First, it is an honor to have an opportunity to respond to two papers of such quality—of such high learning and careful application. In fact, the richness of substance in each of these papers has presented me with something of a dilemma. I can't hope to do justice to the intricacies of the questions they raise. To properly answer Professor Corey's questions about the viability of Voegelin's reading of Aristotle on *phronēsis* would take a paper at least as long as his own. And Professor Henry's paper on civil theology in a gnostic age raises philosophical, political, and historical topics of great complexity.

Also, it seemed to me at first that, because of their very different topics, I would not be able to respond to these two papers from any common point of theoretical concern. But after reading them a few times, it struck me that behind these two papers there is, indeed, a common background problem. So, beginning with an apology for not addressing head on the details of these excellent papers, I will discuss briefly what I call this background problem, and then indicate how I see it relating to these two papers.

The background problem is this. Voegelin identifies at the start of *Order and History* what he calls "the primordial community of being," consisting of "God and man, world and society." This "quaternarian structure" of reality, as he puts it, consists of these four areas: divine or sacred reality; the individual person or psyche; the natural world; and the social or political realm. These four areas of meaning together constitute the *cosmos*, the whole of reality. In cosmological understanding, these four areas are conceptually very much bound up with each other. The natural world is perceived as saturated with divine essence and intention; the individual psyche is
not carefully distinguished from divine and natural forces; the social world is perceived as corresponding to its divine or celestial counterpart; and so on. But in the course of historical time each of these areas comes gradually to be differentiated from each other, and differentiated more and more, so that each area becomes more and more recognized in its relative conceptual autonomy.

For example: the objects, structures, relations, and events that make up what we think of as the natural world come to be understood as distinct from the divine essence. This conceptual autonomy allows the world of nature to be analyzed as a complex network of finite intelligibilities without recourse to direct explanatory reliance on divine being, action, or will. Thus the natural sciences emerge, which eventually take shape as rational-critical analyses that place ever-increasing emphasis on the contingency of material being and material processes; on a cosmic timescape of mind-boggling scale; on the evolutionary development of organisms on earth; and so on.

These developments create new and ongoing problems in properly understanding the relationship of the natural world to the realm of divine being. For also, the understanding of divine reality, following out its own processes of differentiation, evolves as well. First of all, there is the discovery of the radical transcendence of the divine ground or essence, a discovery that leads to a revolution in human self-understanding, a revolution that hasn't yet been fully played out. Then of course insights into transcendent mystery advance, too, through the increasing clarity arising from mystical meditation, contemplation, and prayer, and through achievements in theology.

Each of these two components, then, in the primordial community of being--the natural world, and divine being--has become ever-more carefully differentiated, first of all from each other, and as well within its own structures and meanings. And with each significant advance of differentiation, new demands and difficulties have arisen. Most basically, there is the challenge of keeping up with--or perhaps better catching up with--the discoveries in each realm. Who among us is up to date--globally up to date--in the mystical, philosophical, and theological understanding of divine reality? And who among us is up to date in developments across the range of the natural sciences in such way that we can integrate their various findings with each
other? Secondarily but crucially, then, there is the difficulty of rationally integrating the two areas of meaning: of working out the precise and true character of the intelligible relations that obtain between the natural world and divine transcendence. The problems involved in this task can be suggested through the mention of a single dread word: "creationism."

I'll just mention developments in the differentiation of the other two core elements in the community of being. With respect to the individual human person or psyche, we have the classical psychologies, especially the noetic analysis deriving from Plato and Aristotle; later on the Scholastic detailing of mental habits, powers and acts; then the results of the modern "turn to the subject" following Descartes; Kant's epistemology; the Hegelian and post-Hegelian analyses of the subject; existentialist and phenomenological examinations of the self; and all the contributions of twentieth-century psychology and cognitional analysis. Next, with respect to the social or political sphere, we have the cumulative accounts of the classical and modern analyses, including political science, political philosophy, sociology, cultural anthropology, jurisprudence, and so on. To work out the structural relationships that truly obtain between these two areas of the analysis of individual consciousness and the analysis of political reality is a tremendous task.

And if we return our attention now to the larger picture of the community of being, we can see that there is the need to relate, first, our ever-deepening understanding of the nature of the human subject, and second, our legacy of insights into social and political meaning, to our ever-deepening understanding of, first, the natural world, and finally, of divine transcendence. The problem, in a word, is one of integration--of integrating all that has been so carefully differentiated. To put it another way, the problem is that of remembering and conceptually reestablishing the unity of the cosmos, the ultimate unity of the quaternarian structure of being.

It is tempting to sidestep this problem of integration. And in a sense it is easy to sidestep it, because the differentiating processes of many centuries have rendered each of the four basic areas of meaning powerfully distinctive, powerfully vivid in its own right. One consequence of this vividness has been that, sometimes, one or another area in the primordial community of being has been narrowly focused upon and taken to be the only real area of being. For example, after the sharp differentiation of transcendence and immanence, transcendence has come to be viewed by some as an illusion, and the scientific analysis of the natural world taken to be the sole
basis on which to understand reality, including the realities of individual consciousness and the social realm—an attitude evidenced by some of the adherents of, for example, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology.

Another consequence of the vivid differentiation of the four areas of being, and one more subtle in its dangers, is the tendency take the conceptual autonomy of each of these areas as indicating their ontological autonomy. That is, one supposes that one can analyze the essential or the ultimate meanings in each realm without ever grounding that analysis in an account of its relationship to the other three partners in the primordial community of being. It is a concern with precisely this kind of oversight that leads David Levy, in his recent book on the philosopher Hans Jonas, to applaud Jonas's criticism of Heidegger's treatment of Dasein as being insufficiently grounded in an understanding and appreciation of the organistic basis of human existence. Heidegger, in Jonas's and Levy's view, fails to properly integrate his highly differentiated understanding of human subjectivity with a correspondingly differentiated analysis of the world of the natural organism upon which subjectivity is founded. Or, for an example more immediate to our concerns here, Voegelin's theory of consciousness is, among other things, an effort to integrate, or to re-integrate, the highly differentiated understanding of human consciousness in Western thought with his profound understanding of both the history of the differentiation of divine transcendence and the history of political thought and realization. Always, the challenge is to recover the cosmos: to acknowledge the quaternarian structure of reality, and to work out the new problems of relationship that ongoing differentiations keep presenting us with.

Now I will try to indicate the pertinence of this background problem to the two papers of Professor Corey and Professor Henry, with their very different subject matters.

First, Professor Henry's analysis of the difficulties involved in developing "a civil theology that would provide significance for political existence" while simultaneously encouraging openness to transcendence and amor Dei is intimately related to the problem of integrating a highly differentiated legacy of distinctively political affirmations of natural rights, political liberty, and political progress with a highly differentiated appreciation of divine truth and meaning. One of the many ways in which this problem of integration is raised in his paper is in
terms of the idea of human dignity. On the one hand, modern democracy tends to ground human dignity in the freedom of the individual to pursue happiness in an autonomous way, which frequently enough leads to the pursuit of material success, enjoyment, and self-interest. On the other hand, as he writes, "Christian philosophical anthropology denies [the primacy of] human autonomy and sees human dignity in man's resemblance to and participation in God." There is the question of whether these two notions of dignity can be reconciled or integrated.

An appreciation of the history of differentiations, such as Voegelin's, makes it clear that the two realms of the political and religious cannot be integrated by forcing the two back into a less differentiated relationship. It is unnecessary--indeed it is impossible--to directly redivinize the secular political realm. There are always people who wish to live in or reinstate a theocracy, or erode the constitutional barriers between church and state. They tend to be people not too well versed in the differentiation of the mysteriousness of divine transcendence, or that of the interiority of the human subject. The actual challenge of integration is highly problematic. It is true that the idea of natural rights and the political rights of individual liberty are, in the end, indefensible without, and metaphysically depend upon, their ground and sustenance in a radically transcendent divine love. The notion of inherent, inalienable personal dignity and personal rights depend, finally, on a transcendent divine source.

On the other hand, this divine transcendence is mysterious. In anthropological terms it is universal and global; in historical terms it is a permanent flux of divine presence; and it is a mystery in process of revelation. It is not the possession of any one people, any one church, any one scripture. And it remains for us a pretty puzzle just precisely how the relative fulfillment of human happiness and justice on this earth is related to human participation in a transcendent fullness of meaning and justice. A civil theology responsive to the pressures of the present and future can only be one that respects this puzzle, and is grounded in an ecumenically tolerant mysticism. And the precondition for the emergence of such a civil theology would seem to include a sufficient number of statesmen, legislators, educators, and cultural leaders becoming deeply knowledgeable about both the historical differentiation of a conceptually autonomous realm of social, political, and cultural values, and the history of differentiating insight into divine transcendence across the spectrum of global religions--for only this would provide a proper grounding for appreciating the actual relationship between God and society.
Finally, a few words on Professor Corey's excellent paper on *phronēsis*. Professor Corey concludes, through close textual analysis, that Voegelin's reading of the meaning of *phronēsis* in Aristotle's ethical theory--as being in essence what Voegelin calls "a movement of being" in which divine reason realizes itself in the world through human deliberation and action--is not corroborated (though not contradicted either) by Aristotle's own texts. The question of the paper is: Does Aristotle say what Voegelin says he says about *phronēsis* as essentially being an experience of human permeability for divine reason? The answer would seem to be "no."

However, perhaps we could follow this question with another: Is Voegelin mistaken to *integrate* various elements of Aristotle's philosophy in the way that he has? This is where the background problem comes in. Aristotle in the texts under consideration is working out a careful analysis of individual thought processes. Elsewhere he has concerned himself with the realm of divine reality and divine transcendence. Aristotle, we can presume, has not forgotten the unity of the *cosmos*--for instance, there is his little comment in Book VII of the *Eudemian Ethics* where he writes,

> For in a sense, the divine element in us moves everything. The starting point of reasoning is not reasoning, but something greater. What, then, could be greater even than knowledge and intellect but god? (1248a26-29)

So, is it precisely correct to say, as Professor Corey does, that "at no point does [Aristotle] present *phronēsis* as anything more than a purely immanent, human power?" Is there really any notion of pure immanence in Aristotle? What if we could bring Aristotle here and ask him: "Is *phronēsis* human reasoning about concrete action that, as a movement in being, involves an *experience* of divine reality and divine reason?" Perhaps he would say, "Well, yes, but of course the connection with the divine wasn't exactly my focus in those texts."