

Eric Voegelin's Reception in China

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Eric Voegelin wrote about China , once taught courses related to China , and even could read Chinese text. Nevertheless, he never traveled to China. During his life time, he might not expect that his ideas would have important impact on China.

In the past several years, however, the name of Eric Voegelin has begun to be discussed more and more in the Chinese intellectual world. His massive writings are in the process of translating into Chinese. His main works have been seriously studied by scholars and young students alike. Chinese scholars treat Voegelin not only as someone who has contributed significantly to philosophy, politics, religion, and history, but as an important source of intellectual inspiration which might help Chinese to understand or even solve the ideological predicament China is facing today.

In the following, I will first briefly review the current situation of Voegelin studies in China , I will then analyze the intellectual environment which facilitates Voegelin's reception in China , and finally, I will discuss some themes which Chinese scholars have found important in Voegelin's writings.

I. Writings and translations related to Voegelin

Voegelin's name was not entirely new to China before the recent surge of Voegelin interest. Since the 1980s, along with the flux of translation of Western writings in philosophy, politics and history, Voegelin's name was occasionally mentioned in some translations. For instance, a widely read Chinese translation of *Contemporary European Political Ideas* by Salvo Mastellone, an Italian political scientist, contains a chapter on Voegelin. The chapter provides a

brief, yet quite comprehensive account of Voegelin's political ideas with particular emphasis on Voegelin's notion of representation.¹ [1]

Nevertheless, until quite recently, there were rarely any discussions of Voegelin by Chinese scholars. For instance, almost all Chinese introductory works on contemporary Western political philosophy published in the 1980s and 1990s did not mention Voegelin's name. Even in the area of studies of comparative history where the name of Colling Wood, Toynbee, and many others were extensively discussed, Voegelin's name was hardly mentioned. In an influential book titled *Contemporary Western Theories of History*, the author reviews hundreds of important Western writings in theories of history. In the chapter on "Comparative history in Contemporary West," the names of Spengler, Mark Bloch, Toynbee, even Barrington Moore are intensively discussed, there is, however, no mention of the name of Voegelin.² [2]

By the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, Chinese scholars became aware of the importance of Voegelin's ideas and the name of Voegelin began to appear more frequently in Chinese writings. In a textbook, *A History of Western Political Thought*, Tang Shiqi mentioned Voegelin, along with Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt, as representing the revival of classical political philosophy in the age of liberalism and positivism.³ [3] In a quite influential book on conservatism, Liu Junning discusses Voegelin briefly. Voegelin, along with Russell Kirk and Robert Nisbet is said to represent cultural and moral conservatism in contrast with economic conservatism as represented by Hayek and Nozick.⁴ [4] In the same time, Liu Xiaofeng, a

1 [1] Salvo Mastellone, *Contemporary European Political Ideas: 1945-1989*, translated by Huang Huaguang, Beijing : Social Science Press, 1996.

2 [2] He Zhaowu et al., *Contemporary Western Theories of History*, Chinese Social Science press, 1996.

3 [3] Tang Shiqi, *A History of Western Political Thought*, Beijing : Peking University Press, 2002, pp. 548-9.

4 [4] Liu Junning, *Conservatism*, second edition, Tianjin : Tianjin People's Press, 2007 (1st edition 1998), p. 12.

renowned scholar on religion and political philosophy, began to note Voegelin's notion of Gnosticism in his writings by the end of the 1990s.⁵ [5]

After an initial period of occasional mentioning of Voegelin's name, there have been growing numbers of writings specially focusing on Voegelin in recent years. Yang Long, a professor of political science at Nankai University, wrote a pioneer Chinese academic paper on Voegelin in 2004 with the title of "Political Philosophy of Voegelin".⁶ [6] The paper provides a fairly comprehensive account of the main aspects of Voegelin's political philosophy, with particular emphasis on his philosophy of consciousness. Chang Hao, a Chinese scholar working in an American university, wrote an article in Chinese reviewing Western writings on the idea of the Axial Age civilizations. In the article, Chang treats Voegelin as making important contribution to the studies of the Axial Age civilizations. Voegelin, Chang suggests, has transcended the Hegelian-Weberian thesis by rejecting the narrow interpretation of rationality by Hegel and Weber. Thus, Voegelin is able to offer a sympathetic understanding of non-Western civilizations in the classical period. Nevertheless, in Chang's opinion, Voegelin is unable to go beyond the traditional Western mindset. He still treats Israelite and Hellenic contribution as the main breakthrough of human spirit, and treats Chinese civilization as in an inferior stage due to its lack of transcendental values.⁷ [7] Li Qiang, in his "In Search of Order in a Plural World: Voegelin on Representation",⁸ [8] explores Voegelin's ambiguous ideas on universal mankind versus different types of representation. In the area of religious studies, in the wake of Liu Xiaofeng's pioneering discussions of Voegelin's notion of Gnosticism,⁹ [9] several academic

5 [5] Liu Xiaofeng, "Does History End?", Hangzhou: Zhejiang Academic Bulletin, No. 3, 2002.

6 [6] Yang Long, "Political Philosophy of Voegelin", *Bulletin of South Western University*, No. 2, Vol. 6, 2004.

7 [7] Chang Hao, "On Axial Age Civilization from the Perspective of World Cultural History", Hong Kong: Twentieth first Century, No. 22, 2006.

8 [8] Li Qiang, "In search of order in a Plural world: Voegelin on representation", Conference paper presented in 2007, Shanghai.

9 [9] 刘小枫, "《灵知派经书》与隐微的教诲", 互联网资源

writings appeared dealing with Gnosticism which, of course, includes treatments on Voegelin's analysis of modern Gnosticism. Among those writings, most notable is Dr. Zhang Xinzhang's book titled *Gnosis and Salvation: Myth, Philosophy, and spiritual salvation in the ancient Gnosticism*. The book analyzes the origin, spiritual features, as well as typologies of ancient Gnosticism. It adopts Voegelin's argument to suggest that Gnosticism forms the main theological and philosophical foundation of modern enlightenment movement and thus is the main cause for the crisis of Western culture in the modern period. 10 [10]

In the midst of the growing interest in Voegelin, some graduate students chose Voegelin as their thesis of research. Ye Ying wrote a Ph.D. dissertation titled "Multiple Expressions of the Universal Order: Eric Voegelin and the Issue of Empire in the Context of Modernity." The dissertation studies Voegelin's political theory in light of his views on modernity and world-empire.¹¹ [11] Chen Jiannan wrote a MA thesis titled "Voegelin on Gnosticism and Modernity."¹² [12]

In order to meet the growing interest in Voegelin's ideas, the main body of Voegelin's writings is now in the process of translation. The five volumes of *Order and History* and the eight volumes of *History of Political Ideas* are both in the process of translation, and two volumes of *History of Political Ideas* have been completed and published. In addition, Voegelin's "Political Religions" and "Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Assays" have been published in Chinese with the title of *Modernity without Constraint. Faith and Political*

10 [10] Zhang Xinzhang, *Gnosis and Salvation: Myth, Philosophy, and spiritual salvation in the ancient Gnosticism*, Beijing : Joint Publications, 2005.

11 [11] Ye Ying, "Multiple Expressions of the Universal Order: Eric Voegelin and the Issue of Empire in the Context of Modernity," Ph.D. dissertation submitted to Peking University (2006).

12 [12] Chen Jiannan, "Voegelin on Gnosticism and Modernity," MA thesis submitted to Zhongyuan University , 2005.

Philosophy; the Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin also has a Chinese edition.¹³ [13]

II. Intellectual Context of Voegelin's Reception in China

The growing interest in Voegelin must be understood in the intellectual context of China. The most important intellectual background which has facilitated the reception of Voegelin in China is the emergence of various types of cultural and political conservatism in the recent years which rejects the wholesale embrace of Western values and reassert the importance of traditional Chinese moral and political thinking.

The significance of the emergence of cultural conservatism could be hardly overestimated if we have in mind the overall picture of the evolvement of political thinking in China since the late nineteenth century. Starting from the late half of the nineteenth century, in the face of serious Western challenges, the general tendency of Chinese intellectual thinking has been to reject traditional Chinese way of thinking and embrace Western ideas and institutions which are perceived as representing universal values. This was the case for the Enlightenment Movement in the May Fourth period. It was also the case for the Marxists. The Communist rule after 1949 was founded under the guidance of Marxism which was held as universally valid doctrine.

Even during the period of Deng Xiaoping's reform, although the main slogan for the Communist Party was "socialism with Chinese characteristics," it is quite clear that liberalism, if we define

13 [13] *Faith and Political Philosophy: the Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964*, translated by Xie Yuhua and Zhang Xinzhang, Shanghai: Huadong Normal University Press, 2007; *Modernity without Constraint*, translated by Zhang Xinzhang and Liu Jinglian, Shanghai: Huadong Normal University Press, 2007; *History of Political Ideas, Volume I: Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity*, translated by Xie Yuhua, Shanghai: Huadong Normal University Press, 2007; *History of Political Ideas, Volume III: the Later Middle Ages*, translated by Duan Baoliang, Shanghai: Huadong Normal University Press, 2007.

it in a broad sense, was the main driven ideas for the reform. During the "New Enlightenment Movement" in the 1980s, there was an overall consensus in the main spectrums of ideologies in China that China should reform its social, economic and political systems by following the model of Western liberal democracy. The ideas of individual liberty, democracy, and rule of law were generally held as universally valid values.¹⁴ [14]

After the Tiananmen event in 1989, particularly after the mid-1990s, however, the dominance of liberalism in the New Enlightenment movement has been shaken. Liberalism encountered challenges from two main directions. From the left, there emerged the New Leftist School in the 1990s. From the right, there has been a surge of various forms of conservatism, cultural conservatism in particular.

The main focus of the New Leftist School has been the social and economic problems associated with the liberal oriented reforms. It thus has little to do with the topic we are discussing now. The surge of various conservative ideas, however, has formed the direct background for the reception of Voegelin in China .

The shared thesis of various cultural conservatisms is to reject modern Western values, such as individual liberty, democracy, and human rights, as universal values, and thus reject Westernization as China 's path to modernity. In this sense, cultural conservatives reject not only the New Enlightenment consensus in the 1980s, but also the Enlightenment movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As some scholars express clearly, one of the main aims of the conservative movement is to reevaluate the Enlightenment movement and mentality in China since the late nineteenth century.¹⁵ [15]

14 [14] Regarding the emergence and influence of "New enlightenment movement" in China in the 1980s, see Wang Hui, "Dangdai Zhongguo Sixiang Yu Xiandaixing (Contemporary Chinese thought and Modernity)," in Wang Hui, *Sihuo Chongwen*, Beijing : People's Literature Press, 2000, pp. 42-94.

15 [15] Cf. Li Qiang, "History and Ideology: Teaching and Research on the History of Western Political Thought in China Since the 1980s," *Japan : International Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol. 3, 2007, pp. 67-79.

The most significant form of cultural conservatism has been the revival of Confucianism. In the past decades, Confucianism has become a fad in China from government, business, and university to ordinary people. Official patronage of Confucianism becomes more frequent and high-level. Official references to Confucian ideas and passages have also become increasingly standard.

Under the encouragement of the Chinese government, there have been flood of writings reinterpreting and advocating Confucianism. One telling case in this regard is the sudden fame of Yu Dan's lectures on Confucianism. Yu is a Professor at Beijing Normal University . She had been a rather obscure teacher in Chinese Literature and Film and Television Studies. In 2006 her lectures on Confucianism appeared on CCTV's popular primetime show, *Lecture Room*, transforming her into cultural icon. From the transcript of these talks, she published *Yu Dan's Reflections on The Analects*. In this simply written book, she reinterprets the classical text for the common person, sharing personal anecdotes and relating the text to modern day life. Her book, which has been described as a "Confucian chicken soup for the modern Chinese soul," has sold 4.2 million copies within several months and has been translated into several languages including Korean and Japanese.

In a sense, Yu Dan's reinterpretation of Confucianism does not entirely reject the Enlightenment project in modern China. Yu Dan's main aim is to advocate some Confucian moral values to address what has been perceived as social and moral evils in a capitalistic society. Yu Dan would not reject Western ideas of democracy and human rights entirely.

In contrast with this moral conservative Confucianism, there has been growing intellectual tendency to reinterpret Confucian political ideas as counterpart to Western values of democracy and human rights. The most influential case in this prospect has been Jiang Qing. Jiang Qing in his *Political Confucianism* (2003) stands out for his unequivocal advocate for the reconstruction of Confucian state in China. The book opens the arguments by criticizing New Confucianism in China since the 1940s. The main argument of the New Confucian School , as Jiang Qing sees it, is to preserve Confucian moral ideals in the meantime to adopt Western political institutions. The nicely phrased notion for the New Confucianism has been "the inner sagesness and outer kingness." Jiang Qing rejects this half hearted embrace of Confucianism. For Jiang, Confucianism is fundamentally, originally and ultimately political, because that's what Confucius

actually intended and thought. The moral cultivation so much stressed by New Confucians is a later development in the history of Confucianism and would only have served its purposes if right political institutions were enacted. He considers New Confucianism's rejection of 'Political Confucianism' would render Confucianism totally irrelevant in any society let alone in China .

Jiang claims that a proper interpretation of Confucianism can build a modern Confucian state capable of dealing with the 'global challenges of politics' and he also disputes if democracy is really the best form of politics or better than Confucian visions of politics since both are premised on different set of assumption, have divergent historical experiences and excel in different areas.¹⁶
[16]

The revival of Confucianism has reversed the dominant intellectual tendency in China since the late nineteenth century which regards modern Western ideas and institutions, be it liberal democracy or communism, as representing universal values and traditional Chinese thinking and institutions need to be evaluated on the basis of Western standard. There is now growing consciousness that the entire Enlightenment project in modern China should be reevaluated.

In presenting the case for reevaluation of the Enlightenment project in modern China , the political philosophy of Leo Strauss has played some roles. I have discussed elsewhere the reception of Strauss in China . I have tried to show that the main attraction of Strauss for Chinese intellectuals is that his critique of modern Western political philosophy provides Chinese Straussians a weapon to reject the Enlightenment movement in modern China . One of the most favorite topics Chinese Straussians like to talk is that Strauss and his students used giants and dwarfs to compare the ancients and moderns. Chinese Straussians argue that the case between the ancients and the moderns in China should also be reexamined, and the Chinese

¹⁶ [16] Jiang Qing, *Political Confucianism*, Beijing : Sanlian Press, 2003. Dr. Mon-Han Tsai has an excellent unpublished paper on Jiang Qing's idea of "political Confucianism," see his "We are all democrats now" .

Enlightenment Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century should be reevaluated.¹⁷ [17]

With the surge of Confucianism and various forms of cultural conservatism, the old issue of China versus the West has again become one of the most hotly debated issues in China . It has been long perceived, by Chinese intellectuals and Western researchers alike, that the case of China versus the West was settled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the Chinese Enlightenment Movement which reached the peak in the May Fourth Movement in 1919, traditional Chinese political ideas and institutions have lost the capacity to compete with the modern Western model as a serious alternative. Westernization has become the main intellectual tendency ever since. Now this tendency faces serious challenge. Confucianism, or more broadly Chinese political tradition, has been openly embraced as the alternative to Western political models, be it liberal democracy or communism.

This debate is bound to touch upon some fundamental questions well beyond narrow social, economic, and political sense. In the past years, more and more discussions and debates have focused on broad cultural and philosophical issues: Are there any universal values applicable to humanity everywhere? Are modern Western values, such as liberty, democracy, and human rights, values associated with particular culture or shared by the humanity as a whole? Does the Chinese tradition have value in the contemporary world? If it is believed to have certain values, on what basis should one understand its values? Should the Chinese tradition be justified on the basis of historicism, or on the basis of universal rationality?¹⁸ [18]

¹⁷ [17] Liu Xiaofeng ed., *Leo Strauss and Classical Political Philosophy*, ♦ p. 6. There is a very interesting report in the *New Yorker* lately which relates the surge of populist nationalism in young Chinese with the influence of Strauss's ideas.

¹⁸ [18] There have been flood of writings in newspaper and internet debating the issue of universalism versus Chinese tradition. One widely noted debate is the debates over an editorial of the *Southern Weekend* on the issue of universal moral values.

III. Main themes of Voegelin as discussed in China

In the context of the major ideological debate over China versus the West, some Chinese scholars have found inspirations from Eric Voegelin. Of course, the studies of Voegelin are still in the very early stage. Nevertheless, from the quite limited writings available on Voegelin, it is clear that Chinese scholars hope to adopt or reinterpret some of Voegelin's ideas to address the most important ideological issues China faces today. Several Voegelin themes seem to have attracted their attentions thus far, including Voegelin's ideas of universalism, his analysis of representation, as well as his criticism of Gnosticism.

The most important ideas Chinese scholars try to adopt from Voegelin is his sophisticated arguments on the issue of universalism versus particularism. In his article "In Search of Order in a Plural World: Voegelin on Representation"◆, LI Qiang tries to highlight Voegelin's contribution to the issue of universalism in the context of various contemporary ideologies. He states:

One of the key issues in contemporary political philosophy is the issue of universalism versus particularism: Are there any universal moral and political values by which one can evaluate moral and political behaviors? The holders of universalism, liberals and Straussians alike, would have no hesitation to claim the existence of certain universally valid values which form the foundation for evaluating political institutions and behaviors. In contrast to this universalism, positivism and historicism both deny the existence of universally valid moral and political principles and holds that value judgments are either individual's choice or closely related to different cultures and traditions.¹⁹ [19]

¹⁹ [19] Li Qiang, "in search of order in a Plural world: Voegelin on representation,"◆ p. 1.

For Li Qiang, both universalism and particularism have limitations. Universalism tends to define universal values based on values in the modern West. Thus it in fact tends to treat particular values in a particular locality at particular time as universal values. Particularism, as it is embodied in historicism, associates moral and political values exclusively with particular cultural tradition, and thus denies the common nature of the mankind, and undermines the human capacity of rational thinking in moral and political issues.

"Voegelin's theory," Li continues, "contains some unique and profound insights which allow us to understand the nature of the issue and go beyond the narrow universalism and particularism."²⁰ [20] As Li interprets, Voegelin's particular methodology allows him to escape the traps of narrow universalism and particularism. Voegelin rejected the normative political philosophy and adopted the methodology of Aristotle. His starting point for political science is to analyze the existing political order and symbols. For in all political societies, political ideas are essential in "evoking a political unit, the cosmion of order into existence."²¹ [21] Theoretically political ideas in every political society are just opinions in Plato's term. No particular political ideas, no matter whether it develops from the West or from China, could claim to be "knowledge."²² Yet, political ideas in various political societies all contain, to a different degree, some elements of "political theory."²³ "Political theory," as Voegelin states, "would be the product of detached contemplation of political reality."²² [22] To construct a political theory is in fact to understand the nature of universal mankind. As Voegelin argues forcefully, there is no doubt existing universal mankind. Nevertheless, "Universal mankind is not a society existing in the world, but a symbol that indicates man's consciousness of participating, in his earthly existence,

²⁰ [20] LI Qiang, op. cit., p. 2.

²¹ [21] Eric Voegelin, "Instruction to the *History of Political Ideas*, *The collected Works of Voegelin*, Vol. 19, p. 229.

²² [22] Ibid.

in the mystery of a reality that moves toward its transfiguration. Universal mankind is an eschatological index.❖23 [23]

What is the significance of Voegelin's ideas for Chinese understanding of universalism versus particularism? Li suggests that Voegelin's methods of interpreting Plato may shed light to us. In his lectures at Peking University, Prof. James Rhodes carefully outlines Voegelin's interpretation of Plato. For Voegelin, one cannot find propositions by just reading Plato's dialogues. There are different levels of knowledge. "First is the name, second the definition, third the image, and fourth knowledge.❖ "The fifth is being itself, which is knowable and true.❖ "The only knowledge of nature that is possible is a wordless union of the soul with it. This union can come about only if the seeker's soul has an affinity to what it seeks. To have an affinity with nature, the soul must be ❖good natured', or pure, like nature itself.❖ 24 [24]

Li tries to combine Voegelin's different arguments to shed light on China's understanding of universalism versus particularism. China has a long political tradition. Political ideas in traditional China have been essential in evoking the existence of Chinese political society, and in creating order. One should not simply reject it and hope to replace it with some abstract principles. Yet one should always keep in mind that those political ideas are only opinions, Chinese society, as all other societies, is obliged to transcend current existence and pursue universal truth. The universal mankind, or the "being itself❖, is knowable only through good natured soul. China should always try to turn its soul to the true being and use its best understanding of the true being to reevaluate the current political ideas and practices. In pursuing the true being, knowledge of other cultures is helpful. It might be the case that some other cultures in their pursuing universal humanity may have gone further than China and have found more truth than Chinese have done. For instance, it could be argued that some modern values such as liberty, democracy and human rights are not particular values associated with the modern West. They contain elements of the truth. Nevertheless, it would be naive to suggest that China should follow those principles simply because they are the truth. The correct way for China is to seriously reflect its own tradition, to sincerely reflect important

23 [23] Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, p. 376.

24 [24] James Rhodes, *Platonic Political Theory: Eight Lectures at Beijing University*, p.9.

elements in other traditions, and then to tune its own soul to the good nature and pursue its own ways to move towards the truth.²⁵ [25]

In addition to philosophical reflection on Voegelin's theory of universalism, Voegelin's actual analysis of the order in China has also drawn attentions from scholars. There are appealing reasons for doing so if we have the situation of Chinese historiography in mind. Traditional Chinese historiography lacks what Max Weber calls rationalism for it did not treat causal analysis as its main task. Modern Chinese historiography has been heavily influenced by evolutionary theory since the late nineteenth century. Through evolutionary perspective, particularly evolutionary perspective of Marxism, Chinese history has been interpreted as following the same patterns as in the West. In the same token, Chinese political institutions and ideas are also analyzed through the conceptualization of Western theories. For instance, one consistent topic for studies of Confucianism has been whether Confucianism contains the ideal of democracy and human rights.

Now with the idea learned from Voegelin, there is an urgent need for Chinese to describe, conceptualize, and analyze its own political order. Voegelin is one of the few prominent scholars who understood China and wrote about China . His conceptualization of the order in China , although far from complete, contains valuable insight to Chinese readers.

It is still in an early stage for Chinese to digest Voegelin's analysis of Chinese order, not to mention go beyond Voegelin to develop a reasonable account of the order in China . Nevertheless, Voegelin's theoretical framework as well as his actual analysis of traditional Chinese order has already drawn attentions from Chinese scholars. It is now widely shared in China that there is urgent need to rewrite Chinese history of order. The evolutionary model has distorted Chinese history to suit some theoretical patterns as developed in the West. Voegelin's method offers one possible way to reconstruct the history of order in China . The key for this method is to reconstruct the symbols and representations in the order structure of traditional China . In recent years there have been numbers of studies devoted to the mode of political legitimation in the period of formation of Chinese political order. There have been argument that from the period of early order

²⁵ [25] Li Qiang, op. cit.

formation, Chinese people had a quite different conception of political legitimacy from that of the West and developed different symbols for political order.²⁶ [26]

In addition to adopt Voegelin's ideas to analyze traditional political order, some efforts have been made to adopt Voegelin's conceptions in analyzing current Chinese political order. Dr. Chen Wei analyzes the current Chinese system of representation by adopting Voegelin's idea of representation. The conclusion is quite conservative. Following Voegelin's logic in *New Science of Politics*, Chen argues that although China does not have proper election system, Chinese government still could claim represent the Chinese people based on its substantive representation of people's will and interests.²⁷ [27]

While political scientists have focused their studies of Voegelin on the issue of order and representation, some philosophers have paid great attention to Voegelin's studies of Gnosticism. Voegelin's "Modernity without Constraint" and "Political Religion" have been translated into Chinese and found many ready followers. Chinese readers are particularly impressed by Voegelin's analysis of both Fascism and Marxism as modern Gnosticism, as extreme form of political religion. Due to the general ideological restriction, there have not been many discussions to relate Voegelin's analysis with the Chinese situation. Nevertheless, Voegelin's ideas have certainly added forces in discrediting Marxism.

I have briefly outlined Voegelin's reception in China . I need to emphasize again, it is still in a quite initiative stage for Voegelin's reception in China . After all main works of Voegelin being translated into Chinese, one can expect more studies on Voegelin. There is great possibility that Voegelin could make significant contribution to the ongoing ideological debates in China . Some of Voegelin's ideas, such as his notion of universalism, symbols and representation, modern Gnosticism, and his analysis of China are his valuable contribution to political philosophy which could not be found in other scholars. Nevertheless, many of Voegelin's ideas need to be further

²⁶ [26] LI Qiang, "Introduction to *Order and History*, forthcoming.

²⁷ [27] Chen Wei, "On Political Representation," *Journal of Renmin University* , No. 2, 2007.

articulated to provide meaningful answers to some important ideological questions China faces today. It seems that Voegelin is much more successful in raising questions than answering them. For instance, his studies of China raise some quite interesting methodological questions. Yet his actual analysis could not match his theoretical speculation.
