

Fusion 15

The September 2009 Voegelin Conference: Muddles

Fusion 14 noted that a listing of member of a New Society, A **Society for the Globalization of Effective Methods of Evolving** - SGEME for short - is postponed till December, 2009. The months between are months of outreach, and this essay illustrates one such outreach. This Fusion 15 follows Fusion 8, where the broad point is made about the New Society as a seed of a later global commonsense support of the community of differentiated culture, what I call the Tower of Able, a global pattern of collaboration that is to “solve the problem of history, which is the real catch”.¹

Are we not on the same track here, seeking order in history, as Eric Voegelin? Certainly: but I would note a bent, literally a bent, towards luminously shifting the future in a new way, a bent explicit in the two E words of the Society’s title, *Effective* and *Evolving*. Are we on the same track as the people attending the Voegelin Conference? Again, surely, yes.

But our bent of present interest, as the previous Fusion notes, is a commonsense bent to the practicality of a division of labour, not any division of labour but one that is, so to speak, recommended by history in the pursuit of such diverse inquiries as economics and linguistics, literary studies and ecology. It does not take genius to note the difference between searching the past, and plotting a future. It does not take genius to see the difference between researching that turns up an old manuscript or a neglected text or phenomenon and the effort to figure out the meaning of an author or again an author’s meaning in history. And so on. So, on to finding a commonsense division of eight components of withdrawal, *die Wendung zur Idee*, leading from discovered anomaly to fresh turns in street and school. Eight components: might that not be a clue to a better ordering of the Voegelin than the 13 panels? Even if, in some annual

¹Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 236, line 7.

meetings, some of the eight components show up empty? Think of research lulls in physics, or lack of inspiration in botanical interpretation: there is no shame in a particular function of collaboration being unproductive for a spell.

But I am not going to follow these questions and suggestions here. I give the actual Voegelin meeting's program below so that those interested might at least peruse it with such homely questions. And I would note that the simple questions posed already put you oddly ahead of Lonergan as he struggled in the decade after *Insight* towards an operative order that would resonate with his characterization of Cosmopolis. So, you need to ask, in your own way, whether the scholars involved in this conference are going forward somewhere somehow together? Is there a coherence in, of, their work? What of it is likely to hit the streets or the classrooms in a manner that effects our global evolving? My title above suggests that all is not well, that the conference is a muddling along. I am not now talking about the muddling that is the horror of classroom life, nominalism and conceptualism run riot. I am talking about sincere efforts to push forward such as occur at conferences like this 25th annual Voegelin meeting. The twenty five years of meetings are, I would claim, far from the positive rhythmic staggerings of, say, physics, with its "cumulative and progressive results."²

There are deeper issue. In what sense is Voegelin a topic, in what sense a leader; in what sense a representative figure?³ Does Voegelin provide a heuristic self-

²*Method in Theology*, 4.

³These are enormously complex procedural questions, questions that tie in both with the search for a Standard Model of cultural inquiry - recall Ortega Y Gasset's search for a 'Faculty of Culture' mentioned in the previous Fusion - and especially with a genetic ordering of history's meanings that would twist counterpositions into slices of that genetic ordering. Such an ongoing ordering will sift out earlier suggestive individuals in favour of persons climbing later within a more adequate explanatory heuristic of history. So, in the millennia to follow ours, old philosophers will bow out in favour of new scientists of humanity, where science is incarnately defined within its aesthetic and heuristic tonalities.. There is an excellent hint of Lonergan's struggle with this broad problem in unpublished notes of the early 1960s [my cataloguing of

identification to the participants, and is such self-identification up-front and operative, as its equivalent is in physics, through some Standard Model? From what perspective is Voegelin being investigated, implemented, whatever? For that matter, from what perspective was Voegelin himself operating, and was that perspective luminous to Voegelin?

And we might venture into many apparently lesser issues, but I wish to leave the exercise of messing with this data to the energetic reader, indeed hopefully to the energetic Voegelin scholar. So I nudge you - a single illustration - towards the importance of one issue: the issue of *Comparison*.⁴ What function does it play in the struggle towards an evolving of richer meanings? Are there missing contexts of such comparative studies and what might they be?

It would be quite foolish of me to repeat briefly leads to grappling with these questions. Better that you personally get a sense of the challenge that faced Lonergan when he concluded *Insight* and was forced to teach in a muddled Rome. But my aim is the same as that of Fusion 14, or Fusion 7, of Fusion 8: we need a growing group, whether scholars of Voegelin or worshipers of Gaia or your discontented friends, who have a sense of that larger challenge of order in history and a suspicion that Lonergan has something to offer the organizers of conferences and colleges and countries. What do you think he might offer towards a creative re-organization of the proceedings and content of the 25th Annual Meeting of the Eric Voegelin Society, towards a creative reorganization of the next century of such meetings?

them in the early 1970s was Batch B.8.6,V , but the catalogue has since been revised]: “Theology 1) not a Platonic Idea 2) but the many species [not individuals except as types, as dominating personalities] 3) in a genetically and dialectically differentiated genus”.

⁴I place the word in italics, recalling for Lonergan students the occurrence of the word in the description of dialectic procedures, *Method in Theology* 250. I risk here the odd suggestion that most of the comparative work of the Voegelin conference belongs more in the zone that is the output of Communications in Lonergan’s sense of that zone as a speciality.

ERIC VOEGELIN SOCIETY 2009 (Rev3+)

Toronto, ON, Canada, Sept. 3-6, 2009

105th APSA Annual Meeting, 25th EVS Annual International Meeting

Organizer: Ellis Sandoz, Louisiana State University

Program Summary

- Panel 1. Mysticism and Politics in Voegelin's Philosophy
- Panel 2. Conscience, Expression & Liberty: Pitfalls of Political Correctness–Roundtable
- Panel 3. The Languages of Political Order: Experience and Symbolization in Non-Western Modes of Thought
- Panel 4. Voegelin and the Ancients
- Panel 5. Voegelin's *The Form of the American Mind* and American Pragmatism as a Significant Contribution to World Philosophy
- Panel 6. Voegelin's *The Political Religions* After 70 years
- Panel 7. Assessing Voegelin's Critique of Hegel
- Panel 8. Revisiting Reinhold Niebuhr in the 21st Century
- Panel 9. Anamnestic Literature
- Panel 10. Theorists, Theologians, and Littérateurs: Evil and Modern Political Thought
- Panel 11. *Voegelin in Toronto, the DVD*: Reflections on the 1978 York University “Hermeneutics and Structuralism” Conference–Roundtable
- Panel 12. The Primacy of Persons in Politics: Empiricism and Theory
- Panel 13. The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence–Roundtable

PROGRAM DETAIL–13 panels

Panel 1. Mysticism and Politics in Voegelin's Philosophy

Chair: Ellis Sandoz, Louisiana State University

Papers: William James' Pure Experience and the Creative Potential of the Metaxy
Macon Boczek, Kent State

Joachim of Fiore and Gnosticism

Matthias Riedl, Central European University–Budapest <matriedl@yahoo.de>

How far is it from Voegelin's reflective distance to mysticism?

Peter von Sivers, University of Utah

Plato as Mystic Philosopher: The Voegelin – Strauss Impasse

Henrik Syse, International Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Voegelin and Basil of Caesarea's Teaching on Discernment

Anne G. Keidel, Boston College <agkeidel@earthlink.net>

Disc.: Glenn Hughes, St. Mary's University–San Antonio

William Petropulos, Eric Voegelin Archiv–Munich

Panel 2. Conscience, Expression & Liberty: Pitfalls of Political Correctness–Roundtable

Chair: Barry Cooper, University of Calgary

Parts: David Warren, *Ottawa Citizen* <otiosus@sympatico.ca>

Jodi Bruhn, Institute on Governance <jodi.bruhn@yahoo.ca>

John von Heyking, University of Lethbridge

Robert P. George, Princeton University

Travis D. Smith, Concordia University

Panel 3. The Languages of Political Order: Experience and Symbolization in Non-Western Modes of Thought

Chair: Timothy Hoyer, Texas Woman's University
Texas Woman's University

Papers: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature: Susan Abulhawa's The Scar of David

Samah Elhajibrahim, Texas Woman's University

The Language of Order Among the Piraha of Brazil

Daniel L. Everett, Illinois State University

Styles of Truth in Gao Xingjian's Soul Mountain

Timothy Hoyer, Texas Woman's University

Religion and Politics in the Constitutions of Japan

Kyoko Inoue, University of Illinois, Chicago (Emerita)

The Politics and Geopolitics of the Two Koreas and the United States

Yu Nam Kim, Dankook University (Emeritus)

Disc: Paul Kiparsky, Stanford University

John Robert “Haj” Ross, University of North Texas

Panel 4: Voegelin and the Ancients

Chair: Paul Caringella, Hoover Institution–Stanford University

Papers: Harmony and Justice in Plato's *Republic*

Richard Avramenko, University of Wisconsin–Madison

Voegelin's Reading of Plato's *Philebus*

Bernat Torres Morales, University of Barcelona <bernattorres@gmail.com>

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Contact same as above

Aristophanic Themes in the *Republic*

Zdravko Planinc, McMaster University

Voegelin on Aristotle's “Science of the Polis”

Jacqueline Pfeffer Merrill, Independent Scholar <jacqueline.merrill@comcast.net>

423 Hillsmere Drive

Annapolis MD 21403

Disc: Ronald Srigley, Thorneo University

Timothy Fuller, Colorado College

Panel 5. Voegelin's *The Form of the American Mind* and American Pragmatism as a Significant Contribution to World Philosophy.

Chair: Macon Boczek, Kent State University <mboczek1@kent.edu>

Papers: The American Open Self: Exploring Voegelin's Experience of Peircian Philosophy

Clancy Smith, Duquesne University <smithc4@duq.edu>

Department of Philosophy

Science and Paradox: Peirce and Voegelin on the Practice of Language amid God,
Man, World, and Society

Rhydon Jackson, Independent Scholar <rhydonj@embargmal.com>

Dewey, Social Intelligence, and the 'Wisconsin Idea'

Frank Ryan, Kent State University <frayan@kent.edu>

Department of Philosophy

Two Pragmatic Moral Universes: James vs. Dewey and the Later Pragmatists

Scott Segrest, United States Military Academy at West Point <prof.scott@yahoo.com>

Disc.: Macon Boczek, Department of Philosophy, Kent State University

Steve Ealy, Liberty Fund, Inc.

Panel. 6. Voegelin's *The Political Religions* After 70 Years

Chair: Matthias Riedl, Central European University–Budapest <visriedl@ceu.hu>

Papers: A Secular Age as a Religious Age? Voegelin & Taylor on Defining Modern Times

Rodney Kilcup, Linfield College (*emeritus*)

The Concept of the State in *Political Religions*

Maxwell Staley, independent scholar <mrs2129@columbia.edu>

Fascism as Political Religion: The case of the Roumanian Iron Guard

Ionut Biliuta, Oxford University <anahoretusd@gmail.com>

The Concept of Evil in *The Political Religions*

Alin Vara, Central European University–Budapest <alin.vara@gmail.com>

Disc: Peter Brickey LeQuire, University of Chicago <pbl@uchicago.edu>

Thierry Gontier, University of Lyon <thierry.gontier@laposte.net>

Panel 7. Assessing Voegelin's Critique of Hegel

Chair: Timothy Fuller, Colorado College <tfuller@coloradocollege.edu>

Papers: Decrypt: Voegelin and Kojève's Hegel

Barry Cooper, U. of Calgary <bcooper@ucalgary.ca>

Reflections on Hegel's Philosophy of Right

Timothy Fuller, Colorado College <tfuller@coloradocollege.edu>

History as Freedom? Voegelin's Hegel

Horst Mewes, University of Colorado–Boulder <horstmewes@yahoo.com>

Hegel Today

Cyril O'Regan, University of Notre Dame <Cyril.J.O'Regan.1@nd.edu>

Understanding the Revolution in Philosophy

David Walsh, Catholic University of America <walshd@cua.edu>

Disc.: Harald Bergbauer, Munich School of Politics

Michael Gillespie, Duke University

<mailto:Daylinks@aol.com>

Panel 8. Revisiting Reinhold Niebuhr in the 21st Century

Chair: Greg Russell, University of Oklahoma

Papers: Fire In Their Hearts: Christian Realism and Democracy Promotion

Eric Patterson, Georgetown University

Pilgrims' Progress: The Disenchanted Destinations of Reinhold Niebuhr and Raymond
Aron

Reed Davis, Seattle Pacific University

Reinhold Niebuhr on Tragedy and Politics

Daniel G. Lang, Lynchburg College

Niebuhr's Christian Realism and Dewey's Pragmatism: The Faith Experience

Vibeke Schou Tjalve, Danish Institute For Military Studies

Disc: David Mayers, Boston College

David Clinton, Baylor University

Panel 9. Anamnetic Literature

Chair: Charles Embry, Texas A&M University–Commerce (*emeritus*)

<charlesrembry@embarqmail.com>

Papers: A Heaven-Gram for World Politics: Hillesum, Heschel and Rilke
rescuing God in exile
Meins Coetsier, Ghent University EHOC <meinscoe@hotmail.com>

J. M. Coetzee and Eric Voegelin on Remembrance and the Private and Public
Dimensions of Guilt.
Polly Detels, Texas A & M University-Commerce <pollydetels@embarqmail.com>

W.B. Yeats and the Formation of the National Consciousness
Patrick Dowdall, independent scholar <pdowdall@comcast.net>

Anamnesis in the Work of Stefan George
William Petropulos, Eric Voegelin Archiv–Munich <William.Petropulos@web.de>

The Persistence of Symbol and Sacrament in Albert Camus
Matthew Connell, Louisiana State University

Disc.: David Palmieri. Auburn University <dwp0003@auburn.edu>

Ron Srigley. Laurentian University. rsrigley@laurentian.ca

Panel 10. Theorists, Theologians, and Littérateurs: Evil and Modern Political Thought

Chair: Martin Palouš, Charles University

Papers: Brutality, Vulgarity, and Evil in Chekhov's Three Sisters
Lee Trepanier, Saginaw Valley State University

F.W.J. Schelling on the Metaphysics of Evil
Steven F. McGuire, Catholic University of America

Reinhold Niebuhr, Modernity, and the Problem of Evil
Matthew Sitman, Georgetown University

Psychologists of Evil: Nietzsche and Dostoevsky on the Darkness of the Soul
Rouven Steeves, United States Air Force Academy

Voegelin's Nietzsche: Overcoming the Problem of Evil in Zarathustra
Sarah Shea, McGill University <sarah.shea2@mail.mcgill.ca>
3635 Rue Ridgewood, Apartment 402
Montreal, Quebec H3V 1B4 Canada

Disc.: Michael Henry, St. John's University

Paul Corey, Humber College <Paul.Corey@humber.ca>

Panel 11. *Voegelin in Toronto, the DVD: Reflections on the 1978 York University "Hermeneutics and Structuralism" Conference*—ROUNDTABLE

Chair: Zdravko Planinc, McMaster University

Parts: Barry Cooper, University of Calgary

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Panel. 12. The Primacy of Persons in Politics: Empiricism and Theory

Chair: Thomas Heilke, University of Kansas

Papers: Can Power be Creative? Evidence and Theory
Thomas Heilke, University of Kansas.

Friendship as Precondition and Consequence of Creativity in Politics
John von Heyking, University of Lethbridge

The Hidden Power for the Creation of Order
Peter Nitschke, Hochschule Vechta,

The true form of a government: The constitutional movements of power
Tilo Schabert, University of Erlangen,

Panel 13. The Modern Philosophical Revolution: The Luminosity of Existence–Roundtable

Chair: Michael Franz, Loyola College of Maryland

Parts: Thomas Heilke, University of Kansas

Glenn Hughes, St. Mary's University–San Antonio

Brendan Purcell, University College Dublin (emeritus)

Henrik Syse, Int'l Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Cyril O'Regan, Notre Dame

Rouven J. Steeves, USAF Academy

Respondent: David Walsh, Catholic University of America