Voegelin and Hume on Philosophical Pathology

"How, O Pyrrho, did you ever make your escape from servitude to the empty wisdom of sophistic opinion?" "Timon of Phlius

This working paper is part of a more extensive project linking Voegelin, Hume, and their respective analyses of the political and spiritual disorder brought about by the English Puritans. Here I will treat only the spiritual diagnosis, and, more specifically, only the first part of this diagnosis: the nature of philosophy. For it is necessary to first understand how these thinkers conceive the philosophic act in order to understand how they conceive its pathology.

Voegelin considered Hume an "intelligent" man but one without philosophical "principles." However, Hume deserves more credit than this, for he developed an account of the pathology of philosophical thinking that rivals--and in some ways may surpass--Voegelin's account. In this paper, I will take up some of these similarities and differences in order to see more clearly what is at stake, where Voegelin may or may not fall short, and where Hume can help.

Some key questions: What causes alienation, particularly the alienation of the philosopher? What causes mistakes regarding the order of being? Does Voegelin's account of pneumopathology explain philosophical errors in particular?

** Voegelin's Theory of Order and Disorder**1 [1]

Of the symbolic forms that Voegelin explores, we are concerned here only with philosophy, in which man is discovered to be constituted by reason (*nous*). Philosophy is motivated by wonder and a love of truth, and thus as a corollary it implies the resistance of untruth. It is the love of wisdom and not wisdom itself; in this way, the philosophic attitude is distinct from what Voegelin famously calls the "gnostic attitude, which we will take up below.

In the correspondence between Voegelin and Leo Strauss, Voegelin's conception of philosophy becomes clearer. For Strauss, the modality that governs the philosophic endeavor is necessity, and philosophy is "radically independent of faith (FPP, 72). On this point--though perhaps on no others--Heidegger is "simply right, Strauss claims, for "whatever *noein* might mean, it is certainly not *pistis* in some sense (FPP, 76). Voegelin, by contrast, considers it a "historical fact that philosophy begins in the "attitude of faith of Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and

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1 [1] Primary texts by Voegelin are cited parenthetically as follows:

A *Anamnesis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990).

FPP *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964* (Columbia : University of Missouri Press, 2004).

HG *Hitler and the Germans* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999).

NSP *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

OH *Order and History*, 5 vols. (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press).

SPG *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Wilmington : ISI Books, 2004).

Parmenides" (FPP, 74). And here Strauss and Voegelin seem to part ways, whatever their other affinities, at an impasse beyond mortal resolution--as Strauss notes:

> Said in one sentence--I believe that philosophy in the Platonic sense is possible and necessary--you believe that philosophy in this sense was made obsolete by revelation. God knows who is right (FPP, 91).

It is pertinent to ask, however, if this is a proper understanding of Voegelin's position; for Voegelin, philosophy in the Platonic sense is itself constituted by an existential tension, a revealed awareness of the existence of a transcendent ground.2 [2] The philosopher is moved (*kinein*) and drawn (*helkein*) toward this cause that is not of his own making--the cause of all being--and the movement of the philosopher takes the form of a searching after truth (*zetein*). The proper attitude is one of piety and of wonder (*thaumas*); philosophy has indeed "no other beginning" (*Theaetetus* 155d). And in time this insight is generalized spiritually to include all men; Aristotle opens the *Metaphysics* by claiming that all men, not merely philosophers, by nature desire to know (*eidenai*). This natural attitude of all men is one marked by unrest, for man is the creature who is not at home with himself, who becomes aware that he is not the cause of his own being. And this unrest, this wondering may become sufficiently "luminous," to use Voegelin's term, that it recognizes its own ignorance as the source of its unrest. Voegelin notes the proper Aristotelian passage (A, 148): "A man in confusion (*aporon*) or wonder (*thaumazon*) is conscious (*cietai*) of being ignorant (*agnoein*)" (*Metaphysics* 982b18). Philosophy as the search for and seeking out of truth becomes the flight from ignorance and the turning around of

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2 [2] Voegelin has claimed that Platonic-Aristotelian analysis only arises at all due to an insight "concerning being"--"that the order of being is accessible to knowledge, that ontology is possible" (SPG, 13). For Voegelin, this insight seems to have a revealed character.

the soul (*periagoge*). Instead of turning towards darkness in an "eclipse of reality,” the philosopher attunes himself to the transcendental ground.

But this condition of unrest is too much of a burden for some men; the lightness of being may become unbearable, for it is a "great demand on man's spiritual strength” (SPG, 84). Hebrews 11:1, a favorite Scriptural passage for Voegelin, teaches us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen”--but, as Voegelin notes, "this bond is tenuous, and may snap easily”:

> The life of the soul in openness toward God, the waiting, the periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, contrition and repentance, forsakenness and hope against hope, the silent stirrings of love and grace, trembling on the verge of a certainty which if gained is loss [sic]--the very lightness of this fabric may prove too heavy a burden for men who lust for massively possessive experience (NSP, 122).

The philosophic meditation on the judgment which attends death--the "Final Transparency” (SPG, 84)--and which Plato carries out at the end of *Republic* and *Gorgias* is instructive and sobering: "[E]xistence in its tension would be unbearable for most men” (SPG, 85-86). And so it is little wonder that other alternatives, spiritual or otherwise, are sought by those who cannot slake their thirst with philosophy; the "temptation to fall from uncertain truth into certain untruth” (SPG, 83) is very strong indeed. As even the "sorcerous” Hegel notes in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (”74), the fear of error is really the fear of truth.

But where to go once the experience of the transcendent proves insufficient and once we feel the demonic pull away from truth? A man "cannot fall back on himself in an absolute sense,” Voegelin argues--a point that we will examine further in our treatment of Hume below--

and so such a man must fall back onto a "less differentiated culture of spiritual experience" (NSP, 123). This may be a "still vital polytheism" (SPG, 84) but only if the cultural conditions are amenable; otherwise, the likelier retreat is toward an undue appreciation of worldliness and toward the attitude that Voegelin characterizes as "gnostic.3 [3] This attitude is no longer one of humility or piety toward the transcendent; "[g]nosis desires dominion over being" (SPG, 32).

Ellis Sandoz has argued (SPG, xiv) that Voegelin considers there to be not only an equivalence in experience but a historical continuity between, for example, the Valentinians and modern day political movements.4 [4] Here, it is only the first claim that interests us: the experiential equivalence. What is important is the alienated consciousness that imbues the "gnostic attitude" as such, regardless of when and where it is instantiated. How is the alienation--or "estrangement," "deformation," or "deculturation"--of this attitude different from the existential unrest that is the lot of all men as men?

Again, for Voegelin, the process of the soul becoming luminous--as it participates in the tension of existence--is composed of two movements: 1) the human searching (*zetein*) for the divine ground; and 2) the divine pull or drawing (*helkein*) that issues from the ground itself. The

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3 [3] See Eugene Webb, *Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 198-200 and Voegelin's own *Autobiographical Reflections* for Voegelin's later misgivings about the explanatory overextension of "gnosticism."

4 [4] See also Webb, 201-202: "[T]he scholarly literature on this subject is already massive, and Voegelin assumes his readers have some familiarity with it. He does not feel it necessary to spell out all of the links between the thinkers he discusses. In placing Marx in the tradition of Joachim [of Fiore], for example, he has not felt obliged to prove that Marx knew of Joachim's thought, because anyone who has studied Marx can be expected to know that he was an admirer of Thomas M"nzer, the leader of the left wing of the German Reformation, and that M"nzer in turn considered himself a follower of Joachim."

second process is the key one for Voegelin. When one turns one's back on the divine pull--when one "defects" in the "apocalypse of man" or in the "egophanic revolt"--one experiences a loss of dignity, a loss of reality, and an impaired capacity to rightly orient one's self in the world (HG, 87). And when the tension of existence is in this way eclipsed, God is murdered--and with this atheism comes a kind of second innocence, as Nietzsche has noted.5 [5] The world is born anew, and existential unrest gives way to exultance in the individual's new dominion; piety gives way to *hybris* and *pleonexia.*

Purportedly following Schelling6 [6] , Voegelin deems this behavior "pneumopathological" to distinguish it from purely cognitive disorders (i.e., psychopathology). However, it is difficult to see how, on Voegelin's grounds--which are essentially the classical grounds--such disorders are not psychopathological, as well: the very instrument of cognition (*nous*) is no longer functioning properly. Stoic insanity (*insania*), born of alienation (*allotriosis*), seems to collapse the phenomena in such a way. And so the questions are whether we are dealing with psychopathological or pneumopathological phenomena and whether there is in fact a difference. This may seem a pedantic point, but it will become important when we discuss Hume, for at issue is whether the philosopher becomes pathological through a disease of the mind or of the spirit. In other words, in the process of becoming luminous, there are two aspects of motion and thus presumably two correlate pathologies. For the philosopher, in which aspect does the pathology of alienation reside? Voegelin's consistent answer seems to be that the

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5 [5] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Genealogy of Morals, Second Essay, "20.

6 [6] The reason I say "purportedly" is that, although Voegelin claimed to have encountered the term in his early studies of Schelling, he later admitted (in his *Autobiographical Reflections*) that he had since been unsuccessful in his attempt to track the relevant passage down. I have been similarly unable to find such a passage in Schelling and it may be that the concept does not occur in Schelling at all.

defection is a turning away from the divine ground--a resistance of the divine pull. Yet is not philosophy *qua* philosophy primarily characterized by the search rather than by its receptiveness? Is not philosophy primarily a matter of noetic rather than pneumatic differentiation? Voegelin is surely right to characterize the egophanic revolt as pathological, even pneumopathological. What is less clear is whether it is this revolt in particular that characterizes the philosopher's revolt--what Hume calls "false philosophy.�

�2 � Hume's Dialectic of True and False Philosophy7 [7]

Hume has been seen as a thinker who is primarily concerned with epistemology, specifically the epistemological stance called "empiricism.� However, it is more correct to call him a skeptic--Hume calls his philosophy the "sceptical� philosophy (T, 180)--and to note that

7 [7] Primary texts by Hume are cited parenthetically as follows:

E *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Press, 1985).

EM *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

EU *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

T *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

his primary concern is not epistemology but rather the nature of philosophy itself.8 [8] For Hume, philosophy is an activity born out of the distinctly human characteristic of "curiosity" or "the love of truth," a "peculiar" affection with an "origin in human nature" (T, 448) and the only passion that "never is, nor can be, carried to too high a degree" (EU, 41; T, 448-454). From this love of truth springs the dialectic of true and false philosophy, which we will briefly outline below. First, however, we turn to Pyrrho of Elis, for there is an important Pyrrhonian element in Hume's thought.

"What is philosophy?" may not be the best or the most important question, but it is without doubt the most philosophical one, for such an inquiry calls the very nature of the philosophy itself into question. In this way Pyrrho and those who followed him--in his "existential skepticism," as Voegelin calls it (OH III, 369)--were perhaps the most self-aware of the ancient philosophers. *Skeptikos* means "inquirer," but there were three other descriptions of the Skeptical approach, according to Sextus Empiricus: 1) "suspensive" because the inquirer suspends judgment; 2) "dubitative" or "aporetic" because the inquirer will neither deny nor assent to the object of his investigation; and 3) "Pyrrhonian" because Pyrrho "more wholeheartedly" and more "openly" than anyone else applied himself to such inquires.9 [9] This existential skepticism is a philosophical stance built on patience and openness, and its goal is not knowledge but rather "the repose of the intellect" and the "freedom from disturbance"

8 [8] See Donald W. Livingston, *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium: Hume's Pathology of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and *Hume's Philosophy of Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

9 [9] Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 1.3.7

(*ataraxia*) of the soul.10 [10] Why this strange result? Sextus describes the ways in which Skepticism differs from other philosophical accounts11 [11] , but here we have time only for the conclusion: If we are interested in human flourishing (*eudaimonia*), we must understand what disrupts or impedes this flourishing--what it is that makes man miserable. And it is not pain, ignorance, or convention that disorders the soul and makes men miserable, according to the Pyrrhonian Skeptics, but rather the philosophical endeavor itself. Since we cannot discern the nature of things, we cannot make philosophical judgments or hold beliefs about them, and thus in a sense we cannot act. The happiest life for Pyrrho involves seeing that philosophy itself is internally problematic, that its wisdom ends in contrary claims. Philosophy, in a sense, disorders existence by its nature, for a man determined to live by the dictates of reason will end only in confusion and despair. Thus, the solution is to learn to disregard reason's clarion call. Spiritual quietude and ordered action do not flow from philosophy for Pyrrho but rather from the fourfold practical criteria, as outlined by Sextus Empiricus: 1) "the guidance given by nature" (instinct); 2) "compulsion exercised by our states" (inclination); 3) adherence to "traditional laws and customs" (piety); and 4) "the teaching of the crafts."12 [12] Through these things, and not through philosophical inquiry, is quietude found.

Voegelin claimed that Pyrrho was a "unique and isolated figure" and that "the continuity of his effectiveness seems to have died with his few pupils and close admirers" (OH III, 371). But there is in fact a self-professed Pyrrhonian moment in Hume, who thinks that true

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10 [10] Ibid., 1.4.10 and 1.12.25

11 [11] Ibid., 1.29.210 – 1.34.241. For Sextus' claim that Plato in particular is not a Skeptic in the Pyrrhonian sense, see 1.33.220-223 and *Against the Dogmatists.*

12 [12] Ibid., 1.11.21-24.

philosophical consciousness has become "thoroughly convinced of the force of the Pyrrhonian doubt" (EU, 162). The crucial difference, though, is that Hume does not follow Pyrrho to the bitter end. It is all well and good to say that we should live by instinct and inclination rather than philosophy, but what if philosophy is itself an instinct or an inclination?13 [13] What is required is not the abandonment of philosophy but its reform in accordance with piety toward nature and custom.

Philosophy for Hume is structured by three principles, which Donald Livingston calls the Principles of Ultimacy, Autonomy, and Dominion:

Ultimacy Philosophy attempts to understand the ultimate nature of things, the way that things really are. Only such an ultimate account will satisfy our love of truth; in the possession of lesser accounts, the mind will never rest. Hume says that we will "push on our enquiries, till we arrive at the original and ultimate principleThis is our aim in all our studies and reflections" (T, 266).

Autonomy Philosophy is radically free and self-justifying. It is not the handmaiden of theology or of anything else. This autonomy demands that the philosopher *qua* philosopher disengage himself from common life in order stand above it as the sovereign adjudicator of its worth. Hume says that "Reason first appears in possession of the throne, prescribing laws, and imposing maxims with an absolute sway and authority" (T, 186).

13 [13] It is no accident that Livingston opens *Philosophical Melancholy and Delirium* with two quotations: one from F.H. Bradley which states that "metaphysicsis itself an instinct; and one from Hume which states that "reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls

Dominion **<u>Dominion</u>** **<u>Dominion</u>** **<u>Dominion</u>

humility and existential stance comes much nearer that of the vulgar than that of the false philosopher (T, 223-223).

This dialectic is not simply a doctrine to be memorized; it is a "timeless natural history of philosophical consciousness" (Livingston) which anyone who seeks self-knowledge can reenact in his own mind. And the central insight of this dialectic is that the principle of autonomy must be reformed; philosophy cannot stand from a sovereign position outside of common life, for in so doing it erodes its origins and thus itself. Though it claims to be self-certifying, reason is in fact self-subverting. No belief can fully withstand philosophical reflection; if not controlled in its questioning, reason will subvert all beliefs and leave the philosopher in total skepticism, in melancholy, in T.S. Eliot's "heap of broken images." Hume says that "the understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any propositions either in philosophy or common life" (T, 267-268).

For Hume, the Pyrrhonian answer to this quandary is not a final one; though philosophy can be problematic, it has an "origin in human nature" (T, 448) and cannot be so easily jettisoned. We cannot avoid despair in the Pyrrhonian manner. And, yet, most philosophers are not driven to nihilism and despair--but their escape is not because they are courageous or wise but because they are deluded. Most of them lack self-knowledge, on Hume's account, and unknowingly and unwittingly smuggle in a favorite prejudice which drapes the self-generated emptiness of the philosophical act with content. As Hume says:

> There is one mistake to which they [philosophers] seem liable, almost without exception; they confine too much their principles, and make no account of that vast variety, which nature has so much affected in all her operations. When a

> philosopher has once laid hold of a favourite principle, which perhaps accounts for many natural effects, he extends the same principle over the whole creation, and reduces to it every phaenomenon, though by the most violent and absurd reasoning (E, 159).

The results of such intellectual frolics in a "vacuum" (E, 343), where reason is given a "full and uncontrolled indulgence" (EU, 40), are little more than "monstrous offspring" (T, 215). This false philosophical consciousness lives in what Voegelin, following Musil and Doderer, calls a second reality and what Hume calls "a world of its own—with scenes, and beings, and objects, which are altogether new" (T, 271). Livingston calls the activity that leads to such a state "the Midas touch," referring to the power of the false philosopher to transmute anything he touches into his favorite philosophical conceit. In his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Hume calls this activity "philosophical chymistry" (EM, 296-297) and claims that it leads to a "malignant philosophy" (EM, 302); in his essay "The Skeptic," he compares it to "magic" and "witchcraft" (E, 161). Fully autonomous philosophical reflection leaves us either in emptiness and despair or in the madhouse of arbitrary content--with either philosophical melancholy or delirium.

Whether it ends in despair or fancy, false philosophy is suffused with radical alienation, resentment, and guilt--but these are special versions of these passions, aimed not at particular things but at the totality of existence. The tone is not that of "methodizing and correcting," which is the proper role for reason to play (EU, 162); rather, this is a Promethean revolt against all established order, which it sees as "deformity" (T, 264). And though false philosophers esteem this "sullen Pride or Contempt of mankind" as the "greatest Wisdom," Hume teaches that, "in Reality, it be the most egregious Folly of all others" (E, 359). But if this is merely

bitter fruit born of rancor, what is it that actually is the "greatest Wisdom?" What is true philosophy? For Hume, the achievement of true philosophy is analogous to the Pyrrhonian insight that prereflective life goes along its merry way without any need to philosophize. The crucial or even absolute moment is the moment when the philosopher recognizes the autonomy of *custom*--not of philosophy--and the need to participate in it. This is not to say that custom should not be "corrected" by reason but to realize that reason, as a human practice, has its roots in custom (T, 186-187)--in a more "compact" mode of symbolization, to use Voegelin's language. Philosophy, like Athena, springs from the forehead of Zeus, seemingly fully formed and mature. But its folly is to deny the supremacy of Zeus; it is folly for philosophy to deny its origins and to see them in shame. The true philosopher, once he has seen through his folly, recognizes Zeus--that is to say, the common life and the divine order from which his philosophic endeavors sprang--and is transformed in the process. The principle of autonomy is abandoned and the principle of dominion relaxed, for the philosopher no longer sees himself as a lord over men. He has seen the limits of the philosophical act and thus seen his limits as philosopher and as man, and is newly minted in piety and humility. He is a philosopher--of the truest sort--yet still a man. To put the point even more strongly, it is only now that he is fully a man. And yet false philosophy is a constant temptation; true philosophical consciousness is not a once-and-for-all achievement. The voice of pride is always at the ear.

"3 " Resolution

On Hume's account, the philosopher is courageous. For Kant, the philosopher should stay within the "fogbank of illusion" and the world of phenomena, since the "logic of illusion"

spoken of in the Transcendental Dialectic runs one aground on paralogisms and antinomies.15 [15] But Hume speaks of the philosopher sailing forth in a "leaky weather-beaten vessel" despite having "narrowly escap'd shipwreck" (T, 263). The error of the false philosopher is not a lack of courage; he does not turn his back on the search or on his journey out into the "boundless ocean, which runs out into immensity" (T, 264). The error lies in the manner in which the search is carried out--in the inability to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of melancholy and delirium. Either the false philosopher holds fast to his course and shipwrecks in nihilism--in "many shoals" (T, 263) and "on barren rock" (T, 264)--or he makes landfall on a new island and treats it as the whole world. In spiritualizing his new insight, however, he has forgotten what has led him to this point. He has forgotten his native soil; his new discovery eclipses his memory of where he came from and what he was. This mistake is one that philosophers constantly make "almost without exception," and so Hume's account suggests that there is a pathology peculiar to the philosophical act itself. False philosophy is the result of an improper philosophical inquiry. Yet it is also a necessary step in order to move toward a proper philosophical inquiry; it is by seeing through his folly that the philosopher gains self-knowledge. False philosophy is necessary but insufficient for true philosophy; it is the initial mode of the restless searching after truth. And in whatever mode it is pursued, it is always this search that characterizes philosophy for Hume; in one of his most striking images, he claims that "there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other than those of hunting and philosophy" (T, 451).

15 [15] Kant, Introduction to the Transcendental Dialectic, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (A 293/B 349).

Voegelin might say that this is simply an analysis of a symptom and not of the disease; it is little wonder that reason becomes disordered--with a consequent disorder of existence--when the philosopher turns his back on the transcendent. This is why Voegelin classifies such insolence as a pneumopathological disorder; it is a disease of the spirit because it is a willful resistance of the divine pull. This resistance may begin as a simple mistake concerning the order of being, or it may take wing when the speculations of a philosopher are "propositionalized" or "doctrinized" into the dogmatic claims of a school or mass movement. When the mistake is refused to be seen for what it is--when questions are prohibited, when the premises of a system become inviolable, when the error becomes an "intellectual swindle" (SPG, 25), when the thinker persists with "demonic mendacity" (SPG, 26)--the mistake becomes an outright revolt against God. This mistake is still rooted, however, in the original resistance to the divine pull. Voegelin's interpretation of several key Aristotelian passages is crucial on this point.16 [16] He interprets Aristotle as saying that, without the divine pull, there is no wonder and no self-awareness at all. Voegelin says:

> "Without the *kinesis* of being attracted by the ground, there would be no desire for it; without the desire, no questioning in confusion; without questioning in confusion, no awareness of ignorance. There could be no ignorant anxiety, from which rises the question about the ground, if the anxiety itself were not already man's knowledge of his existence from a ground of being that is not man himself (A, 149).

For Voegelin, the errors of philosophy are all ultimately pneumopathological since they are all errors of one's orientation to the transcendent ground of being. When the philosopher revolts against God and refuses the invitation of the divine pull, everything is disordered as a result of

16 [16] See A, 148-150 for a fuller account.

the attendant alienation, including the motivation of philosophy itself. The philosophical act, though it begins in wonder, becomes corrupted into a desire for certainty, for *gnosis*. On Voegelin's view, wonder dissipates if the divine ground is absent as motivation. The love of truth becomes the hunger for certain untruth, and the thinker is now in the grim position in which his reason may "miss its goal (*telos*) or be satisfied with a false one" (A, 148-149).

Though a crucial question (for another time) is whether Voegelin has the correct interpretation of Aristotle, I think that Voegelin's overall account is largely sound. However, it still seems to overlook several important things. It is not clear that an account like Hume's is simply a treatment of the symptom, for we might very well ask whether there is a pathology inherent in the philosophic search itself. This is not to address a symptom but to speak of a different disease--or even a disease with a different specificity. Why should all errors be errors of the spirit? It is not clear that the philosopher *qua* philosopher is initially motivated by anything beyond wonder at the world, even (or especially) according to the classical view. "All begin," Aristotle says, "by wondering that things should be as they are" (*Metaphysics* 983a14). Though philosophers ultimately end up with a wonder concerning causes--*why* things are as they are--we do not begin there. Wonder at the world precedes the wonder at one's ignorance; consciousness precedes self-consciousness. It may be that the wonder at our own ignorance leads us to wonder about the ground; it is not clear that the ground itself motivates this wonder. It is not clear, in other words, that philosophy does in fact begin in what Voegelin, if I understand him correctly, calls an attitude of faith--an attentiveness toward the transcendent ground.

But, to make things even more interesting, let us grant this seemingly crucial premise for the sake of argument. Even if we grant that the divine pull is crucial as a motivation, the activity of philosophy is a thing distinct from its motivation. And Hume's teaching is that there are errors of the mind peculiar to the philosophical endeavor. In other words, there are errors beyond errors of motivation; there are errors of philosophical process. Voegelin admits that there are errors of self-deception (SPG, 25) and these seem to be precisely what Hume is talking about, for the errors of the false philosopher are errors of self-knowledge; it brings no theoretical clarity to insist that all these errors are somehow born of "alienation.” What causes this alienation? That is a crucial question. For Voegelin, the alienation seems largely due either to an inability to cope with the unbearable lightness of being, especially in a Christian world, or to a libido that is not oriented by rational desire. But do these things explain the peculiar pathology of a *philosopher*? Hume thinks that, for the philosopher, alienation occurs because it is internal to the philosophical act, and he might very well ask Voegelin whether or not false philosophy precedes and in fact motivates certain forms of pneumopathology--whether it is the self-alienation engendered by the philosophical act that motivates a philosopher's egophanic revolt. In his later work, Voegelin is clear that there are other forces at work in the disorder of "modernity”--theurgy, alchemy, magic, hermeticism, apocalypticism, and the Neoplatonism of Ficino being several examples--and that at times his terminological choices (e.g., gnosticism) have been unfortunate. It may be that Hume's conception of false philosophy accounts for another of these pathologies or disordering forces that remained outside the scope of Voegelin's earlier analysis--a disordering force doubly insidious since it is internal to the very effort that resists disorder.

Hume's account seems to address another puzzling result of Voegelin's insistence upon pneumopathology--namely the fact that there are so many philosophical accounts of the order of

being. While we might claim that, once it is disordered by a revolt against God, reason says many foolish things, surely this is not a claim about how or why reason says such things. On Voegelin's account, pneumopaths or philodoxers seem to be little more than well-oiled machines grinding away at precisely nothing. But it is one thing to say that a man is delusional and another to try to explain his delusions. For Hume, alienation is internal to the philosophical act and a necessary step; the pain of false philosophy is requisite for self-knowledge. It is true that man can become alienated from the ground that orders his existence, but it is not clear on Voegelin's account why this occurs except for spiritual weakness or something like the sinful pride of man (*superbia*). And it is certainly not clear that this accounts for philosophical mistakes concerning the order of being. It may be that it is difficult to see without the light of the Good, but mistaking property for theft is perhaps more than an issue of bad lighting. Hume's account helps to tease out the dynamic more fully--to see how and why a philosopher, in his self-delusion, spiritualizes his favorite prejudice into an account of the order of being.

At any rate, Hume and Voegelin share similar analyses of the pathology of philosophy. There may be more than a family resemblance at stake, though; it may be that we can use one to supplement, rather than supplant, the account of the other. Here I have briefly argued that Hume and Voegelin have accounts of philosophical pathology that are not contrary but are rather complementary--that we can use Hume's thought to fill in the gaps in Voegelin's already rich and profound analysis. In this way, we will obtain a fuller and more differentiated view of the nature

of philosophy. And this self-elucidation is, as Voegelin would say, the task of science, which is to say that it is the task of philosophy.17 [17]

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17 [17] As a final digression: Hume's fuller view of the internal structure of philosophy may also help elucidate the seeming conflicts between Voegelin and other thinkers, like Strauss. It may be that the philosophical act as such takes necessity as its guiding modality due to the principle of Autonomy, and this utter self-reliance may be a requisite step for one to be able to ultimately see through such self-reliance--to see it for the self-delusion that it is. It may be that Voegelin does not see the intermediate step between the initial condition of wonder and the consequent attention to the transcendent ground. This might cause him to misdiagnose certain pathological conditions of intermediacy, e.g., false philosophical consciousness. Strauss, on the other hand, may not see beyond the limits of the modality of necessity. He may not see beyond the intermediate step of the dialectic and thus cannot see any way to reconcile an attitude of faith (whether prior or posterior) to the philosophical act. In such a portrayal, Voegelin and Strauss are not disagreeing necessarily; they are simply addressing different aspects of the philosophical act. Voegelin might respond to such a characterization by insisting that the time sequence of the dialectic has been wrongly inverted; he might say there is no intermediate step that he is overlooking because the attention to the ground precedes everything. Voegelin might insist, in other words, that his claims and those of Hume (or perhaps Strauss) are simply contrary. What Strauss would say to all of this (beyond "God knows who is right�) is vastly beyond the scope of this paper.