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Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (ILCT) and Secret Writing

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Title: Informal Logic and Critical Thinking (ILCT) and Secret Writing
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Many of us are concerned with teaching argument construction and analysis. We utilize various approaches, some classical (Plato's *Euthydemus* (Rouse 1973), Aristotle's *Topics* (Forster 1960) and *Refutations* (Forster 1955)), some more recent (Suzette Haden Elgin's work on verbal self-defense (especially her discussions of lying (1993a, Ch. 8) and "Writing in Code" (1993b, 103-105)), Blair and Johnson's *Logical Self-Defense* (1983)). This concern is central for many of us who teach critical thinking as philosophers, since much of our field consists of argument and response. The task becomes daunting when we consider how obscure much philosophy is. Moreover, there is a tradition of deliberately writing to mislead.

This enterprise of writing in a deliberately misleading way is not exclusive to philosophy (for business applications, see Elgin 1993b, 103-105), but it is there; and, according to Leo Strauss's *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (1952, 1988),¹ it is found among important philosophers, e.g., Plato (Strauss, Ch. 1), Maimonides (Strauss, Chs. 1-2, and Ch. 3, "The Literary Character of the *Guide for the Perplexed*.")) and Judah HaLevi (Strauss, Ch. 4, "The Law of Reason in the *Kuzari*"). They wrote when philosophers risked death, exile, or imprisonment for advancing certain views. Some continue with secret writing wherever societies, audiences, authors, or truths need to be protected in a way that reveals insights to just those readers with the ability to understand and apply them with care.

In this essay, I provide an explanation of secret writing, reviewing its goals and methods, basing my analysis on Strauss and Elgin. I then suggest how some ILCT analyses with their concern for audience, enthymeme, and pragmatics, can lead us toward recognizing secret writing, aiding us in the problematic task of analyzing such deliberately misleading discourse. I will consider three examples, taken from Plato's *Meno* (Grube 1981), from Maimonides *Guide* (Friedlander 1956; Pines 1963), and from HaLevi's *Kuzari* (Hirschfeld 1964; Heinemann 1977). Then, in conclusion, I will review the way I teach this material in my ILCT course, and other philosophy courses, and then seek criticisms and suggestions.

Secret Writing

A definition of secret writing consistent with the work of Maimonides, HaLevi, and Strauss is writing that is deliberately misleading or opaque to some readers (the exoteric audience), while at the same time clear or accessible to just those readers with the ability to understand and apply the writing with care (the esoteric audience).²

There are at least three kinds of goals of secret writing: protective, pedagogical,

and political. Let us remind ourselves that theological and political structure were united in the western and near eastern worlds until quite recently (some would say they are still united), and that the response to doctrinally incorrect teaching has included (and in some places still includes) excommunication (and resultant disemployment), imprisonment, and execution. A thinker whose views do not square with the authorities may then be motivated to express these views in a way which seems (at the exoteric level) not to contradict or even to accord with those authorities, while at the same time communicating the more dangerous views or information at a more subtle level (the esoteric). This will serve to protect the secret teaching from some while revealing it to others; it will protect the authors from excommunication and unemployment; it will keep them and their students out of jail and away from the gallows (or stoning, or flames, or drowning, etc.). If their researches have led them to truth, it may even protect the truth.

Pedagogical goals overlap the protective, in that students' survival is a normal condition of their learning. Furthermore, secret writing is one way to share philosophically challenging materials with students who are ready for them while at the same time not undermining the faith or psychological stability of students who might endanger themselves or others when they encounter such teachings.³

Moreover, the student who struggles to extract the secret teaching from a deliberately misleading text learns to read carefully and suspiciously, paying attention to subtle hints as well as broad trends. Such a student will become more sensitive to any contradiction or problem with the text, in hopes that more careful study will reveal an insight behind or beyond the contradiction. The student will read a secret writer like Maimonides the way that writer reads scripture, on the assumption that the text is written one way to guide the many superficial readers, while at the same time written another way to guide the carefully prepared readers. Working through the text in this way, the student comes to be able to read more carefully and critically, and, if the occasion calls for it, to speak and write more carefully as well.

Political motivations may have, as indicated above, to do with the protection of the practitioners and institutions of learning. There may also be attempts to gently steer the political order in such a way as to support secret writers in their enterprise. At a more immediate practical level, such writing can allow secret writers to publish their work, and remain respected and employed as academics and teachers while obscuring what many would take to be subversive implications of their teachings. Again, we remind ourselves that societies whose social order rests on certain theological political teachings may be at risk when these teachings are called into question.

Given its deliberately cryptic nature, secret writing presents problems for ILCT analyses:

1. Problems of decoding complicate the need to interpret an argument before criticizing it. With secret writing, decoding the text is complicated by difficulties in applying the principle of charity. Whenever we are presented with text containing what may be an argument, the principle of charity leads us to first determine if it is fair to take the text as offering an argument, then leads us to reconstruct as fairly as we can the argument it offers. This already complicated and delicate matter is made even more difficult by a suspicion of secret writing, since things which we normally take to be indications of bad arguments (e.g.,

various fallacies, contradictions, misrepresentations and misquotations of texts, and quotations out of context) may serve only as pointers to the real argument, and furthermore need to be ignored if we can somehow determine that the author's competence does not allow the careful reader to accept these flaws as accurate representations of the author's positions. For example, it means one thing if one relatively ignorant of scripture conflates verses from Genesis concerning the tree of life with verses concerning the tree of knowledge. In such a case, we would deem the misrepresentation of the text a matter of incompetence. If Strauss, on the other hand, were to offer a similar conflation in his introduction to Pines' translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed*,⁴ we might wonder what he's trying to tell us.

2.If we are successful at interpreting the argument, moral issues arise concerning the issue of what might be called secret writer – competent reader confidentiality.

Concerning (1) interpretation, probably the greatest challenge to the ILCT analyst is the extra work involved in applying informal logical analyses to secret writing. Given secret writing's tendency to use non-present texts to make its points, the frequent involvement of allusions to literatures in other languages, and assumptions of background that the reader may not initially bring to the text, secret writing presents significant challenges of "extra homework and background research." This problem is not unique to secret writing. Many disciplines require special training of those who would criticize their texts. Here the challenges are exacerbated by what at times is deliberate misrepresentation.

Yet, at times, interpretation seems possible, and problems may arise concerning (2), "sharing the secret." This, on occasion, may indeed be problematic, e.g., when the interpretation reveals a way to poison the water supply of a city, or to spread a serious disease. I would suggest, however, that most of the time, at least with the well known philosophical examples of secret writing, such as the work of Maimonides, Strauss, or HaLevi, the secrets can not be unequivocally revealed due to the very problematic nature of these texts.

To put it bluntly, there are so many credible yet inconsistent interpretations of these texts that one more, even if the most accurate, will be lost in the sea of disinformation created by the others.⁵ This forces students to judge for themselves which interpretations fare best, and when they do so, they will have to confront the original texts themselves; furthermore, interpreters of secret writing may be themselves engaged in secret writing in these very interpretations. This is clear in Maimonides' case; for his *Guide*⁶ is, among other things, a secret writing interpretation of scripture that takes scripture as secret writing. Thus, the careful student needs to ask of any writing about secret writing whether or not it that interpretation or discussion is itself secret writing. Again, the students/readers will have to address these issues themselves. We can tell them what we have discovered some secret writing means, but that does not mean that they will understand. If it were that simple to communicate difficult truths, teaching would be an easy profession indeed, as any student who heard a lecture would then understand the material.

Some ILCT analyses with their concern for audience, enthymeme, and pragmatics, can lead us toward recognizing secret writing, aiding us in the problematic task of analyzing such deliberately misleading discourse. This can be illustrated by examples taken from Plato, HaLevi, and Maimonides.

The Three Examples

Plato's *Meno*

A student sensitive to the role of audience and the nature of dialogue will realize reading the *Meno* that, as in many dialogues, there are multiple targets of the chief interlocutor's (in this case, Socrates') attempts at persuasion. Here, we may encounter Socrates' partners in the dialogue text (primarily Meno and his slave; but also Anytus) and Plato's partner outside the text, namely the reader.

Let us recall that the motivation of the strange argument from recollection in the *Meno* is Meno's challenge to Socrates about the possibility of coming to knowledge through argument, a particularly pointed challenge when directed at Socrates who claims to lack the knowledge he seeks. If you don't know what it is, Meno asks, how can you look for it and how will you recognize it if you find it? (*Meno* 80d) In reply, Socrates asks Meno to watch Socrates engage in dialogue with one of Meno's slaves, who has never studied geometry. In what is generally understood to be an argument for the recollection of knowledge acquired in a previous life, Socrates then asks the slave questions about how to construct a square twice the size of an original square whose side has a length of 2. Through successive questions, Socrates first leads the slave to realize that the slave does not know the answer, and then through further questioning, the slave comes to a more adequate response.⁷

Several things should be noted:

(1) If this is not secret writing then the argument for recollection does not really answer the *Meno* question. It only moves it back one step as suggested by some of our better students and by Augustine in "The Teacher" (Augustine 1983, 20-33). When the answer is given that we acquired this knowledge in a previous existence, the question remains, how did we acquire it *there*?

(2) Furthermore, some might argue that the recollection of forms argument of the *Meno* is inadequate inasmuch as it is based on a theory of forms which does not sustain Plato's own criticism in the dialogue *Parmenides* (Cornford 1973, 920-946).⁸

(3) And, there is Socrates' hedge:

I do not insist that my argument is right in all other respects, but I would contend at all costs both in word and deed as far as I could that we will be better men, braver and less idle, if we believe that one must search for things one does not know, rather than if we believe that it is not possible to find out what we do not know and that we must not look for it (*Meno* 86b; Cornford 76).

(4) The initial problem is a trick designed to undermine the painful effort to

acquire knowledge. If the trick succeeds with some people, it results in their giving up this quest. If the demonstration only succeeds in showing that someone who makes an effort can gain knowledge it has, at least to that extent, responded to the challenge.

The careful student of informal logic, trained to notice hedges in a variety of contexts (Blair and Johnson's *Logical Self-Defense*, for example, addresses hedges in "Watch for Weasel Words," in their analysis of advertising (1983, 253-255)), should notice Socrates' statement, "I do not insist that my argument is right in all other respects," and wonder about the peculiar constructive ad hominem⁹ argument Socrates is offering here (Kagan, 1988).

Maimonides' demonstration of textual competence in defense of his claim about the role of contradictions in his work

In his "Introductory Remarks," Maimonides addresses the issue of contradictions in a text (Friedlander 1956, 9-11). He explains that these can occur in a work due to seven reasons. He states that in the *Guide*, contradictions will result from causes 5 or 7:

The fifth cause is traceable to the use of a certain method adopted in teaching and expounding profound problems. Namely, a difficult and obscure theorem must sometimes be mentioned and assumed as known, for the illustration of some elementary and intelligible subject which must be taught beforehand, the commencement being always made with the easier thing. The teacher must therefore facilitate, in any manner which he can devise, the explanation of those theorems, which have to be assumed as known, and he must content himself with giving a general though somewhat inaccurate notion on the subject. It is, for the present, explained according to the capacity of the students, that they may comprehend it as far as they are required to understand the subject. Later on, the same subject is thoroughly treated and fully developed in its right place (Friedlander, 10).

...Seventh cause: It is sometimes necessary to introduce such metaphysical matter as may partly be disclosed, but must partly be concealed; while, therefore, on one occasion the object which the author has in view may demand that the metaphysical problem be treated as solved in one way, it may be convenient on another occasion to treat it as solved in the opposite way. The author must endeavor, by concealing the fact as much as possible, to prevent the uneducated reader from perceiving the contradiction (Friedlander, 10).

... Any inconsistency discovered in the present work will be found to arise in consequence of the fifth cause or the seventh (Friedlander, 11).

The question arises, couldn't Maimonides have lost track of the minutiae and implications of what he was saying in the course of a work as long as the *Guide*?¹⁰ What evidence does Maimonides give that he can keep track of all these details throughout an extended work?

Maimonides repeatedly considers the variations of usage of words in the Aramaic vocabulary of the Targum Onkelos¹¹ (a standard translation of the Hebrew text of scripture, used in many synagogues to this day), noting the variations. He goes so far as to correct the Targum Onkelos for the three times in which (in the translation of a common verb, *raah* ("see"), the Targum manuscript at hand is at variance with Maimonides' hypothesis (*Guide*, Part One, Ch. 48; Friedlander, 65). Each time Maimonides does this (in a time when there were no concordances to scripture, nor computer searches), the reader is given more evidence as to the adequacy of Maimonides' memory and his ability to maintain a synoptic view of a larger work. Each occasion of such analysis of an Aramaic term increases the likelihood that Maimonides was able to keep track of what he is doing.

So then, for example, after linking prophecy and philosophy, when Maimonides repeatedly cites the common view that women cannot do either, he should be aware of what he has said, as he is surely aware of what scripture has said (since, among other things, he knows, the Aramaic translation so well). Yet, after making this commonly accepted (Aristotelian?) point, Maimonides is careful to repeatedly inform the reader that only three people reached the highest levels of prophecy, viz. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Towards the end of the work, he shows how the sages were aware of her status, and suggests that scripture itself addresses her situation differently because she is female. (See *Guide*, Part III, Ch. 51; Friedlander 390-391.)

HaLevi's use of language to deny what he apparently supports.

Judah HaLevi's twelfth century work, *The Book of the Kuzari: The Book of Argument and Proof in Defense of a Despised Religion*,¹² like the *Meno*, takes the form of a philosophical dialogue. The dialogue is motivated by the situation of the eighth century (Schirmann 2002, 2003) Kuzari king who "dreamt his way of thinking was agreeable to God, but not his way of acting, and was commanded in the same dream to seek the God pleasing work . . ." (*Kuzari* I.1; Hirschfeld 1964, 35-36). After dreaming this dream, the King of the Khazars summons first a neoplatonic philosopher,¹³ then a Christian, then a Moslem, to see which of the three has the truth he seeks. He initially declines to interview a Jew since Jews are a despised minority (*Kuzari*, Part I.4; Hirschfeld, 40). The King ends up rejecting each of the three for different reasons.

He rejects the Neoplatonist philosopher, although impressed with his ideas, since the king does not see in the philosopher's words a specific guide to action (*Kuzari*, I.2; Hirschfeld, 39), and since it is the quest for the right deeds that motivates him.

The Christian claims about the virgin birth, the incarnation, and the trinity he finds illogical (*Kuzari*, I.5; Hirschfeld, 42).

The Moslem sets forth the Quran as the central miracle of Islam. The King replies: "Although your book may be a miracle, as long as it is written in Arabic, a non-Arab, as I am, cannot perceive its miraculous character; and even if it were read to me, I could not distinguish it from any other book written in the Arabic language" (*Kuzari*, I.6; p. 43).

The Islamic argument is, as it were, too demanding – one would need to learn Arabic, a difficult language indeed, to evaluate it.

And so, the King (who eventually converts to Judaism) is finally persuaded to seek out a Rabbi, an exponent of the despised faith of Judaism, since the teachings of its Torah were cited as evidence by both the Christian and the Moslem.

But it should be noted that later in the text, the Rabbi offers an interesting argument concerning the Mishnah:

. . . the Mishnah contains a large amount of pure Hebrew which is not borrowed from the Bible. It is greatly distinguished by terseness of language, beauty of style, excellence of composition, and the comprehensive employment of homonyms, applied in a lucid way, leaving neither doubt nor obscurity. This is so striking that every one who looks at it with genuine scrutiny must be aware that mortal man is incapable of composing such a work without divine assistance, only he who is hostile to it, who does not know it, and never endeavored to read and study it, hearing some general and allegorical utterances of the Sages deems them senseless and defective, just as one who judges a person senseless and defective after meeting him, without having conversed with him for any length of time (*Kuzari*, III.67; pp 191-192).

It looks like the argument from the Quran has occurred again in a different guise. Nonetheless, it does seem clear that both arguments have been challenged, given the difficulty most of us find in learning a Semitic language. As with many consistency arguments, what works with one side of the argument may work with the other side as well.

If the Rabbi's argument has merit, then a text in a foreign and difficult language may be evidence of divine inspiration and worthy of the study which would make it accessible. A wider audience of non-Arabists like the king may have other languages and experiences of texts that repaid rereading and suggest a divine source. These other works may also have this beauty of revelation; perhaps even the *Kuzari* dialogue itself, which after all is written in Arabic, and whose original readers, after all, should not share the King's response to the language of the Quran.

It is interesting to note that many students forget that the *Kuzari* was written in Arabic, and thus do not notice the additional layer of meaning in the King's challenge to the Quran. Yet, students of informal logic and rhetoric learn early to identify the context of an utterance, and the audience of an argument, in order to understand the role of presupposition and enthymeme.¹⁴

This awareness of context will allow ILCT students to find their way into multilayered secret writing like HaLevi's. Their familiarity with circumstantial ad hominem, for example, may lead them to be sensitive to tensions between the existence of a claim and the possibility of its credible utterance.

Some ways to address secret writing material in ILCT courses and other philosophy courses, and some remarks on dangers of secret writing

Probably the most important thing to share with students is the realization that secret writing may exist, and that when the student is confronted with a suspicious text, it may be worth considering that possibility. Otherwise, the student is in the position of one not knowing how to untie a knot due to ignorance of the knot itself.¹⁵

I usually introduce my students to the possibility of secret writing by suggesting how they may have already done some secret writing of their own. I ask them to imagine themselves in the position of someone who has high ambitions, hoping perhaps to serve as a judge on one of the higher courts (and therefore wants to get good grades to get into a good law school). They have been asked to write a final paper on a controversial topic, say abortion, for an intolerant professor. Short term prudence suggests they pretend to agree with the professor. Long term prudence and the desire to be able at a later date to defend their words suggests that they do not agree. What such a student may do is write a paper which seems to be in agreement with the intolerant professor, who will be forced to read quickly, in the midst of the deluge of final essays. The paper, on a more careful reading, will turn out not to be in favor of the professor's doctrine after all. I sometimes share with the students my knowledge of cases where something like this was done at the thesis level (changing names and details, of course, to protect privacy).

Sometimes in informal logic courses, and more often in courses where secret writing plays a significant role (such as a course in Medieval Philosophy or in Philosophies of Judaism), I assign Strauss's *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, from which most of the intratextual advice shared here on reading secret writing is derived. Having introduced them to the possibility of secret writing and one of its motivations, we review the other motives discussed earlier in this essay, and then turn to various techniques for reading secret writing. Some, as indicated above, are the techniques and concerns used in ILCT and rhetorical studies to consider any kind of writing. Examples of these techniques and concerns include issues of audience, author and context, the need to read carefully and critically while looking for arguments, and the need to recognize enthymemes and presuppositions. If these factors suggest the possibility of secret writing, I then suggest, following Strauss, that they consider evidence of signposts in the author's work.

The signposts include any evidence that the author gives about how he or she reads a text. The instruction the author offers through modeling how to decode and interpret (especially if the author is addressing someone else's secret writing) may be applicable to their own writing. Also important are any explicit indications of how they say one should read.

I urge students to pay attention to built-in protective advantages of writing in dialogue form, and the parallel advantage (in both dialogues and non-dialogues) of considering opposing arguments in such a fashion that the essay turns out to work better as an argument for the opposition.

Then, in the tradition of secret writing with which I am familiar, I recommend they pay attention to traditional signals and phrases, such as "the intelligent will discern," and "those with understanding will understand." For example, HaLevi states (after describing the problem of the Khazar King):

This induced him to ponder over the different beliefs and religions, and finally he became a convert to Judaism together with many other Khazars. As I found among the arguments of the Rabbi many which appealed to me and were in harmony with my opinions, I resolved to write them down as they had been spoken. The intelligent will understand this (Heinemann 1977).

Some Disadvantages and Dangers of Secret Writing

I also try to make students aware of some of the disadvantages and dangers of secret writing. First of all, by its nature, secret writing is deliberately misleading, and therefore particularly liable to wrong interpretations. The "safe" exoteric meaning, if any, can be distorted by readers with enough intelligence to confound it with partially discerned esoteric meaning. Skill in small amounts, like knowledge, can be a dangerous thing.

Also, the secret writer can lose her or his best readers if the lower or common interpretation prevails. Consider, for example, the young Augustine who turned from his mother's religion when confronted with certain simple interpretations of scripture.¹⁶

Another disadvantage concerns how exoteric styles may end up protecting or even supporting evil regimes and societies. I like discussing this idea in terms of the "Howard Campbell Problem." Howard Campbell, in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*, pretends to be a virulent Nazi and anti-Semite in order to work from Germany, serving as a racist radio announcer in order to convey information to the Allies, information which is instrumental in defeating Germany. Yet he finds, to his chagrin, that no matter how ridiculously and extremely he presents his hate talk, his Nazi audience finds in it inspiration to continue their destructive work.

Another danger in learning about secret writing that I warn students about is what might be called a fallacy of misplaced secrecy or misplaced competence which may occur when reading non-secret writing as secret writing. Maimonides may contradict himself due to the fifth and seventh cause, but most of us find ourselves in contradiction due to the sixth, namely that we have lost track of the implications of earlier statements, or even have forgotten that we have ever made them.

Seeking criticisms and suggestions

Most of the study I have done in this area involves texts written in Hebrew from a literary context which has long accepted secret levels of interpretation. (Two of the four levels of Rabbinic interpretation of scripture, *remez* and *sod*, have names that can be translated as "hint," and "secret.")

I suspect I would be more successful at teaching if those of you who have heard or read these words about secret writing were to share your criticisms and insights based on your own experiences of teaching and reading multileveled works with a variety of students.

Notes

¹ For an overview of Strauss's account of the role of secret writing in philosophy, Ch. 1, "Introduction," and Ch. 2, the title essay, are quite valuable. I have also benefited by the guidance of Profs. Ellis Rivkin, Alvin Reines, and Patty Stevens.

² "Persecution, then, gives rise to a peculiar technique of writing, and therewith to a peculiar type of literature, in which the truth about all crucial things is presented exclusively between the lines. That literature is addressed, not to all readers, but to trustworthy and intelligent readers only" (Strauss, p. 25).

³ Consider for example, what happens in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, when the student Raskolnikov learns that "everything is permitted," and becomes a murderer. In discussing the dangers of presenting certain material before certain audiences, the philosopher Al-Ghazali writes, "Indeed, just as the snake-charmer must refrain from touching the snake in front of his small boy, because he knows that the boy imagines he is like his father and will imitate him, and must even caution the boy by himself showing caution in front of him, so the first-rate scholar too must act in similar fashion" (Al-Ghazali 1983, 275).

⁴ See Genesis 3.6, Genesis 3:24, and Strauss, "How to Begin to Study the *Guide* of the Perplexed," (Pines 1963, xiv, xlv, lvi); see also the end of Maimonides' "Introduction" in the accompanying Pines' translation (Pines 1963, 20; corresponds to Friedlander, 11), and the proem to Ch. 1 of the *Guide* (Pines, 21; corresponds to Friedlander, 13, and Kafah's Hebrew translation (Kafah 1977, 15, 17)).

⁵ For a recent treatment of problems raised in the interpretation of the *Guide* and the problems raised by Maimonides' explanation of causes of contradiction as they apply to the *Guide*, see Yair Lorberbaum's recent work (2002, 711-750). His treatment includes an interesting criticism of Strauss's approach, and offers a key to interpreting Maimonides' discussion of contradictions in light of features of the original Arabic text.

⁶ The perplexity alluded to in the *Guide's* title is that of one who "has been trained to believe in the truth of our Holy Law, who conscientiously fulfills his moral and religious duties, and at the same time has been successful in his philosophical studies. Human reason has attracted him to abide within its sphere; and he finds it difficult to accept as correct the teaching based on the literal interpretation of the Law. . ." (Friedlander, 2).

⁷ When I teach this dialogue, I am sometimes fortunate enough as to have a student (who does not know geometry, and also has not yet read the assignment) answer the questions Socrates asks of Meno's slave. The results are usually the same as in the dialogue.

⁸ The present interpretation is somewhat controversial; this is not surprising, given the perplexing character of the dialogue. As the editors note, "The *Parmenides* presents a great difficulty to the reader. The best Platonists differ about its meaning" (920).

⁹ By "constructive ad hominem argument " I mean an argument that attempts to show that the audience will be better people in some way if they accept or act according to a certain thesis.

¹⁰ The Sixth cause of contradiction in a work is that an author is unaware of some inconsistency implied by a large number of premises scattered throughout the work (Friedlander, 10).

¹¹ Onkelos' Aramaic translation of scripture is found in many rabbinic and study bibles, and is used as an authority by many medieval commentators (Greenstein 1984, 213-215).

¹² I'm following Isaak Heinemann's translation in his discussion of the Arabic title, which is to be found on p. 11 of the HaLevi section of *Three Jewish Philosophers*.

¹³ This philosopher expresses views which seem to be typical of neoplatonic Aristotelian philosophers.

¹⁴ This is also true for some students of formal logic, who heed the implications of Quine's words, "For utterances that sound alike can vary in meaning with the occasion of the utterance" (Quine 1989, 1). See, also, for example, his discussion of the fallacy of equivocation (Quine, 56-57).

¹⁵ " . . . it is not possible to untie a knot of which one does not know." Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 995a30, as translated by W.D. Ross (Ross 1941, 716). Also, note the proem to Strauss's "The Literary Character of the *Guide for the Perplexed*" (Strauss, 38). (Thanks to Profs. Hamner Hill, Charles Kelly, and John McMahan for helping me track the Strauss reference down.)

¹⁶ See *Confessions*, Book V, section 14 (Augustine 1961, 108). Also, note Augustine's careful discussion of how to read a text in Book XII (of particular interest are his remarks near the end of the book, when he explains how he would write an important book to be read different ways by different readers; see section 31, p. 308), especially given the importance of reading in the work (e.g., "take it and read, " Book VIII , section 12 (Augustine 1961, 177)).

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