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The Wisdom of the Ancients. The German-Jewish Revaluation of Ancient Philosophy

Guest Editors:

Anna Romani and Fabio Fossa

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Naturalness and Historicity: Strauss and Klein on the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns*

Danilo Manca

Abstract: In the current article I discuss the different ways in which Leo Strauss and Jacob Klein interpret the need of reopening the hoary quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. Their task is to respond to the crisis of reason characterizing European thought and the style of life after the First World War. This provides me with the opportunity to address the issue of how philosophy should face the problem of its naturalness and historicity. I argue that Strauss's position can be understood as the mirror-image of that of Klein. Strauss thinks that the return to the ancients could overcome the historicist approach to fundamental issues characterizing modern philosophy, and consequently arise the problem of the nature of things over again. Klein thinks that the return to the ancients can lead modern man back to the hidden roots of its typical philosophical approach. The model for Strauss's approach to philosophical eternal issues is the medieval commentary. On the contrary, Klein holds that the philosopher should devote himself, or herself, to doing history of philosophy, by reconstructing how philosophical paradigms change over the centuries.

Keywords: Leo Strauss, Jacob Klein, historicity, naturalness, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns

1. Introduction

The quarrel between the ancients and the moderns is not only a debate that heated up and shook the *Académie française* in the early 17th century. It can also be considered a strategy through which modern philosophy strove to circumscribe its epoch and to define its way of thinking. Thinkers such as Galileo, Descartes and Hobbes spent time and filled pages to mark the difference between their worldview and that of Aristotle and the Scholastics. Thinkers such as Schiller and Hegel delve deeper into the difference between the ancients and the moderns in order to acquire awareness of its epoch and foster a revolution of it.

The quarrel was intentionally reopened in the 20th century by some Jewish native thinkers who studied with Husserl and Heidegger and appreciated Nietzsche. Such an operation constitutes their response to the crisis of reason in their time. Leo Strauss and his lifelong friend Jacob Klein were two supporters of this operation¹. In the following article, I will focus on the different ways in which

Strauss and Klein interpret this quarrel, since this provides me with the opportunity to address the issue of how philosophy should face the problem of its naturalness and historicity.

2. Historicity and Naivety in Modern Philosophy

At the beginning of his article on *Political Philosophy and History*, Strauss claims that “political philosophy is not a historical discipline.” In his view, the philosophical questions concerning the nature of political things and the problem of the best political order are fundamentally different from historical questions, “which always concern individuals: individual groups, individual human beings, individual achievements, individual ‘civilizations’, the one individual ‘process’ of human civilization from its beginning to the present.”²

Strauss distinguishes the questions of political philosophy from those of the history of political philosophy. Political philosophy seeks the essence of political things. On the contrary, the history of political philosophy focuses on “how this or that philosopher or all philosophers have approached, discussed or answered the philosophic question mentioned.”³ Yet, this does not mean that the political philosophy is absolutely independent of history. According to Strauss, the history of philosophy contributes to the development of political philosophy in two ways. Firstly, it represents a preliminary activity without which political philosophy cannot comprehend its essential task: “Without the experience of the variety of political institutions and convictions in different countries and at different times, the questions of the nature of political things and of the best [...] political order could never been raised.”⁴ In other words, it is after having realized that political forms and political opinions are many, that we ask what is the best or the most worthwhile political order. Secondly, the history of philosophy is auxiliary to political philosophy: “Only historical knowledge can prevent one from mistaking the specific features of the political life of one's time and one's country for the nature of political things.”⁵

Strauss stresses that the history of political philosophy “does not form an integral part” of political philosophy, since it is necessarily concerned with the contingent aspects of the philosophical questioning activity.

At the beginning of his article, Strauss does not specify whether his position on the role that the history of philosophy plays in the philosophical activity is valid at any time. But, after a few pages, we understand that he was exclusively referring to the ancient state of affairs. Indeed, from his perspective, we routinely take for granted that “historical knowledge forms an integral part of the highest kind of learning.”⁶ However, if we look back to the past, we realize that “when Plato sketched in his *Republic* a plan of studies, he mentioned arithmetic, geometry, astronomy,” but “he did not allude to history.” And still, Aristotle, who “was responsible of the most outstanding historical research done in classical antiquity,”⁷ saw poetry as more philosophical than history. In the ancient and medieval ages “history was left to antiquarians rather than to philosophers.”⁸

The situation changes in the 16th century when history becomes a specific field, “a world of its own fundamentally different from, although of course related to, that other ‘field’, ‘Nature’.”⁹

When history became an object of knowledge, the dream of a “philosophy of history” arose. In other words, many thinkers entertain the idea that the historical becoming follows an order which can be explored and reduced to some categories. Furthermore, although the universal issues of traditional philosophy were not abandoned, they were integrated with a concern for the influence that a historically determined culture within which a philosopher was born has exercised on his thought and method. Hence, any attempt to address the universal issues of traditional philosophy must now be considered historically conditioned. Such a changement led to historicism: “‘History’ itself seems to have decided in favour of historicism.”¹⁰

At the end of his article, Strauss proposes applying historicism to itself. Historicizing historicism means to acknowledge that the success of historicism depends on a peculiar character of modern philosophy, which Strauss outlines as follows:

Modern political philosophy or science, as distinguished from pre-modern political philosophy or science, is in need of the history of political philosophy or science as an integral part of its own efforts. For historicism asserts that the fusion of philosophic and historical marks in itself a progress beyond ‘naïve’ non-historical philosophy, whereas we limit ourselves to asserting that that fusion is, within the limits indicated, inevitable on the basis of modern philosophy, as distinguished from pre-modern philosophy or ‘the philosophy of the future’.¹¹

By assuming to be the only acceptable approach to philosophy, historicism overlooks its limits and misses an important point: once it claims that all answers to philosophical questions are necessarily historically conditioned, it has to accept that this claim, too, is subject to the context from which it comes about. In other words, the idea that philosophical questions are one with historical questions should be considered a historically conditioned truth in turn. The philosopher who catches this point is already out of historicism. The philosopher who holds that the history of philosophy is an integral part of philosophical activity only in the modern age has already reopened the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. More specifically, this philosopher is spontaneously

driven to bracket the idea according to which the modern fusion of philosophical and historical questions is in itself a progress. The general aim is to understand what kind of difference there is between “pre-modern non-historical philosophy” and the modern historical one¹².

Strauss explains this difference by saying that pre-modern philosophy is intrinsically “naïve,” whereas modern philosophy “consists to a considerable extent of inherited knowledge.”¹³ These assertions are strictly connected with each other: inherited knowledge cannot be naïve; rather, it has to be taken as acquired knowledge. Strauss distinguishes inherited knowledge from independently acquired knowledge. By inherited knowledge, he means “the philosophic or scientific knowledge a man takes over from former generations, or, more generally expressed, from others”¹⁴; by independently acquired knowledge, he means “the philosophic or scientific knowledge a mature scholar acquires in his unbiased intercourse, as fully enlightened as possible as to its presuppositions, with his subject matter.”¹⁵

In Strauss’s view, modern political philosophy inevitably keeps a specific form of dependence on classical philosophy. More specifically, it appears as a modification of, and even in opposition to, an earlier political philosophy. Hence, modern political philosophy has only two chances: it can remain an inherited knowledge, unaware of the tradition from which, and in opposition to which, it was acquired. Alternatively, it can be transformed into genuine knowledge “by re-vitalizing its original discovery, and to discriminate between the genuine and the spurious elements of what claims to be inherited knowledge.”

In light of this, my questions are now the following: by “genuine elements” does Strauss mean that part of classical thought which is kept sedimented in modern thought? If so, should we draw the conclusion that modern thought is not genuine in itself? Is it necessarily derived? I am convinced that Strauss’s conclusion is more articulated than that could seem to be reached here. First of all, he is inclined to think that is that modern political philosophy could be said to be genuine, but is in no way natural.

Strauss spells this out by quoting Hegel and by referring to Jacob Klein. In particular, he quotes the following passage taken from Hegel’s foreword in *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

The manner of study in ancient times is distinct from that of modern times, in that the former consisted in the veritable training and perfecting of the natural consciousness. Trying its powers at each part of its life severally, and philosophizing about everything it came across, the natural consciousness transformed itself into a universality of abstract understanding which was active in every matter and in every respect. In modern times, however, the individual finds the abstract form ready made.¹⁶

Strauss identifies “the natural consciousness” with the pre-philosophical one. From this perspective, the final results of the philosophic efforts of classical antiquity would represent the starting point of modern thought. Whether the results of antiquity were taken for granted or consciously modified, modern political philosophy cannot be described as simply emerging from the “natural consciousness.” In fact, it does not arise from a direct refer-

ence to political phenomena as they are accessible to a pre-philosophical thought in daily experience. But this does not imply that modern philosophy cannot be said to be genuine. It is genuine insofar as it recognizes the gap and the specific relation of “dependence” that it maintains with classical philosophy. Put differently, modern philosophy can be genuine, but in no way natural. Its starting point is the result of a tradition, therefore it cannot in any way be naïve. And if a modern philosopher thinks himself naïve, then he is simply taking for granted the work of generations of pre-modern thinkers.

In a note to Hegel’s quote, Strauss invites us to consider Jacob Klein’s *Die griechische Logistik und die Entstehung der modernen Algebra* for a more precise analysis, in particular he refers to page 122, which coincides with the first page of the introduction to the second part of the book. This paragraph is entitled “Über die Differenz antiker und moderner Begrifflichkeit.” Here Klein discusses the relationship between the ancient and the modern approach to scientific activity: “The ancient mode of thinking and conceiving is, after all, not totally ‘strange’ or closed to us.”¹⁷ The “new” modern science arises out of the bequest of the ancient science. Its starting point is a “science already in existence,” whereas the Greek science has a “natural” basis.” In other words, Greek science comes up as a modification of, and stands in opposition to, a non- or pre-scientific attitude. By contrast, the new modern science is erected “in deliberate opposition to the concepts and methods”¹⁸ of Greek science. Up to now, Strauss’s account is very close to Klein’s.

However, Klein takes a position that, in my view, is not the same as Strauss’s. Klein attributes to modern philosophy a form of naturalness as well. More specifically, he notices that the opposition of some founders of the new science, such as Galileo, Stevin, Kepler and Descartes, to the ancient mode of thinking and conceiving is, rather, an opposition to a consolidated tradition:

They are carried by an original impulse which is quite foreign to the learned science of the schools. The scientific interest of these men and their precursors is kindled mostly by problems of applied mechanics and applied optics, by problems of architecture, of machine construction, of painting, and of the newly discovered instrumental optics.¹⁹

This leads Klein to claim that “whereas the ‘naturalness’ of Greek science is determined precisely by the fact that it arises out of ‘natural’ foundation, [...] the naturalness of modern science is an expression of its polemical attitude toward school science.”²⁰ Put in Strauss’s words, whereas the naturalness of Greek philosophy lies on an attitude pointed toward the phenomena of the pre-scientific world, the naturalness of the moderns is rooted in their capacity to turn their attention from knowledge acquired by the school to knowledge genuinely graspable by experimenting.

In such a way, Klein does not deny that modern philosophy could be naïve. He notices that modern science is characterized by a symbolic formalism and a calculational technique: “It determines its objects by reflecting on the way in which these objects become accessible through a general method.”²¹ Moreover, whereas ancient science illustrates its determinate object, modern science signifies

its possible determinacy; whereas ancient concepts directly refer to the object, modern concepts refer only indirectly to the object and directly to other concepts.²² However, by considering Klein’s position in relation with Strauss’s distinction between genuine and inherited knowledge, the naturalness of the moderns appears to be one with its genuine attitude.

For Strauss, knowledge could be described as genuine inasmuch as it is acquired by re-vitalizing the original horizon within which a discovery occurred. In other words, in order to be genuine, knowledge should be free of inherited elements. It is necessary that we assume no elements by tradition surreptitiously and unconsciously. This is possible only if we strive to re-activate the naivety characterizing the natural attitude of the ancients. We have to reconstruct an attitude pointed toward the pre-scientific world *which was natural for the ancients*.

Klein shares with Strauss the idea that knowledge is genuine if not mediated by tradition. However, unlike Strauss, Klein thinks that modern philosophy is not made genuine by an act aimed at reproducing the natural consciousness of the ancients, or by one striving to do it. Rather, founders of modern philosophy think in a genuine way once they begin by opposing the ancient mode of thinking, which works on them as inherited knowledge. Moreover, the naturalness of modern philosophy cannot coincide with the effort to act *as if* one were naïve. Obviously, the modern pre-scientific world is no longer the ancient one. New elements belong to the sphere of the modern everyday experience. The ancients had acquired these elements, which successively are *natural for the moderns*. This is the case, for instance, of the geometric structure of natural objects. In modern times, such structure becomes spontaneously graspable “by a naked eye.”

3. On the Nature of Historical Activity

Klein’s position undermines Strauss’s conviction that modern philosophy cannot establish a direct relation with the pre-scientific horizon of daily experience. Klein re-defines the role that the history of philosophy might play in the typical philosophical activity of questioning. Let me explain my idea in two steps: in the first, I will focus on the idea of naturalness; in the second, I will come back to the problem of the history of philosophy.

One of the authors Strauss and Klein are thinking of when they speak of the naturalness of consciousness is Husserl. He was elected by Klein as his most relevant teacher, but also Strauss gave him some credit. In his article on “The Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy,” Strauss says that Husserl’s phenomenology “surpasses in significance everything I know of, which was done in Germany in the last 50 years.”²³ Furthermore, he adds that Husserl’s analysis of the transformation of the geometry underlying Galileo’s physics in *Crisis* is “the model for any analysis concerning the basic assumptions of modern science and philosophy.”²⁴

In *Crisis* § 9h Husserl describes Galileo at once as “a discovering and concealing genius” [*entdeckender und verdeckender Genius*]²⁵. Indeed, while discovering the mathematical world as a horizon of limit-forms, Galileo

conceals the life-world, that is the natural pre-scientific horizon from which scientific inquiry comes up and in which it is necessarily grounded. However, this does not entail that modern thinkers have no life-world. We have to distinguish the form of the prescientific life-world from its contents. The form, Husserl argues, is the same at any time. The life-world is the horizon within which man lives straightforwardly, having his goals in the object. It is substantially un-thematic²⁶. That is why the attitude that each man undertakes within the life-world is said to be natural. But the objects and the contents towards which we direct our interests are not always the same. They change along with time and articulate the evolution of human culture. This overview coincides with that which prompts Klein to ascribe a kind of naturalness to the moderns, too.

Stanley Rosen has reproached Strauss for having thought, in accordance with Husserl, that there was a time when such a thing as a “natural consciousness” existed. Rosen criticizes the idea according to which supposing the de-sedimentation of this pre-scientific life-world could purge modernity of its defects²⁷. If this is Strauss’s view, it doubtless does not belong to Husserl. Let me spell this out by employing another philosophical example which Strauss takes into account.

In his article on “The Living Issues of German Post-war Philosophy” Strauss recalls Schiller’s essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*²⁸. Schiller, he noticed, “had described the relation of the moderns to the ancients in these terms: the Greeks *were* nature, whereas for modern man, nature, being natural, is only an ought, an *ideal*; modern man has a *longing* for what was *real* in Greece.”²⁹ However, as Péter Szondi has demonstrated,³⁰ Schiller clearly distinguishes the natural way of living from the naive way. Greek man is not aware of being nature. When he becomes aware—that is as to say when he becomes a philosopher—it is no longer natural. Yet, two chances are still at stake: to seek naturalness or to live artificially. By employing this argument in order to interpret the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, two different positions can be taken: one corresponds to that of Friedrich Schlegel, the other to that which Szondi attributes to Schiller. The first is ascribable to Strauss, the second to Klein.

According to Schlegel, naturalness coincides with the spontaneity of classical poetry; no naivety in the compositional activity belongs to the modern poet³¹. Szondi states that he or she who has a longing for the natural way of living could reactivate the characteristic attitude of Greek man in a recasted manner. Naivety has to be acquired, by reproducing a particular way of living characterized by spontaneity. Furthermore, the naivety is no historical paradigm; rather, it is a mode of feeling, as Schiller repeatedly writes.

Similarly to Schlegel, Strauss holds that the world as it is present for, and experience by, a natural point of view had been discussed by Plato and Aristotle and not by the founders of modern philosophy, nor by its successors. An example of this would be Hegel, who, in Strauss’s view, “had indeed attempted to understand ‘the concrete’, the phenomena themselves, but he had tried to ‘construct’ them by starting from the ‘abstract’. Whereas this was precisely the meaning of the Socratic turning: that science

must *start* from the known, from the ‘known to us’, from what is known in ordinary experience, and that science *consists* in *understanding* what is known indeed, but non understood adequately.”³² This conviction prompts Strauss to conclude what follows:

Platonic and Aristotelian terms appeared to have a directness [...] absent from the modern concepts which all presuppose that *break*, effected by Descartes and continued by all his successors, with natural knowledge. Therefore, if we want to arrive at an adequate understanding of the ‘natural’ world, we simply have to *learn* from Plato and Aristotle.³³

Like Szondi, and more closely to Husserl’s notion of the life-world, Klein states that we are natural, once we live spontaneously and straightforwardly. A philosopher who is able to describe the horizon of his or her specific life-world undertakes a natural or genuine attitude. This is possible at any time because nature is not only to be understood as the cosmos. It is, rather, “in human understanding, multidimensional.”³⁴ By “nature” we may mean *physis*, that is “the natural being of every entity existing ‘by nature’ [...] within the texture of the world-order.”³⁵ But, within the sphere of nature, we may also encompass all that becomes familiar to us, all that has acquired the character of a “second nature”: “Almost every artful human activity tends to reproduce itself, to repeat itself, to make the artful product as familiar.”³⁶

The difference is, therefore, between the natural understood as the cosmic element and the natural as understood as the horizon of the familiar. The domain of the latter is wider than that of the former, since it is infinite and tends to be broadened out continuously, whereas that of the cosmos is limited and it is “the only original subject of philosophy.” Unlike Klein, Strauss exclusively identifies the natural element with the cosmos: “The elementary, the natural subject of philosophy still is, and always will be, as it had been for the Greeks: the *cosmos*, the world.”³⁷

This decisive difference between Strauss and Klein determines their approach to the quarrel and the meaning they attribute to the return to the ancients. Both Strauss and Klein think that the naturalness of ancient philosophy cannot be renewed in the modern or, better, in the post-modern time. However, the awareness that the ancient mode of living and thinking cannot really be duplicated leads the two authors to undertake two different attitudes: Strauss thinks that we should act *as if* the ancient mode of philosophizing was renewable; Klein thinks that the activity of the post-modern philosopher should consist of making the conceptual frame, which the founders of modern philosophy assumed to be natural, unfamiliar and unknown. Klein defines this activity *history* by recovering the ancient meaning according to which “*historia*” designates the inquiry through which we conspicuously grasp the original essence of things, the *rizomata panton*, as Klein says by quoting the end of Husserl’s article on *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*³⁸.

In his essay on *Phenomenology and the History of Science*, Klein points out that Husserl’s phenomenology aims at discovering, rediscovering and elucidating the beginnings, the origins and the “invariables” of things.

“This is”, he adds, “the attitude of a true historian”³⁹. But he also specifies what follows:

The origin of history is in itself a non-historical problem. Whatever historical research might be required to solve it, it leads ultimately to a kind of inquiry which is beyond the scope of a historian, whose purpose is to give the ‘story’ of a given ‘fact’. It may, indeed, lead back to the problem of inquiry, the problem of *historia* as such, that is, to the very problem underlying Husserl’s concept of ‘intentional history’.⁴⁰

In Klein’s view, history, understood in the manner just described, “cannot be separated from philosophy.”⁴¹ This philosophic-historical activity consists in rediscovering the significant formation [*Gebilde*] latently shaping, and acting on, a sedimented conceptual frame: “This interlacement of original production and ‘sedimentation’ of significance constitutes the true character of history.” From this point of view there would only be *one* legitimate form of history: the history of human thought. The main problem of any historical research would precisely be “the disentanglement of all these strata of ‘sedimentation’ with the ultimate goal of reactivating the ‘original foundations’, i.e., of descending to the true beginnings, to the ‘roots’, of any science and, consequently, of all pre-scientific conceptions of mankind as well.”⁴²

In describing the philosophical activity of the historian of philosophy, Klein takes the history of philosophy to be an integral and, above all, an essential part of philosophy independently of any time. It belongs to philosophy in ancient as well as in modern ages. However, in two epochs, the object towards which the historical activity is directed changes. The object of ancient philosophy is the *cosmos*, nature as the eternal element, and the aim of the ancient philosopher is to grasp the gap between the essences of things and their contingent manifestations. In modern times, the task of the philosophical historian of philosophy is to distinguish the conceptual frame derived by inherited knowledge from the approach a philosopher has genuinely acquired by looking at his or her life-world. As Klein has explained in his *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*, the aims are many: 1. To grasp the different attitudes the ancients and the moderns adopted in their scientific and philosophic inquiry; 2. To keep separate the conceptual frame that the moderns inherited by *school science* and by medieval tradition from the conceptual frame and the method they got through their living interests (experimental activity, applied mechanics and optics, arts such as architecture and painting); 3. To establish what the moderns lost with regard to the ancients, what they discover independently of their presuppositions, what they do in continuity with the ancients, what they do in opposition to the ancients or by re-elaborating and decisively modifying their bequest.

Even Strauss says that “‘history’ originally designated a particular kind of knowledge or inquiry.”⁴³ However, he holds that the meaning of the term changes when historicism assumes history as a field. Even Strauss thinks that we have to think of the gap between the ancients and the moderns without taking in advance a position on the value of the two attitudes. We must bracket progressivism. However, Strauss’s position diverges from that of Klein, since he places no trust in a philosophical form of the his-

torical inquiry. Rather, he is more interested in a form of hermeneutics that is a post-modern re-elaboration of medieval commentary.

In his essay on *Political philosophy and History*, Strauss points out that medieval philosophy was “dependent” on classical philosophy, and yet it was not in need of the history of philosophy as an integral part of its philosophic efforts:

“When a medieval philosopher studied Aristotle’s *Politics*, he did not engage in a historical study. The *Politics* was for him an authoritative text. Aristotle was *the philosopher*, and hence the teaching of the *Politics* was, in principle, *the* true philosophic teaching. However he might deviate from Aristotle in details [...], the basis of the medieval philosopher’s thought remained the Aristotelian teaching. That basis was always present to him, it was contemporaneous with him.”⁴⁴

For Strauss, it is precisely this contemporaneity of a thought with its basis which no longer exists in modern philosophy, and it is such a contemporaneity that explains the transformation of modern philosophy into an intrinsically historical philosophy.

In his essay on *The Living Issues of German Post-war Philosophy*, Strauss claims that once we apply historicism to itself by arranging “a critical analysis of the genesis of historical consciousness,”⁴⁵ we make a return to reason possible. This process “necessarily is a return to reason as reason was understood in pre-modern times.”⁴⁶ Accordingly, he raises the following questions: “Modern philosophy has come into being as a *refutation* of traditional philosophy, i.e. of Aristotelian philosophy. Have the founders of modern philosophy *really* refuted Aristotle? Have they ever *understood* him? They certainly understood the Aristotelians of their time, but they certainly did not understand Aristotle himself.”⁴⁷ The conclusion is that “if Plato and Aristotle are not understood and consequently not refuted, return to Plato and Aristotle is an open possibility.”⁴⁸

Conclusion

In Strauss’ view, the aims of the philosopher who is able to reactivate and rethink the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns can be summed up as follows: 1. He attempts to make ancient philosophers and their conceptual frame contemporaneous to him; 2. Aristotle’s and Plato’s writings and teachings cannot be considered as surpassed; he tries to take them *as if* they were still authoritative texts; 3. He strives to understand a philosopher as being as good as, or better than, himself.

Strauss’s position is the mirror-image of that of Klein. Strauss thinks that we should try to make ancient philosophy and the ancient life-world familiar to us; Klein thinks we should study ancient philosophy⁴⁹ and the ancient life-world in order to make the modern conceptual frame, which acts on us as Aristotelian tradition did on the founders of modern philosophy, unfamiliar to us. For Strauss, the return to the ancients lets us know the original interests of ancient philosophers in a deeper way. For Klein, the return to the ancients leads us back to the hidden roots of modern philosophy.

Both Strauss and Klein think of philosophy as a human activity originally characterized by the act of questioning. However, whereas Strauss tends to see a development and a training of this questioning in the hermeneutics, in the ongoing capacity of interpreting unfamiliar texts, Klein thinks that we may bring up our philosophical dispositions by devoting ourselves to the history of philosophy, that is by inquiring how philosophical paradigms evolve over the centuries.

Notes

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¹ Arendt, Löwith and Jonas are other interpreters of this idea, each one in a particular way.

² L. Strauss, *Political Philosophy and History (=PPhH)*, in "Journal of the History of Ideas", 10:1 (January 1949), 30.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *PPhH*, 31.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *PPhH*, 33-34.

¹⁰ *PPhH*, 35. On Strauss's criticism to historicism see C. Altini, "Beyond Historicism: Collingwood, Strauss, Momigliano", in *Interpretation*, XXXIV (2006), 47-66; A. Fussi, "Leo Strauss On Collingwood: Historicism and the Greeks", in: *Idealistic Studies*, vol. 44, issue 2/3, (2014): J. Bernstein (ed.), *New Directions in the Thought of Leo Strauss*, 149-261.

¹¹ *PPhH*, 50.

¹² For a deep discussion of Strauss's method in his interpretation of the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns see A. Fussi, *La città nell'anima. Leo Strauss lettore di Platone e Senofonte*, ETS, Pisa 2012.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *PPhH*, 48. Strauss quotes by modifying Baillie's translation of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*, 2nd edition (London, New York, 1931), 94. See original text: Hegel, *Phenomenology des Geistes*, in: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, edited by E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1970-, vol. 3, 36-37.

¹⁷ J. Klein, *The Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra (=GMTOA)*, translated by E. Brann, New York: Dover Publications 1968, 117. On Klein's conception of the history of science see B. C. Hopkins, *The Origin of the Logic of Symbolic Mathematics. Edmund Husserl and Jacob Klein*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2011.

¹⁸ *GMTOA*, 119.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*. On the significance of Klein's reading of the origin of modern science see A. Ferrarin, *Galilei e la matematica della natura*, ETS, Pisa 2014, in particular 11-25; 84-85.

²⁰ *GMTOA*, 120.

²¹ *GMTOA*, 123.

²² See *GMTOA*, 123; J. Klein, *The World of Physics and the "Natural" World*, in J. Klein, *Lectures and Essays (=L&E)*, edited by B. Williamson and E. Zuckerman, Annapolis (Maryland): St. John's College Press 1985, 1-34.

²³ L. Strauss, *The Living Issue of German Postwar Philosophy (=LI)*, in *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem, and other essential texts*, edited by H. Meier, Cambridge (MA): Cambridge University Press 2007, 137. The manuscript is located in Leo Strauss Paper, Box 8, Folder 14. On the occasion of the *Creighton Philosophical Club Thirty-ninth meeting* (Syracuse University, 27-28 April 1940) Strauss read a paper on "The Living Issues of German Postwar Philosophy with special reference to Husserl's *Phenomenology*."

²⁴ *LI*, 137.

²⁵ E. Husserl, *Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie*, Husserliana VI, edited by W. Biemel, Den Haag: Nijhoff 1976, 5 English translation by D. Carr: *Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology (=Crisis)*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1970, 52.

²⁶ See *Crisis* § 39.

²⁷ See S. Rosen, *The Elusiveness of the Ordinary. Studies in the Possibility of Philosophy*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press 2002, in particular: "Introduction", 1-13; "Husserl's Conception of the Life-World", 54-93; "Wittgenstein, Strauss, and the Possibility of Philosophy", 135-159. See also S. Rosen, *Leo Strauss and the Problem of the Modern*, in: S. Smith (edited by), *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2009, 119-136.

²⁸ F. Schiller, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, in: "Die Hören" 1795/96, now in: F. Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 5, Hanser: München 1962.

²⁹ *LI*, 135.

³⁰ P. Szondi, "Das Naïve ist das Sentimentalische. Zur Begriffsdialektik in Schillers Abhandlung", in: P. Szondi, *Lektüren und Lektionen*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973, 47-99.

³¹ See F. Schlegel, *Vorrede zum Studium-Aufsatz: "Über das Studium der griechischen Poesie" (1797)*, in *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, Band 1, edited by E. Behler, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag 1979, 205-217.

³² *LI*, 136. Strauss's interpretation of Hegel is, however, disputable. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel starts from what is first for us, such as sensible certainty. In saying that Hegel constructs phenomena, Strauss follows Heidegger, who claims in his course from 1930/1931 that the Absolute is a presupposition of Hegel's approach.

³³ *LI*, 136-137.

³⁴ J. Klein, *On the nature of nature* (1964), in *LE*, 221.

³⁵ J. Klein, *The World of Physics and the "Natural" World*, in: *LE*, 29-30.

³⁶ *LE*, 238. In his article "Husserl, Jacob Klein, and Symbolic Nature", in *Providence Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 29/1 (2008). J. Cosgrove explores the connection between Husserl's discussion of the mathematization of algebra and Klein's investigation of the genesis of the symbolic in modern times. Moreover, he shows how these inquiries can be applied to Minkowski's formulation of four-dimensional spacetime and to Einstein's special theory of relativity.

³⁷ *LI*, 138.

³⁸ See E. Husserl, *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft (1911)*, in: Husserliana XXV, *Ausätze und Vorträge*, 61, translated into English by Q. Lauer: "Philosophy as rigorous science", in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, New York: Harper & Row 1965, 196.

³⁹ J. Klein, *Phenomenology and the History of Science*, in *LE*, 69. On Klein's interpretation of Husserl's concept of historicity see B. C. Hopkins, *op. cit.*, in particular 11-64.

⁴⁰ *LE*, 72.

⁴¹ *LE*, 78.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *PPhH*, 33.

⁴⁴ *PPhH*, 49.

⁴⁵ *LI*, 133.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *LI*, 134.

⁴⁸ *LI*, 135.

⁴⁹ Let me remind that Klein was also author of some commentaries to Plato's Dialogues. On his reading of Plato's thought and style see C. H. Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers. The Coherence of the Dialogues*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London 2009.