VOEGELIN AND ARISTOTLE WHAT IS NOETIC SCIENCE?

Political science is a late bloomer in the history of human consciousness, and it rarely blossoms at that. it can arise only when certain technological, economic, and civilizational conditions allow for the flourishing of a theoretical culture -- as in the case of ancient Hellas - and, Voegelin notes, it need arise only when the predominant myths of the political cosmion have lost their magic and enchantment - as, for example, during the great crisis of the Peloponnesian War.[1] But there are also decidedly philosophical and spiritual conditions for the emergence of political science. For political science is nothing less than the articulation of the roots of the order of the polity, and these roots are precisely the dynamics for the very search for order itself[2] The search is a reflective, self transcending process of openness to transcendence. Explicit identification of the source of order, moreover, takes its poignancy from an acute experience of disorder in the surrounding society, placing authentic political science in critical contention with the prevailing interpretations of social order.[3]

1. Political Science and- Noetic Science

Such is Voegelin's understanding of political science and of what the originators of political science, Plato and Aristotle, meant by that enterprise. Political science therefore has as its foundation a reflective awareness of the normative structure of human existence. This structure is "noetic consciousness,"[4] and its reflective awareness - which gives rise to theoretical culture - is the "noetic differentiation of consciousness." Thus, for Voegelin, political science is based upon, if not virtually equivalent to, noetic science.

[1]Eric Voegelin. *History of Political Ideas, vol. 1, Hellenism Rome, and Early Christianity, ed. Athanasios* Mouklakis, vol. 19 of *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), pp. 228-23 3.

[2] Eric Voegelin, *Order and History, 5* vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956-1987), L Introduction.

[3] Ibid., I. xiv, M. 62-63, V, 13-14. 4 1 Eric Voegelin, Anamnesis, trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), p. 89-, *Published Essays, 1966-1985, pp. 45-46, 265,* 371-3 74.

[4]*Order and History.*,II,III,V,chap.1;Eric Voegelin. *Published Essays, 1966-1985,vol.* 12 *of The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin.* ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1990), chap. 10; What is *History? And Other Unpublished Writings.* vol. 28 of the *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin.* ed Thomas A- Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1990), chap. 5.

Indeed he suggests that we can substitute for "political science" - with its modem positivist and ideological connotations - the term "noetic interpreation" [5] If by "science" Voegelin means the more inclusive sense of the German *Wissenschaft,* which embraces more than modem natural science, then "noetic science" is simply the explication of the normative structure of human existence: that is, noetic science is the explication of the self-transcending process of cognitive, moral, and spiritual inquiry."[6] Whenever the self-interpretation that is constitutive of the polity seeks to interpret its own intelligibility, norms, and ground, whenever we have such a critical interpretation of the self-interpretation of society, we have an attempt at "noetic exegesis."[7]

2. Voegelin and Aristotle

There is a peculiar quality to noetic science. We have used such terms as "reflection," "explication," and "exegesis" to describe the way noetic; science formulates meaning. Since the subject matter of noetic science is the normative structure of human existence, the subject matter is not a distant object that can be known either by logical deduction or by simple empirical observation. One must participate in the structure of existence in order to know it. The participation has a double dimension to it, for the structure of existence is itself a participation in transcendence. And, furthermore, since the structure of existence is a dynamic, normative process of self-transcending openness to the horizon of transcendence, its reality cannot be adequately captured in a conceptual system or the type of definitions that refer to objects in the external world. So Voegelin concludes

[5]*Anamnesis. p.* 146.

[6] On Voegelin and *Wissenschaft,* see Manfred Henningsen. "Introduction" to Eric Voegelin. Modernity without *Restraint: The Political Religions. The View Science of Politics, and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism, vol.* 5 of the *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000). p. 10.

[7] Ibid., P. 148.

that the language of noetic science is that of 'linguistic indices," which explicate the "movement of
participation" in "nonobjective reality."[8]

If, however, this is what we take to be noetic science, we must consider whether this kind of science could possibly be what Aristotle means by science (episteme) and reason (nous).

Voegelin indeed claims that noetic science, as he conceives of it, is consonant with the basic direction and impetus of Aristotle's thought. Aristotle, he argues, portrays the dynamics of noetic; consciousness in a complex of symbols, ranging from those expressing human self-transcending unrest ("wonder"as the source of all science, the "desire to know" as a drive all humans share by nature, and the correlative "flight from ignorance") to those identifying the divine transcendent ground of unrest (the-pure act of nous)[9] Aristotle, according to Voegelin, highlights the participatory nature of noetic consciousness in his treatment of the activity of nous as the process of immortalizing C-Making noetic life divine compared to human life) and in his

insistence that the goals of political life are excellences which can be known only by the person who possesses them, the spoudaios.[10]

But a commonplace reading of various Aristotelian texts on *episteme* and nous would conclude that episteme is exclusively a matter of demonstrative knowledge and that nous, by total contrast, is an intuition of the indemonstrable principles of demonstration. In addition, many interpreters would presuppose that indemonstrable principles are foundational propositions upon which all definitions must be grounded. The connection of episteme and nous would seem to be an elusive one. If episteme is exclusively an ordered set of propositions, then how can there be a noetic science of the type Voegelin proposes? Would not such an Aristotelian science fall into the trap of

[8] Ibid,,chap. 9.
[9] Ibid, pp. 91-97.
[10] *Order and History, U1, 30 1.*

what Voegelin would consider a propositionalist fallacy? Not only would this putative Aristotelian
science fail to do justice to the participatory nature of noetic consciousness but it would make a retrieval of interiority highly problematic. Reinforcing this tendency is a traditionalist interpretation,
held by Ross among others, that would see Aristotle's account of the origin of universals as that of
a somewhat mechanical process from sense perception to memory to repeated experiences. [11] Would
not noetic science, for Aristotle, be an oxymoron?

We are therefore faced with the question whether Voegelin had read too much of his own position into Aristotle. Behind this question, however, is a much more fundamental hermeneutical issue. Can an interpreter ever "read" Aristotle's meaning by some kind of simple perception of the text? The Hermeneutics of the Empty Head, the interpretive model favored, for example, in positivist circles, would locate a textual meaning "out there" to be looked at 'in here."[12] In fact, if interpreters have minds, their horizons will always come into play in their interpretations, and their horizons will include, explicitly or implicitly, philosophical assumptions - even in the case of pure philologists. But the richer, the more insightful, the horizon of the interpreter the richer, the more insightful, the interpretation.

The Aristotelian corpus indeed poses special hermeneutical difficulties. Aristotle did not write systematic treatises. He employed terms in different senses for different occasions. Perhaps, as Jaeger suggests, they were something like school logoi, intended for reading out loud, for partial memorization, and for discussion.[13] Whatever the nature of the texts, their philosophical content

[11]Citations in Patrick Byme, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle (Albany:* State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 173, n. 27.

[12]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in 7heology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 157.

[13]Werner Jaeger, *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoleles* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912), pp. 138-148, cited approvingly by Joseph Owens, *7he Doctrine of Being in Aristotelian Metaphysics,* 2nd ed. (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), p. 75, and by W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics, 2* vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1924), 1, xiv, n. 1.

demands philosophical insight on the part of the interpreter. The only relevant question is which philosophical perspectives will be most successful in entering Aristotle's philosophical horizon: That
of Voegelin? That of conceptualists (for whom science equals a set of propositions)? Or that of empiricists? It is interesting to note that both of the latter perspectives have frequently been adopted
by philologists, reflecting the contemporary climate of opinion.

It is the burden of this paper to show how a series of plausible interpretations of *episeme* and *nous* vindicate Voegelin's assertions about Aristotelian noetic science. It will be helpful, first, to trace briefly how in the pre-Aristotelian tradition the terms *nous* and *1heoros* had religious and existential resonances. Our main focus will then be on the possibilities that *episteme is* not restricted to demonstrations and that it is intimately tied to the activity, potentialities, and habits of nous. In so doing we can shed fight on how *nous* could simultaneously be the principle of the principles of *episteme,* the dynamism of human inquiry, the norm of human existence, the participation in the divine, and the basis of authentic political life. We can also discern how, in one respect, nous transcends *episteme* but how, in another respect, it exhibits the rudimentary features of *episteme.*

3. Nous and Theoros: the Historical Context

Aristotle certainly coined words to fit his philosophical needs and distinctions. And yet he did not five in an historical vacuum. The terms *nous* and *theoros* - used extensively by Aristotle - had traditional meanings that conveyed a decidedly existential theme of a participatory movement of human quest and of divine presence.

As Douglas Frame has demonstrated, the root of nous was tied to myths of the sacred cycle of the sun god, who sojourned and struggled in the dark underworld each night; it originally conveyed the idea of a return home from death and darkness to fight and consciousness.[14] The dramatic imagery of nous pervaded the story of Odysseus, "the wanderer," who "saw the town lands and learned the minds of many distant men."[15] Odysseus in his return home to Ithaca had to contend with the forces of darkness; the cave of the infamous Cyclops (from which his nous extricated him); the cave of the seductive Calypso; the cavernous bay of the Laistrygones, where "the course of night and day lie close together"; and the region of the fog-bound Kimmerians, over whom "a glum night is spread."[16] He had to encounter fabulous creatures whose very names echoed the myth of the cycle of the sun; the Cyclops, Circe, and Calypso. These themes were conspicuously present at the opening
of Parmenides great poem: he was carried on the renowned road of the goddess "who leads the man
who knows through every town"; there, leaving the "abode of the night" and far "from the beaten

track of men," he was granted the vision of being through the exercise of his nous. [17] We should also
recall the most famous allusion to the original meaning of nous in Plato's allegory of the cave."[18]

We likewise find the theme of a sacred journey -- the search for meaning and the quest for value -- in the word *theoros.* The original Greek meaning of theorist referred to a person sent on a sacred mission to oracles or to religious festivals, such as the Olympic games. " The theorist was to question and to transmit faithfully a divine message; he had to venture forth, searching along the road,

[14] Douglass Frame, *The Myth of Return* in Early Greek Epic (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

[15] Tran& Robert Fitzgerald, *The Odyssey of Homer* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 196 1).

[16]Trans. Richmond Lattimore, The Odyssey *of Homer* (New York: Harper and Row, 196 1).

[17]Parmenides, B 1. tram. G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The* Presocratic *Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 266.

[18]Plato, *Republic,* 514-517d

[19] Gadarner, *Truth and -Method (New York. Seabury Press, 19 75),* p. I 11. Bernd Jager, "Theorizing, Journeying, Dwelling," in *Duquesne Stuides* in Phenomenological Psychology: Volume H. ed. Amedo Giorg4 Constance Fisher. and Edward L. Murray (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press. 1975), pp. 235-260; John Navone. *The Jesus Story: Our Life as* Storv in Christ (Collegeville. Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1979), pp. 103-109; H. Koller, "Theoros und Theoria." in Glotta~ *Zeitschrift fur* Griechische und *Lateinische* Sprache 36 (1958).

in order to hear the voice of God. The *theorion* according to the poet, Pindar, was the place where
theorists competed in the games as official participating delegates; they were simultaneously spectators and participants on their journey, not disengaged Cartesian observers.[20] Thus the theorists
traversed beyond the pale of the everyday to the "festive and awesome realm of the divine," guarding,
along the way, against uncritical acceptance of the dominant values of their native surroundings, but
eventually to return, transformed, to the home country, where the journey began.[21] For Plato in his
Laws, the *theoroi* were to embark upon a course of inquiry to inspect the doings of the outside world,
most especially to visit divinely inspired men, only to come back to the native polis to share the spectacle.[22] Out of this religious background emerged the Greek idea of reason; gradually *theoria* came to be associated with travel inspired by the desire to know, as in the visits of Solon; and

eventually it referred to the experience and knowledge acquired while traveling.[23]

We can postulate that no less for Aristotle than for his predecessor Plato the use of the terms nous and *theoros* expressed experience of an irruption of divine reality on the road of inquiry. And when we examine very carefully strategic meanings of *episteme* and nous in Aristotle's writings, we find confirmation of this postulate.

4. Episteme and Nous

Aristotle is a philosopher whose overriding insights come as a result of making incisive and powerful distinctions. He handles, for example, Parmenides' problem of motion by distinguishing between potential being and actual being. He solves numerous quandaries of the pre-Socratic nature philosophers by diftbrentiating four causes. So we must pay attention to the distinctions he brings to bear in his treatment of *episteme* and nous.

[20]Gadamer, *Truth and Method, p. I 11;* Koffer. "Theoros und Theoria," cited by Jager, "Theorizing," p. 236. Jager, ibid., p. 235, following Koller, "Theoros und Theoria," p. 284, suggests that the origin of *theoros may "echo"* a combination of *theo* and eros. One of the roots of *theorion* and *theoros is theaomm,* meaning "to look on. gaze at, view behold"; a second root, more specific to the motif of religious ambassador, is a combination of theos and ora (care); see Henry George Liddel and Robert Scott..4 *Greek-English Lexicon.* 9th ed rev. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v. "theaomai"and "theoros."

[21]Jager. "Theorizing," pp. 239-240; Navone. *The Jesus Story. p. 105.*

[22]Jager, "Theorizing,", pp. 237-23 M

[23] Ibid., P. 237; Navone. *The Jesus Story. p. 104.*

In particular, as Patrick Byrne notes, we must pay attention to distinctions of act, potency, and habits.[24] This should not be surprising since nous is "rational sour' and, according to Aristotle, there are three kinds of things in the soul: *pathe, dunameis,* and *hexeis.*[25] *Pathe,* literally "passions" and frequently translated as "emotions," are not restricted to emotions but seem to include sensations, memories, and various kinds of thoughts.[26] The pathe are endurings or receivings of the potential of motion, change, or movement. If we recall Aristotle's definition of motion *(kinesis)* as the "fulfillment of potency as potency," then we can say that the *pathe* are really motions or acts. [27]*Dunameis,* on the other hand, are the potentialities of the soul relative to the acts. Finally, *hexeis,* as recurrent activities of the potentialities, are habits. Let us then elucidate Aristotle's conceptions *of episteme* and nous by applying these distinctions

4.1 Cognitive Habits.

The strongest argument for restricting *episteme* to demonstrations seems to be found in a passage from the Posterior Analytics where Aristotle claim that there can be no *episteme* of the first principles of demonstration since these principles cannot themselves be demonstrated.' If science

cannot demonstrate the undemonstrable principles of demonstration, then it must be an intelligence other than science, namely, nous, that can grasp those principles

[24]Bvrne. *Analysis and Science* in Aristotle. chap. 7. The following analysis relies heavily on his arguments.

[25]*Nicomachean Ethics. 112 1105b2O.*

[26]*On Interpretation. I 16a4-9.*
[27] Physics, III. 1 20la.28-29.
[28]Posterior Analytics, II .19 100b5-17.

But the contrast between epsteme and *nous* in this passage is not an absolute one. Rather it is a contrast between episteme and *nous* precisely as "cognitive habits" *(hai peri* ten *dianoian hexeis).'*[29] The habit of episteme is the studied ability to work on a certain range of facts, to employ proofs about the facts, and to master sets of related proofs all pertaining to a unified field of inquiry. Episteme, in this sense, is the skill,
familiarity, and ease of one capable of drawing together interconnected demonstrations of reasoned
fact. One has at one's disposal for example, theorems that one retains in the background of one's horizon, present habitually rather than actively. This habit of episteme, is not, however, an isolated
one, but, on the one hand, is grounded in lower habits that it both incorporates and subsumes and,
on the other hand, is, in turn , incorporated and subsumed by a still higher habit. The lower habits that ground episteme are memory and "experience" (empeira).30 Memory is the drawing together
recurrently of sense perceptions. Empeira is the habitual association of memories of sense perception. Far from arguing for some mechanical model of universals as derived from sensations Aristotle is presenting the emergence of higher habits of the soul from lower habits.[31] Just as empeira is a higher habit than memory since the person of "experience" can grasp a single connection, a logos, among different memories, making such a person of "experience" one capable of good judgments, so episteme is a higher habit of empeira. For episteme grasps the reason why of the connection. The person of experience, for example, may use various mathematical techniques, but the person of episteme, the mathematician, formulates precisely the operations and rules involved in the techniques. Without *empeira there* could be no material basis for episteme, but episteme transcends that basis.

29 Ibid . II. 19 100b5-6.
30 Ibid, II.19 99b38-100A9:Metaphysics, I.1 980B26-981a12
31 *ByRNe, Analysis and Science in Aristotle. pp. 171-178.*

So, too, nous as habit transcends episteme as habit. Nous as habit is the studied ability to penetrate
beyond the demonstrations of episteme to the pre-conceptual, pre-propositional intelligibility of the

reason why. Without the habitual familiarity with the sciences there would be no material basis for
nous as habit, but *nous* goes beyond episteme by grasping the undemonstrable principles.

We notice here that Aristotle's approach is to postulate dynamically interrelated sets of habits, ranging in ascending order from memories of sense perceptions, to empeira, to episteme, to *nous.* They give us a glimpse of the structure of human existence, an existence whose locus is the physical world but whose reach goes beyond increasingly into the nonmaterial realm: from the physical connections of memory, to the intelligible connections of empeira, to the reason why of the intelligible connections in episteme, to the reason why of the reason why in *nous.* But we must consider further distinctions of episteme and nous to witness an even further opening of the structure of human existence.

4.2 Cognitive Acts

We have thus far dealt with Aristotle's treatment of episteme and *nous* as distinct but functionally related habits in his effort to differentiate scientific demonstrations from the undemonstrable principles of demonstrations. How, then, are we to take Aristotle's seemingly paradoxical, if not contradictory, assertions that not all episteme is demonstrable and that there is an epistemic grasp of immediate principles?[32]

The paradox, and contradiction, disappears if we interpret episteme in this context as act.[33] For a cognitive act to be episternic it can meet either of two requirements: (1) it can know the cause

[32]*Postvior Analytics, I.33 72B19-24,88b38.*

[33]See Bvrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle, pp. 179-18 1.*

of a fact and that it could not be otherwise; and (2) it can be the answer to the scientific question, What is it?"[34] A clear example of such an epistemic act would be knowing a scientific demonstration, for a demonstration entails knowing that a fact is, knowing that it could not be otherwise, and knowing what it is. The knowing what it is (to ti estin) provides the middle term of a syllogism but its not itself ultimately the result of deduction; it is a pre-conceptual insight into a formal cause. While the insight plays off of images, it is not reducible to images, percepts, or sensations. Here Aristotle extends the meaning of science beyond an ordered set of propositions and rejects the reduction of scientific meaning to sense experiences, thereby avoiding both conceptualism and radical empiricism.

The meaning of science is extended still further, however, when episteme is applied to the type of cognitive act that grasps immediate principles. Knowing an immediate principle is to know that it is, what it is (formal cause), and that it cannot be other than it is (also formal cause). To know the principle of non-contradiction, for example, is precisely to know that it is, what it is, and that it cannot be other than it is. This kind of knowing thus meets the two criteria for an epistemic act adumbrated above. The startling conclusion, then, is that *episteme* can grasp indemonstrable principles. Is this not to say than such an act of *episteme* is also an act of nous

and that therefore nous, in this sense, is science? And can we not, by extension, likewise call the epistemic act that grasps the middle term as noetic? Indeed Aristotle is quite unmistakable in identifying nous as the act of cognition (to *noetikon)* that grasps (noiei) the forms in the images.[35] Noetic consciousness therefore is inherently scientific consciousness.

[34] *Postvior Analytics. 1.1 71b9-12, !!.18923-25,*

[35]*De Anima, III . 7 43 W.*

4.3 Principle of Science

Nous is also the principle of science. Here we can turn to another set of distinctions Aristotle makes about *nous,* one involving its potentialities. Aristotle differentiates two kinds of noetic potencies, namely, to use the terms of Scholastic commentators, active potency and passive potency. Active *nous* has the potential "to make all things" *(to panta poiein).*[36] This *nous poetikos,* as scholars have frequently called it, is a cause of the *nous* receiving intelligible forms.[37] *Nous poetikas* makes *(poiei)* thinking as a kind of habit (hos hexis fis) just as fight makes potential colors into actual colors.[38] The nous, conversely, is able to receive the intelligible forms because it, as passive nous, has the potency "to become all things" (to panta *gignesthai).*[39] The nature of active nous, as Aristotle muses, is a "baffling problem." [40]Is active nous my *nous* as well as your nous? Is it the Divine Nous? Is it, as immaterial, immortal?

While these questions have generated controversy among Aristotelian philosophers for two millennia, we can focus on one area for a degree of clarity. When we recall that nous grasps the forms in the images, we may be lead to ask, What moves nous to grasp forms in the images? While the answer could be the Divine Nous, an equally compelling answer, if we are to follow Byrne, and one not at all incompatible with the former, is that the mover is wonderment.[41] It is wonderment - it is the process of inquiry, or, as Lear puts it, the desire to understand - that transforms and perfects

36 lbid., III.5 430al4-15.

37 W. K- C. Guthrie. *A History of Greek Philosophy. 6* vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 198 1). VI, 315. n. 1.

38*De Anima,* III.5 430al4ff.

39 Ibid.. III.4 429b20-31, III.5 430al5.

40 *Generation of.4nimals.* 11.3 736b5-8.

[41]Bvrne. *Analysis and Science in Aristotle. pp. 167-169:* that the Divine Nous is the mover of creative intelligence is the thesis of Jonathan Lear. *Aristotle: the Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

images to move *nous* to receive intelligible forms. The relation of nous to reality, then, is not one of
passive perception but rather one of active engagement. Mind is not, for Aristotle, a mirror of nature.
Nous is able "to make and become all things" because the horizon of wonderment is an expansive,
sel-transcending horizon correlative to the unrestrictedness of the desire to know that is embedded
in human nature.[42] Nous itself is also the norm of scientific inquiry and thus its inherent principle.
Nous, as wonderment, sets the criteria for the asking of scientific questions; nous, as passive potential,
sets the criteria for the answering of scientific questions and hence the criteria of scientific
propositions and scientific demonstrations.[43] This means that the standard for what makes episteme
episteme is the luminosity of nous.

4.4 Nous as Episteme

To be sure, if episteme were solely demonstrative, then noetic science might be an oxymoron. The gap between the indemonstrable nous and demonstrable episteme would be a chasm. For how could the undemonstrable shed fight on the demonstrable? Conversely, how could there be a demonstration of the undemonstrable? And, furthermore, how could the demonstrable demonstrate itself? And the undemonstrable explain itself? But in the face of these apparent quandaries we have the luminosity of *nous* as the measure of science. The quandaries arise from the horizon of conceptualism, which demands that the essence of science be an ordered set of propositions. Wonder, on the contrary, is the source of science, and wonderment causes the reception of intelligible forms.

Moreover, noetic inquiry about episteme bears the hallmarks of episteme in its proper and

42 *Metaphyics,* I. I 98W2.
43Byme, Analysis and Science in Aristotle. p. 187.

extended meaning. For nous affirms that *episteme - both* as epistemic acts that grasp forms and as
habits of demonstration - is a fact and that it cannot be otherwise than it is; and nous inquires about
what it is. More remarkable and startling is the sense in which noetic inquiry about nous likewise
bears the hallmarks of *episteme.* Nous is a fact; it cannot be otherwise than it is; and inquiry about
it asks what it is.. Noetic discourse about episteme and *nous* surely follows the same cognitive and
logical laws that govern *episteme,* for the source is the same: *nous.*

4.5 The Self-Luminosity of Nous

And yet we must not lose sight of the absolutely unique status of nous in the structure of human existence. We can consider nous again in terms of Aristotle's threefold distinction of potentialities, habits, and acts. As potentiality it is dynamic; as habit it is self-transcending; as act it is divine-like perfection. All these characteristics are interconnected as part of a unity.

The active potency of wonderment is a moving principle of intelligence and discovery. It is always greater than the propositions that it generates and the habits that it nourishes. Its fluid character makes it elusive, and its creative power renders it "baffling." We can postulate that the spirit of wonder is the self-transcending transformative mover of the aforementioned series o habits: from memories of sense perception, to the empeira of the person of judgment and good sense, to the procedures of the practiced scientist.

We can now add specific noetic habits to the series. Indeed a person familiar with a range of sciences can inquire about what is science itself This kind of inquiry would go beyond raising questions about the principles of any given science to pose questions about the principles of episteme itself And here we encounter an incredible eruption of cognitive energy. We certainly have a nous of *episteme.* Still, if nous grasps the undemonstrable principles and if nous is the principle of science, then *nous* grasps itself *Nous of episteme* leads by its own dynamic necessity to *nous of nous,* According to Aristotle, the *nous,* as immaterial, can be the object of thought.[44] This self-luminosity of *nous* sparks a new level of habits beyond that associated with *nous* of *episteme.* This is the habit of *sophia*, which, concerned with the highest things, reflects *upon* both *episteme* and nous of *episteme* to understand nous as pure act. Whereas *episteme* and nous grasp intelligible forms in
images, *sophia* reflects on the intelligible forms already grasped by *episteme* and *nous.* It seeks the
highest principles, those most unchanging, intelligible, and universal, viz., the subject matter of metaphysics.

The activity of *theoria* is correlated with the habit of sophia, and, accordingly, Aristotle considers theoria the most perfect and self-sufficient human activity.[45] In *theoria* the dynamics of *nous* attains its loffiest manifestation. As all acts *of nous, theoria* is "pure act" *(energeia),* but *theoria is energeia* in its most perfect form, not tainted by potentiality.[46] This leads us to the highest thing and highest principle that *theoria* can contemplate: *nous* itself. *neoria* grasps that the ultimate cause of cosmic order is the unmoved mover. Nature is a mirror of mind.[47] But the unmoved mover is nous thinking itself *Theoria,* then, *is nous* contemplating *nous* thinking nous. This is indeed the summit *of* Aristotle's investigation, where all major paths converge, whether in his Metaphyics, his Physics, or his *Nicomachean Ethics. In* the former two works Aristotle depicts the most perfect life, the life of the divine, as *noesis* understanding noesis. [48] Still, every human act *of nous* shares in the divine life, albeit momentarily.[49] This is precisely why the ultimate horizon of human existence, including
political existence, is defined by self-transcending openness to the divine ground.

[44]*De Anima. 1H.4 430a2-5.*
[45] *Nicomachean Ethics. X7 1177a18- I MO.*
[46]Elizabeth Murray Morelli," Aristotle's Theory Transposed (paper presented at the Lonergan

Philosophical Society), p. 7.
[47] Lear**,** *Aristotle. pp. 306-307.*
[48] *Metaphysics.XII,7 1072a19-B30. XII.9 1074bl5-1075al1.*
[49] Ibid., XII.7 1072b26;Nicomachean *Ethics,* X7 1177b30-1178a8

4.6 Nous and Phronesis

Although less perfect than the theoretical life, the ethical life and the political fife, too, share in the activity of nous. Practical intelligence (phronesis) is an act of nous. It is less perfect than *theoria because* its objects - whether the individual choices of goods that would foster the well-being (eudaimonia) of the individual or the legislative arrangements that would promote human flourishing (arete) within the polis - are less unchanging, intelligible, and universal.[50] We need not dwell on the obvious: how contingency, flux, and particularity pervade the human world. So political science will be science to a much lesser degree than such a discipline as geometry. To a large extent the analytical side of political science, amid a plethora of contingent circumstances, adjusts means to ends, The ends are the excellences of human nature. The meaning of excellence (arete) is to "function well," and to "function well" as a human being is to realize the potentialities of human nature.[51]But what is human nature? Human nature, like every nature, is an "internal principle of change and rest."[52]What is this specifical1y human principle? The answer is the process of cognitive, moral, and spiritual inquiry, with its own built in norms, a process of incarnate beings who can nonetheless participate -precariously -- in the fife of the Divine Nous[53] The principle, in short, is noetic consciousness. Noetic science therefore by explicating the structure of human existence provides political science with the goals of political endeavor. The "single science" of government, which aims to determine which government is best, must determine what is the best human life. [54] The best human life, of course, is the fife of nous, and the perfection of *nous is theoria.* But *theoria* needs phronesis since practical wisdom, including political wisdom (which frames legislation), is the precondition for engaging in *theoria.* [55]

Noetic science in asking the question what is nous is asking about the dynamic principle of human nature. Nous, with its acts, potentialities, and habits, is the self-transcending normative principle of change and rest in human life. While the contemplative fife seeks knowledge for its own sake, employs scientific demonstrations, and focuses on the universal and the necessary, and while the practical fife seeks action, employs the "practical syllogism," and focuses on the particular and the contingent, these differences should not obscure the fact that they both share what is highest in human life. They both participate in the self-transcending normative process of questioning, which ranges from involvement with the images of physical things to the self-luminosity of the pure act of nous. They both share in noetic consciousness. All the virtues, both theoretical and practical, are inherently interrelated.[56] This means that in authentic political life - a kind of phronesis that Aristotle calls the virtue of political wisdom - that *which is* best and divine in us is actualized. [57] The subject matter of political science therefore concerns the participation of human *nous in* the activity of the Divine Nous.

50 Nicomachean *Ethics,* V1.8 114lb23-24.
51 Ibid., 1.7,1097b23-1098a19.
52Physics. II. I 195b2l-22.53

53Bernard J. F. Lonergan. A *Third Collection.* ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York Paulist Press. 1985) . p

[54]*Politics, IV. 1 12M22-23, ViA 1323bl5-16.*

[55] *Nicomachean Ethics, VI. 13 1144b I 7-1145a6.*
56Ibid, VI. 13 1144b32-1145a6.

57Hans Georg GadAmer, 77te Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy, trans P Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1986), pp. 174-176.

5. Limits of Aristotle's Analysis

If we can extrapolate this core of noetic science from the writings of Aristotle with some plausibility, we nevertheless should not be surprised that it has been muddled, overlooked, or even
denied by commentators and philosophers. Aristotle, however, has himself contributed to the confusion.

Aristotle first develops terminology applicable to the most generic discipline possible: that which deals with being as being. From the *Metaphysics* he then can gather terms for his investigation of being as changing, his Physics. From both the *Metaphysics* and the Physics he can employ terms in his study of being as self-changing, his De Anima. This hierarchy of disciplines causes problems when he reaches the specifics of the human situation. When he examines, for example, nous, he is examining a principle of rational self-change, but the categories of metaphysics, physics, and psychology cannot do strict justice to the nuances of noetic consciousness.[58] The faculty psychology Aristotle relies upon differentiates souls by potencies, potencies by acts, acts by objects, and objects by either efficient or final cause.[59] This approach will strain any attempt to explore such "elusive" aspects of noetic consciousness as self-transcendence, interiority, and spiritual presence. And the language of faculty psychology might not be very suggestive of an "exegesis' of "nonobjective reality." It can easily tempt one to look at nous as part of a system or as a theoretical object "out there." This temptation will become more acute if one interprets *episteme* as an ordered set of propositions. Voegelin notes how Aristotle's use of such categories from his metaphysics and physics as matter and form hampers his investigation of political topics (for example, constitutional order) and contributes to a "derailment" of his political philosophy.[60]

58 Bernard Lonergm, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas. vol.* 2 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan,* ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert *NL* Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1997), pp. 2-5.

59 *DeAnima. M4* 415al4-20: Lonergan, *Verbum. pp. 4-5.*

60 *Order and History, III, 333-335.*

Another barrier Aristotle erects to an ample treatment of noetic consciousness is his identification of being with substance.[61] This may be rooted, as Voegelin argues, in Aristotle's "immanentizing" tendency, the propensity to divinize the eternal recurrence of cosmic order, the positing of a transcendent, completely immaterial unmoved mover notwithstanding. [62] In any event, the distinction of essence and existence, such as Aquinas, for example, makes, would seem to provide metaphysical categories better suited to addressing the participatory nature of noetic consciousness.[63] Aquinas equates being with to-be *(esse).* Only divine transcendence is pure to-be; all other beings exist by participation in pure to-be. Aquinas' metaphysics, of course, was still attached to an Aristotelian faculty psychology, so that his philosophy could not fully exploit his metaphysical distinction of essence and existence to explore human interiority.[64]

Whatever the limits of Aristotle's analysis of noetic consciousness, noetic science does pervade the Aristotelian corpus, and to recognize it is not to read into Aristotle's text some idiosyncratic philosophical position. The contemporary task is rather to appropriate the insights of Aristotle about noetic consciousness and in appropriating the insights to develop his ideas so as to transcend his limitations.

Since the time of Aristotle Christian pneumatic consciousness has radically emphasized both divine transcendence of the cosmos and human participation in divine presence; the recent study of comparative religion has indicated parallels in other religious traditions; Aquinas, Schelling, and Kierkegaard have differentiated essence and existence; the Scientific Revolution has discovered a universe that is no longer a cosmos of eternal recurrence; phenomenology has replaced faculty
psychology; and historical consciousness has expanded the theological and political horizons. In fight
of these developments the task today is to transpose Aristotle's noetic science into a philosophy of
consciousness. And this, of course, is what Voegelin has attempted to do, moved by the spirit of wonderment in the face of the disorder of his time.

[61] Etienne Gawn, *Being and Some Philosophers.* 2nd *ed.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute *of Mediaeval* Studies1952), chap. 2..
[62] *Order and History, III 307-310, 362-366.*

[63] David B. Burrell. Knowing the Unknowable God.- Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 1986.
[64]Lonergan. *Verbum,* "Introductiom"

6. Noetic Science as Philosophy of Consciousness

The foundation of political science, for Voegelin is neither a set of propositions nor a set of observations about objects in the external world. It is the concrete consciousness of a concrete person. Or rather it is the concrete consciousness of a concrete person under certain concrete,

existential conditions.[65] For human consciousness ordinarily exhibits intentionality - which Voegelin defines as awareness of objects in the spatial field, as befitting the embodied nature of human consciousness.[66] But human consciousness can also exhibit luminosity when the concrete consciousness is of a concrete person engaging in the concrete process of questioning.[67] The more radical and open the questioning - the more it questions about the meaning of human life, the more it searches for the ground of human existence - the more self-reflective can the luminosity be. Luminosity is therefore an inherently participatory act. It is, moreover, a participatory act that is experienced as a theophanic event at the intersection of time and the timeless.[68] The horizon of luminosity is the horizon of an incarnate inquirer in search of the transcendent ground of existence. [69] This horizon, according to Voegelin, using the materials of the phenomenology of comparative religion, is that of the Greek mystic philosophers, including Aristotle, but it equally embraces the spiritual quests expressed, in more differentiated fashion, in the writings of the Israelite prophets, the Gospels, and the Pauline Epistles and, in less differentiated fashion, in the *Upanishads*, the teachings of the Buddha, the Amon hymns, and Babylonian incantations.[70] Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness explores noetic consciousness directly without the cage of a faculty psychology pr the intrusion of metaphysical categories. Informed by phenomenology and modern existentialist concerns it is also quite consonant with Aquinas-focus on being as the act of existing.

[65] *Anamnesis, chap. 11.*

[66] *Order and History, V, 14-16.*

[67] *Ibid*

[68] *Anamnesis, chap. 7; Published Essays 1966.-1985. chaps. 3. 7.*

[69]See Glenn Hughes, Mystery *and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin (Columbia:* University of Missouri Press, 1993), chap. 2.

[70]*Order and History, I 85-87, chap. 13,. IV, chap. 5, 316-330- Published Essays 1966-1985, chap. 7, p. 294.*

The philosophy of consciousness is the foundation of political science because the participatory consciousness of questioning is the source of order in both personal existence and the fife of the polity. To ignore the normative status of noetic consciousness, including its spiritual dimensions, is to ignore the most substantial element of political existence. Indeed when political science, and intellectual culture as a whole, ignores, distorts, or denies noetic consciousness, then it is an active accomplice to the cumulative cycle of decline. Since, in Voegelin's view, this is, in fact, what modem political science and modern intellectual culture have done, it is incumbent upon him, as a genuine political scientist, above all else, to restore noetic science under the unpropitious historical conditions of the modem situation.

This supreme task of restoration should not, however, lead us to conclude that Voegelin does not appreciate the more "earthly" features of political existence. He commends the proemium of the *Institutes of Justinian* for dividing authority into three facets: power, reason, and spirit.[71]

[71] Eric Voegelin, Me Nature *of Law and Related Legal Writings. vol. 27 of Collected Works of Eric Voegelin,* ed. Robert Anthony Pascal, James Lee Babui, and John William Corrington (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 199 1 *X pp. 70-71; Hider and the Germans,* tram. Defley Clemens and Brendan Purcell, vol. 31 of77te *Collected Works o Enc Voegelin* (Columbia: Unviersity of Missouri Press~ 1999), pp. 79-80: Thomas L McPardand, Authenticity and Transcendence: Lonergan and Voegelin an Political Authority (paper presented at Lonergan Philosophical Society, Sam Clara University, October 29, 1999), pp. 50-75.

Power concerns internal order and defense against external enemies. If a polity has the authority rooted in power, it has articulated itself as an agent that can act in history, and it, accordingly, has "existential representation," an institutional embodiment of its capacity for action.[72] Articulation and representation have technological, economic, social, and cultural preconditions. Here it is quite appropriate to examine the polity in terms of efficient cause. It is precisely this manner that Aristotle conducts empirical investigations to shed light on how to avoid "revolutions' and how to promote the stability of a regime by considering such factors as the form of government and the degree of participation of citizens. Voegelin, too, is acutely aware of the authority of power. Indeed he praises the insight of such "realist" thinkers as Machiavelli and Hobbes into the exigencies of power and admires their avoidance of moralizing cliches.[73]Not surprisingly, Voegelin is totally conversant in his writings with the major political trends throughout history from the Mesopotamian city-states to the Cold War. He traces in great detail, for example, the articulation of the English polity in the Late Middle Ages, arguing that its parliamentary style of representation was based upon historical accidents. [74] He shows in a book-length study that, by contrast, his own Austria after World War One has no adequate political articulation. [75] As a result, Voegelin insists, its appropriate constitution is an authoritarian one. To impose democratic self-rule would be to foster the collapse of the incipient political society and would succumb to utopian formalism, if not utopian fancy.

[72] *New Science of Politics,* chap. 1; Eric Voegelin, History *of Political Ideas, vol. 3, 7he Late Middle Ages,* ed. David Walsh, vol. 21 of *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia-University of Missouri Press, 1"8), pp. 145-154.

[73] Eric Voegelin, History *of Political Ideas, vol. 4, Renaissance and Reformation,* ed. David L. Morse and
William M. Thompson, vol. 22 of *7he Collected Works* of Eric *Voegelin* (Columbia University of Missouri Press.1998), chap. 1; *History of Political Ideas, vol.* 5, *Religion and the Rise of Modernity,* ed. James L. Wiser, vol. 23 of *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia University of Missouri Press, 1998),248;,History *of Political ideas vol. 7, The New Order and Last Orientation,* ed. Jorgen Gebhardt and T'homas A. Hollweck, vol. 25 of *77te Collected Works of Enc Voegelin* (Columbia- University of Missouri Press, 1999), chap 1; *history of Political Ideas. L* 228;
The New Science of Politics, p. 217.

[74] *History of Political Ideas, 111.* chap. 19; *The New Science of Politics, pp.* 121-123.

[75] Eric Voegelin, *7he Authoritarian State: An Essay on the Problem of the Austrian State,* hans. Ruth Hein, *vol. 4 of Collected Works of* Eric Voegelin, ed. Gilbert Weiss and commentary by Erika Weinzierl (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999)

Voegelin's own focus on the authorities of reason and of spirit also avoids such a utopian deformation of reality. The norms of noetic consciousness are not abstractions that dwell in some noetic heaven. They are concretely operative in the process of history - or if concretely inoperative, there are dire historical consequences. Voegelin, inspired by Max Weber's lecture on "Science as a Vocation," pours vast erudition into his study of reason and spirit, an endeavor in which he attempts to incorporate the most recent historical scholarship.[76] His monumental History of Political Ideas is not a conventional history of political ideas because it is a genuine history. It does not treat political ideas as freely floating abstractions or as reified doctrines. As mentioned above, political ideas, for Voegelin, are critical responses to historical crises in which the evocations of society have lost their luster. He locates intellectual and religious developments in their political contexts, and he displays remarkable insight and sensitivity in relating the political contexts to technological, demographic, economic, and social factors. Unlike most orthodox histories of medieval political ideas, for example, which skip from Augustine to Aquinas, Voegelin devotes considerable attention to the German Migrations.[77] He relates the rise of millennialist sentiments to the expansion of urban

[76] The abundant bibliographical materials in *The History of Political Ideas* and *Order and* history amply demonstrate this. But, to cue anecdotal evidence, when Voegelin visited the University of Washington to deliver a series of lectures this author, then a graduate student *was* asked to direct him to Professor Carol Thomas, an expert in Mycenaeann and Dark Age Greek history, since Voegelin wanted to keep up on the developments in this field Thomas' work has recently been published: Carol G. Thomas and Craig Conant *Citadel to City-State:The Transformation of Greece 1200- 700 B.* C E (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

[77] Eric Voegelin. History *of Political Ideas, vol. 2, The Middle Ages to Aquinas,* ed. Peter von Sivers, vol. *20 of 77ie Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), chap. 12, vol. *2, 77ze Middle Ages to Aquinas,* ed. Peter von Sivers, vol. 20 of *the Collected Works of* Eric Voegelin (Columbia: University of Missouri Press 1997), chap.2.

population in the High Middle Ages.[78] He views the popularity of Luther's ideas as, in part, a function of the printing press.[79] He pinpoints the traumatic influence of Tamerlaine's conquests on
the political sensitivity of Renaissance political theorists.[80] He sees the Enlightenment project of establishing a new meaning of Western civilization as a response to a complex of such historical factors as global exploration, commercial expansion, religious fragmentation, and nation-state building.[81]

Voegelin's enterprise does justice to the full range of noetic consciousness, which car; well up from the unconscious, gain insight into images, and ultimately reflect on its own luminosity. His

approach is consonant with Aristotle's idea of human reality as a "synthetic nature," stretching from the apeironic depths, through inorganic nature, vegetable nature, animal nature, the passionate psyche, the noetic psyche, to the Divine Nous.[82] All in all, he clearly follows the empirical bent of Aristotle (not to be confused with modem empiricism). This is illustrated not only by Voegelin's interest in and grasp of detail but in his quite Aristotelian procedure of relating means to ends in light of the details. Again, as a case in point, Voegelin's comprehensive rationale for an authoritarian Austrian constitution is based on his assessment of what in the concrete circumstances of Post-World War One Austria would best nurture by a kind of political education democratic habits. Voegelin, however, in one important respect expends the empirical range beyond that of Aristotle by addressing in a more explicit and thematic way the historical dimension of human existence.[83]

[78] History of Political Ideas, IV, 150-15 1.

[79] Ibid., pp. 218-220.

[80] Ibid., pp. 43-55.

[81] Eric Voegelin. *History of* Political Ideas, vol. 6, Revolution and the New Science, ed Barry Cooper. vol. 24 of The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (Columbia. University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 31-34.

[82]Anamnesis, p. 92; Published Essays 1966-1985, p. 268.

[83] Ibid

But as dedicated as Voegelin is to empirical sobriety he never loses sight of the core philosophical issue in political science: authority is not exhausted by power but also must be reported in reason and in spirit. In addition to the polity's representation as a power on the field of history there is the polity's representation of transcendent truth through the evocations of reason and spirit.[84] And when the entire texture of modem civilization has been to downgrade reason into merely instrumental reason and either to deny spirit or to fuse it diabolically into totalitarian revolutionary movements, then, as Voegelin's entire corpus attests, noetic science must proclaim the proper roles of reason and spirit in political existence. From the beginning of Voegelin's career we witness this calling. In opposition to his teacher, Hans Kelsen, whose positivistic formal theory of law investigated law in terms of the horizon in which it operated, Voegelin in the 1930's searched for the "existential experiences" that gave rise to the horizon. He urged a "transformation of the dogmatic system of natural right into an analysis of existential experiences that made regulation of certain institutions.... the inevitable component of any legal order.[85] Voegelin's search for "existential experiences" led to his restoration of noetic science in the form of his philosophy of consciousness. And thus the prime task of Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness is the restoration of noetic consciousness as the central concern of political science in response to the disorder of the age.

[84]*The New Science of Politics*, chap. 2.

[85] Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein. vol. 2 of *Collected Works of Enc Voegelin*, ed. Klaus Vondung (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1996), p. 4.