Revolt Against Modernity

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CHAPTER I. LABELS, DEFINITIONS, AND OTHER FORMS OF COERCION


2. Several letters from Voegelin testify to his rejection of the label. The most interesting letters were directed to John East and George Nash. Consult the Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, Box 10, file 23, and Box 26, file 13, which are also the sources of the quotations.


8. AR, 21.

9. Ibid., 21.

10. Ibid., 28.

11. From this work Voegelin grew to appreciate the way traditions can incorporate philosophical wisdom without the “technical apparatus.” Germany, he later realized, did not have “political institutions rooted in an intact common sense tradition” (see AR, 29).


13. AR, 63.

14. There is good reason to be suspicious of Voegelin’s memory concerning this project. He set out to write a textbook, but the book ballooned into many
thousands of pages, making the original project impractical, and he was unsuccessfull in his attempts to publish the work. Moreover, he incorporated much of this material into volumes 2 and 3 of *Order and History*. Voegelin overstated the break he made, but the shift from refined ideas to experience is real enough.


16. Ibid., 167.

17. Ibid., 162–63.


20. Strauss borrowed this phrase from Spinoza's book. For Strauss it is a very rich phrase, without a clear definition. It stands for a number of issues about the nature of politics and the role of religious beliefs in society.

21. A proper discussion of Strauss necessarily entails textual analysis. Therefore much of my discussion in later sections dealing with Strauss will revolve around key texts.

22. *On Tyranny: An Interpretation of Xenophon's Hiero*, rev. and expanded ed., including the Strauss-Kojève correspondence, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael Roth (New York: Free Press, 1991), 27 (hereafter cited as OT). It strikes one as odd that Strauss would use "Socratic rhetoric" as an example of language strategies designed to meet the needs of the philosopher while protecting both the society and him from society. Socrates, of course, was killed by the city of Athens for corrupting the youth. Although Strauss does not discuss this matter here, he argued on other occasions that the young and unwise Socrates—the Socrates of Aristophanes—presented himself unvarnished to his fellow Athenians and that he learned too late the need to protect himself and the city with rhetorical strategies designed to buttress the religious beliefs of the city.

23. Ibid., 28.


25. Strauss's desire to return to the dawn of philosophy has striking parallels with Heidegger.


CHAPTER 2. LIBERAL AMERICA AND ITS DISCONTENTS

1. Several scholars have written useful books on this subject. See H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), and Martin


3. Many people believed—and still believe—that the concentration camps were secret and therefore largely unknown among the general population. Such a belief makes it much easier to blame their existence on Hitler, Himmler, and company. The question of the complicity, or even knowledge, of the general population with regard to "the final solution" is very much debated and debatable. A more fruitful discussion about the complicity of the German population requires examining the role the population played in the larger context of legalized anti-Semitism, and the literature on this subject is overwhelming. A good starting point is Hans Mommsen, "The Reaction of the German Population to the Anti-Jewish Persecution and the Holocaust," in *Lessons and Legacies: The Meaning of the Holocaust in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Hayes (Evanston: Northwestern Illinois Press, 1991). A very provocative examination of the Holocaust is Richard Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

4. The nature and objectives of war had changed slowly, but in World War II the issues appeared especially stark. The distinction between combatant and noncombatant almost disappeared, and new weapons provided new and fearsome means of terrorizing. It was a war between whole nations rather than between armies. Neither side of the war remained innocent with regard to violating traditional limits governing warfare.


8. Many scholars have chipped away at Arendt's theses. With regard to the Nazi regime, Arendt probably overstates her case, especially with regard to the economic institutions.

9. This is a complicated subject. Even among early so-called liberal phi-
philosophers like Hobbes and Locke the state-of-nature construct served heuristic purposes. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this fiction had clearly lost its usefulness. John Dewey, for instance, argued forcefully that society provides the context for individual human development. Nonetheless, liberalism, as a coherent body of thought, depends upon this fiction, which creates a great deal of tension for liberal intellectuals.

10. A powerful strain of liberalism has attempted to escape this language. Max Weber was the most articulate spokesman of this view, which emphasizes a procedural liberalism whereby government and other social institutions serve as means to adjudicate differences among competing social groups in a pluralistic society. The goal of such a liberalism is accommodation of as many views (and behaviors) as possible through the procedures of government. Critics of this view argue that it further separates liberalism from the necessary moral questions concerning the proper ends of government. Moreover, although this view influenced the development of liberal governments in Europe and the United States and found expression in powerful thinkers like John Dewey, liberals have never completely escaped from their rights-oriented tradition. Some intellectuals, in light of the fate of Weimar, even suggest that these trends contributed to the horrific experiences of this century.

11. The claim here is that government exists to protect individuals from harm (crime, national defense, etc.) and to foster an environment in which individuals have as much freedom to pursue their goals as possible. One need take only a small leap to find in this definition a role for government to help those people who find themselves at a disadvantage in getting a fair shot to accomplish their goals. Here begins the long-standing tension among liberals between the incompatible goals of liberty and equality. Liberals remain true to their heritage by seeking a balance between the two.

12. Since rights can be created or eliminated with relative ease in an intellectual environment that does not depend heavily upon tradition and does not have a reasonably strong theological or metaphysical base for rights, the focus of government can change to secure the changing conceptions of rights.

13. I offer here the emphases of twentieth-century liberals. These goals are compatible with earlier goals. Tolerance is little more than a dedication to pluralism just as social justice emphasizes the fairness for which constitutions were written.


16. The Liberal Imagination, xi.

17. Ibid., xiii–xiv.


20. Ibid., 16.


22. From the perspective of the late twentieth century, the word “democracy” appears problematic. Widely differing regimes argue that they act according to democratic principles, each type of regime defining the concept differently. In the years before 1917, democracy referred to relatively generous suffrage laws and an active electorate with regard to policy issues.


26. Ibid., 373–74.


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CHAPTER 3. FROM PHILOSOPHY TO POSITIVISM

1. One is almost reduced to reifying modernity when discussing Strauss and Voegelin. The complicated meanings of the word will become clear later, but it is important to note that the term referred to a cluster of beliefs, expectations, and aspirations that had become socially effective. Because they were so widely accepted in intellectual circles Strauss and Voegelin felt justified in giving these beliefs a life that developed and adapted to the changing times through the thoughts of concrete individuals.


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 250; emphasis added.

5. Ibid., 27–28. The essay from which this quote comes was not originally published by Strauss. Thomas Pangle brought together typescript notes of a lecture, and it has a disarmed quality that one rarely finds in Strauss’s works.

6. NSP, ii.

7. The most common complaint, on the occasion of a severe disagreement concerning a substantive question, is that one’s opponent wrongly framed the question, that he or she chose a language or concept ill-suited to the problem. Perhaps the common ground is the assertion of an intimate connection between language and problem. The fight takes place, then, over the proper language. Whose conceptualizations will rule?
8. This is a very long and detailed letter dealing with nearly every page of Voegelin’s book. Voegelin made passing references to the “letter,” but as far as I know he never responded in any detail to Kelsen [Hoover Institution, Voegelin Papers, Box 63, folder 13].

9. The question, What does statement X mean? when posed by a positivist has the effect of forcing one to play according to her rules. By meaningfulness she wants to relate a statement to phenomena, which requires, in matters of greatest importance, the reduction of a symbol to a concept.

10. Several points emerge in this paragraph that we cannot unpack in this context. In a very illuminating letter to Leo Strauss [22 April 1951], Voegelin addressed the issue of pregivens in the context of revelation: “Revealed knowledge is, in the building of human knowledge, that knowledge of the pregivens of perception. . . . To these pregivens belongs the experience of man of himself as esse, nosse, velle, the inseparable primal experience: I am as knowing and willing being; I know myself as being and willing; I will myself as a being and a knowing human. . . . the human being is not a consciousness . . . that neither the ‘I’ nor the ‘Thou’ can be ‘constituted’ out of consciousness . . . that one cannot construct self-consciousness as the act of perception after the model of a sensuous perception . . . instead what is involved here is the pregivens of perception.” This letter is found in Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence Between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934–1964, ed. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993], 83 [hereafter cited as FPP].


12. He would always emphasize the events of that century as crucial, but he pushed the roots of modernity back to the thirteenth century in NSP and then back to Jesus and Paul in OH 4.

13. Voegelin could write about the ideational structure of a society because certain ideas become socially relevant and powerful at the expense of others. This process exposes much about the spiritual health of a society, i.e., the people who compose the society.


15. Ibid., 481–82, 484.

16. Ibid., 485, 487.

17. Ibid., 490–91.


21. RCP, 3.

22. Ibid., 4. See also Leo Strauss, Natural Right and History [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950], 76–80 [hereafter cited as NRH]. Here Strauss compared the world created by scientists and the world experienced prescientifically. The context was Max Weber’s use of ideal types and other artificial constructs as well as his fact/value distinction. Strauss wrote,
"The natural world, the world in which we live and act is not the object or the product of a theoretical attitude, it is a world not of mere objects at which we detachedly look but of 'things' and 'affairs' which we handle.'

23. Ibid., 5.
24. WPP, 18-19.
25. Ibid., 20.
26. RCPR, 6. Note also his "Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero," in which he wrote: "A social science that cannot speak of tyranny with the same confidence with which medicine speaks, for example, of cancer, cannot understand social phenomena as they are. It is therefore not scientific" (OT, 177). Because social science concerns fundamentally value-laden and moral issues, a value-free social science makes only a little more sense than a value-free moral science.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 8.
29. Ibid.
30. Straus's emphasis upon positivism in some measure cloaks his much greater concern about the danger of "historicism." He wrote about both because he considered them to be intimately related. One might expect that the failure of dogmatism (that search for certain and irrefutable knowledge) to provide answers to political and social problems would lead to a cynical reaction or a radical skepticism (historicism). When the effort to find the final answer fails, one might be prone to deny all claims to knowledge or truth. If we pursue this simplified schema of modernity a bit, we might say that Strauss pitched a battle against the cynics while Voegelin opened a front against the dogmatists. This comparison is meant to suggest matters of emphasis, but it also suggests some ways of understanding the evident differences that separate Strauss and Voegelin. Admiral Nimitz and General Eisenhower employed very different methods in their respective fronts, but the foe was still, in a meaningful way, common.

CHAPTER 4. THE NATURE OF MODERNITY

2. In a letter to Voegelin [29 April 1953], Strauss wrote about Machiavelli, "I can't help loving him—in spite of his errors" (see FPP, 98). Strauss's analyses of many moderns display a deep respect for the thinker—and not a little love. In the case of those like Locke or Burke who did not earn Strauss's respect, he treats their work almost cavalierly—in the case of Burke, Strauss was downright dishonest in his analysis. See Steven J. Lenzner's helpful essay, "Strauss's Three Burkes: The Problem of Edmund Burke in Natural Right and History," Political Theory 19 (August 1991): 364-90.
3. Strauss argued that the real message of a philosophic book is not directed to either nonphilosophers or mature philosophers. "All books of that
kind owe their existence to the love of the mature philosopher for the puppies of his race" [PAW, 36]. Strauss always referred to the "teaching" of a philosopher, indicating a relationship between student and teacher.

4. Ibid., 14.
5. TM, 14.
6. Ibid., 13.
7. The standard Strauss has established is an extremely difficult one. Problems abound in texts great and small; for those found in great texts, providing an explanation regarding the author's intention requires not only great rigor but perhaps a good bit of creativity. Nonetheless, Strauss was adamant on this point: "Reading between the lines is strictly prohibited in all cases where it would be less exact than not doing so. Only such reading between the lines as starts from an exact consideration of the explicit statements of the author is legitimate. The context in which a statement occurs, and the literary character of the whole work as well as its plan, must be perfectly understood before an interpretation of the statement can reasonably claim to be adequate or even correct. One is not entitled to delete a passage, nor to emend its text, before one has fully considered all reasonable possibilities of understanding the passage as it stands—one of the possibilities being that the passage may be ironic" [PAW, 30].
8. Ibid., 35.
9. For examples see TM, 400-441, and PAW, 68-74.
10. PAW, 70-71.
11. TM, 43. Strauss quoted Machiavelli to support his case: "For some time I never say what I believe and I never believe what I say; and if it sometimes occurs to me that I say the truth, I conceal it among so many lies that it is hard to find it out" [TM, 36].
12. Ibid., 30.
13. Ibid., 30-31.
14. Ibid., 45, 47.
15. For example, see PAW, 24-25.
17. The lengthy quote cited earlier concerning the argument from silence is found in the nineteenth paragraph in a chapter containing thirty-seven paragraphs—that is, it is at the very center of the chapter.
18. TM, 12.
21. The key to this interpretation is Machiavelli's shift in personal pronouns. He used "thou" when addressing the prince and "you" "when addressing those whose interest is primarily theoretical"—the young [TM, 77].
22. Ibid., 67.
23. Ibid., 82.
24. Ibid., 80, 56–60.
25. Ibid., 139.
26. Ibid., 116.
27. Ibid., 133.
28. See ibid., 132, for his method.
29. Ibid., 126–27.
30. Ibid., 153–54.
31. Ibid., 168. Machiavelli politicized philosophy, destroying the older separation of theory and action. The real problem of Machiavelli was that he sought to eliminate theory in favor of "technē," or instrumental reason for reason—the better to transform the world. Later thinkers, of course, sought to realize their ideal cities on earth. Marx stands out as the supreme example, but Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi regime was, for Strauss, the most telling.
32. Ibid., 173.
33. Ibid., 12.
34. Strauss never labeled Machiavelli's religious beliefs. He wrote that "it is not misleading to count Machiavelli among 'the wise of the world,'" whom he later identified as "'falsasía or Averroists'" (ibid., 175).
35. Ibid., 179.
36. Apparently Machiavelli's skills, great though they were, proved inadequate in this connection, as Machiavelli was placed on the Index. Strauss never mentioned this fact.
37. Note as examples TM, 176, 200, 202, 208. The first of these references provides a good example of Strauss's argument from Machiavelli's silence. The issue involves the fratricide committed at the founding of Rome and Machiavelli's silence concerning "what the Bible says about the fratricide committed by the first founder of any city." Machiavelli, Strauss insisted, needed to buttress his argument with reference to biblical teaching. "The fact that he failed to do so and at the same time spoke so rarely about revelation cannot be explained by blindness or ignorance but only by a peculiar mixture of boldness and caution: he silently makes superficial readers oblivious of the Biblical teaching."
38. Ibid., 183.
39. Ibid., 204. This is a particularly rich discussion by Strauss. He examined the use Machiavelli made of Moses—who was God's direct representative and so acted only in his capacity as a lieutenant—and King David, Jesus's direct ancestor. By accepting the traditional view that Moses acted as God's representative and David was a godly king, Machiavelli made the case that God is a tyrant. This claim follows from the argument Machiavelli made that all founders are tyrants and that no substantial differences separate Moses and David from those historical characters normally considered tyrants. Of course, the objective of this line of argument is to dissolve the distinction between prince and tyrant. See also ibid., 49.
41. Ibid., 218, 222, 223.
42. One of Strauss's characteristic arguments was that a creative tension obtains between religion and philosophy and that this tension is the genius of Western civilization. Machiavelli sought to tumble both as Strauss understood them.
43. TM, 132–33.
44. Ibid., 241.
45. Ibid., 279–80.
46. Ibid., 296, 297.
47. Ibid., 120.
48. Ibid., 231.
49. Consider two examples from TM: "Time and again we have become bewildered by the fact that the man who is more responsible than any other man for the break with the Great Tradition should in the very act of breaking prove to be the heir, the by no means unworthy heir, to that supreme art of writing which that tradition manifested at its peaks" [120]; "Machiavelli did know pre-modern thought: it was before him. He could not have known the thought of the present time, which emerged as it were behind his back" [12].
50. Ibid., 231.
51. Ibid., 299.
52. I am grateful to Larry Peterman's insightful essay "Approaching Leo Strauss: Some Comments on Thoughts on Machiavelli," Political Science Reviewer 16 (Fall 1986): 317–51 for pointing out this reference that I otherwise would have overlooked. His essay clarified my thinking concerning the problem of problems in this text.
53. TM, 13–14.
54. These tensions are resolved by removing one of the poles. Hence, Machiavelli eliminated theory as understood by Plato in favor of techne (instrumental reason). He would not be bound by the ideal regime, which even Plato emphasized could only exist in speech. Machiavelli liberated moderns from the paradigm, thus elevating action over theory, and the technical approach to human life replaced the theoretical conception. Moreover, by eliminating the theoretical constructions of ideal regimes, Machiavelli lowered the dependence on chance by lowering the threshold of acceptability. The philosopher is liberated from the "ought."
55. From an unpublished manuscript "Political Science and the Intellectuals" found in the Voegelin Collection, Hoover Institution, Box 64, folder 13. This quote comes from p. 4.
56. Ibid., 5.
57. Ibid., 5–6.
58. It is important to emphasize that the divine-mundane symbolism of the cosmological societies was not disproved in some doctrinal sense but the experience was differentiated. The "beyond" symbol establishes a divine structure to reality that is outside of, and the ground of, historical existence.
59. The two chapters of OH 4 that deal with this subject (chapters 4 and
5) are the most controversial. Voegelin's Catholic followers especially find his characterization of Paul misleading. Nonetheless, few sections of his work are as brilliant as these two chapters.

60. NSP, 122.

61. Because history is a symbol for the teleological process directed by God, Joachim could speak of history rather than histories. There is only one history. Much like Paul before him, this hardened understanding of a singular and linear historical process became characteristic of ideologues like Marx. Of course such a single history was much simpler in the twelfth century than in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries when knowledge of other civilizations (especially in the Orient) posed problems for any construction of history in the singular. It required the greatest intellectual talents of ideologues to work around this problem.


63. FPP, 73. The letter is dated 4 December 1950.

64. NSP, 144.

65. Doctrinalization formed part of a larger deformation of language. The mythical imagery of Plato or the Bible became opaque because the richness of the language got flattened into a catalogue of "ideas." In place of truth symbolized by myth or revelation, moderns live in a realm of competing *doxa* (opinions). Consider the way even respected scholars employ the word "ideology." Everyone, they would have us believe, must have an ideology. Clearly one's experiences will delimit the live options, but still one only gets opinions or "ideas." A person whose life is ordered by an openness to reality in its mundane and transcendent modes is literally unbelievable to the intellectual and gets turned into another ideologue. Voegelin's work on the deformation of language (nonsense to a deconstructionist—but what is not?) is understudied. A good place to start is OH 4, 36–43.

66. NSP, 155


68. See Hallowell's introduction to FER, ix.

69. Ibid., 25.

70. Voegelin substantiated this claim by reference to Voltaire's categories of meaning, which Voegelin claimed were Christian analogues [ibid., 11].

71. Ibid., 26.

72. Ibid., 27; quote from Voltaire.

73. Voegelin defined the term in an unpublished essay, "The Necessary Moral Bases for Communication in a Democracy" (Hoover Institution, Box 66, file 7): "the transformation of our conceptions of society by moving the substance of society from the Mystical Body of Christ through the scale of the ontological hierarchy down to organic substances and drives" [11].

74. FER, 28–29.

75. Ibid., 32.

76. One especially splenetic case is in a letter to Leo Strauss in which Voegelin suggested that Locke wrote esoterically, hiding the real nihilist
message from himself. In FPP, 92–93 [20 April 1953]. See also the lengthy footnote on Locke in FER, 37–38.
77. FER, 69–70.
78. Ibid., 246.
79. Voegelin emphasized the swindle perpetrated by Marx and outlined Marx’s intellectual dishonesty in Science, Politics, and Gnosticism (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1968), 27–28 (hereafter cited as SPG), and FER, 259.
80. Voegelin discussed his use of magical imagery for Hegel in a response to Thomas J. J. Altizer’s review essay of the essay under investigation. Voegelin wrote that he found “Hegel’s self-declaration of the Phanomenologie as a work of magic. . . . I had read the passages on the ‘magic words’ and the ‘magic force’ in the Phanomenologie many a time without becoming aware of their implications.” Later in the same essay he wrote, “In the contemporary world, alchemist magic is primarily to be found among the ideologists who infest the social sciences with their efforts to transform man, society, and history.” Eric Voegelin, Published Essays, 1966–1985, ed. Ellis Sandoz, vol. 12 of The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 298 [hereafter cited as CW 12].
81. Ibid., 216–17.
82. Ibid., 218.
83. Ibid., 219–20.
84. Voegelin does suggest this point. He emphasized how the French Revolution and Napoleon’s glorious battles disturbed Hegel: “He was worried in these days by the question how a philosopher could participate in the meaning of the bloody events which to him were the only meaningful reality in the world” [CW 12, 220].
85. The source for this quote is Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung (Stuttgart, 1936), 324.
86. CW 12, 221.
87. OH 4, 264.
88. Ibid., 266.

CHAPTER 5. THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY

2. See, for instance, Leo Strauss, Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy, Introduction and Bibliography by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 168 [hereafter cited as SPPP]. The section reads in part: “Catastrophes and horrors of a magnitude hitherto unknown, which we have seen and through which we have lived, were better provided for, or made intelligible, by both Plato and the prophets than by the modern belief in progress.”
4. Ibid., 92.
5. Ibid., 95.
6. "Historicism asserts that all human thoughts or beliefs are historical, and hence deservedly destined to perish; but historicism itself is a human thought; hence historicism can be of only temporary validity, or it cannot be simply true. To assert the historicist thesis means to doubt it and thus to transcend it" [NRH, 25].
7. Ibid., 25.
8. Ibid., 26.
10. NRH, 27, 29.
11. Ibid., 31-32.
12. Thus philosophers do not have a comprehensive view. They are skeptics.
13. RCPR, 25.
15. SPPP, 178.
16. The book also includes three book reviews, bringing the total number of "chapters" to fifteen. The chapter on Nietzsche is number eight.
17. Ibid., 147, 148, 149.
18. Ibid., 175.
19. Ibid., 176.
20. Ibid., emphasis added.
21. Ibid., 177.
22. Ibid., 179.
23. Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, aphorism 150. "'Around the hero everything becomes a tragedy; around the demigod everything becomes a satyr-play; and around God everything becomes—what? perhaps a 'world'?" Strauss pointed to this aphorism as "Nietzsche's own theology" [SPPP, 181].
24. SPPP, 181, 182.
25. "He led us to suspect that the true science of religion, i.e. the empirical psychology of religion, is for all practical purposes impossible, for the psychologist would have to be familiar with the religious experience of the most profound homines religiosi and at the same time to be able to look down, from above, on these experiences" [ibid., 182].
26. Ibid., 182.
27. Ibid., 183.
28. Ibid., 188-89.
29. Ibid., 190.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 191.
32. The most infamous attempt to answer this question is Shadia Drury's book, *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988). In her chapter on Nietzsche, Drury draws from very slim evidence to suggest
that Strauss's greatest intellectual debt was to Nietzsche (which Nietzsche
is unclear) but that, unlike his intellectual father, he had learned to hide his
real teaching. In the hands of Drury this conclusion takes on an almost sin-
ister character. It is worth quoting the conclusion to her chapter on
Nietzsche: "It is no use protesting that Strauss's real intellectual debt is to
Plato and the ancients. For as we have seen, the ancients to whom Strauss
appeals have been transfigured by Nietzsche. That Strauss insists on appeal-
ing to Plato rather than Nietzsche should not surprise us. He has learnt a les-
son in political prudence from Machiavelli. He has learnt to use the 'preju-
dice in favor of antiquity' to establish 'new modes and orders' " (181). The
problem—or the biggest problem—with Drury's conclusion is that one is
left thinking of Strauss as a closet modern, a wiser Machiavelli. Strauss did
see important connections between Nietzsche and Plato, but he did not see a
Plato transfigured by Nietzsche. He saw a Nietzsche who in one important
respect pointed back to Plato, but Nietzsche also pointed forward to Heide-
gger.

33. PP, 98.
34. RCPR, 24; emphasis in original.
35. Ibid., 25.
37. Because all people are committed to some way of looking at the
world, the difference between philosopher and nonphilosopher must be fate.
38. RCPR, 26.
39. See Leo Strauss, Liberalism Ancient and Modern [Ithaca: Cornell
University Press, 1989], 256–57 [hereafter cited as LAM].
40. Ibid., 236–37.
41. See, for example, RCPR, 29.
42. One exception is Strauss's very important but very short essay "Philos-
ophy as Rigorous Science and Political Philosophy" (republished in
SPPP), in which he discussed Heidegger and Husserl.
43. "The more I understand what Heidegger is aiming at, the more I see
how much still escapes me. The most stupid thing I could do would be to
close my eyes or to reject his work" (RCPP, 30).
44. SPPE, 31; emphasis added.
45. Plato, Strauss, and Heidegger agreed on one thing: ontology is the
heart of the philosophical pursuit.
46. RCPR, 29.
47. SPPE, 33.
48. Letter to Voegelin dated 17 December 1949, found in FPP, 63.
49. TM, 13.
50. WPP, 41.
51. A just order requires rule by the wise. But only the most favorable and
fantastic conditions would allow the wisest to rule.
52. NRH, 178.
53. WPP, 46.
54. NRH, 169.
55. See ibid., 171, 173.
56. Ibid., 176, 177. "What Hobbes attempted to do on the basis of Machiavelli's fundamental objection to the utopian teaching of the tradition, although in opposition to Machiavelli's own solution, was to maintain the idea of natural law but to divorce it from the idea of man's perfection; only if natural law can be deduced from how men actually live, from the most powerful force that actually determines all men, or most men most of the time, can it be effectual or of practical value. The complete basis of natural law must be sought, not in the end of man, but in his beginnings, in the prima naturae or, rather, in the primum naturae. What is most powerful in most men most of the time is not reason but passion. Natural law will not be effectual if its principles are distrusted by passion or are not agreeable to passion. Natural law must be deduced from the most powerful of all passions" [180].
57. Ibid., 181-82.
58. The emphasis Strauss placed on the destruction to Christian beliefs caused by thinkers like Locke makes one reassess Strauss's claims about Machiavelli. Clearly, Strauss considered Machiavelli's attack on religion very important. Indeed, as I show later in this book, Strauss understood morality to be a function of religious beliefs.
59. NRH, 220.
60. Ibid., 221. Voegelin agreed with Strauss concerning Locke's Hobbesian trajectory. See Voegelin's letters to Strauss, 20 April 1953 and 15 April 1953, and Strauss's reply on 29 April 1953 in FPP, 92-98.
61. Strauss's reading of Locke was very selective. On this point concerning natural law, and when Strauss interpreted Locke to advocate the unlimited acquisition of wealth, Strauss focused upon a few key passages while ignoring the large number of contradictory passages. Because Strauss assumed that Locke, as a philosopher, could not be contradictory without the contradictions suggesting some esoteric meaning, Strauss was forced into an interpretation that took the minor note to really be the major note. But with Locke the method is strikingly unpersuasive. John Dunn examined Strauss's argument in an excellent article, "Justice and the Interpretation of Locke's Political Theory," Political Studies 16 [1968]: 68-87. Dunn understands the contradictions in Locke's work as evidence of a genuine dilemma, or an ambiguity Locke was unable to clarify. But for Dunn, Locke remained faithful to the natural law tradition and to the Christian beliefs he professed. On the other hand, Dunn never took seriously Strauss's beliefs about philosophers and the manner in which they write. Concerning Locke and natural rights and natural law see NRH, 226-28, as well as the discussion of natural law in "The Law of Reason in the Kuzari" in PAW, 95-141, esp. 126-41.
62. "It is on the basis of Hobbes's view of the law of nature that Locke opposes Hobbes's conclusions. He tries to show that Hobbes's principle—the right of self-preservation—far from favoring absolute government, requires limited government. Freedom, 'freedom from arbitrary, absolute power,' is 'the fence' to self-preservation. Slavery is therefore against natural law ex-
cept as a substitute for capital punishment. Nothing which is incompatible with the basic right of self-preservation, and hence nothing to which a rational creature cannot suppose to have given free consent, can be just; hence civil society or government cannot be established lawfully by force or conquest: consent alone 'did or could give beginning to any lawful government of the world' [NRH, 231]. Moreover, with regard to Locke's view of happiness Strauss wrote: "Since there are therefore no pure pleasures, there is no necessary tension between civil society as the mighty Leviathan or coercive society, on the one hand, and the good life, on the other: hedonism becomes utilitarianism or political hedonism. The painful relief of pain [i.e., the work that brings one out of the state of nature] culminates not so much in the greatest pleasures as 'in the having those things which produce the greatest pleasures.' Life is the joyless quest for joy" [NRH, 251].

63. Thus Locke did not consider property to be an absolute right but, rather, the means to secure natural rights. One may say that the right of property is dictated by natural law but not natural right. See NRH, 242.

64. Ibid., 235, 236.
65. Ibid., 244--45.
66. See ibid., 246--47.
67. Ibid., 248.
68. TM, 13--14.
69. NRH, 1.

70. Still, Strauss did not display great optimism. When commenting on the "Jewish problem" and the American experience he wrote: "I do not believe that the American experience forces us to qualify this statement. It is very far from me to minimize the difference between a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, and the nations of the old world, which certainly were not conceived in liberty. I share the hope in America and the faith in America, but I am compelled to add that that faith and that hope cannot be of the same character as that faith and that hope which a Jew has in regard to Judaism and which the Christian has in regard to Christianity. No one claims that the faith in America and the hope in America are based on explicit divine promises" (RCPRE, 233).

71. NRH, 2.
72. Ibid.
73. Strauss's argument suggests that the rise of social science as a privileged form of knowledge eventually undermined religious faith. On the other hand, Strauss does not suggest, so far as I can tell, that social science emerges as religion fades.

74. "Liberal relativism has its roots in the natural right tradition of tolerance or in the notion that everyone has a natural right to the pursuit of happiness as he understands happiness; but in itself it is a seminary of intolerance" [NRH, 6].

75. Political scientists begin with theories that they apply to real experiences. Political philosophers begin with real experiences as experienced by
political actors. Political philosophers believe that a much wider gap separates theory from praxis and thus do not seek to inform directly political actions. Nonetheless, political philosophy is edifying, without meaning to be so. See LAM, 8, 203-23.

76. Ibid., 218-19.
77. NRH, 2.
78. LAM, 224.
79. Ibid., 24.

80. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). This is a crazy and wonderful book in desperate need of a good esoteric read. How is it possible that a book about America could leave almost all of America’s heritage out and replace it with the German heritage? How could such a book become a best-seller? The chapter about rock music is the best expression of Bloom’s attitude toward American popular culture.

81. LAM, 5.
82. Ibid., 24.
83. AN, 26.
84. CW 12, 34.
85. Ibid., 6.
86. Ibid., 5.

87. The essay also includes a section on the literary response to this disorder. The lack of public influence of these spiritually sensitive writers suggested to Voegelin that the people had lost contact with spiritual reality. The German university was “the iron curtain” that separated the spiritually sensitive literary figures from the larger educated public.

88. Ibid., 21.
89. Ibid., see especially 18-28.
90. Ibid., 25.
91. See ibid., 51.

92. All quotes from here to the end of this chapter, except where otherwise noted, come from a transcript of one of Voegelin’s speeches, “The Necessary Moral Bases for Communication in a Democracy,” found in the Voegelin Collection at the Hoover Institution, Box 66, folder 7.

93. See CW 12, 37-42.

CHAPTER 6. THE PHILOSOPHER

1. Speaking generally, Strauss’s philosophy may have had a more direct impact on political conservatism. The coalition that, at least by the late 1970s, marched together as conservatives included a very influential group who were directly or indirectly Straussian. Voegelin, on the other hand, directly influenced few conservative thinkers, and they were largely Catholic, traditional conservatives—the core of what I am calling conservatism.
2. Strauss emphasized that for Socrates a contract was conventional, not natural. His admission to a contractual obligation to the city points out the ambiguous relationship between the philosopher (a person who lives according to nature) and the conventional city. No contract was necessary in the Republic since it represented the natural city. See NRH, 119.

3. LAM, 224.

4. "According to liberal democracy, the bond of society is universal human morality, whereas religion (positive religion) is a private affair... The German Jews owed their emancipation to the French Revolution or its effects. They were given full political rights for the first time by the Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic was succeeded by the only German regime—by the only regime that ever was anywhere—which had no other clear principle except murderous hatred of Jews, for 'Aryan' had no clear meaning other than 'non-Jewish.' One must keep in mind the fact that Hitler did not come from Prussia, nor even from Bismarck's Reich" (LAM, 226).

5. See ibid., 228, 230, 224.
6. Ibid., 230.
7. Ibid., 256.
8. Ibid., 227.

9. "I experience a tree; in doing so, I am not necessarily aware of my 'Ego' which is the condition of possibility of my experiencing anything." Strauss related this example to understanding Judaism. "Accordingly, when speaking of the Jewish experience, one must start from what is primary or authoritative for the Jewish consciousness, and not from what is the primary condition of possibility of Jewish experience: one must start from God's Law, the Torah, and not from the Jewish nation" (ibid., 237–38).

10. Ibid., 213.
11. Ibid., 231.

12. Strauss wrote in numerous places about the internal logic of orthodox faith. One example: The attacks by cultural Zionists on orthodoxy "and similar denials and interpretations lost all their force by the simple observation that they contradict not merely inherited opinion but present experience... God's revealing Himself to man, His addressing man, is not merely known through tradition going back to the remote past and is therefore now 'merely believed' but is genuinely known through present experience which every human being can have if he does not refuse himself to it. This experience is not a kind of self-experience... [but] something undesired, coming from the outside, going against man's grain; it is the only awareness of something absolute which cannot be relativized in any way as everything else, rational or nonrational, can; it is the experience of God as the Thou, the father and king of all men" (LAM, 232).

13. Ibid., 239; emphasis added.
15. Ibid., 241.
16. See ibid., 246.
17. Ibid., 245.
18. Ibid., 238.
19. Ibid., 246.
20. Ibid., 254.
22. LAM, 255.
23. When the greatest good becomes creativity (or the freedom to create) then the moral standard becomes self-control. No “transcendent” standard like God or nature creates an end to govern human behavior. Humans control ends and means.
24. LAM, 256.
25. Ibid., 236.
27. PL, 113–14.
28. Ibid., 18–19.
29. One of the several places in which Strauss mentioned the unevident foundations (i.e., grounded on belief) of modern philosophy is RCPR, 269–70. Consult also NRH, 173–76.
30. See PL, 5.
31. Ibid., 12.
32. The term “natural” is ambiguous. Earlier in the paragraph he mentioned the destruction of “natural theology and natural law.” Strauss probably meant to suggest a holistic knowledge that emerges from a people’s spiritual beliefs. Because, as I show later, Strauss used “natural” to refer to the conventional world—Plato’s cave—(although at other times Strauss contrasted natural to conventional) which was governed by assumptions about the whole, natural knowledge should refer to the knowledge that springs from that cosmological myth. Because Strauss believed the Enlightenment philosophers also operated according to a myth (belief), we must consider that “natural” refers to something more. Perhaps the best way of understanding this issue is Strauss’s belief that the Enlightenment was a revolt against nature—an attempt to overcome or master nature. Consequently those philosophers rejected the natural understanding and sought abstract (and the more empirical the more distanced from the experienced whole, and thus more abstract) ideals and tools. Thus, while they stepped out of the natural realm, they did not transcend it. More important, as I show later,
"natural" probably meant the assumption common to believers and philosophers that there is a whole about which we can know something meaningful. Also, this whole contains a transcendent standard for human life. Consult Kenneth Hart Green's essay, ""In the Grip of the Theological-Political Predicament: The Turn to Maimonides in the Jewish Thought of Leo Strauss," 47, 66–67.

33. PL, 12–13.
34. Ibid., 15.
35. Ibid., 13.
37. LAM, 257.
38. PL, 112.
39. "There is no investigation into the history of philosophy that is not at the same time a philosophical investigation" [ibid., 23].
40. PAW, 154–55.
41. See Strauss's "On Collingwood's Philosophy of History," Review of Metaphysics 5 (June 1952): 559–86. Note especially on pp. 585–86: "History takes on philosophical significance for men living in an age of intellectual decline. Studying the thinkers of the past becomes essential for men living in an age of intellectual decline because it is the only practicable way in which they can recover a proper understanding of the fundamental problems."
42. PAW, 155.
43. Ibid., 156.
44. As for science, Strauss wrote: "Science, rejecting the idea of a final account of the whole, essentially conceives of itself as progressive, as being the outcome of progress of human thought beyond the thought of all earlier periods, and of being capable of still further progress in the future" [ibid., 15].
45. See "On Collingwood's Philosophy of History" for an examination of the blindness of modern historians to the ancient world.
46. PAW, 157; emphasis added.
47. In light of the preceding quote the original meaning of philosophy must be made in reference to an unprovable assumption that there is a whole or "a being." Such an assumption rested upon "commonsense"—or on the necessary posits of everyday life.
48. To make another stab at the meaning of "natural" in this context, Strauss equated natural with the assumptions that [a] there exists a whole about which humans can know something and [b] the account of the whole is important to human life. Thus, to live in Plato's cave is to live in primordial awareness of a whole of which one forms a part.
49. Only people seeking the natural cave have need of history.
50. PL, 20; emphasis added.
51. Strauss understood that the Jewish philosophers took their inspiration
from Plato (despite the apparent Aristotelianism of their thought) while Christian thought was obviously more influenced by Aristotle. The differences in Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptions of natural right discussed in NRH may be important with regard to the appropriation of these doctrines by Jews and Christians.

52. See PAW, 9–10.
53. Ibid., 18–19.
54. PL, 25.
55. Ibid., 53; emphasis in original. See also note 88 on p. 121.
56. Ibid., 126; emphasis in original.
57. PAW, 56.
58. PL, 55–58. See also NRH, 91.

60. By presuppositions Strauss meant the given of the social world into which one is born.
61. See PL, 83.
62. Ibid., 84, 99.
63. See NRH, 141, for Strauss’s discussion of the need to establish a code that is persuasive to the unwise, thus giving the wise consent to rule.

64. See RCPR, 236.
66. See PAW, 31–32.
67. Of course when old worlds die, new ones may be created. An unmistakable sense of expectation and excitement creeps into Strauss’s work. After all, if Strauss considered the Christian religion a poor foundation for political order, then the process of modernity, or rather the final collapse of the modern project, produces a terrifying chaos waiting for a new creator to give it form. Strauss wrote about how these conditions made an understanding of the classics possible again (traditions had obscured them). Thus the principles of classical political philosophy could be applied to novel circumstances. Great danger and great opportunity go together in the postmodern age. We are left with the conclusion—however paradoxical—that Strauss’s return to the ancients was part of his attempt to create “new modes and orders.” Consult The City and Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 9, 11 (hereafter cited as CM). See also Strauss’s comments concerning Heidegger in SPPP, 33.

68. Strauss wrote, concerning Husserl’s views: “As theory of knowledge naturalism must give an account of natural science, of its truth or validity. But every natural science accepts nature in the sense in which nature is intended by natural science, as given, as ‘being in itself.’ . . . Hence naturalism is completely blind to the riddles inherent in the ‘givenness’ of nature. It is constitutionally incapable of a radical critique of experience as such. The scientific positing or taking for granted of nature is preceded by and based upon the prescientific one, and the latter is as much in need of radical clarification as the first. Hence an adequate theory of knowledge cannot be
based on the naive acceptance of nature in any sense of nature’’ (SPPP, 35).
See also CM, 11–12.
69. See SPPP, 31.
70. Ibid., 35.
71. Berns’s essay, ‘‘The Prescientific World and Historicism: Some Reflections on Strauss, Heidegger, and Husserl,’’ is in Leo Strauss’s Thought, 169–82. See pp. 169–70.
72. SPPP, 31.
73. Ibid.
74. This acceptance is tantamount to a rejection of nature, as Plato understood it. Nature, applied to the social and political realm, resupposes something common to all humans. Thus Strauss understood this move to parallel, essentially, the claims by the sophists that all norms are conventional and thus political science is part of rhetoric. See CM, 16–17.
75. SPPP, 36.
76. Strauss emphasized that for Socrates political philosophy was not distinct from philosophy because ‘‘each part of the whole, and hence in particular the political sphere, is in a sense open to the whole.’’ Aristotle, on the other hand, created political science ‘‘as one discipline . . . among a number of disciplines’’ (CM, 20–21).
77. SPPP, 34.
78. See WPP, 91.
79. CM, 20.
80. This observation must not be construed to mean that philosophers do not seek to know divine things. On the contrary, their attraction, which Strauss called a madness or mania, was precisely to the hidden origins of the whole. So while their lives are oriented to the divine, they gain only knowledge of their ignorance on this most important of subjects. See CM, 20–21, 241.
81. See, for example, CM, 29.
82. WPP, 10.
83. FPP, 222.
84. Ibid., 229.
85. Ibid., 233. See also NRH, 74–76.
86. Ibid., 225. See also WPP, 11.
87. Ibid., 219.
89. NRH, 124.
90. Rosen, Hermeneutics as Politics, 131.
91. Thomas Pangle noted this point in his introduction to SPPP, 4. See also his references.
92. See CM, 13–14, for a counterexample.
93. WPP, 38–39.
95. Ibid., 121.
96. SPPP, 3.
97. Ibid., 3–5.
100. Ibid., 21.
101. Ibid., 51.
102. At the end of paragraph fifty-nine Strauss noted the need for a new beginning, so paragraphs sixty through seventy-seven form a section. The discussion in the text concerns paragraph sixty-nine.
103. CM, 127.
104. The philosopher produces nothing useful for everyday life. He has no art or craft that brings him money or provides the city with anything. Consequently, the philosopher needs the city to produce all the things necessary for bodily life. The philosopher needs the city, but the city has no need for the philosopher. He must make himself acceptable to the city or else be exposed as a danger—or at the very least as useless. Aristophanes exposed Socrates, Plato and Xenophon exhibited the changed philosopher who sought to assist the city. Socrates' concern for the health of the city was based, not upon personal concerns, but upon the fate of philosophy. If the world was to see future philosophers they would require cities—cities that were not pathologically frightened of philosophers. For this reason Socrates chose death rather than escape.

CHAPTER 7. THE MYSTIC

1. Something of a paradox shades Voegelin's understanding of philosophy as resistance to disorder. All philosophy, as Voegelin employed the word, emerges from a powerfully felt sense of disorder, which is as true of Anselm as of Plato—indeed of Hegel, Marx, and especially Nietzsche. The presence of widespread hunger, suffering, injustice, and the like might inspire one to seek some new order—to posit some felicitous future awaiting human creativity. So also might the destruction of the old gods send one in search of new symbols of order. Nonetheless, whether it is the creation of ideological dream worlds or the recovery, in a new and more differentiated form, of the spiritual source of human order, philosophy requires disorder—history requires the dyad, disorder and the search for order. The process has, at this most superficial level, a structure reminiscent of Hegel's system.

2. OH 4, 237.
3. When puzzling over several questions concerning consciousness, Voegelin emphasized that the "reasons [or answers to the problems] had to be sought, not in a theory of consciousness, but concretely in the constitutions of the responding and verifying consciousness. And that concrete consciousness was my own" (*Anamnesis*, ed. and trans. Gerhart Niemeyer [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978], 12; hereafter cited as AN).
4. Ibid., ii.

5. Voegelin examined this problem with regard to his own use of a reified "reality." In the context of his analysis of Plato's use of the word "vision" to suggest "an event in the cognitive process of reality," Voegelin wrote that "the partners of the encounter [in the vision] must not be converted into the grammatical subjects of such statements of 'Plato thinks . . . .' or 'God reveals . . . '; a Platonic opsis ['vision'] is neither a Cartesian cogito nor a revealed doctrine. Faced by this difficulty, one might then feel tempted to make 'reality' the grammatical subject and to predicate of it the process of becoming luminous in the vision. In fact, I have used this proposition more than once myself, in order to avoid hypostatizing the partners to the encounter. But its use would be a misuse if it were to suggest 'reality' as something about which propositions can be advanced short of the experiences analyzed. For as soon as we ask further what this 'reality' that now has become the grammatical subject 'really' is, we can only say that it is as what it appears when it becomes luminous for itself in the visionary event. Again, the transformation of the term into the subject of a defining proposition leads only back to the insight of the vision itself." The quote is on pp. 230–31 of Voegelin's very suggestive essay, "The Beginning and the Beyond," in What Is History! and Other Late Unpublished Writings, ed. Thomas A. Hollweck and Paul Caringella, vol. 28 of The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); hereafter cited as CW 28.

6. Voegelin wrote often on this subject, and I cite one example: "In the event of the opsis ["vision"] and its language we reach the limit at which language does not merely refer to reality but is reality emerging as the luminous 'word' from the divine-human encounter" (CW 28, 231; see also p. 184).

7. See, for instance, CW 12, 344.

8. For most of his career Voegelin freely associated the word with his work. Late in life he came to think the word too much a product of modern forms of dividing up philosophy. See, for instance, CW 12, 197–98.

9. See Chapter 1, "The Beginning of the Beginning," in OH 5. Because humans are thrown into a story—the story of reality—one's life begins in the middle. Only through exploration of the meaning of the story in which one participates does "the beginning" become clear. The classical expression of the beginning, as Voegelin pointed out, is in Genesis 1.

10. OH 1, 5.

11. Ibid., 3.

12. Ibid., ix.

13. More precisely, "pragmatic" events, as Voegelin called them, made cosmological symbols of order dubious. Philosophers and prophets destroyed the cosmological order by supplying more adequate symbols of reality, thus rendering older symbols unbelievable.

14. OH 4, 77.

15. The question of beginning emerges when one discovers the beyond. See, for instance, OH 4, 7–20.


18. Voegelin never distinguished among different positions staked out by Husserl over his career.

19. AN, 16-18.

20. Ibid., 19.

21. It has become commonplace to recognize the influence of Schelling, Kant, and Hegel on Voegelin's thought. However, few people have worked to expose the nature of these influences. With regard to the influence of Hegel, two interesting sources deserve attention. Paul Gottfried wrote an overlooked book on the influence of Hegel on the American right, *The Search for Historical Meaning: Hegel and the Postwar American Right* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986). His discussion of Voegelin is instructive. Also, Voegelin engaged in a published exchange with Thomas J. J. Altizer who, in a review essay of Voegelin's "On Hegel: A Study in Sorcery," found that Voegelin was engaged in patricide. See *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 43 (1975): 765-72. See also Voegelin's response in CW 12, 292-303.

22. OH 5, 15-16.

23. CW 12, 121, 133. See also p. 131.

24. Translation is found in *The Beginning and the Beyond*, 58.

25. CW 28, 189.

26. Ibid., 229.

27. OH 5, 38.

28. "By virtue of his imaginative responsiveness man is a creative partner in the movement of reality toward its truth" (ibid.).

29. Ibid., 41.

30. "The folly of responding to the divine appeal by denial or evasion is just as much a human possibility as the positive response" (CW 28, 199).

31. The conditions of the disorder dictate the nature of the search. For Plato the search could proceed rather directly because the cosmological symbols had retained their integrity, even if they were no longer sufficient. In the modern era, countless efforts to gain dominion over reality have so confused the issues as to make the symbols opaque. Voegelin, therefore, had first to escape the restrictive doctrines of his time—especially the various forms (recognized or not) of positivism.

32. OH 1, xiii-xiv.
33. See AN, 113.
34. Ibid., 92.
35. Ibid., 93.
36. AN, 93; OH 4, 190.
37. See AN, 114, for a graph of this structure.
38. Voegelin often identified the psyche as the site and the sensorium of human participation with the divine presence. He used the same description, nonetheless, for consciousness, and consciousness and psyche come very close to collapsing into one another.
39. AN, 95–96.
40. CW 28, 227.
41. AN, 149.
42. Hughes, Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin, 27; emphasis in original.
43. See OH 4, 8–9, 71–73. See also Hughes, Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin, 43–44.
44. CW 28, 185.
45. Ibid., 218. See also p. 185 for discussion of the exegetical nature of terms like “immanent” and “transcendent.”
46. Ibid., 221–22.
47. In another context Voegelin wrote that “the experience of consciousness . . . is not phenomenal, but not noumenal, but even the noumena of Vernunft are not the noumena of being as a whole. That being which is the ground of all experienceable particular being is an ontological hypothesis without which the experienced reality of the ontic nexus in human existence remains incomprehensible, but it is nowhere a datum of human existence rather it is always strictly transcendence that we can approach only through meditation. It cannot be drawn from that Beyond of finiteness into finiteness itself. Our human finiteness is always within being” [AN, 32].
48. NSP, 122.
49. Voegelin explored the meanings of the root words for “fool” going back to Hebrew usage, especially in the Psalms, and Greek usage, especially by Plato. See the section “folly and theology” found in the essay “The Beginning and the Beyond” in CW 28, 198–203.
50. Voegelin argued further that the Christian order, at the beginning of Scholasticism, was experiencing numerous tensions—from emerging nations to new religious orders to more general questions concerning the relationship between secular and spiritual authority. Keen minds during periods of such change challenge traditional beliefs and call for answers based upon reason rather than biblical authority.
51. CW 28, 205.
52. See, for instance, CW 12, 127, 132–33. “The imaginative play has its hard core of reality as its is motivated by man’s trust (pistis) in reality as intelligibly ordered, as a Cosmos. Our perspectival experiences of reality in process may render no more than fragments of insight, the fragmentary elements may be heterogeneous, and they may look even incommensurable,
but the trust in the underlying oneness of reality, its coherence, lastingness, constancy of structure, order, and intelligibility, will inspire the creation of images which express the ordered wholeness sensed in the depth." Surely, Voegelin and his critics would agree that in the late modern era there is little _pistis_ to go around.


54. The problem extends well beyond the few "speculative" philosophers of history. One is apt to hear or read phrases like "History tells us" nearly everywhere, even among historians. Voegelin would have considered this a problem extending well beyond naiveté and suggesting a profound and basic misunderstanding of the nature of human existence.

55. Voegelin thought that Toynbee (and Spengler) made a crucial mistake by considering ordering experiences and their symbols as products of civilizations rather than of their "constitutive forms." See OH 1, 126.

56. CW 12, 97.

57. OH 1, ix.

58. See Hughes, _Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin_, 106–7, for a discussion of the distinction between universe and cosmos in Voegelin's work.

59. See OH 1, 21.

60. The problem of the place of Israel in these cycles of civilizations is an illustrative example. The Toynbee presented here is the earlier Toynbee. He later came to rethink much of his original enterprise.

61. See OH 4, 1.

62. See ibid., 7 and chap. 5.

63. This discovery surprised Voegelin because he had thought that a cosmological society could not conceive of history as a course rather than a cycle.

64. OH 4, 6.

65. See ibid., 1–7, for Voegelin's discussion of the foregoing problems.

66. Ibid., 58.

67. See ibid., 306.

68. Ibid., 304.

69. Plato's discovery also created a before-and-after experience. He became aware of history as the process of human-divine conversation.

70. OH 4, 332.

71. "The recognition of universal mankind as an eschatological index penetrates to the center of the problem presented by history as a dimension of humanity. Without universality, there would be no mankind other than the aggregate of members of a biological species; there would be no more a history of mankind than there is a history catkind or horsekind. If mankind is to have history, its members must be able to respond to the movement of divine presence in their souls. But if that is the condition, then the mankind who has history is constituted by the God to whom man responds. A scattering of societies, belonging to the same biological type, thus, is discovered to
be one mankind with one history, by virtue of participation in the same flux of divine presence'" [OH 4, 305].

72. Ibid., 242.

73. "There is no history other than the history constituted in the metaxy of differentiating consciousness" [Ibid., 243].

74. Translation is found in The Beginning and the Beyond, 35.

CHAPTER 8. STRAUSS, VOEGELIN, AND THE CONSERVATIVE IMAGINATION

1. By emphasizing their role in conservative intellectual circles here, I do not suggest that this was their only role. One might wish to look at their influence among philosophers or political scientists or classicists. Of course, they fit into several stories of European life as well.


3. The purest expression of this view is found in the works of Robert Nisbet.
