I regret not being able to give these remarks in person, for the panelists have offered five very stimulating papers.

I have entitled my remarks "In Search of the Body Politic." Each of the papers, in its own way, addresses Voegelin's search for an appropriate symbolization of order in history and the history of order, understood as the search for the symbolization and locus of the harmony of the body politic. It is not surprising that harmony (concordia, or concordantia) should be a dominant theme in the quest for order for both strive for an intelligible reconciliation of similar and dissimilar things. What is interesting is the degree to which the image of the body as a metaphor for understanding the order of political life takes center stage.

In emphasizing Voegelin's attempt to articulate the harmony of the timeless with time, Professor Sandoz's paper points us to the centrality of the Incarnation in Voegelin's thought. Revelation is understood as "the fact of God's presence in reflective use of the image of the cross as consciousness" (Sandoz, p. 6), a grace which, in Voegelin's words "imposes a supernatural form on the nature of man" just as the eternal Logos was made flesh (NSP, quoted at Sandoz, p. 7). Reflection and so political reflection for Voegelin, is always embodied reflection which is measured and confirmed by the revelation of the Measure itself.

Professor Buijs's account of immanentization is also an examination of Voegelin's attempt to articulate the harmony of the timeless with time. He draws our attention to Voegelin's Rasse und Staat, where "the modern state is analyzed as an immanent particularization of the universal transcendent corpus mysticum." (Buijs, p. 8) As Buijs reminds us, for Voegelin (as for Carl Schmitt) modern secular ideology is marked by the metamorphosis of religion not religion's disappearance. At issue is the symbolization of a mystical body against which both epistemology and politics are to be measured. The body of Christ is made flesh in a corrupt and dangerous way. This deformed metamorphosis profoundly affects what Voegelin calls "the balance of consciousness" because the balance of consciousness itself requires an appropriate balance of spiritual and material; the secular immanentization of the corpus mysticum yields a corrupt "political psycho-hygiene" (Buijs, p. 11) and so a corrupted political order.

Professor Riedl's paper is a most helpful re-examination of Joachim's relation (or lack thereof) to Voegelin's account of Gnosticism. Of particular importance to the present theme is his account of Joachim's use of the form of the cross for understanding the order and harmony of monastic living. The cross, as the illustration shows, literally forms the physical displacement of the several bodies in relation to each other. In Joachim's ideal of monastic life, the monks form the body of the cross in both hierarchical and harmonious fashion. Joachim's mistake, as Riedl observes, was to mistake this embodied cross as empirical evidence of the possibility of the third age of the Holy Ghost.
Professor von Heyking’s account of mixed constitutionalism and religious pluralism in Nicholas of Cusa is a valuable resuscitation of this important medieval political thinker. The problem of the embodied spirit is present here too: How is the voice or judgment of God to be rendered incarnate in human affairs? Cusanus’s articulations of conciliarism and custom as the embodiment of God’s spirit are, in von Heyking’s presentation, models for understanding how religious and political differences can be rendered harmonious without dispatching the standard of ultimate (Christian) truth. Yet it is surprising that von Heyking does not make use of the two splendid and dominant metaphors which frame the De concordantia catholica. The work opens with an extended discussion of Christ as the spouse of the Church. Marriage two "compound bodies" become one sets the stage for understanding the temporal harmony of the body politic. A different and more elaborate metaphor of the body concludes the work (at III.585ff). Drawing upon recent physiological theories, Nicholas depicts the Church and Empire as different systems within a unified body and so both subject to the good of the body. The Church is represented by the circulatory system the divine laws are the arteries which branch out bringing the life-giving spirit, while canon laws are the veins which serve as intermediaries between the arteries and the flesh. The Empire is represented by the nervous system imperial laws branch out, connecting the brain to the bones and so contributing to the support of the flesh which is always in danger of decaying. Complementary and interrelated functions allow diverse institutions and dispositions to coexist in orderly, harmonious fashion.

It has become fashionable in certain circles to derive a political theory from Trinitarian relations. Voegelin, and the analyses today, locates the symbolization of the body politic not in the Trinity but in the Incarnation. In attending to the Incarnation, we are reminded that the fragility of order in the soul and the polis alike requires the maintenance of both the body and the mystery of the corpus mysticum. "The face of faces is veiled in all faces, and seen in a riddle." (Nicholas of Cusa, De visione Dei, vi.)