no, take a better reason, a higher reason, which is still very common: because of their deeds. And what would follow from what is generally admitted is precisely that deeds are the most important and not the speech. This is a clear fallacy. Now let us go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Another fallacy consists in combining what is divided or dividing what is combined. For since a thing which is not the same as another often appears to be the same, one may adopt the more convenient alternative. Such was the argument of Euthydemus, to prove, for example, that a man knows that there is a trireme in the Piraeus, because he knows the existence of two things, the Piraeus and the trireme; or that, when one knows the letters,

<sup>x</sup> Isocrates, *Evagoras*, trans. La Rue Van Hook (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 373, 1945), secs. 65-69.

<sup>xi</sup> Footnote from Freese's Loeb edition: “A fragment from the *Parthenia* (songs sung by maidens to the accompaniment of the flute). Pan is called ‘the dog of Cybele,’ the great nature-goddess of the Greeks, as being always in attendance on her, being himself a nature-god. The fact that Pindar calls Pan ‘dog’ is taken as a glorification of that animal (326).

<sup>xii</sup> The Greek *koinos hermēs*, meaning halves, is a proverbial expression used when someone has a stroke of good luck and is expected to share the good fortune (see Freese's Loeb edition, 326).

one also knows the word made of them, for word and letters are the same thing. Further, since twice so much is unwholesome, one may argue that neither is the original amount wholesome; for it would be absurd that two halves separately would be good, but bad combined. In this way the argument may be used for refutation, in another way for demonstration, if one were to say, one good thing cannot make two bad things. But the whole topic is fallacious.

**LS:** In other words, it is not merely fallacious from the point of view of severe philosophic or scientific reasoning; it is even ridiculous, inept. This is what Aristotle means. Now the first example is, I think, perfectly clear. All words consist of letters; a man who knows all letters will therefore all know all words. It's obviously not right. Or, two chemicals which are separately productive of health, but combined are fatal. It's impossible. And the other way around, if you take two fatal chemicals they cannot possibly be conducive to health. This is absurd. Now the next example—we know that already from an earlier discussion, but it is now taken as an example of a fallacy. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Again, one may quote what Polycrates said of Thrasybulus, that he deposed thirty tyrants, for here he combines them.”

**LS:** Oh, that still belongs to that. In other words, he claims honors for thirty tyrannicides, but it was one action. Good. Yes, the next one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Or the example of the fallacy of division in the *Orestes* of Theodectes: ‘It is just that a woman who has killed her husband’ should be put to death, and that the son should avenge the father; and this in fact is what has been done. But if they are combined, perhaps the act then ceases to be just. The same might also be classed as an example of the fallacy of omission; for the name of the one who should put the woman to death is not mentioned.”

**LS:** I think this is also perfectly clear, I take it. Now the next one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another topic is that of constructing or destroying by exaggeration, which takes place when the speaker, without having proved that any crime has actually been committed, exaggerates the supposed fact; for it makes it appear either that the accused is not guilty, when he himself exaggerates it, or that he is guilty, when it is the accuser who is in a rage. Therefore there is no enthymeme; for the hearer falsely concludes that the accused is guilty or not, although neither has been proved.”

**LS:** In other words, not even the attempt to prove has here been made. It was<sup>23</sup> not an inept proof, not even . . . namely this: he argues the crime is enormous, hence *a* committed it, which really doesn't work. Or, the crime is enormous, hence *a* did not commit it. This is clear. The next is also inconclusive. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another fallacy is that of the sign, for this argument also is illogical. For instance, if one were to say that those who love one another are useful to States, since the love of Harmodius and Aristogiton overthrew the tyrant Hipparchus; or that Dionysius is a thief, because

he is a rascal; for here again the argument is inconclusive; not every rascal is a thief although every thief is a rascal.”<sup>xiii</sup>

**LS:** Sure, and these principles appealed to, that not every rascal is a thief, are also generally known [and] therefore they belong perfectly within the context of rhetoric.<sup>24</sup> Then there comes the example of the mice, which was discussed by Mr. Dry. Clearly that is absurd because the mice might as well have ruined the Egyptians' equipment. There is no reason for praising the mice. It was merely by *tuchē*, by accident. Let us then take the next one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another fallacy is that of the Consequence. For instance, in the *Alexander* (Paris) it is said that Paris was high-minded, because he despised the companionship of the common herd and dwelt at Ida by himself; for because the high-minded are of this character, Paris also might be thought high-minded. Or, since a man pays attention to dress and roams about at night, he is a libertine—”

**LS:** Well,<sup>25</sup> I have the greatest respect for decency, but I would still translate “adulterer,” otherwise it doesn't become a legal case.

**Mr. Reinken:** “because adulterers<sup>xiv</sup> are of this character. Similarly, the poor sing and dance in the temples, exiles can live where they please; and since these things belong to those who are apparently happy—”

**LS:** “Who are thought to be happy.” This is a technical term, “reputed to be happy.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “reputed happy, those to whom they belong may also be reputed<sup>xv</sup> happy. But there is a difference in conditions; wherefore this topic also falls under the head of omission.”

**LS:** To make this clear what it means—thought to be or reputed to be—if someone argues, “*x* is rich, hence he is happy,” this is not rhetorically bad, because wealth is reputed to be an ingredient of happiness. Of course it is not sufficient, but it is not as absurd<sup>26</sup> and as ridiculous [as this is], because here exiles can live wherever they like—except where they like to live, at home. So it is particularly stupid. Good. Then we come to the *post hoc propter hoc*.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another fallacy consists of taking what is not the cause for the cause, as when a thing has happened at the same time as, or after, another; for it is believed that what happens after is produced by the other, especially by politicians. Thus, Demades declared that the policy of Demosthenes was the cause of all the evils that happened, since it was followed by the war.”

**LS:** This was also discussed when we . . . . Now let us skip a bit, skip the next point—no, we can read that too.

<sup>xiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 24. 2-5, 1401a7-b14.

<sup>xiv</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “adulterers” what is rendered as “libertines” in the Freese translation.

<sup>xv</sup> In accordance with Strauss's preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “reputed happy” what is rendered as “apparently happy” and later in the sentence as “thought happy” in the Freese translation.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another fallacy is the omission of when and how. For instance, Alexander (Paris) had a right to carry off Helen, for the choice of a husband had been given her by her father. But (this was a fallacy), for it was not, as might be thought, for all time, but only for the first time —”

**LS:** In other words, when she was unmarried.

**Mr. Reinken:** “for the father’s authority only lasts till then. Or, if one should say that it is wanton outrage to beat a free man; for this is not always the case, but only when the assailant gives the first blow.”

**LS:** Now, to come back to the example of Alexander and Helen, we had a case before (do you remember that?), in 1398a22, when it was proven that Alexander was a man of singular temperance because he was satisfied with a single woman, which is a sign of temperance [Strauss laughs]. Now, this was not criticized by Aristotle. Why is this argument better than the one here? If he can make distinctions between poor arguments, but I think he must. Because that is one way of an intelligence test, you know, which heresies a man may commit [Strauss laughs]<sup>27</sup> and which he may not commit.

**Student:** The first argument is good as far as it goes. Being faithful, sticking to one woman is fine, but it just happens that in his case there are other things—

**LS:** Yes, but what is the point of view? What was it that the first speaker wanted to prove?

**Same Student:** A definition.

**LS:** But still, a definition of what? Let us say of temperance. In other words, the case that Paris (Alexander) was temperate is not as bad as to say that he was a just man, which is the issue here. Because clearly by taking away another man’s wife he was unjust, but he may still have been in his way temperate. So these are nice, nice distinctions. Yes.

**Another Student:** He uses this later too in comparing Alexander and Aristides in I think the Third Book, twelfth chapter, and he doesn’t explain. I suppose he has already accepted the argument he is making here. He didn’t believe this, did he?

**LS:** No, I think Aristotle did not regard this as sufficient, but he would say—what is the objection to the first argument, which is a bit better than the one here?

**Same Student:** For a man who professes virtue—

**LS:** Granting that Paris was perfectly satisfied with Helen, does this prove his temperance, his decency? That’s roughly the same word because it comes from the Greek word *cosmos* which means ornament, appearance, decency. Now what could it also prove? Granted that Alexander was entirely faithful, absolutely faithful to Helen, does this prove his temperance? Well, it might prove that Helen was a singularly attractive woman for him. So it has nothing to do with his character. But still, taking the somewhat loose definition of decency which is here used, it is not

on the face of it as shocking as this one, about his justice. Good. Now we come to a more subtle and fundamental difficulty in the next paragraph.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, as in sophistical disputations, an apparent syllogism arises as the result of considering a thing first absolutely, and then not absolutely, but only in a particular case. For instance, in *Dialectic*, it is argued that that which is not *is*, for that which is not *is* that which is not; also, that the unknown can be known, for it can be known of the unknown that it is unknown. Similarly, in *Rhetoric*—”

**LS:** But first, do you understand this seemingly unintelligible passage? I mean, that non-being *is*? I think that it is a demonstrable proposition that non-being *is*.<sup>28</sup> You couldn't possibly say that non-being, or nothing, is not *being* if it *were* not in a sense. And if you say the unknowable is knowable, since you say this is unknowable, you could not possibly say that if you didn't know it *in a sense*. Is that not true? For example, take Kant's famous attempt to prove the impossibility of speculative metaphysics, because the objects are unknowable.<sup>xvi</sup> But how could he make his argument if they were not knowable? Well, in a sense, in a sense. And the disregard of this “in a sense” is of course the defect here. Mr. . . . .

**Student:** Which would you prefer if you had the choice, happiness or a ham sandwich? I can prove that a ham sandwich is better because nothing is better than happiness, and a ham sandwich is better than nothing.

**LS:** Nothing is better than?

**Same Student:** Nothing is better than happiness, and a ham sandwich is better than nothing.

**LS:** Well, I have quite a few objections [laughter], because I am not so much impressed by the virtues of a ham sandwich [laughter] . . . . Now what is the rhetorical equivalent of these famous difficulties?

**Mr. Reinken:**

Similarly, in *Rhetoric*, an apparent enthymeme may arise from that which is not absolutely probable but only in particular cases. But this is not to be understood absolutely, as Agathon says:

“One might perhaps say that this very thing is probable, that many things happen to men that are not probable—”

for that which is contrary to probability nevertheless does happen, so that that which is contrary to probability is probable. If this is so, that which is improbable will be probable. But not absolutely; but as, in the case of sophistical disputations, the argument becomes

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<sup>xvi</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer & Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). It is difficult to delimit one passage that can be said to contain Kant's “attempt to prove the impossibility of speculative metaphysics,” but one may consider, among other sections of the work, the Second Part of the First Part of the *Critique*, “Transcendental Logic,” 193-200.

fallacious when the circumstances, reference, and manner are not added, so here it will become so owing to the probability being not probable absolutely but only in particular cases.

**LS:** "In certain respects."

**Mr. Reinken:**

The "Art" of Corax is composed of this topic. For if a man is not likely to be guilty of what he is accused of, for instance if, being weak, he is accused of assault and battery, his defense will be that the crime is not probable; but if he is likely to be guilty, for instance, if he is strong, it may be argued again that the crime is not probable, for the very reason that it was bound to appear so. It is the same in all other cases; for a man must either be likely to have committed a crime or not. Here, both the alternatives appear equally probable, but the one is really so, the other not probable absolutely, but only in the conditions mentioned. And this is what 'making the worse appear the better argument' means. Wherefore men were justly disgusted with the promise of Protagoras; for it is a lie, not a real but an apparent probability, not found in any art except Rhetoric and Sophistic.<sup>xvii</sup>

**LS:** Yes. Now let us see that. In other words, the application to rhetoric of this well-known sophism, that non-being *is*, [that] the improbable is probable, is based here on the verse of Agathon. In a way, it makes<sup>29</sup> sense to say that, because clever people will do the improbable thing in strategy—not what everyone expects, but the improbable. And therefore one can say pointedly [that] the improbable is probable. But Aristotle says that nevertheless this is a misuse because this probability so to speak is a probability of the second order, we could say, and does not belong to the primary level of probabilities with which we are always concerned.<sup>30</sup> I mean, this would destroy all ordinary probability reasoning. This man was found alone in that house, blood over his jacket, a sworn enemy of the murdered man, and deriving money from his death—the famous things. And then if the man says: "Precisely, because there is a 99 percent probability, what a fool [I] would<sup>31</sup> have been to kill him!" It would be the end of all probability reasoning of all human life,<sup>32</sup> one could say. There is a fundamental fallacy involved.

Now here Aristotle refers explicitly to a well-known work of Protagoras, a famous sophist. He claimed that he was able to make the weaker *logos*, the weaker assertion, [the] stronger. And Aristotle defines here what he means is that he wanted to make the improbable probable. That's the meaning of that. But this does not necessarily mean that this trick here (I mean the misuse of probability as such) was Protagoras' point. What precisely did this famous principle mean? Needless to say this is something of great practical importance, especially in forensic rhetoric. A criminal who doesn't have a ghost of a chance according to all ordinary considerations because the case is so clear—how can he be acquitted? If he has a lawyer or orator who can make the weaker course<sup>33</sup> stronger than that of the accuser.

<sup>34</sup>The example which Aristophanes gives is this: "Father-beating is generally regarded as bad." So that's the strong *logos* because it is generally regarded as right. Now what does the weaker

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<sup>xvii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 24. 7-11, 1401b20-1402a28.

*logos* say? It says: "But Zeus fettered his father."<sup>xviii</sup> And now Zeus has obviously much higher authority than any other being, and therefore father-beating is good. You know, that means to make the weaker *logos* the stronger *logos*. And then one would have to argue that out. This would of course not occur in ordinary forensic rhetoric, but [is] not entirely unrelated to that. Yes.

By the way, the being of non-being is the theme of Plato's dialogue *Sophist*, but there it is made perfectly clear that non-being does not mean unqualified non-being, but being "other." Being other means, of course, being not like that. In other words, it is impossible to speak about being without introducing negativity of sorts. In an entirely different way that was done later on by Hegel. This only in passing. Now let us turn to the next chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Next to what has been said we must speak of refutation. An argument may be refuted either by a counter-syllogism or by bringing an objection. It is clear that the same topics may furnish counter-syllogisms; for syllogisms are derived from probable materials and many probabilities are contrary to one another. An objection is brought, as shown in the *Topics*, in four ways: it may be derived either from itself, or from what is similar, or from what is contrary, or from what has been decided. In the first case, if for instance the enthymeme was intended to prove that love is good, two objections might be made; either the general statement that all want is bad, or in particular that Caunian love<sup>xix</sup> would not have become proverbial, unless some forms of love had been bad.

**LS:** That means incest. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** "An objection from what is contrary is brought if, for instance, the enthymeme is that the good man does good to all his friends; it may be objected: But the bad man does not do harm [to all his friends]."

**LS:** Now let us take the case more simply. The good man is the opposite of the bad man. But the bad man also may benefit his friends. Therefore, it is not the property of the good man to benefit his friends. This is his argument. Aristotle regards this as powerful from a rhetorical point of view. It would lead of course to the conclusion that benefiting one's friends is not of the essence of the good man. Or you have to make distinctions between what is [or is not] a friend. I mean is the relation of Giancarlo<sup>xx</sup> to his helpers friendship? This leads then beyond what you can use in forensic rhetoric.

**Mr. Reinken:** "An objection from what is similar is brought, if the enthymeme is that those who have been injured always hate, by arguing that those who been benefited do not always love."

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<sup>xviii</sup> Aristophanes, *Clouds*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 488, 1998), ll. 900-905.

<sup>xix</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. F. J. Miller, G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 43, 1916), 2: Bk. IX, ll. 454-664.

<sup>xx</sup> It is not known who "Giancarlo" is.

**LS:** Yes, this is good enough, isn't it? In other words, you want to prove that this man who is suspected of having killed *b*, hated *b*. And you prove it by the fact that he had been hurt badly by the murdered man. And then you reply: No, by no means.<sup>35</sup> Just as men who have suffered benefits are not necessarily grateful, there is no necessity why a man who<sup>36</sup> [has] been hurt should be full of hate.

**Student:** The problem I see here is that this seems more likely to be an argument from the opposite.

**LS:** Yes, that is true. Averroës in his commentary<sup>xxi</sup> (I looked it up) says it is a combination of the opposite and proportion, because there is assumed also—and proportion is what he means by similitude: doing well, loving; doing ill, hating—that combination of the two things. Yes, that is true. Yes?

**Student:** Could you give any example that would be more [of the] similar?

**LS:** No, no. I mean I tried in all cases to find a simple example. Well I couldn't invest an infinite time. Very rarely did I succeed—in the case in which Mr. Dry succeeded, and perhaps in one or two other cases. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For instance—”

**LS:** One sees simply the high degree to which these things were articulated in Aristotle's time, that he could leave it at these very laconic remarks assuming that it would be understood. Now these works to which he refers when he says—for example, the *Art* of Corax in the preceding, at the end of chapter 24, we don't have that. And our training in these matters is of course particularly bad. The teaching in rhetoric and also in formal logic has practically disappeared from general instruction. I know that, say, roughly ten years before I attended the highest classes in high school formal logic was still a part of the obligatory instruction. I'm sure in this country too that has disappeared for quite some time in general instruction. But on the other hand, in the philosophy courses, courses in formal logic were very rarely given. Nowhere at the university where I studied was there such instruction formally given. Logic meant at that time transcendental logic in the Kantian sense and not formal logic. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The fourth kind of objection is derived through the former decisions of well-known men. For instance, if the enthymeme is that one should make allowance for those who are drunk, for their offense is the result of ignorance, it may be objected that Pittacus then is unworthy of commendation, otherwise he would not have laid down severer a punishment for a man who commits an offense when drunk.”

**LS:** This is a reference to authority<sup>xxii</sup>—refers here to the conflict between universal laws and laws peculiar to particular nations, like Pittacus, who made the penalty twice as strong if it was committed by a drunken man. Here you have the universal law, what he called universal law in

<sup>xxi</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 2.25.6.

<sup>xxii</sup> The first side of the original reel-reel tape runs out, and there is a brief portion missing in Strauss's commentary.

the chapter on that. It's of course not an appeal to authority but the appeal to a particular legislator, either your own or another highly renowned. Contradicting that universal law would be an example of that. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now the material of enthymemes is derived from four sources—probabilities, examples, necessary signs, and signs. Conclusions are drawn from probabilities, when based upon things which most commonly occur—”<sup>xxiii</sup>

**LS:** Now we do not have to read that. The main point I think is this. Aristotle says here that it can be shown in *all* cases of rhetorical argument that the proof is not strict, scientific. But this is not a legitimate refutation of a probable argument because that is taken for granted, that it cannot be that. Beyond reasonable doubt—Aristotle uses the Greek equivalent of that phrase. Beyond reasonable doubt means very probable. It does not mean that it is of apodeictic certainty. Now of course taking this into consideration, we see how much depends on the ability of the speaker. Say, does a guilty defendant deserve pity or not? Whether he will convince the jury or not will depend entirely on his power of persuasion,<sup>37</sup> i.e., among other things on his proper selection of the particular *topos* fit for this purpose. Now let us turn to 1403a, the beginning, where he speaks about these various signs.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Signs and enthymemes based upon signs, even if true, may be refuted in the manner previously stated; for it is clear from the *Analytics*<sup>xxiv</sup> that no sign can furnish a logical conclusion. As for enthymemes derived from examples, they may be refuted in the same manner as probabilities. For if we have a single fact that contradicts the opponent's example, the argument is refuted as not being necessary, even though examples, more in number and of more common occurrence, are otherwise; but if the majority and greater frequency of the examples is on the side of the opponent, we must contend either that the present example is not similar to those cited by him, or that the thing did not take place in the same way, or that there is some difference. But necessary signs and the enthymemes derived from them cannot be refuted on the ground of not furnishing a logical conclusion, as is clear from the *Analytics*; the only thing that remains is to prove that the thing alleged is non-existent. But if it is evident that it is true and that it is a necessary sign, the argument at once becomes irrefutable; for, by means of demonstration everything at once becomes clear.<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** Now what is this? He says “necessary signs,” in Greek *tekmēria*, that's a different word.<sup>xxvi</sup> Now what is a necessary sign? We had some examples before.

**Student:** In Book 1, chapter 2, he gave two examples: one, it is a sign that a man is ill because he has a fever; and the other, a woman has had a child because she has milk. Given the one thing, the other—

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 25. 1-8, 1402a30-b16.

<sup>xxiv</sup> As footnoted in the Freese translation: *Prior Analytics* II. 27, 70a2-b36.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* II. 25. 12-14, 1403a2-15.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Strauss apparently means to make clear that *teknērion*, translated as “necessary sign,” is a different word in the original Greek from that translated as “sign” earlier in the citation, *sēmeia*.

**LS:** The simplest example I believe would be: where there is smoke, there is fire. Whereas the one which you mentioned before-Socrates<sup>38</sup> is just, hence the wise men are just-is absolutely inconclusive because it might so happen that one wise man, Socrates, was also just. Now, if we take this case here for example, in this case what can you do? An unmarried girl is pregnant. This is a fact. I mean with this you have to start. And the argument is this: the only man who could have been responsible for the pregnancy was *x*. If this is absolutely settled, the only thing to do, which you might try, is to prove that she is not pregnant. This is the kind of case he has in mind. Non-necessary signs, as they are called here—"x has dated that girl, and hence he is responsible for the pregnancy"—clearly this would not make any impression on anyone. Good.

Now we leave it at this. And I would like to return for a few minutes to this broad question which I mentioned at the end of the last meeting and which was brought up<sup>39</sup> by [both] Mr. Dry and Mr. Lyons today [about] the difference between political, practical reasoning, prudential reasoning, and rhetorical reasoning. Now practical, political reasoning belongs to prudence. And prudence is, according to the Sixth Book of the *Ethics*—I'll read it in Thomas Aquinas's explanation: "Prudence is located not only in reason but has also something in the appetite."<sup>xxvii</sup> Prudence in the Aristotelian sense is constituted by some fusion between an intellectual quality and the moral qualities, virtues.

If we start from this point, is this applicable to the question of rhetoric? You would say: the rhetorician<sup>40</sup> must [also] have some moral qualities.

**Student:** No, I mean that's the difference. The rhetorician does not need any moral—

**LS:** I see. In other words, the rhetorician must possess virtue and good will as we have seen. But is this truly necessary? The reputation of virtue and of good will is perfectly sufficient. If this were the whole evidence, one could say rhetorical reasoning is not necessarily and essentially influenced by the virtues and good character of the speaker—the truly good as distinguished from reputation for [goodness], which is a very different thing.

Now I looked up—I don't know how I came to that—a statement by Roger Bacon in his *Moral Philosophy*. Roger Bacon, you will not mistake him for Francis Bacon. Roger Bacon is thirteenth century, I believe late thirteenth century, I do not remember the dates.<sup>xxviii</sup> And one of the first Latin authors who was influenced by the Arabs and knew them reasonably well. He was engaged in missionary activity and therefore learned Arabic and so on. Now he has quite a discussion of this problem of rhetoric in the Fifth Part of his *Moral Philosophy*. I have here a new critical edition of that by Massa.<sup>xxix</sup> M-a-s-s-a. Now what he says—I will give you the main points:

Political science, *scientia civilis*, is strictly speaking practical and not speculative. Speculative sciences are such as do not teach us to be or to become good. And civil science and moral

<sup>xxvii</sup> *Summa Theologica*, Second part of part II, question 47, article 1, "Whether prudence is in the cognitive or in the appetitive faculty."

<sup>xxviii</sup> Roger Bacon (1214-1294).

<sup>xxix</sup> Roger Bacon, *Rogeri Baconis Moralis Philosophia*, ed. Eugenio Massa (Zurich: Thesaurus Mundi, 1953).

science are for him the same. In the looser sense civil science consists however of a theoretical and a practical part. In other words, there is in the practical science of morals and politics<sup>41</sup> a more general part which can be called theoretical, although it is not strictly speaking theoretical. It's only relatively theoretical. Well, for example, Aristotle's general discussions about the various kinds of regimes; you know, he goes there much beyond what is of immediate practical use. And now here comes the key point: The theoretical part of the practical sciences do not have the effect of making us good.<sup>42</sup> Let us say this. Reading the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the analysis of choice and of virtue being a mean does not have the effect of making us good; nor, I suppose, [does] the description of the individual virtues.

Now, what follows from that? "Moral philosophy 'is not for the sake of contemplation or speculation, but for the sake of our becoming good,'"<sup>xxx</sup> as Aristotle said. And<sup>43</sup> [according to Bacon, Aristotle] says also there that "'knowledge or science has little or no effect toward virtue.' Hence, scientific arguments are not sufficient for morality."<sup>xxxi</sup> And here is a place where rhetoric comes in. Rhetoric has this effect of *flectora*, of *flectora*—what is the word?

**Student:** Bending.

**LS:** Bending, bending our will. This is his point. So the question we discussed earlier, the question of an exhortatory rhetoric, which would be conducive to making men good, or at least aspire to being good, for which there is no place in Aristotle as we have seen, at least not in the *Rhetoric*, is here the central theme and we shall see soon why.

Now, in order to show how important this bending of our will toward the good is, he says: "The practical intellect is more noble than the speculative intellect."<sup>xxxii</sup> Here he shows of course a non-Aristotelian premise, because Aristotle always denies that. Now let us see a few more passages.

"We need greater and more powerful inducements so that we are bent to" this kind of thing.<sup>xxxiii</sup> [**LS:** But this is exactly supplied by rhetorical arguments and not by any others.] "Now this argument [**LS:** meaning the rhetorical arguments], is not known to the general run of artists [**LS:** artists in the medieval sense of the college students and teachers] in the Latin world, since the books of Aristotle and his commentators have only recently been translated and are not yet in use among the students; but Cicero's *Rhetoric* [**LS:** which was known always in the Western world] does not teach this argument [**LS:** the rhetorical argument which makes us good], except only in connection with forensic purposes, so that the orator could persuade the judge," etc.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

<sup>xxx</sup> Bacon, *Moralis Philosophia*, 250 (Fifth Part. II. 3, lines 14-15). Strauss is translating from the Latin throughout this and the following passages.

<sup>xxxii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 250 (Fifth Part. II. 3, lines 16-18).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 251 (Fifth Part. II. 5, lines 8-9).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 251 (Fifth Part. II. 6, lines 10-12).

<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 251 (Fifth Part. II. 7, lines 15-20).

“We need the complete doctrine of Aristotle and his commentators”<sup>xxxv</sup> to get this most desirable exhortative rhetoric.

That’s what Bacon says. Now, I am not now concerned with whether that is historically correct regarding Aristotle. I am only concerned with the fact that here we have a clear demand for this kind of rhetoric, which to our common sense seems so evidently necessary. Here we have it. You will find Aristotelian rhetoric is the one which exhorts to virtue. And now he refers to a praise of rhetoric by Cicero in his *De optimo genere oratorum*.<sup>xxxvi</sup> But above all, and this shows, Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Book 4.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Augustine is *the* authority for the possibility and really the necessity of rhetoric.

Now, if we use the other word, “sermon,” the sermon which is to have this moral appeal, that is the point which he has primarily in mind. Now let me see whether I can find it. “Cicero had said: ‘He is eloquent who can say small things in a small way, things of a medium weight or dignity in a medium way, and say the grand things in a grand way.’”<sup>xxxviii</sup> And this he interprets to mean: ‘To teach what should be done, this is the small; to delight the readers, the hearers [LS: touching their attentions] is medium; but bending is the greatest.’”<sup>xxxix</sup> And is what is to be expected of rhetoric. “What are needed are affective sermons, speeches, *sermones affectuosi*, which in a magnificent manner change the affect toward the deed. And here is the place for the grand style [LS: to distinguish from the medium and pedestrian one].”<sup>xl</sup>

Let me see a few more things. “Demonstration doesn’t move the practical intellect unless by accident, but rhetoric moves the practical intellect *per se*, essentially and absolutely, and he can bend the mind, which demonstration never can.”<sup>xli</sup> And then he says: “This Fifth Part [LS: of his own work] must bring forth, set forth arguments of extreme beauty” [LS: an Arabism, *fine pulcritudinis* . . .] “of perfect beauty, so that the mind will suddenly be enraptured toward agreement, and before it can see the contrary [meaning possible objections], as Farabi teaches in his book of the Sciences.”<sup>xlii</sup> He means *Enumeration of the Sciences*.<sup>xliii</sup> And he shows then in the sequel that this applies (of course, this part applies) especially to the religious beliefs, to the beliefs peculiar to a sect, sect in the sense of a religion as it was used in this kind of literature based on the Arabic things, on the Arabic sources.

Now,<sup>44</sup> the basis of all arguments here are “the Church, Holy Scripture, the testimonies of the Saints, the multitude of miracles, and so on, and the consent of all Catholic Doctors.”<sup>xliv</sup> And<sup>45</sup>

<sup>xxxv</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 251 (Fifth Part. II. 7, lines 23-24).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 252 (Fifth Part. II. 10). See Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, in *Rhetorica: Volume II*, ed. A.S. Wilkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903), I, 3.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 252 (Fifth Part. II. 10-11). See Augustine, *Teaching Christianity (De Doctrina Christiana)*, trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1996), IV, 12, 27.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 253 (Fifth Part. II. 15, lines 10-11).

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 253 (Fifth Part. II. 15, lines 13-15).

<sup>xl</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 253 (Fifth Part. II. 17, lines 26-28).

<sup>xli</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 254 (Fifth Part. III. 1, lines 4-7).

<sup>xlii</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 254 (Fifth Part. III. 5, lines 27-31).

<sup>xliii</sup> Farabi, *Enumeration of the Sciences*, trans. Charles E. Butterworth (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 76-84).

<sup>xliv</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 255 (Fifth Part. III. 6, lines 3-5).

the arguments are fundamentally of a rhetorical or poetic character—this does not make any fundamental difference. And he refers here: “One can learn much from Averroës’ commentary and the book of Aristotle, which is available in Latin, although it is not in use by the multitude [laughter]. At the beginning of this commentary the translator, Hermannus, said he was unable to translate the text of Aristotle because of the difficulty. But Horace’s *Poetics* can be very helpful,” and also<sup>xlv</sup> what Al-Farabi, Avicenna and Al-Ghazali say in their works.<sup>xlvi</sup>

So I think this is quite interesting to consider. I had completely forgotten that. Here we have surely a statement about that edifying rhetoric, exhorting rhetoric, which is not merely of biblical origin by the way—I mean the prophets and then the New Testament—but in the Greek schools there developed such a thing after Socrates’ time, and there is at least one example in Xenophon, in *Memorabilia* I. 4, of such speech exhorting to virtue.<sup>xlvii</sup>

So this existed, but Aristotle has no what they call “systematic provision” for this kind of rhetoric. That was the question. But does this help us in any way as regards our great question of the relation of prudential and rhetorical reasoning? I mean, in itself there is no reason whatever for assuming that there is any conflict here, because you simply say [that] prudential reasoning is practical reasoning. And in the *Logic*<sup>xlviii</sup> Aristotle discusses only the various forms of “quote theoretical unquote” reasoning, where even rhetorical reasoning would be regarded as theoretical. But the absence however of any reference to this problem from the *Rhetoric*, and certain difficulties in the *Ethics* itself, creates the problem of which I have spoken before. I may say something more about it next time. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Is it possible that the difference between prudential reasoning and rhetorical reasoning—<sup>xlix</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “I mean, what is the objection which one could make?”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “in Thucydides.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “Chapter.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “Because the islanders in this situation—.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “they were compelled to live—.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “does not.”

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<sup>xlv</sup> Here Strauss paraphrases the last sentence of this passage.

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 255 (Fifth Part. III. 9-10, lines 25-30); 256 (lines 1-3), Strauss ends with a condensed paraphrase summary of the last 2 to 3 lines.

<sup>xlvii</sup> *Memorabilia* I. 4.

<sup>xlviii</sup> It is unclear to which of Aristotle’s logical treatises Strauss refers. Generally, or in the widest sense, Aristotle’s “Logic” could be taken to mean the full Organon or logical works: *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Sophistical Refutation*.

<sup>xlix</sup> The remastered tape ends at this point.

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- <sup>7</sup> Moved “at least.”
- <sup>8</sup> Deleted “the arguments.”
- <sup>9</sup> Deleted “[page 303].”
- <sup>10</sup> Moved “here.”
- <sup>11</sup> Deleted “What.”
- <sup>12</sup> Deleted “cannot be—.”
- <sup>13</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>14</sup> Deleted “them.”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleted “about that.”
- <sup>16</sup> Deleted “what is the simple—.”
- <sup>17</sup> Moved “may be.”
- <sup>18</sup> Deleted “to.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “Because.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “he can very well—.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “by.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “we say—.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “not only—.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “now.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “one should really—.”
- <sup>26</sup> Moved “as this is.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “you know.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “of course.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “From this point of view, all—.”
- <sup>31</sup> Moved “I.”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “therefore.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “stronger.”

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<sup>34</sup> Deleted “Now what is—.”

<sup>35</sup> Deleted “Just as people who have suffered ill do not necessarily hate—or rather.”

<sup>36</sup> Deleted “should have.”

<sup>37</sup> Deleted “and not—.”

<sup>38</sup> Deleted “was wise—.”

<sup>39</sup> Moved “both.”

<sup>40</sup> Moved “also.”

<sup>41</sup> Deleted “there is.”

<sup>42</sup> Deleted “Only the—.”

<sup>43</sup> Deleted “he.”

<sup>44</sup> Deleted “the whole argument regarding these things—.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “these kind of things—.”

**Session 13: May 25, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress]—compelled to ask you afterwards, although you are not the best addressee for that question because of the proposal you made last time. What has this discussion of style and diction to do with political science? But you answered that question. You can't make an analysis of Lincoln without paying very great attention to his rhetoric. The same would of course be true of Winston Churchill. But if someone would raise the objection that these are unusual men and that the general run of politicians is not considered from this point of view, I would refer you only to Senator Dirksen of Illinois,<sup>i</sup> who is obviously a rhetorician—if not of the highest caliber, you know, a bit too high-flown [laughter] and all that. So you stated these things very well and your . . . thoughtful.

<sup>i</sup>I find it a bit harsh if you say that the Americans love money more than other nations. This has been questioned and [it] can very well be questioned. It would have to be properly re-stated. Max Weber says somewhere in a discussion of capitalist morality that tax farmers in former ages and so on, and other kinds of people, no one could rival them in avarice.<sup>ii</sup> So this I think is somewhat unfair to [Americans], but surely the absence of older social traditions from this country, the older non-capitalist traditions, gives this country a peculiar character, that is perfectly true. But even in England, this old country with this long past, I remember how I was shocked when I heard for the first time the question: “How much is he worth?” That is untranslatable, I believe, into any other language [laughter]. And this is not America, this is England.

**Student:** . . . rate men according to how many sheep they had. This was their form of money . . . this character, he possessed thousands and thousands of cattle—

**LS:** Ja, sure. Well, it may be pure sentimentality, but one can say sheep are simply nicer to look at, especially lambs [laughter]. Now, surely gold is more durable than sheep, I know that. But, you know, there is a certain difference when the property consists in the immediate objects of use [rather] than in that indirect thing, money—which has of course infinite advantages, as Aristotle has explained to us prior to Adam Smith and Locke, but still it has also its peculiar dangers.

**Same Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Sure. That is true. Now, I think that was a very good paper, especially since it answered one question which one can raise to Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as a whole, from the point of view of present-day political science.

Needless to say that the remarks of Aristotle have very much to do with the fact that rhetoric is not equally required in all regimes, as you saw very well. I mean, <sup>2</sup>if the government of the country is in the hands of, say, twenty families and therefore their most respected members, and

<sup>i</sup> Everett M. Dirksen (1896-1969), Republican Illinois Congressman, 1933-49; Senator, 1951-69.

<sup>ii</sup> It is uncertain which work of Weber Strauss has in mind, though it is possible that it is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930). Weber refers to the exploitative interests of tax-farmers in his essay “Structure of Power,” though he does not make such a comparative assessment of their avarice. In *Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 167.

they meet in council, there is no need for rhetoric in this elaborate form. There is a need for it in popular government, obviously. I think that today a statesman cannot be quite successful if he is not an orator as well. This at least helps very much, whereas in other regimes there was no necessity for that. Of course he must be able to state clearly what he wants, but that is not yet rhetoric. One has of course famous exceptions immediately available of Presidents of the United States who have been notorious for not being good speakers—President Eisenhower in particular, but I think also the present President<sup>iii</sup> doesn't strike one as a great orator. So this needs some qualification. And especially the point that both rhetoric as such and the level and character of rhetoric have something to do with the level and character of the polity at the time is also clear.

In that wonderful biography of Lincoln by that Englishman, Lord Charnwood, there is a beautiful reflection on the Gettysburg Address: that it did not make at that time any impression.<sup>iv</sup> The impressive orator was a then-famous man, I forget—

**Student:** Everett.

**LS:** Everett,<sup>v</sup> who was *the* official speaker and he spoke for two hours. And this was a masterpiece of rhetoric according to ordinary standards, I think standards which are still noticeable behind Senator Dirksen, you know,<sup>3</sup> a certain high-flown language. And of course this speech is completely forgotten. And what you said about Lincoln . . . is true as far as I can judge of that. Now let us turn to the text. In order to see the context in Aristotle, let us read the beginning of the Third Book, which is a summary of what precedes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

There are three things which require special attention in regard to speech: first, the sources of proofs; secondly, style; and thirdly, the arrangement of the parts of the speech. We have already spoken of proofs and stated that they are three in number, what is their nature, and why there are only three; for in all cases persuasion is the result either of the judges themselves being affected in a certain manner, or because they consider the speakers to be of a certain character—

**LS:** So the first is the effect on the passions. The second is the presentation of character, moral character. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “or because something has been demonstrated.”

**LS:** That's the enthymeme, or paradigm.

**Mr. Reinken:** “We have also stated the sources from which enthymemes should be derived—some of them being special, the others general commonplaces.”

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<sup>iii</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson.

<sup>iv</sup> Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1916), 158, 360-61.

<sup>v</sup> Edward Everett (1794-1865), Whig politician, U. S. Representative and Senator, Governor of Massachusetts, and President of Harvard University.

**LS:** So this is clear in principle. And now what remains, he goes on to say, is to speak about diction (or “style” as they translate it). “Diction” would be a more literal translation of the word. Here, let us read that perhaps.

**Mr. Reinken:** “We have therefore next to speak of diction<sup>vi</sup>; for it is not sufficient to know what one ought to say, but one must also know how to say it, and this largely contributes to making the speech appear of a certain character.”

**LS:** Meaning the speech. He does not say here the speaker, though he implies<sup>4</sup> [that] of course it will also reflect on the speaker.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In the first place, following the natural order, we investigated that which first presented itself—what gives things themselves their persuasiveness; in the second place, their arrangement by diction; and in the third place, delivery, which is of the greatest importance, but has not yet been treated of by any one. In fact, it only made its appearance late in tragedy and rhapsody—”<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here for one second. Now Averroës in his commentary makes this remark: “Rhetoric is, of course, a part of logic, if not according to Aristotle, surely according to the Aristotelian tradition. The logician considers those attributes of the speech which are common to all nations.”<sup>viii</sup>

A false conclusion [or] any error in reasoning is an error in all languages. But the speculation about that<sup>5</sup> [which] is peculiar to individual nations belongs to the condition of the orator who lives in a particular nation. In other words, *qua* part of logic, rhetoric is as universal as dialectics or the analytics are. But in the case of the orator there is something to be added which does not come in in the two other cases, namely what is proper in the language of the individual people. In 1407a20 there is a remark at the beginning of the fifth chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Such then are the elements of speech.<sup>6</sup> But purity, which is the foundation of style—”<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop here.<sup>7</sup> “The principle of diction,” literally translated, is “to speak Greek.” That is, *hellenizein*. This has a double meaning, of course, because you say of someone that he doesn’t speak English—not only if he is a Frenchman, say—but also if he speaks English badly<sup>8</sup>. “That’s

<sup>vi</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s previous remark, the reader has re-translated as “diction” what is rendered as “style” in Freese’s Loeb translation (similarly for any subsequent instances of “diction” in citations from this section).

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 1. 1-3, 1403b6-23.

<sup>viii</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle’s Rhetoric*, 3.1.4. Charles Butterworth translates the passage thus: “Due to this, it is incumbent upon the adept in logic to look into rhetorical utterances; but he is not to look into them with respect to the conditions particular to each and every nation; rather, he is to look into that with respect to the conditions common to all nations. Due to this, looking into them is a part of the art of logic. Looking into what is particular to each and every nation is up to the rhetorician nominated [to do so] in each and every nation.” (Butterworth’s translation supplied to the Strauss transcript project for this reference.)

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 5. 1, 1407b19-20.

not English," you say. So *hellēnizein* has therefore [two] meaning[s]: *a*) simply speaking Greek and not another language, [and] *b*) also speaking proper Greek. Therefore you can speak of purity, that's the point. The fact that Aristotle uses here the word *hellenizein* of course is a clear indication of that particular limitation. Aristotle did not know of any rhetoric exercised by people who were not Greek. There are no such remarks in the *Politics* to this effect.

The problem of history, as it is now called, would of course start from such utterances, that while rhetoric may have principles which are universal (at least in Aristotle's opinion) it is not altogether accidental that rhetoric emerged in Greece and that the great orators proper whom we have are Greek orators in the first place or people who learned from the Greeks. Averroës makes occasionally remarks in his commentary on things which are no longer [of use and] which are of no use among Arabs, [whereas] they were evidently very important for use in Aristotle's time. He quotes Farabi to the effect that quite a few things which Aristotle says are neither intelligible nor useful to us.<sup>x</sup> But I mention this only in passing. This is of course a broad question.

Now in the immediate sequel where we left off read[ing] he says "acting," I believe. How does he translate this [term] *hypokrisis*? That's of course the root of the word "hypocrite" [and the word] "hypocrisy."

**Student:** Yes, that was a very difficult thing to translate.

**LS:** Well, I would translate it by "acting."<sup>9</sup> The hypocrite is a man who *acts* the virtuous man. But . . . has the lowest rank of all things to be considered in the book, but is important. Why?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Because rhetoric addresses low people. In other words, if the addressees were men of high intellectual and moral standing, acting would be wholly superfluous. Now let us go on. Where is this particular passage?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Do you have that? Will you read from there on?

**Mr. Reinken:**

for at first the poets themselves acted their tragedies. It is clear, therefore, that there is something of the sort in rhetoric as well as in poetry, and it has been dealt with by Glaucon of Teos among others. Now delivery is a matter of voice, as to the mode in which it should be used for each particular emotion; when it should be loud, when low, when intermediate; and how the tones, that is, shrill, deep, and intermediate, should be used; and what rhythms are adapted to each subject. For there are three qualities that are considered,—volume, harmony, rhythm. Those who use these properly nearly always carry off the prizes in dramatic contests, and as in the present day actors have greater

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<sup>x</sup> Averroës, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric*, 3.1.10.

influence on the stage than the poets, it is the same in political contests, owing to the corruptness of our regimes<sup>xi</sup>.

**LS:** Now let me see. Yes, “of the regimes” is the reading of the manuscript.<sup>10</sup> Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But no treatise has yet been composed on delivery, since the matter of style itself only lately came into notice; and rightly considered it is thought vulgar. But since the whole business of Rhetoric is to influence opinion, we must pay attention to it, not as being right, but necessary; for, as a matter of right, one should aim at nothing more in a speech than how to avoid exciting pain or pleasure. For justice should consist in fighting the case with the facts alone, so that everything else that is beside demonstration is superfluous—”

**LS:** Demonstration here in the broad sense, where it means not only the reasonings but also the ethical, presenting a character, and the appeal to the passions. But the acting element is to be excluded.<sup>11</sup> Now let us go on. Nevertheless, although *de jure* it is something despicable, *de facto* it is very important.

**Mr. Reinken:** “nevertheless, as we have just said, it is of great importance owing to the corruption of the hearer. However, in every system of instruction there is some slight necessity to pay attention to style; for it does make a difference, for the purpose of making a thing clear, to speak in this or that manner; still, the difference is not so very great, but all these things are mere outward show for pleasing the hearer; wherefore no one teaches geometry in this way.”

**LS:** Yes. . . . In the most exact sciences rhetoric has no place. What we want in the way of diction there is demanded by the exactness and precision of the science itself, that you cannot use ambiguous words and do not make your proof unnecessarily complicated by referring to irrelevant things in the proof and this kind of thing. This doesn't even have to be considered as a part of diction, because it's not, really. Aristotle, you see, is as strict here in this respect as Plato [is] in the *Gorgias*—you know, that what is ordinarily understood at<sup>12</sup> first glance [as] impressive of rhetoric, that is completely irrelevant.

The importance of *hypokrisis*, of play-acting, increases with the decay of the regime. What Aristotle has in mind is this. What is the decay of the regimes? Let us act according to a rule stated by Aristotle in this very chapter: replace the general, which is confusing because of its generality, by the specific which is known in the light. Remember that rule, that you should never use the genus but the species, unless you want to obscure it? Now what does he mean by the defect of the poverty of the regimes? What does he mean by that? What regime was [in place] when Aristotle wrote this?

**Student:** The Macedonian—

**LS:** Not yet. He's speaking now of course prior to the Macedonian conquest.

**Another Student:** Democracy?

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<sup>xi</sup> “Forms of government” in Freese's Loeb translation.

**LS:** Democracy, sure. And that is what Plato suggests all the time, that these meretricious arts, if they are arts, come to the fore with democracy. Whether this applies to modern democracy is a long question, but one thing is very striking, I believe: <sup>13</sup>the social position of the actors. <sup>14</sup>Not only have the old and irrational taboos been taken away (you know, actors were generally regarded as the scum of the population, [and] that has been completely taken away) [but] they are truly artisans of manners—artisans of manners—especially for the so-called teenagers as I am given to understand. This is one thing which is quite remarkable.

<sup>15</sup>Taking the broader Aristotelian view of regime where he does not merely mean the technically political, but [rather] everything which gives character to a society, forms character (the actors as actors, disregarding all individual differences among them, are not as much giving a character to society as, say, the politically leading men), but something much less ambiguous, I believe—and that is in the sanctuary of social science itself. One of the key terms of present-day social science is “roles,” *roles*. You all have *n* roles. Simply stated, you are play-acting all the time. You are never truly yourself. This is, I think, a very characteristic expression: “in his role as citizen,” “in his role as father” or [“in her role as a] mother,” etc. The question is, what is the true man? This of course is no longer a matter of sociology but is it a matter of psychology? That would lead to a difficult question. Aristotle continues the theme, the fundamental irrelevancy of the frills. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, when delivery comes into fashion, it will have the same effect as acting. Some writers have attempted to say a few words about it, as Thrasymachus, in his *Eleoi*—”

**LS:** This is of course our friend Thrasymachus from the First Book of the *Republic*. *Eleoi*, that means speeches of compassion. He was a master of arousing anger and compassion, these opposite things of which we have read quite a bit. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and in fact, a gift for acting is a natural talent and depends less upon art, but in regard to style it is artificial.”

**LS:** “But it is subject to be treated by an art.”<sup>16</sup> He says the gift for acting cannot be furthered very much by *technē*, by instruction. But as far as the diction is concerned, the influence of the art is very great. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Wherefore people who excel in this in their turn obtain prizes, just as orators who excel in delivery; for written speeches owe their effect not so much to the sense as to the style.”<sup>xii</sup>

**LS:** And therefore you must have known the experience—if you read, say, a Shakespearean play carefully, you see probably more things in it than you would see even if it<sup>17</sup> [were] acted however well, because a certain stratum is very unlikely to be understood by the actors or by the man in charge of the acting.

In the immediate sequel Aristotle says some things which we cannot read now about the difference between poetic and rhetorical diction, of which the principle is obvious. Something

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<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 1. 3-7, 1403b23-1404a19.

may be very good poetic diction and poor rhetoric, and vice versa. Let us rather turn to the next chapter.

In the first part of this chapter, he speaks of the two requirements of diction: it must be clear and it must be proper, appropriate. “Appropriate” means<sup>18</sup> in the direction of the stately (not to say pompous of course) rather than in the direction of the vulgar. This is achieved if the speech has a certain strangeness—literally translated “a certain stranger-ness”,<sup>19</sup> but not like a stranger who speaks a different language (that would be a great affect) but [rather] a certain aloofness. Nevertheless, it must appear to be natural—if it sounds affected, then this is fatal. In other words, the orator must be able, as he puts it in 1404b24, to “steal”<sup>xiii</sup> well—“steal” meaning deceive. The audience must not for one moment have the impression that this is not a perfectly unrehearsed and natural utterance of the speaker. If any thought occurs that he figured out at home this particular joke and this effect, then the effect is of course ruined. The only proper device for oratory is the metaphor as distinguished from homonyms or synonyms. This he develops in the sequel. Now let us see, since he recommends metaphors so highly, what are the virtues of metaphors? In 1405a8.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “It has already been stated, as we have said, in the *Poetics*, what each of these things is, how many kinds of metaphor there are, and that it is most important both in poetry and in prose. But the orator must devote the greater attention to them in prose, since the latter has fewer resources than verse. It is metaphor above all that gives perspicuity, pleasure, and a foreign air, and it cannot be learnt from anyone else.”<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** Now, this is hard to understand. Why can it not be learned? Literally, it cannot be “taken” from anyone. Can one not take a metaphor from someone else? We do it all the time. Ja, but that is not the metaphor which he means. Then it becomes trite almost. And at least it will not be regarded as any special merit of the speaker. But if they have never heard the metaphor, [if] it was made by the speaker, then alone will it have the full effect. Does this make sense?

Now it is clear [that] metaphors must be appropriate on the one hand to the subject matter and on the other hand to the speaker. As for the subject matter, in defending an inveterate drunk the metaphors must be chosen from a different sphere than if you speak, as Cicero puts it, the majesty of the Roman people. You can’t use the same metaphors, it goes without saying. And also it must be fit to the speaker. A young man cannot very well use metaphors taken from the experiences of old age, and to some extent it’s also true the other way around. Now the next chapter discusses something, chapter 3—how does he translate that again?

**Student:** “Frigidity of style”?

**LS:** Frigidity. What is frigidity? I do not know whether I understand the meaning of this common American word well enough, but a large part of what Aristotle discusses falls under the

<sup>xiii</sup> Strauss refers to Aristotle’s use of the word “*kleptetai*” in III.2.5. Aristotle similarly uses *lanthanein*, conceal, earlier in the same passage.

<sup>xiv</sup> The point at which the reader begins is rather 1405b3.

<sup>xv</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 2. 7-8, 1405a3-10.

heading of the “corny,” c-o-r-n-y. I think the corny is only a part of what Aristotle means by frigidity, but probably the most obnoxious part of it.

I give you one example of a very corny thing which is explicitly called frigid in the context. That occurs in Xenophon's *Banquet*, chapter 6, paragraph 7. Now there was some kind of actor around at the banquet and Socrates was not particularly impressed by his performance, and so this fellow became annoyed, and he says:

“Are you Socrates who is called the thinker?” Now the Greek word could also mean the worrier. You know men who think about the intestines of gnats and similar things can be said to worry about things about which a sensible man does not. So Socrates replies: “Now is it not nicer than if I were called the thoughtless one?” The other: “But you are supposed to be a thinker, a worrier, of the things aloft”—which was regarded as somewhat<sup>20</sup> impious. Whereupon Socrates says: “Do you know anything which is more aloft than the gods?” And hence, that would be pious. “No, by Zeus,” this fellow says, “they don't say you care for these [the gods], but for the most useless things”—meaning the motions of the sun and the moon and so on. Socrates: “But even so, I would care for the gods,” and now there comes a joke, let me first get it translated, “for they help us by giving rain from above and they give us light from above. If I talk frigidly, you are responsible because you cause troubles to me.”<sup>xvi</sup>

Good. Now, I will translate this as “corny.” The useless is in Greek *anōphelēs*—[Strauss gets up to write on the board] . . . from above” “helping,” so that he interprets “useless” as “helping from above.” Now, the words are obviously . . . this is frigid, corny [laughter]. I thought I should mention this little example. Now the simple overall rule which Aristotle gives regarding the frigid is stated in 1406a15-17.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But one must aim at the mean, for neglect to do so does more harm than speaking at random; for a random style lacks merit, but excess is vicious.”<sup>xvii</sup>

**LS:** I believe that is evidently sensible. A careless style is preferable to overwrought and therefore frigid. Now, toward the end of this chapter, 1406b5:

**Mr. Reinken:** “The fourth cause of frigidity of style is to be found in metaphors; for metaphors also are inappropriate, some because they are ridiculous—for the comic poets also employ them—others because they are—”

**LS:** What does the “for” mean? What does the word f-o-r mean here? How does Aristotle reason here? “Some metaphors are improper because of their ridiculous character, for the comic poets too use metaphors.”

**Student:** Doesn't he mean they use them in order to get laughs?

<sup>xvi</sup> Xenophon, *Symposium*, trans. E. C. Marchant & O. J. Todd. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 168, 1923), VI. 6-7. Apparently Strauss's translation.

<sup>xvii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 3. 7-8, 1406a15-17.

**LS:** Yes, and this fact proves that metaphors can be [inappropriate in rhetoric]—I [clarify this] only because this is one of Aristotle's characteristic insertions where one doesn't necessarily see what the connection is. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “others because they are too dignified and somewhat tragic; and if they are far-fetched, they are obscure, as when Gorgias says: ‘Affairs pale and bloodless’; ‘you have sown shame and reaped misfortune’; for this is too much like poetry. And as Alcidamas calls philosophy ‘a bulwark of the laws’ —”

**LS:** By the way, there is a certain ambiguity. It may also mean “a ram against the *nomos*.” So it is more subtle than it seems.

**Mr. Reinken:**

and the *Odyssey* “a beautiful mirror of human life,” and “introducing no such plaything in poetry.” All these expressions fail to produce persuasion, for the reasons stated. As for what Gorgias said to the swallow which, flying over his head, let fall her droppings upon him, it was in the best tragic style. He exclaimed, “Fie, for shame, Philomela!”; for there would have been nothing in this act disgraceful for a bird, whereas it would have been for a young lady. The reproach therefore was appropriate, addressing her as she was, not as she is.<sup>xviii</sup>

**LS:** I think we have no difficulty in understanding <sup>21</sup>the last example, but otherwise Aristotle seems much too stern for our taste. That is very interesting. For example, what is wrong with this Gorgian saying, “you have sown basely or disgracefully, and you have harvested badly”? What is so bad about that? And also that the *Odyssey* is called a “beautiful mirror of human life”—nothing is more common to us than this. Is Aristotle more strict, more *classic* in his taste, or what is it? Why do we feel differently?

**Student:** He's taking a much simpler audience than we usually consider in terms of rhetoric.

**LS:** But still—

**Same Student:** It may be something as . . . the sowing of shame go beyond a countrified audience . . . because his objection was that they don't produce persuasion.

**LS:** Yes, but on the other hand, what I read [in] the Lincoln-Douglas debates, which were addressed primarily to a rural audience, was on a very high level. I do not know whether this is sufficient. Yes.

**Another Student:** These phrases too aren't as poetic to us as they may be to the Greeks. For example, the metaphor of the mirror, the beautiful mirror, I'm sure it's been used and reused since then, whereas it may have been quite fresh to the Greeks and very poetic—

**LS:** Yes, that is true.

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<sup>xviii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 3. 4, 1406b5-19.

**Same Student:** Also the other one by Gorgias, I mean it has become a cliché but probably was very poetic.

**LS:** That may be. So it was really a kind of imposition. Mr. Lyons?

**Mr. Lyons:** Sowing shame and reaping misfortune would be much too grandiose for . . . that would be the danger.

**LS:** Well, it depends. If it would be in the case of the drunkard we discussed before, it would be impossible, but if it were said about a great blunder say in foreign policy: “You have broken the treaty, I warned you at the time; and now you [will] get it”—

**Another Student:** I have the impression that he is saying that the situation calls for something not so light as a metaphor; [that] when dealing with a subject [such] as shame and misfortune,<sup>22</sup> the metaphor is too light, too poetic to be appropriate.

**LS:** But poetic does not [necessarily mean light]—he says here explicitly, “because of the stately and tragic,” which is surely not light. He doesn’t even give an example of a metaphor which is, as he improbably calls it,<sup>23</sup> comical or ridiculous.

**Another Student:** I was only going to say that this would be precisely appropriate, say, to Munich, sowing shame and reaping misfortune. It would have been most appropriate to say in August, September of 1939.

**LS:** Yes.

**Same Student:** I have no answer except that—“others because they are too dignified and somehow tragic”—maybe he’s thinking of this tragic experience.

**LS:** But—Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** One question: Was the context known to his audience at that time and which has escaped us now? Now the *Odyssey*, we know those two statements. But the first two: Could they been applied by Gorgias to something which was much beneath the severity of the sentence?

**LS:** That we do not know. But he is here only concerned that expressions of this kind are not fit for public speech.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Not under any circumstances?

**LS:** He seems to regard them as particularly good examples, otherwise he wouldn’t have picked them. I believe some of you stated it already. For example, let us take sowing and harvesting. This is, of course, very well known to us from the Bible, and that was what Mr. Levy indicated in his speech. The Bible is the background of much of modern western oratory, and there is no equivalent. So<sup>24</sup> what stems from the Bible, regardless of how it would have to be judged from

the point of view of rhetoric, ceases to have that extreme strangeness and far-fetchedness which it would have if it did not come from the Bible. I believe that is the important point. Now, the mirror, that poetry is a mirror of life, we have been fed with this ad nauseam. That is also what one of you said. Once these expressions become a part of the heritage they are no longer in any way conspicuous and they could only be blamed sometimes for being used too often. But they can no longer be rejected as too stately. Needless to say (and this is the only point where I differ very much from Mr. Levy), the Bible was not read as poetry, of course—<sup>25</sup>this was a modern invention of the eighteenth century, I believe when Sir<sup>26</sup> [Robert] Lowth wrote a book on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews.<sup>xix</sup> But it was not read as poetry and therefore it wouldn't fall under this criticism.

**Mr. Levy:** I only meant to say that it has the same effect, a poetic effect upon the audience, like the *Iliad* had the effect on the Greeks of being their standard—

**LS:** Yes, but it was not a holy book. We must never forget that. It was never regarded as a holy book. It was regarded as their greatest book, so to speak, but it was not regarded as a holy book and therefore it did not enter into the daily life as much as the Bible did. The incidents were very well known, of course, but it was something very different. Someone wanted to say something? Yes.

**Another Student:** I was just going to say that the Bible was transformed into poetry in a way through hymns.

**LS:** Yes. But still, this did not belong to oratory. Hymns do not belong to oratory. And the question is whether [there are not some limits in] the use of phrases taken from hymns (and indirectly from the Bible) in secular or political oratory<sup>27</sup>. Now if Lincoln made such a magnificent use of it, this had also to do with an unusual situation in the Civil War. You know, if you used it for getting a change in oil depletion laws, it would sound funny. It all depends on [the] subject. When Lincoln was simply compelled by the whole situation to fall back on the notion of the war as a punishment for slavery, and which could of course be only divine punishment, the magnitude of the theme justified that. This would have to be considered in each case.

**Student:** Lincoln also used the Bible for not so very high purposes. He wrote a satirical piece for a frontier wedding in which he made great fun at a mix-up on which wife went to whom. And he created quite a bit of stir in the county . . . .

**LS:** What has this to do with the subject we are discussing, namely public oratory, meaning deliberative or forensic oratory in the first place?<sup>28</sup> The analogon to that [kind of speech] would be what might be said in a Greek banquet. Think of the speeches in Plato's *Banquet*, a subject which Aristotle doesn't take up here at all. That wouldn't contradict that.

**Same Student:** No, I'm just saying that biblical style is not only used for high purposes—

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<sup>xix</sup> Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, trans. George Gregory. (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1829 [1753]).

**LS:** Ja, sure. But<sup>29</sup> that was of course a kind of, how shall I say, ironical use—a kind of parody, not offensive necessarily, but a kind of parody. That's something different. But Aristotle is here speaking only of the strict line separating oratory from poetry and therefore the limits put to metaphors to be used in public speech.

In the next chapter Aristotle discusses similes, which differ very little as he says from metaphors, because the simile makes simply explicit what the metaphor does not, that it is *like* something. We can't read this; let us turn to 1406b17. No, this we cannot possibly read. There are some beautiful examples here of proper similes. He also quotes Plato's *Republic*, among other things, as you see.<sup>30</sup> Let us read only the Platonic examples.

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>31</sup> "Again, Plato in the *Republic* compares those who strip the dead to curs, which bite stones, but do not touch those who throw them; he also says that the people is like a ship's captain who is vigorous, but rather deaf; that poets' verses resemble those who are in the bloom of youth but lack beauty; for neither the one after they have lost their bloom, nor the others after they have been broken up, appear the same as before."<sup>xx</sup>

**LS:** I think they are well done, all three of them, as similes. Now, let us turn to the next chapter, 1407a30, where he speaks first of the necessity of the connection, of the *syndesmos* in Greek,—the simple case, "*men* and *de*."<sup>32</sup> You must know the referent in each case and that must be made clear. The next point which he makes is then the second point, that one must use the peculiar names, or words.

**Mr. Reinken:**

The second, to employ special, not generic terms. The third consists in avoiding ambiguous terms, unless you deliberately intend the opposite, like those who, having nothing to say, yet pretend to say something; such people accomplish this by the use of verse, after the manner of Empedocles. For the long circumlocution takes in the hearers, who find themselves affected like the majority of those who listen to the soothsayers. For when the latter utter their ambiguities, they also assent; for example,

"Croesus, by crossing the Halys shall ruin a mighty dominion."

And as there is less chance of making a mistake when speaking generally, diviners express themselves in general terms on the question of fact; for, in playing odd or even, one is more likely to be right if he says "even" or "odd" than if he gives a definite number, and similarly one who says "it will be" than if he states "when." This is why soothsayers do not further define the exact time. All such ambiguities are alike, wherefore they should be avoided, except for some such reason.<sup>xxi</sup>

**LS:** So, in other words, ambiguities or darknesses may be used if they serve a purpose, otherwise not. Deliberately they may be used, otherwise not. Now "circumlocution"<sup>33</sup>—that is in a way a literal translation of the Greek word (you use the *periechon*, which means in this case the genus instead of the species), but it means also the "surrounding," what comprises it, what is *circum*,

<sup>xx</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 4. 3, 1406b32-1407a2.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 5. 4, 1407a31-b6.

circumlocution. The simplest example which occurred to me from our age is the term “anti-Semitism,” which means merely hatred or hostility to the Jews. But it is the *idion*, the peculiar: what is really meant is concealed by a generality because Jews happen to be Semites. And therefore when I hear sometimes such people, I say, “What, he’s an anti-Semite?” and I say, “What’s wrong with Nasser or even Farouk then?” But of course no one dreams of that. This is the most well-known example to me, but they are used all the time and it is always in every case interesting to see why it is used. That is an interesting question. Why [was] this term<sup>34</sup> [anti-Semitism] coined in the nineteenth century? Because this<sup>35</sup> of course, as all politically used terms, has a function. And this is always the interesting thing. Aristotle makes this clear, that if it is done deliberately, then it is not wrong—I mean for some purpose, then it is not against the primary rules of speech.

**Student:** Isn’t it just that in most of the languages it is easier to say this than to go through circumlocutions to say—

**LS:** But people could have got along without that term wonderfully. Once the term has become accepted, it is a bit of a hardship to avoid it. That’s quite true. But this doesn’t explain its original introduction. Just as quite a few inventions were not originally justified, but they are justified once they have been established. No example occurs to me at the moment, but I’m sure there are many.<sup>36</sup> And therefore the phenomenon which was meant existed before the term was used.<sup>37</sup>

**Student:** But did the phenomenon exist before then? Before you could refer to these things as pogroms, but in the nineteenth century something new came about.

**LS:** Well, I can only say if you look up the *Pauly-Wissowa* (do you know what that is, the dictionary of classical antiquity in German?), there is an article titled “Anti-Semitism in Classical Antiquity.”<sup>xxii</sup> So this would seem to prove that it existed; something of this kind existed quite a bit in Alexandria for example;<sup>38</sup> in Rome too. No, that is not the point. But the term didn’t exist. The term emerged by virtue of these reflections about the difference between the Aryan and Semitic race; and this was due to the study of languages in the first place—two different types of languages, Semitic and the Indo-Germanic. And Renan<sup>xxiii</sup> and such famous scholars made a theory of it, about the Semitic mind, but<sup>39</sup> without any “quote anti-Semitic unquote” intention. But<sup>40</sup> once the term was coined, it could be used in order to conceal the fact that the object of the aversion [was] always the Jews.

This is not quite uninteresting as simply one case study among many others of<sup>41</sup> what the motivation was [in the creation of such terms]. Now of course the men who are particularly concerned with propriety of scientific language, our social scientists,<sup>42</sup> use these terms without

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<sup>xxii</sup> August Friedrich von Pauly’s *Pauly’s Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, commonly known as the *Pauly-Wissowa*. (Pauly published initial volumes between 1839 and his death in 1845; the work was completed by other editors in 1852. In 1890 Georg Wissowa undertook an expanded edition, ultimately published by 1980). For “Antisemitismus,” see *Supplement* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1903-1978), V: 3-43.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ernest Renan (1823-92), French philologist and historian. See *Histoire générale et système comparé des langues sémitiques* (1855), *Oeuvres complètes d’Ernest Renan*, t. VIII: 127-589 (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947).

any reflection whatever. One could easily show that with another term. For example, the “new nations.” What’s a new nation? Is India a new nation? Is China a new nation? Is Turkey a new nation? <sup>43</sup>What does it mean? This of course also has a non-scientific reason and a purely political reason—namely, in order not to hurt the feelings of these nations, not to call them “underdeveloped” or whatnot, they are called “new,” or “emerging,” that is the most recent one.

**Student:** The “expectant” nations, I just saw.

**LS:** “Expectant,” wonderful [laughter]. Wonderful. This, I believe, are those which have not yet acquired statehood, ja?

**Same Student:** Yes, I’m not sure.

**LS:** Angola would be an expectant nation. Fantastic, ja [laughter]. The serious thing is of course that if science is to be severe and strict in its terminology and value-free, it must never use circumlocutions<sup>44</sup>. Is it not obvious? But we can preach, find sin, wherever we look [laughter].

Let us turn to the next chapter, 1408a16, or thereabouts, after the quote of the Lady Fig. “It is pathetic.” I mean pathetic in the original sense, appealing to the passions and arousing passions. Now, “pathetic speech, when it is a matter, a case of insolence, then one must speak like an angry man,” let me find it for you—

<sup>45</sup>**Mr. Reinken:** “Style expresses emotion, when a man speaks with anger of wanton outrage; with indignation and reserve, even in mentioning them, of things foul or impious—”

**LS:** Is this not a beautiful distinction? In the one case there is nothing wrong in calling a spade a spade, a case of outrage; but in the case of impiety, even the mentioning of the crime is not proper. And of course the other cases are obvious which he mentions here. Go on where we left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “with admiration of things praiseworthy; with lowliness of things pitiable; and so in all other cases. Appropriate style also makes the fact appear credible; for the mind of the hearer is imposed upon—”

**LS:** More literally, that should be translated: “for the soul makes a logical error.” He does not speak of the “mind” here because these are the passions that “*paralogizetai*,” that “make a paralogism.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “for the soul of the hearer makes a logical error<sup>xxiv</sup> under the impression that the speaker is speaking the truth, because, in such circumstances, his feelings are the same, so that he thinks (even if it is not the case as the speaker puts it) that things are as he represents them; and the hearer always sympathizes with—”

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<sup>xxiv</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s preceding comment, the reader retranslates as “the soul of the hearer makes a logical error” what is rendered as “the mind of the hearer is imposed upon” in the Freese translation.

**LS:** It is stronger: “And the hearer *synomoiopathei*, he is affected together, in the same way.” The soul, the passions, not the mind, is here persuaded.

**Mr. Reinken:** “with one who speaks emotionally, even though he really says nothing. This is—  
”<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** So pathetic, emotional diction deliberately creates a logical error conducive to the cause for which the speaker speaks. Yes, now he speaks about the ethical character.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Character also may be expressed by the proof from signs—”

**LS:** “Character” is *ethos*, ethical.

**Mr. Reinken:** “because to each class and habit there is an appropriate style. I mean class in reference to age—child, man, or old man; to sex—man or woman; to country—Lacedaemonian or Thessalian. I call habits those moral states which form a man’s character in life; for not all habits do this.”

**LS:** That is not moral character. “I call habits according to which a man is of such and such a quality in regard to life, or by is life; for lives are not of such and such a character by virtue of every habit.” If a man has a habit of grammar—if he speaks correct English and writes it correctly, this does not give by itself a character to his life, whereas there are other habits, like the habit of temperance, which give a character to life. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “If then anyone uses the language appropriate to each habit, he will represent the character.”

**LS:** Literally, “he will produce the character.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “he will produce the character; for the uneducated man will not say the same things in the same way as the educated.”

**LS:** So if he speaks like an educated man then he will present himself as an educated man. And he will have the peculiar authority [connected with it], advantage or disadvantage,<sup>46</sup> because there are also audiences [before whom] he would talk like an educated man that may do him harm. I believe Adlai Stevenson<sup>xxvi</sup> was sometime accused on this score, if I remember well. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But the hearers also are impressed in a certain<sup>xxvii</sup> way by a device employed *ad nauseam* by writers of speeches: ‘Who does not know?’ ‘Everybody knows’; for the hearer agrees, because he is ashamed to appear not to share what is a matter of common knowledge.”

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 7. 3-5, 1408a16-24.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Adlai Stevenson II, Governor of Illinois 1949-1953; U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, 1961-65.

<sup>xxvii</sup> The first side of the original reel-to-reel tape runs out, and there are several words missing from this citation, but this gap has since been filled in from the Loeb text of the *Rhetoric* used by the reader.

**LS:** I think the late Stalin was a master of this device, but this had something to do with the quasi-science he used. He used very frequently the expression “as is well-known,”<sup>47</sup> and these things were of course well-known only under certain premises. Good. And now, finally the next few lines.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The opportune or inopportune use of these devices applies to all kinds of Rhetoric. But whenever one has gone too far, the remedy may be found in the common piece of advice—that he should rebuke himself in advance; then the excess seems true, since the orator is obviously aware of what he is doing.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

**LS:** Well, these are of course such phrases like “I almost said,” but you have said it already; “one is tempted to say,” and you imply that you resist the temptation, but others won’t; and this kind of thing—this contradiction is why it’s funny.

Well, I think I should say a few words about the general question which we took up last time about<sup>48</sup> the general problem of rhetoric and prudence. Now the first question which I would like to repeat, on the basis of Roger Bacon to whom I referred last time [is this]: Is moral, political, prudential reasoning rhetorical reasoning? This is asserted by Roger Bacon, and I did not read perhaps enough with sufficient emphasis the key passage. He proves his assertion by reference to Aristotle:

Aristotle in the First Book of the *Ethics* holds that moral science must not use demonstration, but rhetorical argument. For it is an error, as he says there, that moral science should use demonstration and the mathematical sciences should use rhetorical arguments, since demonstration does not bend the practical intellect to its works, but is referred by itself to the speculative intellect, because it does not proceed beyond the truths of science. And therefore also dialectics is of no value in moral things and in persuasions, since if demonstration has no place there, the dialectical argument too can’t have a place there, because the end or purpose of dialectical argument is demonstration, insofar as the dialectical argument paves the way for demonstration.<sup>xxix</sup>

So that is, I think, a very good and perfectly Aristotelian argument, but the main argument is of course not valid. You know Aristotle says very briefly in this passage, 1094b19-27,<sup>xxx</sup> that it is as absurd to demand from a rhetorician mathematical certainty as it would be to permit the mathematician the use of rhetorical arguments. This does not bear out Bacon’s interpretation at all. But the fundamental difficulty is the following: according to Bacon himself, in another part of the book, the orator, the man who has a habit of oratory, does not have to be a moral man. But prudence is inseparable from moral virtue. Now this alone would already settle the question regarding dialectics as well, because the dialectician too does not as such require moral virtue but prudential reasoning does.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 7. 6-9, 1408a25-b4.

<sup>xxix</sup> *Moralis Philosophia*, 250 (Fifth Part. II. 4, lines 19-29).

<sup>xxx</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* I. 3, 1094b19-27. Rackham translates the sentence which Strauss apparently paraphrases: “It is equally unreasonable to accept merely probable conclusions from a mathematician and to demand strict demonstration from an orator” (1094b26-27, p. 9).

Still, I would like to say a few words on the question of dialectics. A book came out in German by a political scientist, Wilhelm Hennis, *Politics and Practical Philosophy*.<sup>xxxii</sup> Unfortunately it is in German. Well, I happen to read German with great ease [laughter], and therefore it is no difficulty. Now what does Hennis say? He uses “practice” synonymously with “politics,” which is not quite correct, but which we can let pass.

Practice is based on premises which are true generally, but not universally. In the field of theory there is only necessity, no probability or accident. [LS: The German word for accident can also mean chance, so you could also say chance.] In the field of practice, however, actions are not necessary, not determined, but free. Now, political science is possible only as a practical science. The organ of that science, the intellectual organ, is *phronesis*, prudence, practical wisdom. [LS: This is perfectly correct, but then he goes on to say that] Dialectics is a method fundamental for all disciplines of practical thinking, for example, especially for jurisprudence, or legal reasoning. Dialectics has its place where questions permit more than one answer, but where it is required that an answer be given.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

You know, you cannot suspend judgment as you could in theoretical questions. He refers to Burnet, the great English classical scholar who had said of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that it is dialectical throughout.<sup>xxxiii</sup> But he quotes also another scholar who says that there are no stringent, apodictic proofs in the *Physics* or *Metaphysics* either—or if, very rarely.<sup>xxxiv</sup> In other words, contrary to what he suggests, dialectical argument is in no way limited to practical science. Dialectical argument has its place everywhere where we start from opinions as opinions, and dialectic is distinguished from apodictic, not from theoretical. And to repeat the point which I made before, the *habitus* of the dialectician does not require moral virtue whereas prudence in the Aristotelian sense does. So the thesis cannot then be maintained as it stands.

But there is of course a great difficulty here which is not disposed of by these remarks. Even if prudential reasoning is fundamentally different from dialectical reasoning, there is surely a certain overlapping. Now, from the most superficial and external point of view, compare Book 5 of the *Politics* with the *Ethics*. In the *Ethics*, Aristotle explicitly addresses gentlemen, morally good men<sup>49</sup>. They alone are fit hearers. But when he gives counsel to a tyrant, by definition not a gentleman (you remember these passages which are so well-known and [about which] some people say, “Oh here is Aristotle so very close to our good old Machiavelli by giving advice to tyrants”<sup>50</sup>), he argues to the tyrant from the tyrant’s point of view. Let us avoid the word “prudential”; let us say he argues purely expedientially: “You want to be secure in your power? Well, then you must not be wholly wicked as you are in the habit of being, but half-wicked,” as

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<sup>xxxii</sup> No translation of Wilhelm Hennis’ book into English existed at the time of this seminar; Strauss translates probably from this original edition: *Politik und praktische Philosophie* (Neuwied am Rhein: Luchterhand, 1963). A recent translation of Hennis’ essays has been published under the title *Politics as a practical science*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); this collection however spans Hennis’ career and includes only two essays from before 1964. We were not able to find the citation read by Strauss in this volume.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Strauss’ translation.

<sup>xxxiiii</sup> John Burnet, *Ethics of Aristotle* (London: Methuen & Co., 1904).

<sup>xxxv</sup> We have been unable to identify the “other scholar” referred to here.

Aristotle put it. In other words: “Be sensible, don’t murder everyone who thwarts you, but only when it is absolutely necessary.” Good. So this is a kind of argument which is not prudential in the strict sense, and the same applies of course to other things too. When he argues, for example, [that] you must make [a]<sup>51</sup> combination of election by lot and election by raising the hand in this kind of regime, and another one in that kind of regime—this is of course also one which does not require moral purpose but is, one can say, purely expediential.

<sup>52</sup>And here it is of course also understood that these sound advices which Aristotle gives do not guarantee success. <sup>53</sup>Let us take the case of this tyrant. He wants to be secure, not to be worried all the time that he will be assassinated by the many enemies he has made; and now he will stop it and become a bit more sane but of course it may be too late<sup>54</sup>. In a given case, the relaxation of tyrannical rule may even bring about his murder, which might not [have] happen[ed] if he had gone on with his vicious career. You know, human things are very complicated. Now the question arises: Is not much, if not all, political reasoning of this expediential (as distinguished from gentlemanly) character? And is it not in all cases of qualified validity, meaning not apodictically certain?

Let us take a few examples: a clear line of policy, anti-communism, the West against the Communist East. A strong NATO is of course a very important part of it. But then what some people call the defection of de Gaulle, and his notion (based on the peculiar situation of France, which he stated already in his forties in his memoirs) [that] the first requirement of France is an alliance with Russia, Soviet or not Soviet. The second circle takes in England, and the third circle<sup>55</sup> takes in the United States, and he acts on this, as you can see. This creates a difficulty. Can you continue the clear line—the liberal democratic West versus the<sup>56</sup> Communist<sup>xxxv</sup> East—under all circumstances? I believe that I am not guilty of any sympathy with communism [and] therefore I have a greater right to speak about it than some others, but of course no one can exclude the possibility that at some time this country might be compelled to ally itself with one of the Red giants against the other. I think it’s just common sense to say so. But it is only, however, an illustration of this impossibility of making universally valid judgments in that field. Incidentally, there is a great authority regarding these matters, it occurs to me, and that is Edmund Burke. You know what he thought about the French Revolution, and yet he said, Well, if it has reached a certain amount of power we may have to accept it as a nuisance on the earth for some centuries. Then the crusade, as one could call it, which he propagandized against revolutionary France would no longer be a feasible policy.

Now, when we<sup>57</sup> [say] it might be necessary to make this or that alliance, this obviously presents a problem. What do we mean by “necessary” here? Well, I think [that] on the politically most effective level it means nothing but “necessary for the self-preservation of this country.” Because if any additional considerations are concerned then it becomes already complicated and there can no longer be expected the same degree of unanimity, the practical unanimity which you have if it is a matter of sheer self-preservation. Generally speaking, necessity means in such arguments the self-preservation of *a* country—the country of the speaker and the addressees. But<sup>58</sup> what is it to refer [to]<sup>59</sup> the country? What character does it have? The Oder-Neisse line is part of Germany, it belongs to Germany. The question: Does it belong to Germany as the arm belongs to a man? There can be no doubt that the arm belongs to a man, and if it is taken away his nature has been

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<sup>xxxv</sup> Strauss says “Anti-Communist East,” yet his intended meaning is clear.

impaired. Do provinces of a country belong to that country in the same way? And here we see [that] we take for granted in all such arguments that they are parts of the country as the members of the human body are part of the human body. But here [there] is of course the opinion element, because what is due ultimately to historical accident is taken to be natural.

And this leads to a rhetoric of its own, like “natural frontiers.” Natural frontiers are simply frontiers easy for defense, but for the country [in question]<sup>60</sup>. For the French in the nineteenth century the Rhine was a natural frontier because the Rhine was easier to hold against the Germans than any other thing, but for the Germans it would have been a very unnatural frontier because quite a few Germans lived on the west bank of the Rhine.<sup>61</sup> Well, if you take de Gaulle’s favorite expression, “the eternal France,” I think it’s obviously a rhetorical statement. Something eternal cannot have come into being, and France has admittedly come into being. One can even date it: 843.<sup>xxxvi</sup> In order not to make the mistake of some people who speak of de Gaulle’s rhetoric, let us not forget that “the war against poverty” is also a rhetorical expression. It would need a long defense.

<sup>62</sup>Another example: laws in general. Law is the dictate of right reason—that is true, if it is a good law. But do the laws owe their validity to the right reasons? Laws must be enacted and they are enacted ordinarily on the basis of reasons which are not identical with the good reasons, but with rhetorical reasons. And these rhetorical reasons also affect, of course,<sup>63</sup> the interpretation of the law because they really are about<sup>64</sup> and have been stated as a *ratione* among the *rationes leges*. So here is another sphere where the dialectical or rhetorical comes in.

Now there are other cases in political argument of a very special kind. For example, if you are confronted by an adversary who claims that his whole position—his strategy plus tactics, to say nothing of his highest principles, are theoretically true, scientifically correct (as in the case of communism) then of course in that case the refutation of these things would not be prudential but would be itself theoretical or scientific. That is clear. But ordinarily I think we have to leave it at [this]: that logically speaking the arguments used in politics are surely mostly dialectical and rhetorical. I have a few passages here, but I will postpone this for the next meeting.

I just looked up the *Federalist Papers* from this point of view, and I thought how good it would be if someone would write a Master’s or Doctor’s thesis (I do not know what would be more practical)<sup>65</sup> on the arguments of the *Federalist Papers* from this point of view; [that is to say] a logical analysis [of the arguments].<sup>66</sup> The *Federalist Papers* are so interesting because they are already influenced by this new kind of political science that was started by Hobbes, say, which claimed to have theoretical certainty regarding the most crucial<sup>67</sup> practical political questions. But nevertheless the *Federalist Papers* is an eminently sober book. Still, to argue that out would be a very helpful study, and [it would] also [be helpful] by throwing light on the difficulties in present-day political science—which of course is very anxious to lead up to policy proposals and believes it can avoid all the difficulties by saying that everything is scientific with us except the ends, or as they call<sup>68</sup> [them], the values. Assuming these and these ends (and this is a mere assumption which has no theoretical dignity), everything else is necessary. Is it truly necessary? To study that would be very interesting. Mr. Butterworth?

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> In 843, the Treaty of Verdun carved up the Carolingian Empire.

**Mr. Butterworth:** I'd like to know if you, on the basis of the point you arrived at today on this question, then retract or would restate the conclusions that you arrived at earlier, a week ago, about Pericles' speech about Megara in Thucydides. Namely, you said then you didn't see any rhetorical reasoning—

**LS:** But rhetorical reasoning—I remember that distinctly. I said this: Aristotle somehow takes it for granted, and naturally [so], that all public speech is rhetorical in the sense in which he defines it, [i.e.] consisting of enthymemes at the core. But if you read, say, this speech—not the funeral speech, which is epideictic speech<sup>69</sup> at its worst, you could say (I mean the statement [that] we get the products from *all* countries to Athens<sup>70</sup> and other overstatements, I forgot now the details) but this speech, the first speech at the end of the First Book—when I read it I simply said it is in the Aristotelian sense barely rhetorical. It is almost as severe and strictly argued as a first-rate state paper. And so the question was, then, what is a kind of reasoning in a first-rate state paper? Now Aristotle would of course say [that] if it is a first-rate state paper it must be prudential reasoning. And prudence includes morality—morality on the part of the speaker and [it is also] shown in the proposals. But there is a difficulty here. I mean not that I question the moral virtue of Pericles, but whether these proposals could not have been made under the circumstances by a man of a much lower character than Pericles but of equal cleverness, seeing the situation as it is. Therefore the question arises: What is the character of the reasoning of a first-rate state paper? It is safe to assume that not all first-rate state papers are made by men of high moral virtue, but [by men] of great competence, imagination, and other morally neutral qualities. This is then the question:<sup>71</sup> What is<sup>72</sup> [the] status [of such political reasoning]? And I think I may not have developed it [before] as much as I did today, but what I intended surely was the same: that ultimately we come back to premises which are no longer evident, but opinions.

Well, in this particular case, Pericles presupposes of course that Athens must remain an empire. What is the basis for that? Pericles would not for one moment say, as in the German-English discussion prior to the First World War, “We must expand”—or in relation to the Second World War, the living space question, “We must be imperial otherwise we will starve.” No one said that, but the glory of empire and the grandeur of empire—that was the point. And the appearance of a purely “quote objective unquote” reasoning, where no irrelevancies like honor and glory enter, really has very much to do with the power of economic thought in modern times, which also claims to show [that] here there are necessities which have nothing whatever to do with any questionable low or high goals. We must export or die. We must expand or die.<sup>73</sup> In modern times people believed to have discovered a whole sphere which is strictly morally neutral and which by itself would give sufficient guidance to action.

**Mr. Butterworth:** But isn't it also true that in your analysis of this speech, you were saying that Pericles did not use a shortened form of reasoning, such as one we would normally use before such a huge assembly of people?

**LS:** No, no.

**Mr. Butterworth:** And if not, then what does this mean?

**LS:** I developed this [argument], I believe (either at that time or last time), that the premises which are implied for example in very strict language and radical language: <sup>74</sup>the political goals are, say, almost universally not true felicity but some imagined felicity, [such as] wealth, power, [or] whatever it may be. And therefore <sup>75</sup>the fundamental, ultimate premises are questionable on this ground, which does not mean that they can be questioned politically. You couldn't be elected dogcatcher on the basis of your standing for true felicity; that goes without saying. Still, from the highest point of view we must say that this is not in the highest sense.

The other point of view is [that] the unit for which these good things are claimed is fundamentally an accidental unit. That this place, Attica, this and this place, these and these original villages settled together, *synoikismos*, and became the polis of Athens. Well, why not the next village to the west which was left out? <sup>76</sup>Something arbitrary enters into that. And you know what people have tried to do—they thought they [found] a wonderful criterion which is absolutely uncriticizable so that the society is truly natural: nationalism. Nationalism and nationalism simply defined by language: all people speaking German must form one political community, and we draw the lines regardless of all other consideration[s]. <sup>77</sup>There may be so many German enclaves in France and vice versa—we don't care. Ja, but this is simply not feasible. The German Swiss prefer absolutely the company of the Swiss French and Swiss Italians to that of the Germans of the Reich. Well, [in] Canada you have the same problem. <sup>78</sup>Also the fate of Austria-Hungary is, I think, the most beautiful proof of the absurdity of nationalism as a theoretical dogma. As Churchill has wisely said, these people would be much better off if they had remained members of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy—the whole misery of the Second World War and of the Russian occupation would have been, or could at least have been, avoided without that.

<sup>79</sup>Nationalism, within limits, yes; but as a theoretical . . . impossible. Now one other way—well, the Nazis tried to be still more scientific and said, “Not language, but race.” But then you come into other difficulties. <sup>80</sup>You know, it's also difficult. There is no possibility in this sense: you do not find a natural basis which would entitle you to say this is as much part of a country or nation as an arm is of the human body. Of this: my arm, of my body—that simply does not exist. There are approximations to that but these approximations are caused by what Burke called prescription, which is surely nothing which would enter into an apodictic argument because prescription cannot be universally valid. We would still be in those caves in which our beastlike ancestors lived if prescription alone prevailed, you know, and not positive change. The difficulties would come out in one way or the other.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “when you say.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “say.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “a kind of—.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “also.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “what.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “[page 371].”

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- <sup>7</sup> Deleted “but the beginning, I mean.”
- <sup>8</sup> Moved “say”; moved “English.”
- <sup>9</sup> Deleted “and still.”
- <sup>10</sup> Deleted “the regimes.”
- <sup>11</sup> Deleted “Rhetoric as a whole is—.”
- <sup>12</sup> Deleted “a.”
- <sup>13</sup> Deleted “in the first place.”
- <sup>14</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleted “I think one can even speak, I mean.”
- <sup>16</sup> Deleted “I mean, he does not mean—.”
- <sup>17</sup> Deleted “is.”
- <sup>18</sup> Moved “rather”; deleted “towards.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “but”; moved “of course.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “amorous—.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “the last case.”
- <sup>22</sup> Moved “that.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “is.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “in other words.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted “So-and-so.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “whether,” “in that”; moved “there are not some limits.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “This kind of, what you could say—.” Moved “kind of.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “this was still—.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “Now, what is particularly—.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “[367 bottom].”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “so that you must know”; “in Greek.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “consists partly.”

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<sup>34</sup> Moved “was.”

<sup>35</sup> Deleted “was.”

<sup>36</sup> Deleted “And here this term—.”

<sup>37</sup> Deleted “You can say at all times, but it was never called that.”

<sup>38</sup> Moved “quite a bit.”

<sup>39</sup> Deleted “he.”

<sup>40</sup> Deleted “then.”

<sup>41</sup> Deleted “how such terms.”

<sup>42</sup> Deleted “they.”

<sup>43</sup> Deleted “Or what does it mean?”

<sup>44</sup> Deleted “of course.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “**Mr. Reinken:** “Style expresses emotion, when a man speaks with anger of wanton outrage; with indignation and reserve—” (III.7.3) Page 379. Did we skip a chapter, Chapter Six?”

**LS:** No, no. That was Chapter Six. No, we skipped Chapter Six, ja.”

<sup>46</sup> Moved “connected with it.”

<sup>47</sup> Deleted “all the time.”

<sup>48</sup> Deleted “the whole—.”

<sup>49</sup> Moved “explicitly.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “and these things.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “this kind of.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “Now the question—.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “for example.”

<sup>54</sup> Moved “of course.”

<sup>55</sup> Moved “only.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “Anti-.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “speak.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “what is the character—.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “which all things.”

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<sup>60</sup> Deleted "speaking."

<sup>61</sup> Deleted "So, in other words, there is a certain—."

<sup>62</sup> Deleted "Now another point."

<sup>63</sup> Deleted "then"; moved "also."

<sup>64</sup> Moved "really."

<sup>65</sup> Deleted "on the Federalist Papers."

<sup>72</sup> Deleted "to what extent are these arguments, I mean"; moved "logical analysis."

<sup>67</sup> Deleted "practical questions."

<sup>68</sup> Deleted "it."

<sup>69</sup> Moved "you could say."

<sup>70</sup> Deleted "from all countries and this kind of thing."

<sup>71</sup> Deleted "Is—." Moved "such political reasoning."

<sup>72</sup> Deleted "its."

<sup>73</sup> Deleted "in other words."

<sup>74</sup> Deleted "the goals."

<sup>75</sup> Deleted "something, I mean."

<sup>76</sup> Deleted "There is."

<sup>77</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>78</sup> Deleted "And nationalism—."

<sup>79</sup> Deleted "and so nationalism is not, I mean."

<sup>80</sup> Deleted "I mean it is not,."

**Session 14: May 27, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] Now, I don't have to ask you what is the relevance of all these things for political science after the discussion of last time. We don't have to go into that. If oratory is important to the political scene then one should know something about oratory in order to distinguish between good and bad oratory, between the sophisticated and simple oratory, and so on and so on. Someone must <sup>1</sup>apply his mind to that, and if someone of the immense mental power of Aristotle has done it, we should only be grateful and not complain. You understand something of prosody, I believe, of meter.

**Student:** Just a little that I—

**LS:** And you have some musical understanding also?

**Same student:** Yes, a little.

**LS:** I regret to say that I neglect these things almost completely and therefore I cannot help you very much in these matters. What strikes one at any rate is<sup>2</sup> Aristotle's amazing attention to all details. Although he said to begin with that Book 3 is the least important subject of rhetoric, if it is an important<sup>3</sup> or an essential ingredient of rhetoric, delivery, then one has to study it. [There is] this amazing *polyistōr* character of Aristotle—there is no field of human study, with the possible exception of mathematics, to which he has not applied his immense mind. Of course he applied his mind to mathematics in his *Analytics* and other logical writings, but he is, I believe, not counted among the heroes in the history of mathematics. Although I read in a very good study that the doctrine—you know much better than I, Mr. Devereaux: What is Mr. Klein's thesis about Euclid's doctrine of proportion?<sup>4</sup> Is this not based philosophically on Aristotle, on a break with the Platonic doctrine, the whole question of fractions?

**Mr. Devereaux:** The way I've heard it is that Eudoxus was the first to formulate the definition on which the theory of proportion rests. And I've heard that Eudoxus was a pupil of Plato's.

**LS:** But there is something else. I'm sorry I do not know this sufficiently. But still, Aristotle is not famous as a mathematician. Let us not make any bones about that.

What one has of course to consider all the time is that Aristotle is confronted with a radical change in rhetoric which has taken place in the last two generations and which is chiefly due to Gorgias. This is his style of immense preciousness and sophistication, and Aristotle reacts against that. But he does not simply wish to return to the simple, political rhetoric practiced, say, up to 450 or so, but a mean: not as artless as, say, Nicias was or Themistocles may be, but on the other hand not so obtrusively artful as Gorgias. This is an important point of the general character of the argument.

There was only one thing with which I would like to take issue with you. You say "the many arguments which Aristotle uses in order to make his point"—I mean, what I call "*eti, eti*," namely *eti* is the Greek word for furthermore: "furthermore, furthermore, furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origins of Algebra* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968).

furthermore.” And you said Aristotle teaches us in this way the art of rhetoric. Is this what you said?

**Student:** Yes.

**LS:** This is, I believe, not tenable for a very simple reason—for a very, very simple reason: because Aristotle does exactly the same in the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*. This is his way of arguing, and obviously he doesn't wish to teach rhetoric in these writings. That has a deeper reason: I do not believe that Aristotle wishes to teach rhetoric by his own “quote rhetoric unquote” by the way he talks in the *Rhetoric*. The style is the ordinary Aristotelian style. You could say rightly that the *Nicomachean Ethics* is much more rhetorical than the *Rhetoric*. The *Rhetoric* is a rather dry treatise—you know, there are not these moving and inspiring passages with which the *Ethics* abounds.

**Same Student:** My idea wasn't that Aristotle was rhetorical so much in the *Rhetoric*, but that his enumerations or examples include most of the possibilities, so we can see when he divides them up into various categories that this is the natural way of doing it. It makes it easier for us to learn.

**LS:** He may make the divisions. But if he tries to prove a point and says: “this and this assertion is absurd, false; furthermore, besides, in addition, and gives say eleven arguments against it”—this has nothing to do with rhetoric nor has it [anything] to do<sup>4</sup> with mere teaching purposes in any sense, but it has a much deeper reason.<sup>5</sup> In a strict scientific argument, only one proof is required. There may be two ways of proving some theory but then the question arises which is the best. And then we don't, you know,<sup>6</sup> really need the other proof. But Aristotle's works are in this sense not scientific—or to use a very frequent modern word, Aristotle does not proceed systematically. He looks around. He does not deduce whatever he asserts from something granted in advance,<sup>7</sup> in a straight line as it were. He looks around, and that is the dialectical character of his whole fundamental reasoning, starting from what is granted by opinion or in opinion. And a great variety of things are granted,<sup>8</sup> not all [of which] are relevant to the subject at hand, but quite a few are. If you read only such a thing as his criticism of Zeno and Melissus in the First Book of the *Physics*,<sup>ii</sup> for example, you see this simple way, this natural way of carrying conviction. By the way, in all philosophic discussions, I believe to the present day, this is still understood, that you<sup>9</sup> take your arguments from the various things pertinent to the subject matter. Good. But I was very pleased with your paper.

First, I would like to return these papers. Mr. Zimmerman, I have only one point to note here . . . “it is practical wisdom which governs propriety and keeps rhetoric on the point. It does not need to be accompanied by the possession of moral quality, but the orator must at least be able to command a reputation for moral virtue, create an appearance of moral quality.” I understand how you arrive at this conclusion but it is open to objection on one simple ground: practical wisdom keeps rhetoric on the point but it does not need the possession of moral quality. You see the difference? Good character, moral quality, is inseparable from practical wisdom and

<sup>ii</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Glen Coughlin (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2005). For criticism of Melissus: 1-5 (Bk. I. 2-3, 184b15-187a11). Criticism of Zeno, at least by name, does not occur until Books VI and VII: 122-23 (Bk. VI. 2, 233a22-31); 135-36 (Bk. VI. 9, 239b5-240a18); 154 (Bk. VII. 250a19-28).

vice versa. So it is easy to refute this assertion but nevertheless there is a difficulty here which we may take up again.

Now we have Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Balitzer. There is an examination now, I believe, and with my stopping so late or finishing so late my class could overlap with the examination, which we normally don't do. Now here is one thing from Mr. Balitzer which I thought is of some interest:

Of the requirements for appropriate metaphors are that if we wish to adorn our subject the metaphor should be chosen from the better species under the proper genus and vice versa. For example, the slogan, "It is better red than dead," and the opposite, "It is better dead than red": the word "red" in the first sentence—better red than dead—is for some audiences the species of the same genus to which the word "dead" in the second sentence belongs.

He speaks only in these general terms about it. What does he mean by that? What is the genus? After all, he should identify that. If someone is better red than dead—or vice versa, better dead than red—which is the genus to which the two things red and dead belong? Unfortunately he didn't make it clear. It is of some importance not for the understanding of the propositions for practical purposes but for our theoretical understanding. What does he mean?

**Student:** He means an unhappy situation.

**LS:** This is very circumlocutory [laughter]. Both are evils. That is the genus. Red is an evil and dead is an evil and the question is what is the greater. This is the point. But it is not bad that he takes such contemporary rhetorical statements and tries to analyze them. This is a prejudice or fact . . . and how to distinguish between prejudice and fact. You are a physicist, are you not?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Good. And now let us read a few [passages]. We cannot possibly go into these details.<sup>10</sup> Why do we not read the beginning of chapter 8.

**Mr. Reinken:** "The form of diction should be neither metrical nor without rhythm. If it is metrical, it lacks persuasiveness, for it appears artificial, and at the same time it distracts the hearer's attention, since it sets him on the watch for the recurrence of such and such a cadence; just as, when the public criers ask, 'Whom does the emancipated choose for his patron?' the children shout 'Cleon.' If it is without rhythm, it is unlimited, whereas it ought to be limited (but not by metre); for that which is unlimited is unpleasant and unknowable. Now all things are limited by number, and the number belonging to the form of diction is rhythm, of which the meters are divisions. Wherefore prose must be rhythmical, but not metrical, otherwise it will be a poem. Nor must this rhythm be rigorously carried out, but only up to a certain point."<sup>iii</sup>

**LS:** Well, that is obviously very sober and sound as he states it. No meter—or, say, for that matter no rhyme—obviously because it deflects attention. You await then, how is he going to rhyme, say, Bobby Baker [laughter], or whatever, and this deflects attention. And since the

<sup>iii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 8. 1-3, 1408b21-32.

rhymes are not likely all to be good, it really will harm instead of help. So there cannot be meter, a poetic form of rhetoric, nor can it be unrhythmical. Unrhythmical—what does he mean? In a simple way, without considering the diction or this kind of thing, what is unrhythmical? I mean, an operational definition.

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** Maybe, but not necessarily, but this is not the peculiarity. Well, I made it clear to myself in my migrations through the world when I came from a very unrepublican country like Germany to much more language-conscious countries, like France and England. You hear it almost immediately, that a spoken French or English sentence—well, I do not speak of the Italians because still more the Italians are people<sup>11</sup> enjoy every sentence they speak, which goes beyond the French and the English. But the German sentence does not have this rhythmic character. And I have gradually found I use this simple example for my private orientation. The German sentence<sup>12</sup> (the ordinary, not in the case of the great prose writers and so forth) can be rather like<sup>13</sup> these beer wagons with four Belgian horses [laughter]. There is a kind of rhythm perhaps there too, but not—it lacks obviously a certain kind.

Or another point which I observed after having undergone some French and English influence, without having studied Cicero or Aristotle for that purpose: The German sentence in learned literature (in which the Germans have been very successful, especially regarding the Americans—I believe that American social science is stylistically deeply indebted to German style of this kind, and the Italians as I saw) and this is what I call the sausage. You know, just when you have a sausage there is always a question: Can you not put a bit more meat into it? [Laughter] The line is hard to draw where it will burst at the seams. If you read Weberian periods you will easily find examples of that. Another clause won't do [Strauss laughs as he speaks]. Sometimes it's two or three relative clauses dependent on each other—well, if you read carefully you see which is which but it obviously has no form or shape. It cannot be taken in in one view—to use the expression which Aristotle uses here and he uses also in his *Politics*, surveyability, intelligibility while it is spoken. This is crucial. Good.

If one wants to exaggerate, one could say (that is of course not what Aristotle means) that a rhythmic sentence resembles more a dance than this wagon with the four Belgian horses. That goes too far but it is not entirely wrong. So then while this is necessary, and especially because of the question of being taken in in one view, this is of course affected by the musical character of the sentence also—I mean not only by the name and number of clauses, etc. I think we leave it at that and turn to the next chapter. We don't have to begin at the beginning. 1409a34 or thereabouts, where he makes the distinction between two kinds of diction, the periodic and the other one.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Such is the continuous style. The other style consists of periods, and by period I mean a sentence that has a beginning and end in itself and a magnitude that can be easily grasped.”

**LS:** “Well taken in in one view” would be a somewhat better translation of this wonderful Greek word [*eusynopton*], “well-visible,” “overlookable together.” This is not well translated. Aristotle

says this of the polis—the polis must have this character of being taken in in one view, otherwise it is too large for humane living together. Otherwise it becomes Babylon. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

What is written in this style is pleasant and easy to learn, pleasant because it is the opposite of that which is unlimited, because the hearer at every moment thinks he is securing something for himself and that some conclusion has been reached; whereas it is unpleasant neither to foresee nor to get to the end of anything. It is easy to learn, because it can be easily retained in the memory. The reason is that the periodic style has number, which of all things is the easiest to remember; that explains why all learn verse with greater facility than prose, for it has number by which it can be measured.<sup>iv</sup>

**LS:** He means of course especially that it is easier to remember verse, which is I think a fact. It's easier to remember verse than to remember prose. This we all know from our school days, I believe, or am I wrong on this point? <sup>14</sup>You have a considerable support for memory by the metrical or rhyming character, which you do not have in prose. The period we can say is something like the strophe in poetry. It has a certain unity and can therefore be better remembered, better taken in in one view. The hearer or reader is kept in breath, as it were, by the foreseeable <sup>15</sup>end, whereas if the construction is not periodic, he doesn't know where it will lead to and a grasp of where it will lead to is required. Now some people of course take care of this difficulty by saying at the beginning, "I am going to do this and this." Now it is perhaps not necessary for an attorney defending the defendant to say, "I'm going to defend the defendant." But he can perhaps say at the beginning, "I am trying to show you about the . . . ." That is sometimes helpful but it is not very artful, not very artistic, to give the plan of your speech at the beginning. And if it comes out in this way it is more gracious.

Now a few more passages we can only consider, and then turn to a more general discussion. In the next chapter, we begin at the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** "Having settled these questions, we must next state the sources of smart and popular sayings."

**LS:** Well, perhaps one could translate this a bit better. "Smart" is literally translated "urban" or "townish," a word which doesn't exist in English, meaning not rustic, not rural, "graceful." I mean the usual [translation of *asteion*]<sup>14</sup>—not clownish, not local yokel [laughter], or whatever the colloquial terms used for this are. "Graceful." And the other—yes, "popular" one can say, but "popular" has so many different connotations now. "In high repute" would be more literal, "which is famous," *eudokimounta*.<sup>16</sup> A cosmetic can be popular and that simply means it is used by more people, or [be] said to be used by more people, than another. But the deservedly popular is not implied in "popular." But *eudokimounta*, the Greek word, has something of this "which is highly regarded." Let's keep this in mind. It may come in handy some time, that popular is not the same as highly regarded. Our present-day usage makes us oblivious of that. Yes.

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<sup>iv</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 9. 3, 1409a34-b8.

**Mr. Reinken:** “They are produced either by natural genius or by practice; to show what they are is the function of this inquiry. Let us therefore begin by giving a full list of them, and let our starting-point be the following.”

**LS:** This was the occasion for your general remark. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Easy learning is naturally pleasant to all, and words mean something, so that all words which make us learn something are most pleasant. Now we do not know the meaning of strange words, and proper terms we know already.”

**LS:** By proper terms here he means something like “dog,” words which properly designate within the sphere of the language in question the thing meant. So it is in no way a sign of an art if an orator speaks of dogs and cats if the subject matter [is] dogs and cats. Of course if he would apply it to a certain political subject metaphorically, then it would be different. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is metaphor, therefore, that above all produces this effect; for when Homer calls old age stubble, he teaches and informs us through the genus; for both have lost their bloom. The similes of the poets also have the same effect; wherefore, if they are well constructed, an impression of smartness is produced.”

**LS:** Yes, “smartness.”<sup>17</sup> This is of course an Englishman who translated it, and it is possible that in England at that time, 50 years ago, “smart” had a somewhat different meaning than it has now. I think in present-day America I would not translate the Greek word *asteion* by “smart,” because today when you speak of smart you have no suggestion of grace, do you? Or graceful?

**Student:** We talk about people being a smart dresser . . . of good taste.

**LS:** Smart has served this meaning? A smart dresser is not a sharp dresser?

**Same Student:** No, no.

**LS:** I see. Well, you see how important it is to know all this. Good. I see, but in “smart dresser” there is a certain implication of graceful, you mean?

**Same Student:** Yes. Knowing how to do it, well done.

**LS:** Yes, I see. Thank you. Good. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For the simile, as we have said, is a metaphor differing only by the addition of a word, wherefore it is less pleasant because it is longer; it does not say that this *is* that, so that the mind does not even examine this. Of necessity, therefore—”

**LS:** What is this? A simile, a simple example, one of these every-day examples. Socrates is said in Aristophanes' *Clouds* to have said, “Heaven is a stone.” This is not a simile. A simile would be, “Heaven is like a stone.” Therefore according to Aristotle the simile as such, because by

emphasizing the dissimilarity also, similarity is always . . . does not give<sup>18</sup> rise [as much] to thinking, to putting together the metaphor. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Of necessity, therefore, all style and enthymemes that give us rapid information are smart. This is the reason why superficial enthymemes, meaning those that are obvious to all and need no mental effort, and those which, when stated, are not understood, are not popular, but only those which are understood the moment they are stated, or those of which the meaning, although not clear at first, comes a little later; for from the latter a kind of knowledge results, from the former neither the one nor the other.<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here.<sup>19</sup> What is the root in the nature of man to which Aristotle traces all these phenomena? Ultimately what decides the preference of metaphor to simile and all other cases of this kind?

**Student:** A desire for acquisition of knowledge?

**LS:** Yes, well, “for learning” is the term used by [Aristotle] here. Do you remember the first sentence of the *Metaphysics*?

**Student:** All men by nature desire to know.

**LS:** Yes, yes, which has been frequently ridiculed by people, you know, because Aristotle, they say, didn't know human beings. But what Aristotle means is of course something very simple which he constantly can confirm. Aristotle uses this when he speaks of *all* men. He uses a phenomena which we can find everywhere, that men are curious. All men are curious. When some strange sight occurs the mere sight interests us—or the sound for that matter—without any concern for<sup>20</sup> [our] well-being. If someone is comically dressed, everyone would—Aristotle has in mind this. (Of course, they are only on the lowest level, and the desire to know on the highest level is something very different.) But ordinary curiosity is the form in which desire for knowledge appears in everyday life among all people. Yes, but Aristotle makes here another assertion which is implied in the fact that this is a natural desire: that learning is by nature pleasant. No rebellion to this assertion on the basis of your own experience?

**Student:** . . . it's a tedious thing to learn.

**LS:** Painful.

**Another Student:** It's not child's play, I think we would agree.

**LS:** Painful, he says. It's in the *Politics*, I do not remember where.<sup>vi</sup> At any rate, he says it clearly, and this we surely know. But how<sup>21</sup> [does he] here<sup>22</sup> [solve] our difficulties, this seeming contradiction?

<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 10. 1-4, 1410b6-27.

<sup>vi</sup> *Politics* VIII. 5, 1339a26-29.

**Student:** Easily.

**LS:** Easily or quickly, that is pleasant. If it is difficult and slow, then it is of course painful. But this doesn't mean that if the difficult and slow process is conducted to an end it is not very pleasing. I mean, if<sup>23</sup> finally after many years of being bothered by a problem you find a solution, this is eminently pleasant. That's clear. So there is no difficulty here. We will perhaps take this up a little bit later. The fundamental issue is: must one have recourse to this premise, that men by nature desire to learn, in order to understand the best way of talking to political multitudes? This is of course very much counter to the present-day . . . who goes to . . . to learn. Most people go there to applaud the candidate of their favor or to heckle the other one. Those who go there to learn [are] very few. Aristotle nevertheless means . . . we must see to what extent it is still intelligible. Now read a bit of it later on, when he summarizes. What he also must do, he must put things before the eyes, line 33 or 34.

**Mr. Reinken:** "we ought to see what is being done rather than what is going to be done. We ought therefore to aim at three things—metaphor, antithesis, actuality."<sup>vii</sup>

**LS:** The word<sup>24</sup> translated by "actuality" is *energeia*, which is grammatically, etymologically, the root of "energy" rather than of "actuality."<sup>25</sup> While energy means something entirely different in modern physics than it means in Aristotelian physics, there is some connection here. The translation "actuality" is quite defensible. Now what Aristotle [means] is explained in the context: the things which *are being done*, as distinguished from things which *will* or *may* be done in the future. The orator in other words has to make the facts of the case present, *actual*. Actual—this is the ordinary translation for what is now, what is present, and of course not merely because it is present, but what is present<sup>26</sup> [at] its peak. That is the primary meaning.<sup>27</sup> You have energy; *energeia* means to be at one's work and of course at that work in its fullness.

Let us assume that the specific work of a horse is to run (I say let us assume that). Then the *energeia* of the horse would be when the horse is running; and of course if it is an old decrepit mare or a colt newly born, so to speak, then it cannot be the true *energeia* because the horse is not at its peak. But a full-fledged, grown-up horse, healthy, in the act of running—that's the *energeia*, the being at work of the horse. That may suffice for the present time.<sup>28</sup> The transition to the modern meaning<sup>29</sup> was of course mediated by physics, by the change which the word energy underwent in physics on the way from Aristotle, say, to Leibniz. But there is also a meaning—a less scientific change that can also be understood. Let us turn to 1411b22, when he takes up this question again.<sup>viii</sup> "Now it has been said that the smart consists—"

**Mr. Reinken:** "We have said that smart sayings are derived from proportional metaphor and expressions which set things before the eyes. We must now explain the meaning of 'before the eyes,' and what must be done to produce this. I mean that things are set before the eyes by words that signify actuality."

**LS:** "Which show things in their being at work," *energounta*, "in their being at work." Yes.

<sup>vii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 10. 6, 1410b34-36.

<sup>viii</sup> The clause "when he takes up this question again" is not present on the re-mastered tapes. It comes from the original transcript.

**Mr. Reinken:** “For instance, to say that a good man is ‘four square’ is a metaphor, for both these are complete, but—”

**LS:** “Both these,” which both these? The *tetragōnon* and the good man.

**Mr. Reinken:**

but the phrase does not express actuality [being at work], whereas “of one having the prime of his life in full bloom” does; similarly, “thee, like a sacred animal ranging at will” expresses actuality, and in

“Thereupon the Greeks shooting forward with their feet”

the word “shooting” contains both actuality and metaphor. And as Homer often, by making use of metaphor, speaks of inanimate things as if they were animate; and it is to creating actuality in all such cases that his popularity is due, as in the following examples:

“Again the ruthless stone rolled down to the plane.”

“The arrow flew.”

“[The arrow] eager to fly [towards the crowd].”

“[The spears] were buried in the ground, longing to take their fill of flesh.”

“The spear-point sped eagerly through his breast.”

For in all these examples there is appearance of actuality, since the objects are represented as animate.<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** So in other words, what Aristotle means by actuality, by making things actual, is partly animation—to make or present the inanimate as animate. Animation. And I think if one would develop this, one would see a connection between the term ‘energy’ as now understood, the vividness of power. You know this term ‘energy’ is now in very common use—and not only now, I think it came into common use in the late eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> I remember a Ph.D. thesis being written in the Committee on Social Thought on the use of energy by Stendhal, where it plays a very great role.<sup>x</sup> But it is of course already very common in Rousseau . . . . This only in passing. Now let us read a few more passages in this chapter, 1412a24, after he has referred to Stesichorus.

**Mr. Reinken:** “And clever riddles<sup>31</sup> are agreeable for the same reason; for something is learnt, and the expression is also metaphorical. And what Theodorus calls ‘novel expressions’ arise when what follows is paradoxical, and, as he puts it, not in accordance with our previous expectation; just as humorists make use of slight changes in words. The same effect is produced by jokes that turn on a change of letter; for they are deceptive.”<sup>xi</sup>

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 11. 1-3, 1411b22-1412a4.

<sup>x</sup> We have been unable to identify this dissertation project, whether finished or unfinished.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 11. 6, 1412a24-30.

**LS:** Here he comes back again to the question of learning. That in solving a riddle, a kind of learning is involved, that is obvious. Whether that is a profound learning, whether we learn something profoundly new, that is not the question, but you learn something here. You have here, say, the question [Strauss writes on the board]: that's the river, if I remember my few looks at such things, and you have to find out which river meets the specifications given—some learning, some problem-solving, as they say; oh yes, “problem-solving” would probably be the present-day equivalent to that.

Cope gives this example from Cicero for this kind of rhetorical effect: “What does this man lack except property and virtue?” [Laughter] This is not a Ciceronian joke, but one used by Cicero for illustrating a principle. And Cope questions that learning constitutes a pleasure,<sup>xii</sup> however surprising [this might be], whatever you might say. But what would Aristotle say in order to justify his interpretation that in such things we learn something? I mean here an orator speaks about a man who is notoriously defective; everyone knows that. And then he says: “This is a man without any flaws, except he's poor and lacks virtue.” How would Aristotle justify his interpretation that we learn here? I think it could be justified. You see, learning means not only learning something which we have never known before. In this case we knew that this man lacked property and virtue. But learning means also confirming, re-learning something of which we have become doubtful. Now, in the moment this man makes a remark that is a kind of questioning of all our knowledge. If he says of this particular individual: “He is so perfect,” and then to become reassured that we can trust our senses, so to speak, is a kind of learning. I believe that is what Aristotle would say about this. Now I have only two more passages, 1412b16, shortly before the quotation from Anaxandrides.<sup>32</sup> [First], when he says, “Also the famous saying of Anaxandrides.”

**Mr. Reinken:**<sup>33</sup>

It is the same with the celebrated verse of Anaxandrides,

“It is noble to die before doing anything that deserves death;”

for this is the same as saying that “it is worthy to die when one does not deserve to die,” or, that “it is worthy to die when one is not worthy of death,” or “when one does nothing that is worthy of death.” Now the form of expression of these sayings is the same; but the more concisely and antithetically they are expressed, the greater is their popularity. The reason is that antithesis—

**LS:** Popularity always in this sense, “highly regarded.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “The reason is that antithesis is more instructive and conciseness gives knowledge more rapidly.”

**LS:** You see again: knowledge; this is crucial, knowledge or learning. We learn something. I must say, I may be entirely mistaken, I think the formulation which Aristotle himself gives, “It is worthy to die while not being worthy to die,” seems to be more hard-hitting, more concise, than

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<sup>xii</sup> *Rhetoric with Commentary*, 3: 130-31.

the other. But I may be mistaken. How does Cope translate it<sup>34</sup>—immediately after quoting the words?

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is worthy to die when one does not deserve to die.”<sup>xiii</sup>

**LS:** Well more pointedly: “if one is not worthy to die.” This would be more neat, I believe. However this may be, why again learning? What do we learn here? Well it is hard to say here in this case, but let us take an alternative interpretation. What does Hobbes say about these kinds of things? Why do we enjoy them?

**Student:** They put somebody down by them for one thing.

**LS:** Why do we laugh?

**Same Student:** Because we see somebody put down.

**LS:** Ja, or as Hobbes says, to laugh means to see someone fall. And if<sup>35</sup> [one] falls [oneself], one cries.<sup>xiv</sup> That’s Hobbes’s simple explanation. In other words, we laugh when we feel ourselves superior. That’s the point. For example, simple things: children see another child who has a manifest bodily defect, hunchback or whatever it may be, and they laugh at him. This kind of thing—or if he speaks a foreign language, if he can’t speak English. And every defect is laughable because it gives the other a feeling of superiority [because] he does not have this defect. Now accepting it for the argument, how would Aristotle argue here? Well, what is the greatest defect?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** All right, but still even this is controversial—only ask the Syndicate.<sup>xv</sup> This is controversial, but one thing which is not controversial, and the Syndicate agrees with Aristotle, or Mr. Percy<sup>xvi</sup> for that matter: stupidity. Stupidity. They claim to be very clever, the Syndicate. So, lack of understanding. So then the ridiculous *par excellence* would be when another man reveals a defect of understanding (of course not every defect,<sup>36</sup> but some). But <sup>37</sup>why is this the greatest defect, I mean the most generally admitted defect? Because knowledge or learning is our natural desire, the highest natural desire. So Aristotle would only see . . . I will say a few questions later

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<sup>xiii</sup> The reader apparently reads not Cope but again the Freese translation. Cope’s commentary contains this translation: “It is worthy to die when one is not worthy to die” (*Rhetoric with Commentary*, 3: 136). In light of Strauss’s subsequent suggested translation, it may well be this Cope translation that he had in mind when asking the reader how Cope translates this line.

<sup>xiv</sup> Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, ed. J.C.A. Gaskin (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 60 (chap. IX, sec. 21). Strauss seems to refer most closely to Hobbes’s “comparison of the life of man to a race,” which includes these lines: “To fall on the sudden is disposition to weep. To see another fall, disposition to laugh” (60). Hobbes defines laughter and weeping at more length earlier in this same chapter IX of *Elements of Law*, 54-55 (sec. 13-14) and in *Leviathan*, 36 (chap. 6).

<sup>xv</sup> Strauss refers to the Chicago Crime Syndicate.

<sup>xvi</sup> Charles H. Percy (1919-2011) lost the election for Illinois Governor in 1964. He was U. S. Senator from Illinois 1967-85.

about this question of the ridiculous. Only one more passage, the immediate sequel, where you left off, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, in order that what is said may be true and not superficial, it must always either apply to a particular person or be suitably expressed; for it is possible for it to have one quality and not the other. For instance, ‘One ought to die guiltless of any offense,’ ‘The worthy man should take a worthy woman to wife.’”

**LS:** Notice these are trivial commonplaces. And they are quite true, but this is very poor in rhetoric. There is an American colloquial expression for this kind of thing, one orator who does this. Well it has been—

**Student:** Corny?

**LS:** No, corny is, I believe, something for the inept.

**Another Student:** Platitudes?

**LS:** Platitudes. The most comprehensive presentation which I know is Sancho Panza in Cervantes, who quotes innumerable proverbs on every occasion and they never fit the occasion [laughter].

**Another Student:** They work sometimes though, like Coolidge,<sup>xvii</sup> for instance. He was very popular for these banalities. He would praise saving money or something like that, repeat some banality about thrift. And everyone hailed him as a wise man.

**LS:** But you see how important my little revision of the translation was. One shouldn't say popular, but renowned. Was Coolidge renowned as an orator? It's a question. That would not settle it. Yes, go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “There is no smartness in either of these expressions, but there will be if both conditions are fulfilled: ‘It is worthy for a man to die, when he is not worthy of death.’”

**LS:** So, I see that<sup>38</sup> I agreed with Aristotle that this is a better formulation than that of the poets. Good, I'm sorry. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The more special qualities the expression possesses, the smarter it appears; for instance, if the words contain a metaphor, and a metaphor of a special kind, antithesis, and equality of clauses, and actuality.”<sup>xviii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, “vivacity” one could almost say for the last. Aristotle does not mention it but I'm sure he means<sup>39</sup> that there is of course a great difference between saying smart things on the occasion for a man who deserves it and retelling the same story to a different audience after the meeting. That's clear. The true effect will be that in the assembly and not when you retell it afterwards,

<sup>xvii</sup> Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, 1923-29.

<sup>xviii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 11. 8-10, 1412b16-33.

although there is still some vicarious enjoyment of the story when you are told it, but it cannot have the [same] effectiveness<sup>40</sup> [as] when it was [said] at the<sup>41</sup> time.

This Aristotelian emphasis on *learning* is naturally a consequence or an ingredient of his understanding of man: the famous definition, which you have all heard ad nauseam, [is] that man is a rational animal.<sup>42</sup> [Aristotle] *excludes* by this statement the brutes, [who] have no desire to learn. They may be forced to “quote learn unquote”—the famous rat which learns how to get out of the cage and this kind of thing, but this is not properly learning in Aristotle’s point of view. But man however is not only rational, he is also animal, which we must never forget. As such he has such peculiarities as crying and laughing, weeping and laughing, *weeping* and laughing, which are peculiar to man. The important question would be, and as far as I know Aristotle never answers it: how are these two peculiarities<sup>43</sup> related to man’s rationality? In other words, why does laughing necessarily presuppose rationality—not reasonableness, which is a special virtue of reason, but rationality?

Now these points have of course to be considered also when we speak of witty sayings. Apart from the examples which Cicero gives of witty sayings, there is a long list in *Cortegiano*—who’s the author of the *Cortegiano*, [a] sixteenth-century Italian writer?

**Student:** Castiglione.

**LS:** Castiglione. There is a long list of witty sayings which you might occasionally enjoy.<sup>xix</sup> Now these witting sayings—the enjoyment we derive from them is not merely due to the fact directly that we are rational beings but also to the fact that we have this peculiarity of laughing. What is the ridiculous? Aristotle referred to the *Poetics* when he spoke of it, only a brief remark later in the chapter. And in the *Poetics* the definition given is this: the ridiculous is a mistake as well as some ugliness—meaning it may be<sup>44</sup> “and/or,” one could translate it—which is painless and not ruinous, not fatal.<sup>xx</sup> And as a simple, obvious example he says, look at the comical mask, which is ugly and distorted but not by pain. Think of clowns in the circus and other places. The pain which they pretend [to experience] by being spanked—spanking being a major vehicle of course of the vulgar comic, of course never maiming, still less killing. But spanking is funny, at least for most people [it is funny] to see somebody else spanked [laughter]. Good.

<sup>45</sup>So in other words, the other fellow—his defect must be of this way that *he*<sup>46</sup> is not pained by it. He’s not pained by it. So a man with an inferiority complex would not be as such comical. You will see later on what that means. Nor must we be pained by the aspect. And of course, it must not be ruinous, fatal. A murderer is not a ridiculous figure or for that matter a hold-up man, unless we know that the gun is only a water pistol. I mean if we know it, but in most cases we don’t know it [Strauss laughs], and that makes it sure that it is not ridiculous.

<sup>xix</sup> Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier (Il Libro del Cortegiano)*, trans. Charles Singleton (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1959), 140-189 (Bk. 2, 42-90). Strauss refers to a discussion of “the art that pertains to all this sort of amusing talk, calculated to excite laughter and gaiety with propriety” (141).

<sup>xx</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 199, 1927), V. 1-2, 1449a32-34.

Now, why is this ridiculous or laughable pleasing? Hobbes, to whom I have referred before, says because we feel ourselves superior, and that we enjoy: to see someone fall is to laugh, as he puts it.<sup>xxi</sup> But Hobbes's explanation is, I think, very narrow because we laugh of course also about our own ineptitudes. I think it must have happened to all of you also, that you did something inept, saw the ineptness, and you laughed without any other witness, or about ineptitudes of others which we share. This would be rather forced then to say that we laugh because by seeing the ineptitude we are above that ineptitude and therefore superior. This would be rather forced. I do not believe that is the case.

Now of course there is an infinite variety of laughable defects. Let us take a classic example: the Thracian maidservant who laughed about Thales, who looked at the stars and while doing so fell in a ditch. It's undeniably laughable because he studies the highest things and he is not capable<sup>47</sup> [of taking] care of what every Thracian slave-maid can take care of. Plato develops this in the simile of the cave and shows the complexity. These fellows in the cave laugh about the man who has left it and comes back because he doesn't know how to live in that sphere anymore, and yet *he* laughs about them because of the ridiculous character of their concerns.

Now if one sees then that there is this immense variety or relativity of the ridiculous—needless to say,<sup>48</sup> convention comes also in; some things which are laughable in America may not be laughable in India and vice versa, obviously, because custom is one great criterion of what is defective and what is not defective. In order to go beyond this immense variety and relativity we must therefore find out what is absolutely ridiculous, without any special conditions, and I believe the clearest case of that is if someone is ridiculous according to his own standards, so [that] he is self-condemned. And the clearest case of that is if a man pretends to have a quality which he lacks. A coward who<sup>49</sup> pretends to be brave is infinitely more ridiculous than a plain coward. I think Fielding has once defined it this way quite rightly, that the really laughable uses affectation, is affectation.<sup>xxii</sup> Affectation of course always means that you affect something which you do not have, otherwise it's not affectation, and of course everything pompous is for this reason emphatically ridiculous.

Now, take another case which is related to what I said just now. We have learned from Aristotle (if we don't know it more directly) that young people are more given to laughter than old ones. Old men usually do not engage in pranks, for example, whereas young people are known for indulging in them. But what is that? What is underlying that—again if we take the most characteristic cases and the most interesting cases? The relief from<sup>50</sup> what Aristotle would call the “stately” (*semnon* in Greek). Even to fool what is stately—for example toward, say, a teacher. I remember this from my own experience very well. I was already a Ph.D.—although younger than some of you who are not yet Ph.D.'s unfortunately, but at the same time a timely warning to some of you. I remember that Edmund Husserl—a very highly respectable man, in a way one of the greatest men of our century—invited his students at the end of the semester for a party, and then we had riddles and other games of this kind were played. And of course somehow the younger people had the feeling we are much cleverer at that than this old man

<sup>xxi</sup> Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, 60 (IX, 21).

<sup>xxii</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987 [1742]), 6-8 of the Preface, beginning from this sentence, “The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation . . . .”

<sup>51</sup>who was concerned with nothing so to speak except the phenomenology of sense perception, and [he] was ridiculed because he was said to have said in one seminar: “Let us discuss an everyday example of sense perception, let us assume this table here explodes” [laughter] . . . . Of course we knew he was very intelligent but lacking something which young people believe they have to a higher degree. And then he showed us, without any intention, simply because he had a marvelous mind, that he was much better at solving riddles than any of us were. This only in passing.

<sup>xxiii</sup>—is the relief from that which one respects, and perhaps even to fool it. If this has a justification (and not only as relief but also for another reason) [it is] because the respectable and that which is looked up to is not respectable or stately from every point of view. It does have its defects. Now if we bring these two considerations together, namely that affectation, or boasting, is the ridiculous *par excellence*, and then that the stately is from another point of view the ridiculous *par excellence*, all this of course presupposes *logos*, reason, the fact that man is a rational animal and learning is natural to man. There is a great variety of doctrines of the ridiculous, one by Bergson<sup>xxiv</sup> and one by Freud, but I simply do not remember them sufficiently now to restate them. But the Aristotelian explanation would necessarily, as he has indicated clearly enough, trace it through man's rationality. Man could not be the rational animal if he were not also the laughing animal, and weeping too. But here he doesn't speak of weeping on this point.

Now I would like to make a few more remarks about the general question which we began to discuss last time and which we must continue lest we forget the wood for the tree. Now right at the beginning—well, read the beginning of chapter 1, [Book 1], only the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic; for both have to do with matters that are in a manner within the cognizance of all men and not confined to any special science.”<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** Let us stop. And read<sup>52</sup> the beginning of the second chapter.<sup>53</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** “Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

**LS:** So <sup>54</sup>rhetoric is universal. Let us never forget these emphatic assertions with which the work begins. Then, we have already seen this in chapter 2 of the First Part: rhetoric is in fact concerned with politically effective speech on political matters and not with everything. Some qualifications we recall—in the case of epideictic rhetoric, which may treat any subject, Solon, Helen, the gods, etc.—but fundamentally rhetoric is limited. This is made clear by Aristotle in the second chapter. Rhetoric in contradistinction to dialectics has two roots: one foot it has in dialectics, so to speak, and the other in politics. This is the most obvious difficulty regarding the

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<sup>xxiii</sup> The first side of the original reel-to-reel tape runs out, and there is a portion missing from Strauss's remarks.

<sup>xxiv</sup> French philosopher Henri Bergson (d. 1941).

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 1. 1, 1354a1-3.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* I. 2. 1, 1355b25-26.

whole work, which we have observed. And now let us link this up with the other difficulty, which came to our attention later. The beginning of paragraph 12 of the second chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The function of Rhetoric, then, is to deal with things about which we deliberate, but for which we have no arts.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

**LS:** That’s all we need. Rhetoric is limited to objects about which we deliberate. That cannot be said of dialectics. But what is the intellectual virtue governing deliberation?

**Student:** Prudence.

**LS:** Prudence, *phronesis*. Therefore<sup>55</sup> although Aristotle does not say anything about it, or because he doesn’t say anything about it, he forces us to raise the question: what is the relation of rhetoric to prudence? We did find an answer in Roger Bacon, who identifies rhetoric (with minor qualifications) with moral reasoning. This is not possible because rhetoric does not presuppose moral virtue or, to use a convenient term, the rhetorician does not have to be a man of good will whereas a prudent man must be a man of good will. Therefore Roger Bacon’s assertion is as such not tenable. This also decides another issue: that prudence, deliberative reasoning, cannot be identical with dialectical reasoning because dialectical reasoning as such also does not presuppose good will whereas prudence does.

Up to this point there can be no question. The difficulty arises from the following fact: that much of the *Politics* in particular has logically the character of dialectical reasoning. Burnet went so far, as I told you last time, as to say that the *Ethics* also is dialectical throughout. Incidentally, in the *Politics* I believe the most glaring example of the rhetorical character of the work is the<sup>56</sup> treatment of the issue of slavery in Book 7 on the one hand, and in Book 7 on the other. In Book 1 only men [who are] by nature slaves may be enslaved; and Book 7 implies that the slaves in the best society are not natural slaves. There must be an argument for both cases and that is therefore not dialectical reasoning. Now these questions I believe we must keep in mind for any further study we might wish to make regarding this field.

But let me bring up only one question again which was discussed last time and on other occasions: <sup>57</sup> what is the use of this observation regarding the fundamental and central problem of the *Rhetoric* for us? For us today, you know, rhetoric doesn’t have the intellectual status it had throughout the tradition. You can learn elocution, I’ve been told, at the University of Chicago I suppose as well as other places. But ordinarily I think the people who become orators—political orators, forensic orators—become it because they have a natural knack for it and in addition by practice and observing others, but not by attending classes in rhetoric. Or am I mistaken?

**Student:** There are courses in forensics and debating taught in secondary schools.

**LS:** Oh, in secondary schools.

**Same Student:** Well, also in colleges.

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<sup>xxvii</sup> The reader retranslates as “arts” what is rendered as “systematic rules” in Freese’s Loeb translation.

**LS:** I see, but still I take it this has nothing whatever to do with the instruction within political science departments. No. Let us see what our problem in political science is. Now, I have said this so often: <sup>58</sup>the fundamental theoretical question concerns today social science as a whole and common sense. I trust you know what I mean by this, that all scientific knowledge in the social sciences rests on knowledge which is not scientific. And it rests on it (I mean not only in that it starts from it, that would be uninteresting); <sup>59</sup>it rests on this knowledge we call loosely common sense knowledge. This is fundamentally the question: what is the character of reasoning in political science as distinguished from <sup>60</sup>the character of reasoning in political life? They are obviously different.

Now this concept of common sense as we use it seems to stem directly from Shaftesbury, end of the eighteenth century, the famous Lord Shaftesbury, who had been a kind of pupil of Locke but turned against his teacher and returned in important ways to the tradition. <sup>xxviii</sup> The problem is however older than Shaftesbury, and the classic statement, I think, occurs in Pascal—Pascal, you know, the famous physicist and mathematician who, when the new science (modern science) had emerged, saw that there is a whole sphere—and the practically most important sphere, where this new science is wholly impotent, incompetent. [Pascal] made at this time the distinction between the spirit of geometry and the spirit of *finesse*. *Esprit de finesse*: we can translate it by “subtlety” or “perceptiveness,” among other words people have come to use. Something which the geometer, i.e., the scientist—so then it means of course every mathematician and therefore also everyone whose doctrine is based on mathematics. But the Shaftesburian expression “common sense” for the latter has become accepted. There was in the eighteenth century in Scotland, as you probably know, a common sense school of philosophy which appealed from modern philosophy to common sense. <sup>xxix</sup> That made it very popular.

The term “common sense” occurs in Aristotle in the *De Anima* but has there an entirely different meaning—it means simply the sense which unites the various senses. <sup>xxx</sup> For example, if I know honey is yellow and sweet, I do not know that either by sight or by taste but by a common sense. The sense in which we use it is rather from the Roman authors, especially Cicero, and Shaftesbury took it over from them. But there, common sense means fundamentally what Aristotle understands by prudence, by *phronesis*. So we cannot clear up our fundamental theoretical problem—which even the most fanatical positivist must face sooner or later, the question of science and common sense—without reactivating for the purpose of that understanding this whole question of prudence—and therefore in particular the crucial question of what is the relation of prudence to such things as dialectical and rhetorical reasoning. You can also say fundamentally that it’s the same question as that of prudence and scientific reasoning, apodictic reasoning as Aristotle calls it. Apodictic reasoning, dialectical reasoning, rhetorical reasoning all do not as such require *phronesis*. And what is the relation of these <sup>61</sup>faculties which

<sup>xxviii</sup> Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Author of *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000 [1711]).

<sup>xxix</sup> The Scottish school of common sense developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Leading representatives include Dugald Stewart, Thomas Reid, and William Hamilton. This group defended “common sense” understanding against philosophical skepticism and criticism of commonsensical beliefs.

<sup>xxx</sup> *De Anima* III. 1-2, especially 426b14-30.

are purely theoretical to a theoretical virtue which is inseparably fused according to Aristotle with moral virtue?

So I think we do not err away [or] wander away too grievously from our sworn duty by studying Aristotle. And this of course is to say nothing of a still more general implication of what we are doing here [for]<sup>62</sup> all social sciences concerned on all levels with understanding human beings as they understand themselves. It may tend to be more, but it's surely also concerned with that, and if any proof were needed it would be supplied by the fact of questionnaires because the questionnaires are meant to bring out what [the]<sup>63</sup> questioned man thinks, say, about Robert Kennedy, and not what the social scientist in question thinks about him. But the ordinary view<sup>64</sup> prevailing in social science today is that all these attempts to understand human beings must have as their basis scientific psychology—which may be even psychoanalysis, or behavioralism, or whatever it may be. And this creates a great difficulty because<sup>65</sup> the notion underlying this [is] that every, or almost every, science is preceded by other sciences which logically precede it, just as theoretical physics is preceded by mathematics. But in the case of the theoretical physicist—you must correct me [to student]—it is understood that<sup>66</sup> at the same time he has to be a competent mathematician.

But there is no question that the scientific political scientist does not even claim to be a competent psychologist. In other words, he must accept here an authority which he cannot properly check, to say nothing of the fact that conceivably this psychology is defective and he would not be the one to know it. For this reason Max Weber, who has much to do with present-day social science, still held the view so confident in common sense that the psychology required by the social scientist is that used by the bridge player. He didn't speak of bridge because bridge is not so popular in Germany as another game, but this is the best translation I can offer,<sup>67</sup> this kind of very simple observation and sizing up [of] human beings which we know is needed for all handling of human beings. So<sup>68</sup> the question of whether psychology, scientific psychology, gives this basis for the understanding of human beings is to say the least not self-evident.

What I would propose as an alternative, and which at least should be given a hearing in a liberal society, is that we might be helped as much as in our attempt to understand other men by understanding the greatest minds that ever were. If we can understand them or make some progress in understanding them, this will do no harm and can only help in our attempts to understand lesser men. This surely we try to do all the time, and that we are led by these attempts to all kinds of by-ways which are strange is of course no objection in the eyes of any man of science, regardless of the philosophic school to which he belongs. There is no science in which you [do not] have<sup>69</sup> to do certain things which seem to be mere *para-ergon*; that cannot be avoided. I believe I haven't made such a remark at the beginning of this course (I do not remember), and<sup>70</sup> after we are now a bit bogged down in details, which even from Aristotle's own point of view are not crucial, this is appropriate.

I would like to say a few things but I think I will postpone this till next time. I want to discuss a few passages of the *Federalist Papers* with a view to this question which has come to our attention [about] the relation of rhetoric, dialectics, and practical wisdom, and science. But since it is fairly early today, even according to my changed schedule, if there are any questions or objections I will be very glad to answer them.

**Student:** You were speaking of the ridiculous before and you mentioned Fielding. I think you could draw a line from Aristotle to Fielding and have a period in which the ridiculous was rather static, but after Fielding I think the ridiculous becomes something else—

**LS:** By static, you mean it was not changed?

**Same Student:** Yes, I think that Fielding and Aristotle had more or less the same concept on the ridiculous. I'm thinking of the Preface to *Tom Brown* (I think it's *Tom Brown*), where he talks about comedy consisting of the low character or the ridiculous. But today I think we have to adjust that somehow because the low character is no longer as ridiculous—

**LS:** Yes, but it all depends what low character. I mean, for example, let us say these famous men here in Chicago in the '20s, especially [those] whom they caught only by some tax, some slip he made in his tax declaration—what is his name?

**Same Student:** Al Capone?

**LS:** Ja, Capone. I think no one would say he was ridiculous except from such a high point of view that it becomes practically useless. But is not Bobby Baker also to some extent ridiculous?<sup>71</sup> I have heard in a certain presentation over the TV, he ridiculed it quite nicely because after all he is not a murderer and so on, and he has a certain amusing cleverness—but [he is] not clever enough, as proved by his fate. Now give me an example of a modern comedy where the hero is a man who is not disfigured by a defect, by a non-revolting defect. Give me an example. You may be right but I do not know.

**Same Student:** You mean in fiction? Nothing occurs to me immediately. I can't think of something—

**LS:** Ja, because the great comedies—say, Molière's great comedies still would easily fall—

**Same Student:** They were still in this period—

**LS:** Yes, yes. I do not know. What is regarded as the greatest comedy of the twentieth century?

**Another Student:** Something by Shaw?

**LS:** Shaw, ja, but are Shaw's simply comedies? They are very witty, but are they comedies? I think of *Saint Joan*, which I happen to know.<sup>xxxii</sup> After all, these are much more something like dramatic satires than comedies, which is a different thing.

**Same Student [as prior to preceding one]:** Well, I think that in the twentieth century comedy is so mixed in with what is serious that you really lose the sense of the ridiculous in it. You

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<sup>xxxii</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan: A Chronicle Play in 6 Scenes and an Epilogue* (London: Constable & Co., 1924). The play premiered in New York, 1923.

mentioned Julien Sorel<sup>xxxii</sup> just a moment ago, or you mentioned *The Red and the Black* by Stendhal and energy. Well, I can think of Sorel as being both a comic figure, a ridiculous figure, and also—

**LS:** Ja, but this is then such a high point of view. Well, you know Plato's famous assertion—or Socrates' rather—that the true tragic poet must also be a comic poet and vice versa, which may very well mean that if you go deep enough you will find at the bottom of comedy, tragedy and at the bottom of tragedy, the comedy. That may be. But this is of course not sufficient because the audience which is directly addressed by the dramatist does not look at these things this way. They are either exhilarated or deeply moved in the other sense. Now as far as I can judge of this question at all, I believe the most striking phenomenon is Shakespeare, because these are wonderful comedies undeniably and yet they are not quite comedies in the old tradition. Take what is quite obvious for example. Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is obviously not a ridiculous figure—and<sup>72</sup> is this really meant to hold up a mirror to the vices, the Shakespearean comedies? It seems to be something very different. I don't know.

**Same Student:** But usually the low people are comical, like the gravedigger.

**LS:** But this is simply an imitation of life, because the nobility finds the clowns in the original sense of the term . . . .

**Same Student:** Today if you talk about a ditch-digger, it's not funny at all. It's deadly serious.

**LS:** Well, this is the old story that today there is no longer any possible object of comedy in this country, at least in the popular means of communication except by protestors,<sup>73</sup> because all others would protest. Do I have to labor that point? Do I have to prove my point?

**Same Student:** No.

**LS:** You see my point. This has of course nothing to do with a value-free social science [laughter]. I don't mean to suggest that it has reached Hollywood in any way, this sophistication, but it has to do with a certain consequence of democracy and the line is very difficult to draw. For example, Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* was greatly resented by Jews in New York City, as I read at the time. One can understand the feelings, because it can be exploited. But on the other hand, one can also say: where is then the end? I mean, shall one simply prohibit great works of art because some part of the population might think it will be misused by their enemies? This is a very hard question.

**Same Student:** I was thinking of an egalitarian state where . . . different, some of the things Aristotle . . . really aren't—

**LS:** Very well, but this does not necessarily mean that Aristotle is wrong. That is not necessary. It may be we have to learn something. Maybe it is no longer possible at all to have true comedy

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Julien Sorel is the fictional hero of Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir* (In *Romans et Nouvelles I*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1952 [1830]) [*The Red and the Black*, trans. C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (New York: Liveright, 2006 [1926]).]

in this kind of democracy. But then there must be another outlet for these fundamental human needs which led to comedy. And I believe the simple things to which I referred, like the ridiculous character of the pompous and the affected is still as true as it always was. The trouble is only if you reach a point where everything above the average is as such regarded as pompous.

Now this is, by the way, not a very new thing. When you study Aristophanes with some care one sees one of his favorite epithets is a boaster. A boaster. Now a general is of course a boaster—and crass, that goes without saying—but also the poets are boasters.<sup>74</sup> A boaster is a man who wants to be something special, you know, “quote something special unquote.” Now every man who has any good quality *is* “quote something special unquote.” And it is very easy to say, “He is not something special, he wants to be something special.” Aristophanes knew that very well and he deliberately took this perspective<sup>75</sup> as a comic poet in order to be able to present everything also from the point of view of a relatively low sense of the ridiculous. And his mastery was only that he satisfied other people. In other words, he gives one message to the people who like to see the boasters debunked and with a maximum of slapstick. They get their fill, very well; but there is also something more.

Since I am not a comic poet, I do not have the slightest notion of what could be done. But I remember having seen a few TV [programs] or movies which were very amusing. In one case I was rebuked . . . because I thought *Holy Matrimony* with this bearded actor, Monty Woolley, I found very funny,<sup>xxxiii</sup> but I was told I shouldn't really regard it as funny because it was [a] true reflection on the institution of marriage. I do not know whether my levity or this man's severity is to be blamed. And again one thinks of Chaplin—of course they are not strictly speaking comedies but they are undoubtedly very exhilarating (I forgot the titles now). And there are some individual comedians who are quite amusing, there is no doubt about that. But this we cannot possibly call comedy because the unity of the plot is lacking, and consistency of character, and all the other things which are needed.

By the way, I think what is true of comedy is also true of tragedy. I have never been able to bring myself to read Arthur Miller's tragedy *Death of a Salesman*, because of what someone told me, that I shouldn't read it [laughter], which is of course not a very good reason. But it is surely not a tragedy old-style. That seems to be the case. I think, or what I was told, [is that] it is a very sad and moving story but it is not a tragedy in the Aristotelian sense. The only thing which I [could observe] from my very poor knowledge of contemporary literature<sup>76</sup> was the immense success of the detective story and everything going with that. And that is clearly not a tragic pleasure, obviously not.<sup>77</sup> I have some rudiments of a poetics of the detective story, but I don't believe I will ever put them together. The key point I think, one of the key rules, is that the murdered man must not be dear to the audience because otherwise it would be painful, and therefore I think the ideal solution was in one story by Dorothy Sayers, which begins with a naked corpse in a bathroom.<sup>xxxiv</sup> So the man is dead. You don't know him, you cannot possibly become affected. And in addition the problem is infinite because his identity [is unknown]—[he is] in a bathroom in someone else's apartment, of course. This, I thought, was from the point of view of this kind of art a very good beginning.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Holy Matrimony* (1943), film directed by John M. Stahl, starring Monty Woolley and Gracie Fields.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), English crime & mystery writer, poet and translator.

But perhaps one would have to raise the question: why is there no longer a tragedy strictly . . . . I do not know Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*<sup>xxxv</sup>—whether that is a tragedy in the old sense, I do not know. Great changes have occurred in this respect, because I believe that very generally speaking up to the eighteenth century tragedy was<sup>78</sup> meant to be edifying.<sup>79</sup> And then to show simply the terrible character of life, or some people say the tragic character of life, without any edifying suggestion—that is surely an innovation. I happen to know a bit about how this happened in German literature, but I do not know in English. Well, we leave it at that and next time we will consider a few passages from the *Federalist Papers*.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “devote.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “of course.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “ingredient of.”

<sup>4</sup> Moved “anything.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “we don’t.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “and of course.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “argue from.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “Let us read a few.” Moved “passages.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “who.”

<sup>12</sup> Moved “can be.”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “because.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “in a way foreseeable.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “in other words popularity can be simply.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “I do not know whether.”

<sup>18</sup> Moved “as much.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “Aristotle, you see—.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “their.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleted “can one—.”

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<sup>xxxv</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935).

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- <sup>22</sup> Moved “he; deleted “solves.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “you.”
- <sup>24</sup> Deleted “which is.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “But still it is not—.”
- <sup>26</sup> Deleted “on.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “You are—.”
- <sup>28</sup> Deleted “But we will see a somewhat better—.”
- <sup>29</sup> Deleted “, that.”
- <sup>30</sup> Deleted “There was—.”
- <sup>31</sup> Deleted “[page 409].”
- <sup>32</sup> Deleted “**Mr. Reinken**: “For example, in the phrase—” (III.11.8)  
**LS**: No, a little bit later, immediately before the quote.”
- <sup>33</sup> Deleted “[page 413].”
- <sup>34</sup> Deleted “—how does.”
- <sup>35</sup> Moved “oneself.”
- <sup>36</sup> Deleted “and whatever.”
- <sup>37</sup> Deleted “why that.”
- <sup>38</sup> Deleted “Aristotle—.”
- <sup>39</sup> Deleted “it.”
- <sup>40</sup> Deleted “than.”
- <sup>41</sup> Deleted “same.”
- <sup>42</sup> Deleted “and therefore because Aristotle does not mean.”
- <sup>43</sup> Deleted “these”; moved “two.”
- <sup>44</sup> Deleted “either/or—.”
- <sup>45</sup> Deleted “Now why is this kind—.”
- <sup>46</sup> Deleted “does not—.”
- <sup>47</sup> Deleted “to take.”
- <sup>48</sup> Deleted “the.”

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<sup>49</sup> Deleted “plays.”

<sup>50</sup> Deleted “the—.”

<sup>51</sup> Deleted “you know.”

<sup>52</sup> Deleted “the beginning of the second paragraph in the same chapter.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Now, previous compilers of ‘Arts’ of Rhetoric have provided us with only a small portion of this art, for proofs are the only things in it that come within the province of art; everything else is merely an accessory. And yet they say nothing about enthymemes which are the body of proof—” (I.1.3)

**LS:** “I’m sorry, I meant.”

<sup>53</sup> Deleted “I’m very sorry. I wanted to make it convenient to you and indicated the chapter.”

<sup>54</sup> Deleted “in other words.”

<sup>55</sup> Deleted “we must—.”

<sup>56</sup> Deleted “whole issue of—.”

<sup>57</sup> Deleted “but still, now.”

<sup>58</sup> Deleted “the fundamental question, I mean.”

<sup>59</sup> Deleted “but it rests on it.”

<sup>60</sup> Deleted “what is.”

<sup>61</sup> Deleted “let us say theoretical.”

<sup>62</sup> Changed from “in.”

<sup>63</sup> Deleted “this man, this.”

<sup>64</sup> Deleted “of course.”

<sup>65</sup> Deleted “whereas—.”

<sup>66</sup> Deleted “he is.”

<sup>67</sup> Deleted “in other words.”

<sup>68</sup> Deleted “in other words.”

<sup>69</sup> Moved “not.”

<sup>70</sup> Deleted “then.”

<sup>71</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>72</sup> Deleted “one cannot speak—.”

<sup>73</sup> Deleted “by protesters.”

<sup>74</sup> Deleted “well, defined as follows.”

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<sup>75</sup> Deleted “deliberately.”

<sup>76</sup> Deleted “could observe.”

<sup>77</sup> Deleted “and the simple proof is that—.”

<sup>78</sup> Deleted “of course.”

<sup>79</sup> Deleted “, you know, i.e.,—.”

**Session 15: June 1, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress] You took the trouble of looking at some of the speeches to which Aristotle refers and that is surely always good to do so. The trouble is only that in the best case one could not do it everywhere because the speeches are lost. Now one little point: the *Teucer* is very simple. The kinship with Priam meant a presumption of disloyalty.

**Student:** Yes, I understood that. I just didn't understand what he meant by "token," I guess the technical—

**LS:** "Sign," a sign. In other words, someone who has relatives—say, in Red China, is more suspected of disloyalty than someone who has no relatives in Red China, other things being equal. That's simple.

Now you made a few points of criticism and I believe if one reduces them to the principle it amounts to this. Take for example such a broad statement of Aristotle, which he qualifies considerably later: strictly speaking there is no need for an *exordium* or *proemium*. This is a special case of something that Aristotle is doing all the time, namely stating<sup>1</sup> rules. Rhetoric being an art, it must have rules. You know in another field where Aristotle was also a kind of legislator, namely regarding poetry, there was a secular fight against Aristotle. You know that? I mean the very simple things—the unity of<sup>2</sup> of place<sup>1</sup> and time in the tragedy. This was taken very literally by the French classics in the seventeenth century. And then the big revolt in the name of Shakespeare, and the general result was if a man can do something—the genius, that is what counts. Rules: there are no rules which are strictly speaking valid. And something of this kind I believe is in all of us, this kind of resistance. And there are many speeches, just as there are many tragedies which are not well-constructed tragedies according to Aristotle, and yet very powerful and in every other sense good tragedies. What's the use of this? Something of this kind was I believe noticeable in your paper, or am I entirely mistaken? Or did it only apply to particular rules? For example, in one point you said Aristotle implies that magnificence of a speech and pleasantness of a speech are contradictory.

**Same Student:** He didn't imply that. Oh yes, he did imply that. He wasn't specific on it because he elaborated on the pleasant, but he didn't say anything about the magnificent. I didn't know why.

**LS:** Yes, but you seem to suggest that a magnificent speech cannot be pleasant.

**Same Student:** Well, his definition of pleasantness in that chapter, a sense of propriety, a sense of the means, and I thought—

**LS:** Well, this has nothing to do with that. But obviously a magnificent speech is also a very pleasant speech. A speech may be pleasant without being magnificent, but it cannot be a good speech and be magnificent without being pleasant. Think of the greatest speeches—for example, the Gettysburg Address.<sup>3</sup> You have to take a very narrow notion of pleasure to deny that it is a pleasure to read it. Good. Then you had a certain criticism regarding what Aristotle says in

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<sup>1</sup> Strauss first says "of space and time," then immediately corrects himself to "place and time."

chapter 12. It was toward the end of your statement on chapter 12. I do not remember it, because you are also one of these fast readers, and it's very hard to follow.

**Same Student:** Well, at the end of chapter 12, I made that remark about magnificence and pleasantness.

**LS:** It was shortly before.

**Same Student:** I was critical about his lack of—whether or not it was a different sort of forensic case that would give him the opportunity to demonstrate some of these rhetorical devices, because the forensic case he deals with is that before one judge.

**LS:** And what is the peculiarity of this case?

**Same Student:** Well, there could be preciseness—

**LS:** In other words, a minimum of frills. And Aristotle seems to regard this as higher. Is that the point?

**Same Student:** Yes, he doesn't give the rhetorician much room here to use his art.

**LS:** But is this not on the other hand a good situation for him?

**Same Student:** For the rhetorician? If he has a good case.

**LS:** All right. Let us postpone the discussion until we come to that. I believe the difficulty which you sense is connected with the fact that Aristotle is of course concerned with showing what the perfect orator is. But since the perfect orator is still something very low, he has also a reservation against him. I believe that's the reason underlying the difficulty which attracted your attention.

Mr. Reinken has written a paper on the same subject. Unfortunately, I haven't read it carefully enough. You took an entirely different approach, much more speculative. But on the other hand, this side, the philosophic side of Aristotle, and what the *Rhetoric* means, or this particular part of the *Rhetoric* means as the work of the philosopher Aristotle, that was fundamentally your question.

**Mr. Reinken:** Yes.

**LS:** Well, perhaps I will say something about it when I have read it again more carefully. Good.

Now in the meantime I have given some thought by sheer accident to the question we have been discussing earlier: why is there no provision made by Aristotle for exhortation to virtue? For sermons, as we could say, a thing which surely existed prior to Aristotle if only in a germinal manner, as is sufficiently shown by Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, I. 5. But when I read today's assignment about epideictic speech I began to see an answer to the question, a very simple one. I forgot something very obvious. There is a very famous epideictic speech in praise of virtue prior

to Aristotle which many of you will know; some of you will have read it, even. And that is Prodicus (or allegedly Prodicus); Xenophon writes it in *Memorabilia*, II. 1 [and]<sup>4</sup> gives the credit to Prodicus. I regard it as absolutely impossible that Xenophon would take over verbatim a speech written by Prodicus but this doesn't make any difference. Apparently Prodicus had written a speech on Hercules at the crossroads. When he finished his elementary education as a boy, he was confronted by two women of more than life size, Virtue with a capital "V," and Vice, also with a capital "V"—but she doesn't call herself Vice of course,<sup>5</sup> she calls herself Pleasure. Who would call himself or herself Vice? [Laughter] And this is of course an epideictic speech. This was surely known to Aristotle, and there were other things of this kind.

But why does this fall under Aristotle's definition of the epideictic speech and not under that heading which I proposed, exhortation to virtue?<sup>6</sup> This statement is a praise of Heracles. Heracles made the right choice: he chose virtue and not pleasure. So in other words the question would then be this: what I<sup>7</sup> felt was missing in Aristotle is provided for because epideictic speech by definition is a praise of virtuous men and blame of vicious men. What Aristotle tacitly excludes is a praise of virtue impersonally—I mean of virtue which is not the virtue of this or that man. And the question<sup>8</sup> would then be reduced. So I would say<sup>9</sup> the greatest example of pre-Aristotelian exhortation to virtue falls absolutely under Aristotle's division and is an epideictic speech. But why not a praise of virtue impersonally?

**Student:** The orator he prepares to do that.

**LS:** Very good, why? Why?

**Same Student:** He need not know true virtue, only—

**LS:** Even if he knew it.

**Same Student:** Oh yes, even if he knew it—

**LS:** Is this possible, rhetorically? Yes?

**Another Student:** He has to use things that are common to his audience. And to speak about general principles wouldn't be as common to his audience as—

**LS:** Well, can we not say generally that rhetoric as understood by Aristotle deals with individuals? I mean with individuals—of course it can also be an individual city, an individual collective, something with proper names. And the universals come in only in the service of the discussion of the individual. Well, in the forensic case it is very clear. Did *x* commit murder? Is *x* guilty or innocent? And the considerations of justice and so on come in only as subservient to the decision of the question is *x* just or unjust? The same applies in deliberative speech: should we now wage war against this other city, proper name? And even in epideictic speech, it may very well be that Aristotle took it for granted [that] epideictic speech which he would take seriously (not just mere show speeches like a praise of soul as Gorgias, I think, wrote)<sup>10</sup> would be a praise of an individual or of an individual city. Mr. Reinken?

**Mr. Reinken:** In the measure that epideictic is associated with writing, and applying what he says, that whereas speech requires us to know Greek, *hellēnizein*, writing frees us from silence when we have something to say to the others—

**LS:**<sup>11</sup> That's what you wrote in your paper —

**Mr. Reinken:** The epideictic can be universal.

**LS:** Can be what?

**Mr. Reinken:** That the epideictic may tend to the universal.

**LS:** But let me first give another point. So we have this exhortation to virtue. Let us assume that. I mean your special thesis about this remark in the *Rhetoric* we postpone. How would this exhortation look? Now, precisely if you would turn to the chapter in the *Memorabilia*, Book 1, chapter 5, "Praise of Continence," you would see it is fundamentally a utilitarian argument. Why is it prudent, expedient, to be continent? More generally stated: Why should one be decent? But for reasons which I indicated on another occasion, to raise the question: Why I should be decent? means already having broken with decency. What could be justified in this way can only be a kind of low-class utilitarian virtue, it can never be virtue proper. I submit this as an additional consideration, why this point was missing. And this leads of course to further questions as I am fully aware.

Now we will take up Mr. Reinken's point when we come to the passage. Let us first turn to chapter 12 and let us read first the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** "But we must not lose sight of the fact—"

**LS:** Oh, I'm sorry, just one question. In the quotation from Demosthenes, you spoke of conscience. What was the term used for conscience?

**Student:** You mean the Greek term? I imagine *sēpē*, I don't know.

**LS:** Surely not *suneidenai*.

**Same Student:** I'll have to check on that, actually.

**LS:** Ja, well, of course one should never say "surely" if one hasn't looked it up. But, you know, this is what we always do when we say or any writer says, "undoubtedly." Then it means he has no proof [laughter]. Good. Fine, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

**Mr. Reinken:** "But we must not lose sight of the fact that a different style is suitable to each kind of Rhetoric. That of written compositions is not the same as that of debate; nor, in the latter, is that of public speaking the same as that of the law courts. But it is necessary to be acquainted with both; for the one requires a knowledge of good Greek, while the other prevents the necessity of keeping silent when we wish to communicate something to others, which happens to

those who do not know how to write. The style of written compositions is most precise, that of debate is most suitable for delivery. Of the latter there are two kinds, ethical and emotional.”<sup>ii</sup>

**LS:** Now let us stop here. This is the passage which you had in mind. Here Aristotle gives a new consideration, which as far as I remember he never had alluded to before. And this is a kind of polarity, writing at the one pole and debating<sup>12</sup> [at] the other. Writing calls for the highest exactitudes, the highest degree of finishedness; and on the other hand, to exaggerate a bit—the histrionic element—is at the other pole. So the writing is completely free from the histrionic<sup>13</sup> if it is good. On the other hand, the good delivered speech meant for delivery lacks the finishedness—and should lack it because that would be just a waste of energy because these subtleties could never be grasped in a hearing.

Now that is one point which Mr. Reinken well understood. We have to think also of the question of writing in general; I mean<sup>14</sup> prose writing in general. And since Aristotle himself was a prose writer of some merit, his own awareness (and of course his study of Plato) has to be considered.<sup>15</sup> From the point of view of rhetoric, all prose writing which is done with any care—I mean not like a mere enumeration of the parts of an animal and this kind of thing—is epideictic from a rhetorical point of view. This you have well seen, I know that. But<sup>16</sup> repeat now the point you made before, because it refers to what he says here.

**Mr. Reinken:** I was merely trying to put the case for a possible epideictic which praised virtue at least not of any particular real man. Your argument was that spoken rhetoric was always to particular circumstances. My claim was that the noblest epideictic is addressed to man as such.

**LS:** All right, but you cannot draw any conclusion from the word *hellēnizein* here, “speaking Greek.”

**Mr. Reinken:** . . . is in contradistinction to *hellēnizein*.

**LS:** I do not think so. I do not believe that it has this meaning. Meaning to the other thing, the non-Greek? No, that’s surely wrong.

**Mr. Reinken:** . . . .

**LS:** But we have this simple evidence<sup>17</sup> for this kind of epideictic if we take this in the broad sense, that every careful, non-scientific prose writing can be called epideictic speech—I mean that’s the sense, and that one can use that for exhorting to virtue. Proof: Aristotle’s *Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*. If this is not first-rate and finished writing, then I don’t know what it is, and that is obvious when you read the description of the temperate man, and of the courageous man, and the others, and this surely has an appeal to your virtuous intentions without any doubt. How effective it is, that depends on other considerations. But that it has this appeal and that it’s meant to have this appeal, I believe there can be no doubt. If you mean this, that’s all right. We have then reached some agreement, [made] some headway in understanding the question of exhortation to virtue and its relation to rhetoric.

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<sup>ii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 12. 1-2, 1413b3-10.

So we cannot read everything here because many things are truly too technical for our purposes. Let us turn to 1414a8, that is after the quotation from Homer about Nireus.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The deliberative style is exactly like a rough sketch, for the greater the crowd, the further off is the point of view; wherefore in both too much refinement is a superfluity and even a disadvantage. But the forensic style is more finished—”

**LS:** So <sup>18</sup>we have now a perfectly clear ranking of the three parts of rhetoric from the point of view of inexactness and “finishedness.” “Exactness,” of course now a very different meaning—I mean, we think primarily of the exact sciences,<sup>19</sup> where of course the same term was used, *akribēs*. But Aristotle, I believe, while not denying that the mathematical sciences are exact, thinks of a much broader range of phenomena—for example, the exact working, say, at the Parthenon. Generally speaking, of a work of art, finishedness, finished, the immense care for every detail, the love of toil invested in making something: this is primarily what exactness means. I mean, nothing slipshod. Negatively, it’s very clear to state. Exactness is the opposite of slipshod. What is then the ranking from the point of view exactness thus understood?

**Mr. Reinken:** Epideictic, forensic—before one judge rather than before many—and finally, deliberative.

**LS:** And the reason is what?

**Mr. Reinken:** Strife and contention lead to—

**LS:** But the more immediate, more direct reason which he indicates here: the greater the crowd, the less finished. Because you must not forget that the crowd is meant to be the judge, to vote afterward on what you say. And if you make a very finished speech, you act foolishly perhaps, because they may not get your refinement and vote against you.

**Student:** There is a passage in the *Politics* where he thinks that *hoi polloi* will make the best judges. This seems to be in contradiction.

**LS:** Well that is a well-known passage,<sup>iii</sup> but does he say that?

<sup>20</sup>**Same Student:** Doesn’t he, in one passage of the *Politics*?

**Another student:** It has to be an uncorrupted *hoi polloi*, but it’s not *hoi polloi* any more then.

**LS:** Yes,<sup>21</sup> that’s quite true. It must be not corrupted, depraved; quite true. So you see how difficult it is to read Aristotle sometimes? Treacherous. This is part of an argument and [one] that goes on. Aristotle has there a certain pro-democratic argument, but this is part of a much larger argument. And within limits Aristotle is of course of the opinion that the many are the best

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<sup>iii</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* III. 6, 1281a40-b23 in Rackham’s Loeb edition. In other editions, such as W. D. Ross’s OCT edition *Politica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), this passage is placed at III. 11, as Book III is divided into 17 chapters rather than 12 in the Loeb. In all editions, of course, the Bekker numbers remain the same.

judges of what is of importance to them. And they should be: whether there is a famine or not, surely a multitude can much better determine than an emperor or a queen who said, "If they don't have bread let them eat cake." So there is no doubt that there are many subjects on which the many are the best judges.

But the question is whether this would apply, for example, to tragedy and comedy. Aristotle refers [to this example] here [and] says: well, on the whole, if you look, the judgments of the Athenian multitude regarding comedies and tragedies were not so bad.<sup>iv</sup> After all, that's quite true, but maybe it wouldn't be the same in other cities.<sup>22</sup> But here the principle is very clearly stated: the smaller the number of the direct addressees, the greater is the necessity of the speech being *finished*. Being finished. Now, let us apply this to the epideictic speech.<sup>23</sup> The deliberative speech is addressed to the whole citizen body, that's clear; whereas only a part of the citizen body is in each case the jury. But who would then be the addressee of the epideictic speech? Is this not also a crowd in Olympia or wherever it may be, on the Isthmus, where a speaker like Isocrates or Gorgias addresses? Or are these not the true addressees of epideictic speech? We have read somewhere about that.

**Student:** At the end of the *Ethics* we were told that the man who will be benefitted by . . . .

**LS:** But there he didn't speak of rhetoric. He spoke of *logos* and . . . but what we read today at the beginning of this chapter, that one extreme we call the diction characteristic of writing. Now the diction characteristic of writing is the most finished. We know now that the most finished diction is that fit<sup>24</sup> [for] an epideictic speech. And this may suggest that the epideictic speech is for reading purposes, for the man sitting alone or with a few other people, but surely not a crowd. This I believe is implied. The single reader, the single judge. Let us read the immediate sequel.

**Mr. Reinken:** "and more so before a single judge, because there is least opportunity of employing of rhetorical devices, since the mind more readily takes in at a glance what belongs to the subject and what is foreign to it; there is no discussion, so the judgment is clear."

**LS:** Yes, "no debate, no contest"; "contest," ja.

**Mr. Reinken:** "This is why the same orators do not excel in all these styles; where action is most effective, there the style is least finished, and this is a case in which voice, especially a loud one, is needed."

**LS:** Let us here wait one moment. What is this "action"? Action means here of course, in Greek, *hypokrisis*. It means of course the actor's action. I exaggerate in translating it to make it quite clear: "histrionics." Histrionics are necessary to the extent to which there is contest and the need for histrionics increases with the crowd. So before a single judge—no possibility of histrionics. But on the other hand, before the single judge you also do need that refinement, refinement of writing—*graphikē lexis*, the diction belonging to writing—which belongs to the epideictic speech. Now the immediate following sentence.

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<sup>iv</sup> *Politics* III. 6, 1281b7-9 in Rackham's Loeb edition.

**Mr. Reinken:** “The epideictic style is especially suited to written compositions, for its function is reading; and next to it comes the forensic style.”<sup>v</sup>

**LS:** Yes, let us stop here. Now this, I think, settles the issue. I mean this ranking. The epideictic speech is that which is at home as it were in writing. This must be properly understood. Not every writing has an epideictic form. The deliberative is the least.

By the way, from here we can get an inkling of the achievement of Thucydides, of the deliberative speeches which he wrote and which are at the peak of finish, of finishedness.<sup>25</sup> In the light of Aristotle I would suggest that they could not have been delivered this way in order to be politically effective. They are extremely concise. Extremely concise, every word very well-chosen. The highest kind of rhetoric is the least “quote rhetorical [unquote],” I mean “rhetorical” in the vulgar sense. Does this make sense? And this highest kind is the epideictic, which calls for the greatest attention regarding the diction for the greatest concentration. A good speech which is for oral consumption must have a certain looseness<sup>26</sup> because you cannot interrupt and say, “Say that again.” You cannot do it, whereas when you read a speech you can always go back, [and] therefore the finishedness is out of this.

The epideictic speech, one could suggest, is the most finished and in a way the most business-like. If we draw any inference from this part of the order—deliberative speech, for the whole polis; forensic speech, before a jury; then the speech, the very business-like speech before the single judge, and then the epideictic speech is higher. If this is a legitimate way of reasoning, one could say that the epideictic speech is the most finished and the most business-like. No carelessness of the kind which passes easily in popular speech, and of course no histrionics, absolutely out of place.

Something of this kind may have been the intention of Isocrates, in a way the competitor of Plato one could say—at least this is a popular view of that. Isocrates, who is mentioned [and], praised at the end of Plato's *Phaedrus* (Plato's dialogue on rhetoric) when he was still young.<sup>vi</sup> I mean to<sup>27</sup> do in prose what hitherto had been done in the poetic element by the poets, and especially of course epideictic. In epideictic speech the appropriate judgment does not consist (as in the case of the deliberative and forensic speech) in voting as the speaker wants you to vote. That is the test of his success, whether you vote as he wants you to vote. There is no equivalent to that in the epideictic speech. You do not vote. Yes, Mr. . . . .

**Student:** If something written like *The Communist Manifesto*, I mean, convinces people of a certain way, would this be epideictic? . . . .

**LS:** No. That would come, I mean there is no direct—but if one tries to pigeonhole it as a<sup>28</sup> kind of rhetoric here then it would be deliberative, because it is a suggestion regarding what communities, in this case the community of the proletarians, should do. It<sup>29</sup> is not a deliberative speech in the Aristotelian sense<sup>30</sup> because it abounds with narrative and Aristotle says there is no place, generally speaking, for narrative in a deliberative speech. Well, this kind of propaganda statement allegedly based on science—this didn't exist, because this kind of political doctrine did

<sup>v</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 12. 5-6, 1414a8-19.

<sup>vi</sup> *Phaedrus* 297b1-2, p. 91.

not exist. That's clear. Aristotle cannot be blamed for not having provided for *The Communist Manifesto*.

But the question is of course a very necessary one: What kind of writing is that? Manifestos, perhaps—are there such things like manifestos? Certain kinds of historians would, I suppose, say [that] of course when some ancient conqueror gave a certain interpretation of his campaigns and conquests (say, Cyrus when conquering the Babylonian empire), that's also a manifesto. But one would have to see—assuming that such things happened, that a kind of rumors are spread favorable to the conqueror—whether this has a character of a manifesto like *The Communist Manifesto*. For example: “These terrible oppressors whom you have to pay this enormous tax, God knows what they did to you; and now I come to liberate you.” This<sup>31</sup> doesn't presuppose any theoretical reflection, does it?

Well, this is a simple question. The beginning of the Declaration of Independence, compared with the preamble to the statements made in England at the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and by the Dutch in their fight against the Spaniards and such preambles—here you have suddenly from the eighteenth century statements in universal terms, in theoretical terms, which you did not find in earlier statements of this kind. One has to compare that. This subject has come up in other considerations more than once I believe. Now let us—or was there any other point? Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** This seems to be a helpful time to recall . . . Aristotle suggested that it was in deliberative rhetoric rather than in forensic that the least amount of rhetorical shenanigans could take place, because the interest of the judges themselves was involved—

**LS:** It was their own business.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** It was their own business, yes. Now the major argument at this point is from the standpoint of exactness, yet he does make this statement that forensic rhetoric before a single judge involves the least opportunity of employing rhetorical devices. So it would seem that perhaps we have to take rather seriously the distinction of a single judge and more than one judge when we rank forensic rhetoric compared with deliberative rhetoric.

**LS:** Yes, but I would be at a loss without any further ado to solve this difficulty to which you drew our attention. But is it not possible that the point of view is different?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** It is fundamentally, I think. At the beginning, he is simply suggesting that deliberative rhetoric has been ignored—

**LS:** Yes.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** —and that most of the teachers of arts of rhetoric build their arts while simply considering forensic rhetoric.

**LS:** Yes.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Now, the arguments do meet in this respect, that he suggests in the beginning that there would be less opportunity for them to concentrate on arousing emotions if they consider the problems that deliberative rhetoric poses, because here the judges do not permit excursions from the point, the issue at hand. Here he seems to suggest that seems to be . . . that earlier view.

**LS:** Well, may I suggest that—can you elaborate this in writing, a brief statement, and hand it in by Wednesday? Good. But I'm very grateful that you did that.

Now let us turn to chapter 13.<sup>32</sup> He comes now to the next subject. He has now completed the subject of diction and turns<sup>33</sup> to the question of order or arrangement. We begin here. "It remains to speak about arrangement, or order. And the *logos* has two parts, the speech has two parts."<sup>vii</sup>

**Mr. Reinken:** "A speech has two parts. It is necessary to state the subject, and then to prove it. Wherefore it is impossible to make a statement without proving it, or to prove it without first putting it forward; for both he who proves something, and he who puts something forward does so in order to prove it. The first of these parts is the statement of the case, the second the proof, a similar division to that of problem and demonstration."<sup>viii</sup>

**LS:** Namely in mathematics. Good. So these are the simply necessary parts of a speech, the statement of the subject and the proof, and the proof is of course the bulk. In the sequel Aristotle rejects another arrangement which, as he says, would be necessary at best in forensic rhetoric and not elsewhere. This statement here implies of course that a proemium or exordium in addition to a statement of the subject—and subject does not mean of course merely, "I shall speak about the Sicilian expedition, because that is on the agenda, so I will speak about it," but<sup>34</sup> this statement of the intention<sup>ix</sup> would be, "I am in favor of the expedition," or "I am against the expedition," to make clear from the beginning what your position is, and then you give your reasons. Good.

Now let us turn a little bit later in 1414b7, when he repeats that and where he says the necessary parts are the statement and the proofs.

**Mr. Reinken:** "So then the necessary parts of a speech are the statement of the case and proof. These divisions are appropriate to every speech, and at the most the parts are four in number—exordium, statement, proof, epilogue; for refutation of the opponent is part of the proofs, and comparison is an amplification of one's own case, and therefore also part of the proofs; for he

<sup>vii</sup> Apparently Strauss's own translation of III. 12. 6. - 13. 1, 1414a30-31.

<sup>viii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 13. 1-2, 1414a31-37.

<sup>ix</sup> Strauss says "the proemium," then immediately seems to correct himself to "this statement of the intention," of the subject. That this is a correction is suggested by Strauss's preceding remark, "that a proemium or exordium *in addition to* a statement of the subject," which considers the proemium as a distinct part of the speech, not equivalent to the "statement of the intention" of the subject properly speaking, which Strauss describes in this sentence with an example. Though it is possible that Strauss's preceding remark meant to suggest that the premium "in addition" must treat or evoke the subject (Strauss's remark is left unfinished), still the proemium appears to be a distinct part, not the statement proper of the subject.

who does this proves something, whereas the exordium and the epilogue are merely aids to memory.”<sup>x</sup>

**LS:** So in other words, the maximum which Aristotle will grant is that you may need, in addition to the statement of subject and the proofs, a proemium and an epilogue. Therefore he turns then to the question of the epilogue and that is in the next chapter. Now let us read the beginning of chapter 14.

**Mr. Reinken:**

The exordium is the beginning of a speech, as the prologue in poetry and the prelude in flute-playing; for all these are beginnings, and as it were a paving the way for what follows. The prelude resembles the exordium of epideictic speeches; for as flute-players begin by playing whatever they can execute skilfully and attach it to the key-note, so also in epideictic speeches should be the composition of the exordium; the speaker should say at once whatever he likes, give the key-note and then attach the main subject. And all do this, an example being the exordium of the *Helen* of Isocrates; for the eristics and Helen have nothing in common. At the same time, even if the speaker wanders from the point, this is more appropriate than that the speech should be monotonous.<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** Now, let us stop here for one moment. The proemium<sup>35</sup> or the exordium does not introduce the subject. The subject is stated in what he calls the *prodesis*. But the speaker, or his art, just as the flute-player introduces not the theme but his art by his prelude—and this is true in epideictic speech. This is the reason why an exordium or proemium is not simply necessary, because it does not introduce the subject. Now let us see a few more things in this chapter, 1415a8, shortly after the quotation from Choerilus.

<sup>36</sup>**Mr. Reinken:**

These then are the sources of epideictic exordia—praise, blame, exhortation, dissuasion, appeals to the hearer. And these exordia may be either foreign or intimately connected with the speech.

As for the exordia of the forensic speech, it must be noted that they produce the same effect as dramatic prologues and epic exordia (for those of dithyrambs resemble epideictic exordia: “For thee and thy presents or spoils.”

But in speeches and epic poems the exordia provide a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know beforehand what it is about, and that the mind may not be kept in suspense, for that which is undefined leads astray; so then he who puts the beginning, so to say, into the hearer’s hand enables him, if he holds fast to it, to follow the story. Hence the following exordia:

“Sing the wrath, O Muse.:<sup>xii</sup>

<sup>x</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 13. 4, 1414b7-13.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 14. 1, 1414b19-30.

<sup>xii</sup> Footnote to the Freese translation, p. 430: “Homer, *Iliad*, I.1.”

“Tell me of the man, O Muse.”<sup>xiii</sup>

“Inspire me with another theme, how from the land of Asia a great war crossed into Europe.”<sup>xiv</sup>

Similarly, tragic poets make clear the subjects of their drama, if not at the outset, like Euripides, at least somewhere in the prologue, like Sophocles,

My father was Polybus.<sup>xv</sup>

**LS:** Which occurs after the middle. And comedy the same. Go on.

**Mr. Reinken:** “It is the same in comedy. So then the most essential and special function of the exordium is to make clear what is the end or purpose of the speech; wherefore, it should not be employed, if the subject is quite clear or unimportant. All the other forms of exordia in use are only remedies—”

**LS:** If we stop for one moment. In forensic oratory the proemium must show forth the subject matter. Good. Now we come to some more subtle points.

**Mr. Reinken:**

All the other forms of exordia in use are only remedies, and are common to all three branches of Rhetoric. These are derived from the speaker, the hearer, the subject, and the opponent. From the speaker and the opponent, all that helps to destroy or create prejudice. But this must not be done in the same way; for the defendant must deal with this at the beginning, the accuser in the epilogue. The reason is obvious. The defendant, when about to introduce himself, must remove all obstacles, so that he must first clear away all prejudice; the accuser must create prejudice in the epilogue, that his hearers may have a livelier recollection of it.

**LS:** Is this clear? If there is a prejudice you must gain the benevolence of the audience obviously right at the beginning. But what about the other? Why not repeat it after you have gained the confidence of the audience against the prejudice—why not restate it in the epilogue? After all, that's very important. And the other way around?

**Student:** It reminds them.

**LS:** Exactly. After this has been disposed of for good, it would be the most foolish thing you could do. And of course it is very effective on the other hand to bring in the slander of the opponent in the epilogue because that will stick, at least for the immediate future. Good. These are very unpleasant things, but true things. Now go on.

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<sup>xiii</sup> Footnote to the Freese translation, p. 430: “Homer, *Odyssey*, I.1.”

<sup>xiv</sup> Footnote to the Freese translation, p. 431: “From Choerilus, Section 4.”

<sup>xv</sup> Footnote to the Freese translation, p. 431: “Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 774. But this can hardly be called the prologue.”

**Mr. Reinken:**

The object of an appeal to the hearer is to make him well disposed or to arouse his indignation, and sometimes to engage his attention or the opposite; for it is not always expedient to engage his attention, which is the reason why many speakers try to make their hearers laugh. As for rendering the hearers tractable, everything will lead up to it if a person wishes, including the appearance of respectability, because respectable persons command more attention. Hearers pay most attention to things that are important, that concern their own interests, that are astonishing, that are agreeable; wherefore one should put the idea into their heads that the speech deals with such subjects. To make the hearers inattentive, the speaker must persuade them that the matter is unimportant, that it does not concern them, that it is painful.<sup>xvi</sup>

**LS:** I think that is easy to understand.

**Student:** Just one question: Why would he include painful? Usually we would be drawn by pain.

**LS:** Have you never heard what happens to bringers of bad messages to kings, particularly powerful people? The kings do what we cannot afford to do.

**Same Student:** But they are interested in the news. They are very attentive.

**LS:** Well, surely it is important for him to know that his army was defeated or maybe destroyed, but nevertheless it is painful for him to hear it.<sup>37</sup> Normally people like to hear good things and not bad things. That it is sometimes very important to know the bad things is undeniable. But other things being equal, let someone else—

**Same Student:** But the question of attentiveness makes it—

**LS:** No, no. We are attentive to what we like to hear. We are attentive to very important things, obviously, and the things which concern us, and not, say (I almost said the Vietnamese, but these things do not work anymore), some—some, I do not know.

**Same Student:** Think of the assassination of the president. That was painful for most people and all three [television] channels covered it continuously.

**LS:** Surely, but why? Not because it was painful, but because it was important. But when the two things (well, these four things rather)—Aristotle here in his way enumerates the things to which we attend. Now they may all fall together, there may be a case. In the case of the assassination all four things came together: it was important; it was of concern; it was astonishing—no, only three, it was unpleasant. But these news media or however you call them, this is of course not rhetoric. I mean these are things meant to inform everyone of what is going on in the world. This is not meant to lead up to practical decisions as in deliberative speech, to say nothing of forensic.<sup>38</sup> How one should call this kind of speech which is done over the TV, radio, and the newspaper? That would be an interesting question, but it is surely not covered by Aristotle, that's clear. What is it—a kind of incipient historiography, or what? I do not know, but it is surely not public

<sup>xvi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 14. 4-7, 1415a5-b4.

speech. The mere infinitude of [possible] inclusions, the end being imposed entirely accidentally—this paper must be out by that time, and we must not have more than 16 or 32 or whatever number of pages—but there is no true beginning, middle, and end, obviously. If you look at any newspaper it never has a single broad story. It has *n* stories wholly unrelated to each other. That's not a speech. That is in the best case a potpourri of a great variety of speeches. But that best case probably never exists.

**Same Student:** You just mentioned the modern media. Do you think that in deliberative, for instance, that the physical effect had anything to do with Aristotle suggesting just a *skiagraphia*, a sketch, that you couldn't really make yourself heard on all the fine points, say, to several thousand people, say, without modern media?

**LS:** Well,<sup>39</sup> say you hear something over the TV about Japan, or something else, I mean how people live there, or how the economy works, or whatever it may be. This of course is not a speech; it is kind of, say, a chapter from a geography book—

**Same Student:** I'm speaking specifically of a speech. Say we have the President speaking directly to us.

**LS:** Well, this is not covered by Aristotle, but I'm sure he must have thought of it, that it is necessary in a given case to give a brief survey of, say, how did the war come. How did the war come? That is historical. That is of course possible, and I'm sure that Aristotle has provided for that. But<sup>40</sup> Aristotle would say: it may be that if the causes of the war are dark, [and] then it's necessary for say Pericles to explain it. But if everyone knows the causes from previous discussions, why is it necessary to reverse the whole story with the build-up of the Athenian empire, and the conflicts with Sparta, the affair in Corcyra, and Potidaea, or what not? It's wholly unnecessary. Now there is one speech in Thucydides in which<sup>41</sup> the Athenians in Sparta give a brief survey of the genesis of the Athenian empire, but one cannot very well call it an historical survey.<sup>xvii</sup> They remind them<sup>42</sup> of the things which have been forgotten, namely that it was Athens which saved Greece from the Persians by her navy at Salamis. It's a reminder. It's not strictly speaking a narrative, *diēgēsis*, as Aristotle calls it. Now, under which category to put the TV is of course impossible, because it has all kinds and conditions of speeches and incipient speeches become part of it. Well,<sup>43</sup> perhaps one should say they are media through which all kinds of things can come, among others also some of<sup>44</sup> what Aristotle would call speeches. It's of no use speaking of that. Good.

Now, where were we now? Laughter is one of these things which creates benevolence. I think that's a common experience.<sup>45</sup> If the audience hates a man they will not laugh at his jokes, obviously, to say nothing of the fact that laughing as such is helpful in forensic speech. [This is] because if people are in a state of indignation (they want the head of that man), in the moment they are brought to laugh, this irrational indignation is on its way out because it's impossible to be indignant and to laugh at the same time, at least on the same subject.

Now the other<sup>46</sup> [point] which Aristotle makes against an overestimation of the proemium is that many things which people say the proemium should do should be done by the whole speech. For

<sup>xvii</sup> *Peloponnesian War*, Bk. I, chaps. 73-77.

example, to establish the character of the speaker—<sup>47</sup>that cannot be done by five minutes at the beginning where he declares, “I am an honest man, therefore . . . my case.” This is much less impressive than if the whole speech conveys the impression of his integrity. Good. Now one more thing only in the next chapter. III.15. Begin at the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** “One way of removing prejudice is to make use of the arguments by which one may clear oneself from disagreeable suspicion—”

**LS:** Well<sup>48</sup> of course<sup>49</sup> “prejudice”<sup>xviii</sup> is not there, is not in Aristotle. What he has to do is the removal of “calumny” or “slander.” A man is, say, suspected of something—not necessarily a legal crime but suspected of unreliability or what not, and he has to get rid of that. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:**

for it makes no difference whether this<sup>xix</sup> suspicion has been openly expressed or not; and so this may be taken as a general rule. Another way consists in contesting the disputed points, either by denying the fact or its harmfulness, at least to the plaintiff; or by asserting that its importance is exaggerated; or that it is not unjust at all, or only slightly so; or neither disgraceful nor important. These are the possible points of dispute: as Iphicrates, in answer to Nausicrates, admitted that he had done what the prosecutor alleged and inflicted damage, but denied that he had been guilty of wrongdoing.<sup>xx</sup>

**LS:** Now,<sup>50</sup> you see here for example that<sup>51</sup> what is implied is of course also this: it may be unjust, but not base, not ignoble, not disgraceful. And also you see that it is impossible to do this with any consciousness and clarity, without having these lists of the just things, of the noble things, of the good things, which Aristotle gave you in Book 1, without having articulated this for your purpose. So here you see the practical use for this as well. One more passage, 1416b, after the remark about Teucer and Priam.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Another method, suitable for the accuser, is to praise something unimportant at great length, and to condemn something important concisely; or, putting forward several things that are praiseworthy in the opponent, to condemn the one thing that has an important bearing about the case. Such methods are most artful and most<sup>xxi</sup> unfair—”

**LS:** And most? What is the word?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Unfair.”

**LS:** “Unjust,” yes.

<sup>xviii</sup> In Aristotle, *diabolēs* is the Greek word rendered “prejudice” by Freese’s Loeb translation; it may otherwise be translated “calumny, slander.”

<sup>xix</sup> The first side of the original reel-to-reel tape runs out, and there are several words missing from this citation, but this gap has since been filled in from the Loeb text of the *Rhetoric* used by the reader.

<sup>xx</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 15. 1-2, 1416a4-12.

<sup>xxi</sup> The reader adds this “most” modifying “unfair,” presumably to emphasize (accurately) the superlative form of the Greek *adikōtatoi*; in Freese’s translation, the one “most” modifies both “artful” and “unfair.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “for by their use men endeavor to make what is good in a man injurious to him, by mixing it up with what is bad.”<sup>xxii</sup>

**LS:** Yes, this is of some interest, the phrase is interesting: they are “most artful,” but artful not in the sense that we—“most artistic” we could as well have said. That’s the ordinary Greek term, *technikōtatoi*. It doesn’t have this nasty meaning which artful, as distinguished from artistic, is likely to have. Most in accordance with the art, and yet most unjust. So you see clearly that is a further proof that the rhetorical art is as such not prudential because the *phronēmōtatos*, the most prudential, could not possibly be the most unjust.<sup>52</sup> [The rhetorical art as such] is a faculty, a cleverness, like boxing or any other thing which can be misused and which in itself does not have the guarantee against misuse. It has to be guided by something higher, and that is directive prudence.

You remember the connection in which we discussed<sup>53</sup> a question which Aristotle does not discuss, namely the relation of rhetoric or dialectics to prudence. And without having an answer to this question we are in the dark regarding the most fundamental question, which is perfectly compatible fortunately with getting some clarity about less fundamental questions. Generally speaking we would be in a very hopeless situation regarding knowledge if we would require full clarity about the fundamental things before we can have clarity about derivative things. That is our strange situation, that we know our way reasonably well in derivative things of this kind or another and not on the fundamental things. We have somehow to live with that.

I would like to bring up another question regarding rhetoric in general. Now we have seen that rhetoric belongs together from Aristotle’s point of view with dialectics, and dialectics with what we can call apodictics, the doctrine of the true syllogism. And this discipline as a whole, dealing with rhetoric, dialectics, and apodictics<sup>54</sup>—what’s the name for that discipline?

**Student:** Logic.

**LS:** Logic. Good. Now logic, as you know, is still a part of philosophy or science, perhaps even more so than it was in Aristotle’s schema. What I would like to do now I have done probably hundreds of times (a slight exaggeration) so that there will be some of you who will be simply bored, but there are some here who would not [Strauss gets up to write at board, some inaudible words]. I believe this is one of the simplest helps one can give beginners, to remind them of the radical change which has taken place in the world in a way which is accessible to every administrator of the most superficial kind. How do you call the men who simply pigeonhole things? . . . Good.

Now all right, what is the Aristotelian division of the sciences, of philosophy?

**Student:** . . . .

**LS:** The fundamental division is the theoretical and practical. And?

**Student:** Metaphysics, physics—

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<sup>xxii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 15. 10, 1416b4-8.

**LS:** No, let this be in the proper order [Strauss lists the following under the theoretical column on the board]. Mathematics, physics, and . . . let us call that metaphysics, although this is not Aristotle's term for it. And here? [Strauss lists the following under the practical column on the board.]

**Student:** Ethics, economics, politics—

**LS:** And where is logic? Outside, a prelude. A prelude. Good. This was the traditional scheme. I do not go into any refinements now. And now what is the scheme today, the schema today now generally accepted? To simplify matters I will say let us forget about science and speak only of the parts of philosophy which are today universally recognized. I'm not speaking of those which are recognized by part of present-day professional philosophers. Now begin, and no far-fetched things.

**Student:** Logic and metaphysics.

**LS:** Ask Ayer,<sup>xxiii</sup> or Reichenbach,<sup>xxiv</sup> or Wittgenstein about metaphysics. Logic, yes.

**Student:** Epistemology.

**LS:** Yes. And?

**Student:** Ethics?

**LS:** Ja, they—and since Weldon,<sup>xxv</sup> one of these people, wrote a book on ethics, I believe they also say they speak about ethics. And?

**Student:** I still thought of metaphysics [laughter].

**LS:** I'm sorry. If there would be a poll?

**Same Student:** How about the root of metaphysics in the . . . .

**LS:** But that is a fellow in Yale and there are some other people in . . . but the majority, all logical positivists, all people stemming from Kant, reject that—the large majority. But aesthetics, I think that is generally recognized as . . . . Well, let's go on. What is still recognized?

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<sup>xxiii</sup> A. J. Ayer (1910-1989), British philosopher; considered a logical positivist. Author of *Language, Truth, and Logic* (London: V. Gollancz, 1946) and *The Problem of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1956).

<sup>xxiv</sup> Presumably Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953), philosopher of science, proponent of logical empiricism and founder of the Berlin Circle. Author of *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

<sup>xxv</sup> Presumably T. D. Weldon (1896-1958), British philosopher and author of *States and Morals* (London: J. Murray, 1946).

**Student:** Philosophy of science.

**LS:** Ja, well, that is epistemology, more or less. I believe one can also say this:<sup>55</sup> philosophy of religion, I believe, would be recognized. It may take the form of a mere psychology of religion, but still. And I believe there is much talk today of philosophy of history. So let us leave it at that. And<sup>56</sup> well, philosophy of language, I don't know whether that is, I think now a universal agreement—but this goes somehow together with logic. Good.

So there is a radical change. And the comparison<sup>57</sup>—I mean if you put these two lists together and give a reasoned account of the differences, that really is the best introduction to our present-day problem, at least to the extent that we know what is the air which we breathe. That is the air which we breathe, not that, but we can articulate it [laughter]. You understand? That is a most difficult thing, to become aware first of all that there is air—men did not always know that there was air—and then especially the particular air which you breathe. Because you can never know properly—there is a vulgar but very telling German, especially Berlinian, proverb: One does not taste one's own saliva.<sup>58</sup> One does not know, is not aware of the air, of the atmosphere . . .

Now if you look at this schema—I will mention only three points because we don't have so much time now—the first striking thing is this: that physics (and that is perhaps the most important, which was part of philosophy) is no longer part of philosophy. The distinction between philosophy and science, which we take for granted, is one of the greatest intellectual events of modern times. Because this little thing, that economics has now disappeared entirely from practical philosophy and is left to the science called economics, is only a consequence of this fundamental change that physics is no [longer part of philosophy]. Economics is a kind of physics, a social physics [but] this is only a secondary development. But the distinction between philosophy and science, that's absolutely crucial. And of course also what is implied in the whole thing [is] the abolition of the difference between theory and practice, theoretical and practical sciences.

Now one can say something as follows. If you would<sup>59</sup> go through that list here and see what these disciplines have in common. In an earlier stage—say, until about 40 or 50 years ago, when the German Idealistic<sup>xxvi</sup> and the British Utilitarian<sup>xxvii</sup> tradition[s] were still stronger—there was a word in common use for all these things: human consciousness. Consciousness. But this word has somehow expired [or] at least has lost its central significance for a variety of reasons, the most popular one being Freud. But there are other more important ones too. But now one can use a much simpler term: they all deal in various ways with *man*. Man is the sole theme of philosophy<sup>60</sup>—well, not in every respect (not the human body [which, it] is understood, is a matter of anatomy and physiology) but, well, what makes man man. That is the theme of philosophy. No longer God or nature are the themes according to the prevailing view, I don't say universally accepted view.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Strauss must refer to what is known in its usual English translation as the “German Idealist” tradition.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Background noise on the tape renders this word only partly audible; still one can discern the first two syllables, “Util—”, and on this basis as well as the context, it seems highly plausible that Strauss's word is “Utilitarian.”

Let us now return to our question of rhetoric. What has this change to do with rhetoric? Logic is now the most important part of philosophy according to the most powerful view, whereas for Aristotle it was only a prelude, or to the Aristotelian tradition, a prelude to philosophy. The true philosophic studies were substantive, not formal. Yet one obvious change and [one] particularly important to us in this class: rhetoric is no longer a part of philosophy or science. From time to time a man writes a book on rhetoric. I remember, I think the late Weaver wrote a book on rhetoric,<sup>xxviii</sup> and there is someone else who wrote a book on rhetoric whose name I forgot. But these are the more or less literary people. You know, there is no place for it in the organization of the sciences as a whole. What does this disappearance of rhetoric mean? Now from the traditional Aristotelian point of view, which is not necessarily the Aristotelian view itself, there was a kindred discipline—kindred to rhetoric—which did survive, and I'm not speaking now of apodeictics, [but of] poetics. Poetics. Now in which form does poetics survive today?

**Student:** Aesthetics.

**LS:** Aesthetics. Yes, which means a very profound change, namely that the difference between poetry and music and painting and sculpture is no longer as important as it was for Aristotle. For these people it was understood: poetry is tops. Tops. Whatever good the other things might do, they are not comparable because poetry is of course the speaking art, and the others do not speak. Music is not speech, and painting and sculpture still less. So what prevented the inclusion of rhetoric into aesthetics? After all, if aesthetics is such a large and general thing, why should it not accept rhetoric?

I address this question to a man of the greatest competence and authority in these matters. Hegel, in his *Aesthetics*, does discuss it still: Why not rhetoric? And he gives roughly this answer: Poetic works are free. It will become clear later on what that means. Prose is not free. Hence even the highest historical works, say, Thucydides, are “quote prosaic unquote”—I mean not only in the obvious sense that he doesn't use meter, but he is bound, he cannot pick his events; whereas the poet of course can disregard all merely irrelevant and chance events, the historian is not entitled to do so. If these chance events have some importance for the cause of the war, he has to mention them. Now Hegel says [that] eloquence is apparently closer than historiography to art, which is free. The orator pronounces his own free judgment. He does not merely reproduce a sequel of events as the historian does. He's perfectly free in handling his subject. For example, he is in no way bound by the temporal order by which the historian is more or less bound. He does not merely appeal to our reason and understanding as the historian does, but much more to our convictions, as Hegel calls it. He must affect the whole man, the passions and so on. In this respect rhetoric is much closer to art than is historiography. Yet nevertheless rhetoric does not belong to art because it stands under the law of practical utility, as Hegel puts it. The speeches are means towards an end; they are not an end in themselves, for artistic enjoyment. Or as he puts it from another angle, there is no true unity of the universal and the individual. Say, the *Antigone*: the *Antigone* is much more than this particular woman. She stands for something, and nevertheless she is this individual, whereas such a complete fusion of the

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<sup>xxviii</sup> Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963), Professor of English at the University of Chicago from 1944 to 1963; author of *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1953) and *Rhetoric and Composition* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), first published in 1957 under the title, *Composition: A Course in Reading and Writing*).

universal and the individual cannot possibly take place in rhetoric because we *mean* it. We mean that this individual, John Smith, is guilty or innocent, and you cannot replace him and say that <sup>61</sup>“the kind of man John Smith” is guilty of the accusation. This is only in a very derivative and metaphorical sense true.

Now to come back to the point: the modern conception of art led to the expulsion of rhetoric. This is not the whole story. It has also [something] to do<sup>62</sup> with the changes in science, regarding science, but if we start from the Hegelian statements. The older view was stated commonsensically and in perfect beauty by Horace: “*Et prodesse volunt et delectare poetae*. The poets wish to be useful and to delight.”<sup>xxix</sup> This is now regarded as philistine. I believe that no up-to-date critic would for one moment stoop to consider that maybe Horace had a point. That’s out of the question. In other words, the older view was [that] however free the poet may be in certain respects and doubtless is, poetry is in the service of something else. Poetry is essentially just as rhetoric is. We can call that in the service<sup>63</sup> (very generally but not meaninglessly), in the service of life. But of what life? That is the question. Some of our contemporaries wholeheartedly agree with that, you know, that art must be in the service of life. Do you know who they are?

**Student:** Socialists, Realists. *Engagés*.

**LS:** Ja, sure, sure. Marxists. This of course is not what Horace or Aristotle thought of, social forces. They thought [of] the life of moral or theoretical excellence. There is a certain difference, and therefore rhetoric is not art in the sense of art for art’s sake. That is perfectly true. But the question is: Is poetry art for art’s sake? That’s a different question. We must not accept without examination the now-accepted pigeonholes. We cannot do that. Nor must we—and this I say against the possible misunderstanding of what I propose—nor can we accept without any further ado the pigeonholes of Aristotle, if we can use this loose word “pigeonhole” (I mean the distinctions which he makes). Nor can we do that. Aristotle’s pigeonholes, to repeat this expression, have only one very great advantage: They are not *our* pigeonholes. And by considering them, by entering into their spirit, we achieve some liberation from the pigeonholes which otherwise would keep us under control. That is what I meant by the atmosphere, the air. We become aware of the air in which we live if we wander into a different air. And maybe when we have a sufficient familiarity with Aristotle we would feel that they are, come to think of it, preferable to ours. Well, all right, we must be open-minded and also not apprehensive and fearful. But let us wait for that.

So this, then, I believe is one point. And of course the other point we have discussed all the time (or thought of it, especially since we read in the last quarter Hobbes’s *Leviathan*)—that one reason why rhetoric decayed (I mean at least not necessarily the actual art of speaking, but the respect for the art of speaking) has to do with the notion that science is, can be, ought to be, all-comprehensive and therefore there would be no place for a non-scientific utterance, [no place]

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<sup>xxix</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 124, 1926), l. 333. Strauss clearly states this line as “*et . . . et*,” and thus translates it “be useful *and* to delight,” but Horace’s line is rather: “*aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae*.” That is, “The poets wish *either* to be useful *or* to delight,” to modify Strauss’s translation. While it does not fundamentally alter Strauss’s point, he remembers the line slightly incorrectly.

for a spectacle, a non-scientific utterance. But I had somehow forgotten about that, so I thought I should bring your attention to that. Yes. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** <sup>64</sup>Any thought as to how you would begin to question whether poetry is art for art's sake in terms of the way we look at poetry today? I know we could give a perfect argument by starting from Plato's view of poetry, that it can't simply be art for art's sake. But any start he would make on those grounds I think would be denied as a valid premise by a staunch advocate of poetry today.

**LS:** Well sure, I'm aware of that. One would go into that. And I suppose part of the argument—I mean this is a long, long story, these are all long stories—would be to consider the work of Shakespeare for instance. You know, this is a very legitimate dialectical, oratorical procedure in an Anglo-Saxon country to say: Well, since the greatest poet in this Anglo-Saxon world is Shakespeare, what did he think of poetry? Let's check on that [laughter]; and then we see whether Shakespeare<sup>65</sup> believed in art for art's sake. I mean absolutely, simply, let us see that. And of course then we would have to go through certain stages.

I remember one point which is ultimately of course quite wrong, but even errors can be helpful on the way to non-error. This point was recently criticized by Allan Bloom in his study on Shakespeare, the point which Nietzsche made when Nietzsche says how did Shakespeare—there's an aphorism of Nietzsche:<sup>xxx</sup> How did Shakespeare think of poets? And the clearest proof is the poet in *Julius Caesar*, and the . . . poet, a kind of louse here compared with Brutus the Roman. I always was sure that Nietzsche misinterpreted this. I'm now more sure after having read Bloom's interpretation.<sup>xxx</sup> But still, it's a good point, why not? Why did Shakespeare present the poet—<sup>66</sup>take the case of the extreme, the opposite end of the spectrum: the self-advertisement of the advertisers, as they call it, the show business advertises the show business. I mean, that is going on all the time. For example, the prizes which they get. These celebrations are done in a big way. And no prizes for journalists, for example, to say nothing of teachers at the University of Chicago College, would be presented from coast to coast over the TV. There is a self-glorification of the show business, which is of course perfectly all right but it is nevertheless strange. Now the question of the meaningfulness, of whether there are criteria by which to judge it does not even arise.

Something similar happens of course to us. There are some people when they hear the word "art" they go down on their knees without any further consideration of what is presented as art. You know the cases in which the question of obscenity, when it was discussed, an absolutely dirty thing—if someone, a critic, can be found who says it is a piece of art, that settles it [laughter]. And after all, it can't be as simple as that. It cannot be. I mean, if this were the case, why did not for example Shakespeare write just a series of obscene works? Why did he not do it? And why did he keep this kind of thing (which he does not deny) in<sup>67</sup> [its] proper place, [that is to say] very rare and in very small doses? In other words, one would have to begin—Shakespeare would be the most practical example here—to see what did Shakespeare understand by art. After all

<sup>xxx</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1974), Aphorism 98, 151-52.

<sup>xxx</sup> Allan Bloom, "The Morality of the Pagan Hero," in *Shakespeare's Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Midway Reprint, 1986 [Basic Books, 1964]), 110, n. 44.

Shakespeare has said (although he is generally speaking a dramatic poet but the epilogue to *Tempest* is a direct utterance of Shakespeare) and one would show that Shakespeare knew of something beyond, not only the theater (that goes without saying) but beyond art, beyond his poetry. This does not settle the issue because Shakespeare had other prejudices as we know—you know, he was also not a democrat—and therefore he might be as mistaken regarding art as he was<sup>68</sup> regarding democracy. But it is still just to get the stone rolling, to get it moving. It's a good beginning.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Would you rule out any examination from something that's very close to us, for instance, Allen Ginsberg?

**LS:** Well, I never heard the name.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Well, what used to be the new school of Beat poetry.

**LS:** Ja, I do not know; I really do not know. I cannot speak about things which I do not know. First, I would make a poll of this class whether the majority here thinks that this is a great poet [laughter]. And if this is settled then we would—

**Mr. Butterworth:** I'm trying to make the hard case for what would seem to be a very weak side. And if I'm not mistaken—

**LS:** If this is the best you can do, I would be very apprehensive [laughter].

**Mr. Butterworth:** No, it wouldn't be fair<sup>69</sup> to take a poll whether people thought this was a great poet or not, because great poets have a unique tendency of not being recognized—

**LS:** Not universally, I believe, not universally. It is well known, to use a favorite phrase of Stalin, that Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes were recognized immediately. That is, I think, a very interesting phenomenon itself: That in modern times with the great change of fashions, also in painting, there is always the resistance of the old generation, like Eisenhower and Khrushchev—you remember, that one point where they agree, against new painting [laughter]. And you know the Impressionists were regarded as absolutely impossible, and today that's old hat. I do not know what they call it now. This has happened in generation after generation.<sup>70</sup> I am sure that this was not always the case. There is even some evidence for that apart from the external statistical facts, that these great poets were recognized immediately.<sup>71</sup> I found somewhere a statement in Plutarch to this effect, that when this beauty and this perfection appeared,<sup>72</sup> the only reaction was that people didn't know that things could be so beautiful. It was obvious that it was so beautiful. Apparently beauty is no longer this criterion in the clear commonsensical manner that it was in the past. One must be careful—to say nothing of the fact that, even granted that the novel is not recognized in its own generation (I grant it for argument's sake) it does not mean of course that every novel poet is a good poet. That's clear. That would be too simple [laughter]. Yes?

**Another Student:** Is it possible that the decline of rhetoric is not due primarily to the science of Hobbes and the people who came after him, but more to what Tocqueville described when he

said that historians in this country, for instance, don't look at the individual as the mover of history? They look at the broad, mass movement because of the influence of democracy upon them. And therefore any analysis of a president in the *New York Times*, for instance, by any of its reporters very rarely dwells on what the man says—except for Kennedy very recently—and how he says it,<sup>73</sup> not on the rhetoric so much as on his achievements, his activation of the broad forces of history. In other words, the decline of the individual means the decline of rhetoric.

**LS:** I believe there are two different things. I think it has very much to do [with the fact] that the mere enjoyment of the perfection of diction and so on probably<sup>74</sup> has not grown to the same degree as literacy has grown. I believe people are quite reasonably much more interested [in] whether the policy announced in the speech is sound or unsound than [in] how well-turned the phrases and well-chosen the individual words are. But still, perhaps the attention to this—I mean,<sup>75</sup> it is very rare to read a scholarly book today which is also written with some concern for language. I believe I do not exaggerate. When I have to read a book or manuscript where I see the author has taken some care and has not just (how should I say?) vomited, if I may say so, the individual words but has thought about it, I am quite amazed. I think it is rather rare. That's a long story. But one thing is the eloquence, rhetoric, the actual rhetoric, and another is the theoretical concern with that, and we are speaking now of course about the theoretical concern. I'm sure there are today still very good speakers. We had the big example of Churchill—of course, an amazing speaker, but there are some others.

**Same Student:** Did the theoretical concern come more from the fact that they're democrats (small d) living in democratic society, and therefore not so concerned with the individual as a leader, but they are concerned with what they call broad social forces and things like that?

**LS:** No, I believe that is not so true because the veneration for individuals is very great in a democracy too.<sup>76</sup> This philosophy of history is by no means the operative philosophy in the democracies. I always remember this book title of a book on Henry Wallace, who was probably the most liberal candidate for vice-presidency, and for some time he was in fact the vice-president. I believe he was much more revered by the simon-pure liberals, you know, the non-politicking, the non-wheeling-and-dealing liberals, than any other man since. And then<sup>77</sup> his biography<sup>78</sup> (he's praised for the common man, the age of the common man) has the title: *Henry Wallace: An Uncommon Man*.<sup>xxxii</sup> Democracy knows very well, even if it is in a sense the rule of the common man, it requires also uncommon men. And I think the worship for individuals, both sensible and civic, is very strong in this country too. I think you can see it in the daily occurrences. I do not believe that is true; [I believe] that philosophy of history has relatively little importance in this respect. Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** I didn't quite . . . your point about the modern conception of art leading to the expulsion of rhetoric, because today rhetoric is not thought of as part of art.

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Henry Wallace (1888-1965), Vice President of the United States, 1941-1945. The biography to which Strauss refers must be Frank Kingdon, *An Uncommon Man: Henry Wallace and Sixty Million Jobs* (New York: The Readers Press, Inc., 1945).

**LS:** Yes, I mean if it were thought of as part of art it would share the veneration which art today generally enjoys, obviously. And it is not thought of as art in this sense quite correctly, because rhetoric cannot be separated—surely not deliberative and forensic rhetoric—from the end or purpose which it serves. But men have said that you can separate a poem from the end. In other words, it has no end: art for art's sake. Another way, Mr. Butterworth, in which I would handle these things, just to get things moving, is to take some of the greatest and most dedicated artists of the nineteenth or twentieth century and see whether he—the example closest to me for some accidental reasons is Gustave Flaubert. If he was not a fanatic of art, I do not know who was. And yet it is perfectly clear when you read his works that this was in the service, not of a party program or party line or such nonsense, but of something which ultimately justifies art.<sup>79</sup>

Well, next time we will have—who is the speaker—the orator? [Laughter] Mr. Emmert, yes.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleted “rules.”

<sup>2</sup> Deleted “space and time—.”

<sup>3</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>4</sup> Deleted “Xenophon.”

<sup>5</sup> Deleted “but.”

<sup>6</sup> Deleted “It is here of course—.”

<sup>7</sup> Deleted “have been missing.”

<sup>8</sup> Deleted “is—.”

<sup>9</sup> Deleted “this example of.”

<sup>10</sup> Deleted “but it.”

<sup>11</sup> Deleted “Yes, but let us—?”

<sup>12</sup> Deleted “on.”

<sup>13</sup> Deleted “I mean.”

<sup>14</sup> Deleted “writing in prose.”

<sup>15</sup> Deleted “in other words.”

<sup>16</sup> Deleted “now tell me.”

<sup>17</sup> Deleted “for that.”

<sup>18</sup> Deleted “In other words.”

<sup>19</sup> Deleted “you know, the exact sciences.”

<sup>20</sup> Deleted “**Same Student:** Pardon me?”

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LS: Does he say that?"

<sup>21</sup> Deleted "that's one point, but the other thing—."

<sup>22</sup> Deleted "One cannot—."

<sup>23</sup> Deleted "I mean that the."

<sup>24</sup> Deleted "in."

<sup>25</sup> Deleted "Which."

<sup>26</sup> Deleted "a certain looseness."

<sup>27</sup> Deleted "have a prose which—."

<sup>28</sup> Deleted "form of."

<sup>29</sup> Deleted "I mean that."

<sup>30</sup> Deleted "is."

<sup>31</sup> Deleted "is not—."

<sup>32</sup> Deleted "Now."

<sup>33</sup> Deleted "now."

<sup>34</sup> Deleted "the proemium—."

<sup>35</sup> Deleted "in other words."

<sup>36</sup> Deleted "**Mr. Reinken:** "As for the exordia of forensic speeches, it must be noted that they produce the—"  
(III.14.5)

LS: No, where is that, of the epideictic speeches?"

<sup>37</sup> Deleted "I think that is—."

<sup>38</sup> Deleted "I mean."

<sup>39</sup> Deleted "to what extent—."

<sup>40</sup> Deleted "this is only—."

<sup>41</sup> Deleted "—yes."

<sup>42</sup> Moved "only."

<sup>43</sup> Deleted "but one would have to take—yes."

<sup>44</sup> Deleted "these—."

<sup>45</sup> Deleted "I mean."

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- <sup>46</sup> Deleted "points."
- <sup>47</sup> Deleted "you know."
- <sup>48</sup> Deleted "Aristotle."
- <sup>49</sup> Deleted "does not—."
- <sup>50</sup> Deleted "there is something."
- <sup>51</sup> Deleted "it is—."
- <sup>52</sup> Deleted "It."
- <sup>53</sup> Deleted "the question."
- <sup>54</sup> Deleted ", is."
- <sup>55</sup> Deleted "That."
- <sup>56</sup> Deleted "if you want—."
- <sup>57</sup> Deleted "of that."
- <sup>58</sup> Deleted "you know."
- <sup>59</sup> Deleted "look up—."
- <sup>60</sup> Deleted "according to the."
- <sup>61</sup> Deleted "this is a kind of man."
- <sup>62</sup> Moved "something."
- <sup>63</sup> Deleted "of which."
- <sup>64</sup> Deleted "Would you care to question—."
- <sup>65</sup> Deleted "regarded—."
- <sup>66</sup> Deleted "you know, well."
- <sup>67</sup> Deleted "their."
- <sup>68</sup> Deleted "against."
- <sup>69</sup> Deleted "to ask—."
- <sup>70</sup> Deleted "I believe—."
- <sup>71</sup> Deleted "there is even."
- <sup>72</sup> Deleted "and."
- <sup>73</sup> Deleted "but more—."

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<sup>74</sup> Deleted “is—.”

<sup>75</sup> Deleted “when I read quite a few—.”

<sup>76</sup> Deleted “I mean in other words.”

<sup>77</sup> Deleted “the book about him.”

<sup>78</sup> Deleted “has the title.”

<sup>79</sup> Deleted “and this kind of thing.”

**Session 16: June 3, 1964**

**Leo Strauss:** [in progress]—the man who gave Churchill the *Nicomachean Ethics* to read, which Churchill (who had neglected his education in certain respects) had never read before. And do you remember<sup>1</sup> the exchange about it? Churchill said: “Well, this is more or less as I always thought.”<sup>i</sup>

Thank you for reading a very fine paper. You refer to Churchill, and quite wisely in such a context of course. There is another remark, [a] more simple [one] because Churchill is of course also master of the very homely expression. One of the things you quoted from him, I forgot now the formulation,<sup>2</sup> reminded me of another statement. When the question came up [about] war, say around '48,<sup>3</sup> he simply said: “I do not feel a war in my bones, whereas I felt a war in my bones, say, in the '30s.” This kind of divining, which I'm sure Churchill would have been able to spell out, but the key point was this, that the certainty was the feeling in his bones. That was very good that you brought<sup>4</sup> this [in]. Churchill is a very fitting conclusion to this course because then we are immediately back to political science, our most immediate concern. And Mr. Emmert, who has written his Master's thesis on Churchill, acts on the view that in order to understand political things one might as well look first at the highest than at the lowest.<sup>ii</sup> One must also study the lowest, that goes without saying. What is now going on regarding the West Side bloc is of course political. But to see it properly one must also see . . . and you acted again on this sound principle.

In the main, what you said was absolutely sound. There were a few points which you in fact misunderstood. “Demonstrative” in this passage does not mean demonstrative strictly speaking. It means only the demonstration characteristic of rhetoric. Aristotle<sup>5</sup> is never pedantic in his usage. There is a<sup>6</sup> demonstration, of course in human matters, in rhetoric, and he calls it enthymematic. That's unimportant. When you wondered that he doesn't make a statement about the statement, that I believe is not a great difficulty. It is really very simple: you stand up and say, “I will speak in favor of going to war,” or “against going to war.” That's the statement, and the clearer you state that and with a minimum of rhetorical frills, the better. People can follow you better.

**Mr. Emmert:** What I thought about was, say if we're deliberating about Cuba, the statement would also include establishing the facts of the situation.

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<sup>i</sup> We cannot identify a specific reference for this story. However, it is commonly taken to be the Conservative politician F. E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead, a friend of Churchill, who gave him Aristotle's *Ethics* in the 1920s and received such a response upon Churchill's looking at the work. Nonetheless, recent biographers have noted that Churchill studied, remembered, and was influenced by his reading of Aristotle at school. See William Manchester and Paul Reid, *The Last Lion: Winston Churchill, Defender of the Realm 1940-1965*, vol. 2 (Boston: Little Brown, 2012), 22-23.

<sup>ii</sup> Kirk Emmert, to whose seminar paper Strauss refers, completed his M.A. thesis, “The Political Thought of Winston Churchill,” in March, 1963, and his Ph.D. thesis “Winston Churchill on Empire” in 1972 in Political Science at the University of Chicago. He has since published extensively on Churchill, including *Winston S. Churchill on Empire* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1989).

**LS:** No, no. That's not the statement. The statement is, for example, you accuse or you defend. And this is ordinarily not even necessary because one man is counsel for the defense [and] there is an accuser—that goes without saying, so it is not even necessary. You noted the fact that Aristotle concludes the *Rhetoric* with a chapter on the peroration. And this last chapter is itself a peroration, and this is quite obvious and quite true. You infer from this that although this is a technical book, not a rhetorical book, it is nevertheless to some extent at least a rhetorical treatment of rhetoric. There is something to this and especially the point which you mentioned—that he speaks here more frequently in the last chapters of “thou,” to make it quite clear. I had not observed it.

**Mr. Emmert:** Is that the familiar “you”?

**LS:** Yes, yes—well, the second person singular, which is so impossible to do in English. There is something to [your point], but still I believe fundamentally it is nevertheless a technical work and not a rhetorical work. And how Aristotle combines rhetorical means,<sup>7</sup> that is a question of Aristotle's style, his way of speaking—which is not always purely technical, as we have seen. But this was not the key issue. The key issue was the problem which was stated last time already by Mr. Nicgorski and restated by you in a different way in your paper. It concerns the status of deliberative rhetoric. Can you state [it] again, because you also have to learn something about enunciation or elocution and the proper speed of delivery? It should not be too slow, nor should it be too fast, but in the mean. Now what is the difficulty as you saw it?

**Mr. Emmert:** In one sense, deliberative rhetoric is a lower thing than forensic rhetoric. It is less finished. And also it doesn't employ as many enthymemes, and therefore it is in many cases less demonstrative, to the degree that rhetoric can be demonstrative. But in another sense, in the end with which it is concerned and the type of man it takes to give a great deliberative speech, it is a higher thing. And broader than that, it seemed that at the beginning of the *Rhetoric* Aristotle suggested that one of the reasons he was writing the *Rhetoric*, one of the things that prompted him, was an attempt to come to the aid of political rhetoric. Other rhetoricians had not written about deliberative rhetoric, had said nothing about it. He felt it was a noble thing, an important thing, and he should write [a work] about rhetoric which tells deliberative rhetoricians how to make their argument better.

**LS:** Well, let me restate it. First, there is a difficulty in not—that I think is what Aristotle means by the difference between the statement and the argument in parallel to that. You must first state the difficulty by itself and then you bring in your solution. You must not begin with your solution. I mean, not only because it is more effective if you present a great difficulty and then . . . like someone who is trying to perform any feat, “Here is the difficulty . . . and now see . . .”—but you must [first state the difficulty] for the simple sake of clarity. Now there seems to be a contradiction between the remarks about the<sup>8</sup> relative rank of deliberative and forensic rhetoric made in the first two chapters and what is said in the last Book. And you solved it,<sup>9</sup> in the way in which one has to solve these things, by making a distinction. You know—in one respect, this; in another [that]. Good. Now is this solution acceptable to you, Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Well, for the most part I would say yes. It's as far as I've been able to solve this . . . however, I think the difficulty remains insofar as—Aristotle gives the impression that

deliberative rhetoric shares less in what we might call the rhetorical, the lower rhetorical things.<sup>10</sup> In the very beginning, he somehow associated at the start of the *Rhetoric* the return to the concern with the enthymeme with the restoration of deliberative rhetoric. Yet in Book 3 there is one point where Aristotle specifically says that forensic rhetoric shares less in the rhetorical—

**LS:** And in the enthymeme in particular.

**Mr. Nicgorski:** He says forensic rhetoric shares less in the rhetorical than does deliberative. In this passage about exactness he says it has less to do with that of rhetoric. Also, he says then that<sup>11</sup> the enthymeme is more suitable for forensic rhetoric than for deliberative.

**LS:** Yes, but if the enthymeme is the crown of rhetoric, then forensic rhetoric would seem to be higher *qua* rhetoric than deliberative rhetoric. Yes, but of course the question is, if I may—what is your reconciling—what is the principle underlying your distinction?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** From the narrow viewpoint of the heart of rhetoric you might have to say that forensic is higher because it uses the enthymeme, but in the broader consideration of the subject of rhetoric you would have to say that deliberative rhetoric is higher.

**LS:** In other words, from a narrowly technical, i.e., rhetorical, point of view, forensic rhetoric would be higher; but if you take a broader view [and] take into consideration also the subject matter, deliberative rhetoric would be higher. So this would be the solution. Now if this is true, we see how artful[ly]<sup>iii</sup> Aristotle proceeds at the beginning of the work. And we all went into the trap. The previous rhetoricians neglected deliberative rhetoric, and they neglected the enthymeme; hence, we inferred incautiously, the enthymeme is at home in deliberative rhetoric. And now we see why the two complaints are perfectly justified [about] the defects of previous rhetoric: a) neglect of deliberative rhetoric; b) neglect of enthymeme. These are independent considerations.<sup>12</sup> You can't put them together and simply say [that] that would be a simple and in an external way elegant solution; but in interesting matters the solutions are never so elegant. Can we leave at that? Mr. Nicgorski?

**Mr. Nicgorski:** Just a small addendum, that is that insofar as deliberative rhetoric addresses itself generally to the crowd or the throng, we should all along have expected that deliberative rhetoric would share more in the lower aspects of rhetoric . . . and yet we tended to be led along another path, to associate the higher part of rhetoric, namely the enthymeme, with deliberative rhetoric.

**LS:** Well, I think we have no particular reason for breast-beating, but this is simply one of our most common human vices: thoughtlessness. Thoughtlessness. We should have thought of it but we didn't. And so we had to learn it the hard way from Aristotle. So he had to spell it out

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<sup>iii</sup> Strauss clearly says "artful"; however, it is unclear whether he intends such an adjectival use, "how artful Aristotle proceeds," or rather the adverbial usage, "how artfully Aristotle proceeds at the beginning . . ." If the latter, then Strauss says "artful" either in a slip or by anticipating adjectival usage modifying the "beginning of the work" or Aristotle's proceeding, but then introducing "Aristotle" as the subject, which would have required the adverbial "artfully."

explicitly. But now we will never forget it. Again, thank you Mr. Emmert for your very good paper.

I have to say a few words about Mr. Reinken's paper on last time's assignment. I can only mention a few points. I'll read to you a few sentences to give you some taste of what he does:

The assignment covers the remarkable descent from near-philosophic calm and reason to wrangling, deceit, and particulars. We may be guided in our understanding of rhetoric and its relation to politics if we say that just as politics is a compromising embodiment of justice in material circumstances, so rhetoric is a compromising embodiment of *logos* in material circumstances.

That is very neatly said. Only the question: What is material? The adjective "material" is perhaps somewhat misapplied.

Also it is noted regarding epideictic speech that there will be a single writer and reader in any act of reading; for the contrary is associated with strife and inquisitions. The acme of rhetoric then is found in carefully written, precise, and detailed works in praise of the truly noble addressed to no particular people, meaning not to this *demos* or that jury. They will achieve the effect upon the reader by his attention, not the author's display. [LS: Yes, but a certain display is of course inevitable, you know, the choice of words and so on] The modes of difference between speech and writing most dwelled upon are the presence of repetitions and asyndeton in the former. Both these have the effect of giving us multiplicity instead of unity. More seems to be said than is in fact said, the illusion being supplied by the arts of delivery. If we reverse this form, we may conjecture that in writings such as Aristotle's with its urbane and laconic reticences and abbreviations, and its notable . . . the contrary illusion may be created of less having been written than is in fact written.

Let me say that is a reasonable suggestion. And one more point, I cannot read the whole thing<sup>iv</sup>:

The central means of accusation which alone is not said to be available the defense and is said to be "most artful and most unjust" is to praise our adversary for what is irrelevant and come down very hard on what is relevant [LS: that we surely discussed] The power of this method can at least be apprehended in Antony's funeral oration: "So were they all, honourable men."<sup>v</sup>

That's this kind of praise. This last point:

That this is a matter of the greatest injustice is due to the fact that it rests on the perversion of good to evil. Herein, Aristotle is at one with the Christian theologians against the Utilitarians.

I would like to have an explanation of the last sentence.

<sup>iv</sup> The clause "I cannot read the whole thing" comes from the original transcript.

<sup>v</sup> Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act III, scene 2, l. 85: "So are they all, all honourable men."

**Mr. Reinken:** The question is whether the greatest injustice according to the Utilitarians would be the infliction of the maximum damage.

**LS:**<sup>13</sup> Well, Aristotle does not say that this is the greatest injustice simply. He says only that of these devices this is the most unjust. And does it not inflict the maximum damage by creating the chance that his man will be more severely punished than he otherwise would, or perhaps that he wouldn't be punished at all? <sup>14</sup>I agree with you that Aristotle is no utilitarian, but I would like to understand how you meant that and what you see as the common point between Christian moral theology and Aristotle versus the Utilitarians. This seemed to me not sufficiently prepared.

**Mr. Reinken:** No.

**LS:** All right, then we don't have to go on . . . Now let us then turn to our last assignment. Is there any point someone wants to raise before we enter?

We come to chapter 16 of the Third Book. That deals with the narrative. Now what do we have to say about narrative? First, Aristotle discusses the question [of] why there is no need for a narrative proper, meaning a consecutive narrative, in epideictic speech. It can be done. For example, in Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, which is an epideictic speech in praise of the Spartan King Agesilaus, you have first a long narrative of Agesilaus' life and then afterwards only the *epainos*, the praise proper.<sup>vi</sup> But one can say this was not meant for oral delivery. Now what is the reason why this should not be done? Perhaps we'll read the beginning of chapter 16. Mr. Reinken?

**Mr. Reinken:** "In the epideictic style the narrative should not be consecutive, but disjointed; for it is necessary to go through the actions which form the subject of the speech. For a speech is made up of one part that is inartificial (the speaker being in no way the author of the actions which he relates), and of another that does depend upon art."

**LS:** By the way, from this it follows that epideictic rhetoric is higher than historiography, history writing. Do you see that? Because the historian is bound by the sequence; he does not control his material and cannot throw it around in the way in which the rhetorician<sup>vii</sup> can. He is not master of the material strictly speaking, a point to which I referred last time in a somewhat different context. Now go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

The latter consists in showing that the action did take place, if it be incredible, or that it is of a certain kind, or of a certain importance, or all three altogether. This is why it is sometimes right not to narrate all the facts consecutively, because a demonstration of this kind is difficult to remember. From some facts a man may be shown to be courageous, from others wise or just. Besides, a speech of this kind is simpler, whereas the other is intricate and not plain. It is only necessary to recall famous actions; wherefore most

<sup>vi</sup> Xenophon, *Agesilaus*, trans. E. C. Marchant & G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 183, 1925).

<sup>vii</sup> Strauss must mean the (epideictic) "rhetorician" in contradistinction to the historian, to maintain the coherence of the clear argument of these sentences.

people have no need of narrative—for instance, if you wish to praise Achilles; for everybody knows what he did, and it is only necessary to make use of it. But if you wish to praise Critias, narrative is necessary, for not many people know what he did—

**LS:** Now, this was well explained by Mr. Emmert, the example of Truman. I mean, you would not address a praise of Truman to people who do not know these massive facts. That would not be praise. That would be information, biography or what have you, but not a proper praise. You get here an idea of what Aristotle understands by a praise, and Xenophon's *Agesilaus* is truly a good example. The various virtues are praised: his courage, intelligence, temperance, and so on, and this would be the plan of the praise. It is obvious that a mere narrative—where “here is a wise action, a proof of his wisdom, here a proof of his temperance” would come in accidentally, that would be very disorderly. It is much better to bring the pertinent facts together when you discuss the virtue in question. Yes, Mr. Butterworth?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Is there any significance to the fact that he says praising Achilles here, and has reference to—

**LS:** Critias?

**Mr. Butterworth:** to the *Symposium* . . . .

**LS:** No, but Achilles after all is the most famous of all heroes.

**Mr. Butterworth:** You don't think there's a reference to the *Symposium*?

**LS:** No, no. The only question is why he mentions Critias at the other pole. You know who Critias was: one of the worst of the Thirty Tyrants. And it would be quite a tour de force to write a praise of Critias, but perhaps for this reason a greater rhetorical achievement if you can bring it off. It's possible that he meant that<sup>15</sup>. We come now to narrative in forensic speech.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But at the present day it is absurdly laid down that the narrative should be rapid.”

**LS:** Yes, “at the present day” is too narrow a translation of the Greek word, which means “now,” but<sup>16</sup> I would translate it “as it is.” Aristotle uses this sense quite frequently. It can also mean “now,” but it can have this looser sense.

**Mr. Reinken:**

And yet, as the man said to the baker when he asked whether he was to knead bread hard or soft, “What! Is it impossible to knead it well?” so it is in this case; for the narrative must not be long, nor the exordium, nor the proofs either. For in this case also propriety does not consist either in rapidity or conciseness, but in a due mean; that is, one must say all that will make the facts clear, or create the belief that they have happened or have done injury or wrong, or that they are as important as you wish to make them. The opposite party must do the opposite. And you should incidentally narrate anything that tends to show your own virtue, for instance, “I always recommended him to act rightly, not to forsake his children”; or the wickedness of your opponent, for instance, “but he

answered that, wherever he might be, he would always find other children,” an answer attributed by Herodotus to the Egyptian rebels; or anything which is likely to please the dicasts.

**LS:** Let us stop here for one moment. This subject, how long or how short; should it be long [or] should it be short? And the simple, wise answer—appropriate, neither long nor short but appropriate, was given by a famous rhetorician or sophist, Prodicus, and Socrates quotes it in the name of Prodicus somewhere (I forgot now where).<sup>viii</sup> Now it is very strange that Aristotle doesn't quote Prodicus, but [rather] the customer of a baker, an anonymous man and totally outside of that art. That is also some rhetorical trick, but I could not explain why he does this because everyone<sup>17</sup> who was likely to read<sup>18</sup> [this] book knew that it was the famous Prodicus. Perhaps he wanted to make clear the kinship between rhetoric and these very lowly arts. I do not know.

This example seemed also to show that there is a proper “mean,” [which is] the key word for prudence but it is also the key word for art. And therefore there is a kinship, not identity, between art and therefore also the art of rhetoric, and prudence. They are not identical but they can look identical. And the chief sophism employed by Socrates in the First Book of the *Republic* in trying to refute Thrasymachus consists in the identification of art with prudence, with practical wisdom. On the basis of this rhetorical principle, if *a* resembles *b*, [then] *a* is *b*; and then of course since there is a resemblance of art and prudence, insofar as both aim at the mean, one can then identify them. But this however does not work out in the long run.

Now the next point which Aristotle makes here is that the defender does not need narrative, or to a lesser degree. Why is this so?

**Mr. Reinken:** “In defence, the narrative need not be so long; for the—”<sup>ix</sup>

**LS:** Why, why, why? The reason is very obvious, but it didn't occur to me; I had to look up Cope. Because the accuser spoke first.<sup>x</sup> At least a considerable part of the data had been transmitted by the accuser, and therefore the defender must limit himself to those parts of the *res gestae* which he interprets differently. Let us go on a bit later, after he has spoken of the prologue in the *Oeneus*; yes, afterward: “The narrative must be ethical.”

**Mr. Reinken:** “And the narrative should be of a moral character, and in fact it will be so, if we know what effects this. One thing is to make clear our moral purpose; for as is the moral purpose, so is the character, and as is the end, so is the moral purpose. For this reason mathematical treatises have no moral character, because neither have they moral purpose; for they have no moral end. But the Socratic dialogues have—”<sup>xi</sup>

**LS:** “The mathematical speeches have no characters, but the Socratic speeches have.” The translation is unnecessarily complicated because the word “moral” occurs much less [often]

<sup>viii</sup> *Phaedrus* 267b.

<sup>ix</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 16. 1-6, 1416b16-1417a8.

<sup>x</sup> Cope, *Rhetoric with Commentary*, 3: 190-91.

<sup>xi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 16. 8, 1417a16-21.

here in the original. He doesn't say moral purpose but simply "choice," *proairesis*. And he doesn't say that the mathematical things do not have the "moral" end, but they "do not have an end." Obviously the quantitative value of the angles has nothing to do with any—[it is enough] that it should be good, that it should be equal to two rights, you know. No ends enter.

In the First Book of the *Ethics*, near the beginning, Aristotle had spoken of the opposition between mathematics and rhetoric.<sup>xii</sup> They are, as it were, at opposite poles. Here you have the maximum of demonstration. And in rhetoric you have so to speak the minimum of demonstration in the strict sense of the term. Now here Aristotle uses the examples not of mathematics and rhetoric, but of mathematics and Socratic speeches. And the Socratic speeches are of course in a sense, which is not simply the Aristotelian sense, rhetorical.

What Aristotle says here is [that] you cannot speak of choice without revealing your own choice, and therewith without revealing what kind of person you are. This is of course *the* controversial issue at the present time. The value-free social science says you can speak about choices without revealing your choice. And how shall I say it—I have Aristotle on my side, to put it very immodestly. Now one could say of course against Aristotle that mathematics and Socratic speeches, meaning Socratic dialogues dealing with moral matters, are extreme examples. There are some in between which are not as exact as mathematics and yet have to do with ends, and these are physical speeches, speeches about nature. Not from the point of view of present-day physics, but from the point of view of Aristotle's physics, of course physics deals with ends, with things, beings tending toward ends. That complicates matters a bit. But why can Aristotle disregard that? What's the difference between the end pursued by a growing puppy—namely to become a full-grown puppy—and the end of which he is speaking here?

**Student:** We don't deliberate about dogs' ends.

**LS:** Yes, it's not a deliberate end. It's a natural end, but ends are there too. Go on where we left off, Mr. Reinken.

**Mr. Reinken:**

Other ethical indications are the accompanying peculiarities of each individual character; for instance, "He was talking and walking on at the same time," which indicates effrontery and boorishness. Nor should we speak as if from the intellect, after the manner of present-day orators, but from choice<sup>xiii</sup>: "But I wished it, and I preferred it; and even if I profited nothing, it is better." The first statement indicates prudence, the second virtue; for prudence consists in the pursuit of what is useful, virtue in that of what is honourable. If anything of the kind seems incredible, then the reason must be added—

**LS:** Now let us stop for a moment. Here that is very difficult, this passage, is it not? The prudent man is concerned with the useful. And the good man is concerned with the noble.

<sup>xii</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics* I. 3. 4, 1094b19-27.

<sup>xiii</sup> In accordance with Strauss's previous comment, the reader re-translates as "choice" what is rendered as "moral purpose" in Freese's Loeb translation.

**Student:** Only in the *endoxa*, that's the important thing. You're talking to the many. You're not talking to gentleman. So these definitions—what the many will think of you when you give a speech is that if you're prudent you can do the useful.

**LS:** In other words, you mean to say that here he uses “prudence” in a vulgar sense, in the sense in which we use it ordinarily when we say prudential considerations as distinguished from moral considerations. This is not sufficient, while I think it is true. Here he clearly implies one can be prudent without being good and vice versa. That's the view which Aristotle of course rejects in the *Ethics*. This in itself would show the lower level of the *Rhetoric* of which we had other signs. Remember the discussion of the virtues. But<sup>19</sup> however something of this distinction is preserved in the *Ethics*, some element of it. What is the object of prudence? What is prudence concerned with?

**Another Student:** The object of prudence is . . . choose the good.

**LS:** No, no. He *has* chosen the good, so to speak. But what is his theme? What does he deliberate about? Yes?

**Another Student:** The choice of the right means.

**LS:** Means, not about the ends. But the point is that he is constituted as a prudent man by the fact that he is dedicated to the noble, otherwise he would only be clever. Good. Now let us go on.

**Mr. Reinken:**

of this Sophocles gives an example, where his Antigone says that she cared more for her brother than for her husband or children; for the latter can be replaced after they are gone,

“but when father and mother are in the grave, no brother can ever be born.”

If you have no reason, you should at least say that you are aware that what you assert is incredible, but that it is your nature; for no one believes that a man ever does anything of his own free will except for motives of self-interest.<sup>xiv</sup>

**LS:** “The useful,” “except the useful.” So in other words, if someone says like this one here, “I chose the noble and disregarded gain,” that's untrustworthy, unbelievable. True morality is incredible. But is it simply incredible according to Aristotle that someone should not be concerned with profit? What does Aristotle imply?

**Student:** Perhaps it's connected with this, that true morality is incredible if the man is trying to persuade you that he is being truly good. In other words, he would say in the *Rhetoric* that true morality—

**LS:** Ja, for this reason Aristotle said one should show one's own decency not by affirming that one is decent, but by the way in which one . . . that is not the point.

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<sup>xiv</sup> *Rhetoric*, III. 16. 9, 1417a22-36.

**Mr. Butterworth:** Wouldn't the ultimate argument be that the truest self-interest is virtue, that the man who believes in the virtuous life really . . . his self-interest?

**LS:** I see, in other words, a utilitarian presentation of virtue would be appropriate. But still, why? I mean, not necessarily, because Aristotle believes in true virtue. But why is it incredible? Aristotle expresses himself more unqualifiedly than he means it.

**Student:** Isn't that really a true statement?

**LS:** Pardon.

**Same Student:** Depending on how you take self-interest, all the way from a thief up to a philosopher, all men do act out of self-interest.

**LS:** Ja but this is so very simple. I will first give you my answer. Aristotle again indicates the level of rhetorical argument in these public debates, public discussions. [It] doesn't help a man that he asserts he is virtuous. You know the joke made about the speaker whom they said is against sin? You know, this would never carry any conviction. What Aristotle implies, I believe, is this:<sup>20</sup> Either you must be silent about your own virtues, because that sound is always offensive, or else you must reduce it to a noble nature. That you cannot help doing that, as in a way Antigone does. I believe that is the point. Now not quite obviously: How did I come to that? You know, he says this is so if you do not have a reason but you know that what you say is incredible. Let us assume you have done something showing outstanding nobility and you know that no one will believe you that you did it without any concern for your interest—but then you must say you are by nature such a man; you cannot help doing that, you have no choice in it.

By the way, this passage in the *Antigone* has given rise to—which most of you may remember, when Antigone says this, that she cares more for her brother than for parents or children or husband because only brothers, or for that matter sisters, are irreplaceable.<sup>xv</sup> If a woman loses her husband she can marry another husband. And children—she can get other children, other things being equal. But brothers and sisters are irreplaceable. And Goethe, no mean judge in such matters, found this absolutely unbearable.<sup>xvi</sup> I think there are quite a few classical scholars who say that this is an insertion by another hand based on some story in Herodotus. I must say it makes perfect sense to me in the play, and reveals the character of Antigone very beautifully. She is not only a very spirited girl and a very noble girl, but she is also a very intelligent girl. She cannot stand the notion that she would take this extreme step for anything which is not the most important matter. And the sophistry of passion—she is of course under the influence of a

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<sup>xv</sup> Sophocles, *Antigone*, trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 21, 1994), ll. 909-913.

<sup>xvi</sup> Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe with Johann Peter Eckermann*, trans. John Oxenford, ed. J.K. Moorhead (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998 [1930]), 176-8 (March 28 1827). Goethe's criticizes Antigone's explanation of her actions as "savour[ing] too much of dialectical calculation." Goethe considers this Antigone passage a "blemish," an "excess" of Sophocles' mastery of eloquent explanation of motives. Goethe traces such mastery to the tragic poet's "excellent rhetorical education, by which he became trained to look for all the reasons and seeming reasons of things. Still, his great talent in this respect betrayed him into faults: he sometimes went too far" (178).

passion—gives her a reason. If it had been a case of a mother or of a child, she would also have found a reason, no doubt. But she cannot leave it at the mere—at saying, “<sup>21</sup>I feel that way.” She must give a reason. You doubt that?

**Student:** Well, hers is not precisely a normal family.

**LS:** But still, granting that, but still. You mean to say you would connect it up with the fact that since—once incestuous—yes, but it wasn't known at that time—

**Same Student:** But—

**LS:** Oh yes, sure; of course, you are right. I see. In other words, you would link it up with that, with the incestuous origin. But surely no explicit reference to that is made; she states it universally. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** May I muddy the waters? It strikes me that Antigone's argument is the same one which he just lifted from Herodotus back at the beginning of 1417a, when that argument when used by the Egyptian rebels was, “wherever he might be, he would always find other children.” The replaceability of children has been given us as the height of wickedness in character.

**LS:** Yes, but that is in a very different context. The man deserted his children, which is a very unjust act; and then he replies to that [by saying] that he can get children also elsewhere, which no one questions. In a much nobler context this argument occurs in Machiavelli's *Discourses* somewhere, of this Countess (an Italian Countess, I forget her name)—her children had been taken by the enemy and she was in a fort, and safe and could resist. And they said, “We will kill your children if you do not surrender,” and then with an indecent gesture she said, “I have the wherewithal to get other children.”<sup>xvii</sup> But this was a different context. No, I think there is no connection between these two other examples. Good.

Now in the next chapter Aristotle takes up the question of proofs again. But he had spoken of proofs already before. Why does he take up the subject again? Well, because now he discusses proofs from the point of view of the arrangement of the speech, and not with a view to their intrinsic character. Now when he says in the first sentence of chapter 17 [that] the proofs must be apodictic, this is here understood in a loose sense, in contradistinction to the emotional and ethical, and not in contradistinction to the dialectical and rhetorical. That's the only way in which I think it makes sense. Now will you read the beginning, Mr. Reinken?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Proofs should be demonstrative—”

**LS:** They are “demonstrative” of the kind we have in rhetoric. That must be understood.

**Mr. Reinken:** “and as the disputed points are four, the demonstration should bear on the particular point disputed; for instance, if the fact is disputed, proof of this must be brought at the

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<sup>xvii</sup> Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield & Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 231-32 (Bk. III, chap. 6, paragraph 18). The Italian Countess is Caterina Sforza.

trial before anything else; or if it is maintained that no injury has been done; or that the act was not so important as asserted; or was just, then this must be proved—”

**LS:** This is clear. I mean, he speaks very laconic[ally], but it's obvious. In the later cases he admits that harm was done, but the harm was inflicted justly.<sup>22</sup> We must simply supply these missing parts. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “the three last questions being matters of dispute just as the question of fact. But do not forget that it is only in the case of a dispute as to this question of fact that one of the two parties must necessarily be a rogue; for ignorance is not the cause, as it might be if a question of right or wrong were the issue; so that in this case one should spend time on this topic, but not in the others.”<sup>xviii</sup>

**LS:** So in other words, what Aristotle demands is special attention to the fact that only in certain cases the disparagement of the adversary is absolutely essential. Only in certain cases because if the opponent's character is not disparaged, the character of the other one is necessarily disparaged. It does not come quite clearly out from the formulation, but I think that is what he means. And what he implies I think is this: the disparagement of your opponent will do you harm if it is not necessary to disparage him, which obviously makes sense. If in a given case it is perfectly sufficient to disparage<sup>23</sup> [the opponent's] knowledge of the facts,<sup>24</sup> then it would be very foolish to aggravate the matter by disparaging his character in addition. That is I think what he means here. One other point a bit later on, we don't have to read it all, later on when he speaks about deliberative speeches, a few lines later.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In deliberative oratory, it may be maintained either that certain consequences will not happen, or that what the adversary recommends will happen, but that it will be unjust, inexpedient, or not so important as supposed.”

**LS:** “Unjust.” So justice and injustice do enter deliberative oratory. In the definition which he gave in 1358b20ff, he spoke only of the expedient and inexpedient as the theme of the deliberative orator, and just and unjust [as] the theme of the forensic orator. Now this becomes perfectly clear, how Aristotle means it. Justice and injustice necessarily arises in forensic oratory, whereas not necessarily expediency or inexpediency; and in deliberative, political speech expediency and inexpediency necessarily arise, and not necessarily justice. But of course a question of justice might also arise. This we have to add to our earlier discussion of the subject. Now let us then go on where you left off.

**Mr. Reinken:** “But one must also look to see whether he makes any false statements as to things outside the issue; for these look like evidence that he makes misstatements about the issue itself as well. Examples are best suited to deliberative oratory and enthymemes to forensic. The first is concerned with the future, so that its examples must be derived from the past; the second with the question of the existence or non-existence of facts, in which demonstrative and necessary proofs are more in place; for the past involves a kind of necessity.”<sup>xix</sup>

<sup>xviii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 17. 1-2, 1417b21-30.

<sup>xix</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 17. 4-5, 1417b34-1418a5.

**LS:** In other words, eggs cannot be unscrambled. That is the kind of necessity which he means. They cannot be unscrambled. Here we have a kind of necessity regarding facts, whereas regarding the future there is no necessity. It may or may not happen. If you say, “This man is *bound* to have done this” in a forensic speech, and “We are *bound* to win this war” [in a deliberative speech], this “bound” has a very different meaning in the two cases and the demands for proof differ accordingly. “He is bound to have done this”—this issue is already settled, although we may not know how it was settled [e.g.,] who killed him. As regards the future, the issue is not yet settled in any way, so there is no necessity here.

We cannot read everything. Let us read a bit later on<sup>25</sup> when he says in line 21 that political speech is more difficult than forensic speech.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Deliberative speaking is more difficult than forensic, and naturally so, because it has to do with the future; whereas forensic speaking has to do with the past, which is already known, even by diviners—”

**LS:** Which is a nasty remark [laughter]. You see, this shows the rhetorical element of which you spoke here. It would be interesting to put—well, of course that can only be done by studying all the works of Aristotle—to see whether the rhetorical devices used by Aristotle, [such as irony in this case], are not much more frequent<sup>26</sup> in the *Rhetoric* than in the others. My overall impression is that this is the case, but overall impressions are at best beginnings of a study and not results. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “as Epimenides the Cretan said; for he used to divine, not the future, but only things that were past but obscure. Further, the law—”

**LS:** In the early nineteenth century someone said that the historian is a soothsayer turned toward the past—you know, the diviner of the past. Well, there is something to that. Yes.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, the law is the subject in forensic speaking; and when one has a starting-point—”

**LS:** “The subject,” the *hypothesis*, “the assumption,” that which you presuppose.

**Mr. Reinken:** “is the assumption<sup>xx</sup> in forensic speaking; and when one has a starting-point, it is easier to find a demonstrative proof.”

**LS:** The *hypothesis*, in Greek. That is a starting point, that which you can presuppose. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “Deliberative speaking does not allow many opportunities for lingering—for instance, attacks on the adversary, remarks about oneself, or attempts to arouse emotion. In this branch of Rhetoric there is less room for these than in any other, unless the speaker wanders from the subject.”<sup>xxi</sup>

<sup>xx</sup> In accordance with Strauss’s preceding comment, the reader re-translates as “assumption” what is rendered as “subject” in Freese’s Loeb translation.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 17. 10, 1418a21-29.

**LS:** Why this is? So the forensic speech is from this point of view intellectually higher because it has a clear *archē*, a clear “starting point,” a “principle,” and that’s the law. But there is some starting point of course also in deliberative speech, and what is that?

**Student:** The issue.

**LS:** No, no. What is it that he ultimately aims at, the political speaker?

**Another Student:** The course of action.

**Another student:** The city.

**LS:** Yes, but not simply the city, the well-being of the city, the common good. Now the common good is much less clearly defined than the law. There is always the possibility of questioning this or that interpretation, and therefore from this point of view<sup>27</sup> deliberative rhetoric is lower.<sup>28</sup> Yes?

**Student:** But isn’t it a more difficult thing for the deliberative rhetorician to correctly see what the end is? In other words, the forensic orator has a law, has an easy starting point; the deliberative orator has to find the end—

**LS:** But the question is whether the more difficult is necessarily the higher. That’s a question. And take a simple example. From Aristotle’s point of view there would be no question that geometry is much higher than metrology.<sup>xxii</sup> And it is much more difficult to make a universal statement in metrology than in geometry.<sup>29</sup> The intellectual rank does not—<sup>30</sup>you can also see it is extremely difficult to do tightrope walking, very difficult, and this does not necessarily prove that it is a very high art. The rank of deliberative rhetoric cannot be determined on the basis of its peculiar difficulty. Its subject matter, its importance, and this kind of thing, has to be taken into account.

**Student:** What about, the most difficult kind of rhetoric takes the most gifted man to do it, therefore it’s a higher thing because it takes a greater man—

**LS:** No, if the theme were not so much higher, freedom and empire, than the guilt or innocence of this or that individual, or in a civil suit even less grand—this is the reason why deliberative rhetoric is higher. And since in addition it is also more difficult, it requires much greater art than forensic rhetoric. But the mere difficulty alone would not make it higher. Yes. Now, a little bit later, shortly before 1418b<sup>31</sup>—when he had spoken of Gorgias’ speech. No afterward, after he’s through with Gorgias.

**Mr. Reinken:** “If you have proofs, then, your language must be both ethical and demonstrative; if you have no enthymemes, ethical only. In fact, it is more fitting that a virtuous man should show himself good than that his speech should be painfully exact.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

<sup>xxii</sup> In this and the following sentence Strauss says “metreology” but appears to mean “metrology.”

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 17. 12, 1418a38-b1.

**LS:** Now is there not a difficulty here? This seems to contradict what he said earlier in 1417a35-36, that people think that no one chooses voluntarily anything except what is useful to him. And here he says now the opposite, that the enthymemes are less important than that the speaker shows himself to be a virtuous man. Yes?

**Mr. Butterworth:** Isn't there a difference between showing yourself to be a virtuous man, and saying that you are a virtuous man?

**LS:** That is true. That is quite true. But still, you remember the enthymemes which Aristotle . . . <sup>xxiv</sup>—the enthymeme. I suggested to you, but I'm not satisfied with it, that Aristotle is here speaking still of the epideictic speeches of which he had spoken before. And this would not necessarily be relevant to the forensic and political speeches. But come to think of it, it is of course true, as you imply, that if he is a first-rate orator of amazing cleverness and yet creates the impression that he cannot be trusted, then the whole speech is useless. That is surely true. I think we have to leave it at that.

Another point, later on toward the end of the chapter, after he has given this quotation from a poet, who is it, Callistratus. I'll find it for you [Strauss indicates to Reinken the place]. Begin here.

**Mr. Reinken:** “So much concerning proofs.<sup>32</sup> In regard to moral character, since sometimes, in speaking of ourselves, we render ourselves liable to envy, to the charge of prolixity, or contradiction, or, when speaking of another, we may be accused of abuse or boorishness, we must make another speak in our place, as Isocrates does in the *Philippus*—”<sup>xxv</sup>

**LS:** We do not need the examples, but there are quite a few—on a higher, more dignified level—in the Platonic dialogues; of course very frequently the dialogues within a dialogue. And Socrates says, “Now let us assume someone would say this, then what would we say?” And this man might very well say, this artificial person created for the purpose and for the occasion by Socrates, might say, “You are very great fools if you say that,” whereas Socrates could never say to his interlocutor, “You are a great fool.” With this we are all familiar. Yes. Now a few more things about, first of all, chapter 18. Let us read the beginning.

**Mr. Reinken:** “In regard to interrogation, its employment is especially opportune, when the opponent has already stated the opposite, so that the addition of a question makes the result an absurdity.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

**LS:** Yes, “of a single,” “the addition of a single question.” That I think is the point, the effective thing. And then he gives some examples of that and then almost immediately, the famous example of Socrates which we know from Plato's *Apology*—how Socrates with a single question finishes off Meletus. Meletus says Socrates doesn't believe in gods but he says also Socrates

<sup>xxiv</sup> The first side of the original reel-to-reel tape runs out, and there is a portion missing from Strauss's response.

<sup>xxv</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 17. 16, 1418b23-27.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 18. 1, 1418b40-1419a2.

introduces new daemonic things. And Socrates says: “Well, how can there be daemonic things if there are no daemons? And what is a daemon, either a god or a half-god, let us assume an offspring of a god and a human being. Hence,<sup>33</sup> if I admit daemonic things, I admit daemons, I admit gods.”<sup>xxvii</sup> This single question here settles the issue. Now after that, the fourth example, immediately after he has spoken of Socrates.

**Mr. Reinken:** “Further, when the opponent can do nothing else but answer the question by a sophistical solution; for if he answers ‘Partly yes, and partly no,’ ‘Some are, but some are not,’ ‘In one sense it is so, in another not,’ the hearers cry out against him as being in a difficulty. In other cases interrogation should not be attempted—”<sup>xxviii</sup>

**LS:** Now this case is, I believe, underlying the downfall of Gorgias in the *Gorgias*. I never thought of that before. When Socrates says, “You must answer briefly,” and<sup>34</sup> [Gorgias] says, “Yes, I’m a master of brief answers”—and then he’s through [with] him because he gets every kind of “<sup>35</sup>Did you stop beating your wife?” questions, and if he has to say yes or no, in both cases he is finished. And he cannot say, “I must make a distinction.” But this I believe is really<sup>36</sup> more than a mere boast of Gorgias that he can give brief answers. It is his awareness of this rule, that the interrogated man must as such be able to give brief answers. And the bad impression it makes if someone questioned says, “Well, there is no simple answer possible, we must make a distinction”—there is something fishy. This I think is underlying that.

And of course the wise point which he makes immediately afterward—well, we do not have to read that—but the great question is where you must stop with your questions. You must have very good tactics where to make this preferably single question which finishes your adversary off, rather than complications where the audience simply cannot follow and the whole thing becomes obscure to them to your great disadvantage. The next brief remark at the end of this chapter is about jests, about the ridiculous. Yes?

**Mr. Reinken:** “As for jests, since they may sometimes be useful in debates—”

**LS:** Ja, that is not true: “since it is thought.” You see, Aristotle is very dignified. One can say he is the Jane Austen among the philosophers. He is infinitely more, but he is also that. He would not say “simply,” but “is thought to be.” Then he says as little as he can about it. Now what is that?

**Mr. Reinken:** “the advice of Gorgias was good—to confound the opponents’ earnest with jest and their jest with earnest. We have stated in the *Poetics*<sup>xxix</sup> how many kinds of jests there are, some of them becoming a gentleman, others not. You should therefore choose the kind that suits you. Irony is more gentlemanly than buffoonery; for the first is employed on one’s own account, the second on that of another.”<sup>xxx</sup>

<sup>xxvii</sup> Plato, *Apology*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 36, 1914), 26b3-27a8.

<sup>xxviii</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 18. 4, 1419a13-17.

<sup>xxix</sup> See the footnote in Freese’s Loeb edition, 466: “The chapters are lost (cp. I. 11. 29).”

<sup>xxx</sup> *Rhetoric* III. 18. 7, 1419b3-9.

**LS:** Yes, <sup>37</sup> the ironical man jokes not for the sake of gain, that is I think what he means, not in a serving manner. The buffoon jokes in order to become acceptable to others, to make himself [acceptable]—that's something serving. And the ironical man jokes for the sake of the joke, as it were. And of course not every kind of joke is possible. That goes without saying.

Now the last chapter deals with the peroration, and this truly is the peroration, as Mr. Emmert has pointed out. There is only one little point of curiosity which I would like to mention. In about the middle of the chapter, when he comes to speak of the passions to which one might profitably appeal in the peroration, he mentions seven of them and he makes a peculiar selection. He omits such nice things as friendship and as grace or gracefulness, and also fear and shame. I do not know how to explain this. In other words, either [to Mr. Emmert] you are right and there is much reason for saying what you said, that this is very well worked out. The peroration is a peroration, so he does what he speaks about. And if this should be true generally, I really could not comment . . . on the basis of what I've understood . . . then these little things would also have to be interpreted. I have no reply to that. . . .

So I would like to bring up a more general question in conclusion of this course, but is there any other point here in what we have read today which someone would like to bring up? Well, we have discussed a few times the question: what has happened to rhetoric in the last generation? I disregard now such interesting questions, but very limited ones—for example, the alleged or real decay of parliamentary rhetoric. Some people trace it to the importance of party discipline, especially in Britain. In other words, the chances that a speaker, say, a conservative speaker, might persuade labor members, or vice versa, have become zero, and therefore there is no longer a premium on parliamentary debate. There may be something to that but this is not the fundamental issue.

The fundamental issue is rather this: That if we take rhetoric in the broadest and deepest sense, as it was understood by Plato and Aristotle, then it bridges somehow the gulf between philosophy and the polis. This is much clearer in Plato than in Aristotle, but it is of course also noticeable in Aristotle. Now this gulf is bridged in modern times by an entirely different means: in the first place, by the popularization of philosophy or science; and, secondly, by technology. Philosophy, or science, is productive of good things which everyone, however non-philosophic, can see to be a good thing, like the disappearance of some man-killing diseases. Everyone can see that it is better to have no plagues. There is no question, so that technology and popularized science makes a solution.

The second point, of which I spoke last time, was the modern concept of art, where art is divorced completely from utility, political or otherwise, and therefore the artful character and the connection between poetry and rhetoric is no longer truly intelligible. But there is [this] implied in what I said before (but I would still like to spell it out again explicitly)<sup>38</sup>: The modern notion of science, which implies the omniscience of science at least *de jure* (*de facto* of course there is no question), but there is no theme which is not subject to scientific treatment in the sense of modern science. And this scientific treatment, if achieved, will make superfluous any other treatment. Ideally, what we call the commonsense understanding of political things can be replaced by a scientific understanding; all commonsense understanding is only provisional.

Now there is however one admitted difficulty. This omniscient science cannot validate or invalidate value judgments. This is wholly outside the sphere of science. And here one could say, Well, here is where rhetoric comes in. Rhetoric substantiates the value judgments. But the implication of the now-prevailing view is this: Value judgments cannot be supported by *any* reasoning, scientific or rhetorical, because they are radically emotional. In other words, the possibility that value judgments might be supported by a certain kind of reasoning, namely rhetorical reasoning, is not taken seriously. That is an additional reason.

Now I said on an earlier occasion and perhaps I can do this today [that] it would be a very interesting and worthwhile study to analyze the character of the reasoning employed in the *Federalist Papers*.<sup>xxxii</sup> This is a state paper of the first order, and it is surely not a scientific book in the present-day sense of science. It is high-class reasoning. What kind of reasoning is that? The *Federalist Papers* are so interesting from this point of view because the modern notion of science existed already to some extent at that time of course, after Newton naturally, but it is (so to say) somewhere in between the classical, pre-modern view and the view now prevailing.

There are a few passages which I thought I should read to you. One moment. "The science of politics"; that is said in No. 9.

The science of politics,<sup>xxxii</sup> like most other sciences, has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now well understood, which were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients. The regular distribution of power into distinct departments—<sup>xxxiii</sup>

This means separation of powers and so on. So in other words, there is a political science, and this political science has progressed in important points in the last century or so, just as natural science has progressed. And this typical premise of modern thought is here the notion. Now the main statement about science occurs at the beginning of No. 31. I will read to you a few points:

In disquisitions of every kind there are certain primary truths, or first principles, upon which all subsequent reasonings must depend. These contain an internal evidence which, antecedent to all reflection or combination, commands the assent of the mind [LS: self-evident truth]. Where it produces not this effect, it must proceed either from some defect or disorder in the organs of perception, or from the influence of some strong interest, or passion, or prejudice. Of this nature are the maxims in geometry that the whole is greater than its parts; that things equal to the same are equal to one another; that two straight lines cannot enclose a space; and that all right angles are equal to each other. Of the same nature [LS: as these mathematical principles] are these other maxims in ethics and politics, that there cannot be an effect without a cause; that the means ought to be

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Alexander Hamilton, James Madison & John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter, Charles Kesler (New York: Signet Classic, New American Library, Penguin, 2003 [Penguin, 1961]).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> The *Federalist* text edited by Rossiter reads: "The science of politics, *however*, like most other sciences" (67, italics used for any discrepancies from Strauss's reading of the text in the seminar). Perhaps Strauss chooses to skip the "however," as it relates to the previous sentence which he has not read.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> *Federalist* No. 9, 67.

proportioned to the end [LS: you see they don't make a distinction] that every power ought to be commensurate with its object; that there ought to be no limitation of a power destined to effect a purpose which is itself incapable of limitation. And there are other truths in the two latter sciences [LS: meaning ethics and politics] which, if they cannot pretend to rank in the class of axioms, are yet such direct inferences from them, and so obvious in themselves, and so agreeable to the natural and unsophisticated dictates of common sense that they challenge the assent of a sound and unbiased mind with a degree of force and conviction almost equally irresistible.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

I think that is a most important statement about this question of rhetoric and science. Did you notice here something? Here there is no place for rhetoric, obviously. This is science. But there is one little irregularity in this statement. Yes?

**Student:** Common sense . . . .

**LS:** No, no. Common sense means here simply the unspoiled, natural understanding. He speaks here of maxims in ethics and politics, and there is nothing peculiarly ethical here—I mean these are rules of prudence in the morally neutral sense of the term.<sup>39</sup> That goes without saying. Machiavelli would absolutely agree with that—that there cannot be an effect without a cause, that the means ought to be proportioned to the ends. If you want to conquer the world you have to have a proper military superiority, and so on. So here this is one statement of particular importance. Immediately following, he says:

Though it cannot be pretended that the principles of moral and political knowledge have, in general, the same degree of certainty with those of the mathematics, yet they have much better claims in this respect than<sup>xxxv</sup> we should be disposed to allow them.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

In other words, here there comes a slight qualification: for one reason or the other, the evidence and the scientific character is not quite as great in moral and political matters than in mathematics. Let me see a few more passages. Yes?

**Student:** You seemed to be making something of that “ought.” It seems to be significant. When you went to the first ought statement—

**LS:** No, only in contradiction to a present-day view because there it sounds so strange that an ought statement comes in. But then of course one could easily satisfy our contemporaries [by] saying [that] what he means is this: if you want the end, you ought as a sensible man to wish also the means. [From No. 34]:

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> *Federalist* No. 31, 189.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Strauss begins to pronounce (the words “to judge”) but then apparently decides to skip part of this sentence; the *Federalist* text edited by Rossiter reads: “yet they have much better claims in this respect than *to judge from the conduct of men in particular situations* we should be disposed to allow them” (190, italics for discrepancies from Strauss's reading).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> *Federalist* No. 31, 190.

Admitting that we ought to try the novel and absurd experiment in politics<sup>40</sup> of tying up the hands of government from offensive war founded upon reasons of state, yet certainly we ought not to disable it from guarding the community against the ambition or enmity of other nations . . . . To judge from the history of mankind [LS: a rhetorical argument], we shall be compelled to conclude that the fiery and destructive passions of war reign in the human breast with much more powerful sway than the mild and beneficent sentiments of peace; and that to model our political systems upon speculations of lasting tranquility is<sup>xxxvii</sup> to calculate on the weaker springs of the human character.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

In other words, it is not wholly baseless because these springs exist. There is a kind of calculation going on on the other side, but an unreasonable one, because you must calculate on the stronger springs. And then he comes to the question, "What are the chief sources of expense in every government?" And the answer of course [is that] all other expenses are insignificant in comparison with those which relate to the national defense. Now, this is here one of these axiomatic presuppositions on which the argument of the *Federalist Papers* is based. The basis of the argument is the history of mankind, what Aristotle would call examples, but a bit more than examples, because he means of course that there is no example to the contrary. There was never a period, say, of 50 years in any country without war. Good.

Here we have another most important truth. Well, I have not corrected everything, a few more points. [From No. 47]:

No political truth is certainly of greater intrinsic value, or is stamped with the authority of more enlightened patrons of liberty [LS: You see, the one is intrinsic, the other is from authority, i.e., rhetorical] than that on which the objection is founded. The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny . . . . In order to form correct ideas on this important subject it will be proper to investigate the sense in which the preservation of liberty requires that the three great departments of power should be separate and distinct.<sup>xxxix</sup>

This, in other words, is a most important truth: the separation of power, but it is not of mathematical clarity; there is some qualification needed. A complete separation would be even fatal, as is shown in the next number, [No. 48].<sup>41</sup> Later on, in No. 49, they stress the necessity of political arrangements having their basis in opinion as distinguished from knowledge or science.

If it be true that all governments rest on opinion, it is no less true that the strength of opinion in each individual, and its practical influence on his conduct, depend much on the number which he supposes to have entertained the same opinion.<sup>xl</sup>

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<sup>xxxvii</sup> The *Federalist* text edited by Rossiter reads: "*would be* to calculate on the weaker springs..." (204, italics for discrepancies from Strauss's reading).

<sup>xxxviii</sup> *Federalist*, No. 34, 204.

<sup>xxxix</sup> *Federalist*, No. 47, 298.

<sup>xl</sup> *Federalist*, No. 49, 311.

Here is obviously the rhetorical logic. In the scientific argument the number of people who agree with it is utterly irrelevant, although in certain kinds of scholarly discussions questions seem to be settled at the present time by this method. Then he goes on:

[But]<sup>xli</sup> a nation of philosophers is as little to be expected as the philosophical race of kings wished for by Plato. And in every other nation, the most rational government [LS: i.e., men of science] will not find it a superfluous advantage to have the prejudices of the community on its side.<sup>xlii</sup>

Here therefore, naturally this applies to the authors of the *Federalist* themselves. And these remarks in No. 51:

Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place.<sup>xliii</sup>

And so on. The wise men, the knowers, the scientists, use the opinions and the passions which can never be replaced by knowledge. You will never have a community of knowers who act from knowledge. This is clear.

The result of the deliberations of all collective bodies must necessarily be a compound, as well of the errors and prejudices as of the good sense and wisdom of the individuals of whom they are composed . . . How can perfection spring from such materials?<sup>xliv</sup>

Another passage; in No. 80 a sentence begins as follows: "If there are such things as political axioms."<sup>xlv</sup> So in other words, what he seemed to have said before, [that] there are such axioms in political science as in mathematics, is now questioned. Yes, there are a few more. Let me see. Here, a statement in No. 68:

This process of election affords a moral certainty [LS: Now, moral certainty was always understood in contradistinction to mathematical certainty] that the office of President will never<sup>xlvi</sup> fall to the lot of any man who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications . . . It will not be too strong to say that there will be a constant probability of seeing the station filled by characters pre-eminent for ability and virtue.<sup>xlvii</sup>

<sup>42</sup>“Probability” does not mean here of course something which you could figure out mathematically, or the figuring out of which in mathematical terms would be of any use. Moral

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<sup>xli</sup> Strauss skips the opening word of the sentence: “*But* a nation of philosophers...” (312, italics for discrepancies from Strauss’s reading). Again, perhaps Strauss chooses to skip the “but,” as it relates to the previous sentence which he has not read.

<sup>xlii</sup> *Federalist* No. 49, 312.

<sup>xliii</sup> *Federalist* No. 51, 319.

<sup>xliv</sup> *Federalist* No. 85, 523.

<sup>xlv</sup> *Federalist* No. 80, 475.

<sup>xlvi</sup> The *Federalist* text edited by Rossiter reads: “*seldom* fall to the lot of any man . . . .” (412, italics for discrepancies from Strauss’s reading).

<sup>xlvii</sup> *Federalist* No. 68, 412.

certainty *is* theoretically speaking a probability. In the main I would say (although there are surely quite a few things which are straight from peculiarly modern political thought<sup>43</sup>) [that] this is still the older view.

One sentence which is particularly topical, I thought: “The mensuration of the faculties of the mind has, I believe, no place in the catalogue of known arts.”<sup>xlviii</sup> Here this would be a major point. But of course for practical purposes as such it is still true: no one votes for a candidate for office on the basis of what some experts might tell him about his IQ. In these cases, I think all men like to form their judgments on the basis of what they can see with their own eyes because a man might have a terrific IQ and be wholly unfit for any office.

It would be of some interest, I think,<sup>44</sup> to discuss these<sup>45</sup> explicit remarks about the character of certainty of the argument. I could not find the passage (it has been a long time since I read the *Federalist Papers*) in which they speak about the fundamental premise of the whole argument—let us say the democratic premise and what its status is. My recollection is that they simply take it as a datum. Since we have to make a constitution for the American people, and since they are dead set against such things<sup>46</sup> [as] hereditary nobility or whatever it may be, we simply accept the *hypothesis*,<sup>xlix</sup> as the ancients would say, of a democratic republic. But it is a bit more complicated, I know that. I couldn't find [the passage]. But this would be of course of importance for judging of the character of the argument. What is the intellectual, theoretical dignity of the basic premise of this argument?

Well, I wish you a pleasant vacation and progress, especially for those of you who are working on a Master's or Doctoral thesis, that when we meet again the worst will be over.

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<sup>xlviii</sup> *Federalist* No. 79, 473.

<sup>xlix</sup> Strauss clearly pronounces “*hypothesis*” in Greek. Cf. Strauss's comment on Aristotle's usage of the Greek *hypothesis* above, 360.

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- <sup>1</sup> Deleted “what—.”
- <sup>2</sup> Deleted “but it.”
- <sup>3</sup> Deleted “and then.”
- <sup>4</sup> Moved “in.”
- <sup>5</sup> Deleted “always—he.”
- <sup>6</sup> Deleted “there is a kind, you know.”
- <sup>7</sup> Deleted “in other words.”
- <sup>8</sup> Deleted “relation—.”
- <sup>9</sup> Deleted “by.”
- <sup>10</sup> Deleted “Insofar as we—.”
- <sup>11</sup> Deleted “forensic rhetoric is generally more associated with—.”
- <sup>12</sup> Deleted “They are not—.”
- <sup>13</sup> Deleted “But is this not here—.”
- <sup>14</sup> Deleted “I mean.”
- <sup>15</sup> Deleted “by that.”
- <sup>16</sup> Deleted “it can also—.”
- <sup>17</sup> Deleted “knew that.”
- <sup>18</sup> Deleted “that.”
- <sup>19</sup> Deleted “there is.”
- <sup>20</sup> Deleted “If you have to speak of a decent quality of yours—no.”
- <sup>21</sup> Deleted “this is my.”
- <sup>22</sup> Deleted “He never makes it—.”
- <sup>23</sup> Deleted “his.”
- <sup>24</sup> Moved “the opponent’s.”
- <sup>25</sup> Deleted “after.”
- <sup>26</sup> Moved “such as irony in this case,,” Deleted “more frequent.”
- <sup>27</sup> Deleted “it.”

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<sup>28</sup> Moved “Deliberative rhetoric.” Deleted “is lower.”

<sup>29</sup> Deleted “in other words, you see.”

<sup>30</sup> Deleted “and.”

<sup>31</sup> Deleted “**Mr. Reinken**: “Epideictic speeches should be varied with laudatory episodes—” (III.17.11) **LS**: No, I think a bit earlier.”

<sup>32</sup> Deleted “[page 461].”

<sup>33</sup> Deleted “if I believe—.”

<sup>34</sup> Deleted “he.”

<sup>35</sup> Deleted “did you beat—.”

<sup>36</sup> Deleted “—it is.”

<sup>37</sup> Deleted “so in other words.”

<sup>38</sup> Moved “this.”

<sup>39</sup> Deleted “because—.”

<sup>40</sup> Deleted “he’s used the language of the ... no, no he does not.”

<sup>41</sup> Deleted “**Student**: Could you give us the last two citations?”

**LS**: 47, No. 47.

**Same Student**: And the one before that?

**LS**: It can be done. No. 34. Yes..”

<sup>42</sup> Deleted “these terms.”

<sup>43</sup> Moved “peculiarly”; deleted “modern political thought”; deleted “in the main.”

<sup>44</sup> Deleted “of some interest.”

<sup>45</sup> Deleted “these—someone who has some training in logic—first of all.”

<sup>46</sup> Deleted “like.”