

The Constitution and Prospects of World-Empires

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In his classic 1961 lecture,¹ [1] "World-Empire and the Unity of Mankind," Eric Voegelin raises important questions well worth revisiting forty-five years later in this post-Cold War era of surging religious fundamentalisms and a current U.S. foreign policy that some consider an effort to establish a new American empire.² [2]

Voegelin concludes his examination of the meaning of the term "empire" with the assertion that "To establish an empire is an essay in world creation, reaching through all the levels of the hierarchy of being. This essay is always related to the invisible order through the attunement of existence to transcendent Being; it is an evocation of true existence within this world, through participation in the order of the world beyond." [179] He then considers the pathology of the contemporary (1961) situation, characterized by such economic interdependence and destructiveness of wars that "the global *ecumene*" must become a world in the sense of a global society with police powers if civilization is to survive. This quest for an emerging world-empire can be traced back to the *philosophes*--in particular, to Turgot's belief in the historical

1 [1] Eric Voegelin, "World-Empire and the Unity of Mankind," *International Affairs*, vol. 38, no. 2, April 1962, pp. 170-188. The lecture was delivered at the London School of Economics in 1961. Page numbers in brackets in this paper refer to this article. The article is also available in the *Collected Works*, vol. 11.

2 [2] See, for interesting recent examples, Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), Harold James, *The Roman Predicament: How the Rules of International Order Create the Politics of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), and Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

progress of mankind characterized by the softening of the *mores*, the enlightenment of the mind, and the movement toward global commerce.

Voegelin asserts that "There never was a mankind in evolution, its generations connected by cause and effect, accumulating a collective memory," and so "it requires a good deal of imaginative construction to transform a multiplicity of societies in history, which even today range from Neolithic tribal communities to Anglo-Saxon democracies, into a unity of mankind with an evolution common to all." [181]

So such a project, he says, means that "The issue of representative humanity thus reappears on the scale of the global *ecumene*--but Confucius and the Buddha, the philosophers, the prophets, and Christ have been replaced by the representative humanity of a gentleman with soft mores, an enlightened mind, and a ticket for a trip around the world." [182] "But," he warns, "enlightened intellectuals are not a harmless curiosity; they are dangerous maniacs. They take themselves seriously, they really believe they represent mankind, and if a recalcitrant *masse totale* insists on being formed in the image of God, they will use force to correct the mistake and remould man in their own image." [182] Condorcet, a generation later, characterizes the instrument of this remoulding as a new class of men "who are less interested in the discovery of truth than in its propagation." [182]

"This aggregate of ideas--the intramundane process, its inevitability, its culmination in the global empire directed by Gnostic sectarians"--Voegelin traces "through Comte and Marx to the Gnostic empire-builders of the twentieth century" to the point that it has become "the dominant political force in our time. And its success had good psychological reasons. The intramundane tribalism of mankind implied in the *masse totale* holds a powerful appeal to

spiritually and intellectually immature men who can reap the emotional benefits of being members of the tribe in good standing without submitting to the unpleasant discipline of spirit and intellect; when the truth of existence as an obligation for everyman is abolished, one can participate in representative humanity without effort. And equally powerful is the appeal to forceful personalities who can indulge their *libido dominandi* as the leaders of mankind." [183]

Voegelin concludes that the effort to transform "the ecumene into a world while destroying the truth of existence that alone could make it one" is bound to fail, but then raises the question whether such a world "can be created even when the truth of existence is included." [183] This question, he says, was considered only once in history: when Rome attempted to conquer the ecumene, and philosophers, led by Polybius, wondered what sense ecumenic rule could have. At that time, the Christian apocalypse seemed a plausible answer to many, but as time passed and the Second Coming did not occur, "the non-apocalyptic structure of history" [185] led people to wonder "Is it really the function of man to contribute' to a progress of which the profits will be reaped by future generations--to be a stepping stone for a rational world to come?" [185]

"The Christian compromise with reality has assumed the form of the Church," he asserts, "which is neither an empire nor a community living in expectation of the imminent end of the world, but an institution representing the eschatological telos within the world. The Christian answer to the question of 'world-empire' was thus the separation and balance of spiritual and temporal powers within the order of a society." [185] The result of this inadequate philosophy of history has been "the ghastly farce of an apocalypse without an eschaton" with the result that "the question of empire has been reduced to an ecumenic dominion which never can become a

world; and mankind has become a synonym for the inmates of an apocalyptic concentration camp." [185]

The twin forces released--the individual and the societal--in this historical process cannot be reversed, Voegelin asserts, but their result may be the ultimate discrediting of apocalyptic thinking and realization "that mankind is more than the global collective of human beings living at the same time. Mankind is the society of man in history, extending in time from its unknown origin towards its unknown future. Moreover, no crosscut at any time represents mankind by virtue of a common power organization. For the living can represent mankind universally only by their representative humanity; and their humanity is representative only when it is oriented towards the eschatological telos. Organization, to be sure, is necessary to the existence of man and society in this world, but no organization can organize mankind--even global ecumenicity of organization is not universality. The dream of representing universal order through the world of empire has come to its end when the meaning of universal order as the order of history under God has come into view." [188]

Voegelin concludes the essay with a summary thesis: "the age of empire is coming to its end in our time. A period of five thousand years, characterized by the attempts to represent mankind by means of a finite organization in the present, has run its course and reached an epoch in the original sense of suspense. In this suspense we know that old forms are dying, but of the new forms we know no more than the prefigurations I have tried to sketch." [188]

The profound insights in this remarkable essay are many, and I have been able to summarize only those that I believe are most relevant to two related projects. The first project is the attempt to discover what we might learn from the history of the subsequent 45 years about the new forms that seem to be evolving. The second project is to see whether there are promising implications in the views of some other recent insightful analysts of the human condition about new possibilities for fostering heightened human consciousness, whether or not that consciousness might evolve into a new kind of empire.

Obviously, much has happened in the last 45 years. In 1961, Voegelin wrote of "new worlds in formation--a new free world", a Communist world, and a *troisieme monde*." Since then we have seen the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and of its empire, and the differentiation of the "third world" into countries ranging in their political and economic development from India to Somalia. These largely unanticipated changes have had profound effects on the structure and processes of world affairs. In addition, the development and spread of economic and cultural globalization, fostered in large part by profound technological changes in communication and transportation as well as in the means of destruction, has exacerbated trends of which Voegelin saw only the beginnings. But perhaps the most important--and ominous--new development has been the surging religious fundamentalisms, from Moslem through Christian, in their many guises, around the world.

Voegelin in this essay writes of the parallel developments in what Eisenstadt³ [3] has called "the axial age" of the creation of empires spanning the ecumene from the Atlantic to the

3 [3] S. I. Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).

Pacific and the "spiritual efflorescence" marked by the appearance of Confucius and Laotse, the Buddha, Zoroaster, the Prophets in Israel, and the Philosophers in Hellas. He says, however, that this parallelism should not be misconstrued as "a connection on the level of causality," but rather should be seen as having "an ontological connection" because they "display a parallelism of meaning." [171]

But is this all? The occurrence of such "parallel" phenomena may be best understood as instances of a kind of causation that transcends our conventional view which accepts only evidence from the five standard senses and standard concepts of causality. Jung termed such parallel happenings instances of "synchronicity."⁴ [4] I believe they reopen a question long neglected in political and social science: the possible roles of what are sometimes today called "noetic" phenomena.⁵ [5] These phenomena might include everything from possible "psi effects" such as clairvoyance and telepathy to *ganzfeld* effects such as those studied in the "noosphere project" at Princeton and the studies of the societal impacts of group practice of certain forms of meditation.⁶ [6]

4 [4] C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). See also Victor Mansfield, *Synchronicity, Science, and Soul-Making* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1995).

5 [5] I discussed this set of phenomena as possible foci of social science in David V. Edwards, *For A Noetic Political Science: Incorporating Unconscious, Psi, And Supernatural Phenomena*, a paper presented at the 1997 Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, August 1997.

6 [6] For a summary of research results on such asserted noetic phenomena, see Dean Radin, *The Conscious Universe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). And for a summary of the research results involving Transcendental Meditation, see Robert M. Oates, *Permanent Peace* (Fairfield, IA: Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy, 2002).

But the noetic phenomena most interesting and important for our purposes here are possible instances of divine intervention in the terrestrial world. Voegelin does not refer to such possibilities in this essay, and seems to confine his analysis to historical causation readily explained without divine intervention. But, as we well know, many people believe--even if they do not practice their academic sciences and humanities as if they believed it--that God or their preferred version of the divine does indeed intervene, either at will, or perhaps on human request, in the human, terrestrial world. And if this should be the case, might it not reconfigure our beliefs about the extent to which reality can be transformed?

This possibility leads further to another possibility not addressed by Voegelin in this essay: the possibility that revelation of divine truth may be ongoing, episodic, or progressive, rather than once-and-for-all manifest in Jesus Christ or perhaps in a range of spiritual masters such as those, mentioned above, alive from the axial age through the time of Jesus. I have neither the vocabulary nor the knowledge to address this possibility more specifically.⁷ [7] Should this possibility turn out to be true, we might find that an increasingly divine and trans-terrestrial order might come to evolve on earth, opening up new possibilities for connecting, or even reconciling, the eschaton and the mundane, and raising humankind above its current apparent limits.

7 [7] However, there is a very interesting possible model for it in the writings of Henry James, Sr. (the father of William and Henry) and later the Indian spiritual philosopher Sri Aurobindo, who spoke of an ongoing process of "involution/evolution." For accessible introductions to this idea, see Michael Murphy, "The Evolution of Embodied Consciousness," in James Ogilvy, ed., *Revisioning Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 73-96, and Daniel A. Kealey, *Revisioning Environmental Ethics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), ch. 5

Voegelin writes that during the Roman empire and after the death of Christ, Polybius and the author of the Gospel of Matthew "gained the insight that the end of all human action does not lie within this world but beyond it; this insight ♦ has now expanded to include the telos of society in history. The fulfillment of mankind is an eschaton--the great theme of history and eschatology has opened." [184]

But what does this mean for us today? If the end of all human action lies beyond this world, then our primary task seems to be to develop spiritually so that, at least as individuals, we become better prepared for the transition to that next world. Practically speaking, this suggests, at least to me, that the improvement of life on earth and of its institutions is best focused on fostering the conditions for humans to develop spiritually. This then suggests that what the state can do is usually best focused on protecting the sphere of individual spiritual practice, at least as long as this does not interfere with the spiritual and mundane practice of others.⁸ [8]

Voegelin, we recall, asserts that "The Christian answer to the question of ♦ world-empire' was thus the separation and balance of spiritual and temporal powers within the order of a society." [185] Today this traditional separation of church and state in America is under challenge, especially from the Christian Right, which seeks a bigger sphere for "faith-based" organizations with governmental financial support as well as policies informed directly and literally by their leaders' beliefs about what God would want. The arrangement I am suggesting will require further rethinking of this traditional separation, but with an individualistic focus rather than an institutional church focus of the sort favored by the Christian Right.

⁸ [8] This would, of course, be a challenging project to design and implement, not least because of the religious and spiritual diversity so characteristic of contemporary society in most industrialized societies.

One additional reason for this rethinking is the fact that the church, in its many and varied manifestations on earth, extending well beyond Christendom, long ago all but lost the emphasis on direct experience of the divine by the individual that was at the heart of the message, not only of Jesus, but of the great spiritual masters of the axial age. Instead, this emphasis on individual direct experience of the divine has been replaced by the institutionalization of the gospel (or, more accurately, parts of the gospel as interpreted by church authorities) in the organized church which thereby became the official (and often the only allowable) mediator between the individual and the divine. This phenomenon, so clear in the history of the Christian church, seems also characteristic of the other major religions in the world. Interestingly, and promisingly, this institutional insistence on the necessity of official mediation is now increasingly being overcome or circumvented by the rediscovery of the beliefs and practices of the early followers of Jesus, grounded in contemplation, and there are similar movements in other faiths, such as the Sufi version of Islam.⁹ [9]

Is it possible that this movement might become the seed of the constitution of what we might call an emerging "empire of faith"? Of course, an empire of faith would not be a traditional temporal world-empire in Voegelin's sense. Voegelin summarizes "the conceptual core, as it emerges from the historical phenomena, of a definition of world-empire" as "A power

9 [9] In the Roman Catholic church, the movement's most prominent advocate is Father Thomas Keating, author of many books on the practice of contemplative prayer, which in his version is called "centering prayer." See, for example, his *Open Mind, Open Heart* (New York: Continuum, 1986). The contemplative Christian movement has its advocates in other denominations as well. Of course, this contemplative tradition has always been kept alive in the Greek Orthodox faith by the monks on Mount Athos. See, for example, the *Philokalia* (various editions) and the three recently translated works by Boris Mouravieff, *Gnosis: Study and Commentaries on the Esoteric Tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy*, volume one (Exoteric Cycle, 1989), volume two (Mesoteric Cycle, 1992) and volume three (Esoteric Cycle, 1993), all published by Praxis Institute Press, Newbury, MA.

organization, informed by the pathos of representative humanity, and therefore representative of mankind." [172]

The proselytization encouraged by some of the great world religions, if perhaps less so by the great world spiritual traditions, would seem to suggest that they, in any case, believe that empires can be constituted by communities of faith and practice, even in the face of or in deviation from the stipulations of "caesar" or the state.

So just how are empires constituted? We know that at one level of analysis empires are constituted by mundane deeds, such as those of Alexander of Macedon, Julius Caesar, and Charlemagne. We also know that at another level of analysis empires are constituted by historians or other commentators on the deeds and happenings that are taken to characterize and create empires.

Most empires or would-be empires are empires in name only. They certainly do not meet the test of Voegelin's definition. He discerns three periods of empire in history. The first is the cosmological, which was characterized by parallel imperial creation and spiritual efflorescence. The second, the ecumenical, was characterized by an orthodoxy and the emergence of what came to be termed new civilizations around the world. The third, which began around 1500 AD with the emergence of the Spanish and British empires, reveals that the apparent stability of the orthodox empires is deceptive, giving way increasingly to the emergence of gnostic movements as alternatives for the role of representative humanity. The current situation is inchoate, as we noted above.

Just as there was a Communist attempt at empire-building when Voegelin delivered this lecture, and just as there had been the fascist attempt that eventuated in World War II, so there have been in recent years two distinct, if underdeveloped, efforts at creating empires.¹⁰ [10] One is the Islamic crusade led by Osama Bin Laden and inspired by earlier movements and ideologists in Egypt¹¹ [11] to use indoctrination directed especially at the youth plus terror delivered on innocent populations at home as well as abroad in "the heart of the infidel." The other is the effort of the George W. Bush administration, officially in response to this Islamic/terrorist threat to the politico-military order dominated by the United States, but in fact, as we now know, in planning for years before this triggering event.¹² [12]

The Bush approach in many respects marks a return to a sort of "idealism" which has more in common with the "Idealism" born of the Woodrow Wilson administration at the turn of the twentieth century in that it makes an asserted but not well-specified version of "democracy" its political goal for the Middle East and other regions. However, its reliance on an assertive, and even at times aggressive, military approach is in many respects quite at odds with the Wilsonian tradition.¹³ [13] At the same time, as we noted above, the Bush administration has

¹⁰ [10] Some have argued that globalization, or, in the term preferred by Jacques Derrida and some other French theorists, *mondialization*, is a possible world-empire in the making. This seems unlikely. But for one such argument, see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) and two critiques: Jodi Dean & Paul Passavant, *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri* (London: Routledge, 2003), and Atilio A. Boron: *Empire & Imperialism: A Critical Reading of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

¹¹ [11] For an interesting recent account, see Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

¹² [12] For one of many accounts of the evolution of the Bush administration's foreign policy planning, see James Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Viking, 2003).

¹³ [13] See N. Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

been acting--especially in domestic politics--to institutionalize a version of Christianity, derived from what has come to be called "the Christian Right," as a guide to certain aspects of domestic and foreign policy.¹⁴ [14] Thus, the Bush foreign policy is probably better characterized as "militaristic idealism."

Neither approach--neither Osama's, nor Bush's--seems likely to carry the day, especially since the United States' Iraq adventure has become an imbroglio while Al Qaeda seems unable to capitalize globally on its "success" of September 11, 2001. Neither movement seems able to develop and implement a strategy adequate to its imperial goals, nor does either seem able to generate widespread positive popularity in the target populations.

Why is this so? Voegelin's analysis suggests a very interesting possibility. In showing how the early followers of Jesus wrestled with the idea of apocalypse, and how the emergent Christian Church chose to reconcile the idea of apocalypse with the obvious fact of the world's failure to cooperate with this idea, Voegelin points the way to understanding the simplistic views of the still dominant but perhaps now receding in influence contemporary Christian Fundamentalists. Many of these "fundamentalists"--particularly those termed "premillennial dispensationalists"--claim to believe that "the end is near" and that God will soon redescend to earth to carry the faithful to heaven along with those Jews in Israel wise enough to have last-minute conversion experiences, in what is generally called "the rapture."

¹⁴ [14] For a sympathetic account, see Paul Kengor, *God and George W. Bush: A Spiritual Life* (New York: Regan Books, 2004). For a critical view, see Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking, 2006).

Whatever foreign policy access the fundamentalist Christian Right has had in the Bush Administration, beyond its electoral muscle, has depended on its consistency or overlap with the underlying views of a stable of people generally called "neoconservatives"--a phenomenon made more interesting by the fact that many of the powerful neoconservatives are actually Jewish in cultural ancestry if not always in daily practice.¹⁵ [15] The Iraq adventure seems to have weakened unquestioning acceptance of the "neocon" analysis of world affairs,¹⁶ [16] but no new alternative has emerged within the Bush administration to take its place. Rather, a resurgent "powerpolitical" approach, called in the academic world "neorealism",¹⁷ [17] seems to be increasingly shaping the Bush foreign policy.

Voegelin seems surprised by the reemergence of "the idea of world-empire in the literal sense of dominion over territorial expanse" in the face of "the picture of the universe created by modern science." [175] He attributes it largely to "the recrudescence of literalism in the modern period," [175] paired with the instrumentalist attitude toward things which gets extended to man and ultimately to the world at large. This intellectual trend eventuated in Kant's postulation of "man as a purpose in itself, never to be used only as a means to an end." [175] To Voegelin, while this "man who is a purpose in itself has lost his status as *imago Dei*, the true source of his untouchable dignity," this conception can be understood "as an act of resistance, however

¹⁵ [15] See, once again, Mann, *The Rise of the Vulcans*.

¹⁶ [16] It has also seen recent defections. See, for example, Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ [17] For accounts of "neorealism" in its major variants, see Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), and John A. Vasquez & Colin Elman, eds., *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), among many other studies.

ambiguous, against the theories and techniques of psychological management" [173] developed by the *philosophes* and employed so effectively by dictators and other manipulators of people ever since.¹⁸ [18]

So we return to the question of whether an empire of faith could be constituted on earth in such a way as to overcome these mundane limitations as articulated by Voegelin. The most interesting suggestion I have found relevant to this project is the argument of the British lay theologian Owen Barfield in his brilliant little book *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*.¹⁹ [19] The argument is too elaborate to be summarized adequately here. The key to Barfield's suggestion derives from his study of the evolution of human consciousness. Barfield characterizes human consciousness in the era of "primitive man" as "original participation," in which people experienced themselves as connected to the phenomena they encountered because they believed that they and the phenomena shared a common creator. This "original participation" was ousted from human consciousness, first by the Jews, who forbade the creation of representations of the divine because such representations would tend to foster worship of idols. But "original participation" was ousted from Western culture at large by the scientific

¹⁸ [18] One can find contemporary manifestations of such manipulative approaches in contemporary politics as well. For accounts, see Joe Klein, *Politics Lost: How American Democracy Was Trivialized by People Who Think You're Stupid* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), and see the analyses and recommendations by George Lakoff, esp. *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* (Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004), and *Whose Freedom? The Battle over America's Most Important Idea* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006). Lakoff's Republican counterpart is, of course, Frank Luntz. Unlike Lakoff, Luntz does not write books. He does, however, write long memos to Republican politicians, and these memos often find their way onto the Web. See, for instance, "The Framing Project" on www.politicalstrategy.org.

¹⁹ [19] Owen Barfield, *Saving the Appearances: A Study in Idolatry*, second ed. (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988). The first edition was published by Faber & Faber in London in 1957 and in New York by Harcourt Brace in 1965.

revolution, which fostered a new type of human consciousness that experienced phenomena as independent of the consciousness experiencing them. This idolatry or reification, Barfield argues, is mistaken, for in fact humans must "participate reality" (his term) with their minds, whether nonconsciously, as we currently do, or consciously, as we could once we recognize the profound error of our current literalist and reificatory type of consciousness. In a fascinating interpretation of the Biblical parables, Barfield argues that Jesus articulated such an understanding of the necessity of our bringing this creative role of man in reality to consciousness so that we can consciously, with the exercise of will and responsibility, bring about the era of "final participation" in which we become conscious co-creators of "the kingdom of heaven" here on earth.

The social and human sciences have long been corrupted by the idolatry or reification that Barfield traces to the scientific revolution and that Voegelin analyzed so penetratingly in his classic *New Science of Politics*.²⁰ [20] However, we now are developing ways of better understanding how social reality is created, maintained, transmitted, and how it may be changed creatively.²¹ [21] We do not yet know how far such conscious creation can go, for at least three important reasons. First, the number of social scientists who now study this phenomenon is still relatively small and the realization is relatively recent.²² [22] Second, most social scientists do

20 [20] Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), now also available in the *Collected Works*, vol. 5.

21 [21] The first step in this process of discovery was the underappreciated book by Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), still widely available as an Anchor paperback. Berger and Luckmann were inspired by the work of Alfred Schutz, who carried on an extensive correspondence with Voegelin.

22 [22] I made my first attempt at developing such an approach to the study of world affairs in *Creating a New World Politics: From Conflict to Cooperation* (New York: McKay, 1973) but the emergence of what is now generally called "constructivism" in the social sciences is much more recent. The classic study in

not even consider, let alone study systematically, the possible role of noetic phenomena, and especially the divine, in the creation of reality. And third, we still do not know how powerfully constrictive material constraints such as natural resources and the ecosystem may prove to be in limiting the possibilities of conscious creation of reality.

Thus, the only possible course for those interested in fostering such conscious creation of social reality must be one of trial and revision. Put another way, we must act before knowing and learn while doing. In the term developed by the late Donald Schoen, we must be "reflective practitioners," just as are most professionals.²³ [23] In addition, we must be continually aware that our theoretical ideas about social causation will likely themselves be constitutive of social reality and social change in ways and to extents we do not yet know. This means that we must also be "reflexive" social theorists, recognizing that the theory is a factor and the theorist is an actor in social reality. I believe that the next great step in the development of social science must involve taking account of these still-largely-unrecognized factors, as I have argued elsewhere.²⁴ [24]

Is it possible that the combination of the technological trends in communication coupled with trends we have been examining in both contemporary culture and the emergent social and

world affairs is Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²³ [23] See Donald Schoen, *The Reflective Practitioner* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). This work derives in part from earlier work Schoen did with management theorist Chris Argyris, who developed and employed the concept of "deutero-learning" or second-level learning. See Argyris and Schoen, *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978)

²⁴ [24] See, for example, Edwards, *The Theorist as Reflexive Reflective Practitioner*, a paper prepared for delivery at the 1990 annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, August 1990.

human sciences may eventually be contributing to the creation of a new cosmopolitan consciousness, which in turn might eventuate in a new "representative humanity," and a new "society of man in history" that might qualify as an empire of faith? Voegelin would surely be skeptical, but some of us may nonetheless wonder.

Many years ago, discussing the views of Voegelin with a prominent disciple who shall remain nameless here, I confessed to twinges of gnosticism as a significant element in my motivation for studying political science. My friend responded with a confessional assertion that we all experience gnostic tendencies from time to time. I have come to believe that the theoretical breakthroughs made by Voegelin might be creatively combined with an understanding of the underlying processes of conscious creation built upon the work of such innovative, if largely still underappreciated, philosophers of consciousness as Barfield and June Singer²⁵ [25] to construct a way of creating such an empire of faith.

In closing, I am reminded of a pair of poetic couplets: the classic lines of A. E. Housman, "And malt does more than Milton can To justify God's ways to man," and the supplement by contemporary poet Daniel Hoffman, "Neither malt nor Milton can Explain to God the ways of man."²⁶ [26] Eric Voegelin has, I believe, gone a very long way in successfully undertaking, in a sense, both of these projects in the course of his magisterial life's work. But as he once said to me,²⁷ [27] it is up to the rest of us, not simply to summarize and broadcast his views, but to

²⁵ [25] See June Singer, *Seeing Through the Visible World* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990).

²⁶ [26] Daniel Hoffman, *An Armada of Thirty Whales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

²⁷ [27] In a private conversation with Alessandra Lippucci and me, after we had summarized for him relevant happenings in an American Political Science Association annual meeting--obviously, before the Eric Voegelin Society had been established.

carry on the project he articulated and developed as best we can in today's world. Newton is well known for the assertion that "If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."²⁸ [28] When we operate within contemporary philosophy and social science, it may often seem as if we are instead crouching on the shoulders of pygmies. Eric Voegelin is the most stunning exception in both the originality and the profundity of his contributions to the real human project. Perhaps his shoulders are broad enough to support even these somewhat deviant ruminations. In any event, I have undertaken them in the hope that this essay might prove a modest contribution to that ongoing project.

²⁸ [28] See the fascinating historical account by sociologist Robert Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants* (New York: Free Press, 1965).