MODERNITY AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS

I am delighted to be on a panel to discuss the excellent work of Professor Cooper and the topic of the foundations (plural) of modem political science. What can Voegelin contribute?

One brief introductory confession is in order to explain my perspective. While in graduate school in another discipline, I read the *New Science of Politics* and the first three volumes of *Order and History.* Indeed, they were the principal reasons for shifting after the MA to political science. However, I quit following the literature on Voegelin after graduate school because it appeared to me that he was being used as part of an academic ideological skirmish. I later found that this irritated him immeasurably. Some years later I was given the fourth volume to read while on sabbatical; it was an exciting experience. Bill Havard then told me to read the more recent articles. I was hooked again.

One of the reasons I was struck by the last stage in Voegelin's philosophical evolution was that there now seemed the possibility for open discussions with other thinkers. It seemed to me then, and now, that a discussion on the foundations of political science will not progress very far through a ritualistic chanting, for example, of "philosophical anthropology" and "ontology." Regrettably, such phrases only persuade the persuaded. My own area of interest was a branch of analytical philosophy, and I thought that I could see an extraordinary opportunity for a true discussion and perhaps some improvement in shoring up the foundations of political science through Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness. Since a full discussion by Professor Cooper of this final stage in Voegelin philosophic developments will occur in the second volume of Cooper's study, our panel will have to be reconvened. Given the quality of the first volume, we are in for another treat.

Let me begin with an old joke and an observation. First the joke: In a large dark warehouse, a man is slowly walking around a floor lamp. At the other end of the warehouse, another man enter, sees the fellow and shouts: "What are you doing?" The answer back: "I am looking for something." The fellow shouts back: "Is that where you lost it?" "Don't know," replies the other man, "but it is where the light is." Second,, the observation. Every year I offer my students a bottle of French champagne if they can find one article in the *APSR,* the *Journal of Politics, Polity, Political Studies,* the *Australian Journal of Political Science,* etc., that even hints at the possibility of a collapse of the USSR. The lamentable truth is that there are such articles in poetry journals, history journals, and yea verily, sociology journals. The articles on the USSR in traditional political science journals discuss the usual array of topics about institutions and processes: bureaucracy, voting, provincial and central government relationships, decisionmakers, stake-holders, etc. The connection between the old joke and this observation - to belabour the obvious - it that the lamp of political science, i.e., our various conceptual frameworks, may well have trapped us into recognizing only a small part of political reality. We are comfortable where the lamp is and indeed can pursue quite successful careers where the lamp is. Key features of political reality however may well have shifted. It is the possibility of a shift that I want to examine. After that, I will turn to the question "What can Voegelin contribute?"

The barebones of political reality are these: 1. Homo sapiens live in groups; 2. Decisions have to be made for their continuing existence; 3. Those decisions are made often without complete information or where complete information is not even possible, and, as a consequence, a group of decision-makers is set aside for this task; 4. These decisions are implemented often by force over other homo sapiens - let us not forget that we are one of those species whose members routinely kill one another; 5. A process of persuasion - usually institutionalized - is used to persuade the group that the decisions are to be followed. Finally, these five key features of political reality are embedded in an historically dynamic field: thus, as has happened in the past, various dimensions of political reality may shift requiring yet again new approaches. I suspect that the fifth feature in political reality - a process of persuasion - will be the point where Voegelin's contribution will be the most noticeable and valuable.

There are real shifts that have occurred in political reality: city-states, to empire, to nation-states, to global alliances and institutions, both public and private. There are also various recognizable shifts, big and small, often noted in the history of political philosophy: pre-Socratics to Plato and Aristotle; Plato-Aristotle to the Renaissance and Modernity; Modernity to what? "What" is indeed the question. In the twentieth century there have been detectable shifts in political reality, both in actual institutions and processes and in political philosophy. The paper is structured to illustrate those shifts and to show Voegelin's potential contributions. Section One very briefly examines Plato's and Aristotle's original views of political philosophy and science; Section Two outlines the dramatic transition to modernity and contemporary political science; Section Three will delineate the shifts in modernity, both politically and philosophically; Section Four ventures to describe Voegelin's contributions to the foundations of political science; finally, Section Five will conclude with an evaluation and some points of criticisms.

I. Authority - Plato and Aristotle

For Plato and Aristotle, the founders of political science as well as of political philosophy, the central orientating-issue was always the nature of authority. This is clear in the case of Plato, but, I would also argue, it is the case with Aristotle as well. For example, his famous typology of six kinds of regimes, three just and three unjust, are divided in effect by his philosophic work on the nature of authority. Also, the *Nichomachean Ethics* is clearly designed to be the introduction to what we now call *The Politics.* Indeed, the political books of *The Politics* - books 4, 5, and 6 - are themselves guided by the orientating theme of the nature of authority.

The questions of legitimacy and sovereignty, which dominate modem concerns, are for Plato and Aristotle almost always subsumed by the overwhelming importance they place on authority. That there was a question of authority - and indeed a special kind of authority - was their discovery, and it set their agenda. It is understandable for students within modernity to be puzzled and to ask practical and "real" political questions about how the Republic comes into existence; who votes; what is the institutional framework; and so on. For Plato and Aristotle reaching some understanding on the nature of authority, on the other hand, was the means for studying political institutions and political processes. A graph of their political science would show a true foundation:

LEGITIMACY:GOVERNMENT PERSUADES AND PEOPLE ACCREDIT

Government

Persuades Accredit

People

Source of Authority

Aristotle describes the myriad kinds of oligarchies and democracies - which bore students to distraction - from the standpoint of how authority can be implemented and nourished given this type of society, with this type of dominant character, and with this kind of economic system, etc. Institutions and processes were decidedly of secondary importance to Plato and Aristotle. It would strike them as plain stupid to use a discussion of institutions and processes as a way of addressing questions of authority. That would be upside-down and backwards. They would be puzzled if not contemptuous, as is Voegelin, of modem political science since Hobbes.

II. Modernity

Hundreds of books have been written on the mix of factors that lead to and constitute the close of the middle ages and the eruption of the Renaissance and Modernity. Most political philosophers would recognize Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Bodin - a few would also note Luther - as thinkers who both articulated the changes in political reality and instigated further changes in political reality and in the study of politics. Within the historical context of the rising nations of Italy, Germany, France, and England these formative thinkers perceived the reality of power, and they explained and justified temporal authority or the state with arguments which distinguished them from the medieval and classical ages. In the main, they saw politics as the realm of force, selfishness, and domination, but they also held that the state or temporal authority could provide peace and order. It was necessary for them to explain and understand power, for it appeared to have a pattern and development that could not be understood by simply discussing religious and philosophic sources of authority. Each of these political thinkers saw this task as a new one; each wrote in the language of their people rather than in just Latin; each made the claim that he was an originator. The shift to modernity had occurred.

It would be bold and stupid to try and characterize modernity in a short paper. But, I'll do it anyway with respect to the study of politics and particularly to the dominant school in the West, liberalism. There are four great themes that characterize and continue to permeate Western liberal thought. First, there is a new understanding of science, emanating from the Renaissance and characterized by the reductive model for explanations, by new scientific methods, and by a claim of real knowledge and certainty. Second, there develops an extraordinary confidence in humanity's capacity to know and even to master nature, society, and the self. Third, the problems of politics are not simply to be mitigated, but they are to be permanently solved. Fourth, the autonomous individual, rather than society, is assumed to be the starting point for constructing a political system that would provide the grounds for legitimating and justifying a political system.

First, the new science provides an essential break with the medieval world. Descartes and Hobbes came to be founders of liberal rationalism, and Locke joins them as a founder. They were all well aware that a revolutionary shift had occurred. Two features were particularly significant: the reductive model and the search for certainty. Knowledge was achieved by reducing complex matters to their constituting parts. The reductive model is central to the new natural and social sciences, to use modem terminology. The new methods, whether they emphasized the rational approach of Descartes and Hobbes or the observation and experiment approach of Locke, were designed to provide "real" knowledge, and this new science with its knowledge was gleefully contrasted with the so-called "science" of Aristotle and the schoolmen.[1]

Second, through the new science, its methods, and the resulting knowledge, our reason frees us from the bonds of the past and of custom so that we can both understand better nature, society and ourselves and exercise a far greater control and even mastery over nature, society, and ourselves. An extraordinary mood of confidence and power permeates the works of Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke. We can shape and control the future. Recall the famous boast of Descartes that we can "make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature. "[2] Hobbes introduction to the *Leviathan* reflects this mood: human knowledge and power are parallel with God's. Locke, less dramatically perhaps, also has the same extraordinarily confident attitude toward the future, once we apply the new epistemology and its methods: "We are born with faculties and powers capable almost of any thing, such at least as would carry us farther than can easily be imagined: but it is only the exercise of those powers."[3] which gives us ability and skill in any thing, and leads us towards perfection." With these faculties and power, claims Locke in the *Essay,* we can advance "Man's Progress" and attain a
"profitable Knowledge."[4]

Descartes', Hobbes's, and Locke's confident claims about attaining "real" knowledge through the new science - whether the stress is on geometry, logic, or experiment and observation - applies to human nature as well as to society and physical reality. Both Hobbes and Locke, we should remember, advocate a true science of morality. Locke concludes his recommendation on educating the young with these words: "Teach him to get a Mastery over his Inclinations, and submit his Appetite to Reason."[5] There is a possible control and mastery over ourselves far greater than that sought by the early Calvinist and Puritan theologians with their schemes of self-imposed rules and regulations for a righteous life.

[1] For the relation between Descartes and Locke, see Schouls, *Reasoned Freedom: John Locke and Enlightenment,* pp. 27-3 7 and *The Imposition of Method: A Study of Descartes and Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

[2] *Discourse on Method,* Part 6, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* 3 Vols., trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Vol. I, p. 143.

[3] *The Conduct of Understanding,* section 4 in *The Locke Reader,* ed. John W. Yolton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 173-74.

[4] Bk. IV, xii, 12.

[5] John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton, eds., *John Locke: Some Thoughts Concerning Education (Oxford:*
Clarendon Press, 1989), paragraph 200.

Third, Hobbes and Locke both address political reality as a set of problems to be solved. With their philosophic stance, it is first necessary to be clear about the fundamental nature of political reality. What are the key constituting ingredients of political life? Hobbes finds the great drive for self-preservation and the passions plus a calculating self-interest as chief factors. Locke finds natural equality and liberty plus the great rights. In both cases, the method is to go behind culture and civilization and to discover the original, natural, and basic parts that will form the whole. These thinkers provide solutions to politics. The urbane pessimism of the ancients does not survive because Hobbes and Locke confidently assert that there is a solution, supported by science and knowledge. For them the problem of achieving order with legitimacy and other traditional problems are solvable.

Fourth, the autonomous individual becomes the focus for creating a political system and for evaluating its claim to legitimacy, and the epistemologies of Hobbes and Locke support the model of the autonomous and free individual. It is the individual's own capacities that provide knowledge. In fact, one must not rely upon the authority of the Church, state, or tradition. Thus, there is an epistemic autonomy supporting political autonomy for the individual. Hobbes's *Leviathan* is replete with witty and snide comments aimed at debunking the authorities of his time and emphasizing that each person can rely on his or her own capacity to reason. Locke, although more judicious with his comments, does the same. In the *Essay,* Locke calls on humans to think for themselves and employ their own reason. [6] With revolutionary fervour he calls for an individual."[7] to "dare Shake the foundation of all his past Thoughts and Actions. The individual's capacity to reason, guided by the epistemology of the *Essay* and the power of freedom to decide and act, make it possible for humans to create a political system irrespective of custom and tradition. The prerequisite for an individual to enter a political compact is to become a "Master of himself, and his own Life."[8] As one scholar of Locke writes, "men begin to feel that the whole world is new for everyone and we are all absolutely free of what has gone before."[9] The autonomous individual as a knower and maker is primary; a society is derivative. Rights thus take precedence over duties, just as the individual is prior to society: individuals have become the base particles that compose society and government. [10]

6 Bk. I., iii, 23.

7 Bk. I., iii, 25.

8 IIT. 172.

9 Laslett, Two *Treatises of Government*, "Introduction," p. 97.

[10] Charles Taylor has written an influential article explaining and criticizing this perspective: "Atomism," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1985), pp. 187-2 10. The preceding two pages were adapted from John Hallowell and Jene M. Porter, *Political Philosophy" The Search for Humanity and Order* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1997), 407- 10.

It is not surprising to find political science - increasingly as modernity gained momentum - turning to questions of the institutions and processes that would guarantee legitimacy. I should add that the debate between rights and utilitarian liberalism is within this common framework. Even Rousseau and Marx, who break with liberalism, share much of modernity's agenda. The shift from ancients to modems could be characterized as one in which the great question becomes finding the proper institutions and processes. The matter of authority would be solved as a consequence. In a reversal of the earlier period, authority has now been subsumed by legitimacy and sovereignty. Indeed, the graph should now be turned upside down.

In sum, the dynamics of legitimacy - the two way arrows - became the centre of interest. Having the correct institutional framework - be it that of Hobbes, Locke, or Mill - would provide legitimacy for a regime; moreover, the accrediting would be reduced to a simple recognition of self-evident features such as pain and pleasure or some economic interest or a class interest or a combination. Most political science classes have happily explored this area. It is where the lamp is.

III. Shift in Modernity

However, I think that there are clear signs of yet another major shift in the way that we see political reality both philosophically and politically. To take political philosophy first, each of the four features of modernity are clearly under attack: faith that the reductive model of science could provide certainty, faith in reason to free us from the bonds of custom, the view of reality as a set of potentially solveable problems, the epistemic autonomy that served to support political autonomy. Over time, the erosion of the philosophical authority of these four features will also alter what we consider to be significant features of politics. As a result more attention will be spent on the "accrediting" role of legitimacy and on authority. (It is here that I believe Voegelin's contribution can be the most valuable). Take the first feature of modernity - the reductive model of science. Its philosophical authority has been badly eroded. The consequence is this: By altering what counts as an explanation, we now recognize as pertinent features of human action much that was previously either debunked or ignored - such as the reasons articulated by political actors. As trust in "scientific" reasoning underlies all of them, each of the other items characterizing modernity is similarly under attack, and, as I said, this will affect our conceptual frameworks for understanding political reality. In short, we will need more and better lamps, and Voegelin provides some.

In addition to philosophical signs of shifts, there are also signs politically of a major shift. Let me give two brief illustrations of changes in political reality, seldom noted in political science and then only vaguely alluded to. First, political participation is normally explained in textbooks by examining political parties and voter registration and turnouts. That is where the lamp is! Woe and lamentations are the normal conclusions when the figures are produced. Yet the most striking feature of the last half of the twentieth century in large democracies has been the extraordinary growth in political activity by citizens. Far more people are now involved in

political activity in a generic sense, than ever before in democratic history. It is just that the activity is not within parties nor can it be seen in voter's statistics. Wrong lamp in the wrong place! Remember the warehouse! Citizens are organized in functional and causal groups with their own financial support and newspapers. Moreover, for good or ill, this part of the political process is effective in public policy formation and in legitimizing a political system.

A second illustration: if you ask students in Canada - including upper division ones - to list major public policies inaugurated over the last decade or so, they would list NAFTA, Grain Stabilization, GST, Charlottetown, Meech Lake, non-smoking regulations and practices, environmental policies, gun control. However, the average student has only the vaguest idea of how these policies were created and who were the chief political actors. Some will note that MPs are no longer important. Ironically, they know most about the ones that failed - Charlottetown and Meech Lake. The very institutions and processes that they are most accustomed to studying were the ones that were strikingly out of touch. But that is where the lamp was so that is what they know.

A shift has occurred, in short, in the dynamic field of political reality requiring new concepts and approaches. While it is true that the traditional institutions and processes of government are more than just the final bestowers of an imprimatur, nevertheless, they have become less and less the channels, the expressions, and legitimizers for political reality.

Are political scientists as out of touch with the new dimensions of political reality within Western political systems as they were with the new political dimensions which culminated in the collapse of the USSR? Some political scientists are, and they remain very comfortable with the old lamp.

IV. Voegelin's Contribution

Voegelin's major contribution to the foundations of modem political science is through adding his voice to those who are also working at the task of reconstituting our understanding of political reality. Simply put, the task is to reverse once more the graph. Rather than institutions and processes conditioning - and thus serving as the basis for explaining - human thought and behavior, the source of authority would under gird and ultimately provide explanation both of human thoughts and actions and of the operation of institutions and processes.

Professor Cooper states: "The primary political problem for the political science of Schelling and of Voegelin is not the internal organization of the regime but the relation of the power-state to the community substance."[11] For Voegelin, Cooper concludes, "the foundations of modem political science ... are constituted by related complex of materials." These are the great thinkers and "the configurations of empirical political history." [12] Specifically, the great thinkers provide the path for understanding philosophic anthropology, sources of authority and, more broadly, the spiritual dimension. It is in this first complex of materials that meaning and significance are found. The second complex of materials, empirical political history, introduces for study the nation-state and democracy. I will look at each of these two "complex of materials" to see what Voegelin can contribute.

It is with respect to the first complex of materials where Voegelin's contribution is clearly the more profound. To reiterate, the contribution requires working in concert with others. Philosophic Lone Rangers will not work, even if nurtured by tenure, grants, and separate institutions. Indeed, such infrastructure support for a philosophic approach can actually hinder the possibility of a contribution by unwittingly building a walled and self-contained city of philosophy.

The great thinkers who provide the entrance to philosophic anthropology and the spiritual dimension have often been ignored or dismissed in modernity. In part, this is a consequence of the epistemological features of modernity discussed in Section Three. Voegelin, along with many others, has written extensively about the transition to modernity. By showing the inadequacies of the epistemological presuppositions in modernity, it becomes possible to reintroduce the great thinkers of the past and the spiritual dimension. In this regard, I propose to compare, briefly, Charles Taylor and Voegelin to illustrate the potential for philosophic kinship. [13]

[11] Barry Cooper, *Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 407.

[12] *Ibid,* 434.

[13] Michael Walsh in his perceptive introduction to Voegelin's *The History of Political Ideas: The Later Middle Ages* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1999), has also noted the similarity with Taylor. One of the many strengths of Professor Cooper's fine study is that he does indicate when Voegelin's interpretations fit with works of other scholars.

Both Voegelin and Taylor are acutely aware of the transition to modernity and indeed have made contributions to understanding this transition. Their resulting common critical assessment of modernity is worth some reflection. I will later criticize Voegelin's argument in some respects. At this point I want merely to explore three areas of similarity between Voegelin's and Taylor's analyses: first, the epistemological and methodological constraints they perceived in modernity - to which I will devote some attention; second, the renewal of interest in the history of philosophy exemplified by their thought - which I will only briefly discuss; and third, the recognition of transcendence and consciousness in their philosophies - which may well provide the most fruitful area for identifying a philosophic kinship between Voegelin and Taylor.

In the first area of analysis, the critique of modernity's epistemological and methodological premises, Taylor employs such categories as instrumental reason, disengaged subject, and naturalism. These, of course, are not concepts Voegelin commonly uses when he tackles this topic in *7he New Science of Politics* or "The Origins of Scientism." Nevertheless, there is a striking congruence of thought between their approaches.

Taylor summarizes four key principles of "scientific" or naturalistic study which are "obstacles" to an adequate study of the self and to philosophical enquiry:

1 The object of study is to be taken "absolutely," that is, not in its meaning for us or any other subject, but as it is on its own ("objectively ").

2.The object is what it is independent of any descriptions or interpretations offered of it by any subjects.

3. The object can in principle be captured in explicit description.

4. The object can in principle be described without reference to its surroundings. [14]

[14] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self.- The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 33-4.

These principles form the foundation for the oft-lamented reductionist model of human experience, thought, and action. In one of his first writings Taylor describes the consequence of this model:

This theory of experience has turned out to be an embarrassment for everyone, and in recent times this same basic objectivist orientation rather expresses itself in the perspective of a reductive explanation of human action and experience in physiological and ultimately in physical and chemical terms. In this way we shall be able to treat man, like everything else, as an object among other objects, characterizing him purely in terms of properties which are independent of his experience - in this case, his selfexperience; and treat the lived experience of, for example, sensation as epiphenomenom, or perhaps as a misdescription of what is really a brain-state. *[15]*

The above four statements characterizing the scientific approach, in short, are inappropriate for the human sciences. *[16]* (Polanyi and others would also argue that these features have become inappropriate for the natural sciences.) Taylor disputes each of these four features. Humans cannot be studied as "absolute" objects independent of a person's self-interpretation: "What I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me." As Taylor further states: "We are not selves in the way that we are organisms, or we don't have selves in the way we have hearts and livers."17 Not only is a study of human self not identical with a study of a chair but the language required for the study works differently in two respects. Language cannot ever fully capture in an explicit description a self, and such language is not independent of a language community.

The language we have come to accept articulates the issues of the good for us. But we cannot have fully articulated what we are taking as given, what we are simply counting with, in using this language....But articulation can by its very nature never be completed. We clarify one language with another, which in turn can be further unpacked, and so on. Wittgenstein has made this point familiar.

[15] Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers, Vol. I* (Cambridge:

Cambridge
University Press, 1985), 47.

[16] Taylor cites both Wittgenstein and Polyani in developing his position: *Sources.* 460, 514, 592 fn. 27.

[17] Taylor, *Sources,* 34.

A language only exists and is maintained within a language community....

My self-definition is understood as an answer to the question Who am 1. And this question finds its original sense in the interchange of speakers. I define who I am by defining where I speak from, in the family tree, in social space, in the geography of social statuses and functions, in my intimate relations to the ones I love, and also crucially in the space of moral and spiritual orientation within which my most important defining relations are lived out.[18]

This picture of the "obstacles" to an adequate study of the self and to philosophical enquiry in general is consistent with Voegelin's critique of scientism. Voegelin's language differs from Taylor's but substantively there is little difference between their arguments. To recall briefly Voegelin's argument: the mathematized sciences have become the model for all realms of study; what cannot be placed within the confines of this model is held to be irrelevant or illusory; reality becomes defined by the axioms of mathematized science; and so on. Both would agree that it is necessary to clear away these epistemological constraints or obstacles for philosophy to flourish. Voegelin would surely agree with Taylor's call for the "retrieval of the lived experience or creative activity underlying our awareness of the world, which [has] been occluded or denatures bu the regnant mechanistic construal."[19]

As a concomitant of the clearing away of the epistemology of modernity Taylor has developed - in the footsteps of Wittgenstein and others - a philosophy of language similar to Voegelin's. We have seen that for Taylor humans are in part constituted by language through our self-interpretations and that these self-interpretations are inescapably part of our language community. It is vital to note that Taylor explicitly criticizes those who stop at this point. His criticism of Habermas, as one instance, is precisely because of Habermas's failure to go beyond the social exchange in language. Habermas treats language as if an exposing of its internal structure were sufficient. In contrast, Taylor argues that a striking feature of language is its transcendental dimension. This can be seen in the remarkable capacity humans have of exercising reflective detachment and independence, which Taylor sees (but Habermas, for instance, does not) as an inherent feature of our language. Socrates, the prophets, and psalmists "stood out against the almost unanimous obloquy of their communities." As Taylor further explains: "They are still in a web, but the one they define themselves by is no longer the given historical community. It is the saving remnant, or the community of like-minded souls, or the company of philosophers, or the small group of wise men in the mass of fools, as the Stoics saw it, or the close circle of friends that played such a role in Epicurean thought."[20]

[18] Taylor, Sources, 34-5.

[19] Taylor, Sources, 460.

[20] Taylor, Sources, 37. Taylor's views clearly remove him from the ordinary language camp of analytical philosophy which he himself has called "arid." As quoted in Michael Ignatieff, "Of Human Interest," *Saturday Night* (December, 1985), 65.

The transcendental dimension is also detectable in the theistic grounding of the goods humans seek. What Habermas and others do not accredit is "the search for moral sources outside the subject through languages which resonate *within* him or her,, the grasping of an order which is inescapably indexed to a personal vision ."[21] There is always "the danger of a regression to subjectivism," he add, but with integrity the task is possible.

We can never fully articulate "the search for moral sources" from "the grasping of an order." In a language strikingly reminiscent of Voegelin, Taylor sets forth the human context:

That description and experience are bound together in this constitutive relation admits of casual influence in both directions: it can sometimes allow us to alter experience by coming to fresh insight; but more fumdamentally it circumscribes insight through the deeply embedded shape of experience for US.[22]

This echoes Voegelin's much quoted statement: "Man exists in this metaxy, in the tension 'between god and man.' Any construction of man as a world-immanent entity will destroy the meaning of existence, because it deprives man of his specific humanity."[23]

The need for a renewal of the history of philosophy is a second area of similarity between Voegelin and Taylor. With the critical destruction of the epistemological and methodological "obstacles" of modernity, both the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy become pertinent again. After all, the history of science is of little value to a practicing chemist, except in the idiosyncratic senses of satisfying an archaeological interest or of providing an emblematic identity of being on the side of the enlightenment against the forces of darkness. Similarly, logical positivism had an identical effect: the history of philosophy might be of an archaeological interest but not of much importance otherwise, and its emblematic identity was best shed. With the break in philosophy mainly engineered by Wittgenstein, however, logical positivism and its variants have lost their persuasive power.

[21] Taylor, Sources, 5 10.

[22] Taylor, Human Agency and Language, 37.

[23] Eric Voegelin, Anamnesis, trans. and ed. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 104.

Voegelin's position on the philosophy of history and the history of philosophy is too well known to need summarizing, but let me briefly note some of Taylor's contributions. Taylor has revisited

the historical figures in philosophy, i.e. Voegelin's great thinkers, not only to achieve some perspicuity about our own time but to understand better the traditional topics in political philosophy.

The Source of the Self- the Making of the Modern Identity is a conceivable project because the historical figures of philosophy have helped to form our identity or, in Taylor's phrase, provided us with often clashing moral horizons. Philosophers of the past were not dealing with illusions or merely subjective recommendations. Indeed, there are questions commonly addressed by philosophers in history that have shaped our identity: what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self; what kind of life is worth living; what can provide respect, a full life, and dignity to a human; why it is inescapable for humans to have a moral horizon or framework; and so on.[24] Through these thinkers, and within the wider economic-political culture, the modem identity has been molded. In sum, for Taylor the history of philosophy is necessary for perceiving the sources of the modem self, let alone addressing the various tensions within our identity and within modernity itself. Are not Taylor's views compatible with Voegelin? In one of Cooper's formulations of Voegelin's conception of political science, he states that relating the "comprehensive past of humanity to the meaningful present surely remained the task of Voegelinian political science."[25]

Taylor's approach is clearly not a "philosophy of history" in any traditional textbook sense. He does not present a reductionist model whether it has economics or sociobiology as its base; nor does he describe history as a script in a conversation among philosophers. The very idea of history's having an intelligible historical pattern with a directional momentum is as alien to him as it is to the Voegelin of volume IV. What would be common between Taylor and Voegelin is the view that philosophy cannot fully articulate and grasp "the moral horizon" for humanity. Where Voegelin uses "symbol-concept" to show the openness of language and the quest for understanding and meaning, Taylor uses "designative-expressive." Michael P. Morrissey has succinctly states Voegelin's view of the philosopher's purpose as follows: "The therapeutic recovery of the engendering experiences, made transparent by the meditative exegesis of their symbols in their original emergence, must become the critical task of philosophy today."[26] This captures, I believe, Taylor's efforts in writing *The Sources of the Self* and his view of the task for contemporary philosophy.

[24] Taylor, Sources, 3, 14,15, 21. All of this is not to deny that Taylor's interpretation of Hegel or of Plato, as examples, will differ with Voegelin. A comparison would be fruitful.

[25] Cooper, 327.

[26] Michael P. Morrissey, *Consciousness and Transcendence: the Theological of Eric Voegelin* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 122.

The philosophies of language and of history depend upon, and are broadened by, the larger view of what Voegelin calls consciousness. This is the third area of similarity I want to discuss and the one, as I mentioned, which has the greatest potential for philosophic kinship. Consciousness is a category that Taylor refuses to use because of is awkward philosophical heritage of subject

object and, one suspects, because of its inevitable reliance on a geological-like layering of concepts.

Yet, there are many places where Voegelin's and Taylor's thought coincide. To the ear of Voegelinians, Taylor's formulations may at first seem odd - although no odder, I assure you, than Voegelin sounds to Taylor. For example, Taylor has described his search as "the exploration of order through personal resonance."[27] It would be as inaccurate to call this subjective as it would to so label Voegelin's search. The inward turn is necessary for many reasons: one cannot find solace in some intelligible pattern of history nor in some other "touchable" external source. As Taylor explains his position:

We are now in an age in which a publicly accessible cosmic order of meanings is an impossibility. The only way we can explore the order in which we are set with an aim to defining moral sources is through this part of personal resonance. This is true not only of epiphanic art but of other efforts, in philosophy, in criticism, which attempt the same search....1 have throughout sought language to clarify the issues, and I have found this in images of profound personal resonance like 'epiphany,' 6moral sources,1 'disengagement,' 'empowering,' and others. [28]

Without use of such Voegelinian categories as the beginning and beyond, consciousness, thing-reality, and It-reality, Taylor is constructing a position similar to Voegelin. Taylor uses the poet Rilke for illustration:

[27] Taylor, *Sources, 511.*

[28] Taylor, *Sources, 512.*

To read ... Rilke is to get an articulation of our farther, stronger intuitions, of the way the world is not simply an ensemble of objects for our use, but makes a further claim on us. Rilke expresses this claim in images of 'praising' and 'making inward,' which seem to lay a demand of attention, or careful scrutiny, of respect for what is there. And this demand, though connected with what we are as language beings, is not simply one of self-fulfillment. It emanates from the world. It is hard to be clear in this domain, just because we are deep into a language of personal resonance. But something extremely important to us is being articulated here through whatever groping and fragmentary one-sidedness. To declare this whole kind of thinking without object is to incur a huge self-inflicted wound.[29]

Taylor's careful and sensitive description is clearly similar in nature to Voegelin's position. Listen to Voegelin's extraordinary interpretation of Genesis:

The authors of Genesis I, we prefer to assume, were human beings of the same kinds as we are; they had to face the same kind of reality, with the same kind of consciousness, as we do; and when, in their pursuit of truth, they put down their words on whatever material, they had to raise, and to cope with, the same questions we confront when we put down our words. In the situation created by the question: what is that kind of reality where the spoken word evokes the structures of which it speaks? They had to find the language symbols that would adequately express the experience and structure of what I have called It-reality.[30]

Not to belabour the point, but in both positions consciousness is the locus; reality is not a plurality of objects; languages does not work as a mirror or a labeling device; and, most importantly, there is a depth to which we respond without being able either to control it or to fully articulate it.[31]

It is more difficult with the second complex of materials - empirical political history, its institutions and processes - to find allies with whom Voegelin can join. Voegelin's writings on totalitarianism might be cited as one area where there are clear allies, and his own contribution has been original and significant. But even here it is less the institutions and processes that he has examined than it is the experiential origins, the meaning, and significance for Western civilization. It has been his analysis of experiences and symbols that were his concerns and that provided his insights.

[29] Taylor, *Sources, 513.*

[30] Eric Voegelin, *Order and History: In Search* of *Order,* vol. V (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 19.

[31] A fuller treatment of the relationship between analytical philosophy, Taylor, and Voegelin can be found in Porter, "Voegelin and Analytical Philosophy," paper to the APSA conference, September, 1995.

The internal operation of democracy and its various institutions and processes have all been altered in this century, and new institutions and processes have appeared. The very idea of a nation-state and its sovereignty, once the bedrock of modem political science, is problematic. The growth of international organizations and alliances, public and private, have also altered international relations. In this new shift in empirical political reality, which equals in impact the shift from the middle ages and its institutions and practices to the nation-state system, the standard concepts in political science will all need to be re-examined: citizenship, statesmanship, common good, community, legitimacy, justice, and so on. When Plato and Aristotle discussed these concepts, they knew that the life of the polis was in crisis and that a return to that form of political life was not possible. Yet, although both clearly knew about empires, there was no attempt to redefine these political concepts. The political science of Aristotle - the cataloguing of constitutions, oligarchies, democracies, etc. - is of little value in understanding an empire. Still, the political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle continued to direct our attention to the permanent questions: How should one live? What is the source of right? How can power be made legitimate? Their having addressed such questions constitutes the major contribution of Plato and Aristotle to our political existence. I suspect that Voegelin's contribution is a similar one.

V. Evaluation and Criticism

There is a sense in which it is premature to present an evaluation of Voegelin's contribution to the foundations of modem political science. This first volume of Cooper's two volume study primarily focuses on the early writings and the eight volume *History of Political Ideas.* Cooper

rightly refers to the *History* as Voegelin's "war effort." With the rise of ideological mass movements, the use of terror, the war, and the collapse of European culture and political systems, it is probably predictable to find an unrelenting criticism of modernity, and sometimes plain anger erupts in his treatment of a thinker. One should also add that Voegelin wrote at a time in which scholarship in the history of political thought ranged from George Sabine to Arnold Brecht. (This reminds me of Dorothy Parker's quit upon witnessing Katherine Hepburn's first theatrical performance. Says Dorothy: "Hepburn's emotional range was from A to B.") All in all, this was not a time that lent itself to a benign or serene philosophic response.

There are two areas in Voegelin's thought which hinder his potential contribution to modem political science: (A) his understanding of modernity and (B) the philosophy of consciousness. Voegelin has of course written original and insightful treatments of both areas, but each has a dimension which hampers his contribution to the foundations of political science.

A. Understanding of Modernity

Voegelin's treatment of the civilizational schism ending the medieval synthesis and leading to the transition to modernity can be found in volumes III, IV, V of *The History of Political Ideas.* He provides a complicated narrative weaving together political events, spiritual movements, theology, and philosophy. It would be difficult to imagine a treatment that better captures the meaning and significance of the transition to modernity. It is cultural history in the deepest and fullest sense. Yet, it seems to me that his story of modernity is not adequate with respect to the new understandings of reason and of political institutions that developed during the transition to modernity.

In discussing reason, Voegelin too quickly refers to scientism, nominalism, phenomenalism, and the like. The weight of his discussion is on the splitting of faith and reason and on the narrowing of the role of reason to little more than mathematizing externalities. Voegelin's excessive, in my view, praise of Bodin in volume V of the *History is* instructive. While Copernicus' cosmogony is belittled by Bodin as having no significance, Bodin's conception of the cosmos as a spiritual-political hierarchy is extolled by Voegelin. [32] Both Bodin and Voegelin are wrong, but not simply in the scientific sense that Galileo, Kepler, and Newton eventually proved Copernicus to be right. Bodin and Voegelin are wrong because they misconceived the nature of reason. Copernicus argued that his theory was true about reality; it had elegance and beauty; and, above all, its very truth meant that it could reveal more about nature. To have a conception of reason not bound by earth echoes Plato: our home is the universe which we inhabit through reason. (The Platonic monk, Novarum, taught his pupil Copernicus well.) Is it any wonder that Copernicus speaks in an ecstatic voice of his vision? Here was a discovery that truly shook the foundations. [33]Why is this not an example of an insight, of a differentiated consciousness, of a leap in being--all phrases of Voegelin? Reason was dramatically better understood than it had been. Locke and many others could still feel the excitement some two centuries later. Such an experience cannot be dismissed as simply a power-trip by anemic souls. Their view of themselves and their relationship with reality was changed. Any narrative of the transition to modernity must take cognizance of this development of reason; a philosophical anthropology must also do so. In discussing political institutions as they have evolved in modernity, Voegelin also has to discuss the state of political science as a discipline. With some justification, he speaks disparagingly of

the political science which arose from modernity. He characterizes it as having three parts: an understanding of human nature that is derived from the Renaissance; an understanding of political systems that is composed of nation-states; an understanding of political theory as bound by the cultural parochialism of the English-speaking world. In short, the almost nonexistence of philosophical anthropology in this conception of political science helps to explain the pathetic state of the discipline in the mid-fifties. In an attempt to enrich the study of politics, Voegelin states in many different ways that a separation of political ideas from reality is not possible. There is an interpenetration of ideas and institutions that constitute nations and political history. The critique of contemporary political science in *The New Science of* Politics is well known as is his criticism of the substanceless Oxford political philosophers. He is justified to criticize the "nominalistic taxonomies" purporting to be scientific studies of political reality.

[32] Cooper, 244.
[33] Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Crditical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 142-153.

Great thinkers, as Voegelin said, are one of the pillars of a proper political science. The great liberal thinkers of English political thought--Hobbes, Locke, Mill--are less than impressive in Voegelin's eyes. Mill's significance barely ranks above a footnote. Hobbes comes out the best. He at least had seen the need to suppress the Puritans and the Presbyterians, and he was brutally frank about human competitiveness, self-interest, and cupidity. Hobbes's problem, as Voegelin once said, is that he thought that he had said it all, which, I might add, is precisely what Hobbes did not claim. Voegelin also had little respect for "the smirk of Locke's political philosophy, which knows only rights of property and no social obligations. [34]

All of these views of Voegelin's on contemporary political science and his criticism of the English "great thinkers" will no doubt strike many as quite sound. Nevertheless, for reasons I will not argue here, I believe that his views are sufficiently skewed that he has not seen clearly three features of Western political thought and practice, especially as found in the English speaking world: the role of society, the nature of political activity, and the connections with the stream of Western civilization, from the ancient Greeks to Christendom to the present.

First, one cannot but note that there are in his comments the continental European bemusement, if not contempt, for the non-philosophic English world, but this has mislead Voegelin as to what English political thinkers are actually doing and why. With the classic liberals--Hobbes, Locke, and Mill--society is a given; it is not to be made by thinkers and governments. Even Hobbes does not make a society. His worry is that without an indisputable place for settling conflicts, the society will be impossible to sustain. He only wants a minimal order, an arbitrator of conflicts; there are no positive duties mandated by Hobbes for the Leviathan. There is, for lack of a better phrase, a Protestant confidence that permeates the English political world. A central government is not required to operate a church, nor is one required to operate a society. Locke's description of the state of nature is the classic representation of this confidence. Government alone represents neither the nation-state nor the collective identity. The often maligned autonomous individual of classic liberalism lives within a stable, solid, sustaining society. In sum, Voegelin

has not fully understood the meaning and significance of the thought of the English political philosophers nor has he fully grasped the realities of their society.

[34] History, vol. V, 91.

Second, political activity within such a society is strikingly nonintellectual. Michael Oakeshott and Bernard Crick have explained at length the nature of political activity. (It may be that Crick's association of Aristotle with political activity needs some qualifications. The tradition of political activity certainly did not exist in Aristotle's turbulent world.) The activity of politics is an art and is nurtured by a tradition within a stable society. The continental philosophers concern about creating a society and the insistence on the relationship between ideas and institutions seem curiously intellectual, arid, and beside the point. In an analogy that delights generation of university students, Crick explains that the activity of politics is like making love--it requires long practice. The comfortable parochialism, which so irritated Voegelin, may well represent long practice. In such a context, it is possible that the so-called "nominalistic taxonomies" may well reflect actual political activity. My worry is that a shift has taken place within the political system and that, as a consequence, political activity has seeped into other areas, and, just as Voegelin often urged, we need to examine the actual facts. Still the problem is that Voegelin did not quite perceive the nonintellectual but philosophically sound tradition of politics in the English speaking world.

Third, by misunderstanding the role of society and the nature of political activity in the English world Voegelin could not give proper credit to their meaning and significance. The practices and traditions of the politics found in Western liberalism and the plurality of institutions within the society and political system embody Western civilization from the ancient Greeks through Christendom to the present.

B. Philosophy of Consciousness

Serious questions about Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness will need to be addressed in a full length study. These questions should be analytic and philosophic rather than primarily theological. The area most in need of study and where there is the greatest need for amendments is epistemology. John Ranieri has recently asked the question: "While rejecting the positivist claim that knowing is only valid when modeled on the method of the natural sciences, did he not tacitly accept the positivist account of what it is that constitutes knowing in the natural sciences?" [35]This is correct. In fact, the question points to a deeper problem which needs to be studied. Voegelin continuously resorts to a mode of analysis and a use of language which is at dissonance with his ontology, particularly his claims about the metaxy. As one brief example, the category of consciousness as luminous is problematic in many ways. Consciousness as luminous purportedly is free of the hypostatization of experience by being luminous: i.e., direct and immediate, unmediated, privileged, and therefore undistorted. This is a remarkable set of descriptors, identical with the claims originally made for sense data from Hobbes and Locke, to Logical Positivism and its mutations. Instead of the mechanical-like body as the authenticating receptor for knowing, we now have luminous consciousness. His use of the word symbol reflects the same kind of problems. In contrast to mere concepts, symbols do reflect the originating

experience and as such have the authenticating power to persuade and illuminate. But there are no such privileged words by which consciousness and reality are linked; there are only usages within a context. To cite Voegelin's remarks on the reflection and the metaxy as immunizations from such criticism is not sufficient. Voegelin's epistemology is not adequate to his task of addressing political reality in a new way. [36]

In addition to epistemological considerations, one other area particularly needs to be addressed: the relationship between pragmatic political history and Voegelin's theory of consciousness. Again, there is a tendency to use dichotomous language where one set of categories is set off from another, just as we saw "luminous" and "symbolic" work with respect to "concepts '" and "empirical knowledge." It is a brilliant insight to view history as a history of theophany and to break with volumes one to three in *Order and History.* Serious questions can still be asked: How can society embody the life of reason? What is the relationship and how is it constituted between consciousness as luminous and pragmatic history ?[37]

[35] Eric Voegelin and the Good Society, 3 1.

[36] Porter, "A Philosophy of History as a Philosophy of Consciousness." *Denver Quarterly* 10 (1975): 96-104; "From the Other Shore: Eric Voegelin's Philosophy of History and Consciousness," *Marxist Perspective* (Summer 1980): 152-169; John Ranieri, *Eric Voegelin and the Good Society,* 8, 27-33, 127-36. Ranieri makes some useful suggestions for amending Voegelin's position.

Let me conclude with a brief recitation of the contribution Voegelin provides to the theory of consciousness and to the mind-body literature. The significance and meaning of consciousness for human social and historical existence have been Voegelin's unmatched endowment for the end of modernity. It is immensely fruitful to conceive of humanity as participating in the process of reality, as understanding within the metaxy, and as pursuing the Question. At the level of pertinence and significance, Voegelin would have a great deal in common with those thinkers who stress human powers to seek and to understand. For example, he would surely agree with Martha Nussbaum's characterization for the questing consciousness: "We are all of us, insofar as we interact morally and politically, fanciful projectors, makers of and believers in fiction and metaphors."38 In a similar vein, Wittgenstein's famous phrase, "to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life," is often laboriously and lugubriously explained as an injunction to relate language with a context in order to achieve meaning. The explication, rather, should be aimed at the verb 'to imagine.' Such again is the power of questing consciousness. In the worlds of Prospero:

... like the baseless fabric of this vision, The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples, the great globe itself, Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve. And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, Leave not a rack behind: We are such stuff As dreams are made of, and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.[39]

Such is the context for human existence; searching for meaning and significance is what humans do with consciousness, and the quest opens all reality to our reverent participation and

exploration.[40]

We can all look forward to Professor Cooper's second volume.

[37] John Ranieri has suggested that there is a striking Kantian legacy in Voegelin. To the degree that this should be true, Voegelin's break in volume four would have to be recast as a mere shift. This would be a matter of deep regret, in my opinion, since I prefer to think of Voegelin as a true postmodern in the sense of the second Whitehead or Wittgenstein.

[38] Martha Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 140.

[39] *The Tempest*, Act IV.

[40] An attempt at a fuller treatment of the philosophy of consciousness can be found in my paper, "Searle,
Voegelin, and Consciousness," given at the APSA Convention, 1997.