

Leo Strauss, une autre raison, d'autres Lumières. Essai sur la crise de la rationalité contemporaine. Vrin 2005, Prix François Furet 2006.

Forthcoming in English : Leo Strauss and the Crisis of Rationalism. Another Rationalism, Other Enlightenment (translated by R. Howse, Suny Press, march 2014).

Examining the heritage of modern philosophers means taking the measure of the crisis in contemporary rationality. Communism, Nazism, and wayward forms of democracy have caused some to question the project of civilization that, tied to an ideal of controlling humans and nature, led to a new form of tyranny. Strauss thinks today's crisis results from the fact that the question of human purpose has been excluded from politics. His examination of modernity is based on a reconstruction of the Enlightenment philosophers that shows where the break between the Ancients and Moderns lies. This angle of approach explains Strauss's interest in Jacobi and his focus on Spinoza and Hobbes, on which the radical Enlightenment philosophers base an arguable definition of reason and humans. It underscores what the Moderns lost in their struggle against tradition. But the concept of "Law" as a religious, social and political whole common to Greek philosophers and Jewish and Arab authors of the Middle Ages complicates the argument between Ancients and Moderns: for Strauss, the Moderns are Christians. He therefore seeks to update classical rationalism and imagine the tension between Jerusalem and Athens related to the genuine Enlightenment philosophers. They made a positive contribution to political philosophy, the propaedeutics of which is the decomposition of religious conscience and modern politics. Will analyzing the presuppositions that keep us from getting away from modernity's destructive dialectics finally enlighten us? What is, in fact, the legacy of this philosopher who, on his way back to tradition, crosses paths with Rosenzweig and Scholem, debates with Schmitt and Kojève, does not follow Kant or Hegel, but wants to go beyond nihilism while remaining faithful to Maimonide?