Commentaries on the Work of Eric Voegelin


During the past four decades, Eric Voegelin has received ever-wider acknowledgement as one of the greatest political thinkers of the twentieth century. Even before his death in 1985, commentators asserted that Voegelin was "the leading political philosopher of our time," and that his work "is of epochal importance," constituting "a revolution in philosophy and political science." Since Voegelin's death, "the professional attention of scholars has resulted not only in an enormous growth in the secondary literature, but also in the creation of several specialized centers for the study of Voegelin's thought, the establishment of two ordered archival collections, one at Stanford and the other in Munich, and a major publishing project, supported by two university presses, to bring out an English-language edition of Voegelin's Collected Works." A classified bibliography on Voegelin running to 180 pages in close print was published in book form in 1994, yet even this massive bibliography was quickly outdated by a torrent of
new publications on Voegelin requiring thirteen published updates containing hundreds of additional citations.

Why has Voegelin's work provoked such an outpouring of commentary? No single answer can be given, since the torrent's tributaries flow from a multitude of differing motivations. However, there are certain peculiarities of Voegelin's career and thought that offer promising suggestions. First, Voegelin's works are extremely demanding (indeed, notoriously so') both in their range and mode of expression. In terms of scope, they demand that the reader "know the history of ideas, philosophy (in all its dimensions), theology, the full sweep of history from prehistory to modernity, and the present development of scholarship in fields as widely separated as anthropology, biblical criticism, comparative literature, psychology, and others...." Obviously, few readers can truthfully lay claim to such erudition, and thus the challenges imposed by Voegelin's work create a demand for commentaries that is greater than writings that fall neatly within a particular field. It is hardly less obvious that few (if any) commentators command such erudition themselves, and some analyses seem to have served as a process of scholarly digestion conducted as much for the benefit of the writer as the reader.

In terms of expression, Voegelin's writings are peppered with neologisms spun out of his own philosophizing or transliterated from the many languages in which he could work (ten, by my count: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek). This feature of his work poses significant difficulty for mere mortals, though in most cases one can eventually discern Voegelin's meaning by working with dictionaries and from the immediate context, as well as the more extended discussion at hand. This is because Voegelin, though often not immediately clear, tries to be. That is, the difficulties attendant to his writings stem not from esotericism (as is sometimes said of Leo Strauss) or cunning ambiguity (as has been said of Hegel) or linguistic showboating for the sake of sheer display. Voegelin neologizes and transliterates because he frequently finds contemporary parlance-especially the parlance of the academy-laden with ideological baggage rendering it unfit for expressing his own authentic philosophizing or that of the
earlier thinkers with whom he works. Once one has read enough of Voegelin's work to become familiar with his patterns of usage and with what he wants to say, writing that once seemed impenetrable comes to seem quite clear and, ultimately, even exemplary in its transparency to the thoughts and experiences being expressed. However, such assurances offer cold comfort to the novice still struggling at the stage of seeming impenetrability, who might well chuck the whole business prematurely if not for the aid of a lucid commentary. Much of the secondary literature on Voegelin quite evidently displays a desire to light the linguistic way for others.

Access to Voegelin's oeuvre is also complicated by two remarkable "breaks" in his program and a number of less dramatic shifts in emphasis over the course of his career. The first of the breaks occurred in the early 1950s when Voegelin abandoned the 4,000 page manuscript for his History of Political Ideas after "it dawned on [him] that a conception of a history of ideas was an ideological deformation of reality." A new program, outlined in The New Science of Politics and carried halfway to completion in the first three volumes of Order and History, was in turn abandoned. Voegelin acknowledged that his own conception of the process of history was marked by the very flaw that vitiates the ideological "philosophies" of history that he sought to surpass, and accordingly, he revised his exploratory methodology as well as his provisional conclusions. Voegelin was his own toughest critic, and to the very end of his life he continued to explore new directions in thought with no reverence for his own earlier accomplishments. Thus we are left with a body of work that is not only intrinsically difficult but also internally divided. Since Voegelin was more inclined to drive his explorations forward than to detail precisely what could or could not be salvaged from earlier works, those who wish to invoke his authority are, in my view, obliged to do this themselves.

This situation has served as a stimulus for secondary interpretations, as most of Voegelin's admirers recognize, if only implicitly, that they cannot legitimately attribute views to him while treating his writings as an undifferentiated, seamless whole. For example, I believe it would be intellectually irresponsible to assert that "Voegel in
maintained X" on the basis of, say, a 1952 writing such as *The New Science of Politics*, without considering the implications of a later work like 1974's *The Ecumenic Age* for the issue at hand. And, under certain circumstances, "intellectually irresponsible" might be too lenient a judgment to place upon such a procedure. That is, if one were to do this because he or she has not bothered to undergo the rigors required to understand Voegelin's late works, we would be compelled to conclude that such a person is lazy and unprofessional. Furthermore, if one were now to attribute the 1952 view to Voegelin because one prefers it to those he developed by 1974 (which is not an implausible scenario), then we might judge the person guilty of misrepresenting Voegelin by misappropriating outmoded writings for partisan purposes. It is clear that a conscientious scholar is obliged-to an unusual degree-to address Voegelin's work in its variegated entirety before attributing views to him. Commentaries addressing the different phases in Voegelin's work have made it possible for those new to the writings to do this (albeit indirectly) without investing the several years otherwise required to canvass Voegelin's vast output.

There are undoubtedly other important reasons why Voegelin's work has drawn so much attention in print, but in any case, the secondary literature has grown so extensive-and includes contributions of such high quality-that a tertiary examination is now clearly in order. This article is the first examination of this type, and in determining its structure I have tried to balance two competing objectives. On one hand, I wish to offer as broad a survey as possible, but on the other hand, it is also important to offer reviews that are as extensive and detailed as befits the importance of the books considered. In order to limit the scope of the project, only books written in English that are directly devoted to Voegelin's work were considered, and I chose to pass over edited collections on Voegelin, since they are necessarily less cohesive in approach. Although they cannot be treated here, it bears noting that all of the edited collections that have appeared to date are important resources meriting serious study. It will also be impossible to consider several excellent books that are strongly informed by Voegelin's
thought but which do not make it their centerpiece. Finally, it will not be possible to include several books that arguably follow the spirit of Voegelin's research even more closely than books explicitly devoted to him, namely, works of original research that are inspired by Voegelin's thought and methodology.

Thus, only book-length commentaries written in English by a single author were considered, and even this relatively narrow category required further trimming, since no fewer than eleven texts fit this description. I have chosen the four books that will, in my view, prove most profitable for a first round of reading by those who are relatively new to Voegelin. This is not to disparage the remaining commentaries, all of which are rather more narrow and specialized in their approach, and are thus appropriately reserved for a second round of reading. In the present essay, my principal aim is to provide reviews offering clear indications of the objectives that inform each of the books, setting them forth explicitly and in detail, and then assessing how-and how well-the author succeeds in fulfilling them. The reviews will appear in the order in which the books were published (with alphabetical ordering of the two books published in 1981), since later works sometimes make use of earlier ones, and since the authors of later books may have structured their projects with a view to what has been accomplished or neglected in earlier treatments.

I

Ellis Sandoz, currently Hermann Moyse Jr. Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Louisiana State University, notes that his *Voegelinian Revolution* has the dual purpose of providing "a general introduction to Eric Voegelin's thought and to do so in such a way as to demonstrate its revolutionary character." (1) Although these objectives do indeed loom large in Sandoz's discussion, it also becomes clear that the book is informed by two additional purposes. First, Sandoz is clearly intent upon making the biographical details of Voegelin's life more familiar to English-language readers, and thus the book quotes frequently and at length from the transcript of a series of interviews conducted by Sandoz with Voegelin in 1973.
Second, Sandoz is also intent upon demonstrating Voegelin's greatness as a thinker, which is not precisely identical to showing the revolutionary character of his work (since all revolutions initiate major change, but not in every case for the better).

Both of these objectives tread rather thin lines that must be seen clearly for the book to be evaluated accurately. With regard to both objectives, it is apparent that Sandoz wishes to help remedy what he openly acknowledges (on the first page of his Introduction) as Voegelin's obscurity among the general public. It is to this "wider audience" beyond "the confines of the academy" that Sandoz addresses his book," though he also notes Voegelin's "evident obscurity even within the restricted horizon of professional political scientists..." (10) Obscurity is, of course, a "relative thing," and Sandoz gives a more specific indication of Voegelin's status when noting (with what: I perceive as unspoken disgust) that "Voegelin is not nearly so famous as, say, Herbert Marcuse or Angela Davis...." (10) We may say that Sandoz is rightly rankled by a gross disparity between Voegelin's stature and his status; that is, between his stature as a thinker of historical significance and his status among American "intellectuals."

Sandoz wishes to make inroads against this disparity, and in this sense it is correct to say that his book is, in the best sense, a popularization. Although this statement is correct, it should be supplemented by an explanation. Sandoz indicates in his opening chapter that the book "is not an intellectual biography," and indeed the volume is dedicated more to Voegelin's thought than his life. Discussions of biographical details are undertaken not as ends in themselves but toward the end of illuminating Voegelin's thought, and the great majority of passages quoted from the taped interviews concern matters of theoretical substance. Thus the book does not seek to "popularize" Voegelin in the vulgar sense, but to make his thought accessible to a portion of the population broader than that which could gain access by means of Voegelin's vast and difficult oeuvre. In doing so, Sandoz endeavors to show not only how Voegelin departs from other (especially modern) thinkers in revolutionary ways, but also to show the greatness of Voegelin's thought
within the broad context of Western philosophy. However, Sandoz explicitly indicates that the book is "an interpretation, not merely an appreciation." (2) Sandoz indicates that, "in all honesty," the book could not be a critical evaluation of Voegelin since Sandoz has been his student and friend for many years, but he also indicates that he is no disciple and that Voegelin "strenuously avoided making disciples of his students." (2) Sandoz does not cross swords with Voegelin, but the book does not therefore come off as a mere celebration of his work, since Sandoz clearly displays an independent grasp of the problems and much of the literature that Voegelin pursues.

Sandoz is quite explicit about several other aspects of his design and intention for the book. He notes that he "favored recent work and the current state of [Voegelin's] philosophy" (3), which is surely appropriate in light of the several "breaks" in Voegelin's program, his relative obscurity in 1981, and the fundamental objectives pursued in the book. Sandoz also observes that he stresses "the pragmatic and commonsensical dimensions of [Voegelin's] thought" (4), which I also regard as a theoretically justified and pedagogically sound approach. Voegelin strikes many new readers as a formidable and forbidding thinker in the stereotypical Teutonic mold, but this has more to do with peculiarities of his expression and the difficulties inherent to the problems he pursues than with an unusually speculative method or any deliberate obscurity. Indeed, Sandoz shows very effectively that Voegelin's bent as a philosopher is strongly empirical, and that the motivations underlying his work are practical and easily understood in commonsense terms. 18 Recalling again that Sandoz is writing an initial book-length introduction to a highly challenging and still obscure thinker, I think there is no question that his emphasis is well placed or that he executes it effectively. We shall see below that Eugene Webb sought to make Voegelin accessible in 1981 by means that, while notably different, were nevertheless equally justified and effective.

Sandoz's emphasis on the greatness and revolutionary character of Voegelin's work obliges him to account for "the man's evident obscurity," and Sandoz responds to the challenge with a multi-
faceted explanation. He begins by citing observations offered by William C. Havard, Jr., and Gregor Sebba, namely, that Voegelin was authoring a new theory of politics from a single hand that was simply outpacing even his best readers and, second, that the multi-disciplinary foundation for the theory was overwhelming the capabilities of the highly specialized members of the contemporary academy. To these explanations Sandoz adds another that he regards as more fundamental still, namely, that Voegelin's work constitutes a "Copernican revolution" that is difficult for others to appreciate because it requires a "major shift in the structure of scientific thinking itself." (11) Voegelin's work must therefore be approached on its own terms rather than in conventional categories of thought, and indeed an "effect of Voegelin's revolutionary originality is that he is (in varying degrees) at odds with all schools of thought." (11) The related fact that Voegelin has "created a new language of philosophical discourse" has also supplied a source of his obscurity and contributed to his being misunderstood. Finally, Sandoz identifies an additional source in Voegelin's persistent effort to understand human order in the light of divine order, which has run afoul of both secular dogmatists (who dismiss him due to the presence of mystical or theological dimensions in his thinking, which they take to be infirmities) and spiritual dogmatists (who rage against him for not equating "the divine" with the Christ of dogmatic Christianity). In sum, Sandoz seeks to square the proposition that Voegelin is obscure with the proposition that his thought is of revolutionary significance by simply linking them: Voegelin is obscure because he is revolutionary. That is to say, his comparative obscurity "above all results from his philosophical independence and originality." (16)

Sandoz's second and third chapters, "Biography and the Course of Thought to 1938," and "Americanization: A Scholar's Pilgrimage to 1981," are predominantly biographical in nature, drawing liberally from the "Autobiographical Memoir." In addition to recounting the basic facts of Voegelin's life and career, they offer an overview of his intellectual influences as well as brief sketches of his early writings. In one sense, works published since 1981 have superseded this portion of Sandoz's book. Sandoz himself edited and published
the "Autobiographical Memoir" in its entirety under the title, *Autobiographical Reflections* in 1989, and this book is obviously a more comprehensive biographical guide than the portions quoted in *The Voegelian Revolution*. Regarding Voegelin's intellectual influences and early works, readers now have access to a more extensive and detailed treatment in Barry Cooper's *Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science*. Sandoz's account is complete but quite compressed by comparison to that found in Cooper's much longer book. However, those desiring an efficient introduction that intertwines biographical information with an analysis of Voegelin's writings will still find Sandoz's book to be the best treatment available.

The central chapters in *The Voegelian Revolution* are devoted to four "crosscuts in [Voegelin's] intellectual horizon" that take stock of the "stages" of Voegelin's inquiry at four points: 1952, 1957, 1966 and 1981. The first of these corresponds with the publication date of Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, and is treated in Sandoz's fourth chapter, "The Science of History and Politics: 1952." The chapter does not actually take stock of Voegelin's work in 1952 so much as offer a straightforward commentary on *The New Science of Politics*. In fairness, though, it must be acknowledged that *The New Science of Politics* was itself a work in which Voegelin took stock of his own findings and set a new course for his thought that was to run for about a decade.

Sandoz's gloss on *The New Science* is excellent, far surpassing the quality of the many reviews that appeared in the wake of this controversial book. To single out a particularly valuable dimension of this chapter, I would mention Sandoz's analysis of representation, which is an important and difficult theme in *The New Science* that has not received its due in the secondary literature. If pressed to note a shortcoming of this chapter, I would say that I find it unfortunate that Sandoz does not address the unusual rhetorical tone struck by Voegelin in this book. Sandoz does indeed discuss the controversy caused by the book and its provocative title, which successfully provoked many social scientists of the positivist persuasion. However, Sandoz does not address an aspect of the book's tenor that
seems even more significant in retrospect, namely, an anomalous exhortatory tone that seemed to place Voegelin somewhere in the camp of conservative Christian Cold Warriors. Voegelin endeared himself to Christians by writing of

...a civilizational cycle of world-historic proportions. There emerge the contours of a giant cycle, transcending the cycles of the single civilizations. The acme of this cycle would be marked by the appearance of Christ; the pre-Christian high civilizations would form its ascending branch; modern Gnostic civilization would form its descending branch.  

Voegelin also endeared himself to conservatives by explicitly identifying Gnosticism, a perennial pattern of spiritual disorder, as "the nature of modernity," and by admonishing readers to "recognize the essence of modernity as the growth of Gnosticism." Gnosticism was in turn associated with a range of thinkers, activists and movements commonly vilified by conservatives, many of whom rallied to Voegelin's account of "the inner logic of the Western political development from medieval immanentism through humanism, enlightenment, progressivism, liberalism, positivism, into Marxism...."

Voegelin closed the book with a call for "repressing Gnostic corruption and restoring the forces of civilization," noting ominously that "at present the fate is in the balance."

In the long run, The New Science of Politics caused trouble for Voegelin more by the friends that it attracted than the enemies it repulsed. Positivists and Marxists took only the briefest note of the book before going about their business, secure in the knowledge that Voegelin could be dismissed as either an antiquarian obscurantist or a right-wing reactionary. Christians and conservatives, on the other hand, came to regard Voegelin as their champion, as exemplified in the description of Voegelin by Frederick Wilhelmsen as, "the scourge of positivism in political science, the hope of Christian conservatives in the dignity of philosophical meditation on the structure of history, and the living symbol of a new and fresh synthesis of disciplines in the service of our common Western tradition." However, when subsequent publications (especially
revealed the aberrant character of The New Science of Politics. Some conservative Christians like Wilhelmsen turned on Voegelin with righteous fury. Wilhelmsen complained that, "we anticipated, not without some justification, that he would culminate [Order and History] with an apotheosis given over to Christianity and history.... Nothing of the kind happened when Voegelin published The Ecumenic Age. Voegelin simply outfoxed his critics." Wilhelmsen went on to call Voegelin "a latter-day Pilate who is too pure to enter into the Golgotha of history" who "dismisses, as the ideologue that he is, two thousand years of Christianity," producing "tons of erudition about folk in China and Egypt and other out of the way places but not one book about the adventure that has been Christianity."

This intemperate reaction is born of several unfortunate misunderstandings, and is an admittedly extreme example of the backlash prompted by The New Science of Politics. Nevertheless, the example serves in its extremity to show that The New Science of Politics is, for all of its remarkable strengths, an atypical and problematic book in several respects that Sandoz leaves untreated. To be clear, this is not because Sandoz himself is prey to the misunderstandings of those such as Wilhelmsen; in fact, he quotes from this same writing by Wilhelmsen in The Voegelinian Revolution with implied disapproval. Moreover, Sandoz also demonstrates his awareness of one of the factors that probably helps explain the aberrant dimension of The New Science of Politics when he mentions (in passing) that Voegelin was "writing in the midst of Cold War anxieties." However, Sandoz does not observe a significant inference derivable from this, which is that The New Science of Politics is perhaps the only one of Voegelin's major works containing elements that appear dated and rhetorically excessive in retrospect. I believe this peculiarity of the book is especially worthy of emphasis when considered under Sandoz's structural approach, which is to highlight certain years and works in order to show the "successive stages" of Voegelin's "enlarging horizons." Since The New Science of Politics represents a "stage" that Voegelin "succeeded" in his ever enlarging thought, one must wonder why Sandoz does not note the
book's unusual and potentially misleading shortcomings. Perhaps this is because doing so would be at odds with Sandoz's objective of "popularizing Voegelin. After all, only a very inept salesman—which Sandoz is not—would term "dated" or "excessive" a work that he knows "is Voegelin's most widely read book." (91)

Sandoz's fifth chapter, entitled, "History and Its Order: 1957," is essentially a gloss on Volumes I-III of Order and History: Israel and Revelation (1956), The World of the Polis, and Plato and Aristotle (1957). Although the basic character of this chapter is shared with the preceding one on The New Science of Politics, it must treat works that incorporate more than twelve times as many pages. Not surprisingly, therefore, Sandoz's treatment is impressive more for its concision than its comprehensiveness or detail. A concise treatment is achieved by following the "central speculative thread" running through these three volumes, which Sandoz regards as "Voegelin's attempt to trace the emergence of human consciousness through analysis of the experiences of the order of being and their attendant symbolic forms." (117) Sandoz devotes special emphasis to what Voegelin called the "leap in being" (or discovery of transcendent reality), which Sandoz understands as "the crucial event in this historical continuum of experience and articulation." While this chapter is no more critical than its predecessor, Sandoz effectively focuses the reader's attention upon the most important theoretical issues at stake in the volumes, and also points up "a most serious difficulty" in Voegelin's "metaphysical position" that remained unresolved until the publication of Volume IV in 1974.

Observations of this sort help readers navigate their way through Voegelin's writings with a clearer sense of their stages of development, and Sandoz opens his sixth chapter ("Myth, Philosophy, and Consciousness: 1966") with a helpful account of the theoretical differences distinguishing Voegelin's Anamnesis from the earlier stages expressed in Order and History I-III and The New Science of Politics. Sandoz summarizes the progression as one expanding the theory of politics first into the theory of history (1952), second into the philosophy of order (1957), and then into the philosophy of
To unpack these last two stages a bit, Sandoz describes the philosophy of order as one illuminating political reality "through recollection and analysis of the trail of experiences and their symbols manifested in the field of history" (143), whereas the philosophy of consciousness in Anamnesis further augments the philosophy of politics with "the experiences and symbols through which the process of consciousness articulates itself in time." (144)

The sixth chapter on Anamnesis and Voegelin's work as it stood in 1966 is the book's longest and the one likely to prove most helpful to readers since, as Sandoz rightly observes, "the philosophy of consciousness is both the core and the most difficult...part of Voegelin's political theory. (167) Sandoz achieves an exceptionally illustrative account by showing not only what Voegelin means by his central concepts and formulations, but also by showing repeatedly what he does not mean. Sandoz continually pauses in his account of the theory of consciousness to head off misunderstandings of, for example, Voegelin's usage of "being" or "consubstantiality" or "experience" or "noesis." This explanatory strategy proves very effective, and the care demonstrated by Sandoz in structuring his explication is quite evidently based on his awareness that Anamnesis is in several ways the key to understanding Voegelin's thought. The studies published under this title serve as a sort of theoretical bridge linking Voegelin's life and work as a young scholar to later phases of his thought and writing, namely, to his mature work on the first three volumes of Order and History, to the breakthroughs requiring the remarkable work of reconception in The Ecumenic Age, and finally to the great meditative studies pursued in Voegelin's final decade of activity. The studies in Anamnesis are also crucial for understanding the relations between the different components or aspects of Voegelin's thought. In conventional terms, Voegelin works in modes that we associate with historians, philosophers, political scientists and theologians, and yet each of these disciplinary designations proves to be an ill-fitting garment when tried singly or even in combination. To understand how Voegelin's thought intertwines these modes of inquiry, one can do no better than to use Anamnesis as a guide. This is, in effect, what Sandoz does in this sixth chapter,
which is not a commentary on *Anamnesis* so much as a multi-faceted survey of Voegelin's thought, sketched on the developmental plane of 1966 from which the essays in *Anamnesis* were written and/or assembled.

The chapter is far too intricate to be detailed here, but we can profitably indicate the eight points that Sandoz emphasizes in his own summary (184-187):

1) Whatever we know of reality we know through experience, which occurs in a wide range of modes and finds expression in a corresponding variety of symbolizations. Symbols can therefore serve as a sort of conduit for knowledge of reality, but only when regarded in the specific context of the experiences that engendered them.

2) Basic symbolic forms of human existence in reality include myth, revelation, philosophy, and mysticism. They cannot be ranked in qualitative terms, since they "optimally express distinctively different, though related, kinds of experiences." All four forms can be expressive of truth, but "the truth of them all lies at the level of the experiences they articulate, not at the level of the symbols themselves."

3) Mythic participation in reality is "compact," in the sense that it embraces comprehensively the entire range of reality experienced by human beings. The compactness of mythic participation is historically burst by the differentiation or dissociation of the modes of experience contained incipiently within it. However, though it is true that mythic experience is superseded by more sophisticated modes of "noetic" and "pneumatic" experience that differentiate the world from its transcendent ground, human experience of the ground remains so tenuous that, as Voegelin indicated; "our knowledge of order remains primarily mythic, even after the noetic experience has differentiated the realm of consciousness and the noetic exegesis has made its Logos explicit."

4) The noetic mode of participation finds its symbolic form *par excellence* in philosophy, which arises from the philosopher's discovery of reason as the essence of humanity and the faculty permitting participation in the divine Reason which is its source and
ground. Thus, the core of the philosophical effort and of human nature itself "is openness to the Ground as the vertical tension of existence rendered intelligible through the symbols of rational exegesis called noesis."

5) Philosophical science suffers deformation or derailment when symbols expressing experiences of participation in the noetic mode "are severed from their engendering experiential context and are treated as speculative topics-or as referring to subordinate realms of being, or as arising out of modes of experience other than noetic participation." Such deformations are not rare or obscure in their occurrences but, rather, "a predominant characteristic of the history of philosophizing and remain so today."

6) A restoration of the philosophical science of man entails both, "the rediscovery of the technique of noetic meditation through a study of the writings of those philosophers who were its masters," as well as, "the elaboration of a philosophy of consciousness and an ontology out of the revitalized noetic or theoretic activity as informed by philosophical resources available in the contemporary horizon."

7) The new ontology that emerges from Voegelin's analysis in *Anamnesis* does not approach reality as a closed rational system, nor as an external realm of things upon which thinking observers spectate. Voegelin's account is nevertheless empirical, though not in the classical mold. Voegelin is not an empiricist after the fashion of Hobbes or those who believe that knowledge arises from things impressing themselves upon the senses. However, he does root all knowledge of reality in experience, though this is "the reality of experience in the In-Between of participatory consciousness." Thus, as Sandoz summarizes, "the plural field of reality is articulated tensionally through its symbolic indices (which are themselves part of the reality of experience) into thingness, the self-reflective consciousness as its articulately rational center, and the divine Ground."

8) Voegelin's work contains claims of considerable magnitude, but claims that must nevertheless be seen as strictly and rationally limited in their scope. That is, Voegelin's restorative work in philosophy and political science should not be "mistaken for the proclamation of a definitive or ultimate truth in an apocalyptic
manner." Sandoz sees Voegelin as having claimed "to have detected and rectified an error of consequence with respect to the nature of philosophical thought, its meaning and truth," but notes that "there is none of the enthusiasm or millenarian overtone that characterized Hegel, for example." Voegelin does not regard his work as any sort of historical culmination, nor is he optimistic that his diagnostic analyses or therapeutic suggestions will have much worldly impact. For Sandoz, Voegelin remains a "philosopher and physician" rather than a prophet or a healer.

Sandoz's seventh chapter examines Voegelin's work as of 1981, a date selected not because it coincides with one of Voegelin's major volumes, but rather because it permitted Sandoz to take stock of Voegelin's achievements as his own book went to press. The chapter incorporates the considerable advances established by Voegelin in *The Ecumenic Age* as well as several late essays, and it is primarily devoted to a discussion of those advances and the general shape they gave to Voegelin's thought as it stood in 1981. Interestingly, though, Sandoz offers his evaluation of Voegelin's achievements not at the end of this chapter, but at its beginning. His characterization of those achievements is quite remarkable:

The picture of Voegelin's work that emerges from the forego-
ing analysis of it adds up to a revolution in the science of man comparable in magnitude (if not in style) to the revolutions of Copernicus and Newton in mathematical astronomy, cosmol-
ogy, and physics. That Voegelin's work effects a radical break with dominant contemporary schools of thought and philo-
sophical movements has been clear from the outset of our account. The Voegelinian revolution, though, is more than a new science of politics. It is a comprehensive new science of man which, when drawn together from the array of theoretical insights dispersed over the extensive work of a lifetime, may be said to compose *a Philosophiae Principia Noetica*, a turning point in man's understanding of himself and the truth of existence. (188)

Sandoz is quick to add that Voegelin's "new noetic science of man"
neither proclaims any "Truth to end the quest for truth" nor establishes any "System to end all systems." On the contrary, Sandoz notes that "the core of the Voegelinian revolution is to show (among other things) the defectiveness of all such `stop history' Answers as imposing fallacious second realities...." (189) For Sandoz, "there are answers aplenty in Voegelin's closely reasoned philosophy, but no doctrine, ultimate teaching, or ultimate Word is to be extracted from it." Indeed, Sandoz finds the revolutionary novelty of Voegelin's work less in the answers it proposes but rather, as in Plato's work, in its mode of asking questions.

These caveats and qualifications should head off some forms of misunderstanding, but they do little to diminish the striking nature of Sandoz' claims regarding Voegelin's achievements. They are so striking, indeed, that we must ask three questions about the claims, namely, are they unjustified, or premature, or imprudent? The three questions are all related to one another, in the following way: claims of revolutionary greatness in intellectual life are conventionally left to intellectual historians; when the historians have yet to pronounce upon a thinker, the claims may seem premature; and when premature claims are made, one wonders whether they are prudent, as they can seem to be motivated by sectarianism or discipleship, potentially tainting thereby the thinker about whom the claims are made. Although I would not be comfortable making claims as bold as those made by Sandoz, I nevertheless do not believe they are blameworthy on any of these three counts.

First, the notion that such matters should be referred to intellectual historians is highly questionable. Either these historians would reach their judgment based on a philosophical evaluation of the thinker's stature relative to other great thinkers, or they would employ some purportedly "objective" methodology such as the "reputational" polls of historians used to rank American presidents. In the former case, one or a few historians would be engaged in exactly the same sort of enterprise as Sandoz (though from a more remote position), and there are only shaky grounds for preferring their judgment to his. In the latter case, a reputational survey would simply multiply the shaky grounds seen in the first case, and indeed
the greater the number of historians consulted, the greater the likelihood that the outcome would be determined by mere opinions resting on dubious foundations. Second, if there are no solid reasons for postponing a decision on Voegelin's stature or for referring the question to historians, then there are no solid reasons for regarding Sandoz's claims as premature. Finally, if it is true that any well-founded claim of greatness would necessarily be grounded upon a close familiarity with the work in question, and if the work in question is so voluminous that familiarity requires years of concentrated study, then a verdict of discipleship is hardly necessary.

Still, suspicions on this score probably come with the territory. It is no secret that Sandoz's book is suspect on this ground in some quarters, and such suspicions have probably been heightened by Sandoz's decision to stay very close to Voegelin's own language when formulating his synthetic overview of the work and writings. However, the fact is that an effective synthetic overview is impossible unless the writer has a strong and independent grasp of the material being synthesized, and those who actually read this book will be left with no questions regarding either the strength or independence of Sandoz's grasp. Moreover, Sandoz's use of Voegelin's terminology is simply not a weakness in *The Voegelinian Revolution*. Although there are certainly advantages to the alternative tack taken by Eugene Webb and Glenn Hughes (both of whom break frequently from Voegelin's terminology to recast his thinking in alternative language), Sandoz's approach helps novice readers become accustomed to the particular terms and modes of expression they will encounter when digging into Voegelin's texts on their own. In sum, it seems that the most likely explanation for Sandoz's remarkable claims is itself fairly unremarkable. He is persuaded that Voegelin is a philosopher of the first rank whose thought carries explosive implications but is nevertheless only narrowly known. Under these circumstances, and given the fact that Voegelin's work is vast and difficult, the only practical way to persuade scholars to invest the time required to size up Voegelin for themselves is to tell them that the task will be worth their while—and since the time required will be very considerable indeed, one had better not tell them in minced words.
Sandoz follows up on the laudatory opening of his seventh chapter with an explication-first negative and then positive-of the nature of the revolution constituted by Voegelin's noetic science. He maintains that it consists, negatively, of, very nearly a clean sweep of the major intellectual structures of the modern world that constitute the dominant climate of opinion he so often deprecates. Most especially the clean sweep thrusts aside the whole of ideological thought as deformed and doctrinaire: i.e., the leading currents of radical modernity as expressed most especially in Marxism, Freudianism, and positivism. These above all (along with Hegelianism) have generated the debilitating "dogmatomachy of answers" that forms as contending "systems of science," each claiming a monopoly on truth, but each obscuring (rather than illuminating) reality.... The obscuring of reality through systems (scotosis) and the prohibition against the asking of the Question as a principle of the systems are, thus, the twin marks of the deforming contemporary reductionist climate of opinion marking our age. (190)

For Sandoz, "resolute resistance to untruth is the indispensable first act in the reorientation of existence in openness toward truth in the lives of every spiritually sensitive man, whether a Plato or a Paul or a contemporary victim of a deadly climate of opinion, totalitarian or otherwise." (191) Viewed positively, Sandoz sees two paradigmatic characteristics in Voegelin's new science. Primarily, he writes, "it is the exemplification of the contemplative life in the person and work of Eric Voegelin in the 'act of open participation in the process of both history and the Whole' [The Ecumenic Age, 410], so that what noetic science is can best be answered by pointing to the concrete instance of a life and its work." (200-201) Secondarily, he maintains that "the paradigm is discernable in questions asked and answers given in openness to reality as this concretely forms the wealth of scholarly information and analysis in published work." (201) Sandoz concludes the chapter with an explication of what he takes to be the four fundamental principles of noetic science, but before doing so,
he enumerates five explicit cautions. (201-202) Even with these in hand, Sandoz still warns that articulation of the four principles is "a kind of high-wire act conducted in imminent peril of failing." (203) In light of the extreme care (even reluctance) with which Sandoz approaches the task of summarizing the four principles, it would be an act of temerity to further abbreviate this section. Thus, I shall simply note that Sandoz associates the four principles with participation, differentiation, experience-symbolization, and reason, and direct the reader to pages 204-216.

The final chapter from the 1981 edition, entitled, "The Vision of the Whole," consists predominantly of a condensed commentary on *The Ecumenic Age*. When *The Voegelinian Revolution* was published in 1981-and for years thereafter-Sandoz's was among the best commentaries available on *The Ecumenic Age*. This was an unquestionably magnificent book (Voegelin's greatest single work, in my view), but it was also extremely complex and challenging, in addition to being theoretically discontinuous in several important respects with the earlier volumes of *Order and History*. The initial round of reviews was, to state the matter politely, quite uneven in quality. Some reviewers, seemingly overawed by Voegelin's accomplishment, issued reactions that were simply celebratory, and Voegelin was disappointed that many reviews failed to critically address or even adumbrate the substantive thrust of the volume. Another group of reviewers focused almost exclusively on the treatment accorded Christianity, complaining either that it did not loom sufficiently large or that it was centered on Paul's experience of Jesus rather than on Christ himself. A third set of reviews was preoccupied with how *The Ecumenic Age* broke with the original plan for *Order and History*, and many of these either failed to examine the advances that dictated the need for a new approach or overestimated the extent to which Voegelin distanced himself from Volumes I-III. Sandoz's account, though necessarily compressed in scope, is focused sharply on the core advances accomplished in *The Ecumenic Age*. Although the years since 1981 have witnessed the publication of several excellent, specialized commentaries that go a long way toward furnishing remedies for the shortcomings of early reviews,
Sandoz's summary is more than adequate to the needs that new readers of Voegelin will bring to the book.

The second edition of The Voegelinian Revolution includes a new "Epilogue," divided into four parts. The first of these treats several issues of controversy regarding Voegelin's final "position" regarding religion, as well as the bearing of this question on public receptivity to his work. The second and third parts address the two principal publications unavailable to Sandoz in 1981. These are In Search of Order, the final volume of Order and History, and a deathbed meditation dictated to Paul Caringella, "Quod Deus Dicitur?" Both are fragmentary in character, and, according to Sandoz, their silences and omissions have furnished a basis for "various interpretive debates in the secondary literature about the changed views of the `late' Voegelin on crucial matters." Sandoz notes that "brief notice of the issues raised will be in order." (253)

Sandoz is quite clearly not content merely to offer "notice" of the issues, as he shows himself perfectly willing to defend specific positions regarding the "interpretive debates." Nevertheless, he seems intent upon doing so in the least provocative manner consistent with the need to make his points intelligible. Thus, he never names the author(s) of the views he contests, and sometimes introduces such views into the discussion in formulations couched in the passive voice, which is atypical in his writing (e.g., "...there have been questions raised about the triumph of [Voegelin's] `scientific' side over his `spiritual' side in the final writings..."). This is presumably done in a diplomatic effort to minimize aggravation of any schismatic tendencies underlying the interpretive debates. Sandoz notes that, "there is a suggestion of emergence of two schools of interpretation pitting a so-called German against an alleged American interpretation of the master's thought." The possibility of such an emergence is not farfetched, but Sandoz suggests that-at the level of real substance-there is not much available to sustain a dispute over whether Voegelin was a scientific or a mystical philosopher (which would be, respectively, the German and American positions, if we were to take seriously the emergence of two
schools). Sandoz speaks of the "interpretive divergence" as "an odd outbreak of nationalism," and contends that it should be seen as "largely accounted for by the predispositions of the interpreters and not merely or even primarily by complexities in the work being interpreted."

Continuing in this rather dismissive vein, Sandoz elects not to disentangle the controversy but to dispatch it in a manner that some may see as Solomonic (though others might be more inclined to liken it to the manner in which Alexander dealt with the Gordian knot):

To put matters simply: Was Eric Voegelin a scientist to the marrow of his bones? Yes. Was he a mystic philosopher in all of his work from the 1920s until the very end of his life? Yes-by express self-declaration so from the 1960s. Can one be both mystic-philosopher and political scientist in the philosophical sense established in classical antiquity by Plato and Aristotle? Yes-and that is Voegelin's position as I read it, [and] as I think he intended it.... (253-254)

With regard to whether Voegelin's mysticism was specifically Christian in type, Sandoz simply suggests that any silences regarding Christianity in Voegelin's last writings cannot be construed as evidence of any change in heart, since it was Voegelin's intention to take up Christianity in *In Search of Order* before this was rendered impossible by his death in 1985. With regard to what was held by the heart which is said not to have undergone any such late change, we can only infer Sandoz's understanding from his reference to Voegelin's "abiding devotion to Christianity," of which Sandoz regards "Quod Deus Dicitur?" as a "direct statement" (and one we should consult when considering *In Search of Order*). (254)

Although Sandoz writes off the "two Voegelin's characterization" as being, "at best misleading," he does acknowledge that "there are real issues here nonetheless." As he summarizes them,

...it may be arguably true that the power and stature of Eric Voegelin's scholarly achievement can never gain any real attention if it is portrayed as fundamentally grounded in
spiritual experiences and is, thus, in some sense "religious" and to be dismissed out of hand as such. There is more than a little to this argument, I must agree, and it poses something of a dilemma. To speak as I do in following the sources of a "philosophical science" rooted in the work of a mystic philosopher who affirms the cardinal importance of human participation in the divine ground of being, of the reality of the life of the spirit as the basis of noetic science, may seem to invite a strategic catastrophe for the cause of Eric Voegelin. (254-255)

I suspect that Voegelin would wince at any reference to himself as a "cause" (even if the reference were made only figuratively and in passing, as may be the case here). In any event, Sandoz goes on-to his credit-to make it abundantly clear that he does not believe any "prudential calculation" in service of such a cause could justify any muting of "religious" elements in Voegelin's writings, and that it would be "inadmissible as distorting the material on principle, if and when it is carried out to the neglect of the overall content of Voegelin's work." (256) This is a point I wish to underline as a final caution against any misunderstandings of my earlier references to "popularization" as one of the distinctive elements of *The Voegelinian Revolution*. Although I believe one cannot accurately review this book within a survey of secondary literature without remarking that Sandoz, among all the top commentators, is the most intent upon enlarging Voegelin's readership and impact on the world, I would insist that it would be both unfair and inaccurate to suggest that this intention has a compromising effect on Sandoz's commentary.

The Epilogue goes on to address "Quod Deus Dicitur?," which is itself so intricate due to its many sources that Sandoz's account cannot be summarized profitably here. However, his characterization of the upshot of this final meditation is worth noting:

The stance of Voegelin at the end of his days is of a man living in responsive openness to the divine appeal. He finds that what is at stake is not God but the truth of human existence with the persuasive role of the philosopher unchanged since antiquity,
the persistent partisan for reality-experienced in the propagation of existential truth: this is the scholar's true vocation. If there is an "answer" given to the question of his unfinished meditation, it maybe glimpsed in an affirmation of the comprehending Oneness of divinity Beyond the plurality of gods and things. At the end of Voegelin's long struggle to understand, Reality experienced-symbolized is a mysterious ordered (and disordered) tensional oneness moving toward the perfection of its Beyond-not a system. (263)

Sandoz's reflections on In Search of Order are likewise difficult to assess in brief, largely because of the character of the work in question; as Sandoz remarks, "the dense intricacy of the analysis does not lend itself to cogent abridgement." (263) Yet, Sandoz's concluding characterization will indicate the principal lines of his interpretation:

*In Search of Order* can thereby be seen as Voegelin's valedictory analysis of a set of interrelated problems that he struggled with for more than sixty years. He did so from a remarkably consistent and resolute perspective of affirmation of man's participation in divine Being as the *sine qua non* of his undeformed humanity. If anything is surprising about the book it lies, I have tried to suggest, primarily in the subtle shift of vocabulary away from objectification, in the tautness of the prose, in the emphasis upon the mysterious impersonal depth of *It-reality* beyond the doctrinal *God* of ready invocation—all in the interest of refining the participatory mode of discourse so as more tellingly to express the philosopher's meditative process as the truly cooperative divine human event of In-Between reality Voegelin experienced it as being. (268)

As this passage shows, Sandoz's Epilogue concludes *The Voegelinian Revolution* by arguing that Voegelin's final writings flow within the same channel that runs through his entire career—while also showing the relentless advances that make it meaningful to isolate
particular phases marked by years such as 1952, 1957, and 1966. The Epilogue augments and updates an already outstanding book that will likely remain unsurpassed for years to come as an introduction to Voegelin's life activity.

II

Eugene Webb, currently Professor of Comparative Religion and Comparative Literature and Associate Director, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington, indicates that his purpose in writing Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History is to ease the difficulties encountered by many of Voegelin's readers "by providing an overview and some clarification of Voegelin's basic concepts." (vii) His target audience includes specialists and non-specialists alike; he hopes "to make Voegelin's thought more readily available to those who have not studied it before," and to help those with prior exposure to Voegelin's thought "to a deeper understanding of its theoretical foundations." Webb's book is divided into three parts:

The first is theoretical; it seeks to elucidate Voegelin's philosophical principles and concepts and to explain how he developed them, both with reference to contemporary philosophical discourse and through the study of the history of thought. The second part briefly summarizes the main lines of Voegelin's study of history as he has interpreted it in the light of those theoretical principles. The third part focuses on the two themes most central to Voegelin's concern: the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of history.

Recognizing that access to Voegelin's thought is also complicated by his use of technical terms, Webb provides a twelve-page glossary that will greatly benefit new readers.

Webb opens his introductory chapter in a vein similar to that of Sandoz in The Voegelinian Revolution, noting that Voegelin is a "major philosopher" who, though perhaps widely known, "is far less widely read." (3) Webb's explanation of this situation is again quite similar to Sandoz's, though they were arrived at independently. Webb ascribes the disparity between Voegelin's lofty stature and his
small readership to the fact that "he demands not only a radical shift in perspective but also a familiarity with the entire history of Western thought—mythological, philosophical, and religious." He also notes that many who have heard of Voegelin have picked up mistaken impressions of his way of thinking, most commonly "that he is a 'right-wing' thinker in both politics and religion." (4) Contrary to this misimpression, Webb follows Dante Germino in observing that, "as a political philosopher, Voegelin defies classification according to the language of political struggle: he is not left, right, or center, but is engaged in the critical study of politics." (4) Voegelin is no easier to classify philosophically than politically, since, as Webb observes,

he is not in any sense an "ideological thinker" and thus does not present a system of ideas that could be labeled according to any of the traditional designations—such as "materialist," "idealist," "empiricist," "realist," and so on—and, what must be still more disconcerting to many, he does not even present a standard philosophical argument of the sort that leads the reader from premises to a conclusion through the force of formal logic. (5)

This makes Voegelin's thought "difficult to grasp for any person accustomed to the more common type of philosophical exposition." By contrast to more common understandings, Webb sees Voegelin's mature approach to philosophy as "the recovery of the experiential ground of philosophy, the descent by way of historical memory through the various levels of symbolization, mythic and conceptual, to the deepest motivating center of the philosophical quest, which at its root is the spiritual quest of man for true existence." (9)

Webb's emphasis on the element of "recovery" or "rediscovery" in Voegelin's approach to philosophy is entirely appropriate, for Voegelin consistently maintained that human experience of the spiritual depths of the soul and the divine reality in which it participates does not change fundamentally over time (despite the fact that different elements of experience may be understood and symbolized in a fuller and more adequate manner at some times than others). However, though for Voegelin it is true that there is a
perennial order of human nature and the human condition that has "been known implicitly by thinkers of every period of recorded history," it is likewise true that this order "has manifested itself historically." (10) Thus, Webb indicates that "the question to which the present study as a whole is an attempt at an answer" is: "what are the features of an adequate philosophy of history and what does Eric Voegelin uniquely contribute to this subject?" (9) In his initial description of Voegelin's philosophy of history, Webb notes that

[f] or Voegelin the philosophy of history is the analysis of human life in its historical dimension, that is, of human life as a process in which choices are made and in which, through the values that are served or not served, one may or may not live up to the calling of one's potential humanity. History is an enterprise, in other words, in which one may succeed or fail, and what the philosophy of history must offer is criteria by which that success or failure may be measured. (10)

These criteria can be found by studying humanity and its history, which can reveal central truths about human existence that are occasionally rendered explicit in a range of different symbolisms. The symbolisms are not the end points of historical research, however, and Voegelin does not treat them as fundamental propositions that can be assessed adequately in a philosophy that takes the customary form of a logical argument. Rather, according to Webb, Voegelin "aims deeper, and he offers something different: an avenue of entry into the fundamental experience that underlies philosophy as such." (11) Thus, the core of Voegelin's philosophy of history is an effort to "recover the roots of philosophical thinking that for most of us lie buried under layers of uprooted symbols that have accumulated for centuries," an effort which he attempts by means of "tracing the symbols that we call ideas to their origins in the philosophical experience of the thinkers who first developed them." (12)

Webb offers further clarification of these introductory remarks in his first chapter, "Philosophy and History." He notes quite helpfully that, while the study of history
points toward the historical past,...it also points inward and downward-into the depths of the historical present. Historical inquiry, therefore, is an exploration not only of past events and their interrelations but also of the structure of human existence as a process or participation in being. This means that history as a study is in its essential character a philosophical discipline. Similarly, to Voegelin philosophy itself is a process of reflection in which the structure of human existence as a process of reflection in which the structure of human existence and its historical character become conscious.... History is a philosophical inquiry, and philosophy is intrinsically historical in structure. (17)

Webb observes that the starting point for the philosophy of history is always the philosopher's present historical situation, and he locates the key elements of Voegelin's situation in National Socialism, the irrational forces underlying the Nazi movement, and the deeper spiritual vacuum that permitted these forces to hold sway on the political level. More particularly, Webb specifies, "the internal disorder of a mode of existence dominated by passion and appetite and lacking the orientation toward a transcendental summit' *bonum* that the spiritual traditions of Christianity and Judaism had attempted to encourage." On the level of intellectual culture, Webb also cites the importance of "a scientistic theory of knowledge that placed severe limits on inquiry and fostered an externalizing conception of existence," as well as "a positivistic, immanentist theory of man, and a widespread belief in a supposed dichotomy between facts and values." (22) Webb correctly characterizes Voegelin within this situation not as a passive theoretical spectator but rather as an active member of what we may term the "philosophical resistance." Webb argues that "philosophy is not simply an academic subject matter, but an active struggle for truth, moral, spiritual, and intellectual...." (23) We might add "political" to this list of specifying adjectives, but in any case, Webb's sketch of Voegelin is right on target. He was not an academic analyst whose studies alerted him to dangers in the surrounding environment, but rather a very active
and highly aware participant in his times whose awareness of the dangers motivated his work as an analyst.

As Webb observes, "Voegelin's inclination from early on was to interpret the problems of political and social order as founded on the order or lack of it in the souls of the individual members of society." (22-23) His early inquiries into the depths of spiritual order were afforded little assistance by the formal, academic philosophy in vogue in central Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, though Voegelin did find guidance in Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and the Upanishads. Among more contemporary figures, Husserl and Heidegger provided examples of a promising return from sterile, externalizing positivism to the experiential roots of thought, but even they seemed to him "to have fallen victim to the tendency to place stifling limits on the experience to which they appealed." (31) Webb details Voegelin's appreciation of Husserl as well as his recognition, around 1943, that the inadequacies of Husserl's thought would require him to "develop a more adequate theory of consciousness that would take into account the radical openness of the horizon of consciousness-involving transcendence both into the world and toward what is beyond the world." (32) Webb offers a helpful account of Voegelin's effort of re-theorization in 1943, but concludes that readers should not make too much of this "breakthrough," which "was really only a clarification of insights that had been developing continuously." (38) Webb maintains that this caution is equally applicable to the new realizations that led to changes of course in Voegelin's mature writings. This is because, according to Webb, "none of these...have involved any departure from Voegelin's basic conception that the roots of philosophical thinking, in the true sense of the word (that is, of an existential quest for being through the right ordering of the soul), lie in the fundamental experience of what he has come to call the 'tension of existence.'" (38)

Webb's account of Voegelin's understanding of this tension is, quite simply, the best available in the secondary literature. He characterizes it not as an emotion

but [as] something more basic; it can express itself in the form
of emotion, but it can also express itself in the form of worship, inquiry, moral concern, poetry, the arts, and so on. As the term "tension" indicates, what it is most basically is a tendency or tending, a fundamental reaching toward a fullness that can be apprehended under many aspects, but that is not exhausted in any of them. It is a longing for life, for maximal participation in being. It is an unrestricted, radical "Question" that hungers and thirsts after all possible truth—not just the answers to particular, determinate questions, but understanding of all forms of reality and, beyond them, of an ultimacy that in their various, limited ways they analogically exemplify. (38-39)

Webb observes that Voegelin is hardly the first to note the tension of existence, citing parallel accounts in Augustine, T. S. Elliot, and C. S. Lewis while also arguing that other examples could be drawn from outside the Christian tradition (e.g., "from ancient Egyptian Pyramid texts, the poetry of medieval Sufis, Tamil devotional hymns, and so on..."). Indeed, as Webb notes, Voegelin "considers the universality of the experience of existential tension to be its philosophically most important feature." (40) Nevertheless, Webb allows quite forthrightly that the existence of a fundamental, direction-giving tension is neither self-evident nor derivable from any other self-evident truth. The existence of the experience can only be verified by reference to the experience itself, and for those who have not partaken of the experience, its very existence will seem debatable at best. Webb acknowledges that the experience "cannot be logically proved, precisely because it is not an idea or a proposition but an experience." Nevertheless, this does not diminish the fact that "from the point of view of the individual who recognizes the experience as his own, there can be no question regarding the reality of the experience and the truth of the proposition that describes it: for him it is empirically confirmable, even if not according to positivistic canons of what constitutes the empirical. (41)

Having conscientiously acknowledged that there is no common, universal ground in experience from which to attempt an intersubjective verification of the tension of existence, Webb pro-
ceeds to offer a superb description of the tension as understood by Voegelin. Far from betraying any discomfort over the necessarily personal source of this understanding, Webb's description brims with an assurance stemming from verification in direct experience. However, it also shows a sober recognition that the philosopher's experience is one of love of wisdom—not possession of facts—and that the assurance involved is hardly the sort we associate with the completion of a mission. Webb's description merits quotation at length:

...in his own search for a practical answer to the philosophical and spiritual problems with which his world confronted him...[Voegelin] discovered...the fundamental ordering experience that he has termed the tension of existence and that can be described succinctly as a radical love of the true and the good. From the point of view of his own experience, this was not a subjectively created idea but an imperative that grips the soul, a passion to which one may submit or which one may resist but which one does not dream up. It manifested itself not as a proposition to be proved but as an appeal to be responded to and a force to be trusted. As an experience it had an immediacy that made it palpable, even if this was an immediacy that could never be arrived at once and for all but would have to be endlessly pursued through a lifelong process of critical self-appropriation. The reality that disclosed itself was not an object to be looked at but a life to be entered. The answer it promised to one who entered would not be simply intellectual but existential: the philosopher would have to live in the truth and participate in the reality of which he was in search. He was presented not with a simple fact but with an invitation, a call to decision. If he decided to withhold his trust, the life he was invited to would never become real, at least for him. If he did decide to trust it, he could live in its truth, but he would know it only in the dark glass of trust, hope, and love. (44-45)

This is not only an excellent synthesis of Voegelin's many reflections on the tension of existence, but also an exemplary rendering of the
fundamental experience underlying philosophy per se.

Webb's second chapter, "Experience and Language," springs from a simple but serious problem: in our lives as inquirers, we live within language, but the language to which the modern ear has become attuned flows from scientistic schools of thought that employ a truncated view of human experience. Due to the prestige enjoyed by the modern natural sciences, experience tends to be reduced to mere sensory data (in the manner of Locke). By contrast, Webb likens Voegelin's view of experience to the perspective of Aristotle, who describes it as "a cognitive mode between mere data on the one hand and knowledge in the full and proper sense on the other." On this view, experience "might be described as a sort of compact, implicit mode of knowing, whereas knowledge in the full sense has been rendered explicit through critical reflection." (54)

More broadly, Webb holds that,

existential experience, the type with which Voegelin is concerned, will involve at least a pre-theoretical knowledge of how to carry out the project of human existence. Theoretical philosophy, on the other hand, will not be abstract speculation but the explication of what is already present in implicit form: the universal, constant structure of human existence as a project of active fidelity to man's transcendental calling. This is not existence as known from without-as would accord with the scientistic ideal-but existence as known from within by a person fully involved in it, who has to struggle to understand it and to live up to the calling that this understanding makes explicit. (54)

In the modern reductionist perspective, experience is limited to data coming from without, and what is thought to be real is reduced, accordingly, "to that which can be known through such data and in the manner of such data: being becomes an object to be known from the point of view of external observation and hypothecation." (56)

Rejection of this impoverished and constricting view of experience is an early and important source of the distinctiveness of Voegelin's approach to philosophy and political analysis. His early
writings as well as the reminiscences of later years attest to his rebellion against the sterile and restrictive "school philosophies," which he regarded not as philosophies so much as forms of wreckage attesting to the ruination of philosophy in modern times. His rebellion was not an assertion of some purportedly radical new take on philosophy, but rather a restorative effort that sought to rekindle authentic forms of philosophy from the pre-modern past. In this chapter, as in the first, Webb repeatedly likens aspects of Voegelin's effort to parallel features found in other modern philosophers and writers. Thus, at many points in Webb's book we see lines connecting Voegelin not only with Plato and Aristotle but also with (among others) Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, Soren Kierkegaard, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bernard Lonergan, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Thomas Mann, C.S. Lewis and T. S. Elliot. The affinities suggested by Webb serve not only to illustrate particular aspects of Voegelin's thought, but also act as an antidote to the (distressingly widespread) notion that Voegelin is some sort of idiosyncratic, anti-modern, contrarian loner. This dimension of Webb's approach offers a valuable supplement to the secondary literature on Voegelin, most of which focuses on his work either in isolation or in connection to an ancient writer such as Plato.

According to Webb, Voegelin seeks not only to restore occluded dimensions of experience to our attention, but also to restore language that is adequate to the task of symbolizing experience in its full amplitude. The loss of adequate language is the result of a process that has been underway for centuries, emerging fully for the first time in the late middle ages (in the form of nominalism in the work of William of Ockham) and becoming more pervasive ever since. Now that a nominalist style of language (and the world view it implies) has gained wide currency in our culture, language "becomes flattened out or emptied of its inward, existential content and its vertical dimension of transcendence.... (58) Under such circumstances, Voegelin maintains that what is required is "experiential reactivation and linguistic renewal." Linguistically, what must be renewed and augmented is "the symbolic language, both philosophical and mythological, in which human beings have for
millennia given expression to their experiences of involvement in a field of reality larger than themselves. Such language has...what might be called a vertical dimension by which it reaches into the heights and depths of existence. (60)

This dimension is needed if we are to do justice to the fullness of experienced reality, as Voegelin understands it. Webb describes this fullness with clarity, precision, and more than a little poetic capability:

Voegelin's conception is that the experience of existence is a continuum of varying degrees of consciousness and unconsciusness ranging from dark and inarticulate depths up through a center of luminosity in human reflective consciousness and then beyond this into another darkness above. That segment of the experiential continuum constituted as reflective consciousness is characterized by intentional structure, the division into subject and object; those both beneath and beyond this are not so structured. On all its levels—the human, the infrahuman, and the superhuman-being, as Voegelin conceives it, is characterized by immediacy of self-presence, but on the human level this immediacy becomes refracted through the medium of human intentional consciousness. Here there is admittedly a supposition that there is more to reality in its fullness than is contained within the limits of human thought. (59-60)

Those dimensions that are accessible to experience but not to "thought," properly speaking, can be recounted by means of analogical language. By dint of its great "reach," analogical language can "throw indirect light into distances of the experiential field that would otherwise remain totally obscure." (61) Historically, the analogical language for expressing the tension of existence tends to fall into two basic patterns. In mythological expression, "it has taken the form of images of divinity," whereas in philosophical expression "it has used the image of `participation in being." (62) For most of the remainder of his second chapter and much of the two that follow, Webb explores the meaning of these images as intended by those
who originally developed them, as well as the many misreadings that have obscured them through centuries of hypostatization and doctrinalization.

Webb's third and fourth chapters, "Philosophical Knowing as an Existential Process," and "Reality and Consciousness" do not break new ground so much as they dig more deeply into the matters previously introduced, offering increasingly detailed accounts of the nature of philosophy and consciousness as understood by Voegelin. The chapters are devoted largely to problems treated conventionally under the heading of epistemology, though Webb (following Voegelin) neither employs this rubric explicitly nor draws rigid boundaries between epistemological issues and those we might associate with, say, ontology or metaphysics or spiritual psychology. Thus we may note that while Webb, like Sandoz, seeks to offer readers a general introduction to Voegelin's work, he does so with a very different pedagogic strategy. Whereas Sandoz eases his readers into the weightiest and most difficult problems by prefacing them with extensive biographical information (and also by emphasizing the commonsensical aspects of Voegelin's thought in early chapters), Webb chooses to pull readers immediately into the deepest interior of Voegelin's philosophizing.

Both approaches have their advantages. Sandoz's book is, as one would suspect in light of his procedure and stated intentions, more accessible to generally capable readers lacking extensive philosophical preparation. Webb's book seems targeted more toward a professional academic audience with specialized philosophical training. Nevertheless, the book is remarkably successful as an introductory text despite the steep grade of ascent that it requires of readers. Webb is a highly gifted writer who provides powerfully illuminating formulations on almost every page. He illustrates Voegelin's core symbols and concepts by departing frequently from Voegelin's own formulations to offer those of his own or other, like-minded writers. Moreover, he returns to the fundamental symbols and insights again and again as he brings more material into play, as if working in a widening series of concentric circles that serve to show the range of Voegelin's thought while never departing from the task of
illuminating its core." Thus, in Webb's third chapter, he offers excellent glosses on Voegelin's use of *nous*, *episteme*, *psyche*, *doxa*, *aletheia*, *theoria*, *gnosis*, and *cognitio rationis, fidei, amoris, et spei* (as well as their English equivalents), but in every case the exegesis is securely grounded on the foundation set in Webb's account of the tension of existence. Similarly, in the fourth chapter, Webb broadens his analysis to consider the relation of myth to philosophy and to include the crucial symbolism of *metaxy*, but in so doing he anchors the new materials in the preceding accounts of existential tension-while simultaneously showing how that tension maybe understood more fully with the aid of the newly introduced materials.

Webb's fifth chapter, "The Discovery of Reality," is devoted principally to an account of Voegelin's distinctive procedure as an intellectual historian. According to Webb, Voegelin's approach is built upon the basic assumption...that the philosophical thinker, to the extent that his thought is an expression of open existence, is directly involved in the reality he seeks to understand and knows it in a pre-theoretical manner on the level of immediate experience. Theoretical reflection is the elucidation of this experience through its self-explication as it seeks language that will analogically represent its discernable features and essential structure and so bring them into focus.... To the extent that [the thinker] is motivated by a radical desire for conscious participation in reality, he is engaged in a struggle for truth-not the truth of an opinion but the truth of existence; not the truth that consists of accurate correspondence between ideas and external reality but the truth that is the self luminosity of the reality in which the philosopher's entire existence is a participation.... What is required is fidelity to the order of being. (158)

As Webb reads Voegelin's approach, "fidelity to the order of being" on the part of a philosopher who participates fully in it can yield "the truth of existence" because reality itself is characterized by what the Greek thinkers called *aletheia*, or the "unhiddenness" or self-disclosure, of being. The "truth of existence" that guides the philoso-
The philosopher of history has four basic aspects:

1) It is an experience of our own finiteness and creatureliness, which informs us that we are not the makers of reality but, rather, are involved in it through a process we neither generate nor control.

2) It is an experience of dissatisfaction with a state experienced as imperfect, but which also involves an apprehension of a perfection that it not of this world that offers a possible fulfillment in a state beyond it.

3) It is the discovery that human existence is not opaque to itself, but rather is luminous or illuminated from within by intellect (as in Aquinas) or nous (as in Aristotle).

4) It is the discovery that the intellect itself is a force transcending its own existence, and that "by virtue of the intellect, existence is not only not opaque, but actually reaches beyond itself in various directions in search of knowledge."45

To the hard-nosed, skeptical reader, this may seem like an overly sanguine approach to historical research. However, Webb immediately tempers this discussion of why discovery of the truth of existence is possible with another discussion that shows why it is nevertheless difficult. While it is true that the existentially open questioner may be drawn (helkein) toward the truth of existence, "truth is not the only pull that acts upon the questioner," who "is also drawn by a variety of other attractions that disrupt true order by tempting one toward existential closure and the darkening of intelligence." (159) Additionally, as Webb correctly observes in other contexts, even the truth toward which the open questioner is pulled can—when finally apprehended—have repulsive impact either because it discloses something mysterious and therefore challenging or because it discloses something downright unpleasant. Consequently, the quest for existential truth always has "the character of a resistance to disorder," and the forces that must be resisted are both "external" and "internal" to those engaged in the quest.

Moreover, in intellectual history, these considerations apply "both to the historical thinker under study and to the historian who studies him, both to history as subject matter and to history as discipline." (159-160) Thus, Webb observes that
[t]he thinker studied was himself involved in the project of human existence, whether he played his role well or poorly. He may, through his own entry into existential truth and the record he has left of that process, have become a source of luminosity for subsequent thinkers, or he may have become an example of existential closure and disorder. The philosophical historian who studies him must be more than a chronicler or a doxographer. To fulfill his own obligation to truth, he must seek not only correct opinions about what the thinker of the past meant or did not mean, said or did not say, but also the same truth of existence to which every human being in history has been called. (160)

Thus, Webb follows Voegelin in pointing us toward a view of historical research that is far from sanguine spectating upon an obligingly unproblematic, self-disclosing "subject matter." On the contrary, Webb's characterization of the work of the historian turns repeatedly to the verb, "struggle," as when he notes that, "to understand his historical subject matter as it actually existed, he must struggle either with it or against it." Webb goes on in the remainder of "The Discovery of Reality" to show "how Voegelin applies his principles historiographically in his study of civilizational development," summarizing "in broad outline the major steps he sees in the historical process by which existential reality opened itself up to men over a period of some five thousand years...." (161-162) These major steps include the cosmological (or mythic), pneumatic (or revelational) and philosophical (or noetic) modes of symbolizing the tension of existence, as well as the attendant realities of dogmatism, doctrinalization and derailment by which these symbolisms are continually misconstrued or obscured.

This latter theme is pursued at the outset of "The Loss of Reality," Webb's sixth chapter, where he offers a helpful discussion of the real damage that can be done when authentic symbols of the tension of existence are dislodged from their experiential context (in the In-Between reality of the metaxy) and transformed into dogmatic propositions about things in the external world. However, it
is to Voegelin's analysis of gnosticism that Webb devotes the bulk of this chapter. To Webb's credit, his treatment of gnosticism begins by immediately noting that Voegelin's usage of the term poses problems. First, he notes that Voegelin's concept is "based on the use of the term in the ancient world [to refer to the sum of the various Gnostic sects], but it is broader both in conception and coverage. This, of course, makes for problems, both philosophical and historical...." Historically, the problem is that Voegelin uses the term as a designation for individuals who were members of no Gnostic sect, and indeed at some points he seems to impute gnosticism to figures who lived prior to the historical advent of the Gnostics themselves. This points immediately to the theoretical and philosophical dimensions of the problem, which are two in number.

First, there is the terminological problem that Voegelin employs the term "Gnosticism" in ways that oscillate between use as a categorical concept and as a proper noun. This is no mere grammarian's quibble but rather a source of real trouble, especially for one who, as Voegelin said of himself, is "a man who likes to keep his language clean." The first problem can be shown against the backdrop of how Webb handles the issue of gaps in time between ancient Gnostics and modern gnostics:

Voegelin's analysis of gnostic developments in history may also seem to be characterized by abrupt leaps between, for example, the ancient Gnostics and a medieval thinker such as Joachim or between Joachim and a modern figure such as Marx. There are two reasons why transitions of this sort seem so abrupt. One is that the scholarly literature on this subject is already massive, and Voegelin assumes his readers have some familiarity with it. He does not feel it necessary to spell out all of the links between the thinkers he discusses. In placing Marx in the tradition of Joachim, for example, he has not felt obliged to prove that Marx knew of Joachim's thought, because anyone who has studied Marx can be expected to know that he was an admirer of Thomas Müntzer, the leader of the left wing of the
German Reformation, and that Miinzer in turn considered himself a follower of Joachim. (201-202)

The linguistic or conceptual problem here is that we cannot know whether any or all of these three men are to be regarded as gnostics only by analogy in a categorical sense or whether we should regard them as closeted adherents of historical Gnostic doctrines.

The second and more substantial problem also becomes evident here since, in the sequence running from Joachim to Miinzer and ultimately to Marx, any assertion of doctrinal Gnosticism becomes increasingly plausible and increasingly misleading. Neither Marx nor Engels (who, of the two, had the greater interest in Miinzer, though even his was not very intense or sustained) had any sympathy at all for the specifically religious or mystical aspects of Miintzer's activity, and the proposition that Gnostic undertones from Miinzer somehow crept into their thought or theoretical style was never substantiated by Voegelin or any other scholar of whom I am aware.

This is not to say that there are no commonalities running between modern ideologists, medieval millenarians, ancient Gnostics and, indeed, pre-Gnostic individuals who anticipate or seek to initiate a fundamental transformation of the conditions of human existence. Such commonalities do exist, but they cannot be established in a satisfactory way by suggesting chains of literary influence. One of the most important events in Voegelin's development as a thinker was his recognition that ideas are but epiphenomenal manifestations of the experiences that engender them, and if one accepts this as a premise, then it follows that any commonalities among seemingly disparate figures must be established on the level of experience. I have tried elsewhere to show that this can indeed be accomplished by reference to a common pattern of revolt in reaction to four fundamental experiences of the human condition: uncertainty, contingency, imperfection, and mortality. Regardless of the success or failure of this effort, it is clear that chains of literary influence must be regarded as outmoded remnants of Voegelin's early studies in the history of ideas, and that any analysis of commonalities must take full account of Voegelin's late work in the theory of
If Webb's account is open to criticism on this ground, it is likewise true that Voegelin himself was slow to bring his references to gnosticism into alignment with advances accomplished in other sectors of his work. This can be shown by way of a second problem Webb identifies in Voegelin's concept of gnosticism, namely, that archaeological finds (dating principally from 1952) and scholarly research have shown that ancient Gnosticism, "strongly tended toward apoliticism, since it denigrated life in this world in favor of escape from it through some sort of secret teaching or gnosis. Voegelin's own interest was in the forms that a claim to gnosis could take when there was an interest in drawing on the power of such knowledge for the transformation of the present world." (199) To account for the world-transforming strand in medieval and modern disorders, Voegelin began speaking in the early 1970s of hermeticism, alchemy, and magic as bearing an importance comparable to gnosticism. Thus, in a 1978 publication, he argues that, "...the contemporary disorder will appear in a rather new light when we leave the 'climate of opinion' and, adopting the perspective of the historical sciences, acknowledge the problems of 'modernity' to be caused by the predominance of Gnostic, Hermetic, and alchemistic conceits, as well as by the magic of violence as the means for transforming reality."53 This looks to me like backsliding. That is, Voegelin seems to be reverting here from his more developed analytical approach to one still cast in the mold of the history of ideas. More specifically, it looks like a reversion from the view that, a) we can identify an essential equivalence between ancient and modern symbolisms of revolts occasioned by essentially equivalent engendering experiences to the view that, b) we can show by historical analysis that modern problems are "caused" by residues of gnosticism, hermeticism, alchemy, and magic lingering from ancient times. In sum, it seems to me that if Webb's analysis of gnosticism is imperfect, its shortcomings stem less from any failure of understanding on his part than from shortcomings in Voegelin's own work.54

Webb's seventh and eighth chapters are devoted, respectively,
to "The Philosophy of Religion" and "The Philosophy of History." Both are characteristically clear and incisive, but the chapter on Voegelin and the philosophy of religion is especially valuable. It is of little significance that references to "the philosophy of religion" are conspicuous by their infrequent appearance in Voegelin's writings, since Webb offers a very precise and inclusive account of the grounds on which Voegelin was reluctant to speak approvingly of "religion" (as opposed to a whole range of other locutions regarding spiritual experiences of "transcendence" or "the divine"). The chapter's account is so intricate that it will not be possible to do more than indicate these grounds in rough outline. Webb follows Voegelin in locating the various problems and instabilities associated with religion (when viewed sympathetically from a perspective informed by philosophy) in the dynamics of faith itself. Authentic faith is distinct from gnosis, but that is not to say that the prospect of an absolute and final certainty will not prove appealing for believers. Certainty exerts a strong appeal and uncertainty is spiritually trying, and, as Webb and Voegelin quote from Aquinas, "imperfect knowledge belongs to the very notion of faith, for it is included in its definition, faith being defined as the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." (\textit{Heb} 11:1; 212 in Webb)

This is relatively thin gruel, when measured against the intensity of human longing for certainty regarding the ultimate questions of existence, and many seekers find that it is insufficient to sate their hunger. Consequently, Webb observes that, "religion, for many, slips almost inevitably into dogmatism." He continues by noting that the danger of such derailment is compounded, according to Voegelin, by the fact that, "none of the spiritual irruptions which in the ancient world gave rise to the great religions and to philosophy ever managed to work out a fully balanced symbolization of order that would cover the whole area of man's existence in society and history." Human responses to divine irruptions tend, rather, to accentuate different aspects of human experiences of the divine, thereby multiplying the uncertainties involved as well as the potential for friction between differing accounts. Further complications are introduced by the fact that such accounts must, if they are to be
communicated, be formulated in propositions, which invite misinterpre
tation as representing doxai about objects beyond experience. Moreover,

[i]n technical theological expression this problem is further
aggravated by the tendency of abstract language to become
dissociated from its experiential roots.... At its most authentic,
religious language is not simply description of religious expe-
rience, but is that experience itself in articulate form in
consciousness.... Religious language, however, cannot always
be used and understood at its most authentic, because it has the
responsibility of bearing the living truth from generation to
generation and from higher existential levels to lower. (213)

This observation introduces a whole complex of problems associated
with the communal character of religion, which requires communi-
cation of experienced truth among members of differing maturity
and rational caliber, who will have partaken of the engendering
experiences to differing degrees. To these considerations we must
add that those with lesser allotments of maturity, independent
experience, and rational control nevertheless have-as members of
a religious community-at least an equal claim to its ministrations.
The religious community, on its side of the equation, depends for its
viability on some degree of cohesiveness (like any other sort of
community), and in practice this will not only impose a dogmatizing
imperative, but also press dogmas toward a lowest common denomi-
nator.

Webb goes on to consider a range of problems associated with
the establishment of dogmas and doctrines, which protect but also
imperil the experiential truths lying at their core. Along the way, he
correctly observes that Voegelin was not an anti-institutional thinker
(as has sometimes been supposed) and also that Voegelin was clearly
aware of the preservative functions of doctrine. Although he writes
that Voegelin's "attitude toward religion in general and Christianity
in particular is a divided one" (221), he also maintains that Voegelin
"associates himself personally with the Christian tradition." (222)
The remainder of the seventh chapter is devoted predominantly to
an analysis of that complex association, and in my view Webb's analysis remains among the very best available (both in terms of discernment and evenhandedness) in what has become a very extensive subdivision of the secondary literature.

Webb's eighth chapter, on the philosophy of history, opens with the observation that "the central challenge for a philosophy of history, in Voegelin's view, and the point where most founder, is that of maintaining the balance that is required for open existence in the field of existential tensions. This involves "a balance between the claims that the immanent and transcendent dimensions of human experience make on the human being who lives 'between' them."

(237) This balancing point is precarious and consequently the history of philosophies of history is largely a history of "derailments." For Webb, the "study of particular derailments in the thought of individual thinkers is less interesting than an analysis of the various kinds of derailment that are possible...." (238-239) He maintains that "these fall into two general patterns: the immanentizing and the transcendentalizing. Both involve either the eclipse of the experience of metaxy existence or a deliberate refusal to accept its conditions." (239) As examples of the transcendentalizing mode of derailment, Webb analyzes the Gnostic movement of the early centuries of the Christian era, as well as the sophisticated case of Rudolf Bultmann's historical thinking. As examples of the immanentizing version of derailment, Webb analyzes ecumenic imperialism and modern liberalism. With these examples in hand, Webb proceeds to illustrate the philosophy of history in its proper mode as azetema, by which is meant a search for meaning in history, conducted in existential openness, that seeks illumination rather than terminating conclusions. Webb shows that the work of Arnold Toynbee conforms to this general type (if imperfectly so) before turning to Voegelin's own writing in the philosophy of history. His concern is less to detail the particulars of Voegelin's historical research than to indicate the spirit informing it, and this is accomplished quite effectively.

More than half of Webb's "Conclusion" provides a concise summary of the basic principles of Voegelin's thought. Webb's nine
points summarize the book as a whole, but he is careful not to convey the impression that these stand as the nine Final Truths of some closed system. On the contrary, Webb concludes in the entirely appropriate manner of indicating both the generally ongoing nature of Voegelin's search for order as well as the specific "important areas of inquiry he has scarcely touched upon, but which can profit greatly from study in the light of his principles." (273) These include Asian thought, non-Christian religions, and the "practical political paths" that might best be followed in light of the theoretical principles developed in Voegelin's work. These areas are noted "not as a matter of reproach against Voegelin" since "no one person can be expected to do all the philosophical work that has been neglected for centuries, and Voegelin has already spread his efforts far more widely than almost any other living scholar." (275) Indeed, Webb closes his superb study with the judgment that Voegelin's "combination of learning, comprehensiveness, existential openness, and depth of insight has made him the great philosopher of history of our time." (276)

### III

Glenn Hughes, currently Professor of Philosophy, St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, opens *Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin* by indicating that "the aim of this book is to analyze and relate the many discussions of mystery that run as a persistent theme through the writings of Eric Voegelin." (1) Arguing for the centrality of this theme, Hughes contends that

[a] refined appreciation of mystery is, for Voegelin, one of the requirements for being a true philosopher. The apperception and acceptance of elemental mysteries is a necessary condition, in his view, for the proper formation of individual character, as well as for the development of adequate social viewpoints and political policies. (1)

Although Hughes' book appears at first blush to be a specialized study of mystery, it is actually better characterized as a condensed introduction to Voegelin's philosophy that uses problems associated with mystery as a unifying theme. Understood as such, the book is
highly successful despite its brief length of 116 pages. Not surprisingly, it touches only lightly upon many significant components of Voegelin's work and is conducted on a very general plane confined largely to what we might call Voegelin's "findings" rather than the analyses of specific materials that make up the great bulk of Voegelin's published writings. This is, however, a virtue rather than a shortcoming, as the discipline shown by Hughes in avoiding digressions or extensions from his specific task permits him to weave a remarkably lucid and illuminating account by following the red thread of mystery.

Hughes characterizes the book as an attempt "to examine Voegelin's philosophy of mystery and also, by showing how it pervades and shapes all the main areas of his thought, to broaden the critical understanding of his philosophy as a whole." (7) Although Hughes does indeed show important connections between problems of mystery and other areas of Voegelin's thought, it is certainly the case that he treats Voegelin as a philosopher much more than as a historian, political scientist, or theologian. This fact may occasion disappointment for readers whose interest in Voegelin is focused tightly within these other disciplines, as Hughes resolutely keeps his exposition on the rails by avoiding discussions of, say, alternative historical theories, or problems of Christology, or modern political ideologies. However, the compensations afforded by his approach are considerable. Hughes asserts—and then demonstrates—that...

...Voegelin's analysis of the mysteries of reality, and of the challenges and duties of appreciating them, plays a primary role in his overall philosophy, one that in some ways binds together his theory of consciousness, his philosophy of history, the theological aspects of his work, and, ultimately, his views on what constitutes political health and disease. The present book is an attempt, then, to examine Voegelin's philosophy of mystery and also, by showing how it pervades and shapes all the main areas of his thought, to broaden the critical understanding of his philosophy as a whole. (7)

Thus, while Hughes adopts a very particular focal point for the book,
he is able to pivot quite effectively from that point to illuminate the various foundational aspects of Voegelin's work and to show their interrelations. Hughes notes that his study "aims to be a synthetic and not a generic account of the key topics" in Voegelin's philosophical work, and the structure of his presentation lends itself very well to that aim. The presentation focuses on Voegelin's mature formulations (as expressed in writings from the last thirty or so years of his life). Finally, in view of the fact that Voegelin has "been criticized and, to a sad degree, neglected due to his use of what is seen as an obscure and idiosyncratic terminology," Hughes strives to explain Voegelin not only in his own terms but also "in a more universal and accessible philosophical language" for the purpose of displaying "the precision and explanatory potency of his thought." (10)

Myth and Mystery in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin is divided into four chapters that treat Voegelin's theory of consciousness, his understanding of the differentiation of consciousness toward an understanding of its meaning (or "ground"), his philosophy of history, and his "mystagogy" or teaching regarding mystery. According to Hughes, Voegelin's theory of consciousness is unusual by comparison to other modern theories, in that it is neither an epistemology nor an analysis of the powers and scope of reason nor a Husserlerian phenomenology of consciousness. Its closest relative, in Hughes' view, is Heidegger's analysis of existence as Dasein. Hughes sees the relationship as a close one in several substantive respects: both understand consciousness very broadly as the site in finite existence where meaning itself is illuminated; both regard it as misperceived when hypostatized as a "thing" among other things in the world; and both see it as having an origin or ground other than itself. This last point of similarity is especially important, and Voegelin's conviction that consciousness is rooted in a reality beyond itself is what distinguishes his theory for Hughes both from Husserl and from the mainstream in philosophy since Descartes.

In Hughes' reading of Voegelin, "consciousness is where reality, or Being, or the Whole of what is, breaks out into awareness and knowledge of itself." (20) Consciousness experiences itself as belonging to a ground of being, but this ground always retains a
fundamentally mysterious character. Since in this view the ground is experienced but nevertheless mysterious, Hughes speaks of it as a "known unknown." Accordingly, Voegelin's theory of consciousness seeks to illuminate both that which is known and that which is mysterious in consciousness:

Voegelin's theory wishes to reserve a place in the human search for meaning for both logos and mythos, for rational analyses explaining the functions, procedures, and structures of consciousness—properly theoretical accounts, in other words—but also for the appreciation of consciousness as a part of a story, a narrative to be told from the perspective of the encompassing Whole of reality. (22)

Hughes shows very effectively that consciousness for Voegelin fundamentally involves elements both of experience yielding knowledge, on one hand, and mystery requiring mythic symbolization, on the other. Consciousness begins from a questioning restlessness, or an awareness of ignorance out of which the desire to know develops. The yearning to know or understand that which is only partially apprehended at the point of first encounter may yield answers, "but there is no answer or set of answers that could satisfy once and for all the drive of questioning consciousness, because the range of our questioning easily outstrips the answers available to our finite capacities of knowing." (24) Hence, an element of mystery is always present in consciousness, regardless of how sophisticated or "differentiated" it becomes over historical time.

Hughes regards Voegelin's theory of the differentiation of consciousness as "the most important and certainly the most innovative feature of Voegelin's philosophy." (38) Consciousness has a historical dimension, and as Hughes maintains, "according to Voegelin, the critical event in the history of Western consciousness is its discovery that the divine origin of things is not itself something commensurate with the visible, finite world, but is of a transcendent nature." (38; emphasis in original, here and throughout unless otherwise noted)

Hughes' second chapter, "The Question of the Ground," exam-
ines the differentiating experiences from their points of historical origin in Israel and Hellas. This examination proceeds both "backwards" from the critical discoveries (or what Voegelin termed the "leap in being") to the compact or primary consciousness that preceded them and also "forward" to the philosophical and religious traditions that developed from them. The compact or primary experience of the cosmos

...is the bedrock experience of belonging to an ordered totality of things, a cosmos, that in its movements, origins, and meanings is complete within itself. As Voegelin puts it, "The cosmos of the primary experience...is the whole, to pan, of an earth below and a heaven above-of celestial bodies and their movements; of seasonal changes; of fertility rhythms in plant and animal life; of human life, birth and death; and above all...it is a cosmos full of gods." (44)

Hughes maintains that, in philosophical terms, this means, "that the ground, the purposive origin of things, is perceived or experienced not as "beyond," but as contained within the spectrum of spatiotemporal existences." (44) In pre-differentiated cultures, the origin of things is explained in stories or myths of divine personages or occurrences during a sacred past that account for the present existence (and manner of existence) of things.

What "differentiates" in the process of differentiation? Hughes offers an exceptionally clear explanation:

As consciousness is where knower and known, thought and being, meet and correspond, what "differentiates" is twofold. On the side of being, reality splits into (1) the things of the cosmos and (2) their ultimate origin, which is not another cosmic thing, but somehow beyond all cosmic things. On the side of the thinker, correlative to this bifurcation of reality, human beings discover themselves not only to be things in the sense-perceived cosmos but also to be engaged in transcending it. Consciousness is found to be a Question "that leads to the Beyond of the world because it is not altogether of the world
Differentiating breaks with the cosmos of primary experience can be more or less radical, as Hughes observes in connection with Voegelin's comments on "incomplete differentiations" and "tentative breakthroughs" such as those represented by the texts of Confucius, the *Tao Te Ching*, Buddhist teachings, and the Upanishads. The most radical breaks occurred in Hellas and Israel, according to Voegelin, who associated them with what he called the "noetic" and "pneumatic" differentiations respectively. Hughes identifies the thorough "dedivinization of the spatiotemporal world" as the most striking consequence of these differentiations, a consequence resulting from "the insights of the two traditions of philosophy and Judeo-Christian spirituality complementing and assisting each other in the removal of the ground to pure transcendence." (43)

The process of differentiation that results in this "dedivinization of the spatiotemporal world" involves dimensions both historical and personal, and the interactions of these dimensions raise important and thorny problems for understanding. On one hand, the "leap in being" was a historical event carrying strong significance for the character of human existence. Voegelin spoke of the event as constituting an epochal break, a Before and After, in human history, and Hughes is right to follow him in his reference to the leap as "the critical event in the history of Western consciousness. On the other hand, however, the process of differentiation is also a personal event, in the sense that it is an achievement made by particular persons at particular times by dint of a variety of factors ranging from the spiritual openness and insight of the individuals involved to the cultural and material circumstances of the societies surrounding them. Taking these two points together, one can see that differentiation is-at once-an accomplished fact of human history but also a personal, experiential insight that must be accomplished anew in the lives of every individual encountering reality in subsequent eras.

Hughes handles this problem with admirable dexterity. In a passage that displays his own nuanced understanding of the problem as well as his recognition of Voegelin's deepest motivations, Hughes
writes,

Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness as laid out in his major works does tell the story of its historical development from more compact to more differentiated capacities and states, but it does so in order to provide a coherent and compelling account of the structure of your consciousness and mine, which must cope with the same growth from pre-differentiated to differentiated self-interpretations, through adequate insights into experiences of transcendence, as was undergone in the drawn-out cultural evolution of our collective tradition. The ground of reality was discovered by Israelites and Greeks to be something other than its cosmic effects or contents...but this does not mean that we...have achieved successful self-appropriation of our own consciousness as differentiated. For this is not an easy task. Reality is, for every human being, initially and overwhelmingly the cosmos of the primary experience, into which we are born and which even the relatively rare achievements of articulate experiences or transcendence do not annul but supplement. (52)

For Hughes the "essence" of differentiation is "the bifurcation of the cosmos into a natural or immanent world and a deeper stratum of reality known solely through consciousness' finding a Beyond to its own (and thus to all finite) nature." On this reading, Voegelin's category of the Beyond is metaphorical (and only metaphorical) in nature, in the sense that "the Beyond is not something on the other side of a spatial dividing line." (53) Hughes emphasizes this point by noting that "the reality that transcends the world does not exist in such a way that one might perhaps catch a glimpse of it through an extremely powerful telescope." (53)

The "mature" Voegelin of 1974 and after underlined this point frequently, distancing himself energetically from those who might prefer a Beyond conceived as a heavenly throne room enveloped in clouds to one described-as Voegelin describes it-as an existential tension toward a Beyond that is ultimately mysterious and experienced only in consciousness. Hughes follows Voegelin's lead here,
arguing that, "when through searching and passion and insight the extraordinary souls of Israel and Hellas discerned a world-transcendent reality, whether it was the true God of Israel or Parmenides' Being that is other than the world known by sense experience, or the Platonic-Aristotelian Nous, what they found (or what was revealed to them) was immediately present only in consciousness." (53) Hughes emphasizes the observation pointedly:

The data that forms the "material" for the insight that the finite cosmos has as its ground a reality that is other than finite being is the "movement of the soul," as Voegelin puts it, that discovers its own nature both to presuppose and to be constituted by a spiritual reality unrestricted by finite limitations.... When such a movement does occur, what has happened, in Voegelin's terms, is that the tension of consciousness toward a reality beyond all cosmic contents has become transparent for its own nature as "spiritual," i.e., as related by participation to a ground that is incommensurate with limitation. Of course such a ground is known only in the interiority of meditation and reflection, and so is nothing in the world that can be pointed to. (53)

Such formulations may occasion unease in certain quarters, since some readers might find phrases like, "only in consciousness" or "only in the interiority of meditation" to be uncomfortably close to understandings in which apprehensions of divinity are regarded as merely "subjective" phenomena with no "exterior" referents or objects. Such understandings could be seen, in turn, as lying adjacent to Feuerbachian conceptions in which the divine is considered a simple projection by humans of their own characteristics or aspirations. However, unease or discomfort of this sort stems not from any peculiarity in Voegelin's understanding or phraseology regarding differentiation, but rather from the hard fact that the Beyond apprehended in the differentiating insights is profoundly distinct from the "existent" or "material" reality which human subjects can experience as objects, and which can consequently only be experienced in consciousness.
The upshot of these observations on differentiation for Hughes' work on the theme of mystery is clear: that which is made "known" to those who achieve the great differentiations is mysterious at its core—and remains so permanently since it is the very "otherness" of the ground from the things of the cosmos that are "known" in ordinary modes that makes it comprehensible as their ground. As Hughes expresses the point,

...there is a profound irony at the heart of the differentiating process. It is that the true nature of the ground comes to be known as something radically distinct from earth and sun, king and Pharaoh, so its hiddenness, its genuine unknowability, is revealed. The human beings who find in their own finite intellectual and spiritual capacities clues to the divine being do so only by recognizing that such being transcends incomprehensibly all manner of being with which they are familiar. To know of a Beyond is to acknowledge, to discover a mystery—the basic, primal mystery of the originating ground of all reality. (56)

Hughes offers the most extended and illuminating account of this complex of problems available in the secondary literature on Voegelin. He shows with superior clarity that, while the differentiating "leaps in being" serve to "disclose" vital information about reality, they also cast an immovable veil of mysteriousness over the information regarding the origin and ground of being that is most ardently desired by human questioners. The differentiating leaps are great triumphs in human history. They are also highly problematic and intensely frustrating, given that, as Aristotle argues, "all men by nature desire to know."

The problems and frustrations imposed on questioners are vitally important not only in Voegelin's philosophy and theology, but also in his understanding of politics and history. Historically, the leaps in being effectively "dedivinized" the immanent realm of existence by transcendentalizing the ground, and in so doing created a realm of desacralized worldly things appropriate for scientific inquiry and technological exploitation. Moreover, the removal of the
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divine from the cosmos has set in place a complex of psychic and spiritual strains that have prompted an unbroken stream of attempts to re-sacralize the world (as in Hermeticism, magic, alchemy, and "metastatic faith") or to flee it in hope of achieving a reunion of some sort (as in Gnosticism and various species of magic pneumatism). Politically, these reactions to dedivinization have spawned a multitude of sectarian upheavals over three millennia involving everything from relatively benign escapist cults to monstrously destructive ideological movements. The analysis of such upheavals and their spiritual wellsprings is one of the most prominent and distinctive aspects of Voegelin's work, and clearly it will be impossible for us to discuss it here in any detail. It should be noted, however, that any adequate appreciation of Voegelin's work on spiritual disorder depends vitally on an understanding of his work on the destabilizing effects of differentiation. Problems of spiritual disorder are not at the center of Hughes' book, but by focusing his account of differentiation on the problem of mystery and developing it by reference to Voegelin's latest and most highly developed writings, Hughes has nevertheless contributed significantly to the literature on spiritual disorder.

Hughes' third chapter is devoted to Voegelin's philosophy of history. Since the advent of the philosophy of history in the eighteenth century and its heyday in the nineteenth, this branch of inquiry has generally come to be regarded as an enterprise that considers the flow of meaningful events in time and concludes by issuing in a thesis regarding the meaning of history as a whole. Hughes notes at the outset of "The Drama of History" that Voegelin's work breaks from this typical pattern, emphasizing "both the mystery of history as an unfinished process and the mystery of transcendent being that resides at its core." (71) Since Voegelin conceives of history "not as a sequence of material events to be empirically verified and duly catalogued, but as a pattern of lines of meaning' that emerge from the efforts of persons and societies to understand the structure of reality," one must reserve a prominent place in historical inquiry for "the relation of human beings, through participation, to a strictly transcendent source of being and truth." (72)
On one level, this approach to history is quite clearly dictated by some basic considerations that are readily acknowledged by most theologians and many philosophers. Since history must ultimately be concerned with how meaning is revealed by the passage of events in time, and since any such lines of meaning must include one that extends beyond a contingent, spatiotemporal realm that cannot serve as its own ground to that origin from which both existence and its meaning stem, there is considerable theoretical force behind the notion that historical studies must incorporate a transcendent dimension. However, as Hughes observes, the introduction of such a dimension carries implications that seriously complicate our approach to historical studies-implications that pull theological and philosophical concerns toward the very core of history:

For the historian, whose concern is the development of human self-understanding, this renders the overall pattern of history extremely complex, since meaning in history must now be conceived as constituted not only by diachronically and synchronically related temporal structures, but also by the eschatological line of meaning that runs, so to speak, between the entire historical field of unfolding meaning and the ground of reality beyond time. And as the eminent reality of the ground must dominate any interpretation of meaning in existence, the historian, in the interpretation of the human developments with which he or she is concerned, must accord special significance to those discoveries through which that eschatological line of meaning has come to be known and to the consequences of those discoveries. (72)

This perspective on history was already in place when Voegelin published *The New Science of Politics* and the first three volumes of *Order and History* in the 1950s. His later works-especially *The Ecumenic Age*—introduced still greater complications resulting from three historical findings that arose in the interim between volumes III and IV of *Order and History*:

1) A crosscut of spiritual outbursts that could not be arranged on a time line.
2) A type of order—the ecumenic empire—that was not a society and could not be a subject of order (like the other societal types that were to structure the original conception for *Order and History*) but only an object of conquest.

3) A symbolism, historiogenesis, that is a millennial constant revealing "constancies and equivalences" that "work havoc" with any understanding of history as a succession of distinct periods or symbolisms.

This combination of findings not only worked havoc with conventional understandings of history as a succession of mundane occurrences in time, but also exerted such force against Voegelin's own, highly advanced work in *Order and History* that he felt compelled to relinquish the original publication plan for the series and revise his basic understanding of how history itself must be analyzed.

To return to Hughes' formulation from the quotation above, the force of these findings was exerted principally against the diachronic line of meaning from the original conception, yielding Voegelin's conclusion that history "is definitely not a story of meaningful events to be arranged on a time line." Rather, a truly adequate historical analysis must move "backward and forward and sideways," as well as "in what might be called the vertical direction of transcendent meaning" in order to follow the significant patterns of meaning in history as they reveal themselves in the self-interpretations of persons and societies. In this view, history cannot by symbolized as a "course" but only as a "web of meaning with a plurality of nodal points.

As Hughes summarizes his fine account of how Voegelin's late findings distinguish his conception of history from more conventional ones,

> [t]he traditional conception of history as *essentially* a movement of meaning from past to future is inadequate, because it obscures the synchronic and eschatological elements that also constitute historical meaning. Of course, there would be no history without the advances in self-interpretation that unfold as a process in time. But, Voegelin would argue, with the synchronic and especially the eschatological lines of meaning
properly taken into consideration, it is no longer appropriate to describe the structure of history in general as a course; the course from past to future must be considered as one dimension of a "web of meaning" that only as a whole makes up "history." (73)

Hughes is right to emphasize the impact of the eschatological line of meaning, for this is the line that compels Voegelin to reconceive history in the striking formulations of *The Ecumenic Age*-formulations that demonstrate very clearly the centrality of mystery in Voegelin's mature historical thinking. For the Voegelin of *The Ecumenic Age*, the "spiritual outbursts" and "hierophanic events" we associated with the process of differentiation must be acknowledged not as phenomena in a history of mankind, but as the sources of meaning in history and of such knowledge as man has of it....

[T]hey are experienced as meaningful inasmuch as they constitute a Before and After within time that points toward a fulfillment, toward an Eschaton, out of time. History is not a stream of human beings and their actions in time, but the process of man's participation in a flux of divine presence that has eschatological direction.... The process of history, and such order as can be discerned in it, is not a story to be told from the beginning to its happy, or unhappy end; it is a mystery in process of revelation.

Thus, as in Voegelin's late philosophical work, his mature historical conceptions show mystery lying at the center of his thought.

Hughes offers a concise overview of the structure of Voegelin's philosophy of history before addressing the question of meaning that emerges from it and the attendant question of how this meaning may best be symbolized. Regarding the meaning of history, Voegelin argues we can say nothing definite at all, for two reasons enumerated by Hughes. First, human existence is still unfolding, and consequently its full pattern of meaning must still remain open toward the future. Second, the meaning of human existence in history
must remain shrouded in mystery because its very origins and goal are transcendent rather than immanent. However, though we cannot pronounce on the meaning of history, we can discern lines of direction in history. Concerning this direction, Hughes maintains that

[lit involves a transformation from pre-differentiated consciousness to consciousness emphatically aware of its existence in relation to a meaning that transcends the meaning incarnate in the finite cosmos. And this means that, in Voegelin's view, reality as a whole is engaged in a process of "transfiguration".... The transfiguration Voegelin has in mind appears to be a precarious participation, in the medium of consciousness, of generated and perishing being in the imperishable being of the transcendent ground. Why precarious? Because, while our own experiences of temporally conditioned participation in the pole of transcendent being may lead us to imagine the process of history culminating in a completed and stable transfiguration of some kind...we have no evidence of such a stasis or fulfillment. History is an "in-between" kind of reality: it evidences a process of transition, or transformation, and while it has clearly embarked on a journey, it just as clearly has not reached the destination toward which it appears to be heading. (80)

Thus, Voegelin's philosophy of history offers insight into the structure of history as well as its process, but will not issue pronouncements about its essential meaning because of the continuing mysteriousness of history's destination or outcome. Rather than succumbing to the powerful temptation to derive a sense of humanity's historical role and purpose from such pronouncements (in the manner of Hegel or Marx), Voegelin's thinking calls us to a demanding confrontation with mystery and paradox, namely, "the paradox of a recognizably structured process that is recognizably moving beyond its structure." [67]

Although Voegelin points to an ineluctable mysteriousness encountered in the most profound human experiences of reality and
history, it would be improper to suggest that he depicts humanity simply as lost in darkness and ignorance. As Voegelin writes in the opening pages of *Israel and Revelation*,

The ultimate, essential ignorance is not complete ignorance. Man can achieve considerable knowledge about the order of being, and not the least part of that knowledge is the distinction between the knowable and the unknowable. Such achievement, however, comes late in the long-drawn-out process of experience and symbolization that forms the subject matter of the present study. The concern of man about the meaning of his existence in the field of being does not remain pent up in the tortures of anxiety, but can vent itself in the creation of symbols purporting to render intelligible the relations and tensions between the distinguishable terms of the field. (2-3)

It is widely known that the history of such symbolic efforts begins with mythic symbols. It is much less widely known that resort to myth becomes no less important or necessary as the process of history unfolds in the differentiation of cosmic truth and the development of modes of inquiry such as philosophy and theology. This is an important dimension of *Mystery and Myth in Eric Voegelin*, and though constraints of space will preclude a full discussion here, Hughes' central point can be stated straightforwardly: since even the most differentiated modes of participation in reality ultimately involve encounters with fundamental mysteries, *logos* can augment but never displace the need for *mythos* in efforts to symbolize experiences of participation. Consequently, Hughes offers accounts not only of how mythic symbolizations evolved historically to stay abreast of differentiations (81-86), but also considers the components that would be required for a myth in our time to be complementary to Voegelin's mature philosophy of history. (86)

Hughes' final chapter, "Mystery and Mythos," provides "a systematic summary of Voegelin's analysis of the central mysteries of every human existence and of what is involved in recognizing and embracing them." (89) Hughes analyzes four mysteries that are specified in Voegelin's writings: the mystery of origins, the mystery
of personal meaning, the mystery of history, and the mystery of the relationship between individual destiny and universal history. His summary accounts of these decisively important problems (90-96) is the clearest available in the literature on Voegelin-cleer, indeed, than many of Voegelin's parallel formulations, and considerably more accessible by dint of a deft intertwining of Voegelin's technical terms with more common philosophical language. These summaries are not, however, the conclusion of Hughes' analysis. He observes that these mysteries raise further questions regarding how humans are to orient and attune themselves to a radically transcendent and ultimately mysterious ground of being, and, of equal importance, how they are to find meaning and fulfillment in the immanent realm of worldly existence from which the ground is differentiated. As Hughes casts the issue,

When the differentiating insights separate the perfection of the ground from the physical universe, a shadow falls over the struggle for personal and social fulfillment, insofar as perfect attunement or reconciliation with what is most lasting in reality can no longer reasonably be conceived as possible under worldly conditions. The insights place the index of imperfection on the whole of finite reality. Consequently, the struggle for the realization of meaning, for fulfillment, shifts from being a thoroughly intracosmic conflict to involving, at its deepest level, a "movement," as Voegelin says, from the imperfection of the finite cosmos in the "direction" of the perfection of the transcendent ground. To our concern with the familiar struggle in the world's time between good and evil, order and disorder, is added the disturbing insight that the entire realm of existence in time is "disorder," insofar as we measure it by the transcendent order of its completed and perfected meaning. Inevitably, then, the noetic and pneumatic differentiations lead to a new kind of vision of the human struggle, a vision beyond the horizon of ancient mythic thinking, in which social and personal existence find fulfillment, not in this world, but in a Beyond of the world. (97)
From this vision of the human struggle and the "eschatological consciousness" or insights underlying it, there arise a whole host of problems including "the validity of those insights, of the philosophical problems they raise, of the passions they ignite, of the prophetic explanations and exhortations they engender, and, finally and not least significantly, of their susceptibility to misinterpretation in any number of manners."

Voegelin's extensive treatment of these problems is, as Hughes indicates, "one of his most impressive philosophical achievements." The problems span the range of issues treated by Voegelin under the general heading of gnosticism (as well as related spiritual disorders such as "metastatic faith," "parousiasm," "egophanic revolt," and "ideological consciousness"). In accordance with his focus on mystery, Hughes' account of these problems is relatively brief and, consequently, structurally incapable of detailing the intricacies of Voegelin's analysis. However, Hughes' account is nevertheless quite valuable for its close connection to the strains and tensions in consciousness that are the originating wellsprings of spiritual disorder as understood by Voegelin. Much of the secondary literature in this problem area suffers from distractions that Hughes succeeds in avoiding. More specifically, many accounts of particular writings and movements born from spiritual revolt (against the experience of a radically imperfect and dedivinized world) become embroiled in disputing the particular doctrines in which the revolt is expressed, which is to say that they concentrate on epiphenomenal manifestations rather than on the core phenomenon of the revolt as it occurs on the level of consciousness. For this reason, Hughes' account (98-103) holds genuine significance.

The book closes with an analysis of "the most radical question of all concerning the overall structure of the process of reality. Why [Voegelin] asks, has the one divine ground formed a finite cosmos that includes the human questioner, only to require the questioner to seek, in resistance to existential ignorance and disorder, the ground itself beyond the finite cosmos, and find his or her 'salvation' in increasing degrees of participatory attunement with its truth?" (103) Hughes contends that this question, once asked, expands
immediately to encompass the mysteries of personal destiny and history:

Why is the human transfiguring response only partially successful? As Voegelin comments, "[T]he fulfillment of human nature emerges against the background of the mystery of its failure." And why is there a historical process of discovery concerning these truths? "Why is the structure of reality not known in differentiated form at all times?" It is apparent that all of these mysteries form an interlocking network of insights. It is not going too far to say that the entire complex, as an interpretation of the human situation, stands or falls together.... In short, Voegelin's entire analysis of mystery-and, by implication, of human existence-depends upon the validity of his theory of the differentiation of transcendence; consequently, it will appear cogent only to that reader who is ready to affirm the insights that underlie that theory. (103-104)

Hughes recognizes that such readers are-and will remain-in relatively short supply. He cites two preconditions for affirming the insights that underlie Voegelin's theory: "the question of the ground must be asked; and the questioner must not be satisfied with an answer that falls short of the recognition of transcendent meaning."

The latter precondition is particularly problematic. The differentiation of consciousness is both spiritually demanding and intellectually challenging, and not everyone is equal to these demands and challenges. Moreover, those who manage to grasp the necessary transcendence of the ground must then maintain that grasp, which involves "the problem of coping with its mystery, of finding the love, hope, and faith that enable one to face and continually be delivered from, as Kierkegaard would say, the anxiety its uncertainties produce." (104) Finally (and perhaps most importantly, in Hughes' view), "the contemporary Westerner is at a disadvantage due to centuries of cultural conditioning in which the question of the ground has been answered by so-called 'scientific' interpretations of reality, which...identify one or another type of finite structure, or principle of the relation among finite structures, as the most real or
Hughes regards Voegelin's work as "a corrective to the spirit of the age" (114), and concludes that "Voegelin's mystagogy is a therapy directed against all of these causes of modern closure to transcendent reality." (115) On the strength of its philosophical penetration of Voegelin's effort as well as its remarkable clarity and economy of expression, Hughes' analysis must be deemed an important contribution to that effort in its own right.

IV

Barry Cooper, currently Professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary, has authored, in *Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science*, the most ambitious commentary on Eric Voegelin's thought yet to appear in print. Of the ten single-author books on Voegelin published in English to date, this is by far the longest, the most extensive in scope, and the most broadly based in terms of source materials. Yet we are told in the initial line of the opening page that this is but "the first of two studies on the political science of Eric Voegelin." It is therefore clear that Cooper has undertaken an enterprise without quantitative precedent in the secondary literature on Voegelin, and there is reason to see the book as qualitatively unprecedented as well. By this I do not mean to suggest that it is "better" than the other books on Voegelin, but rather that it is qualitatively different by dint of its implied intention to address the major part—if not quite the entirety—of Voegelin's work. Whereas all of the commentaries to date are either introductions that seek to ease the way for those new to Voegelin or specialized studies that examine some particular facet of his thought, Cooper seems intent upon a nearly comprehensive exposition.

I can only say that Cooper "seems" intent upon a "nearly" comprehensive exposition, and that he "implies" an intention to address the major part of Voegelin's work, because Cooper has surprisingly little to say about his intentions for this book or the broader two-volume enterprise. Moreover, what little he does say is
not entirely clear or persuasive. Indeed, I regard the book's opacity regarding the structure of the enterprise as one of its few significant shortcomings. I hasten to add that the book's many impressive strengths easily outweigh its shortcomings, and also that any shortcomings may be remedied in the promised second volume. Nevertheless, Cooper's first installment poses certain difficulties, given my present purposes. My approach in this essay has been to "devote much of my attention to the objectives that inform each of the books, setting them forth as clearly as possible and then assessing how-and how well-the author succeeds in fulfilling them. Since Cooper has only shown half of how he intends to fulfill his objectives, it is not yet possible to assess how well they will be fulfilled, and thus my comments on this book will focus more sharply on its approach than its execution. This tack is also dictated to a degree by the sheer bulk of the book, which, at 435 pages, defies the sort of running commentary that was possible with a shorter work such as that by Hughes.

Given that this book is the first of two in a set, one naturally wishes to understand it in relation to the larger project of which it is a part. However, this volume does not contain a single explicit reference to the second book or to its role in the larger enterprise aside from Cooper's initial sentence, quoted above. The book's very last sentence does seem to contain at least an implicit reference to the second book, as Cooper writes, "we must reserve for another occasion the systematic discussion of the intellectual mansion Voegelin erected on these impressive foundations." (435)6 This seems to suggest that Cooper has indeed planned a nearly comprehensive exposition of Voegelin's thought, inasmuch as the combination of the foundations and the mansion would seem to add up to the entire edifice. 70

The impression that Cooper is intent upon comprehensiveness is fortified by his statement that "the most general purpose of this study is to indicate as clearly as possible the depths or the circumference of Voegelin's political science." (xi) This picks up on an earlier sentence in which Cooper, considering whether Voegelin may be the most important political scientist of the last century, states that, "what Northrop Frye once called the 'circumference' and
what others have called the 'depth' of the thought of a poet or philosopher constitutes a measure of greatness." Since it is manifestly impossible to plumb depths without getting to the bottom of things, or to gauge circumferences without getting to their outermost reaches, it certainly seems that Cooper's objective for the two-volume study is an explication of the whole-or at least the major part-of Voegelin's thought.

Somewhat surprisingly, though, Cooper disclaims such an intention in his Preface, noting that "the purpose of this study is much more modest than anything approaching an intellectual biography or an analysis of the entirety of Voegelin's work." Although I have no reason not to take him at his word, it is difficult to see how the book and the broader project could be described accurately as anything other than a work precisely "approaching an intellectual biography or an analysis of the entirety of Voegelin's work." The disclaimer occurs in an explanation by Cooper of his decision to begin his analysis around 1938, but it is not clear that this imposes particularly high costs where either an intellectual biography or a comprehensive analysis are concerned. Although it is true enough that Cooper doesn't devote sufficient attention to Voegelin's life as a young man to make the book look like a biography, his many reflections on Voegelin's particular characteristics as a thinker, his detailed analysis of Voegelin's anamnetic experiments, and the largely chronological flow of the book all add up to something that seems pretty serviceable as an intellectual biography. Moreover, it doesn't seem that Cooper has given up much that would be required for a comprehensive analysis of Voegelin's work by deciding not to treat his dissertation or the early publications on jurisprudence and sociology." Cooper's treatment of the race books and the various projects of the 1930s are actually quite adequate as indications of what is important from this period for understanding the "mature" Voegelin's thought. In fact, if Cooper's avowed intention were to pen an "analysis of the entirety of Voegelin's work" in the 900 pages afforded by this and a comparably-sized successor volume, one might say that the space he apportioned to the early material would be just about right. It seems
that Cooper is stalking much bigger game than the "modest purpose" mentioned in his Preface, and one wonders whether modesty has impaired the accuracy of his description. In any case, I believe it would be easier to assess this book if we had a clearer indication of how Cooper understands the scope of his project.

Although there is room for a difference of opinion on how closely this scope approaches an analysis of the entirety of Voegelin's work, it seems indisputable that Cooper is stalking very big game indeed, since no informed scholar would consider it a modest undertaking to "indicate as clearly as possible the depths or the circumference of Voegelin's political science." This will be apparent to anyone who knows the extent of Voegelin's published oeuvre, which includes sixteen books and over one hundred articles of truly remarkable depth and range. Those who also know the even greater extent of Voegelin's unpublished works and papers, which include a small mountain of fascinating and important correspondence, will rightly wonder whether Cooper could possibly be up to the task he seems to set for himself.

The early indications are that—remarkably enough—he just might be. Cooper's Foundations is not without imperfections, but I would nevertheless evaluate it as the most accomplished work in the entire secondary literature on Voegelin. Cooper provides a remarkably complex and detailed account of the early Voegelin by weaving together all of the various types of writings he left behind, and he makes deft and highly profitable use of materials that are almost never utilized by other commentators. Cooper reaches beyond the early books published by Voegelin, drawing upon his reviews of other scholars' books, his unpublished manuscripts and papers, letters to publishers as well as other scholars and writers, and a range of archival materials including collections other than those devoted to Voegelin. Moreover, it is fair to say that Cooper makes more extensive and effective use of Voegelin's correspondence in this one book than have all the other authors of book-length commentaries taken together (myself included). Of course, these varied materials could add up to a confusing mess just as easily as an illuminating composite, but Cooper has orchestrated them with admirable skill.
He demonstrates sufficient command of materials, interpretive ability, and philosophical aptitude to provide a comprehensive commentary that—while obviously not substituting for the originals—does genuine justice to them. Finally, it bears noting that Cooper also writes with a refreshing simplicity and straightforwardness that makes this book (especially its first two thirds) a "good read," which is no mean feat when such weighty matters are under consideration.

Nevertheless, there remain questions of some significance regarding the book's structure. My point of departure is a section in the third chapter where Cooper provides an account of the yardstick employed by Voegelin when reviewing the work of another political scientist (which is also, of course, what Cooper does in the book and what I am doing here). Voegelin's yardstick, Cooper writes, was to look for "mastery of the materials as well as of the methods employed in their interpretation" (73) and for whether an author has "provided an adequate methodological justification of the criteria by which he had selected his materials and ordered them into categories for analysis." (74) In my view, Cooper's own work in Foundations passes the first of these tests with flying colors but falls short on the second. He has clearly mastered the materials, and he interprets them ably at almost every turn. However, my reading left me with many questions about how Cooper has ordered and presented the materials he analyzes, and I find few passages in the book that explain or justify his decisions.

To begin with, I wonder whether the conception underlying the aforementioned distinction between the "foundations" and the "mansion" is viable. Certainly there is an element of truth to the notion that Voegelin's studies for the History of Political Ideas provided a base of sorts for Voegelin's later work. Moreover, I would grant that the metaphor works pretty well as an illustration of the relation of the History to The New Science of Politics and the first three volumes of Order and History. However, when looking further ahead to Anamnesis, The Ecumenic Age, the late essays, and In Search of Order, I think the metaphor proves more misleading than illustrative. This is because one of the most distinctive features
of Voegelin's career is that he was a ceaselessly foundational thinker, by which I mean that he never stood pat on any foundation for long, whether methodological or empirical. Rather, he engaged in almost constant examination and reconstruction of the foundations utilized in earlier works, never content merely to extend the superstructure with additional analyses. Thus, Anamnesis seems more like a new foundation than a new superstructure sitting atop the work performed on the History, and much the same could be said of The Ecumenic Age and the other late writings. The shifts and so-called "breaks" in Voegelin's program over the years are surely very unusual in a thinker of his stature, and they say something important about his approach to reality-political and otherwise.

Reviewers should certainly not make too much of metaphors, which are easy to exploit unfairly for critical purposes. However, I believe that there are issues at stake in Cooper's "foundations" metaphor that are more important than quibbles over imagery. If it is true that the metaphorical distinction between an early foundation and a late mansion doesn't hold up under scrutiny, then we must also ask why it makes sense to begin a study of Voegelin's political science by focusing so intensively on the History of Political Ideas. If the shifts and breaks in Voegelin's program are the result of his having laid improved or at least new foundations at several different points in his career, then is it obvious that we should begin by looking at the early foundations rather than those on which he was working toward the end of his life? Doesn't Cooper's approach run the risk of leading novices who use the book as "a guide to Voegelin's writing" to give undue priority to superceded formulations? I would not go so far as to say that Cooper tempts the reader into the Straussian sin of "reading the high in the light of the low," but a novice who arrives at an understanding of how Voegelin's political science regards issues of method (or the range of evidence or intelligible units of analysis) on the basis of Foundations will be in for some jarring surprises when encountering a book like The Ecumenic Age.

To determine whether there is a problem here, we must examine the issue more closely. Readers of Cooper's book get very little indication of where they are being led in the Preface, which
boils down to something like the following sequence of observations: Voegelin is very important and ever more widely studied; the *History of Political Ideas* was Voegelin's first great work, forming the foundation for his restoration of political science to a genuine science of order; and though Voegelin's mature writings are a finished structure that rise above it, a study of this foundation will help scholars understand the significance of Voegelin's later work. Cooper then launches directly into his discussion, which is thick with biographical background through the first chapter. The second chapter furnishes additional biographical information that shows Voegelin settling into the work of a professional scholar in America, augmented by historical details that help contextualize Voegelin's task in writing the *History*. At this point most readers will probably still be in the dark about the structure of Cooper's book. The first two chapters are overwhelmingly biographical, and as they flow chronologically, the book certainly feels like an intellectual biography, Cooper's disclaimer notwithstanding.

However, beginning with the third chapter, things change abruptly. The biographical flow breaks off, though this is not terribly surprising, since it has set the stage nicely for the main act, which one might reasonably assume is an account of the *History of Political Ideas*. Yet, this is not what follows. Rather than devoting the main body of his text to such an analysis, Cooper pursues problems and questions that are predominantly methodological in nature, and bases the analysis not on the *History* but on the entirety of Voegelin's work in (and sometimes beyond) the 1940s and early 1950s. Only the sections on Bodin, Vico and Schelling from the *History* are given extended treatment, and these treatments are directed less toward questions of textual interpretation than to issues of method and approach in the study of political reality. I think it is fair to say that it is this with which Cooper's book is most centrally concerned: Voegelin's early studies of methods and approaches in political analysis, organized around issues such as scientific and philosophical methodology, human nature and philosophical anthropology, the philosophies of consciousness and history, and the appropriate range of evidence and units of analysis for canvassing political reality.
The problem, of course, is that Voegelin is hardly done with these questions in 1950, which makes one wonder where Cooper intends to take his readers in the next volume. Will the next book also have chapters entitled, "The Range of Evidence" and "Intelligible Units of Analysis" that discuss Voegelin's more developed late formulations? If these problems and questions are not revisited, readers will not be well served, and if they are revisited, Cooper may find that he has left himself an impossibly massive task for the second book. I presume, possibly incorrectly, that the second book will also need to treat *The New Science of Politics, Israel and Revelation, The World of the Polis, Plato and Aristotle, Science, Politics and Gnosticism, Anamnesis, The Ecumenic Age, In Search of Order,* and at least a dozen articles of great difficulty and importance. Moreover, if Cooper intends to do justice to Voegelin's mature work, he would also need to incorporate the less prominent articles, conference papers, unpublished writings, speech transcripts, book reviews, and the vast correspondence produced by Voegelin in the last 35 years of his life. What sits atop Cooper's foundation is perhaps not a mansion but a house with many mansions, and if he really means to plumb the depths and survey the circumference of Voegelin's thought in this study, the decisions made in structuring this first book may prevent the second one from fulfilling this purpose—unless it is either a very, very big book or a miracle of concision.

Perhaps there is no real problem here, and indeed it seems much more likely than not that Cooper knows where he is going, since he is obviously an exceptionally capable thinker who knows Voegelin's work in great detail. Still, readers may find themselves uncertain about where they are being led as they dig into the book, and also about where Cooper intends to go in the successor volume. It seems that he may be somewhat torn between two organizational schemes that work at cross purposes, one "topical" and the other chronological. On one hand, he structures most of his chapters topically to examine a particular dimension of Voegelin's thought, and thus is sometimes tempted to peek ahead to late writings because he cannot fail, in good conscience, to mention that Voegelin revises the early views on the topic under discussion. However, since
he has devoted this book to a particular time period, he must pull back from these anticipatory allusions and abort them before the reader can get a full and adequate understanding of Voegelin's mature view. Perhaps Cooper's organizational strategy will be vindicated in the next book, but since he has provided little that explains or justifies it in this one, that outcome remains to be seen.

Nevertheless, regardless of whether these are real problems or only seeming ones born of my misunderstanding, they do little to undermine the value of what Cooper has accomplished in *Foundations*. In other words, while *Foundations* may be a structurally questionable start to the two-volume study, it remains an extremely valuable book on the level of substance. Cooper's first chapter, "Escape and Arrival," offers an account of the circumstances under which Voegelin departed from Austria in 1938 and of the writings that set the Gestapo on his trail. It also provides the first detailed account of the process by which Voegelin took up residence in the United States and joined the American wing of the academy, and here readers will find a wealth of interesting and illuminating information on Voegelin's early research program and his self-understanding as a young scholar. The second chapter, "War and Political Ideas," picks up in 1942 with Voegelin's arrival at Louisiana State University, where he was to work until departing for the University of Munich in 1958. The centerpiece of the chapter is an analysis of Voegelin's theoretical design for the *History of Political Ideas*, which he began in 1939 and which was the principal focus of his writing for more than a decade. The bulk of the *History* has now been published by the University of Missouri Press, and Cooper's analysis joins that of Thomas Hollweck and Ellis Sandoz (in their "General Introduction to the Series") as the leading and indispensable sources for understanding this remarkable project. This chapter also includes a valuable section on Voegelin's views regarding interwar Germany, World War II, and the broader crisis of Western politics and culture.

Cooper's third chapter, "Positivism and the Destruction of Science," considers Voegelin's encounters with positivism in American political science. Cooper's point of departure is Voegelin's (still
unsurpassed) demolition of positivism in *The New Science of Politics*, but rather than offering a mere reprise of that relatively widely-read case, Cooper offers a broadly-based analysis that traces positivism back to its spiritual and historical roots and forward to its development into a scientism that marginalizes authentic science. Cooper sets the spiritual and intellectual context of the discussion at the outset, where he observes that

[nor Voegelin, positivism was first of all a matter of principle, namely the perversion of science. Like any perversion, it was the result of an act, in this case an intellectual act of subordinating theoretical relevance to method. This principle of perverse subordination, then, constitutes the methodological core of the problem, which implies that the manifestations of positivism through particular doctrines are secondary. (68)]

Cooper shows the principle in action with accounts of Voegelin's reviews of contemporaries whose work was vitiated by more or less explicit versions of positivism. These accounts are less concerned with the particular doctrines in question than with the principles of relevance employed by their authors and dictated in turn by the impoverished versions of philosophical anthropology underlying these principles. Cooper illuminates the historical and philosophical basis for Voegelin's critiques by analyzing the "spiritual genealogy" that stretches back from "libidinous and perverse behavioralists" through "'scientific value relativism' and the destructive effects of nineteenth-century positivism" to "the intellectual atmosphere of the late sixteenth century." (95-96) This intellectual atmosphere is marked by a "loss of the concrete," understood as a loss of contact "not only with the realities of divine transcendence and reason but with the reality of everyday existence as well." (103) The lost concrete experiences of reality were replaced by phenomenalist equivalents, and the chapter closes with a discussion of phenomenanism, understood as "Voegelin's summary definition of the ontological error characteristic of the positivist era, much as *spiritual eunuch* was the term he used to describe the type of human being characteristic of the positivist era." (115-116)
The fourth chapter, "Method: Voegelin, Strauss, and Arendt," is a fascinating study of Voegelin's intellectual and professional relation to these important contemporaries. In structural terms, it revolves around Voegelin's reviews of Strauss' *On Tyranny: An Interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero* and Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* However, Cooper's analysis is supplemented by artful and exceedingly effective use of Voegelin's correspondence, book reviews, and related articles to illuminate much deeper points of commonality and difference among the three thinkers. It will obviously be impossible to detail the particulars of Cooper's analysis here, aside from noting that Strauss comes out looking much better than does Arendt. Although there are deep and serious issues dividing Strauss and Voegelin (which are addressed more deeply and seriously by Voegelin than Strauss, in Cooper's view), Voegelin nevertheless concludes in correspondence that Strauss "was a great scholar" and "a notable force in raising the awareness of standards in science." By contrast, Voegelin's correspondence includes reference to *The Origins of Totalitarianism* as "a rather messy performance, valuable only for its historical materials." Regarding their exchange (published with Voegelin's review in *The Review of Politics*), Cooper writes of Voegelin's "disappointment, even irritation with Arendt's refusal or inability to engage in a serious discussion." Cooper appears to concur with Voegelin's assessments of both Strauss and Arendt, writing of the former as "a scholar who knew his business" but of the latter as needing "correction" of her "defective or spiritually impoverished language."

Cooper's fifth chapter is devoted to philosophical anthropology. Although a classical anthropology had existed in the form of the Platonic/Aristotelian "idea of man," Cooper's concern is with "the development of philosophical anthropology in the twentieth century." He notes that this contemporary pursuit does not operate unchallenged in its realm of inquiry, but rather has arisen partly in response to the specialized human sciences or social sciences: linguistics, psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, economics, and political science.... Each social science, having
accumulated enormous amounts of information and having
developed logically coherent models within which that infor-
mation could be understood, saw itself as autonomous not
merely with respect to the social sciences but with respect to
philosophical anthropology as well. (166)

By contrast, philosophical anthropology is an integrative or rela-
tional undertaking that serves "the minimal purpose of establishing
the relationship between physical, biological, intellectual, and other
activities insofar as such activities and their relationship influence
the establishment of social order." (162) Cooper cites four men as
having initiated and carried through the revival of philosophical
anthropology: Helmuth Plessner, Adolf Portmann, Arnold Gehlen,
and Max Scheler. (167) It was Scheler's work that provided the point
of departure for Voegelin's own contribution, and Cooper's account
is valuable no less for its summary of Scheler's work than for its
overview of Voegelin's own. It bears noting that Cooper does not
treat philosophical anthropology as an undertaking distinct from the
philosophy of history or the philosophy of consciousness, but rather
as a result of their fusion. (162) Cooper's account pays particularly
close attention to Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness (as it
existed in the 1940s), and thus the studies that formed the basis for
4namnesis looms large in this chapter. (176–210) In Cooper's
oncluding summary, he contends that

Voegelin's philosophical anthropology can perhaps best be
understood as an extension of Scheler's, particularly Scheler's
image of man as an ontologically process consisting, nevertheless,
of ontologically distinguishable subprocesses: physical,
biological, and spiritual. Several interconnected implications
were drawn from Scheler's argument: first, the human being's
"rooted" in animal, physical, and cosmic being; second, there
an be no legitimate reduction of one "level" of being to
other; third, any adequate philosophical anthropology must
'elude a well-articulated philosophy of consciousness; fourth,
ich a philosophy of consciousness must be able to account for
its own awareness of the world-transcendent Ground of Being; and fifth, the historically variegated accounts of consciousness of reality must be integrated by a philosophy of history. (210)

The sixth chapter, entitled, "The `Reader' of History," takes up Voegelin's early work in the philosophy of history. The chapter's lead character is Bodin, but the stage is set by an account of Voltaire's transformative use of the philosophy of history in an effort to supersede Bossuet's theology of history. Cooper provides an admirably clear and concise summary of the secularization of history (of which he regards Voltaire's polemics as an important symptom), which he defines more precisely as a dissociation of the constituent elements of medieval Western universalism, namely, spirit, reason, and imperium. Cooper enumerates the three phases in this process of dissociation as identified by Voegelin (222), a process that was largely provoked by the church and which resulted in the destruction of its public authority in spiritual matters. This created "a spiritual vacuum that was quickly filled by the new sources of spiritual order: the divine right of kings, nationalism, humanitarianism, liberalism, socialism, racism, pacifism, feminism, and so forth." (223) Cooper follows Voegelin in concluding that "in order to deal with this problem, an act of `ecclesiastical statesmanship' comparable to that achieved by Saint Paul or Saint Thomas was required." (225) But Voegelin, Cooper notes, was in no way an ecclesiastical statesman-though it could be said that if an ecclesiastical statesman were to appear, "he or she would profit from Voegelin's analysis of the source of the contemporary social, political, and spiritual disorders."

Although Cooper explicitly observes that "no political scientist would ever claim for himself that he was a new Thomas," he suggests that several of Voegelin's central endeavors are indeed among those that a new Thomas would be required to undertake:

A new Thomas would...develop a philosophy of history that was neither as empirically limited as the theology of history represented here by Bossuet nor as spiritually arid as the
secular philosophy of history represented here by Voltaire. Such an enterprise, as was just indicated, would have three interrelated components. First, it would balance the universal spiritual insights of Bossuet with Voltaire's concern for an ecumenical survey of evidence. It would, moreover, be concerned for the historical vicissitudes of the church as an institution that has attempted to shelter the spiritual substance of Christianity from the corrosive influence of two civilizational courses. And, third, it would be sensitive to the intelligibility of mythical symbols as vehicles for the transmission of experiences of world-transcendent realities. (226)

Cooper does not immediately take up the challenge of offering "an adequate account of the implications of these three components," observing that one must first critically clarify and justify the significance and empirical validity of terms such as civilization. He begins this effort by examining, in the remainder of this chapter, the thought of Jean Bodin.

Cooper regards Bodin's analysis of the "problems of human order in society and history" as a model for Voegelin's parallel effort. Despite clear divergences (e.g., "the Gnostic origin of Bodin's anthropology" [229] and the "activist inspiration" behind his study of history" [230]), Voegelin found in Bodin a thinker who successfully navigated an approach to history that incorporated the different strengths of Bossuet's and Voltaire's without running afoul of their shortcomings. (238) More specifically, Voegelin's political science was impacted by Bodin's "contemplative realism," his understanding that the analysis of texts must penetrate to the motivating experiences underlying them, his appreciation of the importance of non-European histories, and his recognition of a need for mystical insight for reading the transcendent lines of meaning revealed in historical events. (242-246)

Cooper's seventh chapter, "The Range of Evidence," considers the scope of evidence that must be considered by "a genuine and empirical political science." Voegelin, following Max Weber, held that
One cannot be a successful scholar in the field of social and political science unless one knows what one is talking about. And that means acquiring the comparative civilizational knowledge not only of modern civilization but also of medieval and ancient civilization, and not only of Western civilization but also of Near Eastern and Far Eastern civilizations. That also means keeping that knowledge up to date through contact with the specialist sciences in the various fields. Anybody who does not do that has no claim to call himself an empiricist and certainly is defective in his competence as a scholar in this field.

Cooper illustrates the development of Voegelin's cross-civilizational approach to political reality by examining his studies of Temūr (249-264) and the letters of the Mongol qans to the European powers. (265-285) I know of no other commentator who has treated these essays, and Cooper succeeds not only in showing their quality and continuing value, but also makes excellent use of the divergences separating Voegelin's analyses from those of other scholars to draw broader conclusions regarding proper historiography.

Cooper's eighth chapter, "Intelligible Units of Analysis," continues the discussion of the previous chapter "by posing the obvious question: how does one make sense of comparative materials?" (286) The highlight of the chapter comes at its end, where Cooper considers Voegelin's response to the historical work of Arnold Toynbee. (309-334) However, the chapter as a whole repeats a pattern established in earlier sections in which Cooper makes highly profitable use of writings that are typically ignored altogether or treated only in passing elsewhere in the secondary literature on Voegelin. In this case, the writings include a lecture series from 1930 on "National Types of Mind and the Limits to Interstate Relations;" a stingingly accurate and highly amusing letter to Karl Loewenstein in response to a request that he participate in a roundtable discussion of comparative government; a review essay on "The Oxford Political Philosophers;" and reviews of books by Ewart Lewis, Albert R. Chandler, John Wild and R. B. Levinson. In one section of
particular value for those new to Voegelin, Cooper concludes his discussion of "The Oxford Political Philosophers" with a digression on the sharp tone of the criticism leveled by Voegelin against the writers in question. Although biting polemics are among the most striking features of Voegelin's writing (prompting some readers to dismiss him as a theoretical brawler), he virtually never justifies his practice or even comments upon the issue. However, in "The Oxford Political Philosophers," Voegelin concludes by noting that

[t]his is no time [1953] to pat the viciously ignorant on the back for being "sincere," or abiding by their "conscience." This is a time for the philosopher to be aware of his authority, and to assert it, even if that brings him into conflict with an environment infested by dubious ideologies and political theologies—so that the word of Marcus Aurelius will apply to him: "The philosopher—the priest and servant of the gods." (302)

When sending a copy of this review essay to longtime friend Elizabeth DeWaal, who had earlier objected to Voegelin's tone in his discussion of the Homeric heroes, Voegelin included a letter likening his own attitude toward the Oxford political philosophers to that of Plato toward the Homeric heroes:

I enclose an article on the "Oxford Political Philosophers." You will perhaps find it also contemptuous in tone. But you will find in it also some explanations why sometimes a tone should be contemptuous, and not be genteel under pretext of innocuous "disagreement with other authors." I just recall a phrase from the *Screwtape Letters*: It is advisable to keep an open mind with regard to technical inventions, kitchen-appliances, and the like; to keep an open mind with regard to the Ten Commandments is "moral imbecility." There seems to be a point where unequivocal expression of contempt is in order; a point at which the pretext of amiable conversation about intellectual matters with "colleagues" could be collaboration in crime. (303)

As Cooper interprets this letter, "Voegelin's `contemptuous' tone was, therefore, deliberately achieved in order to convey his judg-
rnent regarding the political consequences of the spiritual complacency and blankness of the Oxonians. They were concerned neither with a comprehensive range of phenomenal evidence nor with developing an intelligible and rationally defensible philosophical anthropology. Parochialism and spiritual ignorance proved mutually sustaining."

Cooper concludes the book with two very long chapters devoted principally to Vico and Schelling. The chapters are both too extensive (running nearly one hundred pages) and too intricate to permit summarization here, though it merits noting that both figures exerted a major influence on Voegelin's approach to political science and history. This is not to say that Voegelin was in any sense an uncritical devotee of either Vico or Schelling, but rather that their theoretical premises and the structure of their approaches to history and society provided models that assisted Voegelin in shaping his own methodology. Suffice it to say that Voegelin's development as a thinker simply cannot be adequately understood apart from the influences exerted by Vico and Schelling. Since Cooper has now provided analyses of the roles played by these thinkers that are clearly more sustained and penetrating than any available in the secondary literature, these chapters must now be regarded as required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the development of Voegelin's thought.

Looking ahead to Cooper's promised successor volume by way of a conclusion for this review, one hopes that the completed pair of books will address Voegelin's intentions regarding political science in a sustained and specific way. As things stand, a reader could come away from Foundations uncertain about which of the following claims is being made by Cooper: that Voegelin sought to create a new political science; that he sought to reform or redirect the political science operating in his day; that he sought to restore ancient political science in a revamped, modern mode; or that he set certain foundational blocks on which we might now build a new political science. If Cooper should find Voegelin himself insufficiently clear about this, then it will be important for Cooper to offer his own interpretation on the issue. He owes it to Voegelin to be as clear and
explicit about this as possible, since what he says will have consequences for Voegelin's reputation among his living colleagues, and also because directness and clarity on this issue is in keeping with Voegelin's own principles. More specifically, Voegelin believed in "understanding a historical situation through the self-understanding of the persons involved." Cooper has very effectively shown how Voegelin's thought is important for a viable political science, but he has less effectively explicated Voegelin's self-understanding of his relationship to political science. Given the title of the present volume and nature of the larger enterprise, I believe this should be among the tasks set for the next book.

To offer a final (unsolicited) suggestion, I hope Cooper will reconsider his intention, stated in the Preface, to offer an exposition of Voegelin's political science but not a critique. (xi) Cooper justifies this intention "on the grounds that, before one is in a position to criticize, it is necessary to be reasonably secure in one's understanding." I certainly do not wish to take issue with this as a code of scholarly conduct, but I do wonder whose understanding is in question-Cooper's or that of his readers? On the basis of this book and his other writings, it is clear that Cooper's level of understanding is manifestly adequate for critical as well as expository work on Voegelin, and I wonder if his modesty is perhaps getting in the way. Alternatively, Cooper may be expressing an intention to refrain from criticism because he believes that readers should consult not only his exposition but also Voegelin's originals before switching into a critical mode. This is not unreasonable, but I would question the implication that readers will be better prepared for Voegelin's originals by an uncritical exposition than by a critical one. Criticism would only enhance the credibility of Cooper's sympathetic exposition, and might also enhance the willingness of readers to dig into the originals as a basis for independent judgment. Voegelin's work is challenging not only in its difficulty but also in its internal variegation, its tone, and its intention to involve the reader personally in the questions it pursues. Critical engagement seems to me the proper response to this challenge, and since Cooper's capabilities are so manifestly up to the task, I hope that he will take it on.
NOTES
2. Sandoz, The Voegelinian Revolution, 2. In every instance hereafter, citations for the four books under review will appear as parenthetical references within the text, whereas full citations will be provided for other works by these authors.
6. They have been likened to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit in terms of difficulty (see Sandoz, 4), and the secondary literature is rife with remarks on the imposing character of Voegelin's writings.
University Press, 1982), 15-17. Portions of the manuscript were reworked into the first three volumes of Order and History; the balance has now been published as volumes 19-26 of The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (hereafter, CW), University of Missouri Press. For a helpful account of Voegelin's work on the History and its transformation into Order and History, see Thomas Hollweck and Ellis Sandoz, "General Introduction to the Series," in History of Political Ideas, vol. 1: Hellenism, Rome and Early Christianity, Athanasios Moulakis, ed. (1997), 1-47, vol. 19 of CW.


10. Voegelin's coinage for this flawed conception of history is "historiogenesis," which he treats in detail in The Ecumenic Age, vol. IV of Order and History. For the most extensive account of this "break," see my "Editor's Introduction" to The Ecumenic Age, CW vol. 17 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 1-28.


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16. Referred to by Sandoz as the "Autobiographical Memoir," which was corrected by Voegelin himself and ultimately published as Autobiographical Reflections, Ellis Sandoz ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

17. Sandoz continues by more precisely specifying his audience as "persons seriously interested in the abiding questions of human existence..." (1), which is, lamentably, a much more narrow set of persons than the "general public."

18. Especially important sections running along this line include 19-22 on common sense philosophy and its role in Anglo-American political culture; 22-23 on the self-interpreting nature of experiential reality; and 25-26 on continuities in human experiences of reality over time and the attendant role of "unoriginality" as a test of the validity of contemporary propositions.
19. Although Cooper's discussion of thinkers who influenced the development of Voegelin's thought is much more detailed than Sandoz's, the treatment of Voegelin's early books in *The Voegelinian Revolution* is much more substantial. Cooper's treatment picks up just as Voegelin is emigrating from Austria, whereas Sandoz offers helpful glosses *on Rasse and Staat, Die Rassenidee in der Geistesgeschichte von Ray bis Carus, Der Authoritaere Staat,* and *Die politischen Religionen.*


22. In *Modernity without Restraint,* 175; 190.

23. Ibid., 189.

24. Ibid., 241.

25. There cannot be much doubt that Voegelin chose not to be identified as a conservative. Barry Cooper provides exhaustive documentation showing that Voegelin worked hard "to defend himself, Strauss, and others against the smothering embrace of conservatives." *(Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science,* 130 and 130 21n) However, there is likewise little doubt that Voegelin did much to bring this "smothering embrace" upon himself (though Cooper neglects to observe this), and *The New Science of Politics* is but one of the more notable cases in point.


27. Ibid., 196.

28. Ibid., 201; 205.

29. Sandoz is himself hardly prey to these misunderstandings, which cannot be detailed here without taking us too far afield. Indeed, Sandoz cites this very document from Wilhelmsen with implied disapproval in *The Voegelinian Revolution,* 10.
30. An alternative hypothesis is that Sandoz elects not to observe the exhortatory "shortcomings" of *The New Science of Politics* because he does not, as a conservative activist or ideologue, regard them as shortcomings. I cannot speak to Sandoz's view of the elements in the book that I call into question, but I can express my doubts about this hypothesis by noting that Sandoz's writings display a true theorist who may be conservative but is surely no ideologue.

31. Specifically, the difficulty concerns the apparently conflict between Voegelin's understanding of being and nature as unchanging and, on the other hand, his assertion that "a change in being actually has occurred" in the "leap in being." (121, n6)


33. *This is* according to Paul Caringella, assistant to Voegelin in the last years of his life.

34. These issues and the specific deficiencies of the initial round of reviews are treated in some detail in my "Editor's Introduction" to *The Ecumenic Age, CW*, Volume 17 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 1-28.


36. *As his sole example of these debates, Sandoz cites the exchange between Jurgen Gebhardt, "The Vocation of the Scholar," and the response by Frederick G. Lawrence, "The problem of Eric Voegelin, Mystic Philosopher and Scientist," in *International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Eric Voegelin*, Stephen A. McKnight and Geoffrey L. Price, eds. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 10-58. Although Sandoz does "not mean to suggest that this is the only debate over the meaning of Voegelin's
work," he selects this as an example on the ground that its sharpness is so "striking." (271)

37. Sandoz does not expand on the nature of this "devotion," which is somewhat surprising in light of the strength of this descriptor. The literature on Voegelin's relation to Christianity is very extensive and highly contentious, and yet I know of no writer who has issued such a statement. Even those who find Voegelin in strong sympathy with Christianity are quick to note the many substantial ways in which Voegelin's views are in tension with its tenets and institutional manifestations. Later in the Epilogue, Sandoz quotes Voegelin's widow as having said to him that, in his last days, Voegelin told her, "at last I understand Christianity!" (258) Understanding certainly does not constitute devotion, however, and readers may be led to make more of such a statement than is advisable. For my part, I make no claim in any of this regarding Voegelin's relation to Christianity. Yet Sandoz seems to do exactly that, and it is perhaps regrettable that he would do so in such a cursory way in the midst of a discussion premised upon the controversial nature of the matter.


39. Implicit in the universality of the experience is its timelessness or "perenniality." Webb quotes the precisely pertinent passage from Voegelin: "'The test of truth...' as he puts it, "will be the lack of originality in the propositions." (40) For the broader context see, "Equivalences of Experience and Symbolization in History," in Voegelin, Published Essays, 1966-1985, CW, Volume 12, Ellis Sandoz, ed. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 115-133.


41. By extension, we may note that Webb's treatment carries an ambience different from Sandoz's The Voegelinian Revolution. Sandoz emphasizes Voegelin's explosive distinctiveness as a thinker whose revolutionary insights draw from the work of others but are largely the product of a single, heroic figure. By contrast, Webb's account seems to imply that Voegelin is but one among a number of
important revolutionaries whose works are all occasioned by a common (though not concerted) rejection of the played-out project of modern philosophy. I should note that this contrast could easily be overdrawn, as Sandoz repeatedly stresses Voegelin's "studied unoriginality" (i.e., his debts to the past accomplishments of thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle and Augustine), as well as his utilization of the work of many of his contemporaries in specialized fields. However, this difference in tone is undeniably real, and it is interesting in light of the fact that both books were published in the same year and were both penned by writers in close contact with Voegelin himself.


43. Here also we can see that Sandoz and Webb differ in their approaches, and again that both have strengths. Sandoz sticks very close to Voegelin's own terminology, which can be jarring in initial encounters. However, readers may find this very helpful when they turn to Voegelin's own writings, as they are likely to be accustomed to Voegelin's notoriously difficult verbiage.

44. Thus Webb notes, at the outset of the third chapter, that "the exposition of Voegelin's thought will have to take the form of a spiral, returning again and again, as here, to its center in the experienced tension of existence, the existential philia or love for perfection of being, in order to draw out its implications for an understanding of man, philosophy, and history." (89) This is only one of several points in the text which suggest that Webb had already achieved virtual mastery of his subject before turning to the task of structuring it to achieve intelligibility for others.

45. Quoted from Voegelin, "On Debate and Existence," Inter-collegiate Review 3 (1967, 143-52), 147. This article, which is the source for all four of these "basic aspects," is now available in Published Essays, 1966-1985, CW, Volume 12.

46. Readers are also advised to consult Webb's very helpful and carefully drawn distinctions between episteme, doxa, and gnosis, 197-198.

47. Since this is also the book's weakest chapter in my view, one must wonder whether (as Gregor Sebba once said of Voegelin's work
on Asian thought) Webb just does not have his heart in this particular subject. I raise this not as an assertion but merely as a speculative hypothesis, and not a particularly critical one at that. Throughout the book, Webb displays little taste for the sort of excoriating criticism that marks so much of the literature on Voegelin's concept of gnosticism-to its detriment.


50. This pattern of capitalization (using lower case when the term is being used as a categorical concept, and upper case when it is employed as a proper noun to refer to the historical Gnostics) was first suggested by Webb, 201. Although I have criticized it (*Eric Voegelin and the Politics of Spiritual Revolt*, 19), for reasons that will become clear momentarily-and though Webb has graciously agreed with the substance of my criticism-I still find his suggestion preferable to any alternative short of making a clean break with the term. Such a clean break is simply impossible when either the historical Gnostics or Voegelin's concept of gnosticism are in play, as in the present instance.

51. Webb suggests a second chain as an example of his second reason why Voegelin's transitions between Gnostic figures seem so abrupt, which is that, "the writings he has published so far do not represent all the details of his research." (202) Webb suggests that publication of pertinent sections of Voegelin's *History of Political Ideas* will "fill in the historical picture considerably" (203), and make it possible to vindicate Voegelin's treatment of Puritan sectarians (in
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The New Science of Politics) by connecting them to the Franciscan Spirituals, Ortliebians Paracletes and Adamites, who in turn link up with the thought of Boniface VIII in Uncurl, sanctam and Dante in the Convivio, who can then be linked to ecclesiastical reformers such as Joachim and various medieval sects such as the Albigensians, who were in turn inspired by Scotus Eriugena, who developed his views under the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius, who served as a conduit into the West for pre-existing gnostic and quasi-gnostic patterns of thought." (202-203)

52. The fourth experience in this series actually requires a somewhat more elaborate description as the experience of mortality in a world in which all things pass away, but beyond which there is a perceived but mysterious lastingness or an eternity beyond the world of things. See my, "Brothers Under the Skin: Voegelin on the Common Experiential Wellsprings of Spiritual Order and Disorder," in The Politics of the Soul: Voegelin and Religious Experience, 139-161; Voegelin's Analysis of Marx, Eric Voegelin Archiv Occasional Papers, University of Munich, 2000; and "Gnosticism and Spiritual Disorder in The Ecumenic Age," The Political Science Reviewer 27 (1998), 17-43.

53. See, e.g., "Response to Professor Altizer's `A New History and a New but Ancient God?" in Published Essays, 1966-1985, CW, Volume 12, 298.

54. As Webb notes, Voegelin indicated in the 1970s that "he would probably not use [the term gnosticism] now if he were starting over again...." (200; cf. also 9n) I believe he should indeed have made a clean break with the term, and that it was not too late for him to do so in the 1970s. His augmentation of gnosticism with references to hermeticism, alchemy, and magic merely muddied the waters further, inasmuch as it suggests that we can still establish adequate linkages to modern ideologies if we employ a greater number of chains of literary influence. However, from the perspective of Voegelin's mature methodology, such chains are of little or no value when treating problems of etiology.

55. Quoted from The Ecumenic Age (2000), 372.

56. Hughes justifies his focus on mystery not only by arguing for
its centrality in Voegelin's thought, but also by contending that "we have experienced, during the last few centuries in the West, a peculiar and growing eclipse of the awareness of mystery." (1) He cites the fight of Enlightenment figures against Church authority as a source of disrespect for mystery, as well as the growing power of the modern natural sciences in nourishing "a widespread conviction that the universe could not for long hold back any of its secrets from the human mind." (2) Hughes rightly maintains that for Voegelin, modernity's declining appreciation of mystery carries consequences much more momentous than a mere shift in intellectual fashion: "For Voegelin, the decline of our awareness and respect for mystery is intimately connected both with the widespread existential malaise and with the political horror stories of the twentieth century." (2)

57. The quotation from Voegelin is from *The Ecumenic Age* (2000), 118.


59. Cf., e.g., *The Ecumenic Age* (2000), 280, where Voegelin maintains that "a primitive tribal village is materially too cramped for the bios theoretikos."

60. Hughes fortifies these observations with two well-chosen quotations from Voegelin: "The differentiation of existential truth does not abolish the cosmos in which the event occurs" (*The Ecumenic Age* [2000], 53), and "Compactness and differentiation [are not] simply historical stages of consciousness, the one succeeding the other in time, but poles of a tensional process in which the revelation of the Beyond has to overcome progressively a hard core of compact resistance without ever dissolving it completely." (*In Search of Order* [1987], 99)

of Modern Ideology, op cit.


63. Voegelin, The Ecumenic Age (2000), 106. This is indeed how Voegelin had understood history in Volumes I-III of Order and History. As he summarizes his original conception on the first page of The Ecumenic Age: "History was conceived as a process of increasingly differentiated insight into the order of being in which man participates by his existence. Such order as can be discerned in the process, including digressions and regressions from the increasing differentiation, would emerge, if the principal types of man's existence in society, as well as the corresponding symbolisms of order, were presented in their historical succession." (The Ecumenic Age [2000], 45)

64. Voegelin, The Ecumenic Age (2000), 106.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 51.

67. Ibid., 227.

68. See also the valuable section on myth from Hughes' final chapter, 108-114.

69. The paragraph closed by this sentence leaves it unclear where Cooper draws the line between the foundation and the mansion. Cooper writes: "The meditative explorations of volume 4 of Order and History, of the later essays, and of volume 5 of Order and History were all undertaken on the basis of philosophical and historical materials to which Voegelin first gave form in History of Political Ideas and in the other works he undertook during the time between 1938 and the mid-1950s. We must reserve for another occasion the systematic discussion of the intellectual mansion Voegelin erected on these impressive foundations." (435) This is confusing because, back on the first page, the reader is told that "the foundations indicated in the title are found chiefly in Voegelin's History of Political Ideas." (xi) One is forced to wonder whether Cooper includes The New Science of Politics, Order and History I-III, and Anamnesis in the foundation or the mansion yet to be discussed systematically. Certainly they don't receive "systematic" treatment in the present Foundations book, but then, neither does the History,
and each of these later books is linked and compared to *History of Political Ideas* just enough times in *Foundations* to make it unclear whether Cooper will pick up his exposition in the successor volume in 1952, 1966 or 1974. My guess is that 1952 is the correct answer, but it might be helpful if Cooper would offer clarification.

70. This is not quite as obvious as it might seem, since it is possible that Cooper understands the "entire edifice" as including the foundations and the mansion of Voegelin's *political science*, but that he understands political science as only a portion—however small or large—of Voegelin's thought. However, this possibility does not seem very likely, which is to say that I do not see Cooper treating Voegelin's political science as distinct from, say, his philosophy or theology or historical thought. On the contrary, chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7 develop an extraordinarily broad and inclusive understanding of political science, based on the various points of connection between the political realm and all the other strata of being. Cooper treats political science so broadly and inclusively (largely following Voegelin and, by extension, Scheler) that it does not look like an enterprise distinct from philosophy or history or theology, much less political theory.

71. These are the omissions he notes in this section when disclaiming a comprehensive analysis.


73. Summarizing the circumstances that created this atmosphere, Cooper observes: "That Newtonian natural science could serve as a model for all science (including political science) was possible because of the generally effective condition of political science at the start of the seventeenth century. The medieval institutions of church and empire were in a state of advanced decay, and the new mystical bodies politic, the nations, were not yet sufficiently established to be able to sustain a coherent body of political thought. 'Between the empire and the national state,' wrote Voegelin, 'man was left alone. The tabula rasa of Descartes was more than the methodological principle of a philosopher; it was the actual
state of man without the shelter of a cosmion. (101)

74. Cooper uses Voegelin's chapter on "Phenomenalism" from the History of Political Ideas (Vol. VII, in CW, Volume 25, 175-192) to good effect, defining it very clearly in its various dimensions on 108-110, and illustrating its consequences in biology, economics, and psychology on 111-115.


76. The illuminative impact of these materials is a result not only of Cooper's virtuosity as a commentator but also because of a peculiarity in Voegelin's thought and mode of writing. As Thomas Hollweck and Paul Caringella observe, "...it can be argued whether Voegelin was a book author in the commonly used sense. His method consisted rather in working out problems in the form of reflective and meditative essays; only when the problems could be arranged in meaningful clusters would he organize them into a book." ("Editor's Introduction" to What is History? And other Late Unpublished Writings, CW, Vol. 28, xv) This being the case, there is no principled reason for commentators to privilege Voegelin's books over his articles, or his articles over his book reviews, or his reviews over his more extended letters. However, that is exactly the pecking order observable in all secondary treatments—with the single exception of Cooper's. To understand the superiority of Cooper's approach one need only read this book.

77. Cooper quotes from Voegelin in this connection: "The good lady, in spite of all her merits, has, I am afraid, not quite understood the explosive implications of what she is doing in theory. I have committed the mistake of honoring her with a careful review, taking her seriously, and entering into the issues. One shouldn't do that; it has cost me a lot of time to disentangle the decisive points from a rambling context, and the time seems to have been wasted." (152)


79. To quote Cooper's discussion of the letter, Voegelin re-
sponded (in part) by noting that, "'The so-called Field of Comparative Government,' he said, is not a science but a 'college-institution.' It is a category useful to impart information concerning foreign governments to students who otherwise would remain ignorant. Such texts as exist in the field are more or less useful, but they do not, properly speaking, do any comparing." (294)

80. This is contrary to the view of Sandoz, who contends (inexplicably, by my lights) that Voegelin's "work is strikingly free of polemics...." (11)

81. Additionally, if Cooper means to suggest that Voegelin sought to create or re-create a new political science, it will be helpful to clarify for others in the discipline whether this means that he sought to create or re-create a political science or the political science. To explain this awkwardly worded point by way of an example, we tend to speak of certain fields as if work within them can, appropriately, be personal or individual, and of other fields as strongly collaborative and public. Thus, nobody bats an eye when Professor So-and-So is said to have "a philosophy," but if Professor Such-and-Such claims to have "a chemistry," we're inclined to dismiss him as a crackpot. Anglo-American linguistic convention seems to place political science-rightly or wrongly-closer to chemistry in this regard. I take it that Cooper wishes to speak of it more as we speak of philosophy in this sense, even though he stresses the strongly collaborative aspect of Voegelin's research. Clarification of this issue may head off some dismissive or derisive reactions, which is all to the good, since Voegelin's thought is sufficiently provocative as it stands.

82. Voegelin, Autobiographical Reflections, 15. See also 80, where Voegelin notes that "...the principle that lies at the basis of all my late work [is that] the reality of experience is self-interpretive."