SILENCE IS NOT ALWAYS GOLDEN: INVESTIGATING THE SILENCE
SURROUNDING THE THOUGHT OF ERIC VOEGELIN

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By
Patrick Johnston

Thesis Committee:
Manfred Henningsen, Chairperson
James Dator
Louis Herman
We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science.
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The political philosopher Eric Voegelin (1901-1985) has been described as “one of the most original and influential philosophers of our time.” However, considering the fact that most political theorists, much less political scientists, have never even heard of Eric Voegelin, his thought has not been met with deference, but silence. In confronting this quiescence, I examine how Voegelin himself, students of the thought of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss, the use and abuse of Voegelin’s thought, and the political science discipline itself contributed to the silencing of Voegelin. I also make suggestions on how the silence surrounding Voegelin’s thought can be overcome.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR  Autobiographical Reflections
CW  Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, all volumes available through the University of Missouri Press.
EVF Barry Cooper, Eric Voegelin and the Foundations of Modern Political Science
NSP New Science of Politics
NYT New York Times
OH Order and History, all volumes available through the University of Missouri Press as CW 14-18.
ROP Review of Politics
VRC Voegelin Recollected: Conversations on a Life

CW 29 Selected Correspondence: 1922-1950, edited by Jürgen Gebhardt (Forthcoming 2008).
CW 30 Selected Correspondence: 1950-1984, translated by Sandy Adler, Thomas A.


*OH IV The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1974).
Introduction

The business of introductions is always difficult because an introduction has, most simply, a double sense. On the one hand, the introduction is a space to begin something and, on the other hand, the bringing forth of something new. In the context of a master’s thesis, both purposes have to be brought out. Focusing on the silence regarding Eric Voegelin’s work then becomes a task in the original sense of introduction (introducere). Specifically, Voegelin must be led into or within the consciousness of those who are unfamiliar with Voegelin. What I offer in these pages is not an “introduction to the reading of Voegelin” à la Alexandre Kojève with Hegel. Nor am I undertaking a strict study of the important concepts and thoughts found in the works of Voegelin. In my opinion, these types of projects have failed to bring Voegelin a wider audience and I should therefore take a different tack. What I attempt to do is make a consideration of the non-exhaustive possible reasons for the silence concerning Voegelin’s work and give accompanying discussions of how and why the quiescence can be overcome. However, such a move must be accounted for. Frantz Fanon captures the essence of the self-reflection which any serious writer encounters when they have to justify their project. “Why write this work? Nobody has asked me for it. Definitely not those to whom it is addressed.”¹ In the spirit of such honesty I should ask myself: why write about Voegelin at all? And, why choose an approach to Voegelin’s work that can only be described as superficial compared to any of the volumes of secondary sources about Voegelin that have appeared to date? In what sense is Voegelin silenced? Why not compose a

biography of Voegelin instead if the purpose is to illuminate the presence of a thinker whom I believe is important? I will now take these questions in reverse order.

Biographical work on Voegelin has already been completed by Voegelin himself by answering questions from his student Ellis Sandoz. Portions of these taped conversations (then known as the “Autobiographical Memoir”) were first transcribed and published in Sandoz’s *The Voegelinian Revolution* and later as *AR*. Furthermore, a volume entitled *VRC* was recently published which reveals the human side of Voegelin which is often lost in lionizing accounts such as Sandoz’s various published writings (and those works from other writers which take their root in Sandoz’s Voegelin) on Voegelin.

An interested reader in the life of Voegelin should place *VRC* next to Voegelin’s own correspondence followed by *AR* and then the *Voegelinian Revolution*. Another important source in this area is the chapter in *Anamnesis* which collects the anamnetic experiments Voegelin conducted in 1943 concerning philosophically formative experiences from his

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3 Cooper, Barry and Jodi Brunh, eds. *VRC* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007). This book contains interviews of Voegelin’s wife Lissy Voegelin, Voegelin’s friends, and his students which “interweave episodes of pathos, humor, fear, rivalry, and ambition” while supplying readers with “a deeper understanding of the man himself.” Personally, reading *VRC* was a bit like the experience of reading Saul Bellow’s *Ravelstein* (2000) except for the fact that unlike Bellow’s portrayal of Bloom, Voegelin is not a fictional character.

4 The volumes entitled *Selected Correspondence*, CW 29 (forthcoming 2008) and CW 30 (2007) have been dedicated to Voegelin’s massive correspondence. However, these volumes only contain letters from Voegelin to recipients of his letters. The entire correspondence between Voegelin-Robert Hellman, Voegelin-Alfred Schütz, and Voegelin-Leo Strauss has been published in the following volumes: *Robert B. Hellman and Eric Voegelin: A Friendship in Letters, 1944-1984*, ed. Charles Embry (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004); *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence Between Eric Voegelin and Leo Strauss, 1934-1964*, eds. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper, (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1993[Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004]). In both editions the full correspondence is followed by essays written by Voegelin and Strauss, but the Missouri Press edition cut (for financial reasons) the interesting “commentaries” section from the Penn State edition which featured essays from James Wiser, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Stanley Rosen, Thomas J.J. Altizer, Timothy Fuller, Ellis Sandoz, Thomas L. Pangle, and David Walsh. Unfortunately, the Voegelin-Schütz correspondence in *Eine Freundschaft, die ein Leben angehalten hat: Briefwechsel 1938-1959*, eds. Gerhard Wagner and Gilbert Weiss, (Konstanz: UVK Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 2004), has not been translated into English.
early childhood. From the books already mentioned and the list of monographs in the bibliography, it is easy to see that Voegelin is not the equivalent of a long lost relic which has only recently resurfaced. Indeed, work about Voegelin first appeared during his lifetime and has continued to this day. The necessary caveat is that those who have put forth these efforts belong to a small club of sympathizers—Voegelin is practically an unknown figure when one includes the discipline of political science as a whole. The inability or unwillingness of American political science to rise above analyses of the mundane and to instead confront large and complex problems plays no small role in Voegelin’s silence as I will discuss in Chapter 5 below. And, although Voegelin was an interdisciplinary scholar, he is likewise little known in other fields in which he was comfortable such as History, Philosophy, and Theology. For the purposes of this thesis I would be carried to far afield to try to account for the silencing of Voegelin in each of those fields just mentioned. I can only instead offer up the phenomenon of overspecialization in the humanities a part of a possible explanation.

Memorable books and essays about Voegelin have already been produced by the minute and dedicated circle I have alluded to. Some of the topics treated in no particular order include: Voegelin’s theology, Voegelin’s political theory, Voegelin as a philosopher of history, and Voegelin on race. My thesis cannot be included among the ranks of these works because I could not (and did not) fixate on one area since I wanted to get at some reasons behind the stillness which surrounds Voegelin’s work. To avoid aimlessness I have chosen a few issues to explore that I will discuss in more detail below.

The answer to the question of “Why Voegelin?” which I started my series with is the easiest of the bunch to give. In a very elementary sense, I felt obligated to pay my respects to Voegelin who has been an influence on my own thinking. And, gratitude needed to be shown to those people whom Voegelin had trained and influenced who have in turn taught me. Another motivation was to give an honest response to those who might ask if the inattention to Voegelin is reasonable. Even during my earliest brush with Voegelin through his *NSP*, I realized that he was a thinker to be dealt with, but I also acknowledged that my sentiments appeared to be in a minority grouping which did not equivocate on the merit of Voegelin’s scholarship. Pick up any of the soon to be completed thirty-four volumes of Voegelin’s *CW*, note the distinction between collected and complete, and one finds a sentence on the back cover of the dust jacket that is more puzzling than misleading: “Eric Voegelin (1901-1985) was one of the most original and influential philosophers of our time.” As I have already intimated, perusing even a few pages of any of the books will validate the first part of the statement about the novelty of Voegelin’s thought. It is then the term “influential” that gives me pause because it appears that Voegelin has had only a relative influence. To those proud few called “Voegelinians,” if that is not some kind of blasphemy, Voegelin was certainly a great influence on their thought. Beyond (and sometimes including) this group, there were and still are people who have tried to use Voegelin’s thought for some political end. Perhaps, and I think rightly, these negative influences should be included in the discussion because it also seems to be the case that Voegelin’s style turned off many people for a plethora of divergent reasons. Even so, all of the discussion above deals with those persons who have actually engaged Voegelin’s work. Compiling all of these separate individuals
together produces nothing more than *vox clamantis in deserto*. To put it another way, in light of the voluminous work, the contents of which show Voegelin to be a true believer in the benefits of illumination derived from cross-disciplinary study, the silence is deafening.6

I am not the first person to have noticed the lack of regard for the thought of Voegelin. This topic of silence was very explicitly discussed by Ted V. McAllister in a book review of Barry Cooper’s *EVF* (1999) in the *ROP* in 2000. McAllister came up with two reasons. The first was to blame Voegelin himself for expecting a high level of background reading on the subjects which were to be found in a text written by Voegelin. Further complicating matters was that as a product of Voegelin’s erudition, he had developed a language of discourse that takes great effort and care to discern. This was less a fault of Voegelin and more owed to the difficulty of penetrating the material under consideration. Voegelin had no space in his writing for intellectual slovenliness and was not going to muddle up passages by defining his, at times, “arcane” terminology while trying to achieve “luminosity.” However, McAllister makes a good point that often the texts of Voegelinians are written haltingly because Voegelin’s terms have not been explained in common sense understandings of these words.7

The other reason given why Voegelin is rather little known in the United States is the academy itself. For reasons that McAllister does not discuss, but I think are

6 To my knowledge there are only two book reviews which treat the *CW* as a whole. The first was James M. Rhodes, “On Voegelin: His Collected Works and His Significance,” *ROP*, Vol. 54, No. 4: 621-647. Rhodes’ essay was written in 1992 when only three of the volumes had been published. Since that time, the LSU Press, which was the original publisher of the *CW*, became a regional press and the project shifted to the University of Missouri Press. However, all of the volumes originally published through the LSU Press are available through the University Missouri Press. Recently, Mark Lilla published a review of the *CW* entitled, “Mr. Casaubon in America,” in the *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 54, No. 11, June 28, 2007. If readers took Lilla’s warm and engaging piece seriously (but apparently they have not), then some cracks might appear in my armor regarding silence among the public.

important for this topic of silence, most of Voegelin's time teaching in the United States was spent at my alma mater, Louisiana State University (LSU). McAllister claims that being at LSU, compared to Leo Strauss' University of Chicago, for example, Voegelin did not have access to the United States' best students. Indeed, Voegelin was not even teaching in a political science program with graduate students until he was asked in 1958 to fill the chair at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich which had been vacant since Max Weber died in 1920. Voegelin would only remain in Munich for eleven years before retirement and he then spent the years from 1969 until his death in 1985 at the Hoover Institution located at Stanford University. Therefore, in the US, Voegelin had no students associated with him who could propagate the study of his work. The only American student who finished a doctoral degree in Munich with Voegelin was Ellis Sandoz. His entire teaching career has been in the US and he has done yeoman's work promoting Voegelin in the United States, but it is a tough road to hoe with help coming from German students or people who never directly worked with Voegelin and who are not well known.

While I would like to go deeper into the two suggestions made by McAllister about the "neglect" of Voegelin, I think other reasons for the silence also exist which I will discuss throughout this work. Ultimately, I suggest that Eric Voegelin is a thinker who should not be silenced. Those who choose to pick up his work should not expect a cake walk, nor should they expect Voegelin to paint with a narrow brush. It is a definite

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8 One rumor that I cannot wait until later to refute is the one relating to Huey Long's interest in Eric Voegelin coming to LSU. Huey Long was shot in the Louisiana State Capitol Building on September 8, 1935 and died September 10. Eric Voegelin did not leave Germany and emigrate to the United States to escape the Gestapo until 1938 and he was not hired at LSU until 1942. It is true however that Voegelin was considered a "star faculty" member who was hired away from the University of Alabama, see Thomas F. Ruffin et al., Under Stately Oaks: A Pictorial History of LSU, revised ed., (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2006), 67-69.

9 McAllister, op. cit., 822.
challenge to read Voegelin and to think with him, but it is not an impossible enterprise.

Things that are rewarding are not often easy to come by and scholarship is one of these things.

Chapter 1 discusses Voegelin's academic struggles in the United States of America. When Voegelin emigrated to the United States in 1938, he was no more than a transient worker as far as Harvard University was concerned. After a short period at Bennington College in Vermont, Voegelin said he wanted to flee the "climate of opinion" among the German émigrés on the East Coast. His next two stops were, briefly, the University of Alabama and then LSU by 1942. During his sixteen years at LSU, Voegelin would seek jobs at top research institutions to no avail. That Voegelin tried to gain employment at Yale, Johns Hopkins, Harvard and other schools in the Northeastern United States suggests his own justification for leaving the "climate of opinion" was a self-satisfying reason. Voegelin had engaging students at LSU, but no graduate program and poor facilities. After years of having to take working "vacations," Voegelin succumbed rather easily to the German state's offer to let him start his own Institute. Voegelin's German graduate students produced a copious number of books that were also soundly written during Voegelin's time in Munich. However, the impact of these German students has been greater in Germany than in the United States.

Chapter 2 focuses on Voegelin and popular culture. Although Voegelin was not a public intellectual, he was brought some temporary public scrutiny when a Time "cover story" appeared in 1953 that dealt with Voegelin's NSP. His peace was again threatened in Munich when he decided to give a course on the National Socialist period in Germany. The lectures of that summer in 1964 were posthumously published in both English and
German. Voegelin was able to keep the pyrotechnics from going off around him in Germany by refusing to work on the manuscript although he had signed a contract to turn the lectures into a book. In death, Voegelin’s treatment by the influential NYT made his career appear as little more than a footnote which would inspire no one to read him. Voegelin’s own reticence about being a public figure hurt not only his book sales but also the extent to which he is known today.

Chapter 3 deals with Voegelin’s relations with Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss, respectively. While it is recognized by Arendt scholars that Voegelin’s review of Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism* is the only book review she ever responded to, the reason for her response is not analyzed. In fact, it does not seem as though most Arendt scholars have read anything of Voegelin’s save for his review of Arendt’s book. Besides missing the points of overlap between Voegelin and Arendt’s thought, Arendtians do not generally show any knowledge of the friendship between the two thinkers. Straussians, on the other hand, have a better understanding of the nature of the relations of Voegelin and Strauss. On the whole however, Straussians tend to purge references to Voegelin in their writing. The thirty year correspondence shows the distinct points over which Strauss and Voegelin must remain at dissension. Although the correspondence breaks off nearly a decade before either man died, this does not excuse anyone from serious consideration of the thought of either thinker. The hesitancy to delve into Voegelin’s work by Arendt and Strauss scholars limits analyses of both Arendt and Strauss. And, it also negates possible evaluations of Voegelin.

Chapter 4 examines what might I am calling the “use and abuse of Voegelin.” I deal here specifically with writing which makes reference to Voegelin but has no genuine
connection with his scholarship. I also confront works which carefully frame Voegelin in such a way that furthers their narrow projects which Voegelin would have had nothing to do with. On the positive side, there are books and articles which not only do justice to Voegelin but ask probing questions and give readers something to think about. In my estimation, the noise which has been made about Voegelin has been mostly positive, although at times it could alienate new readers.

Chapter 5 describes a scene of disarray in political science. The annual main event for political scientists in the United States, the APSA meeting, is probably the best site to witness the confusion of the discipline. The ideologies of positivism and behavioralism which Voegelin lamented and refuted in the 1950's have not disappeared from the academy. Instead, they are the dominant voice in major publications. In addition, themes Voegelin wrote about such as civilization have been vulgarized and used to excuse what is seen as an inevitable coming conflict in contrast to Voegelin's approach which can bring out human commonality. This sad state of affairs is not meant to grant acceptance to the silencing of Voegelin, but instead to elucidate the nature of the obstacle to getting Voegelin noticed, including on the LSU campus.

The final chapter is not so much a conclusion as the stopping point for this particular study. I recapitulate the ways in which Voegelin has been silenced and reiterate the reasons why I think Voegelin deserves a larger reception. I do not presume to cover the whole of the situation which has led to Voegelin being underappreciated, but merely try to shed some light on pertinent points regarding the matter. I cannot presage any revival of Voegelin studies or of political philosophy for that matter. I can only hope that this endeavor was not in vain.
Chapter One: Why Voegelin Could Not Land a Good Job in the USA

What do Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, and Eric Voegelin have in common? All of these scholars were forced to flee Europe during the National Socialist period. Voegelin is unlike the rest of those thinkers an important respect as a university professor. Voegelin never acquired a position at a top university in the United States.\(^1\) The question of what was different in Voegelin’s case arises. The purpose of this chapter will be to try to give a tentative analysis of what prevented Voegelin from getting hired. Voegelin also was the only one of the scholars listed who studied in the United States before emigration. Voegelin first came to the United States in 1924 as a result of a Laura Spellman Rockefeller Fellowship (a three year fellowship). He was in the United States from 1924-1926 and studied at Columbia University, Harvard University, and the University of Wisconsin. The academic year of 1926-1927 was spent in Paris. Among others, Voegelin studied with John Dewey, John R. Commons, and Alfred North Whitehead during the two years in the US. It was during this time that Voegelin’s attraction to elite American Universities was established. While the professors Voegelin studied with opened him up to a world of knowledge which he “had hardly suspected the existence” of, the libraries of the American university were the “most important influence” to Voegelin.\(^2\) At Columbia’s library, he came upon American and English common sense philosophy. This experience

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\(^1\) This is by no means an exhaustive list. Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse were all members of the so-called Frankfurt School and this aided in gaining employment through mutual reinforcement. I have included the names of the prestigious universities where these thinkers were employed in brackets next to their name in chronological order: Adorno (Columbia, UCLA), Arendt (Chicago, New School for Social Research, Princeton), Horkheimer (Columbia, UCLA), Marcuse (Columbia, Harvard, Brandeis, UC San Diego), Strauss (New School for Social Research, Chicago).

\(^2\) Voegelin, *AR*, 28[\textit{CW} 34, 56].
with a common sense tradition freed him from any interest in the methodological debates which were raging in Europe. Further experiences with John R. Commons and Voegelin’s reading of George Santayana’s work (Voegelin did not meet Santayana) “immunized” Voegelin from Martin Heidegger’s influential *Sein und Zeit* (1927).\(^3\) The appeal of the Northeastern universities which Voegelin first visited in the 1920’s resided more with unmatched facilities like Harvard’s Widener Library than the prestige of any of the schools. Widener in particular was held in high esteem by Voegelin.\(^4\)

Coincidentally, Voegelin’s first academic appointment upon emigration from Austria was Harvard University.

Voegelin had friends at Harvard, including Arthur Holcombe, then chair of the Department of Government who arranged for Voegelin to get a part-time instructorship at Harvard in 1938. Other friends in Austria helped Voegelin get his exit visa to Switzerland before he could be rounded up by the Gestapo.\(^5\)

Concurrent with Voegelin’s arrival at Harvard he was made to understand by Holcombe that the position at Harvard would last for one year only. Thus began the academic problems for Voegelin in the United States and his rationalizations for leaving the East Coast.

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\(^3\) Ibid., 29, 33\([CW 34, 57, 60-61]\). For those who interested in the influence of America on the intellectual development of Voegelin during his fellowship, see *AR*, 28-33\([CW 34, 56-61]\); *CW 33*, 433-435. Of lesser importance in Voegelin’s own opinion (because it does not fully describe the importance of the break from methodological debates) is the book which was produced from the time he spent in the United States, *Über die Form des amerikanischen Geistes* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928), available in translation as *CW* 1.

\(^4\) It should be noted that any good library was a likely destination for Voegelin. While in Paris during the third year of his Rockefeller Fellowship, Voegelin says that used the bulk of his time “collecting materials in French constitutional history in the Bibliothèque Nationale,” quoted in Barry Cooper, *EVF*, 13. Voegelin would spend weeks at a time in libraries as evinced by almost identical descriptions of visits to the *Bibliothèque nationale* and the Warburg Institute in 1934, see *AR*, 36-37\([CW 34, 64-65]\). Voegelin’s correspondence throughout his life also has many references to his library explorations including his visit to the Zurich city library when his emigration was delayed, see *EVF*, 19.

\(^5\) On the subject of Voegelin’s emigration see, *AR*, 42-44, 54-56\([CW 34, 70-72, 82-83]\); *CW 33*, 436-437; *EVF*, 10-20.
It could also be argued, however, that his troubles in American academia began before Voegelin left Europe. An exemplary example is his failed attempt to get a job at the University of Wisconsin. The chair of the political science department at Wisconsin, Frederick A. Ogg, wrote Voegelin back with praise of Voegelin’s scholastic accomplishments up to that point and the news that there were no jobs for him. Ogg’s reason was that there was no chance that money could be raised to pay for extra positions. In any event, the promised money from the Rockefeller Foundation did not help Voegelin immediately win any suitors. In 1939, when he was not commuting between Bennington College in Vermont and Cambridge to attend to his position at Harvard, Voegelin was applying for jobs. In this pursuit he wrote over forty letters in all, around twenty of them to American institutions. The school he would ultimately leave Bennington for, the University of Alabama, was one of the twenty. Voegelin departed Bennington with controversy (something he apparently did not bring up with Sandoz during their interview sessions in 1973). Voegelin had rejected the offer of $5,000 for the year of 1940. Turning down this generous sum shocked and angered the faculty of Bennington. Instead, Voegelin taught a summer course at Northwestern University in 1939 before going down to Alabama for half of the pay that he would have received at Bennington. What follows is an analysis of Voegelin’s account of why he left the East Coast for Alabama because it appears entirely possible that for whatever reason Voegelin did not want to acknowledge that he represented a threat to the old guard of political scientists at these institutions.

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6 For an account of this exchange and a copy of Voegelin’s letter to Ogg see, EVF, 12-15. Ogg ignored Voegelin’s note that the Rockefeller Foundation had agreed to pay for one-half of Voegelin’s salary for three years at an American institution.

7 See EVF, 22-23.
Fleeing the East Coast

The justification Voegelin gave for leaving Bennington (and the East Coast completely) is related to a self-inflicted silencing of Voegelin by Voegelin. Voegelin said that the environs of the East Coast did not suit him any more than had Austria under occupation by the National Socialists. Elaborating, he noted that there was a “very strong leftist element” at Bennington along with some vociferous Communists among the faculty and even more in the student population. Another problem was that the East Coast was full of Central European refugees and Voegelin did not want to be associated with that crowd because he wanted to become an American. He assumed that becoming an American would be impossible, or at least unnecessarily prolonged, in such a situation. Voegelin also said that he had decided to become a political scientist. A necessary step in this process was to learn about the American government by teaching about it. Teaching courses in American government was not a possibility for a foreigner at “any of the major Eastern institutions.”

It should be obvious enough that Voegelin could not have made a comparison between Vermont in 1939 and Austria in 1938 without a good deal of hyperbole being involved. However, arriving in the United States in 1938, Voegelin would have been hard pressed not to find a leftist element anywhere in the country on account of the widespread acceptance of the New Deal. Voegelin himself could be accused of associating with leftists when he studied with John R. Commons at Wisconsin in the 1920’s. Voegelin seemed to be oblivious to the Communist situation in Alabama when

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8 Voegelin, AR, 58[CW 34, 85], my emphasis.
9 John R. Commons (1862-1945), the labor historian and institutional economist, represented what Voegelin considered to be the “real, authentic America” and a “Lincolnesque figure,” see AR, 30-31[CW 34, 58]. Voegelin also dedicated the longest chapter of his first book to the thought of Commons, see CW
he accepted the job at the University of Alabama. Located in the Deep South, Alabama was the stronghold of the Communist Party during the Great Depression. A reason why Voegelin might not have said anything about this is that the Communist Party of Alabama was largely comprised of thoroughly religious African-Americans who had no connection to European Communism. A further explanation might depend on the fact that the University of Alabama was still segregated when Voegelin taught there. Even so, the Communist Party in Alabama was mostly comprised of laborers, not intellectuals or students. The Communist Party of Alabama would dissipate two years after Voegelin started teaching at the University of Alabama. Unlike the Bennington experience, Voegelin did not say anything about a leftist or communist element in Alabama.

A casual look at the so-called leftist environment in Vermont from which Voegelin had escaped would seem to confirm Voegelin's assessment of Vermont. Marxism at Bennington certainly received a boost when Erich Fromm began teaching there in 1941, coincidentally, just as the activity of the Communist Party was subsiding in Alabama. George Aiken, the Republican governor of Vermont while Voegelin was at

1, 205-282. Voegelin was also intrigued by the progressive politician Robert La Follette and wrote about the “Wisconsin Idea” which Voegelin “reduced to the terse formula ‘Restoration of the Government to the people’,” which of course was not uniquely a phenomenon of Wisconsin, see CW7, 192-193, originally published as “La Follette und die Wisconsin-Idee,” Zeitschrift für Politik 17 (1927): 309-321.


11 As was the case with most European émigrés, Voegelin appeared not to have a good understanding of the problem of race in the United States nor did he seem interested in the race problems of the country, see, VRC, 41, 216-218. Adorno’s view of American jazz music adopted an inherent racism and he was therefore deaf to jazz played by African-Americans which avoided his critiques of the “culture industry.” For an interesting article on this subject see, Thomas Andrae, “Adorno on film and mass culture: The culture industry reconsidered,” Jump Cut, 20, 1979, 34-37, http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC20folder/AdornoMassCult.html (accessed February 2, 2008). For an account of Arendt’s failed attempt to understand racism in the South (“Reflections on Little Rock”) and her informative exchange with Ralph Ellison, see, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984), 308-318.
Bennington, was labeled a Communist.\textsuperscript{12} The state of Vermont has long been known for its "progressivism" which was supposed to be embodied in the ideals of Bennington College. This attitude had also taken hold of the "impressionable" young women at Bennington, according to the social psychology research studies of Theodore Newcomb.\textsuperscript{13} However, Voegelin appears to have overstated his case in 1973. Thomas Brockway notes that the "college was remarkably free to invite speakers of every persuasion and the faculty itself was far from united in politics, although most of them voted for Roosevelt. During the Leigh era students tended to move toward the left but few of them advocated anything more revolutionary than the New Deal, and student leaders took on themselves the duty of protecting the college from organizers and agitators."\textsuperscript{14} Moreover, Voegelin's wife, Lissy Voegelin, did not corroborate his story on the leftist element. Lissy Voegelin told a different story about an anti-refugee element among the some of the girls at Bennington. However, according to Voegelin's wife, the girls at the school were fond of her husband and tried to convince the president of the college to keep Voegelin there for five years. While Lissy Voegelin said she enjoyed

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{12} It should be noted that this epithet, which was untrue, was given to Aiken by his own party in the state. See Samuel B. Hand, \textit{The Star That Set: The Vermont Republican Party, 1834-1974} (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2003); Michael Sherman, ed., \textit{The Political Legacy of George D. Aiken: Wise Old Owl of the U.S. Senate} (Woodstock, VT: Countryman, 1995); "Most Influential Vermonters of the 20th Century: George Aiken," http://www.vermonttoday.com/century/mostinflu/gaiken2.html (accessed February 11, 2008).

\textsuperscript{13} Newcomb was a popular professor of psychology at Bennington and wrote the books \textit{Persistence and Change: Bennington College and Its Students After Twenty Years} (New York: Wiley, 1967) and, with Duane F. Alwin and Ronald L. Cohen, \textit{Political Attitudes Over the Lifespan: The Bennington Women After 50 Years} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992). Both books suggested that the longer the Bennington women were in college, the more liberal they became. Newcomb said of his experience at Bennington that there was no conscious effort to "make good little liberals out of these gals" but to at least show the upper-class background students of Bennington "how the other half lives," quoted in Thomas Brockway, \textit{Bennington College: In the Beginning} (Bennington, VT: Bennington College Press, 1981), 206-207.

\textsuperscript{14} Brockway, ibid, 81. Brockway (1898-1999) was a political science professor at Bennington from 1933 until 1975. The Leigh era refers to the tenure of the first president of Bennington College, Robert Devore Leigh, who was president from 1932-1941.
\end{footnotesize}
Vermont, Eric Voegelin said Bennington was located “in the mountains in the snow and ice where I see only fifty people and they hate each other. I don’t like it there.”

That Voegelin wished to become a United States citizen is evident not only in the fact that he was naturalized in 1944 and retained his citizenship for the rest of his life, but also in admonishments of letter writers who referred to Voegelin as a European or a refugee. What Voegelin seems to have meant by “becoming a political scientist” was becoming an American political scientist. Voegelin later said that when he was around the age of thirty that he realized that a political scientist must be able to read “the classics of political science. That was when I started learning Greek, because I had not had it in high school.” Voegelin was already teaching a class on American Government at Bennington so it is important that he qualified his statement by saying that he would not be able to teaching such a class at a “major Eastern institution.” Voegelin described the situation correctly, but also hinted that he did want to stay in the East. What must be remembered about Voegelin’s reason given to Sandoz is that it took place three decades after the fact. By 1973, Voegelin had already retired from teaching and would have had at that point what could be described as a successful career. There was no reason for Voegelin to complain about his American struggles in the 1940’s and 1950’s, though he could have. Yet it is exactly these struggles which are important to the matter at hand because they help explain part of the reason why Voegelin is not widely known in American political science.

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15 Eric Voegelin quoted by Lissy Voegelin in VRC, 163.
17 This statement comes about ten years after the interviews with Ellis Sandoz in Voegelin’s “Autobiographical Statement at Age Eighty-Two,” see CW33, 435.
Voegelin’s Qualifications

As I suggested above, Voegelin’s difficulties in terms of finding a position at a good American university began before he arrived. The letter from Voegelin to Ogg is interesting not only because Ogg’s response was the typical one Voegelin, but also because the reply is symbolic of the treatment Voegelin would get during the entirety of the American portion of his teaching career. The essential elements of Ogg’s comments are that while Voegelin’s scholarship is impressive and something to keep an eye on, Voegelin is not the kind of scholar who is wanted at the institution in question. What such sentiments translated into was that Voegelin could be invited to give guest lectures or perhaps be a visiting professor, but under no circumstances could he be a permanent hire. To get some understanding of what intimated departments about Voegelin, I will briefly detail Voegelin’s accomplishments up to the time he started teaching in the United States in 1938. Voegelin went to a Viennese Realgymnasium for high school. He had graduated with honors while taking among other things eight years of Latin, six years of English, and two years of Italian. He also had some tutoring which gave Voegelin some knowledge of French. After receiving his Dr.rer.pol. with honors at the age of twenty-one from the University of Vienna, Voegelin spent a summer studying at Oxford University and a year at the Universities of Berlin and Heidelberg. Voegelin also possessed the aforementioned Rockefeller Fellowship which allowed Voegelin to study at three major American Universities and the Sorbonne in Paris. Voegelin became an associate professor (a.o. Universitätsprofessor) at the University of Vienna in 1935 which required the extra step of writing a second dissertation (Habilitationsschrift) for the habilitation. He was also the chair of the political science department (1936-1938) of
the Vienna Worker's High School (Volkshochschule) which was a school of 10,000 students. This position was part of an extension program with no state sanctioned status. Voegelin had also given many guest lectures by this time. What is especially striking, in comparison to his American colleagues, is that Voegelin who was thirty-seven in 1938 already had thirty-five publications, including five books. The subject material of these publications was manifold and ranged from American philosophers, European racial ideas, comparative government, Max Weber, Immanuel Kant, and political religions, to name some examples. After graduating high school, Voegelin had improved his knowledge of the French, English, and Italian languages while also picking up Russian, Spanish and some ancient Greek. He would later develop his Greek as well as learn Hebrew, Egyptian and Chinese (Mandarin). Voegelin confessed to Ogg that besides teaching courses for ten years in "general political science, sociology, history of political ideas, comparative government, legal theory, constitutional law, methodological questions, and recent political ideologies," that he was also qualified to teach both general and special courses on "social psychology, social ethics, and social philosophy." Needless to say, Voegelin represented quite an obstacle to place in just one department.

Unpleasant intellectual surroundings or not, it is clear that Voegelin was not going to build a successful career at Bennington. The school was not accredited, had no graduate program, and was not even co-educational until 1969, the same year Voegelin officially retired from teaching and arrived in California to take his position at the Hoover Institution. Voegelin probably did not need the advice from the chair of the

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18 Quoted in EVF, 14. Most of these biographical details come from the letter to Ogg, EVF, 12-14, but see also AR; Erika Weinzierl's "Historical Commentary on the Period," trans. Fred Lawrence, in CW 4, 22-28; Sandoz, VR 33-89.
Northwestern University political science department, A.R. Hatton, who told him that if salaries were comparative to take the Alabama job.\textsuperscript{19} As was stated earlier, the University of Alabama was only offering half of the generous salary from Bennington. At Alabama, Voegelin quickly drew the ire of university administrators when he put in a purchase request at the library for $100 worth of books which he thought he needed for research.\textsuperscript{20} Voegelin recalled the Southern hospitality he received from “southerners who somewhat condescendingly enjoyed protecting an innocent from Europe.”\textsuperscript{21} Such an attitude of protection did not extend to the administrators of the University of Alabama. The book buying request had been a bridge too far and the university was considering firing Voegelin. He was able to persuade the administrators not to take such action.

When it was made known to Voegelin that the university would rather hire Alabamans over foreigners, no matter how talented, Voegelin realized he would not be rehired, much less gain tenure. He then resigned from Alabama to take the LSU opening.\textsuperscript{22} This move resulted in a slight increase in salary. The facilities were comparable to Alabama’s, which is to say, not up to Voegelin’s standard. He would become enthusiastic on more than one occasion to give guest lectures at elite Northeastern colleges in the hopes of getting employed at one. Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Yale, etc. were all more than happy to let Voegelin visit, but a job was not in the offering at any of these places. The situation of 1937 at Wisconsin had not changed at all even though Voegelin’s publication list grew and his \textit{History of Political Ideas} project was reaching thousands of typed pages in length. The closest Voegelin could get to the East Coast after he left it was to spend

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{EVF}, 22.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{AR}, 58[CW 34, 85].
\textsuperscript{22} See, \textit{EVF}, 26, 30-32.
summers at Widener and to give an occasional lecture at a prestigious university. The University of Munich contacted Voegelin as early as 1951 about becoming the chair of the American Studies program. Voegelin declined because, as he said to Alfred Schütz, "In no way do I want to give up citizenship wantonly; an arrangement must be able to be found; otherwise it won't work." Voegelin was also prevented from going to Germany at this stage by his worry of the Russians proximity to Munich and the fact that Lissy Voegelin was "in open rebellion" saying that "an American woman would never demean herself by leaving the wonderful home country and go[ing] among the barbarians." Voegelin’s book, NSP, would soon be going to press. This was a work that upset many people in the American political science discipline. The subject matter of the book was broad and took as its main thesis the idea that Gnosticism which drew the transcendent into itself or outright denied the possibility of transcendence was "the essence of modernity." The acceptance of these two approaches to transcendence caused the existential crisis which gave Gnostics like Hitler and Stalin room to operate. Robert Dahl said of Voegelin’s book that he "has not only 'un-defined science; he has un-scienced it." This was the same book that landed Voegelin a *Time* "cover story" (the article concerning NSP was a major piece while South Korean President Syngman Rhee was on the cover and the focus of the main article of the week). This only added to the inconvenience that was represented by Voegelin. "The 'nuisance value' of the article is great and enjoyable: A whole series of scoundrels in our branch that call themselves professors without doing the work of a scholar, and who would have never in their lives looked at the book, find themselves forced to at least take notice of it—if it’s in 'Time,'

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21 *CW* 30, letter 29, 102.
there must be something to it, " Voegelin confided to Schütz.\textsuperscript{26} I doubt seriously that with all of the various types of divertissements available today that such an event as the \textit{Time} article, which I discuss in Chapter 2, would be reproducible.

The Yale Affair

The disappointing situation at Yale where Voegelin gave a guest lecture/job audition is the most well known of Voegelin’s attempts to acquire gainful employment on the East Coast at a major institution. The year was 1948. Voegelin had eleven publications for the decade up to that point, on varied topics as usual. Most of these publications were written for the \textit{Journal of Politics} and the \textit{ROP}. Voegelin’s lone piece in the \textit{American Political Science Review} also came during the mid-1940’s. And, he was hard at work on the \textit{History of Political Ideas}. Suffice it to say that Voegelin was getting his name out in the world of political science. Yet, instead of aiding Voegelin, this genuine ability to do political science seemed to ruin him in American political science.

It will therefore be instructive to flesh out the nature of that event at Yale as a representative example of the difficulty Voegelin faced in getting a job on the East Coast.

Voegelin was enthusiastic about his chances of getting the Yale job when he returned to Baton Rouge. Voegelin was in a good mood when he wrote his friend Robert Heilman.

\begin{quote}
Yale begins to show visible interest in my presence. I was invited to give a lecture, for the purpose of getting ‘acquainted.’ Last week I was up there; and everything seemed to go well. No word has yet been breathed about an offer; but I was studied with obvious care by the various notables; and the chairman of the department went to the extreme of saying that I was just what they would need and that he hoped for further correspondence. Same has not arrived yet. – Through Cleanth, who takes a lively supporting interest in the affair, I know that they intend to make an offer; but according to Cleanth the offer will be lousy: an Associate
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{CW} 30, letter 43, 149.
Professorship with $6000. In the end I would take that of course, if it should materialize, but I would feel exploited. The lecture looked to me like a great success; with discussion it lasted for two hours and could have gone on for another hour. Perhaps they are impressed and will think better of the salary. We'll see! For the rest, the whole incident was great fun. Yale is most desirable; lavishly equipped, a touch of snobbery, somewhat like an exclusive club. I don't mind; I like it as long as I can laugh about it. And Willmoore Kendall and Cleanth [Brooks] would certainly help in the laughing.

Heilman was apprehensive in his response because of the "unimaginative dimensions of the possible offer." The salary was, after all, only one thousand dollars more than Bennington College had offered in 1939. Heilman also presciently diagnosed the situation at Yale. "Maybe a prospect of a serious improvement in the faculty is almost as difficult to face at Yale as elsewhere."

As time began to pass, Voegelin seemed to resign himself to the fact that the job would not be forthcoming, especially when the only news he had heard was from Willmoore Kendall about what sounded like a failed coup d'etat in the Yale faculty. "I went home with the idea that in the course of the next two or three weeks an offer would come. As a matter of fact: nothing has come, not even a line of thanks for giving them a lecture which cost me six working-days, inconvenience, etc., and for which I did not receive an honorarium." Kendall's letter, which Voegelin summarized for Heilman, noted that the lecture was "a roaring success and that in particular the graduate students were overwhelmed." However, there was also the matter of the failed "revolution" in the Yale political science department which was stifled by the full professors. Voegelin relates that ultimately, "Kendall opines that either [Cecil] Driver or [Arnold] Wolfers, or both, have vetoed an appointment for me because they were afraid that my presence

27 Quoted in, Charles Embry, op. cit., letter 12, 53-54, my bracketed addition.
28 Ibid., letter 13, 55.
29 Ibid., letter 14, 58.
might invite comparisons with their performance about which they did not care.”

Heilman responded by notifying Voegelin about Brooks’ penchant for “melodrama” and ability to steer Kendall into his escapades. As in a previous letter, Heilman was able to get down the bottom of the matter. “If the old-timers don’t at the moment want you, it is of course the old question of quality; but that is the truth no one can ever admit; so they will be hot on the trail of finding a real disqualification; and if you could be tied up with a backstairs operation run by a couple of young revolutionaries, they would probably feel that the Lord had given them a wonderful piece of discrediting evidence.” Heilman would follow up with Voegelin after he received a letter from the Yale co-conspirator, Cleanth Brooks. Heilman quoted the following “confidential” passage from the Brooks letter.

Voegelin did brilliantly, but nothing has happened, and though I was told by one of the department members the other day that the dept was still interested, I don’t know. I am also told—quite confidentially of course—that Voegelin’s lecture was simply too good: that some of the members of the dept had cooled off because they thought that V’s presence here would jeopardize their own laurels. Anyway, I hope for the best, but it’s obvious that nothing is going to be done in the way of an offer for the present.

Soon after the letter, Voegelin saw Kendall in Chicago and got first hand confirmation that the lecture was too good. Although he was not certain of the veracity of Kendall’s statements, Voegelin related them to Heilman. Voegelin never read from a manuscript while giving a lecture. The Yale talk on “The Western Revolutionary Movements” was no exception to this practice. This free-speaking custom, Voegelin says,

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30 Loc. cit. Cecil Driver and Arnold Wolfers were two of Yale’s full professors. Voegelin in this letter also says he has no interest in getting caught up in “any idiotic conspiracy which Kendall or Brooks, or both, have cooked up,” original brackets.

31 Ibid., letter 15, 59-60.

32 Ibid., letter 17, 63.
created the very unfavorable impression that I knew what I was talking about and had my subject-matter at my finger-tips; the discussion was even worse because it ranged over a variety of subjects on which I also seemed to be informed in the most improper manner. Such ungentlemanly erudition frightened at least two members of the department so thoroughly that their thumbs turned down on me. Yale is a respectable place and such casual pouring forth of knowledge which should be divulged only with all symptoms of sweat on the brow from a carefully prepared paper cannot be tolerated.\footnote{Ibid., letter 19, 69. Manfred Henningsen informed me that Voegelin picked up this style of speech delivery from Karl Kraus. I have been able to see Voegelin's impressive performance ability in video recordings of panels which Voegelin participated in. While speaking, Voegelin thoroughly covered his intensive preparations with the illusion of spontaneity. He appeared not only at ease, but also seemed to be really enjoying himself while talking lucidly. In Voegelin's writings, a few works approach the same effect as the visual performance. See \textit{CW} 31, which is the book length series of lectures Voegelin gave in Munich on the problem of Hitler and the Germans; "Autobiographical Statement at Eighty-Two," in \textit{CW} 33, 432-456; and \textit{AR}.}

Voegelin also speculated in this letter that once his \textit{History of Political Ideas} came out that Yale might again be interested. As we know, Voegelin shelved his massive project and Yale did not come calling for him. After the Yale experience Voegelin was cynical in 1949 when Johns Hopkins invited him for a lecture. "I shall give a talk in Johns Hopkins, again with the understanding (as last year in Yale) that I am looked over for an opening. I am full of black suspicions and firmly resolved to talk point-blank and tough unless an adequate offer is forthcoming."\footnote{Embry, op. cit., letter 22, 77.} This lecture and others yielded the same result. In the case of Johns Hopkins, Leo Strauss may have had a hand in preventing Voegelin from being hired. I will talk more about the Strauss and Voegelin relationship in Chapter 3. In any event, Sandoz says that "there was a direct statement that Voegelin was characterized as being 'too controversial' to be appointed at Johns Hopkins."\footnote{Sandoz in \textit{VRC}, 182.}

However, Voegelin was ready to give the United States one more chance (before seeking employment in Europe) with the publication of his \textit{NSP}.
Voegelin Goes to Munich, Builds a Legacy

Voegelin had already received offers for a professorship at Munich and Freiburg by the time NSP was published in 1952. Yet, he told Heilman he wanted to prolong these offers for two years if possible to see if his book would have any effect.36 Some of the reviews were good and some of them were bitter in tone and attacked Voegelin. He confided to Heilman that “the reactions to my poor book certainly are becoming a nightmare.”37 Voegelin admitted that his English was not the best and that he was unaware that some of the technical terms he used would be so offensive to readers’ sensibilities.38 We know that Voegelin did not stay in the United States past 1958 despite the commercial success of NSP. In fact, at the apogee of his importance in the United States, Voegelin was on his way out of the country. By May 1956, Voegelin was actively seeking a job in Europe instead of being courted by universities in Germany.39 By 1957, everything was settled in Munich for Voegelin’s own Institute and he had announced to his friends and foundation sponsors that he would take the job.40 When the good news came in 1958 that the first volume of Voegelin’s OH had sold out of the first printing, it was too late to try to change his mind because Voegelin was already in Munich.41

An “arrangement” for Voegelin to keep his American citizenship (actually an act of Congress) was found by 1958 when Voegelin would go to Munich to start his Institut für Politische Wissenschaft with little more than a few empty rooms. LSU’s political science department was merely considering establishing a Ph.D. program in 1955 which

37 Ibid., letter 53, 136.
38 CW 30, letter 41, to John Hallowell, 141.
39 Embry, op. cit., letter 59, 147.
40 See for example, ibid., letter 72, 170; CW 30, letter 139, to Alfred Schütz, 313 and letter 143, to Kenneth W. Thompson, 318-321.
41 CW 30, Letter 153, to Donald R. Ellegood, director of the LSU Press, 334-335.
had not occurred by 1958. Munich was going to allow Voegelin to build his Institute the way he wanted it and to have a dual professorship in the colleges of political economy and the humanities. This dual position also included lecture, exam and graduation rights in both colleges.42 Voegelin’s salary nearly doubled when he went to Munich despite the higher cost of living. He also benefitted from the German pension system which was better than what was offered in the United States. The German pension also included provisions to support the spouse of the employee after the death of the employee. In Munich, Voegelin would also finally have a chance to train graduate students to carry on the craft of political science. The Institute would flourish and Voegelin only returned to the United States during his tenure in Germany for research trips or to be a visiting professor at Notre Dame every other summer so he could retain his US citizenship. This position at Notre Dame is as close as Voegelin would become to being a regular faculty member at a prominent university in America and his hopes had gone unfulfilled. Apparently, while Voegelin approached the German legal retirement age of sixty-eight, there was still a chance to acquire a coveted position at a top school. These opportunities obviously did not pan out either.43

The move to Germany and the inability to get a job at a prestigious American university is ultimately responsible for the academic legacy Voegelin has today. With few exceptions, everyone who promotes Voegelin’s work today studied with him at Munich. This list includes Voegelin’s most dedicated advocate, Ellis Sandoz. Richard

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42 CW 30, letter 133, to Alfred Schütz, 304. Voegelin’s chair at Munich was in the Staatswirtschaftliche Fakultät and his joint right to supervise dissertations was in the Philosophische Fakultät. Most of the doctoral students under Voegelin got their doctorate from the Philosophische Fakultät.
43 Ibid., letter 246, to Cleanth Brooks, 511. Voegelin notes that besides “Maryland University” [sic], Emory University, the University of Massachusetts and Johns Hopkins also expressed an interest in his presence once he was retired in Germany.
Allen, who wrote a doctorate dissertation (which was rejected) under Voegelin in Germany, played a key role in getting Voegelin the position at the Hoover Institution following retirement in Germany. The German students of Voegelin have also had an important impact. Nearly all of the German students became professors of political science at German universities. Voegelin had encouraged these students to engage in their own work and not to follow him. An acceptable exception to this is the work on political religions, which Voegelin had finished with, done by Claus-Ekkehard Bärtsch and Klaus Vondung. There was also one student, Michael Naumann, who along with a successful career in journalism was the German culture minister in the first Gerhard Schroeder government in 1998. Naumann is currently running for Lord Mayor of Hamburg in the 2008 elections.

Luckily, Voegelin’s students who entered politics did not advocate for foreign policy disasters like those of those policy makers in the George W. Bush administration and (its supporters in the conservative press) who claim to have been influenced by Leo Strauss. This situation, as is well known, has brought unfair condemnation of Leo Strauss’ work from certain corners, academic and general. However, unlike Strauss, Voegelin does not enjoy the advantage of having thoroughly committed students who wish to cultivate the teachings of the master through publicity and teaching courses. As I alluded to earlier, Voegelin did not want a scenario, which the Straussians can be seen to represent, where work on any topic is grounded in the teacher’s texts and texts by the students. Voegelin expected original work from his students. By looking at the areas covered in their publications, one can observe that Voegelin’s students have respected his wishes. However, this means that to become well known, Voegelin would have to rely

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on the strength of his own work and ability to publicize himself. His refusal to engage the public, though he had opportunities in the US and Germany, is an element of Voegelin’s current silence and the topic I turn to in the next chapter.
Chapter Two: Voegelin and the Public Sphere

The public intellectual is necessarily a public figure with a politically active voice. The public intellectual is an abundant figure while the public philosopher is a rara avis. There appears to be two general types of public intellectual. One variety of public intellectual seeks to “speak truth to power,” while the other type agrees with the governing power’s policies and tries to persuade the public to be in favor of such policies. The intensity of commitment to both positions varies. The public philosopher may be of either type because, as we know, Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt tried to lend legitimacy to the National Socialist regime. Nonetheless, either of these positions is problematic for the personal peace of the public intellectual. The societal critic may be arrested, mocked, forced to flee, or even killed by the society which is critiqued. The death sentence which resulted from the guilty verdict in the trial of Socrates is the most famous example of the extreme sacrifice that a public philosopher may endure. Likewise, the intellectual who stands in support of the government must be ready to be hated by the public should policies fail which the intellectual defended. The sycophantic public intellectual will be challenged by the critical public intellectual on general principles of truth and ethics. The sycophantic intellectual could also be killed if there is a revolt which results in a change in governing policy or more drastically, a change in the rulers as well. Not all of the dangers which face public philosophers need to be spelled out here. The history of political philosophy is filled with examples of what has happened to political philosophers.

Voegelin decidedly did not fit this framework of public intellectuals. Voegelin was a philosopher, but not a public one. He did have two great opportunities to become a
public intellectual, in the United States and in Germany, but he shied away from both. I argue that this lack of public engagement was not due to any timidity on Voegelin's part, but can instead be seen as attached to his commitment to philosophy. This conscious choice by Voegelin in turn diminished his stature as a philosopher to be reckoned with both in the eyes of the public and with scholars who could get away with being ignorant of Voegelin's thought. Voegelin's decision to not enter the public realm created the conditions of possibility which allowed the memory of Voegelin's work to languish to the point that an anamnetic project must be undertaken before Voegelin's thought can be approached seriously in general.

It is obvious enough that in order to enjoy the widest possible reading audience, the public intellectual, especially the public philosopher, must possess a writing style that is easy for general readers to comprehend. Along with a lucid writing style, it is also important in our time for public intellectuals to turn themselves into a sellable commodity to reach the distracted public. Getting a good book reviews in large daily newspapers is not enough to reach the American reading audience. Most of the books written by intellectuals which become bestsellers today are not even published by academic presses. This means that the public intellectual must acquire a literary agent as commercial publishers will not look at manuscripts not submitted by an agent. Once this step has been taken, educating the public, however important it may be to the intellectual, is secondary to the pecuniary interests of the agent and publisher. The intellectual is then

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1 I do not mean to say that these two events were Voegelin's only opportunities. For example, Voegelin's engagement with the public through newspaper articles while he was an assistant professor at the University of Vienna was probably the closest he came to being a Socratic gadfly. Voegelin's newspaper activities and his qualified support of the authoritarian Austrian state "may be seen," as Barry Cooper has said, "as a practical attempt to help form public opinion to resist the propaganda of those who, he said later, were concerned only with the abolition of democracy," *EVF*, 6.
simply another author competing with novelists, self-help gurus, celebrity tell-all books, etc. The intellectual, vying for the public’s attention, must be a good salesperson to get their work noticed. This is a crucial element of the process of becoming a public intellectual in the United States. A captivating and persuasive speaker and writer can sell a work to the general public which would be panned by the academic community. If the “sell” is well executed, intellectuals can be seen by the public as authoritative figures on political topics that have little or no connection to their academic background. Two prominent figures in this respect in the United States are the evolutionary biologist and physiologist Jared Diamond and the linguist Noam Chomsky. The routine involved in selling one’s work includes the book tour which is made up of book signings at bookstores, appearances on television programs, public talks at universities and public forums, giving interviews, etc. The political philosopher Allan Bloom, who became one of these academic “rock stars,” as he referred to the experience, also indulged his passion for profligacy. One could place Hannah Arendt in contrast with Bloom because she enjoyed being a public philosopher without falling prey to the insouciant lifestyle made possible by popular status and wealth. While the description of contemporary public intellectuals just adumbrated fits public political intellectuals such as Arendt, Bloom, Chomsky, and Diamond, one could not apply such a description to Voegelin. I will

2 Diamond’s important works as a public intellectual are *Guns, Germs and Steel* (New York: Norton, 1997) and *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2005). Chomsky has written many critical works on US foreign policy, the most recent of which is *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (New York: Metropolitan, 2006). As Chomsky is not invited for television appearances in the US, he also writes many newspaper editorials which are sometimes purchased as a syndicated column.

discuss Voegelin’s refusal to become the “academic equivalent to a rock star” in connection to the NSP and the Munich Hitler lectures.

Voegelin and the Critique of Gnostics

Voegelin’s NSP was not directed at the general reader. The text itself contains technical terminology in the English, French, German, Greek, and Russian languages. The linguistic situation arose not because Voegelin was showing off but because he wanted to avoid imprecision in his analyses which drew on original source materials. Any translation into English of the terms from other languages would have clouded the original meaning built into the terms and was avoided where possible. Voegelin’s use of English has been called idiomatic and glossaries of Voegelin’s terms are extant. The book grew out of the important Charles R. Walgreen Foundation lecture series at the University of Chicago. Voegelin gave the lectures on “Truth and Representation” in 1951. The lectures were given the new title, The New Science of Politics: An Introduction, for the published book form. The title appears to be an emulation of Giambattista Vico. Both Vico and Voegelin were engaged in a restoration of a philosophy of history and politics in their books called the “new science.”

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4 It should be noted that Voegelin did not authorize such a glossary as is found in CW 34 (149-186) or in Eugene Webb’s Eric Voegelin: Philosopher of History (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 277-289. The glossary in CW 34 is based on Webb’s glossary.

5 Other influential books to come out of this lecture series are Leo Strauss’ Natural Right and History (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953) and Hannah Arendt’s The Human Condition (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958).

6 Vico’s magnum opus was entitled La Scienza Nuova. The standard English translation, The New Science of Giambattista Vico, eds. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1984) is actually a translation of Vico’s third new science (Terza scienza nuova, 1744) which is not a new edition of an older version but a new work, as Voegelin points out in his review, see CW 13, 180-181. Before Voegelin’s Walgreen lectures, he was working feverishly on the History of Political Ideas. Voegelin reported to Eduard Baumgarten that reading Vico (and Schelling) helped him deal with the problem of presenting the use of myth in Plato without leaving anything out, see CW 30, letter 27, 96. Voegelin also wrote an entire chapter on the thought of Vico in the History of Political Ideas, see CW 24, 82-148. For accounts of the connections between Vico and Voegelin’s thought see, EVF, 335-382 and Giuseppe Ballacci, “Eric Voegelin and Giambattista Vico: A Rhetorical Reading,” Paper Presented at the Convention of Studies on Eric Voegelin, Rome-Alatri, 19-21 October 2007.
describes in *NSP*, his work is not really new at all but the reunification of the philosophy of history and the philosophy of politics which were fields that were "inseparably united when political science was founded by Plato." Voegelin is not interested in a return to Platonic political science. "One cannot restore political science today," he says, "through Platonism, Augustinianism, or Hegelianism." The "restoration of political science to its principles" which Voegelin speaks of is a result of the "movement toward retheoretization." As this movement was not well known generally, Voegelin intended his book as an example that the work of the movement had done enough in its salvage project of the principles that "the application of results to a basic theoretical problem in politics can at least be attempted." The "basic theoretical problem" was, as Voegelin described in a letter, to try to lay the groundwork for "an ontology of political societies, or at least the essential nucleus of one." As the book grew out of six lectures, Voegelin did not have the space to go into a detailed analysis of the "movement toward retheoretization." Instead, he chose to demonstrate through his work what constitutes the general project of retheoretization. There are two parts. The first part consists of a critique of the destruction of science and those who were responsible for the destruction. Voegelin is not speaking of natural science but social science. The destruction of social science which he had in mind is the idea that social science ought to use the methodology of natural science. Concurrently, an opinion developed in social science which concluded that any work which did not fit the model of natural science was not properly scientific because it was not rigorous or "objective." In *NSP*, Voegelin works through his

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7 *NSP*, 1[CW 5, 88].
8 *NSP*, 2[CW 5, 89].
9 *NSP*, 3[CW 5, 90].
10 *CW 30*, letter 49, to Thomas H. Clancy, 156. See also ibid., letter 44, to A. Styron, 150.
critique of “scientism” in social science in the “Introduction.” The rest of the book and the second portion of retheoretization then, is Voegelin’s example of what a restored political science can do. Leo Strauss’ *Natural Right and History* (1953), which Voegelin might have considered a work representative of the “movement toward retheoretization,” also follows this two-part form.\(^\text{11}\) Voegelin did not list any specific works in this movement and Strauss’ book appeared after *NSP*. However, Voegelin did see an article sent by Strauss in 1950 which became part of Strauss’ book. Voegelin was impressed with the piece, agreed with Strauss’ “excellent analysis of historicism,” and was “eager to read what follows.”\(^\text{12}\) *Prima facie*, it does not seem possible that either of these books would be of any interest to the general public in the United States. However, for Voegelin, *NSP* is his best selling book which is still in print and not just because it is still being placed on course syllabi at colleges and universities. I will speak more about this in chapter 4.

The pinnacle of Voegelin’s chances for success among the public in the United States was when his *NSP* was used in a *Time* article, “Journalism and Joachim’s Children.”\(^\text{13}\) This one article threw the door wide open for Voegelin who simply did not stride through it.\(^\text{14}\) This piece is often referred to as Voegelin’s “cover story” although the actual cover story (“The Walnut”) dealt with Syngman Rhee, then President of the Republic of Korea, who is depicted on the cover. Nonetheless, the article which talks

\(^{11}\) Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953). In this book, the chapters “Introduction,” “Natural Right and the Historical Approach,” and “Natural Right and the Distinction Between Facts and Values” (pages 1-80) can be said to form the critique of the destruction of science while the rest of the book deals with the way natural right was theorized by certain important philosophers.

\(^{12}\) See letter 34 in Emberly and Cooper, op. cit., 72. The article sent by Strauss was “Natural Right and the Historical Approach,” in *ROP* 12 (Oct. 1950), no. 4: 422-442.

\(^{13}\) Max Ways, “Journalism and Joachim’s Children,” *Time* May 9, 1953.

\(^{14}\) In any event, Voegelin was in the hospital following a surgical procedure when the article appeared and was therefore limited from making the most of the publicity.
about Voegelin's book is important as the Time author used NSP to reflect on the thirtieth anniversary of publication of the magazine. The article's author, Max Ways, made Voegelin a public intellectual for a short time by appropriating parts of NSP to apply to current affairs. This is something that Voegelin would not have done on his own with his work. The Time piece had several themes drawn from the NSP. The United States of America was faced with a crisis of meaning because its intellectuals disagreed on meaning itself. The West was filled with Gnostic politicians who had dreams of world peace and progress. On this point, Voegelin was drawn on directly in the only section of the NSP which addressed the post WWII world. The idea which was circulating about an apocalyptic end to the Korean War and the Cold War was attacked as being derived from the thoughts of Gnostic activists. Social science was said to be lacking in direction because of the rotting remnants of positivism. Senator Joseph McCarthy was seen as someone who represented the end of the trust of the public in what intellectuals had to say. McCarthy had to be opposed with the kinds of things which Voegelin represented.

Voegelin's last chapter is entitled "The End of Modernity" and his focus on Gnostic politicians who put themselves at a disadvantage after winning WWII, which Max Ways quotes from, is found in NSP, 171[CW 5, 228]. However, even Voegelin admitted that "the last chapter is too abrupt and does not elaborate the decisive point sufficiently. My only excuse is the limitation of the lecture form," CW 30, letter 49, to Thomas Clancy, 156. The "decisive point" Voegelin speaks of is that the "American and English democracies, which most solidly in their institutions represent the truth of the soul, are, at the same time, existentially the strongest powers," NSP, 189[CW 5, 241]. Voegelin was not hampered by the lecture form in AR, yet his argument is even less compelling when we consider the following: "Regarding the institutional realization of existential order, American society seems to have certain advantages over other national societies in the Western world. But I must first of all admit that in the matter I am biased because, after all, I had to run for my life from the political environment in Central Europe, and I was received with kindness in America," ibid., 115[CW 34, 140]. Bias in this case has turned into quiescence. Voegelin nowhere in the penultimate section of AR speaks of what exactly makes the institutions of the United States superior to all others, though he asserts the superiority of the American Revolution over France and Germany's failed revolutions. In fact, when Voegelin speaks specifically about the US, he only relates a story of internal disorder from "waves of European influence," "the obvious problem of the black population and its status," the "enormous power of the mass media under control of the intellectual establishment," and the "willful divorce from reality and violent aggressiveness in the pursuit of utopian dreams," see ibid., 115-119[CW 34, 140-144].

This is not an exhaustive review of the Time article which was ten pages long.
Although Voegelin was grateful about the attempt to popularize his work, he was not pleased with the presentation of his book.

Voegelin disagreed with the use of "certain chapters on Modern Gnosticism out of context." In fact, Voegelin was genuinely shocked when the article appeared because he had nothing to do with it. He did commend *Time* for taking a "severely theoretical work" which "makes no concessions to popularity" and trying to "mediate problems of such complexity" for its readers. "You have seen, what probably not too many will see, that the theoretical propositions are applicable to the concrete questions of our time. I am sure your article will help even professionals in the field of political science to understand the pragmatic value of my analysis."

Ways' article was met with a mix of reactions in letters to the editor. Some letters referred to Voegelin as an "egghead," the dismissive term for intellectuals in the 1950's. Other letters praised the piece as the most interesting thing to ever appear in *Time*. One letter writer was not convinced of the attack on positivism and criticized the discussion of August Comte in the article with the intimation that positivism in social science had advanced past the level it was when Comte was writing. This critique was also found in a professional review of *NSP*. The reason for ignoring his contemporaries in social science was obvious for Voegelin. He had dealt with the most able positivist thinkers in Comte, Husserl and Weber, for instance, and found them wanting. Why would he then drop down to discuss the mediocrity which was practiced in the social science of his time?

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17 *CW* 30, letter 44, to A. Styron, 150.
18 *CW* 30, letter 47, to *Time* Magazine, 154. A section of this letter was published in the April 20, 1953, issue of *Time*.
The leaps which Voegelin makes in connecting Joachim of Flora to Hegel and Marx and Hitler are not really leaps at all. This is an important fact to note because these connections bothered both respondents to the article and professional political scientists. In the background lie the connecting threads in Voegelin’s *History of Political Ideas*. Since Voegelin had done research, which anyone who invested effort could have done, on the periods of thought in between Joachim and the modern Gnostics, Voegelin felt he could simply state that there was a connection which he had seen. Voegelin was not the first to assert such a nexus between medieval and modern Gnosticism. As Strauss states in a 1950 letter to Voegelin when Voegelin brings up this point about Gnosticism, “I know the idea of tracing back the turn to history to Joachim of Flora and the like (alone in the last two years the books of Taubes and Löwith appeared, who do just this) but also that it does not persuade me.”

Sales of *NSP* were not impacted by the fact that most political scientists were not convinced of Voegelin’s presentation. Voegelin’s book sold so many copies that *NSP* has never gone out of print at the University of Chicago Press. Voegelin never used the opportunity granted to him by the *Time* article and left for Europe in 1958 having only left his mark on conservatives who adored his *NSP* and *OH I*. Voegelin would have more than one chance in Europe to engage the public, but I will only talk in detail about the event of the Hitler lectures in 1964.

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21 The latest printing was 1987. I was told by Manfred Henningsen, editor of *CW 5*, that the University of Missouri Press can only sell a few thousand volumes of *CW 5* because the University of Chicago Press only granted limited rights to *NSP*, which is included in *CW 5*, due to its popularity.
Voegelin on the Problem of Hitler and the Germans

In 1964, Voegelin gave his lectures during the summer semester entitled, “Hitler und die Deutschen.” Thomas Hollweck reminds us that Voegelin’s lectures were not an isolated event of self-reflection in Germany with Arendt’s Eichmann book appearing in the German edition in 1964, the Auschwitz trials (1963-1965), and Rolf Hochhuth’s play Der Stellvertreter (The Deputy, 1963) about the silence of Pope Pius XII during the Holocaust. Hollweck states that the Hitler lectures were “anything but a coincidence, and the controversies they created inside and outside the university placed Voegelin straight in the middle of a German debate from which he would have undoubtedly emerged as the spokesman of a new generation of political scientists in Germany—if the lectures had been published in short order.” While Hollweck is correct that it was no coincidence that Voegelin decided to give the lectures in the summer of 1964, he may be overstating the case in terms of Voegelin’s potential influence when we recall the impact that the Frankfurt School had in Germany. The responsibility for the delay in publication (1999 in English, 2006 in German) fell with Voegelin. The publisher had made the arrangements to turn the lecture series into a book along with another manuscript, Anamnesis. Although Voegelin signed the contract for both the Hitler lectures and Anamnesis in 1964, he never worked on the manuscript for the Hitler lectures. Anamnesis was published in Germany in 1966. Voegelin was not a completely unknown professor at this time in Germany. With his inaugural lecture at the University of Munich, Voegelin became the first person to teach political science there since Max

22 CW 30, 11.
23 Voegelin was looking for an arousing topic to use for his “Introduction to Politics” course and decided on the topic of Hitler and the Germans at least partly in response to the Schramm Spiegel affair, see note 25 below. For the influence of the Frankfurt School, see note 35 below.
Weber's death in 1920. This lecture, which determined that such major German thinkers as Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger were Gnostics, was entitled "Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis" (translated for English publication as Science, Politics and Gnosticism). In response to the lecture, an editorial appeared on the front page of the Süddeutsche Zeitung, the leading German liberal paper, which said Voegelin was guilty of engaging in "irrationalism." Perhaps luckily for Voegelin, the author of the editorial was unaware of Voegelin's critique of Weber's "value-free science" in NSP. Voegelin said in a letter that he had succumbed to the pressure of his students at the Institute, "who were outraged at Schramm's introduction to 'Hitler's Tischgespräche'" and wanted a course given on the problem. The lectures were a sensation and drew a large crowd every week. Presumably no one was lukewarm about the proceedings as Voegelin's tone brought out unequivocal reactions. A Neo-Nazi paper claimed that Voegelin harbored a "systemic hatred of the Germans." However, most of Voegelin's students would probably agree with Henningsen that the lectures were "the high point of their German education, for they had met no one else who had told them the truth more bluntly." One truth Voegelin asserted was that the idea of a German "collective guilt" (Kollektivschuld) was nothing more than a cliché which became "an alibi in two respects." The first sense could be seen through the rubric of "contemporary history"

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24 Quoted in CW 5, 3. For Voegelin's criticism see NSP, 13-22[CW 5, 98-106]. Voegelin says for instance about value-free science, "Such a science would not be in a position to tell anybody whether he should be an economic liberal or a socialist, a democratic constitutionalist or a Marxist revolutionary," NSP, 13[CW 5, 98].


26 See the accounts of Voegelin's students in VRC, 66, 71, 72.

27 Newspaper article from the Deutsche Nationale Zeitung und Soldatenzeitung and Henningsen quoted in CW 31, 1-2.
(another cliché). What contemporary history was supposed to entail was uncovering all of the past atrocities which had occurred during the National Socialist period. However, this method of “mastering the past” (Vergangenheitsbewältigung) avoided the issue altogether by talking about things which can no longer be changed. “The other method,” Voegelin says, “is the rejection of a collective guilt for the past, again with the ulterior motive of refusing to master the present.” Voegelin was preceded in disproving the idea of a collective guilt of the Germans by Karl Jaspers in his *Die Schuldfrage* (1946, translated as *The Question of German Guilt*, 1947). One of Jaspers’ students, Hannah Arendt, attempted to refute the “idea of guilt” in Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*. Arendt reminds us that guilt (Schuld) “means both being guilty of (responsible for) some deed and having debts in the sense of owing somebody something.” On Arendt’s reading of Heidegger, the Self actualizes guilt by heeding the ‘call of conscience’ which reveals guilt through the ‘voice of conscience’ through which the Self becomes manifest. Arendt easily cuts through this example of what Voegelin would call a “linguistic corruption.”

“It apparently never occurred to Heidegger,” Arendt states, “that by making all men who listen to the “call of conscience” equally guilty, he was actually proclaiming universal innocence: where everybody is guilty, nobody is.” Voegelin might have quoted Arendt’s statement that equal guilt really meant “universal innocence” in his Hitler lectures had Arendt’s *Life of the Mind* been published in 1963/1964 as her *Eichmann in Jerusalem* was.

Detlev Clemens points out that Voegelin’s lectures struck a nerve in the German public because he “challenged, on several fronts, the Germans’ dominating attitude

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28 CW 31, 76-77. The entire account of the cliché of collective guilt is, ibid., 75-82.
regarding the Nazi past.” The real issue at stake that Voegelin had pointed to was the possibility that “there was a continuity in the mentality and political culture of the Germans beyond the break of 1945, a continuity of moral and spiritual decline that had made possible the rise of National Socialism and that in the Federal Republic prevented a thorough dealing with individual guilt and responsibility for the crimes committed.”

Voegelin sought out in the lectures to prove that such continuities did exist. In the case of German science, the findings of a recently concluded research study give weight to Voegelin’s claims that not much had changed in the mental and political lives of Germans after the fall of the Third Reich. German Historian Ulrich Herbert discussed with *Nature* the findings of the “independent Research Unit,” of which he was a member, on the “History of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft 1920-1970.” Herbert’s discussion maps on well with the results of Voegelin’s own research which went into the Hitler lectures. Herbert says that no new crimes of the National Socialists were found because of how well known the crimes already are. However, the researchers “learnt how exquisitely closely ‘normal’ professors — not just the mad Nazi types — aligned their goals with the policies of the Nazi regime. Grant applications showed, for example, how many professors took part in developing plans for expansion to the east after Germany won the war (as they assumed). Plans that would have killed or enslaved more than 30 million people.”

Interestingly, the research group found that nationalism played a role in German science before, during and after the National Socialist period. Herbert

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30 CW31, 15.
32 Herbert in op. cit., 755.
says that the nationalism which affected the German intelligentsia after World War I “didn't end in 1945, but continued into the early 1960s, when there was a change of generation.” Herbert concludes that German “universities ended up colluding with the regime because the conservative professors who were able to continue working there agreed, like the general population, with most Nazi policies. There was no organized opposition to the views and no public debate of different positions.” Voegelin certainly would have agreed with the point about the lack of a public debate. His early books were, after all, banned by the National Socialists and he was fired from the University of Vienna following the Anschluss.

However, unlike the results of this research study which has been endorsed and funded by the DFG, Voegelin did not want to submit his results to a candid public. Publishing the Hitler lectures might have helped Voegelin step out of the shadow of the Frankfurt School which lessened the impact of Voegelin’s work in Germany. Clemens says that Voegelin did not want to “give his lectures a wider audience than that of the University of Munich and his students.” The main reason might be the last reason given by Clemens: “Voegelin knew that if ‘Hitler and the Germans’ were published, he would expose himself and his Institute of Political Science to fierce reactions—of which the audience reactions were only a foretaste—and would be publicly drawn into the discussion of “this most disagreeable of topics,” as he called it, which increasingly polarized and

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33 Ibid., 755.
35 See Tilo Schabert’s reflection, VRC, 108; CW 5, 16.
36 CW 31, 17.
impassioned the German society.” Getting into such a public fracas would have taken
time away from what Voegelin wanted to do, philosophize.37

The Death of a Philosopher

To be eulogized in spaces with which a thinker was familiar with during their life
is to be expected. For example, following Voegelin’s death, obituaries and memorial
Review*, and *Southern Review*—all publications where Voegelin’s work had been known
and discussed. Unexpected locales, such as large daily newspapers, where one is
memorialized posthumously can be instructive of the extent of a thinker’s impact in the
public realm. A site where the politics of public memory is played out in relation to
public intellectuals is the obituary section of the *NYT*. During one’s life as a writer, the
*NYT* Book Review section represents a space of opportunity to spread one’s readership
exponentially by obtaining a compelling review. Contemporary public intellectuals such
as Michael Burleigh, Michael Mandelbaum, and Jared Diamond have enjoyed a wider
audience partly because of the reviews they received from the *NYT*.38 However, a
dismissive review, like the one Leo Strauss received for On Tyranny, can help to remove
one’s work from public consciousness.39 No other books that Strauss wrote after On
Tyranny in 1948 got reviewed by the *NYT*. By contrast, Voegelin did not even receive

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37 *CW* 31, 18. The quote about the “most disagreeable of topics” comes from Voegelin’s lecture, “The
German University and the Order of German Society: A Reconsideration of the Nazi Era,” *CW* 12, 1.
38 For Diamond’s works see, note 2 above. Historian Michael Burleigh depends on Voegelin’s *Die
politischen Religionen* [The Political Religions, in *CW* 5, 19-73] in his analyses. The two most recent works
are *Sacred Causes: Religion and Politics from the European Dictators to Al Qaeda* (New York:
HarperCollins 2006) and *Earthly Powers: Religion and Politics in Europe from the French Revolution to
Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, writes apologies of neoliberalism, see *Democracy’s
Good Name: The Rise and Risks of the World’s Most Popular Form of Government* (New York: Public
Affairs, 2007) and *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts As The World’s Government in the Twenty-
first Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), for representative examples.
one book review from the NYT. Another luminary in modern political philosophy, Hannah Arendt, was in part made into a public philosopher by the glowing reviews she received from the NYT writers. This was no fluke. Allan Bloom, who was unknown outside of the academy, became a bestselling author following the reviews in hundreds of publications, with the NYT being the most prominent of them, of his Closing of the American Mind. The book was declared "essential reading for anyone concerned with the state of liberal education in this society."\(^{40}\)

In death, Arendt, Bloom and Strauss all received longer obituaries than Voegelin. This fact should not be considered a case of "word envy." With respect to Arendt and Bloom, a longer and more thoughtful obituary was to be expected given their previous attention by the newspaper.\(^{41}\) The death of Arendt was very much a public news event. When Arendt died in December 1975, she garnered more attention in the pages of the NYT than Clinton P. Anderson, the former four-term Democratic Senator from New Mexico, who died a month before Arendt.\(^{42}\) The day after Arendt died there was a short notice. That piece was followed by the long and thoughtful obituary and an account of the funerary ceremonies.\(^{43}\) The obituary of Arendt also included a picture of her at her New York City home.

Leo Strauss, who was ignored by the NYT for the remainder of his life following the book review, was provided with a thoughtful, if short, obituary in death. The piece


\(^{41}\) Although I only treat Arendt's obituary here, for comparison see also, Anthony DePalma, "Allan Bloom, Critic of Universities, Is Dead at 62," NYT, October 8, 1992.

\(^{42}\) Before becoming a Senator, Anderson was a two-term House of Representatives member and President Truman's Agriculture Secretary. As a Senator, he was a patriarch of the NASA program, a proponent of conservation and atomic energy. Anderson was portrayed in the 1998 HBO miniseries, From the Earth to the Moon by Mason Adams. The Los Alamos Meson Physics Facility in New Mexico was also named after Anderson.

\(^{43}\) Both pieces by David Bird, NYT, "Hannah Arendt, Political Scientist, Dead" (December 6, 1975) and "Hannah Arendt's Funeral Held; Many Moving Tributes Paid" (December 9, 1975).
mentioned the importance of Strauss in the respect of reviving an interest in classical texts. He was furthermore remembered for having critiqued behavioralism in political science. However, no public interest in the work of Strauss was likely to be pursued when readers were told, "he wrote books for other scholars rather than the general public." Towards the conclusion of the article, the most charitable lines of Randall’s book review were quoted: “Leo Strauss is a scholar who knows his own mind. Impatient of all academic reservations and shilly-shallying, he has the courage of his prejudices. He is convinced that he knows the truth. Fortunately, he is usually right.”

A respectful obituary can bring attention to an intellectual’s work, even if the person was rejected in life. In death, Voegelin’s work could have been revived for readers with even a decent obituary from the NYT. However, his obituary was written, by an author who wanted to remain anonymous, in a matter-of-fact, detached and unmoving tone. In response to the obituary, George Panichas suggested in a Modern Age editorial that a positivistic and empiricist influence at the paper had prevented a fair and fitting obituary for Voegelin.

For the Times Voegelin has never existed and his work has never been deemed important. This neglect is a scandalous example of the positivistic proclivity that afflicts the Times as much as it afflicts social and intellectual conditions in general in the United States. And it is precisely this proclivity that would find inescapably antipathetic a philosophical thinker who sees history as “a mystery in process of revelation” and who insists that “God and man, world and society, form a primordial community of being.” To modern positivists and empiricists such views are held in contempt, to be eliminated in any way possible.

45 Loc. cit.
Speculation aside, Panichas did point out something worth considering: the *NYT* had no previous attempts to engage Voegelin to draw on for the piece. The *NYT* obituary of Voegelin showed no understanding of the importance of his work and so little respect that the author, Herbert Mitgang, did not even sign his name to the piece. Based on the final result, it is a wonder why the attempt to make up for decades of silence was even undertaken by the *NYT*. In just over one hundred printed words, Eric Voegelin, the "philosopher, author, and professor," was raised to consciousness by the *NYT* only to show how little he mattered to the paper. This obituary cannot be accounted for by lack of information. Indeed, Mitgang talked to Voegelin's student Sandoz for a half hour to gather information which he would ultimately discard. As the obituary is so short for Voegelin, it is worth reproducing here in full to show its inadequacy.

Eric Voegelin, a German-born philosopher, author and professor who fled the Nazis from the University of Vienna during World War II, died last Saturday at his home on the campus of Stanford University in Stanford, Calif.

He was 84 years old.

Professor Voegelin, who became a United States citizen in 1944, taught at Harvard, the University of Alabama and Louisiana State University. In 1968, he went to Stanford as a distinguished research scholar. His works included "The New Science of Politics" and "Order and History," a four-volume work on historical philosophy. He was working on a fifth volume at his death.

He is survived by his wife, Lissy. The reader of the obituary knows nothing of the reasons why Voegelin fled Germany during the National Socialist period. He could have just as easily been a criminal or Communist or a Jew (he was none of these) as a critic of the regime (in the space of five

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49 Mitgang, op. cit.
years, he produced three works against the ideas of the National Socialists). Likewise, one is led to presume that Voegelin never returned to Germany by the outline of his professional appointments: Harvard, Alabama, LSU and Stanford. What has been elided here is Voegelin’s inability to land a job at a prestigious institution in the US, the lack of attention which met his work in the American political science, and Voegelin’s establishment of his Institute in Munich. Stanford also presents an undisclosed wrinkle as Voegelin did not really work at Stanford, but at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace which is housed on the Stanford campus. Finally, the section of the obituary which deals with Voegelin’s works section is the most crucial. The NSP is not even glibly treated and it is not at all obvious what the book is about from the title. The four volumes of OH which were already completed and the fifth unfinished volume had been reduced to “historical philosophy.” As I suggest below, OH contains a key to understanding Voegelin’s life and work. 50

In Search of Order

Voegelin, I argue, stayed away from public entanglement over political issues as part of his philosophical commitment to finding order in history. This dedication was so strong that Voegelin’s political asides seem to aim at nothing else but the restoration of order. Voegelin’s student, Henningsen says of Voegelin that he “was not a political creature. He had all kinds of talents, but he would have responded to the assembly in Athens the same way Plato did. No, I think, worse: he would have fled.”51 Another student, Michael Hereth, shared a similar sentiment with Henningsen and said Voegelin

50 Lissy Voegelin stated that her husband informed her that OH V would contain “the key to all his other works,” see Foreword in CW 18, 13.
51 Quoted in VRC, 97. Henningsen maintains that Voegelin never tried to dissuade his German students from getting involved with Social Democrat organizations. Voegelin also did not try to prevent Henningsen from writing for newspapers.
was "very much a Platonist about politics: no involvement in politics at all." This
distanced attitude is quite telling as a source of what Hereth called "stupid" political
judgments on German politics.\textsuperscript{52} The judgments often took the form of irrational
outbursts. More than one former student recalled that Voegelin's response to the Iran
Hostage Crisis (1979-1981) was that the United States should bomb Tehran and that
would end the whole affair. Hereth relates that the bombing comment came at a
colloquium at Hamburg University and Voegelin specifically suggested that an atomic
bomb be used. This was a statement, which not surprisingly, left the crowd appalled.\textsuperscript{53}

Voegelin statements in *AR* on the event of the Vietnam War are also troubling.
The sharp focus on detecting and describing second realities during the National Socialist
period during the Hitler lectures less than a decade earlier seems to have all but
disappeared by 1973. The situations of the Second War World and the Vietnam War are
not analogous. About the only thing the National Socialists shared with North
Vietnamese Communists is being an enemy of the United States in armed conflict.
Though the North Vietnamese were willing to fight until the last person, this had almost
nothing to do with a utopian Communist ideology or totalitarianism.\textsuperscript{54} Instead, the North
Vietnamese were continuing their fight for the independence and reunification of
Vietnam. When France was defeated at Dien Bien Phu and the United States propped up
a puppet government in South Vietnam, the United States was seen as the next colonizer
to be defeated.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 96, 95. See also the section entitled "Politics", 94-102, where Voegelin is described as emphasizing
his American citizenship, paying more attention to international and US newspapers than German ones, and
abandoning his affiliation with the Social Democratic Party in Germany.
\textsuperscript{53} See Florian Sattler, *VRC*, 94, and Hereth, ibid., 96.
\textsuperscript{54}*AR*, 117[CW'34, 142].
Voegelin also misconstrues the aftermath of the Tet Offensive. He claims that “certain trends in American society” made it “possible to convert the military defeat of the Communists in the Tet offensive of 1968 into an American defeat through the propaganda of the mass media.” What has been conveniently elided by Voegelin is that a “certain trend” which had developed in the wake of the Tet Offensive was the distrust in the propaganda from the United States government, especially from Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara and General Westmoreland, about how well the Vietnam War was going. The Tet Offensive exposed the massive problem of intelligence failure on the part of the United States military and the arrogant mishandling of the war by those who were conducting it. Under President Ford in 1975, the United States ended its involvement in the war by doing what Voegelin said could not be done to end a war. The US walked out, or rather flew out from Saigon during “Operation Frequent Wind.”

Voegelin’s offhand political comments when placed side by side with his academic work seem impossible to reconcile. However, Voegelin was interested in his philosophical truth quest and politics ate away at the time needed to engage in the quest, which was personal, even mystical. This does not by any means excuse Voegelin, but does help us to see why he made such crude statements. And, we are able to recognize what was necessary for Voegelin’s who theoretical project: peace.

Henningsen says that in response to sit-ins at Voegelin’s lectures in 1968, Voegelin “wanted calm, he did not want turmoil.” In nearly all of Voegelin’s work...

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55 AR, 118[CW 34, 143].
57 Voegelin had said in 1973 that the Vietnam War “had to be carried through to some sort of conclusion, because one cannot simply end a war by walking out of it,” AR, 118[CW 34, 142].
58 For RC, 41. Henningsen also says that Voegelin also used his “Bavarian-Austrian phrase,” “ich will meine
from the early attempts to deal with the problem of the National Socialists, to modern
Gnostics, to his theory of consciousness in the *Anamnesis* and at the end of his life with
*In Search of Order*, I see a continuity of a focus on order.59 Most of all, this
philosophizing, as he says, in the preface of *OH* I is a “means of establishing islands of
order in the disorder of the age.”60 To me that line sums up Voegelin’s project because
this kind of order (the island) is the order that a mystic philosopher (which Voegelin
called himself) needs to operate.61 A public philosopher, which Voegelin did not want to
be, needs more space. I do not think such an island would have been possible to establish
had Voegelin critiqued the United States or if he had published his Hitler lectures while
teaching in Munich. Voegelin’s freedom from public entanglements which allowed him
to produce his large body of work came at the heavy toll that few people know about his
work and even fewer try to understand it.

In the next chapter I will discuss the nature of the relationship between Voegelin
and Arendt and Voegelin and Strauss. Arendt and Strauss were like Voegelin in the
sense that they wanted to retreat to their own islands to think. However, unlike Voegelin
and Strauss, once Arendt took her moment to “stop-and-think,” she would return from the
island to tell the public the results.62 Thus far I have laid the blame for the silencing of

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50 Ruhe haben” [I want to have my peace], my translation.
59 One could argue that Voegelin was also aiming at the restoration of order with his Austrian newspaper
articles, see n. 1 above. Voegelin made a clear elaboration about the necessity of order in a letter to
Thomas Clancy regarding *MSP*. “First of all, I do not think that peace is an aim at all. It is a concomitant
result of stable order, just as happiness is not an aim in itself but the concomitant result of a certain
substantive state of the soul. Hence, what one can strive for in politics is only a stable order under given
historical circumstances,” *CW* 30, letter 49, to Thomas Clancy, 156.
60 *OH* I, xiv.
61 Voegelin says that he cannot deny the charge that he is a mystic in a letter to Gregor Sebba, *CW* 30, letter
422, 751.
62 Thinking, Arendt says, “interrupts any doing, any ordinary activities, no matter what they happen to be.
All thinking demands a stop-and-think,” *Life of the Mind/Thinking*, (Orlando: Harcourt, 1978), 78, original
emphasis.
Voegelin at almost solely Voegelin's feet. While he has to share the burden, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal with factors external to Voegelin which contribute to the silence.
Chapter Three: The Avoidance of Voegelin

It is not uncommon to make a comparison of the thought of Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. I am therefore breaking no new ground in considering Arendt, Strauss, and Voegelin together in this chapter. Indeed, the grouping of these thinkers is common enough that any study which takes up the thought of one the thinkers and neglects one or both of the others may be said to be deficient. The situation I want to discuss in this chapter is not the accord and discord which exists between the thought of Arendt, Strauss and Voegelin so much as the silent passing over of Voegelin by scholars of Arendt and Strauss. Such refusal to read or comment about Voegelin in work on Arendt and Strauss shows a lack of engagement with Voegelin and his work that Arendt and Strauss did not exhibit. Voegelin is regularly purged as one of these participants in the life of the mind in secondary literature. One thing which can be said about what Arendt scholars and Straussian have in common is that they do not talk or write much about Voegelin, if they deal with Voegelin at all. In the case of Arendtian scholarship,

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the neglect of Voegelin should not be considered a reflection of any animosity between Arendt and Voegelin because they never experienced a break as did Strauss and Voegelin. A general trend that can be described in scholarly work on Arendt’s thought is the awareness of Voegelin, but no interest in what he had to say. As a corrective to this trend, I recommend a fresh look at the thought of both Arendt and Voegelin on totalitarianism. To encourage such attention, I discuss the nature of the relationship between Arendt and Voegelin and point to the agreement the thinkers came to on the phenomenon of National Socialism. A different situation appears when one considers the inattention Voegelin receives from the Straussians. Unlike with Arendt, Voegelin exchanged dozens of letters with Leo Strauss. The Strauss-Voegelin correspondence was collected, translated and printed in a volume in 1993. In reading the correspondence, it becomes clear to the reader where Strauss and Voegelin divide on issues of philosophy. Despite this opposition, both Strauss and Voegelin came away from arguing out ideas in letters to each other with a focus on their own projects. The Straussians, unlike Strauss himself, do not seem to want to engage Voegelin’s work. The Straussians, again unlike the Arendt scholars, are seemingly not unaware of the nature of the relationship between Strauss and Voegelin or of Voegelin’s work. Voegelinians have attempted to bring Straussians to the ongoing dialogue on the thought of Strauss and Voegelin with disappointing results. I know of no effective method to encourage the Straussians to engage Voegelin’s thought. Instead, I wish to highlight the evasive maneuvers of the Straussians when the topic of discussion is Voegelin and to point out that Strauss himself did not pass up the opportunity to listen to Voegelin.

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4 Emberely and Cooper, op. cit. Voegelin and Arendt only exchanged 13 letters but saw each other in person more often than Voegelin and Strauss did.
A Lack of Intellectual Curiosity

On the illumination of the relationship of Arendt and Voegelin and the lack of attention paid to it, no one has done more work than Manfred Henningsen. Henningsen is not alone in pointing out the affinity of Arendt and Voegelin on totalitarianism. Peter Baehr, a scholar of Arendt’s thought, noticed the similarity of Voegelin’s thought on Hitler to that of Arendt. Baehr, heading off a digression on Arendt’s statements about totalitarian leadership which he does not wish to pursue, simply states that the “chief argument in relation to Hitler is that his much-vaunted gift of fascination was a ‘social phenomenon’ that had to be ‘understood in terms of the particular company he kept.’” In a footnote, Baehr then relates that Voegelin has “a broadly similar position” in CW 31 and briefly elaborates. “Voegelin concluded that only those who were already spiritually compromised, and who, because of that debility, were allowed into the Hitler circle, could be swept away by the Führer’s ‘aura.’” It is unfortunate that Baehr did not have the occasion to consider CW 31 fully, but it is nevertheless a promising step to see that an Arendtian is aware of the Hitler lectures. Unfortunately, Henningsen pieces and Baehr’s realization were published too late for the scholars in the *Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* to utilize for their articles. While the appearance of CW 31 caught the

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7 *Cambridge Companion to Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). In the volume I mean specifically Margaret Canovan, “Arendt’s Theory of Totalitarianism: a Reassessment (25-43), Seyla Benhabib, “Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*” (65-85), and Mary Dietz, “Arendt and the Holocaust” (86-109). Canovan’s article quotes Arendt’s “Reply” twice in the text without mentioning that it was made in the context of responding to a review of the *Origins* by Voegelin (30). Benhabib does not mention the ROP exchange. Dietz quotes Arendt’s “Reply” where Arendt clarified her method of historiography, but Dietz says nothing about why Arendt would do such a thing (87). Arendt is also quoted from the “Reply” in opposition to the “standard approaches of the social sciences as well as political
attention of Baehr, he seems to be alone in this recognition as the attitude of most Arendtians has not changed toward Voegelin. This attitude is detrimental to their analyses of Arendt. The back cover of the *Cambridge Companion* tells us that “Advanced students and specialists will find a conspectus of recent development in the interpretation of Arendt.” I will not claim to be an advanced student or specialist (the editor/publisher presumably means with relation to Arendt), but it is not surprising that the recent developments inside the volume do not include an interpretation of Arendt after making a comparison with Voegelin’s work. The reason is because ignoring or setting Voegelin up as an adversary of Arendt is standard in Arendtian literature. Arendt responded to Voegelin’s critique, according to Henningsen “because it went to the center of her intellectual self-understanding.”

Therefore, the point of discussing the personal relationship of Arendt with Voegelin is that it makes it impossible for anyone who is serious about the thought of either of these thinkers to claim ignorance of the influence of one on the other. The same can be said for the personal relationship of Strauss and Voegelin, although as I have stated, the Straussian silence is a different case. But, it may be suggested, the Cambridge volume published in 2000 was an introductory attempt which updates work which has already been done on Arendt. Perhaps the Arendtians were saving the new reflections in theoretical frameworks” represented by Voegelin (88). How Dietz knows that Voegelin represents such “standard approaches” and “frameworks” is intriguing since she never cites anything of Voegelin’s work.

This opposition role has occurred even when the point was conceded that Voegelin’s “question about the unity of the work, which prompted one of Arendt’s infrequent attempts at methodological self-clarification, is a justified one.” Considering that the author of this statement, Benhabib, follows with “Hannah Arendt did not engage in methodological reflections,” one wonders if she cannot see that the question why did Arendt reply to Voegelin then offers itself for discussion, Benhabib, The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt, new ed., (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 63.

light of studying Voegelin for their articles and books. A review of the literature proves otherwise.

The Arendt-Voegelin exchange in ROP took place in 1953. Arendt's "Reply" is the catalyst for mentioning Voegelin at all for Arendtians. Yet, no matter how many times this ROP event is referenced, it never spurs a hard look at the man Arendt felt compelled to respond to. This fact, I think, can only be explained by a lack of intellectual curiosity. Therefore, instead of rehashing the ROP exchange again, I want to move beyond what has been a convenient escape route which allows for the negation of a serious comparison of the two thinkers and instead bring to light the little discussed Arendt-Voegelin friendship. I now turn to facts of the Arendt-Voegelin relationship that are available (and have been for sometime) for anyone who puts forth the effort.

Arendt scholars seem to have no idea that Arendt and Voegelin had a friendly relationship. This relationship certainly did not resemble the friendship of Arendt and Mary McCarthy, to be sure. Despite the relative paucity of contact between Arendt and Voegelin, it certainly and importantly extended beyond (and even before) the exchange in the ROP. In light of the biographical content I discuss below, the disconnect between the accounts of the Arendt-Voegelin relationship presented by Arendtians and the reality of the relationship starts to come into view.

Voegelin first wrote to Arendt in 1951, before his review of the Origins appeared. Voegelin thanked Arendt for having the publisher send him a copy of the book, which he said he was "very anxious" to see since he had read her articles in the ROP. Voegelin even presciently announced, "As a whole this study is likely to have a lasting significance as a standard work, through the elucidation of the connections and the masterful
categorization of a huge mass of material of which others only managed to extract individual details."\textsuperscript{10} Some of the disagreement which would find its way into the review of the book can be found in the letter, including the often cited debate over the term "nature."\textsuperscript{11} However, the points of contention in the letter are presented mildly and Arendt responded favorably to Voegelin and noted the importance of his work for her thought.\textsuperscript{12} What might seem incredible is that Voegelin's review, which is much more abrasive than the 1951 letter to Arendt herself, was the event which started the "friendly relationship" between Arendt and Voegelin that ended with Arendt's death in 1975.\textsuperscript{13}

Even without knowing this detail, anyone who reads the Arendt-Jaspers correspondence, in English or German, is confronted by Arendt's enthusiasm for Voegelin's NSP. Arendt announced to Jaspers that the book had come out and that "I think the book is on the wrong track, but important nonetheless."\textsuperscript{14} Arendt's dismissal of a key part of this book in \textit{On Revolution} has already been noted.\textsuperscript{15} This was not a dismissal of the thought of Voegelin by any means. The same year as \textit{On Revolution} appeared, the \textit{Festschrift} for Voegelin's sixtieth birthday appeared for which Arendt had been a contributor and active editor in soliciting contributions.\textsuperscript{16} One of Voegelin's assistants, Peter Weber-Schäfer,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[10] \textit{CW} 30, letter 18, to Hannah Arendt, 69-70.
\item[11] Ibid., 70-71.
\item[13] \textit{CW} 5, 2.
\end{footnotes}
had written Arendt in 1960 about editing the volume because he claimed that he had heard Voegelin "express his great admiration" for Arendt's work. Arendt promptly replied and accepted the joint editorship. She then sent letters asking for contributions to at least six people on the list of possible contributors sent by Weber-Schäfer.17

Before the appearance of the Festschrift and On Revolution, Arendt visited Voegelin in Munich during a break from the Eichmann trial in 1961. This was no mere social call. She had been invited to give a guest lecture at Voegelin's Institute and Arendt accepted. Arendt wrote to her husband about this trip and said the Voegelins had been "sehr nett" (very nice).18 Following Arendt's lecture about the Eichmann trial, most of the students whom she engaged in Voegelin's seminar had the same feeling about their encounter with Arendt.19 Not even the standard biography of Arendt written by Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World, has any details about Arendt's lecture at Voegelin's Institute or that she had visited the Voegelins on that trip. Perhaps the standard framing of Voegelin in opposition to Arendt is derived from this biography because Voegelin is presented exactly in this manner by Young-Bruehl in the book.20

Voegelin also sought assistance from Arendt from time to time. Voegelin had tried to recruit Arendt for the Institute as a guest professor. He said, "As one of the

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17 See the letter to Gottfried von Haberler, Nov. 3, 1960. This letter and the ones to and from Weber-Schäfer are available on the Library of Congress American Memory website. The Library of Congress houses the Hannah Arendt papers.
19 VRC, 77-78, 79
20 See Young-Bruehl, op. cit., 252-255, 276-277. The second edition, published in 2004, changes none of the content which is now over two decades old.
professorships should be concerned with revolutions and their history, I thought that you would be the ideal person to have.” Although the offer was tempting, Arendt declined. She cited her “principles” of not devoting more than a quarter and a half per year to teaching at the University of Chicago.21 When Voegelin was deciding on the Hoover Institution position, he consulted Arendt to see if it was a reputable place and trusted her answer that it was.22

Totalitarianism Part Two

In Voegelin’s third attempt to come to some understanding of the National Socialist regime, a decade after he had written his review of the Origins, he found himself agreeing with Arendt.23 Although the two books under comparison were born of different circumstances, Arendt was reporting on the Adolf Eichmann trial and Voegelin was not pleased by the nature of the German society which surrounded him, Arendt and Voegelin are so close in their understanding of Nazi Germany that they discuss the same themes and have similar interpretations.24 A theme of crucial importance to the self-understanding of Germans was the “flourishing” of former National Socialists in the Federal German Republic.

Both Arendt and Voegelin described “laxity toward former Nazis” on the part of Germans in the 1960’s. Arendt uses the example of the court case of the important Free Democratic Party member Martin Fellenz (former Higher S.S. and Police Leader), which occurred “six months after Eichmann’s name had disappeared from the news,” to suggest

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21 These letters are available at the Library of Congress website. Another interesting aspect of Voegelin’s request and Arendt’s reply is that both are written in English. Arendt and Voegelin usually corresponded in German.

22 Voegelin mentions this in a letter to Henningsen, see CW 30, letter 274, 544.

23 Voegelin talked about Nazism in published work as political religion 1938, then as Gnosticism in 1952, and finally in the Hitler lectures, published posthumously, as burlesque in 1964.

24 The books are obviously not mirrors of each other. Arendt’s book is a “trial report,” as she called it. In Voegelin’s lectures, Germans are symbolically on trial.
that Germans “themselves did not much care one way or the other” about their past. Likewise, Germans “did not particularly mind the presence of murderers at large in the country, since none of them were likely to commit murder of their own free will.”

Arendt says that Fellenz was “accused of participation in and partial responsibility for the murder of forty thousand Jews in Poland.” Fellenz was sentenced to four years and received time already served for two and a half years for time spent in jail waiting for a trial. Voegelin culled an event from the Auschwitz trials (1963-1965) to show some of this same nonchalant attitude. A man on the witness stand during the trial of a Gestapo guard at Auschwitz had shouted “murderer” when he saw the defendant who had beaten him into a cripple. The defendant had also been seen killing other prisoners by the witness. Voegelin notes that the newspaper report he was quoting from faults the witness for a “loss of self-control.” For Voegelin, the message from the journalist is that “one should peacefully allow oneself to be killed and shouldn’t in any way shout ‘murderer.’”

One man both Arendt and Voegelin focus on is Hans Globke. Globke was called to testify for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trials. Globke testified that he was a “mitigator” who stayed in his Ministry of the Interior position in the Reich to stop “real Nazis” from entering such offices. It was pointed out by both Arendt and Voegelin that bureaucrats like Globke were capable of assessing and taking action on the “Jewish question” even before Hitler came to power. In 1932, Globke issued a top secret

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26 *CW* 31, 64. See ibid., 63-69 for a more complete discussion of German laxity.
27 Globke was a key adviser for West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Secretary of State from 1953-1963. Before being enlisted by Adenauer, Globke had been a high-ranking officer in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in 1932 and retained such a position in the Reich Ministry of the Interior.
circular letter which stated that “proof of Aryan descent” was necessary before one could change their name. This “mitigator” arguably “made things worse than they were under ‘real Nazis’” with his interpretation of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. The only thing that could be proven to have been mitigated by Globke is the situation of Czech brides. Before his action, German soldiers were required to provide photos of the potential brides in a state of complete undress in order to obtain a marriage license. After a Globke decree, the photo only needed to show the future bride in a swimsuit. Yet, Globke was easily able to reenter the German government in 1949 as the undersecretary of state in the federal chancellery.

Under Chancellor Adenauer, West Germany had a reason for acting in such a lax manner toward former National Socialists. As Arendt points out, “if the Adenauer administration had been too sensitive about employing officials with a compromising Nazi past, there might have been no administration at all.” In this vein, Voegelin gives details about two industrialists who were highly involved in the Third Reich (one used slave labor, the other helped Hitler receive his German citizenship) who received the Federal Cross of Merit from the West German government. The only reason why such exploits were described publicly in newspapers was because someone, by chance, happened to have a functioning memory. Why a remembrance occurred after the Cross of Merit was conferred (which resulted in a revocation of the medal) did not similarly happen when a former S.S. man, who had been imprisoned for four years for several murders, was allowed to flee Germany on a valid visa, was beyond Voegelin’s comprehension. He then pointedly asked his lecture audience, “Does it not look like an

29 Eichmann in Jerusalem, 128; CW 31, 67.
30 Eichmann in Jerusalem, 17-18.
operetta republic if things like that happen here? Second, a more serious question: Up to what level is our whole federal-republican society still so riddled in an organized form with National Socialists that it is almost impossible to overcome such things, especially in the judiciary and the police service?\(^{31}\)

Another issue Arendt and Voegelin are both critical of is the use of the cliché of the German “unmastered past” (unbewältigte Vergangenheit).\(^{32}\) An interesting piece of work could by done, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, by examining the existence of “unmastered present” of Austria using the analyses of Arendt and Voegelin in light of the statements of Otto Habsburg-Lothringen (Otto von Habsburg) on the occasion of the 70\(^{th}\) Anniversary of the Anschluss and the opinion poll “which showed almost two thirds of Austrians wanted to end what was described as the ‘endless discussion’ about the country's role during the Second World War.” Habsburg-Lothringen had stated that “No state in Europe has a greater right than Austria to call itself a victim.” He also denied the Allies’ wartime charge of Austrian responsibility for aiding the National Socialists as “hypocrisy and lies.” Habsburg-Lothringen downplayed the phenomenon of the crowd of tens of thousands Austrians who cheerfully welcomed Hitler as being on the level of “high-spirited football fans.”\(^{33}\)

I have tried to show that the original tension between Arendt and Voegelin over her interpretation of totalitarianism was not as great as it initially seemed. That this gulf was bridgeable can be seen by comparing Eichmann in Jerusalem to CW 31. Voegelin

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\(^{31}\) CW 31, 67-69.


recognized that in some sense he shared a fundamental similarity to Arendt. "When I saw her library in New York, she had practically the same books on her shelves as I had on mine. We had read the same things." However, we must remember what Voegelin considered the key difference between himself and Arendt which kept their thought projects separate. "But there is one great difference: She has an original inclination toward Marx; and my analysis of the philosophy of experience as well as my critique of ideologies, especially of Marxism, simply went against her grain. That Marxism should be nothing but a questionable sectarian movement... ran counter to her sense of propriety." In light of the fact that Arendt and Voegelin "read the same things" and yet had, for the most part, different interpretations and approaches to those readings, is it not then time for Arendt scholars to review Voegelin's thought on totalitarianism?

**Willful Ignorance?**

The Straussian avoidance of Voegelin seems more sinister than that of the Arendt scholars because there is no where to hide from Voegelin for the Straussians. The only alternative to dealing with Voegelin is to suppress his thought. It appears that the main reason that Straussians refuse to engage Voegelin's thought is that they believe that he is a historicist, although Voegelin was not. This is a theme which can be seen in the two latest works on Strauss, *The Truth About Leo Strauss* and *Reading Leo Strauss*. I will

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34 *CW* 33, 446.

35 *Loc. cit.*

36 Cooper has a good discussion of the events surrounding Voegelin's review of Strauss' *On Tyranny*, Strauss' "Restatement" and Strauss' false characterization of Voegelin as a historicist through "sophistic remarks," see *EVF*, 124-130.

37 Catherine and Michael Zuckert in *The Truth About Leo Strauss: Political Philosophy and American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 47-48, present Voegelin in this manner, albeit without making a real effort at communicating what Voegelin actually said in his review of *On Tyranny*. In *Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), Steven Smith only mentions Voegelin to cite Strauss' view of Machiavelli in a reply to Voegelin's review of Strauss' *On Tyranny*, see ibid., 134.
not speak about agreement between Strauss and Voegelin, as I did with Arendt and Voegelin, because there are no works to highlight which show the affinity of the thought Strauss and Voegelin. I will instead detail the strange silencing of Voegelin by the Straussians and suggest that it is unacceptable to do so.

It cannot be said that Straussians are ignorant of Voegelin and his thought. It might not be too extreme to say that Straussians exhibit a willful ignorance of Voegelin. The Straussians have been given opportunities to come together with Voegelinians and discuss the thought of the two men. Yet, Straussians, when they do appear, refuse to enter the dialogue. Strauss is seen as simply right and therefore Voegelin is simply wrong. It does not matter that both Strauss and Voegelin did not believe in such endings to philosophical discussion. At a crucial juncture in the correspondence with Voegelin, Strauss says about their dispute on a point, “God knows who is right.” It is in this spirit of the Strauss quote that I present two occasions where Straussians refused to enter the ongoing dialogue which Strauss and Voegelin started but left in a suspended state in 1964.

The express purpose of the correspondence volume was to bring out the correspondence which was not widely known. The commentary essays, which were included only in the original volume, were a way to have thinkers familiar with the thought of Strauss and Voegelin discuss certain aspects of the correspondence and the

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38 Emberly and Cooper, op. cit., letter 39, 91.
39 Personal communication with Peter Emberly and Barry Cooper. With the second edition, this case has become somewhat obfuscated. The University of Missouri Press did not want to publish the commentary essays due to financial concerns. What this means is that anyone who does not have access to the Penn State edition has virtually no idea what was in that edition. The introduction to the Missouri volume gives no hint about the identity of the “scholars” who had written essays or what they discussed in “dealing with one or another aspect of the work of Strauss and Voegelin or with comparisons of their work,” see Emberly and Cooper, op. cit. (2004), xxiii. The commentary essay problem does not exist in the French version of the correspondence which relied on the Penn State edition, see note 3 for the French volume.
thought of both men. The attempt to build a bridge between scholars who are influenced by Voegelin and Strauss by the editors, who are sympathetic to Voegelin, failed because the Straussians failed to enter the discussion. This is clear from the two Straussian essays.

Even though Stanley Rosen and Thomas Pangle are forced to mention Voegelin because of the context, they both avoid taking Voegelin’s thought seriously. Their essays seek to prove that Voegelin was a “historicist” and that Strauss was a superior thinker about philosophy. Rosen’s essay, “Politics or Transcendence?: Responding to Historicism,” is the shortest essay in the volume. Economy of space did not result in concentrated quality of content. Rosen cites only letters from the correspondence and Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil. The letter citations are meant to show that Voegelin was closer to the “Judeo-Christian tradition” while Strauss’ paganism was closer to the correct anti-Historicist position represented by (in this case) “Nietzsche’s scientific slant.”

Rosen’s piece descends into unabashed speculation in order to separate Voegelin whose “orientation as a political thinker is Christian” from Strauss’ orientation which is that of a pagan. Strangely, Rosen says that Strauss “takes metaphysics more seriously than does Voegelin” not because “Strauss is the more serious metaphysician of the two, but that he tacitly rejects metaphysics altogether. Strauss never stated the full reasons for this rejection, and certainly there is no basis in these letters for reconstructing the argument.” It seems from this statement that Rosen could reconstruct Strauss’ argument if he wanted to, but declines without giving a compelling reason why we should accept this move. It is therefore highly questionable that on the basis of an

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40 Rosen in Emberely and Cooper, op. cit., 266.
41 Ibid., 263, 265.
argument which we are not allowed to inspect that Rosen declares that Strauss, through his rejection of metaphysics, gets access to the "phenomenon of historicism." Voegelin, on the other hand, is not able to see historicism until it has been immanentized. To try to understand Pangle's refusal to take on Voegelin's thought, it is possible to consider what Straussians consider a "historicist" approach and refer to an earlier event in Pangle's life, i.e., his essay on the first three volumes of OH. Pangle argues against Voegelin's work for many reasons, the most serious of which for Straussians is Voegelin's historicism. Voegelin's historicism arises because he takes seriously the fact that Plato, for instance, lived at a certain time and not at another time. The great fault, according to Straussians, is the assertion that the concrete situation of a particular age is bound to have an impact on one's philosophy. It seems commonsensical to research the times in which a historical thinker lived as a way to help understand what they said. Straussians reject this research as historicism. Such rejection was described by Gregory Vlastos as Strauss' "addiction to the strange notion that a historical understanding of a historical thinker is somehow a philosophical liability." Similarly, in another review of On Tyranny, John Herman Randall Jr., says contra Strauss, "the historian does indeed try to find out what past thinkers thought about their problems. But he also asks why these problems were problems for them, and why they were limited in the answers they gave—questions which past thinkers did not ask. The historian thus does understand the past better than it understood itself—a fact which Dr. Strauss finds odd."

42 Ibid., 262.
45 Randall, op. cit.
Pangle's essay is much longer than Rosen's and cites work from Strauss and Voegelin and not merely the correspondence. However, more pages did not result in a serious look at the thought of Voegelin. Pangle admits that he has only "limited familiarity with Voegelin's works," but recognizes Voegelin's "great work" is *Order and History*. So limited is Pangle's knowledge of Voegelin (at least as presents it in his essay on Platonic political philosophy) that he nowhere cites Voegelin's *OH III*. For what Voegelin has to say on Plato, we are directed by Pangle to the *NSP* and the correspondence. He spends one page on "the common ground" of Strauss and Voegelin which was the "problematic character of the lawful ordering of human society" and a diagnosis "of the moral and philosophic self-estrangement of modern man." Then, Pangle seeks to elaborate Voegelin's historicism on the next three pages. After this blow has been struck, the two disputes considered by Pangle become attacks on Voegelin in favor of Strauss. Strauss wins the first round about the "status of revelation" by declaring that philosophy cannot presuppose "a specific faith." Voegelin's Christianity had already been described by Pangle as a faith peculiar to Voegelin himself which is likely to be shared by few. Strauss' paganism, to use the language of Rosen, is seen by Pangle as a philosophic position starting from "truly self-evident premises that must be granted by all thinking men (e.g., the existence of oneself as thinking and willing, the duty to do what is truly right, the visible motions, causality)." Key to ending the dispute over Platonic rational philosophy is that Strauss asserted that philosophers are by their nature uneasy wherever they may live. Because Strauss elaborated "the true teaching at the

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46 Emberely and Cooper, op. cit., 321.
47 Ibid., 322.
48 Ibid., 330, Pangle cites Strauss from letter 39, ibid., 89, emphasis original.
49 Ibid., 326-330.
50 Ibid., 330-331.
heart of the Republic” (an analysis of a “strict correlation between types of soul and types of society”) and a correct interpretation of Plato’s Laws (a city established without dialogue), it follows that philosophers “are far more independent than they would otherwise be of every political order, and in particular of their own ‘historical situations.’”\textsuperscript{51} The implication is that philosophers are ahistorical and Voegelin who cannot see this point is wrong. Voegelin is then dropped completely from the concluding seven pages of the essay. It is obvious that Pangle takes Strauss’ side in an unfinished debate when he says to begin the concluding section: “In contrast to Voegelin’s faith-inspired historical philosophizing or philosophy of history, Strauss takes an intransigent stand for philosophy as rigorous science.”\textsuperscript{52}

The second example of Straussian avoidance of Voegelin is directly related to the first edition of the correspondence in the sense that it was an attempt to bring together Straussians and Voegelinians. In this case, the purpose was to talk about Arendt, Strauss, and Voegelin. The event was the 2007 American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting. James Stoner and Michael Zuckert were invited by the Eric Voegelin Society to give papers on a panel entitled, “Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin: Rival Visions of Politics and Reality.” Zuckert delivered a paper on “Why Leo Strauss is Not an Aristotelian.”\textsuperscript{53} This is a topic which could have been easily extended to cover Arendt and Voegelin. Yet, Zuckert chooses not to compare the three thinkers of listed in the panel title and instead presents a monologue. Zuckert’s paper mentions the

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 339.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 341. Pangle appears to mean that Voegelin engaged in faith-inspired philosophical reflections.
names of Arendt and Voegelin in the opening lines and then drops them from discussion. Strauss who suggested a ‘return to the ancients’ is presented as in agreement with Arendt and Voegelin who also suggested a “‘return’ in thinking.” Arendt is said to “defend a view of the political which she sees as Greek if not quite Aristotelian.” Voegelin however presents an interpretative challenge for Zuckert. He knows that Voegelin “is disaffected from modern thought and calls for a return, although precisely to what is harder for me to say.” Voegelin’s call for a return was apparently too difficult to bother with as Zuckert does not say another word about Voegelin in the paper. Zuckert comes away as the more ecumenical of the two Straussians who were on the panel as he at least says something about both Arendt and Voegelin.

Stoner’s paper, “The Catholic Moment in the Political Philosophy of Leo Strauss,” does not even mention Arendt, who wrote her dissertation on Augustine (*Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin. Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation*, 1929), at all. Stoner argues that Strauss’ “distinction between reason and revelation seems to me to correspond to Catholic teaching” presented by Aquinas’ first question in the *Summa Theologica*. Reason is theoretically available to all humans while revelation is granted by the grace of God to only certain individuals. Voegelin is dispensed with in a speculative sentence: “On these matters of definition, Strauss and the Catholics are, as best I can tell, in perfect agreement — in contrast, I think, to Eric Voegelin, for whom reason is a form of revelation of the divine ground.” In the rest of the paper, Stoner who is a devout

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54 Loc. cit.
56 Loc. cit.
Catholic, elaborates the nature of the agreement of Strauss and Catholic thought (which is not always as “perfect” as is the opposition to Voegelin) and why Catholics can read and learn from Strauss. Both of these attempts, the correspondence volume and the APSA panel, failed to make the Straussian contributors honest.

The reticence to enter a discussion by the Straussians as just described above is unfortunate. Strauss had an influence on Voegelin and vice versa—whether one wants to admit that this impact occurred does not matter. Influence does not have to lead to agreement. One can see this fact by looking at Heidegger’s influence on Strauss and the influence of Hans Kelsen on Voegelin for example. The letters in the correspondence between Strauss and Voegelin also show that influence even in disagreement can help one’s own thinking. We can let Strauss himself have the last words as to why Straussians should read Voegelin. After an exchange of letters about the content of Voegelin’s then upcoming Walgreen Foundation lectures, Strauss welcomes Voegelin’s future presence at the University of Chicago to deliver the lectures. “We will not be in ‘agreement’—but for me it is always a great benefit and a rare joy to speak to a man who chooses the hard way.”

Moving Forward

A look at Voegelin’s work beyond his review of Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism* would be a benefit to the work of Arendtians. Voegelinians might have new reason to read both the *Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in light of the similar conception of National Socialism which Arendt and Voegelin came to. Study in other areas of the two thinkers work might bear fruit as well considering that they read the same books, but thought about them differently, as Voegelin said. The

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57 Emberly and Cooper, op. cit., letter 35, 76.
cause of the Straussian lack of engagement with Voegelin will be harder to overcome. The only recommendation I can give is to keep inviting Straussians to the discussion and hope that someday they will take after Strauss in terms of conversing with people they disagree with about how to philosophize.
Chapter Four: Use and Abuse of Voegelin

It would be preposterous to suggest that writing about Voegelin requires an intellectual treasure hunt for materials. There are already more things published on Voegelin than one could ever read without being a philologist. Therefore, I do not have the unenviable task which confronts Wayne Cristaudo in writing a book on the thought of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy in dialogue with Franz Rosenzweig. Like Voegelin, Rosenstock-Huessy’s name has become little more than a strange sound to the ears of most people. This silence surrounding both men exists despite the influence both had on important thinkers of the twentieth century. While Cristaudo has not been joined by many others in making an extended case for the importance of Rosenstock-Huessy’s work, great effort has been taken to preserve and disseminate the thought of Voegelin.

The Eric Voegelin Society (EVS) boasts a large international membership. Sandoz is the secretary of the EVS and is responsible for approving the panels for the annual meeting.

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2 The relation of Voegelin to Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss was considered in Chapter 3. Some of the thinkers influenced by Rosenstock-Huessy include Reinhold Niebuhr, Franz Rosenzweig and Paul Tillich. Rosenstock-Huessy and Voegelin also knew each other’s work. Rosenstock-Hussey wrote Voegelin about Voegelin’s *OH I*. Voegelin’s response mentioned that he thought highly of Rosenstock-Huessy’s work, see Wayne Cristaudo, “Philosophy, Christianity and Revolution in Eric Voegelin and Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy,” *European Legacy*, Vol. 4 (Dec. 1999), no. 6, 72, n. 2.

of the EVS which coincides with the annual meeting of the APSA. Sandoz, as director of the Eric Voegelin Institute (EVI), also played a key role in the publication of the volumes of the CW as the most active member of the Editorial Board. Voegelin’s international bibliography, edited by Geoffrey L. Price, is 305 pages. There have been no fewer than three American political science special journal issues dedicated to the thought of Voegelin. There are three Voegelin research centers, one in the United States and two in Germany. Apart from the two languages in which Voegelin published (English and German), Voegelin’s work has been translated into Chinese, Czech, French, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. There has been secondary work done on Voegelin’s thought in all of these languages except Chinese, Japanese, and Swedish. In addition, while there are no works of Voegelin translated into Dutch or Turkish, secondary work on Voegelin is extant in these languages. In light of these facts, one could say symbolically that Voegelin’s impact can potentially stretch from one side of world to the other where it reached Cristaudo as an undergraduate in Australia. It is therefore necessary to confront this outpouring of scholarship on Voegelin in a project which is concerned with the silencing of Voegelin. I am obviously not going to undertake a literature review which would encompass all of the work mentioned above. I will suggest in this chapter that despite the impressive size of the list of secondary literature, and sometimes perhaps because of it, the thought of Voegelin is still

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4 The 2008 meeting will be the 24th annual meeting of the EVS. The 2007 meeting grew to a record ten conference panels. The implications of this development will be discussed in Chapter 5.

5 Eric Voegelin: International Biography, 1921-2000, ed. Geoffrey L. Price, (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2000). Since the publication of this volume there have been quite a few more works published which would need to be added to the list.

6 The Eric Voegelin Institute for American Renaissance Studies is located on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The German centers are the Voegelin Bibliothek at the University of Erlangen and the Voegelin Archiv at the University of Munich. A decade ago there were additional centers located in England and the Czech Republic which are no longer in operation.
not approached by scholars. To follow out the implication of this suggestion, I will review the general theme of the use and abuse of Voegelin. This theme can be seen non-exhaustively in the topics 1) Voegelin as Christian, 2) Voegelin as conservative, 3) and the use and abuse of Voegelin’s thought in secondary literature.

The Many Baptisms of Eric Voegelin

Voegelin was born to Lutheran parents in Cologne, Germany in 1901, but since that time Voegelin’s personal Christianity has undergone many permutations in writings about him. Voegelin noted that he had documents which labeled him, among other things, a Catholic, a Protestant, a neo-Augustinian, and a Thomist. Part of this labeling of Voegelin as this or that type of Christian is Voegelin’s own fault. In a letter to John East, who was writing a piece for Modern Age on Voegelin, this guilt is made clear. East had asked Voegelin about Russell Kirk’s classification of Voegelin as a “pre-Reformation Christian.” Voegelin responded,

The ‘pre-Reformation Christian’ is a joke. I never have written any such thing. These canards arise because I frequently have to ward off people who want to ‘classify’ me. When somebody wants me to be a Catholic or a Protestant, I tell him that I am a ‘pre-Reformation Christian.’ If he wants to nail me down as a Thomist or Augustinian, I tell him I am a ‘pre-Nicene Christian.’ And if he wants to nail me down earlier, I tell him that even Mary the Virgin was not a member of the Catholic Church. I have quite a number of such stock answers for people who pester me after a lecture; and then they get talked around as authentic information on my ‘position.’ I don’t know where Russell Kirk got his information.

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7 AR, 46[CW 34, 74].
8 Voegelin to John East, in CW 30, 825, letter 479. Kirk referred to Voegelin as a “pre-Reformation Christian” in print in his review OH I, see, “Behind the Veil of History,” Yale Review, Vol. 46 (1957): 466-476. East’s article was published as “Eric Voegelin and American Conservative Thought,” Modern Age 22 (Spring 1978), 2: 114-132. This piece raised the ire of Voegelin and a discussion about the nature of his scholarship, see Voegelin’s letter to East, in CW 30, letter 493, 840-841. Voegelin says that East’s article provides all the material necessary for a satire on the conservatives which East has left incomplete. Voegelin concludes, “In order to make it complete, you would have to confront the actual content and purpose of my work, which has nothing to do with conservative predilections, with these predilections as illustrated by your selection of quotations. Why you have left the satire incomplete, I am sure, you will know best yourself.” Voegelin then referred East to his “Remembrance of Things Past” in the Notre Dame
Much has been written about Voegelin’s personal Christianity up to this point and I cannot add much in the way of information. What I can do is issue the disclaimer that Voegelin’s personal faith was certainly not an institutionalized form of Christianity nor was it Christianity per se. Further, the speculation of others on this point matters little because Voegelin was first of all a scholar and any kind of rigidity in thought was considered unscholarly by Voegelin. However, since there is not silence on this particular issue I unfortunately have to cover ground which is by no means loose soil.

Sandoz says that “Eric Voegelin was, indeed, above all a philosopher and a scientist, not a party hack or politically correct ideologue of any stripe. Nobody is entitled through any device whatever with impunity to turn him into one posthumously.”9 The same could be said for the religious element of Voegelin. That is to say, by being a philosopher and a scientist, Voegelin could not be a dogmatic Christian of any kind. Voegelin was a mystic philosopher and this put him at odds with institutional Christianity. Voegelin was highly critical of both the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Germany in his Hitler lectures.

The symbolism of what Jesus meant to humanity was far superior to Voegelin than anything to do with the historical Jesus. This was an issue that upset some of Voegelin’s Christian readers and this frustration became especially heated after the publication of the fourth volume of OH, The Ecumenic Age. Christianity, which originally was going to take up two volumes of space in the OH series, had been relegated to a single chapter.10

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Besides speculation which has raged for years in publications on Voegelin, there have been some specific accounts which have made possible a Christianization of Voegelin posthumously. Sandoz, to bolster his presentation of Voegelin’s Christianity in *The Voegelinian Revolution*, carefully constructs his recounting of information gained from Lissy Voegelin on this issue. Sandoz reports that Lissy Voegelin told him that Eric Voegelin kept telling her, “‘At last I understand Christianity!’ And she responding: ‘Yes, Eric, but you’re going to take it with you!’” The wording used in the epilogue was published four years after the death of Lissy Voegelin who could not have corrected him that Voegelin had actually kept repeating: “I know it now,” to which she replied, as Sandoz reports, that Voegelin was going to take “it” with him. Since Lissy Voegelin is no longer alive to validate either statement, we can suggest that there was no deathbed conversion by turning to a memorial fabrication written by Fr. James V. Schall and the fact that Voegelin had made his own burial arrangements in December of 1984. Schall says,

On the day of Voegelin’s death, a Psalm was read as he passed into unconsciousness. The Psalm was the Twenty-fifth. “Oh, keep my soul, O Lord, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in Thee.” Voegelin died peacefully while this Psalm was being read. As his wife was too weak and anxious, the Psalm was read to Voegelin by his American Indian housekeeper whose name was, with splendid paradox, Hiawatha.

Henningsen says that Schall’s account of Voegelin’s death “borders on hagiography.” Schall was not at the Voegelins’ home when Eric Voegelin died and he did not name his

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12 This information I received from Henningsen and Voegelin’s personal assistant during his last years, Paul Caringella.
source for this misinformation. Therefore, it is worth quoting Henningsen’s correction of the facts here at length.

Apart from the fact that he did not have an American-Indian house keeper named Hiawatha but actually an African-American nurse by that name, this nurse was very religious and resolute and decided, while Mrs. Voegelin was not in the room, to read to her dying patient from the bible. The text she chose had offered itself when the copy which she had taken from Voegelin’s library opened at the part of David’s Psalms. Neither the patient nor his wife was involved in the choice of the passage. Yet in the imagined death scene of the philosopher he has to conform to a sublime, slightly exotic image. He cannot be shown as he really was up to his death, namely the radical questioner who was unwilling to be satisfied by the answers of convention, tradition and institutional religion. He practiced the art of questioning until his last hours. ‘He was watching himself dying,’ his wife said. He was curious to the end. 14

Voegelin as Conservative

When Voegelin did not capitalize on his entrance into American popular culture, his book lost the attention of most everyone except for the conservative movement spearheaded by the late William F. Buckley, Jr. and the conservative organization he created, the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF)—though they did not seem to understand Voegelin either. Voegelin never appeared on Buckley’s television program Firing Line which started in 1969 and continued to air until 1999. As far as I can tell, Buckley never invited Voegelin to do an interview. Buckley at least once used his catch phrase “don’t let them immanentize the eschaton” on the show. In 1969, this cliché baffled a young man in New Jersey named Edward Vazquez who was able to receive no help from his high school teacher in deciphering the meaning of the phrase. When the teacher found out that Buckley was the cause of the students’ queries and that Buckley had attributed the phrase to Voegelin, the teacher responded that Buckley had made up

both the phrase and Voegelin. While Buckley did not ask Voegelin to be on his TV show, Buckley did write Voegelin in 1979 and asked him to write a monthly one page column on any topic, at double the usual rate, in National Review as “a guest philosopher of the year.” This offer would stand as long as Voegelin remembered that he was supposed to enlighten readers and meet the deadlines. Voegelin politely declined and gave several excuses. His main reason was that he was “simply not talented for the kind of writing you have in mind.” Voegelin conceived of the idea of a column like William Safire’s NYT magazine column “On Language,” except that the focus would be on the “intellectual misuse of philosophic language.” Voegelin said that this idea would become so interesting that he would miss deadlines. At the close of his letter, Voegelin mentioned that he would be receiving an assistant, Paul Caringella, to aid him in finishing OH V. Voegelin also sent Buckley a copy of “Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme” to suggest that National Review’s readership would not be interested in “this kind of philosophical analysis.” This experience with Buckley was not an isolated one. The matter might have died down had the initiative to spread Voegelin’s importance not been taken up by two of the most popular American conservatives, Buckley and Russell Kirk. These two men founded the publications National Review and Modern Age (where

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16 Buckley quoted in CW 30, 849, n. 1.
17 See CW 30, letter 502, to William F. Buckley, Jr., 848. “Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme” was an essay which represented a new interest of Voegelin’s in the philosophical problems of magic and alchemy and their use in philosophy. Namely, the kind of “magic” Voegelin is describing is espoused by speculative philosophers who have a “pneumopathology” (disease of the spirit) and create systems of “history” which by their construction alienate humans from existence in the metaxy (in-between) within “divine presence.” What this means is that thinkers like Nietzsche, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx denied transcendence in order to construct their ideological systems. Voegelin had completed the essay, “Hegel a Study in Sorcery,” a few years before “Wisdom.” Both of these essays can be found in CW 12, “Wisdom,” 315-375, “Hegel,” 213-255. One should also consult what Voegelin says about this manifestation of the ego in these thinkers in “The Egophanic Revolt,” OH IV, 260-266.
Voegelin’s name and thought is still invoked) which are lasting monuments of the conservative embrace of Voegelin.

Voegelin, despite the statements I related in Chapter 2, was not a conservative. I should note that Sandoz makes a good point in saying that while Voegelin was not a political conservative, “it is both right and wrong that he is mislabeled as a conservative. He’s a conservative in the sense that he wishes to preserve civilization against the onslaught of the barbarians, whichever political hue the barbarians might assume.”

This fact never prevented people from assuming, on the basis of a misunderstanding of Voegelin’s work, that he was a conservative. Voegelin could be quite short with American conservatives to whom he felt he had nothing to say. Sometimes he had literally nothing to say to conservatives. As he described in a letter to Heilman about conservatives, “As far as I can understand the odd animal that goes under the name of the American political intellectual at all, nothing exciting or serious is happening . . . I don’t read this type of literature because the authors are no partners in a discussion; these things are only an object of investigation, and at the moment I have no much time for them.”

The conservatives did have time for Voegelin. In the 1960’s, Buckley’s cliche, “don’t let them immanentize the eschaton,” could be found on political buttons, YAF bumper stickers, and even clothing as a counter protest to the Left. That the cliche was coined by Buckley was enough for conservatives who did not even feel that they needed

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18 *VRC*, 43.
19 See Henningsen’s remembrance of Voegelin’s encounter with Russell Kirk, *VRC*, 42.
20 *CW* 30, letter 106, to Robert Heilman, 258-259, original emphasis. Also in Embry, op. cit., letter 57, 142-143.
21 Voegelin was surprised and amused when he received his sweatshirt and button, see *CW* 30, letter 276, to Gerhart Niemeyer, 348.
to read Voegelin to wear one of the buttons, as William Kristol recently admitted.22

When William Safire asked Buckley to explain his phrase, he did so, as with Edward Vazquez, without any reference to Voegelin's context in NSP.23 For conservatives living during the Cold War who were opposed to Communism and conservatives living today who oppose secularism see in the book an easy answer they can stand behind: enemies of conservatism could be called the Gnostics. The fact that the erudite book was written by a philosopher who seemed to be a conservative only aided to legitimize this answer in the minds of American conservatives who were revolted by and were revolting against modernity. However, Voegelin was not a conservative, he did not write to give conservatives ammunition for their ideology, and refused to publish in conservative publications.

Voegelin's Machiavellian moment also appears in relation to conservatives. While he had little use for conservatives themselves, he could always get funding from the wealthy foundations of the conservatives. And, he wrote letters to and received money from at least a half dozen of these foundations. Voegelin did not care about the name on the foundation or what they promoted. He sought to get funds for his work and these foundations could not persuade him to join conservative clubs or write to give aid and comfort to conservatives. This was a matter of principle as Voegelin explained in turning down an offer to join the Philadelphia Society: "To let myself be formally identified as a liberal or conservative, would be counter to my whole lifework of trying to get out of ideological problems. I think I owe it to my reputation, as well as to the

22 William Kristol, "The Indispensable Man." NYT, March 3, 2008. Kristol also concedes that he has still not read much of Voegelin's work.
authority of my work as a scholar, not to join.” Whether Voegelin would have still received money from conservative foundations or support from conservatives such as Buckley and Kirk had it become known that he made money in the stock market on his intuition that the birth control pill would be very popular is not known. 

The Use and Abuse of Voegelin in Secondary Literature

It is interesting to recall words from the 1980s which still have a certain relevance to the problem of the uncritical use of Voegelin’s thought. In a review of Sandoz’ *Voegelinian Revolution*, R. Bruce Douglass remarked, “Voegelin work perhaps in retrospect may turn out to be as seminal as Sandoz et al. today assert, but it will take more than reverent repetition of his ideas to make it so . . . What is now needed is to move beyond exposition to a thorough and fully critical testing of the validity of the many provocative claims Voegelin makes. Only after that has occurred will it be possible even to begin to make an educated judgment about the historical significance of his work.”

Cooper, who otherwise writes an excellent study in *EVF*, is only interested in exposition. Cooper says, “The most general purpose of this study is to indicate as clearly as possible the depths or the circumference of Voegelin’s political science. I have attempted an exposition, not a critique, on the grounds that, before one is in a position to criticize, it is necessary to be reasonably secure in one’s understanding.” This is in some sense a fair point because Cooper was dealing with material which was only

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25 I received this information about Voegelin’s stock trading habits from Manfred Henningsen.
26 R. Bruce Douglass, untitled review, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 45 (1983) no. 2, 544. David Walsh has offered a reason why “fully critical testing” has not been forthcoming from the political science discipline. “Even, political theorists, Voegelin’s own sub-field within the discipline, are not well equipped to furnish philosophical critique,” see “Voegelin’s Place in Modern Philosophy,” *Modern Age*, vol. 49 (Winter 2007), no. 1, 12.
27 *EVF*, xi.
recently published and a wealth of unpublished material in Voegelin’s letters. His book is obviously not a replacement for reading those volumes, but does some good work toward drawing attention to those books.

If we recall a statement of Eugene Webb, we can see why the time to uncritically repeat what Voegelin said is over. In an early work on the thought of Voegelin Webb said, “Although Eric Voegelin is one of the major philosophical thinkers of the twentieth century, his work is only beginning to be studied widely and intensively. It is my hope that the rapidly growing appreciation of his importance among historians, political philosophers, and scholars of comparative religions will bring him a larger and broader audience among the public at large.”

It is obvious that to the extent that Webb’s statement was true in 1981, one can only look around now at the silence surrounding the work of Voegelin and ask: what happened? It is easy to mistake the volumes and essays which appear on the thought of Voegelin as proving Webb right. A careful consideration of the authors of the growing number books on Voegelin and the reviews of those books shows almost without exception to be a Voegelinian enterprise. The Voegelinians have not brought the thought of Voegelin to the “public at large” as Webb hoped for. This task has fallen to public intellectuals such as historian Michael Burleigh. This is not necessarily a positive development for Voegelin’s work. Burleigh for his own reasons will not move beyond Voegelin’s Political Religions despite the fact that Voegelin himself pointed out this book was part of “a number of stopgap notions” and “ad hoc explanations” which he had diverged from. I also do not find the citations in literature to say Voegelin’s importance

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29 CW 5, 252.
has steadily increased in other disciplines since Webb’s comment. One exception would be Mongol studies where Voegelin has been cited as an authority on the “Mongol Orders of Submission to the European Powers” which he wrote about in 1941.30

What can be said to constitute “use” and “abuse” of Voegelin’s thought? Any work which takes Voegelin’s thought on its own terms and represents accurately what Voegelin has to say may be considered a work which has made a fair use of Voegelin. The exception to fair use can be said to be the uncritical restatement of what Voegelin said in his works. I think the imminent completion of the CW and the amount of introductory studies to the thought of Voegelin which already exist are reason enough to move in a new direction with Voegelin scholarship. An abuse of Voegelin occurs when his thought is appropriated and used in a manner inconsistent with Voegelin’s aims or where Voegelin’s thought is irrelevant to the problem(s) at hand. These simple “rules” do not cover every scenario and are meant to aid in an attempt to tease out reasons why secondary literature can prevent the study of Voegelin’s thought.

The problematic of use and abuse can be seen in a recent issue of ROP. Two students of Voegelin were included in the issue in different capacities. Jürgen Gebhardt wrote an article which, at pertinent places, draws upon Voegelin’s thought and a recent book written by Sandoz, which holds Voegelin hostage in an account of American exceptionalism, was reviewed. Rather than use the language of globalization, Gebhardt prefers to speak about an emerging global ecumene (universal community). Gebhardt

30 To gauge this exception I reviewed literature which appeared after Cooper’s EVF. For the use of Voegelin’s essay before 1999, see EVF, 278-279. To the books Cooper discussed, the following books citing Voegelin’s “Mongol Orders” paper should be added: Anne F. Broadbridge, Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Muslim Worlds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 28-29; Peter Jackson, The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 103-104; George Lane, Earl Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance (London: RoutledgeCourzon, 2003), 321.
sees “a creative response by political philosophy” to Bhikhu Parekh’s challenge of Western political philosophy on the issue of “the changing context of human existence” as “the quest for a hermeneutical science of man that breaks with the axiomatic assumptions of mainstream Western social science to develop the ‘language of cross-cultural theory’ Charles Taylor proposed many years ago.” The creative response imagined by Gebhardt is that of “intercivilizational” political thought. He concedes that while Max Weber was “an outstanding comparativist,” an “intercivilizational, comparative political theory does not make sense” using Weber’s rational science because it “homogenizes the civilizational multiversums of culture.” This homogenization is seen as legitimate because only the science of the modern and disenchanted rational science can make sense and give meaning to “chaotic reality.” Voegelin is brought in sparingly but importantly as a representative of “the epistemological counterposition to Weber.”

After describing a break from “a one-dimensional notion of modernization,” Gebhardt focuses on an alternative hermeneutical approach. He says that “the investigation of social reality must first turn to the symbolic universe of human self-interpretation, since societies and other human figurations express experiences of order and disorder by means of imaginative symbolization. Only by studying those acts of self-interpretation that flow from the experiential world of concrete human persons can

32 Ibid., 7-8.
33 Ibid., 12. A seasoned reader of Voegelin will notice Voegelin’s Gebhardt in the formulation of such phrases as “symbolizes the consciousness of the tensional life in the in-between of mundane and transcendental order,” ibid., 22. This wording obviously draws on Voegelin’s concept of the metaxy. For a clear statement from Voegelin on the metaxy, see AR, 72-74[CW 34, 98-100].
the entire fabric of human existence be brought into focus on its own terms."34 This is an insight Gebhardt finds elaborated in Voegelin’s *Ecumenic Age*. A reconsideration of the concept of “the political” leads Gebhardt to Hellas over other axial civilizations for the “most penetrating understanding of the axial emergence of a new form of symbolism and political order.” This realization does not mean that we must become Greek philosophers (we live in the post-axial epoch after all), but instead that we should further “the Greek rational effort.” This effort allowed us to see that in Greek “science,” “to politikon is raised to the status of a universal that, in turn, redefines and individualizes the universal so that it can refer to specific cases like the polis.”35 Indeed, “Hellenic philosophy reflected on the grand theme of the axial age—the basic tension between the mundane and the transcendental orders—and translated the specific case of the polis-existence into an authoritative paradigm of humankind’s humanity, the *philosophia peri ta anthropina.*”36 He contends in closing that, “Hermeneutic theorizing accepts the diversity of humankind and is truly universal because its transcendental point of reference is the vision of universal humanity.”37 In his essay, Gebhardt’s debt to Voegelin’s work can be seen, but he is neither parroting Voegelin nor completely reliant on him.

In contrast to Gebhardt’s use of Voegelin’s thought to elaborate an ecumenical political philosophical analysis, Sandoz’ essay collection titled, *Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America* (2006) may be placed as an abuse of Voegelin while promoting the questionable universality of Americanism.38 I do not mean to say that the essays

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34 Gebhardt, op. cit., 10-11.
36 Ibid., 20.
37 Ibid., 21-22.
which deal with Voegelin (all reprints except for “Carrying Coals to Newcastle: Voegelin and Christianity”) are as willfully selective as is Burleigh and his use of Voegelin’s concept of political religion. Instead, Sandoz’ use of Voegelin in the volume is an abuse because Voegelin’s thought does not belong in that particular space. We learn in the Preface that “the first half of the book addresses aspects of American thought influential in the Founding, including the neglected question of the education of the Founders for their unique endeavor, common law constitutionalism, the place of the Greek and Latin classics.” The second half then “continues with studies of Eric Voegelin’s philosophy, itself conditioned by his own early American experience, its relationship to Christianity, the watershed debate with Leo Strauss over the true meaning of philosophy, the theory of Gnosticism as basic to radical modernity, and an exploration of the spirit of Voegelin’s late remarkable writings.” The conclusion of the book deals with neither of the first two parts and is aimed at “some preliminary reflections on the current epoch in history,” that is to say, the epoch “under the shadow of lethal conflict with Islamist jihadism.” Sandoz’ reflections on this peculiar epoch are meant to identify “possible meanings for America and for humankind.”

Immediately the reader is struck by the apparently lack of unity. This fact is not lost on the author who attempts to justify his arrangement of materials. “The thematic unity of the volume,” Sandoz describes, “arises from the non-reductionist philosophical framework within which the questions I address are examined.” The question still lingers, what does Voegelin have to do with the content of the book? Sandoz’ answer

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39 Sandoz, Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), xii. Voegelin had very little to say about the United States following his first book. Voegelin’s self-justifications for leaving the East Coast were discussed in Chapter 1.

40 Ibid., xi.
again claims a unity which is unconvincing. “A theoretical perspective unifies the book, one which I am indebted to Eric Voegelin, who figures prominently in the pages which follow.” It is a strange idea that one’s influences merit the space of one half of the chapters in a volume that putatively has nothing to do with them. Sandoz’ description of the influence of religion on the founding of the United States is not a new topic (although he is correct to point out its neglect) and it draws on some of his earlier publications.

The presentation however is completely uncritical and emblematic of what may be called the “myth America.” Sandoz’ mythical United States is exceptional because of its apparent chosenness. This exceptionalism is summarized through the use of the term “philosophical anthropology” which was coined by Max Scheler and developed by Voegelin and which, Sandoz says, resides at the “bottom of republicanism.” Philosophical anthropology “exists solely in the hearts and minds of individual human beings, the only concrete reality of political existence . . . [I]t is decisively grounded in biblical faith philosophically elaborated and disclosed to hegemonic reality, with its appeal to transcendent truth and to eternal Beatitude (blessedness and felicity, happiness) as humankind’s summum bonum and ultimate destiny.” Further, philosophical anthropology is crucial to the republican “just regime” which like any just regime uses

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41 Ibid., xi.
42 Sandoz also oddly includes a “Bibliographical Appendix,” which consists of a list of the books of the CWO. The lack of unity in the volume was noted by reviewers, see Federici, ibid., 134-136; Kenneth B. McIntyre, “Immanentizing Arcadia?” Intercollegiate Review Vol. 42 (Fall 2007), no. 2, 53.
43 See Henningsen, Der Mythos Amerika, forthcoming, (Berlin: Eichborn, 2009), 1, n. 1; McIntyre also captures this sentiment without using the terminology in op. cit., 55-56.
44 Another version of American exceptionalism is grounded in the seeming victory over the globe of neoliberal ideology largely because of its “Goliath” (the USA) is presented by Mandelbaum, The Case for Goliath: How America Acts As The World’s Government in the Twenty-first Century (2005). Sandoz’ version is obviously more in contact with the original religiously inspired exceptionalism when “manifest destiny” mythology presented the United States as “Columbia.”
45 Sandoz, Republicanism, Religion and the Soul of America, 8.
“natural law and consent of the people as foundations.” That “the people” were not allowed to consent to the Constitution as it was drafted and ratified without the input of “the people” is passed over by Sandoz. Likewise, there is no mention that the Protestant fundamentalist roots of republicanism conceptually emptied the continent to allow for the killing and removal of the American Indian tribes and also the propagation of African slavery. I am not attempting to demonize the USA with such comments. Sandoz invites the reader to see if what is presented about the founding period of the United States is not the case. I think the case can be made that Sandoz’ account is not complete. The founding violences of English settler colonialism, which continued well after the founding, do not match the claim that the “American community” of the eighteenth century saw the “individual person and citizen as unique in the eyes of his Creator.” The subject of the exclusion of non-Americans from the dignity they are owed because of their common divine origin is still pertinent to discuss. To relegate even the acknowledgment of such uncomfortable contradictions to oblivion is to engage in superpatriotism and the kind of enterprise Voegelin would not participate in.

What I have been trying to suggest in this chapter is that the type of use of Voegelin’s thought can have an effect on engagement with Voegelin’s work. There are too many works published by too many authors to read everything which leads people to look for shortcuts. The American Conservative portrayal of Voegelin as a fellow traveler can lead those adverse to that ideology to write off Voegelin without reading his work. A similar foreshortening of engagement could occur from trying to fit Voegelin into the mold of a Christian philosopher. More important for serious scholarship is the use of

46 Ibid., 9.
47 Ibid., xii.
48 Ibid., xi.
Voegelin in secondary literature. Voegelin's work can be utilized creatively to further one's own scholarly pursuits, as represented by the Gebhardt essay, but paying one's debts to Voegelin need not take the extreme form represented by Sandoz' book. As R. Bruce Douglass pointed out, more than expositions of Voegelin's work are needed. Voegelin must be approached with a critical eye if his work is to gain the acclaim which is already been heaped upon it.
Chapter Five: The State of the Discipline

I will begin to speak about Voegelin’s obscurity in contemporary academia with an anamnetic tale from my time as an undergraduate at LSU (2002-2006). William C. Stubbs Hall (built 1924), which houses the political science and sociology departments, was the building in which Voegelin worked during his time at LSU. Stubbs Hall is located on the “historic” part of the LSU’s campus directly across the Exxon Quadrangle from the Philosophy and Religious studies department, among others, in Coates Hall. Shadowed by live oak trees, hedges, and magnolias, the buildings on the “historic campus” are meant to emulate Italian Renaissance style by overlaying their brick construction with stucco. It was amongst this backdrop that Voegelin could be seen pacing while entranced in thought. Voegelin’s presence on the LSU campus was faint in my experience.

I would often enter the front of Stubbs Hall which is the side opposite the Quadrangle. Inside the building at the foot of the white marble stairs, there is a directory board which informs the reader that the Eric Voegelin Institute is located in room 212 Stubbs Hall. Having noticed that the Institute is on the political science floor, while ascending the staircase the question should arise: “Who is Eric Voegelin and what does he have to do with political science?” However, this query is asked by few students and seemingly fewer of the faculty members of the LSU department. After leaving the stairwell and emerging on the second floor, the first room on the left is the main office of the political science department. A Conrad Alfred Albrizzio portrait of Voegelin (circa 1945) hangs on the wall opposite the main desk. Due to the obstruction caused by the wooden door of the office, it is impossible to see this painting without entering the office,
but unavoidable upon exit.\textsuperscript{1} The Eric Voegelin Institute is towards the end of the hall on the lefthand side. A very large picture of Voegelin in his later years, with smoldering cigar in hand, is mounted on the wall of the outer office space of Ellis Sandoz, who is the director of the Institute.\textsuperscript{2} Unlike the portrait in the main office, it is possible to catch a glimpse of the Voegelin picture in the Institute while passing by. If one enters Stubbs Hall from the Quadrangle, Voegelin becomes invisible. Voegelin was similarly a non-entity during my first semester of coursework in the department. I thought it was curious that although there was a Voegelin Institute and pictures of Voegelin in the building, no one mentioned him. I first turned to the brief description given by the department’s website. In this space, I learned that Voegelin was a prolific writer who also intimidated “more than one major American University” through his “candor in observations on men and ideas.”\textsuperscript{3}

From the Voegelin Institute’s website I learned that Sandoz was one of Voegelin’s students and the only American to complete a doctoral degree with Voegelin. I decided after this “introduction” to Voegelin that I needed a better intellectual background if I was going to seek to understand what Voegelin was about. For this task I had to turn to other departments on the campus because Voegelin did not appear to stay within the confines of what was represented as political science by the department. What attracted me to Voegelin’s thought was firstly the critique of “isms” and secondly, the application of cross-disciplinary study to political science. After the NSP, I had read \textit{CW}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item This is the same painting which graces the cover of the LSU Press edition of \textit{AR}.
\item The same picture appears on the cover of the University of Missouri Press paperback edition of \textit{Anamnesis} (1990).
\item The quotes are from Robert Heilman who was Voegelin’s friend and an English professor at LSU from 1935-1948, see “Department History” http://appl003.lsu.edu/artscl/polisci.nsf/$Content/Department+History?OpenDocument (accessed January 22, 2008).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and then *OH I* which I had received as gifts from Sandoz. Especially in *CW 4* and *OH I*, I appreciated the discovery that two areas I was interested in, ancient Egypt and legal studies, respectively, did not have to be discarded in order to do political science. I took courses in the Latin and ancient Greek languages so that I could read classical texts in the original. From the history department, I attended classes on Western Civilization to give context to the classic texts and authors. Because there are only three faculty members in the LSU political science department who specialize in political philosophy, I also walked across the Quadrangle to the Philosophy and Religious studies department to get some exposure to theology, epistemology, Hannah Arendt, and Aristotle.\(^4\) When I had accumulated enough credits to take upper level courses, I enrolled in Sandoz’s Ancient Political Philosophy class which had Voegelin’s *NSP* on the syllabus. During that semester I observed that this was the first class I had taken where graduate students where students and not assistants. It was not so strange when I took into consideration the fact that the LSU department leans overwhelmingly in the direction of quantitative methods. In addition, I had heard a story from one of these students that suggested a reason why the specter of Voegelin does not haunt the department—general opposition. The graduate student explained that during the scope and methods seminar course, which includes exercises in statistical analysis, Voegelin’s *NSP* was produced and a reference to his critique of positivism was made. The professor instructed the graduate student to put the book away and never bring it to class again. This graduate student then called the

\(^4\) I was told by one of the professors that three political theorists out of a total of twenty or so faculty members was considered a “theory heavy” department in the discipline of political science. Voegelin’s work was known among a couple of the older faculty members of the Philosophy and Religious studies department, but not the junior faculty. One of the older professors would joke with me and ask from time to time, “How is our German friend [Voegelin] doing in the political science department?” My last response was, “Dr. Sandoz looks as if he will be able to keep Voegelin off of life support.”
professor "Karl Marx" because of the professor's prohibition of questions about research methods.5

Along with taking courses in political theory, my experience of reading Voegelin as an undergrad was crucial in helping to combat the persistent questions about what political science is. Although it had never occurred to me that predicting the outcome of an election was something important for political scientists to be doing, the general public seemed to think that psephology was what political science was all about—the ubiquitous appearances of political scientists in the media during election campaigns does nothing to hinder this stereotype. Other queries had to do with political science as a precursor for law school or part of a politician’s training. With my background in political philosophy I could describe such commonly held ideas about political science as deformations. None of these predictive trivialities will help anyone understand the societies and civilizations in which elections are held and which justices and lawyers live. This fact seemed to matter little to both the public and most of LSU’s political scientists. The problem for these political scientists at least seemed to reside in the lack of understanding about science which Voegelin described in the NSP.

The use of method as the criterion of science abolishes theoretical relevance. As a consequence, all propositions concerning facts will be promoted to the dignity of science, regardless of their relevance, as long as they result from a correct use of method . . . leading to fantastic accumulation of irrelevant knowledge through huge 'research projects' whose most interesting feature is the quantifiable expense that has gone into their production.6

6 Voegelin, NSP, 8[CW 5, 93-94]. The Aristotle passage can be found in Nicomachean Ethics, 1094b15-1095a15.
Voegelin is of course here relying on the Aristotle's caution that one should not hope to make political science any more precise than it can be. Since political science deals with human beings we should not expect the certainty of a "hard science" or adopt their methods to become more scientific. The fact that many American political scientists do not observe this warning will be discussed in the next section below.

It must be remembered that LSU should not be seen as a microcosm of the academy in the United States. How could it possibly be? Besides the housing of the Voegelin Institute in the political science department, Voegelin was one of the first three Boyd Professors at LSU. He is still the only political science professor to be so honored.7

If there is any university in the country where the work of Voegelin should receive respect and attention, it is LSU. Yet with respect to the hostility to, indifference to, and/or silencing of Voegelin which I experienced, LSU can be considered in the mainstream of the discipline at large.

The Problem of Scientism in American Political Science

A recent article by Jon R. Bond entitled, "The Scientification of the Study of Politics: Some Observations on the Behavioral Evolution in Political Science," can be seen as a representative example of the problem of scientistic thinking in political science in the United States.8 Bond does, however, build upon the Centennial Issue of the APSR by showing us that the nature of the problem of scientism in American political science

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7 There have only been 65 Boyd Professors since the establishment of this professorship in 1953. The Southern historian and biographer of Huey Long, T. Harry Williams was also one of the first three Boyd Professors. There is no higher rank of professor at LSU. The distinction is given only to those professors "who have attained national or international distinction for outstanding teaching, research, or other creative achievement." See, "Boyd Professors" http://appl003.lsu.edu/acadaff/affairs.nsf/$Content/Boyd+Professors?OpenDocument (accessed January 21, 2007).

goes back to the founding of our discipline. Bond’s argument for scientification can be summarized as the following: political science is a science in the same way that “natural and material sciences” are sciences, the “behavioral revolution” did not occur in the 1960’s because behavioralism was a founding principle of American political science, political science is a newer science than the “natural and material sciences,” but is nevertheless progressing towards becoming a “real” science. However, it is perhaps best to retreat to the beginning of the essay and start working through the problems it presents.

What does Bond mean by the “scientification of the study of politics”? He says this phrase “refers to the process through which political science as an academic discipline has come to use the scientific method for the production and dissemination of knowledge about politics.” By knowledge, Bond means the “modern” usage from the eighteenth century to the present. That is to say, science is seen as “a method of learning based on systemic observation using the scientific method.” The “archaic sense” of science as simply “knowledge or knowledge gained by studying” was dismissed as being outdated. Bond seems unaware that this sloughing off of science’s “archaic” meanings, and thus his confusion over what constitutes science, is a problem of the English language. It does not occur in German science for instance. Wissenschaft (science, scholarship) is derived from Wissen (knowledge). One can then make such distinctions

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10 Bond, op. cit., 898, 904.
11 Ibid., 898, 900-904.
12 Ibid., 898, 904-905.
13 Ibid., 897.
as Naturwissenschaft (science, natural science, physical science), Geisteswissenschaften (humanities), Sozialwissenschaft (social science), and politische Wissenschaft (political science). Furthermore, it is an unacceptable anachronism to apply the “modern” English sense of science to Aristotle’s episteme politike (political knowledge) as Bond does.\footnote{Ibid., 899.} In any event, the political science of Plato and Aristotle is still currently applicable.

Voegelin was able to describe what this political science consisted of when he gave a general outline of the “subject matter, analytical method, and anthropological presuppositions,” of episteme politike in CW 5. Voegelin says that far from being esoteric, political science is “concerned with the truth of things that everyone talks about.” To give a few examples cited by Voegelin, things ancient Greeks talked about included questions such as: What constitutes happiness? How should a person live? What is the right size and population for a polis? What is virtue and how is it related to justice? What should the form of government be and what professions should the polis have? These questions are not drawn from thin air but from the concrete existence of human beings living in a society. Even philosophers cannot escape this situation and must therefore be concerned with the same types of questions other citizens are asking.\footnote{CW 5, 257-258.}

I should note that no one in Hellas was asking citizens about their demographic information to analyze why a certain politician was ostracized (exiled for one year) by the votes of the citizens. The reason for this has nothing to do with the lack of computers and statistical software programs and everything to do with common sense. An exiled politician was believed to have hurt the polis through his policies and actions. The point of the particular voting measure of ostracism was to minimize the damage any one man
could do in a single year. Asking a younger or older man (all citizens were male) why he preferred to cast his vote for one politician or another for ostracism would miss the purpose of the exercise completely. In order to carry out political science in the manner of Plato and Aristotle today it is clear we have to modify some of the questions listed above. For example, the polis is no longer in operation so we must therefore ask about other types of political formations.

Returning to Bond, who does not appear to be acquainted with the fundamentals of episteme politike, one notices that he cannot be giving an accurate account of the ongoing “debate” in political science when he discusses three essential questions of the debate. The question “is politics art or a science?” is not a valid query up for debate, but a false dichotomy. According to Aristotle, politics is both art (techne) and knowledge (episteme) and Bond agrees, but again he does not understand the difference between Greek episteme and English science. Bond’s second formulation is a question which deals with the possibility of political science being a “real” science which can find “underlying laws of politics.” This has in part been answered by way of the German example above. I will take up this problem again below. The final question considers the possibility of political science as “real” science as a good thing. In the sense which Voegelin discussed, political philosophy as a way to put one in contact with the divine ground of order, political science can be said to be a good thing. Political science in Bond’s sense, i.e., a science on the path of progress which lags behind its older counterparts, cannot be a good thing. One is not permitted to describe something as good which is falsely constructed. In this specific case, Bond attempts to make political

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16 Bond, op. cit., 897-898.
17 Ibid., 899.
18 Ibid., 897.
science participate in the false notion of progress. This will be spelled out in more detail below in conjunction with the discussion of political science and its ability to uncover the hidden “laws” of politics. What is at stake in this disciplinary “debate,” according to Harold Lasswell’s definition of politics as “who gets what, when, how” on which Bond relies, is the education of students. It should be clear to Bond that while education is at stake, he is not being joined in a debate. The Straussian political philosopher Harvey Mansfield and Leo Strauss, who are used as representatives of “politics as art,” do not have any common ground to stand on with positivists and thus the debate is negated. 19 If not classifiable as a historicist by the Straussian benchmark (because Bond is not doing philosophy), Bond at least displays his belief in progress which signified for Strauss the element which was “most responsible” for historicity. 20

Bond’s own positions which “come down squarely on the side of science” in a non-existent debate are the following:

1. I believe that while there is an art to politics, there are basic laws that explain political behavior and these laws can be discovered through the scientific method.
2. I believe that political science is a ‘real’ science, though in an earlier stage of development than the natural and material sciences. Notice that I didn’t call those other fields ‘hard’ sciences. Political science is truly a ‘hard’ science because of the difficult challenges we face in the measurement of key concepts and even in observing the political processes and behavior we seek to study. James March was right when he said, ‘God gave all the easy problems to the physicists’. I don’t know if our challenges to measurement and data collection are greater than those say, astronomers or meteorologists, but we do have the additional burden of having to justify our work as science. I doubt that astronomers ever claim to be astrologists (or vice versa).
3. I believe that the scientific study of politics is a good thing because it advances knowledge and human understanding. It’s not the only way to

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19 Ibid., 897-898.
20 See Arthur M. Melzer, “Esotericism and the Critique of Historicism,” APSR, Vol., 100 (May 2006), no. 2, 291. This signification is Melzer’s attribution to Strauss from the Strauss passage quoted. For the negative relation between the idea of progress and esotericism, see ibid., 291-293).
study and learn about politics. I agree with Professor Mansfield that the study of great books and great men—and women—deserves a place at the center of the university. But just as science is not the only way to learn and create knowledge, neither do the arts and humanities have a monopoly on education. If Aristotle is right that “man by nature is a political animal” (The Politics 1253a1-3), then the study of politics is the most important part of becoming an educated person and citizen. And recall that Aristotle studied both the art and science of politics. He is an early example of a great scholar and philosopher who analyzed the art of politics informed by systemic, empirical observation (The Politics, Book III).21

In these statements we see Bond cite Aristotle, which is a good start, but the attempt miscarries because he has misunderstood Aristotle. As Voegelin pointed out to students, “You can’t refer to Plato’s political ‘system’ or Aristotle’s or anyone else’s until Hegel.”22 Voegelin is correct on this point. The Greek word *systema* (system) does not appear in the entire Corpus Aristotelicum. One is left wondering if Bond knows about Aristotle’s observation in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which I referred to above, that political science was an inexact science and that we should expect no more preciseness than political science allows. Point number one above, therefore, is ridiculous. No one who has not lost contact with reality can seriously entertain the notion that politics is governed by invisible laws that just have not been discovered. On point number two, I refer the reader back to the discussion of science and the “debate” on what science is.

Bond does not even seem to have the scientific method of natural scientists understood properly. He states, “Theory building proceeds from description to explanation and prediction.”23 Peter Manicas is helpful in correcting such confusion.

“Indeed, while the theoretical work of physical scientists often begins with the effort to understand patterns, they are not interested in, nor generally capable of, providing either

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21 Bond, op. cit., 898-899.
22 I quote David Edwards who recalled what Voegelin told the students of a Seminar class at the University of Texas at Austin, see VRC, 35.
23 Bond, op. cit., 899.
‘explanations’ or ‘predictions’ of particular events.”24 About the “fundamental goal of theory,” Manicas says, “in both the natural and social sciences is not, contrary to widespread opinion, prediction and control, or the explanation of events (including ‘behavior’). Rather, more modestly, theory (at least in one of its clear senses) aims to provide an understanding of the processes which jointly produce the contingent outcomes of experience.”25

What Voegelin’s attempt at restoration, briefly described in Chapter 2, shows us is that political science is participatory. The ability of the political scientist depends on how finely tuned the instrument, that is the political scientist, for conducting the science is. Voegelin’s epistemology is starkly opposed to the kind of Archimedean point fact gathering on display in the scientistic journal articles.26 Voegelin’s break from the modern epistemological model, which is based on Descartes’ distinction between subject and object, is most evident in his Anamnesis (1966).27 Gilbert Weiss says of Voegelin’s theory of consciousness presented in Anamnesis, that Voegelin came to the conclusion that “consciousness is not an inner entity separated from the outer reality, but an event within reality, and, accordingly, consciousness is constituted by reality, not the other way around. Something like a transcendental consciousness or subject has no ground in the ‘reality of common experience.’ The only thing we know from experience, and therefore

25 Loc. cit.
talk about, is the consciousness of concrete human beings living in concrete social and
historical settings.\textsuperscript{28}

While Bond’s article is a representation of the problem of scientistic thinking in
contemporary American political science, an article by Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan
S. Morris can be seen as a paradigmatic example of what is wrong with the practice of
most American political science.\textsuperscript{29} This article combines the most confused elements of
Bond’s political “science” with a lack of imagination and perception with regard to the
materials. The paper is classified as “media studies” which is a fairly new example of the
problem of overspecialization. Since the media is a pervasive part of the lives of many
people in the United States, it is probably not a bad idea to include an analysis of relevant
media as part of the bigger analysis of the political situation in the US. However, making
the media the whole of the analysis instead of only a part, cuts off the rest of the political
reality in which people live. Further, the authors stick to a pedantic restriction in the field
of media studies and therefore uncritically accept a dichotomy of, “hard” versus “soft”
news, which is highly questionable.\textsuperscript{30} The conclusion of the article states that The Daily
Show’s host, Jon Stewart, should not be so hasty in branding programs like CNN’s
Crossfire (canceled) and Fox News Channels' The O’Reilly Factor and Hannity and
Colmes as “hurting America” because the “findings” show that Stewart’s show, like the
others just named, negatively influenced its major demographic by “lowering support for

\textsuperscript{28} Weiss’ introduction, CW 4, 8-9, original emphasis. See also Voegelin’s CW 6; “The Meditative Origin
of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order, 391-392” and “The Beyond and Its Parousia,” 396-414, both in
CW 33.

\textsuperscript{29} “The Daily Show Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth,” American Politics

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 342-345. An example of a “hard” news program is the CBS Evening News while Hannity and
Colmes is considered a “soft” news program.
both presidential candidates and increasing cynicism."\textsuperscript{31} It must be remembered that \textit{The Daily Show} is a political satire and styles itself as “fake news.” Moreover, the authors seem to miss a most interesting point. A simple tally of electoral voting statistics from presidential elections shows that not one president since Lyndon Johnson has won the popular vote with more than fifty percent of the \textit{total} voting population of the United States. If television shows appear to be impacting voting frequency negatively by exposing the failings of candidates, the question to ask is not: how do we refine our numbers so that we can say more confidently that people are impacted negatively by TV programs? Instead, one should ask fundamental questions about the ability of the party system of the United States to produce choiceworthy candidates. To ask such questions would necessarily involve a larger discussion of the political formation of the United States and its people. More surveys will not help in this area because to ask a survey question is to foreshorten the range of possible answers that can be given. And, although surveys results can lead to discourse, surveys themselves are not a form of discourse and do not get beyond triviality. One could also consider whether shows such as \textit{The Daily Show} are actually good for the United States by indirectly acting beneficially for the US as Diogenes and the Cynics were helpful for Athens.\textsuperscript{32} The Fox and CNN programs are not intended to be humorous and style themselves as “hard-hitting” which the authors unfathomably agree with.\textsuperscript{33} The inability of the authors to see that all television news, including “reputable” networks like ABC, NBC and CBS, should be considered “soft

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 361.
\textsuperscript{33} Baumgartner and Morris, op. cit., 361. I would recommend those interested in this point watch a few episodes of Comedy Central’s \textit{The Daily Show with Jon Stewart} and \textit{The Colbert Report}. These shows would also be beneficial to watch for scholars who are certain that \textit{Homo economicus} is real.
news" or better yet, entertainment is less troubling than the detailing of the data
collection in the paper itself.

Baumgartner and Morris actually imagine that they were actually in the laboratory
while conducting the experiments to collect their data based on a few hypotheses. This
language is repeated on several occasions so I am fairly certain no joking was involved. I
will briefly discuss the research design of these two political "scientists" which appears
to be written as if their "controlled experiment" is as replicable as an elementary biology
experiment on the Drosophila melanogaster (fruit fly). Baumgartner and Morris state
"To examine the effects of The Daily Show on young adults, we constructed a controlled
experiment." This experiment used volunteers from "introductory-level courses at a
medium sized university." The students were shown clips of election coverage from the
"hard" news source, the CBS Evening News and from The Daily Show. Baumgartner and
Morris then had the students fill out questionnaires about their "demographic and
political" backgrounds and also answer survey questions about the TV clips. The authors
"found" that the humor of The Daily Show had what limited effect on opinion that it did
on non-regular viewers. The "drawback of the survey findings" was said to be the lack
of a nationwide sample. It appears from this article that these two "scientists" think
political science is about escaping into the laboratory to examine young people as if they
were lab rats. Whether Baumgartner and Morris don lab coats and sterilize the room they
are calling a laboratory was not mentioned in the paper. Yet, the "drawback" is an
insufficient sample size and not that they their "controlled experiment" has removed all
of the social and historical concreteness of both themselves and the students.

34 Ibid., 346.
35 Ibid., 356.
36 Ibid., 359.
It is no surprise based on the two accounts above that the best work done on elections and the political system of the United States in the past four decades was done not by an Americanist political scientist but by a journalist, Hunter S. Thompson. He was not one of those journalists in the television news media that the Baumgartner and Morris seem to think present “hard news.” Thompson was able to achieve the level of intelligibility and persuasiveness that he did through his participatory political analysis (Gonzo Journalism). Thompson’s 1973 book, Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 was considered by the best account of the 1972 presidential campaign by The Washington Post and the best attempt to portray “what it feels like to be out there in the middle of the American political process” by the NYT. However, while Thompson’s Gonzo Journalism got him to the “meat-hook realities” he was after, the use of drugs, alcohol, and unrestrained verbiage is not something our Americanists should emulate. Nevertheless, his insight that saying something provocative and compelling about the electoral process and the political system of the United States requires participation, not distance, ought to be well noted by Americanists.

I choose to focus here on the Americanists because they are the largest part of the discipline. The problem of scientism extends to other fields of the discipline as can be seen by perusing the contents of the three main APSA journals (American Political Science Review, Perspectives on Politics, PS: Political Science and Politics). A closer

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37 Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005) was an American journalist and author who created Gonzo Journalism which is a standard feature in his work.

38 Thompson said of TV news, “It is normally perceived as some kind of cruel and shallow money trench through the heart of the journalist industry, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free and good men die like dogs, for no good reason,” in Generation of Swine: Tales of Shame and Degradation in the 80s (New York: Summit, 1988), 43. Thompson did allow that rarely he did come across a token real human being in TV news, but his point remains that TV news cannot be “hard news” by the very nature of medium of TV as entertainment.

look reveals utter confusion about fundamental essentials to enter a discussion. This is a problem which makes itself evident in the existence of such things as "game theory," "rational choice," and the narrow minded "isms" of International Relations. When humans are not totally excluded from scientistic formulations, they do not appear as any humans on Earth do.

The APSA Annual Meeting, Do We Need It?

Perhaps the most visible symbol of what is new in the American political science discipline in the United States is the APSA Annual Meeting. This is a massive conference that unites scholars from across the country and also includes international scholars. The 103rd meeting in 2007 was held in Chicago. There were ten panels about Eric Voegelin or the application of some aspect of his thought. All of these panels were hosted by the Eric Voegelin Society (EVS). This number of panels is the most ever for the EVS and made it easily the second largest group panel and the only group panel dedicated to one person. The largest group panel was hosted by the Claremont Institute with fifteen panels. The influence of Voegelin, as represented by the number of panels at the 2007 APSA meeting, was equivalent to Aristotle, Cicero, Hegel, Machiavelli, John Stewart Mill, Montesquieu, Nietzsche, and Rousseau combined. Aristophanes, Plato (sponsored by EVS), and Wollstonecraft each had one panel. The title of both of the panels on the "founders" of political science, Plato and Aristotle, makes reference to their "relevance," which should not be necessary to state. Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss were the focus of only two panels and both were compared to Voegelin in an EVS panel. George W. Bush, a very controversial sitting president and possibly the worst president ever according to historians, has only managed to land on six panels as the topic of
At first glance, it seems that Voegelin is well represented at this important conference. The fact of the matter is much different. There were 1091 panels at the conference meaning that Voegelin factored in around one percent of the total panels.

The main problem with the Annual Meeting is not so much the quality of the panels, although complaints could be registered, but that the meeting seems largely unnecessary considering what takes place at the event. While he never spoke out publicly, Voegelin was nonetheless unequivocal in his lack of enthusiasm for the APSA Annual Meeting. 41 “I have not attended a meeting of the American Political Science Association in years, without being appalled at the mediocrity of the performance and without hearing numerous, frank expressions of disgust.” 42 Presenting a paper and doing work is secondary at the conference to the social gathering and networking aspects of the Annual Meeting. It was this social aspect which caused Voegelin the most grief. 43 In fact, the preliminary program for the 2007 APSA meeting promoted socializing in the “Program Highlights” section as a reason for graduate students to attend the “Graduate Student Happy Hour” during the meeting. “Graduate students are invited to network with each other and meet informally with APSA President Robert Axelrod and other APSA Officers and Council.” 44 It should be noted that this invitation does not mandate that graduate students need to be delivering a paper or acting as a disussants. I was invited to the ROP wine and cheese reception at the 2007 APSA despite the fact that I was not

41 See CW 30, letter 228, to Gerhart Niemeyer, 472. Voegelin admonished Niemeyer for mentioning Voegelin’s name in support of the Barry Goldwater campaign, which Niemeyer worked on, at a social gathering at the APSA Annual Meeting; letter 466, to Jürgen Gebhardt, 811. In this letter, Voegelin complains of the boredom of attending the APSA to Gebhardt.
42 Ibid., unsent draft to Karl Ettinger, included as an attachment to letter 71, to Joseph Willits of the Rockefeller Foundation, 194.
43 See note 42 about Niemeyer.
planning on attending the meeting in a business capacity. All I had done to merit such an
invitation was to submit a paper to the ROP for publication which was not given an
outside review by the editors. The preliminary program which lists all the panels and
participants (naturally also with advertisements and notifications of the “official” travel
agency, airline, and rental car companies) runs 192 pages. The “Guide to Chicago”
section of the preliminary program informs the reader about the co-headquarter hotels
which were different than the last meeting in Chicago. The reason for the move was to
make it convenient for “you to take advantage of all the wonderful dining, shopping, arts
and entertainment options that Chicago has to offer!”

Less than half of all members of the APSA attend the meeting. The vast number
of panels and the timing of the panels is a part of the result that the panels are poorly
attended. Nothing particularly earth-shattering is going to be presented at the APSA.
Our quantitative colleagues are not going to discover a new form of government through
scientific experimentation, as the Onion joked about a month after the 2007 meeting,
even if they think they are in the laboratory. As with other meetings of professionals, it
should come as no shock that the real “business” of the Annual Meeting occurs during
sessions of rubbing elbows at receptions and at the bars and restaurants of the big cities
where these meetings occur. As the official title of the meeting is the “Annual Meeting
& Exhibition,” I should not forget to mention the exhibits. There are scores of book and
journal publishers that attend the meeting to hawk their wares which in turn creates the

46 “Political Scientists Discover New Form of Government,” October 30, 2007,
http://www.theonion.com/content/news_briefs/political_scientists (accessed March 11, 2008). In the same
vein, Michael Parenti discusses a political cartoon which ridicules the profession in the San Francisco
Chronicle, see “Patricians, Professionals, and Political Science,” APSR Vol. 100 (Nov. 2006), no. 4, 504.
unique situation of an annual political science Woodstock (as in the thoroughly
commercialized one which took place in 1999).

Symbolic of the state of the discipline is the theme from that conference:
"Political Science and Beyond." The "beyond" refers to the discipline of political
science. The theme of the meeting was the promotion of interdisciplinary study. The
"Presidential Address" shows the problem the discipline faces when it comes to
fundamentals. When President Robert Axelrod was searching for a way to begin the
address, he chose to tell a tale about his favorite story about importing ideas from another
field. He choose Darwin importing "a key insight" from Malthus’ _An Essay on the
Principle of Population_ (1826). The insight which gave Darwin a theory to work with
turned out to be the idea that under conditions of "struggles for existence" that "favorable
variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavorable ones to be destroyed."^7

Axelrod adds to the Darwin story, "The really neat thing is that twenty years later, another
political economist, namely Marx, imported Darwin’s conception of political struggle
back into political economy." Axelrod also considers Marx’s import from Darwin’s _On
the Origin of the Species_, a contribution to the field of political economy. He also states
that Darwin could have exported if he had “written about biology’s applicability to class
struggle.”^8 But the good reason why Darwin did not write about biology’s applicability
to class struggle is because he was not an “intellectual swindler” as Marx was. ^9 We

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^7 Axelrod, 3, Address printed in _Perspectives on Politics_ Vol. 6 (March 2008), no. 1: 3-9.
^8 Ibid., 4, my emphasis. I pass over the rest of the address because it focuses on how political science can
make itself relevant to scholars in other fields such as “public health, cognitive and neuropsychology, and
the design of web-based institutions,” by informing them about things which political scientists know and
they do not. This is not interdisciplinary study to make political analyses stronger, but instead, a symptom
of a relevance fetish, ibid., 1.
^9 This is Voegelin’s characterization from his Inaugural Lecture at the University of Munich, published as
_Science, Politics, and Gnosticism_ in CW 5, 264-265. Voegelin quotes the preface of Marx’s 1841
dissertation ( _Über die Differenz der Demokritischen und Epikureischen Naturphilosophie_) to make the
should remember that Axelrod, a recent President of the Association, is speaking about Marx’s deliberate deception as a “really neat thing.” This is the President who the graduate students of the discipline were invited to meet during the “Graduate Student Happy Hour.” I have not heard that any of the graduate students informed Axelrod at the informal get together that Marx did no such “really neat thing.” Nor does it appear that any of Axelrod’s colleagues wanted to spoil the mood over hors d’oeuvres and cocktails at the Opening Reception following the Presidential Address by pointing out Marx’s intentions. While his heart was in the right place, it would be refreshing intradisciplinary study if Axelrod read and understood important works for political science before spending the time trying to do interdisciplinary study by exporting game theory to cancer researchers.  

It is a simple fact that to get hired or advance in rank in the political science discipline one must publish and attend conferences. When we consider that the scientistic “researchers” make up the majority of persons in the discipline of American political science and that they have detached themselves from reality, it seems reasonable to ask if this is the kind of political science we want to legitimate in journals with conference invitations, let alone by granting Presidential terms. Voegelin’s idea for an institutional solution was to do interesting political science, in the sense of episteme
**politike** and not disciplinary political science, which would attract young people away from the behavioralists. I have suggested in Chapter 1 that this practice cost Voegelin a chance at finding employment at a top university in the United States. However, Voegelin’s approach faces difficulties when we know that it is possible at many schools (LSU included) to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in political science without having taken one theory course. In reviewing five of the top graduate programs in political science in the United States (Harvard, Chicago, UC Berkeley, Yale, and Michigan), I found that only Harvard requires graduate students to take courses in political philosophy.\(^5\) Besides the fact that the elite schools which train Ph.D.’s tend to treat political philosophy as a non-required subfield, part of the reason why I think behavioralism has not gone away, as many theorists had hoped it would is that there are not enough confrontations with the behavioralists when they talk about important political science texts without having tried to understand them. Judging from the content, or lack thereof, in the main three APSA journals and at the APSA Annual Meeting, it seems that the Peterestroika (restructuring) Movement, which was started by the e-mail “Mr. Perestroika” sent in 2000, has stalled.\(^5\) With all due respect to Ellis Sandoz, he was too early in writing the epitaph of behavioralism in 1972.\(^5\) The continuing influence of scientism in American political science can be suggested a reason for the silencing of Voegelin in particular and “qualitative” research in general, by the discipline.

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\(^5\) I obtained this information from the degree requirements section of the websites of these programs.

\(^5\) For a discussion of this event in political science, see Kristen R. Monroe, *Perestroika!: The Rauous Rebellion in Political Science*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), The e-mail can be found, ibid., 9-11.

Conclusion

Will the silence surrounding Voegelin’s thought ever be broken and Voegelin be allowed to take his rightful place, whatever that may be, in the history of political thought? Voegelinians seem certain—some are more certain that others. Sandoz, who is given the last word in VRC, concludes after a quick comparison of Voegelin to Beethoven: “The stature of Voegelin is going to hold up. Voegelin, I think, is going to be recognized as the greatest thinker of our time—in due course.” ¹ Geoffrey L. Price took a more prudent approach in speaking only about Voegelin’s last two major works. “The ecumenic age appeared as the fourth volume of Order and history in 1974, after a long period during which Voegelin’s sensitivity to historical data had forced him to recast his conclusions several times. It may be a century before the full achievements of this work, and the posthumously published culminating volume In search of order (1987), are fully appreciated.” ² I will offer no new predictions. The problem with such conjectures is that they do not get at the silencing of Voegelin which makes more or less hopeful suggestions as quoted above possible. Furthermore, these statements about the future reception of Voegelin’s work do not do anything toward overcome the current silence. For this reason, in this work I have tried to uncover some of the situations which made the silencing of Voegelin possible. I have also made some suggestions about how to do something about the silence surrounding Voegelin’s work. I will revisit both briefly.

Voegelin was a political philosopher who made bold statements in his work, but he thought he had done the work to not only justify but also back up such lines as: “Marx

¹ VRC, 278.
was an intellectual swindler.”3 “This elementary humanity—that what concerns my neighbor concerns me too—this was lacking. In a wider sense, it was lacking in the whole Western world, and, in what became a quite specific and criminal sense, in Germany, and especially in the Churches, which used their theological position to renounce humanity.”4 And, most famously, asking us to “recognize the essence of modernity as the growth of Gnosticism.”5 This certainty also came out in Voegelin’s speech, the candor Heilman referred to, which could make Voegelin sound arrogant. He did say one time for example, “I am German philosophy!” (Ich bin die deutsche Philosophie).6 I have suggested that the way Voegelin presented himself, from the list of publications to the showmanship of giving highly informative lectures without notes, cost him a position at a top university in the United States. However, intimidating potential colleagues by taking political philosophy seriously is not something which Voegelin cannot really be blamed for. Nonetheless, not acquiring one of these positions cost Voegelin a chance to work with top young people in the United States and he went to Germany where he was overshadowed by the Frankfurt School. Something for which Voegelin can be blamed for is his public inaction. He had opportunities in both the United States and in Germany to publicize his work. To do so he would have had to risk stagnation in his work while being involved in public controversies. For Voegelin, his “island of order” was more desirable place to live in and he did not venture into the public realm for very long.

Voegelin’s personality and his refusal to become a public philosopher are obviously not things anyone today can do anything about. Similarly, no one can get

3 CW 5, 264, original emphasis.
4 CW 31, 153, Voegelin here was referring to John Donne’s poem, “For Whom the Bell Tolls,” used in the epigraph of Ernest Hemingway’s eponymous novel.
5 NSP, 126[CW 5, 190].
6 See reflections of two German students in VRC, 106-107.
Voegelin at job at Yale, Harvard or Johns Hopkins. However, having identified these past contributions to the silencing of Voegelin, it is important to determine why Voegelin is neglected today. I have described Voegelin’s relations with Arendt and Strauss in Chapter 3. While both Arendt and Strauss entered into a dialogue with Voegelin, the students of the thought of Arendt and Strauss are reluctant to engage Voegelin’s work. In terms of political scientists who work on political philosophy, not having a hearing from these two groups has impacted the extent to which Voegelin is known. My only suggestion is to keep inviting these scholars to discuss the work of Arendt, Strauss and Voegelin. The discipline at large is a different story. However, it will not do any good to continually beat the drum of Voegelin and hope our colleagues will finally listen. Instead, producing more critical and original work on Voegelin’s thought, as well as unique work which incorporates Voegelin’s thought, is the best approach to attempting to gain a wider audience for Voegelin. Only then will students of Voegelin be able move from asserting Voegelin’s importance to having others see it demonstrated.

One area where recognition of Voegelin’s significance has been visible is in scholarship on racism. Voegelin’s work on European race ideas, which are usually less emphasized than his other work, has attracted the attention of Paul Gilroy, Ivan Hannaford, and Alana Lentin. Hannaford and Lentin focus on the concept of race as fundamentally tied in with the nation-state and divorced from ancient notions of race as Voegelin had described in *Rasse und Staat*. Gilroy sees the importance of Voegelin’s contention that “race” thinking helps to constitute social reality which helps to explain the persistence of “race” thinking in spite of the fact that the biological race idea has been

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thoroughly disproved. Voegelin was certainly not alone in pointing such things out, but what is interesting about the use of Voegelin by prominent scholars who focus on racism is that they were not students of Voegelin, nor had they met Voegelin. It is this independent discovery of Voegelin’s work which is perhaps most intriguing and important regarding the silencing of Voegelin because the audience which Voeglinians hope to reach is the uninitiated. That an underappreciated area of Voegelin’s work was utilized by scholars who were unfamiliar with Voegelin maybe telling in pondering the silence surrounding Voegelin’s thought and how it can be surmounted.

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