

**Eric Voegelin at the End of an Era:
Differentiations of Consciousness and the Search
for the Universal**

by

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Originally presented at a conference on “Voegelin's Vision of Order and the Crisis of Civilization in the Twentieth Century” at the University of Manchester, England, July 8-10, 1995. Published in *International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Eric Voegelin*, ed. Stephen A. McKnight and Geoffrey L. Price. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1997, pp. 159-188.

My title is “Eric Voegelin at the End of an Era.” The world we find ourselves in today is a very different one from that in which Voegelin wrote the books and essays by which we remember him. It seems appropriate, therefore, for those of us who wish to carry his enterprise forward to pause now, as this bloodiest of centuries draws toward its close, and reflect on some of the new challenges that face his thought and our own as we make the transition from a former world ideologically polarized by two major power blocs to a new fragmented, decentered, disoriented one, and from a troubled modernity to whatever may be preparing to succeed it.

This was a dangerous era, since there must always be danger in the confrontation of two powerful adversaries. But it was also one that enjoyed a certain stability, since it always seemed clear who the opponents were, and since they each imposed a certain measure of order within their own spheres of influence. The era that now seems to be taking shape

threatens, on the other hand, to become one of multiple, almost random polarizations that are already showing their potential to generate violence.

It is not an accident, I would like to suggest, either that the world of the era that is ending was a polarized one or that there should be further polarizations in the world now taking shape. It is not an accident because social and political worlds are grounded in culture, and culture involves as one of its principal dynamic forces the power of myth — which tends by its very nature toward a polarizing vision of the world, a conception of the world as divided into “us” versus “them.”

In a time when political thought tended to be dismissive of the role of cultural factors in world affairs, focusing instead on the military and economic aspects of the power of nation-states, Voegelin was a rare voice emphasizing the importance of the mythic symbols “by which political societies interpret themselves as representatives of a transcendent truth.”¹ And as Paul Caringella has recently reminded us, Voegelin was already insisting in 1953, in “The Oxford Political Philosophers,” that “the reality of politics is not exhausted by national states” and that “[t]he first problem to be mastered by a contemporary philosophy of politics is, therefore, a redefinition of its object in such a manner that the national state, while receiving its due, will be understood as a part in a greater civilizational whole.”²

But I also think that Voegelin's own understanding of the pertinent issues needs further development — which is precisely the task we are gathering in Manchester to try to begin. I said above that myth — the principal instrument by which societies and civilizations develop and maintain their sense of self-definition and collective identity — tends toward a polarizing vision of the world. This polarizing tendency was not a theme of Voegelin's thought, nor is it an aspect of mythic consciousness that I think he adequately reflected on. The mythic vision has historically been the principal instrument by which group identifications are formed and maintained, and those will always be with us because at the very least they remain a preferable alternative to the chaos of a world of every person for

himself or herself. But the power by which myth brings this about is at best a kind of white magic — and magic is always a dangerous force.

The reason mythic consciousness tends toward a polarizing vision of the world is not difficult to understand. A myth is a story that tells us who we are, where we have come from, what we are called to. It originates as a force establishing group identity among those whose lives it interprets. The myths that get told repeatedly and are remembered are those that have performed this function effectively. To be effective, such a story must have dramatic power, and what gives it that is a structure centered on an *agon*, a struggle between the opposing forces of protagonist and antagonist. Neither of these need be imaged as individual characters; they may be groups, ideological principles, even natural forces. Both poles, however, are needed for there to be a dramatic action, and nothing less than that will accomplish the work of drawing the hearers of the story into an identification with what they believe to be the forces of light, that is, with the protagonistic pole. We all experience the workings of this process every time we lose ourselves in a novel, a play, or a film, and we also experience it more than we may often realize when we read the newspapers, pursue our careers, or root for our favorite teams. The World Series and Super Bowl do not captivate large audiences because the real fortunes of either side's fans depend on which team wins; they draw us because, for the time they last, they structure our imaginative experience as a gripping participation in a dramatic *agon*.³

You can see then, I am sure, why I say that myth tends by its very nature to divide the world into an “us” versus a “them.” I hope you can also see why I think this effect is something we now need to reflect on with greater explicitness than seemed called for in the era of superpower confrontation Voegelin lived and thought in. In most of the twentieth century the mythic vision seemed close enough to the simple truth that it would scarcely have occurred to anyone to think about demythologizing it. (And it is perhaps worth noting that when theologians did talk in those times about “demythologizing,” following the lead

of Rudolf Bultmann, what they meant by it excluded any consideration of the issues I am pointing to.)⁴

In that era, mythic polarization seemed not only innocent but practically obligatory, since without it one's commitment and fighting zeal might be compromised. Voegelin himself was a fighter who fought the good fight, and in its time, I think, it *was* a good fight. In the new era of virtually pandemic, multiple polarizations that we now seem to be entering, on the other hand, the mythic vision will become increasingly dangerous. Many, of course, will persist in it nonetheless, since it comes so naturally to the human imagination and its powers of enchantment are so subtle as well as so strong. It is precisely this problem, therefore, that I think presents the major challenge today for the political philosopher. A critique of mythic consciousness is needed if we are to win enough freedom from it to be able to resist the enticements to violent confrontation that lure us on all sides.

To meet this challenge we can, I believe, find in Voegelin's thought invaluable resources, but we will also have to try to develop further some aspects of his thought and correct some imbalances. My subtitle indicates where I think we need to place our effort: in the search for the universal through the differentiations of consciousness that can win us freedom from these enchantments. In a world that can be expected continuously to surprise us with new varieties of mutually hostile particularisms, what we need above all else is the development of what Voegelin used to call "reflective distance" and a grasp of what there may be of human universality beneath the differences the mythic vision focuses on and turns into symbols of polarized identification. Voegelin's own philosophical quest, at its deepest level, was a search for the elements of human universality, and our own task now is to try to clarify further the issues involved in that search and carry it forward.

The key concept in Voegelin's search for the universal was differentiation of consciousness. It is through the experience of differentiations of consciousness that the discovery of universal humanity takes place, according to Voegelin. In his discussion of such differentiations, Voegelin specified two: the noetic and pneumatic. These he saw as

deriving from ancient Greece and Israel respectively, the first having to do with reflective awareness of the workings of the mind in the process of inquiry, the second with spiritual realization of the difference between intracosmic, mythically imaged divinity and the new conception of extracosmic, radically transcendent divinity that gradually emerged in the prophetic tradition. I will, in fact, be talking about these, but I would also like to suggest that Voegelin's discussion of differentiations of consciousness was incomplete and that even the two differentiations he did discuss require the complementary understanding and practice of a third which, for a variety of possible reasons, Voegelin did not articulate distinctly as such, although I think it was implicit in some of his discussion.

To identify it briefly, the third differentiation I have in mind has to do with what we might call “appetitive consciousness” as distinguished from the noetic “questioning consciousness” and the pneumatic “spiritual consciousness.” The appetitive differentiation of consciousness is the realization, both understood and experienced, of the distinction between between two modes of desire. One is what Thomas Aquinas calls *appetitus* or *desiderium naturae*, as when he describes the “wonder” (*admiratio*), that Aristotle said was the beginning of philosophy, as a “natural desire” (*desiderium naturae*) and uses this idea to argue that the blessed must know God in His existential actuality because otherwise the *desiderium naturae* of humanity would remain unfulfilled.⁵ This is also the “*disio*” that Dante the pilgrim speaks of as moving him to ask questions of Vergil, to follow him up the mountain of Purgatory, to love Beatrice and God, and to ascend finally to the empyrean, where he experienced his *disio* and *velle* (desire and will) as turned by “the love that moves the sun and the other stars.” This mode of desire I shall call simply “appetite.” The other mode of desire consists of the various forms of disordered yearning that Dante's pilgrim had to purify by his journey through the inferno and purgatory. Dante's *Commedia* as a whole depicts a process of the education of desire based on Christian and Aristotelian teachings by which the pilgrim comes to know the difference between his genuine appetite for life in God and the deceitful lusts that dominate him while

his mind is not yet clear. The purification in question is precisely the achievement of this differentiation.

It is not easy to find appropriate terms in common speech for the distinction I have in mind, since it is, on the whole, one that few people have ever wanted to give much thought to, let alone talk about. One of the few modern Western thinkers to take an interest in this problem, the contemporary French cultural critic René Girard, has addressed it by way of a distinction between what he calls “desire” and “appetite.” According to Girard, desire springs from the workings of a psychological mechanism he calls “mimesis,” which draws us into an unwitting imaginative identification with others and what we feel, at least, to be their desires. Girard himself is primarily interested not in the distinction between these but in the violent conflicts that the convergence of desires through mimesis is likely to give rise to.⁶ I think myself, however, that it might be more helpful to follow Aquinas and Dante by using “desire” as an encompassing term to include both appetites of the natural and unproblematic kind and all of the problematic elaborations and distortions that can develop from them. As a term for the negative forms desire can take, I will use, for want of a better, and with some qualification, a word often used in English translations of Buddhist discussions of this problem: “craving.” The Buddhist critique of desire you are no doubt familiar with already, even if you may be less so with Girard's. In both critiques, desire, in its negative modality, is taken to be artificial and illusory and a source of conflict and unhappiness. Buddhists speak of desire as having its origin in *avidya*, or ignorance — that is, both theoretical and practical ignorance of the truth of consciousness. That truth is to be gained, in the Buddhist tradition, through a meditative discovery each individual must make for himself or herself within his or her own consciousness.

As discussed in the Madhyamika tradition of Buddhism deriving from Nagarjuna, this meditative practice requires discrimination of the movements of consciousness as a chain of twelve moments referred to collectively as the circle of “codependent arising” and also the Wheel of Life or of Karma.⁷ I will concentrate only on those of special pertinence

to the present discussion. The sixth, Contact, refers to the relation between the senses and their objects. The sensory experience this generates gives rise to the seventh, Feeling, which may be pleasurable, displeasurable, or neutral. The eighth, Craving, is described as arising from Feeling in the form of a spontaneous, automatic movement of desire for what is pleasurable or dislike for what is displeasurable.⁸ The ninth is Grasping, an impulse that tends to proceed immediately from Craving. Grasping can take the form either of grasping after what is believed capable of giving pleasure or that of avoiding what might give displeasure.

I said above that I would borrow the Buddhist word “craving” for desire in the negative mode, but with some qualification. That which I intend is to use the term to encompass not only what Buddhists mean by Craving but also Grasping. According to Buddhist thought, in ordinary consciousness these are experienced as continuous, and I will treat them as such. On the other hand, when meditative practice succeeds in breaking the link between Craving and Grasping, the former might also be interpreted as corresponding to the *appetitus* of Aquinas. In the way Buddhism usually talks about it, however, the entire chain of codependent arising carries a negative value, whereas for Aquinas, *appetitus* is essentially positive, bearing within it the promise not only of genuine pleasure but also of spiritual fulfillment. So I shall use the term “craving” here to encompass all the negative connotations associated in Buddhist thought with both Craving and Grasping, and I will use “appetite” as its positive counterpart — that is, to refer to natural, genuine appetites, including not only biological appetites for the conditions that make bodily life possible but also the mental and spiritual appetites that constitute the dynamism of what Voegelin called noetic and pneumatic consciousness.

What makes the appetitive differentiation of consciousness I am speaking of especially challenging both to think about and to enact is that there is no clearcut criterion of discontinuity between appetite and craving that makes them easy to discriminate. But there *are* at least clues that indicate that one is passing from simple appetite to something more

complex and problematic. Craving always contains and builds upon some sort of natural appetite by mixing with it a symbolic element. It does so by processes that include, in the Buddhist analysis, imaginative preoccupation with potential objects of appetite and association of such objects with the idea and image of a “self.” In the Girardian analysis, there is also an unwitting imitation (or “mimesis”) of the real or supposed desires of another person (or group) who is presumed to desire those objects for the sake of some enhancement or ontological bolstering they might offer to his or her “being” or sense of selfhood.⁹

Drawing on these clues, one might say that to practice the appetitive differentiation of consciousness it is necessary to rediscover the natural actuality of the appetite by tracing back through the meandering and usually hidden imaginative and interpretive paths by which it has developed into the form it takes on as a craving. When a Sancho Panza, for example, is hungry for a piece of cheese or thirsty for a goatskin of wine, that would be appetite, in the sense in which I am using the term (which is not to say that the imaginative appeal of some beverages perceived as prestigious may not also involve as much symbolic craving as it does natural thirst and anticipation of gustatory pleasure). When Sancho dreams of the banquets he will enjoy when he becomes the governor of the island Don Quixote has promised him, then he is experiencing craving: the lordly repast functions in his consciousness as a symbol of the plenitude of being that he will enjoy when he acquires that status. And in proportion as it does so, it can even stand in the way of real satisfaction. After the repast, as the Don explains, Sancho will have to learn to say “eruct” instead of “belch” and, as befits his new dignity, do neither, although in the days before craving worked its alchemy upon appetite Sancho used to enjoy a good belch after his cheese and wine.

Voegelin was aware of the historical and theoretical context for an explicit discussion of this third differentiation of consciousness and spoke of that context in several places, both in *The New Science of Politics* and in the second and fourth volumes of *Order*

and History, but he evidently never considered it sufficiently important in itself to be worth rendering explicitly thematic in his own analysis of the differentiations of consciousness in history. In recent years I have been exploring the resources that might be useful to us if we want to understand these issues both theoretically and practically. That is what led me to the study of recent French psychological thought and especially the thinkers I discuss in *The Self Between*. I realize that Voegelin might well have been dismayed to find me immersed in Lacan, Kojève, Girard, and the like. We all remember how dismissively he spoke of Freud. I assume he would be pleased to discover that many of the thinkers I discuss in that book are highly critical of Freud too, but I also suspect that he would have thought I was becoming dangerously sympathetic toward yet one more “gnostic” enterprise.

I think myself, however, that Voegelin was too quickly dismissive of the contributions the various psychological traditions might make to the understanding of the human mind. The third differentiation of consciousness requires psychological insight, as well as the practice of something like the Buddhist meditative mindfulness by which one may become aware of the movements of codependent arising and become free from the Craving-Grasping they both feed and depend on. Lacan's discussion of what he calls the “mirror stage,” when a child learns to recognize his self-image and then fatefully also begins to succumb to its power of enchantment, harmonizes well with the Buddhist critique of egoistic desire as grounded in an illusory selfhood.¹⁰ And both, I think, have something to offer to those pursuing the openness of existence Voegelin advocated.

I also think that the tendency, which was sometimes less careful among Voegelinians than in Voegelin himself, to categorize thinkers polemically was one of the less attractive features of the polarized vision of the era of the Cold War. The term “gnostic” in Voegelinian thought is perhaps best understood as an example of this. The Voegelinian term seemed to have rather fuzzy borders as to its semantic content, in a way that sometimes dismayed scholars of historical gnosticism, but its polemical valency was always clear: whatever it might mean and whatever it might have to do with the gnosticism of

history, the word always designated particular kinds of thought and politics as unacceptable. It served as a polemical lens through which one viewed a field of types of inquiry and sorted them into those that were “on our side” and those that wittingly or unwittingly supported “the other side.” If Voegelin is going to speak to the post-1989 world, which is torn less by universalist ideologies than by ethnic, religious, and nationalist particularisms, it will not be through his opposition to ideologies that have already lost most of their force but through his contributions to a positive conception of human universality. This is what we need to deliver us from the chaos of particularisms now threatening.

Human universality, however, is an issue of some complexity. Marxism was a universalist ideology in the sense that it considered itself to have found truths that apply to all human beings everywhere and are alone capable of illuminating human life in all its dimensions and guiding it toward fulfillment. But it excluded the dimension of transcendence, which Voegelin considered the indispensable principle of genuine human universality. I am sure you remember what he said about this in *The New Science of Politics*:

The opening of the soul was an epochal event in the history of mankind because, with the differentiation of the soul as the sensorium of transcendence, the critical, theoretical standards for the interpretation of human existence in society, as well as the source of their authority came into view. When the soul opened toward transcendent reality, it found a source of order superior in rank to the established order of society as well as a truth in critical opposition to the truth at which society had arrived through the symbolism of its self-interpretation. Moreover, the idea of a universal God as the measure of the open soul had as its logical correlate the idea of a universal community of mankind, beyond civil society, through the participation of all men in the common measure, be it understood as the Aristotelian *nous*, the Stoic or the Christian *logos*. (P. 156)

In *Israel and Revelation*, Voegelin discussed the way the dimension of transcendence opened up within the experience of ancient Israel and elicited there the sense of spiritual calling that all the great monotheisms have been born from, but he also said that “the universalist implications of the experience were never successfully explicated within Israelite history” because “the Kingdom of God could never quite separate from Canaan” (p. 164).

This effect is an example of what might be termed the “particularist derailment” that can easily take place as people begin to become aware of the possibility of a human universality that discloses itself in the experience of transcendence. What it involves is a blurring and merging of the transcendent and universal with the immanent and particular, identifying purely local interests with the will of God and exalting oneself or one's group as a standard for all humanity — a sort of tribal narcissism with ecumenic ambitions. This will happen all the more easily, it should be noted, when a person or a people is not prepared to resist the enchanting power of its self-image through a critique of the illusions on which it is founded, including the illusoriness of the desires these illusions feed upon.

There can also be what one might call a “universalist” derailment as well. Marxism was only one of many historical attempts to found on systematic knowledge, magic, or brute force an all-embracing system of control. Such attempts can be made in the name of religion just as much as in that of politics, and when they are, they deform it. It is seldom remembered that the systematic theology of the high Middle Ages, and especially that of Thomas Aquinas was developed in part as the propaganda arm of the Albigensian Crusade and had as a major purpose to compel heretics through the force of scholastic logic wielded as a sort of technological weaponry.¹¹ It was no accident that it was Aquinas's Order of Preachers that eventually presided over the Spanish Inquisition.

In order to analyze the problem of universalist derailment, Voegelin later distinguished between “ecumenicity” and “universality,” saying that “*ecumenicity* will mean the tendency of a community... to express the universality of its claim by making itself

coextensive with the ecumene; *universality* will mean the experience of the world-transcendent God as the source of order that is universally binding for all men.”¹² He went on to discuss the importance of this distinction for analyzing the tendency of religions to slip into such derailment and suggested that one should speak not of “universal” but of “ecumenic” religions because “in the various ecumenic religions, the experience of universality is not always too well differentiated from the desire for ecumenic expansion” (ibid.). “The term *universal religions*,” he said, “would prejudge the crucial issue of the degree to which a spiritual community with ecumenic ambitions has clarified and actualized its character as a representative of universal, transcendent order” (ibid.).

To speak of particularist and universalist (that is, “ecumenic”) derailments should not, of course, be taken to mean that the categories are necessarily exclusive in their application. Israel did not try to impose its religion on the whole world, and the medieval Rabbinic strand of its heritage explicitly renounced proselytizing, but the other strands, Christianity and Islam, developed ecumenic ambitions early in their careers and have often mixed their universalism with particularism. The Spanish inquisitors of the sixteenth century may have professed a universalist theology, but as recent studies have emphasized,¹³ they were also motivated strongly by a particularistic fear that the forced conversion of Jews and Muslims a century earlier was leading to ethnic as well as religious impurity in the land of the Catholic Kings.

In the new era of warring particularisms we now seem to be entering, it is becoming undeniably urgent that we return to and try to complete the process of differentiation of the universal left unfinished by the various cultural descendants of the explorers of what Jaspers called the axis-time. I think myself that it is in the service of this end that future Voegelinian studies may make their most important contribution. To do so, however, they will have to swim against the stream not only of old and new traditions of particularist and universalist derailment but also of much of modern culture, since it will require elucidating a concept to which modernity has generally felt somewhat allergic: that of transcendence. As

Emmanuel Levinas observed, “the history of [modern] Western philosophy has not been the refutation of skepticism as much as the refutation of transcendence.”¹⁴ The immanentizing of transcendence, and through that immanentizing, ultimately, its negation, has been another major feature of the cultural project of modernity. Nietzsche's proclamation of the “death of God” has become for many a major symbol of what is distinctively “modern” about the modern age, and this was only one of the more dramatic expressions of a wish he shared with Marx, Comte, and others to unmask traditional religion as a repressive ideological superstructure from which man must be liberated in order to be free.

But free in what way, and for what good? This is an area on which the third differentiation of consciousness I have spoken of, that between artificial desire or “craving” and genuine appetite, has a direct bearing. The difference is essentially between illusory and genuine good, that is, between what may be falsely apprehended as offering a potential satisfaction to genuine human appetites and what really does offer it. The question of the genuine good, and with it that of appetitive differentiation, is therefore central to the question of what is involved in the modern attack on transcendence.

The Good is known, to the extent it can be *known* at all, not as a fact in the realm of objectivity but as the mystery of a life that engages our subjectivity and makes demands on it that draw us beyond ourselves. What craving seeks is objects to be possessed by an objectivistically conceived “self” that tries to live parasitically on the ontological juices it can suck from them. But this is the pursuit of a false good for the sake of a false existence. The self it seeks is only an image that has enchanted our imaginations. The appetitive differentiation, just as much as the pneumatic or the noetic, is a call to live in truth. The truth of appetite that we are called to discover behind craving's veil of illusion is the appetite genuinely to exist, to commit ourselves to and rejoice in the energies that stem from our transcendent source and move us in the noetic and pneumatic dimensions of actual human existence.

This is why I said earlier that the noetic and pneumatic differentiations require the understanding and practice of a third. It is not simply a matter of their successful practice requiring freedom from the enchantments of craving. In the case of the pneumatic differentiation the failure to practice, at least implicitly, the appetitive differentiation will subvert the pneumatic by leading the desiring imagination to cast the pneumatic beyond in the form of an object that it can use like any object of craving, that is, to bolster its own ontological claims. This is the problem of hypostatizing derailment that Voegelin warned about: a hypostatized self trying to take possession of a hypostatized beyond.

The hypostatizing of the beyond is a pervasive problem in the understanding of transcendence. From the point of view of most beginning students in the history of religions — and I suspect even from the point of view of many actual participants in the living monotheist traditions — the question of what is distinctive about monotheism is one with a simple but not at all adequate answer: that what divides polytheism and monotheism is merely the question of how many gods there are — how many members are contained in the genus “deity.” Israel took centuries to grasp this issue. The Israelites who said their Yahweh was a great god and a great king above all gods and called on Him to defeat the gods of their enemies had not yet developed the transcendent monotheism that Israel later came to stand for. But there were other voices in the tradition, as Voegelin explained in *Israel and Revelation*, that called Israel to belief in One who is neither a supremely powerful specimen of the type of beings called “gods,” nor anything at all contained in the cosmos of beings.

The Bible as a whole is a record of the ways various people over the centuries wrestled with this issue and interpreted it, and the history of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim theology has made it a central and explicit theme, as in Aquinas's article on the question of “Whether God is in any genus,” that is, whether God is some type of entity.¹⁵ His answer was “no,” but many believers still seem to think of God as though He were, just as they think of infinity as a vast space and of eternity as a very long time. It is easy to let our

imaginings do our thinking for us, and in the realm of theology the imagination has an almost irresistible tendency to draw our thinking down to the level of space and time and the entities that fill them. The search for the universal, however, depends absolutely on the differentiation of absolute from merely relative transcendence. It was precisely this differentiation that Voegelin considered the epochal event in Israel and that he coined his phrase “pneumatic differentiation of consciousness” to refer to.

I would like to discuss in more detail the problem involved here because I think it may help to make clear some of the deeper questions we must think through if we wish to understand Voegelin's thought about universality and help others to understand it and grasp its significance for our present historical situation. The idea of absolute or radical transcendence and the apophatic *via negationis* that is its theological expression are often just as provocative and disconcerting to modern non-believers, as to many believers. Critics of religious belief are often still more critical of any way of thinking religiously that does not fit the pattern of naive entitative or hypostatizing belief, as though believers who think of God other than as a supremely powerful particular entity simply lack the courage to admit that they are really atheists or agnostics.

Recently, while participating in a research seminar preparing a volume of essays on the relation of religion and politics, I encountered a concrete example of the difficulty many have in understanding this issue.¹⁶ I had been asked to present an overview of the ways a variety of modern thinkers, including Eric Voegelin, approached that topic. I began by saying that the underlying assumption of much modern critique of religion is neatly epitomized in Ivan Karamazov's famous dictum (antedating Nietzsche's “God is dead” by over a decade) that if there is no God, then everything is permitted. This formulation presupposes that there is a fundamental conflict between essential human appetites and the cultural forces that have traditionally restrained them. I said that another way of addressing the same issue, on the other hand, would be to say that the very fact that every traditional society has had as a central feature some conception of religious law may well be an

indication that such restraints, far from being an alien imposition on human appetite, may actually be the expression of another, perhaps even deeper set of appetites that require for their fulfillment the kind of personal and social order religions have generally tried to encourage.

I then went on to discuss the intellectual tug of war over this question between Jacques Lacan and the cultural critic Georges Bataille. Much of Lacan's thought can be read as a prolonged argument with Bataille over the implications of both Ivan Karamazov's dictum and Nietzsche's "God is dead."¹⁷ Bataille has been a modern voice of that strain in French thought that seems benignly appealing in Rabelais but more sinister in the Marquis de Sade. Basically, he was a believer in total release of vital energies, a cult of *jouissance* (a term that can be translated generally as "enjoyment" but also specifically as sexual pleasure). Or to put it in the terminology of the present essay, Bataille was a believer in the satisfaction of "craving."

Lacan, on the other hand, believed in sublimation, that is, the ordering of desire. Only by developing a capacity for self-control, he thought, could one win freedom from the tyranny of craving that dominates the *imaginaire* and so become a responsible person. The death of God cannot alter the force of His message, because the message as such did not require a particular entity to be its source or to enforce its commands: the pursuit of untrammelled *jouissance* always involves transgression, the murder of the father who stands in its way and who always rises again as the commandment that ordains respect for the will of God.¹⁸ Even if the hypostatized God may be declared "dead," nothing can take the place of His Law because it is needed as an alternative to the inescapable barbarism of craving and the contagions of collective hatred that Lacan saw both behind the asylum walls and outside in the streets.¹⁹ As Lacan conceived it, the question that mattered was not whether or not there was a God-entity but rather whether there was, in the very nature of things and at the heart of human affairs, a divine function: the Law that serves as our tutor in self-transcendence.

I went on to say on the occasion of that seminar that the same point was stated with even greater clarity and poignancy by an earlier French voice, Charles Baudelaire. Toward the end of his life, after experimenting with virtually every form of rebellion, Baudelaire wrote in his *Journaux intimes*, two statements that undercut the metaphor of the death of God by rejecting Ivan Karamazov's claim in advance: "Even if God did not exist, Religion would still be Holy and Divine," and "God is the only being who, in order to reign, need not even exist."²⁰ If Baudelaire and Lacan are right, the symbolism of divine transcendence that religions give expression to can be expected to play a continuing role in any society because it pertains to something universal in human existence. I also said that a more recent thinker who would have agreed with this completely was Eric Voegelin. I know that this is true, in fact, since I discussed the Baudelaire quotations with him. My audience's response was that this was a humanistic reductionism like that of Ludwig Feuerbach.

To say this, of course, is to miss the point of what Baudelaire was saying, and in a way that would equally miss that of much of Voegelin's thought. However, without the appetitive differentiation of consciousness it is easy to slip into such a mistake. There are two ways a derailment of thinking on this issue can take place. One is to assume that God arbitrarily sets up His Law as an impediment to the fulfillment of desires (that is, "cravings") that are believed to be true expressions of essential human appetite. The other is to assume that the idea of God is the expression of an unrealistic hope for the fulfillment of such desires. Baudelaire was not thinking along either of these lines. Nor did he say there is no God. What he said was that even *if* God did not exist, He would still reign. Or to put it another way, if the radically transcendent God of the monotheism that Voegelin's *Order and History* showed gradually emerging in Israel is conceived in the only way adequate to His radical transcendence, that is, apophatically, then the question of His existence or non-existence becomes itself a metaphor for a quite different type of question about Him: the question of whether or not we will heed His call, or, to cast it in Voegelin's terms, whether we will respond to the drawing by which He manifests His presence in our

lives in our experience of the “tension of existence” — a phrase that parallels in Voegelin's thought the *disio* of Dante and the *desiderium naturae* of Aquinas.

The question of God's status as an entity is irrelevant to this — unless one supposes that the reign of God is a matter of an external coercive force. The important question is how one is to understand the *reign* of God.²¹ The point is not whether there is or is not a particular entity by the name of “God.” Rather it is whether there is a relation between human existence and transcendence that is inescapable because it is an inherent feature of the structure of human existence itself. Baudelaire's point as well as Lacan's — and it was also Voegelin's — is that whatever one might think about the question of God's existence, wisdom requires that one respect the God-relation at the heart of one's life — that is, the ultimately transcendental orientation of existential appetite. We all remember the psalmist's phrase, “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.” What Lacan and Baudelaire are both saying in the passages I have cited is that only an even bigger fool would think that he can properly *live* without his relation to divine transcendence. However one may conceive the divine existence, we must live *for* or *toward* the divine principle — or in Voegelin's terms, the divine pole of our experience of existential tension — if we are to live in accord with the inherent structure and dynamism of our existence as conscious persons.

This is not at all a humanistic reductionism. On the contrary, it can be considered a logical development from the idea of radical divine transcendence and of the apophatic theology that expresses it. It is also precisely what Voegelin meant when he warned that to hypostatize either the divine pole or the human pole of the experienced tension of existence would be to deform its structure and miss its meaning. If God is not an entity of any type and therefore cannot be known, as entities are, through an analysis of His characteristics, then the only way to know Him concretely is through sensitivity to the directional tendency we discover in our existence, the movement of transcendence that is inherent to psychic life. This is a point I will explain further, but first let me begin with the easy part: the question of Feuerbachianism, since this can help to clarify at least what Voegelin's thought is not.

Feuerbach's position *was* a humanistic reductionism. He said quite straightforwardly, in *The Essence of Christianity*, that, “[t]he divine Being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified — i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature.”²² And in *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* he said, “The Christian God is himself only an abstraction of human love and an image of it.”²³ To put the matter in Voegelin's language, Feuerbach first hypostatized man and then interpreted God as one of the elements of the hypostatized human entity.

This has nothing in common either with Voegelin's way of thinking or with traditional apophaticism. The apophatic theology of radical transcendence does not reduce God to a projection of human qualities but interprets the symbol “God” as referring to a non-entitative source of being that in medieval theology was said to encompass *formaliter eminenter*, to cite the scholastic phrase, all the positive perfections of being actually or potentially exhibited in entities.²⁴ Or to cite a voice with a different accent, that of the Jewish Levinas, in his essay, “God and Philosophy”: “The God of the Bible signifies the beyond being, transcendence.”²⁵ Neither in Christianity nor in Judaism have careful thinkers thought it necessary for faith to conceive itself in hypostatizing terms.

Feuerbach's way of thinking was unlike either of these. His God was precisely the sum total of all ideal human characteristics, not eminently or analogically, but univocally, and he was explicitly critical of apophaticism in theology for this reason. In fact he might have led the chorus accusing it of unbelief: “The denial of determinate, positive predicates concerning the divine nature,” he said, “is nothing else than a denial of religion... it is simply a subtle, disguised atheism.”²⁶ Feuerbach may have been a humanistic reductionist, but he was certainly religious. Only his version of Christianity expressed a different conception of the nature and purpose of religion. It was a religion socially constructed for social and psychological ends. In constructing such a religion it would be useful to set it up with a God so concrete that the imagination would have something to fix itself on securely.

Perhaps not all religions have offered as much of a handle for the imagination and heart as Feuerbach thought his version of Christianity would, but they *have* generally offered concrete specifications of the good. In practice this is the major element of their particularity. It is also the major source of conflict among them. Even if different religious groups share a great deal, as in the case of the three major monotheisms, all it takes is a few divergences regarding the question of the good to set their adherents on a path of righteous combat — as history has demonstrated abundantly. Hypostatizing of the divine and of the good usually go hand in hand. If we are to find an antidote to that source of disorder in religion and in our world, then it will clearly be necessary to try to press beyond particularistic ways of thinking about religious questions and rediscover the difference between absolute and relative transcendence. To do this, an apophatic approach not only to the question of God but also to that of the good is essential.

It is here that the necessary connection between pneumatic and appetitive differentiation of consciousness becomes clear: a non-hypostatizing understanding of divine transcendence and a non-particularizing understanding of the good go hand in hand. It was less Nietzsche's denial of the existence of God, I think, than his failure to break through to an apophaticism of the good that kept him bound within the framework of the modernism he was trying to transcend. His identification of the good with the will to power, that is, with human self-assertion, made him remain essentially a Feuerbachian humanist. The denial of a hypostatized God is in reality a non-issue, as I hope I have already made sufficiently clear; the real center of the project of modernism has been the project of egoistic mastery over existence. There is a profound irony in the fact that Nietzsche is so widely hailed as the initiator of post-modernism, while Voegelin is widely, if unthinkingly, dismissed as a cultural conservative. In reality, Voegelin's clarification of the existential dimension of classical and monotheist traditions was the springboard for a leap genuinely *beyond* modernism, while the vaunted post-modernism of many thinkers circles about a modernism to which they are tethered by assumptions that have come to seem so natural they are never

subjected to critical scrutiny. Voegelin's radical rethinking of basic concepts raises those assumptions into a light in which they can be thought through and “got over” — in the sense of that phrase suggested by Gianni Vattimo, in *The End of Modernity*.²⁷

Voegelin's way of thinking about transcendence is precisely what enabled him to leap past Nietzsche, since, even if it never made the appetitive differentiation of consciousness explicit as such, the question of the good is central to it, and since his thought on that subject is apophatic in the same way that it is on the divine nature. In fact the two facets of apophaticism go hand in hand in his thought. Voegelin's discussion of the Platonic Agathon in the third volume of *Order and History* makes this clear. It also serves as the best commentary on Voegelin's own way of using the word “transcendence.”

“What is the idea of the Agathon?” Voegelin asks:

The briefest answer to the question will best bring out the decisive point:

Concerning the content of the Agathon nothing can be said at all. That is the fundamental insight of Platonic ethics. The transcendence of the Agathon makes immanent propositions concerning its content impossible.

The vision of the Agathon does not render a material rule of conduct, but forms the soul through an experience of transcendence.²⁸

But what is this experience of transcendence, and how does it form the soul?

Voegelin goes on to develop this idea with reference to specific passages from Books 6 and 7 of the *Republic* in which Plato develops Socrates' suggestion that the good is to knowing as the sun is to sight, giving us the power to know as the sun gives the power to see:

The Agathon is neither intellect (*nous*) nor its object (*nooumenon*) (508c), but that [which] “gives their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower.” The Idea of the Agathon is “the cause of knowledge [*episteme*] and of truth [*aletheia*] as far as known” (508e). ... And likewise the Agathon not only

makes objects knowable, but provides them with their existence and essence, though it is itself beyond (*epekeina*) essence in dignity and power. (P. 113)

This is admittedly a rather compact statement of how Voegelin conceived of transcendence, but it contains essentially all we need to work the idea out further. The Agathon is said to be “beyond essence,” that is, beyond *ousia*. It is worth remembering in this connection that the idea of the *hyperousian*, usually translated as “beyond being,” was the key notion in Pseudo-Dionysius's pioneering articulation of the principles of apophatic theology for Christians. The question we need to consider is what does it mean to speak of that which is beyond being and thus beyond all particularity as “forming the soul” and giving “their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower”?

To understand this I think it will help if we consider what Voegelin thought it meant to be human. In his essay “Reason: The Classic Experience,” Voegelin took an emphatically apophatic approach to that as well, saying that

If man exists in the *metaxy*, in the tension “between god and man,” any construction of man as a world-immanent entity will destroy the meaning of existence, because it deprives man of his specific humanity. The poles of the tension must not be hypostatized into objects independent of the tension in which they are experienced as its poles.²⁹

And what is that specific humanity that would be lost by an objectifyingly entitative interpretation of either the divine pole of the experiential tension of existence or the human? “Man,” he said, “when he experiences himself as existent, discovers his specific humanity as that of the questioner for the where-from and where-to, for the ground and the sense of his existence.”³⁰ The tension of existence, that is, of life in the *metaxy* (Plato's image of human life as a relation to the divine), expresses itself as a process of questioning open in all directions.

“Openness,” in fact, is the essential issue. Voegelin used the term, borrowed from Bergson's *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, to refer to the mode of existence in which one allows the dynamism of consciousness full expression in the operations that constitute us as human. But it is important to remember that behind the special focus Voegelin gave the term in his own work there lies Bergson's concern, which Voegelin shared fully, with the way the modes of existence in question can become the roots of different types of social and political order, either closed in on themselves in particularism or open toward a shared participation in the universal humanity of questioning consciousness. This may be said to have open and closed modes, depending on the manner in which its questioning expresses itself. Voegelin also discussed these in terms of the distinction Plato made between “dialectic” and “eristic” discourse. Dialectic discourse is that of an inquiry that is open both to any questions that might arise and also to any ways of answering them that might be helpful. This means that it is inherently dialogical, open to the contributions of the interlocutors; the questioning consciousness that engages in inquiry in the dialectic mode not only is willing to consider the experience of others as a way of extending the possibilities of strictly individual experience, but genuinely wishes to do so in order that it may have access to an increased range of experience as a base for reflection. It is equally interested in hearing the interpretive contributions that its partners in dialogue may have to offer, since these may open up possibilities of understanding that even the most gifted individual thinker might overlook. It is also willing to have its own observations and interpretations critically questioned and tested in order that interpretations genuinely satisfying to critical intelligence may be sifted from those that are merely possible or even unlikely. Regarding decisions for practical action, it seeks sound knowledge of the real world to which those decisions will apply so that it may assess adequately the effects action may have both for itself and for others.

Inquiry in the eristic, or “contentious,” mode is just the opposite. (Just as “dialectic” comes from the word for dialogue, “eristic” comes from the Greek word for

strife.) Rather than the openness of genuinely questioning consciousness, there is the will to power of an egocentric mind that seeks to shut out knowledge of further evidence or alternative interpretive possibilities or more critical procedures for testing such possibilities if these would challenge it to rethink its favored positions — positions which either augment the egoistic individual's real power in the world or else offer the illusion of doing so. The cost of this is a darkening of consciousness, a “scotosis,” as Voegelin termed it,³¹ or an “eclipse” of reality. Much of the section entitled “Psychopathology” in “Reason: The Classic Experience” is a discussion of the way eristic thinkers practice such eclipse on various levels and especially with regard to the fundamental human experience of existential tension, that is, the inherent dynamism of questioning consciousness. This was also what Voegelin was talking about in *The Ecumenic Age* when he said, “The interdict on the Question is the symptom of a self-contraction which makes the existentially open participation in the process of reality impossible.”³²

Dialogic discourse depends, that is, not only on openness to the voice of the other, but even more fundamentally on the voice of the Question within. Open existence allows all questions, including the Question with a capital “Q,” that is, the tension of existence as experienced in the human psyche, to express themselves in consciousness and pursue their truth. As he put it in “Reason: The Classic Experience,” “To move within the *metaxy*, exploring it in all directions and orienting himself in the perspective granted to man by his position in reality, is the proper task of the philosopher” (p. 107) — and by a philosopher, Voegelin meant any human being pursuing open existence through the love of wisdom. It was the discovery of what this process of open questioning involved and how to pursue it that Voegelin referred to as “the noetic differentiation of consciousness.”

The reality that becomes eclipsed when one fails to live in this manner may be said, therefore, to have two dimensions, corresponding to the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the *metaxy* itself. To explore the *metaxy* in the horizontal direction is to apply the basic operations of consciousness sketched above to the data of objective experience. Faithful

performance of the operations in this dimension in accord with their intrinsic norms will lead to knowledge of the world of objective reality. Scotosis in this area will result in blindness regarding features of the objective world. To explore the *metaxy* in the vertical direction is to perform the same types of operation — attention to experience, its careful interpretation, and so on — to the subjective dimension of one's life. By this I mean one performs them in relation to one's apperceived experience of conscious existence — the awareness immanent in one's operations and the tension and dynamism that move one in them. Scotosis in this area does not just result in but itself constitutes a closing of existence, the self-contraction referred to in the quotation above.

It was the possibility of openness or closure, luminosity or eclipse, in the subjective, vertically tensional dimension of human existence that Voegelin's thought primarily addressed itself to. He fully respected scholarship and science in their exploration of the horizontal dimension of the *metaxy*, but his own special philosophical focus was mainly concerned with the possibility of refusal to apperceive one's experience of existential tension and its inherent relation to what in the language of Platonic and religious myth is called the divine.

You will recall the passage cited earlier in which Voegelin referred to Plato's characterization of the *metaxy* as “the tension `between god and man' ” and said that “any construction of man as a world-immanent entity” would subvert the possibility of self understanding by hypostatizing the poles of that tension into objects, a man-entity on the one hand and a God-entity on the other, with the existential tension itself vanishing from sight, that is, suppressed from consciousness, because it cannot be found as one more object among the others. It is difficult for anyone who begins reflecting on the subjective dimension of existential experience not to carry into that the objectifying attitude we become accustomed to in our horizontal explorations, but to do so is fatal to existential reflection because it occludes the actual experience of subjective life and replaces it with a set of masking and misleading images.

It is not only by accident one may fall into such objectification. The tension of existence can be experienced with different attitudes and feeling tones. To one who relates to it with fundamental openness and basic trust, it will be experienced as a joyful anticipation of the satisfaction of genuine appetites for the true and the good. If one is basically fearful and distrustful of the tension, on the other hand, it will be experienced as the pain of anxiety. As Voegelin put it, "The health or disease of existence makes itself felt in the very tonality of the unrest."³³

The first movements of basic trust or distrust are inherently mysterious because they lie at the root of our subjectivity as such, but once they begin, they become existential modes that tend to compound themselves, so that an anxious existence will not just fall into hypostatizing of the poles of the tension by accident, but will do so as a strategy for gaining control of an anxious situation. Eristic discourse is, in effect, an effort to gain egoistic control over this anxiety and the challenges that arouse it. Dialectic is a self-transcending openness to such challenges and the risks they bring with them.

Here again the importance of the appetitive differentiation I have spoken of for Voegelin's own argument becomes clear. Eristic discourse seeks to possess, and augment the power of, a hypostatized self. But to become free from the enchantment that binds us to that self, we need to do more than adopt a theoretically critical stance regarding hypostatization; we need to break the enchantment on the level of the craving that drives our hypostatizing imagination. It is this craving-fed imagination that binds us to the image of a hypostatized self and makes us keep returning to it, endlessly circling about it in the orbit of illusory desire. Dialectic discourse depends on the openness of dialectic existence, but we can enter that only through the effective disenchantment, on the level of desire, that depends on the experiential differentiation of existential appetite from objectivistic craving.

Hypostatizing objectification is an eristic strategy that can give one the illusion, at least, that one possesses cognitive mastery of both oneself and the divine. It is precisely here, therefore, that the real center of the problem of reductionism is to be found. It was to

counter just this temptation to try to master the divine pole of our experience of transcendence that apophaticism had to develop in the traditions of monotheism. The price of the reductionist strategy is not only the falsification of one's understanding of the divine. It is also the loss of one's humanity.

Why do I say this? Let us recall the questions brought up earlier: what does it mean to speak of that which is beyond being and thus beyond all particularity, the divine pole of our experience of tensional existence, as “forming the soul” and giving “their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower”? These questions bring us to the heart of the issues that concern us, and answering them should help us to understand the necessary connection between transcendence, apophaticism, and open existence and to identify the essential elements of human universality.

Human existence, in both its horizontal and vertical dimensions, is a dynamic process of interrelated operations which can be performed in the modes of either openness or eclipse. It is the experienced tension of existence, that is, existential appetite, and the movements of soul this gives rise to that constitute each of us in our humanity. This is what is universal in us — not the particular products of our operations but the necessity of performing them and the possibility of performing them well or poorly, in openness to reality or in resistance to it. This we all share by the very fact of our existence. It may not be universally realized, since there will always be those who flee from apperception of their experience of existential appetite by trying not to notice areas of experience or to shut out possible questions about them. But the tension of their existence, the force of the Question with a capital Q, will remain and torment them with anxiety, hounding them tirelessly unless they turn around to face it and open themselves to live in it.

What necessary part, then, does the idea of radical divine transcendence play in the openness of existence, and why is it appropriate to image the *metaxy* as a realm of tension drawn toward a divine pole that must never be hypostatized? To understand this, we must consider the inherent dynamism of the operations that constitute our conscious existence.

The image of the divine drawing functions to remind us of the crucial fact that success in the performance of these operations is not the attainment of particular cognitive or pragmatic results but rather a continuous openness to new experience and insight and a continuous willingness to engage responsibly with a reality that is always changing and making new demands on us. The divine drawing in Plato's and Voegelin's image consists of dynamic anticipations of what it would be like to perform successfully the operations that our engagement in the project of human existence calls for. Because each operation is the goal of an appetite to perform it, each can be said to be an instance of the good, and since all of them together constitute the fullness of human life in the *metaxy*, they may be said to aim collectively at the ultimate fullness Plato imaged as the Good itself, the Agathon, which is also, as I hope is now clear, precisely what is symbolized as the divine pole of the tension of existence. This cannot itself be an object of knowledge. Rather it is known in its actuality not objectively, as the goal of a craving, but subjectively in the performance of the operations that existential appetite generates in us when it is free from the distractions of craving. And it is known in this way only to the degree that these operations are actually performed. In their performance in openness to the tension, its structural demands, and its possibilities of satisfaction we come to enjoy the relative fullness of existential actuality that is possible to existents like ourselves. If the divine pole or Agathon were to be interpreted by craving imagination as consisting of a specific objective content, this would imply that our existential process would attain completeness through the performance of the one operation or complex of operations by which that particular content could be mastered. But to say that would imply that we could cease to live dynamically in the *metaxy* of existential process and could attain a final entitative stasis. To seek such finality would be worse than merely presumptuous. It would be not just a cognitive or pragmatic error but an existential one. It would be to seek to lose the very life one sought to fulfill — because there *is* no other human life than that of the dynamic process of *metaxy* existence, and there is no other

satisfaction for our existential appetite than engagement in that process in openness to its dimensions of immanence and transcendence.

The only way either the human or the divine can be known concretely is as reciprocal poles of this process in which the divine reaches into and draws the human, just as the human, by that very dynamism, reaches toward the divine life it is being drawn into. This is what I meant earlier when I said that God can only be known through sensitivity to the movement of transcendence inherent in psychic life. The only way we can know non-reductively either the human or the divine is to participate consciously, mindfully, apperceptively, in a universal process of divine-human encounter and cooperation. It is this *process* that constitutes our universal humanity, and to live it in openness is to dwell in what the New Testament called the *basileia tou theou*, the reign of God.

I hope you can see also, then, why I think there is profound wisdom in the saying that in order to reign, God need not even exist. Existing, in the only sense of the word we are able to understand on the basis of our actual experience of it, is something that *we* do as we reach, and are drawn, toward the divine pole of our existential appetite. Faith is our trust that the inescapable tension we experience bears promise, that it has a source that is gracious and a goal worth living for. Faith is not an anticipation of a supreme Object to be contemplated and possessed but of a Life to be lived, a mode of existence that the openness of our existence opens into.

¹*New Science of Politics*, p. 1.

²Pp. 97-98, quoted in a letter from Caringella to Geoffrey Price of Oct. 17, 1993.

³For a related discussion that analyzes the polarizing function of myth in terms of mimetic desire and its ramifications, see René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), especially chs. 4 and 6.

⁴In fact, one might say that Bultmann's project of demythologizing was itself, at least in part, an expression of yet one more polarized vision — one in which the world was divided into forces of light, that

is, the scientific world-view, and forces of darkness, that is, pre-modern beliefs incompatible with science.

⁵*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 1, a. 1.

⁶Girard has written many books, but for the purpose of getting acquainted with the aspects of his thought most pertinent here, I would recommend *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1978, trans. 1987). For a specifically psychological treatment of Girardian themes, see Jean-Michel Oughourlian, *The Puppet of Desire: The Psychology of Hysteria, Possession, and Hypnosis* (1982, trans. 1991). See also Eugene Webb, *Philosophers of Consciousness*, especially ch. 5, and *The Self Between: From Freud to the New Social Psychology of France* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), especially ch. 3.

⁷A good discussion relating this tradition to modern Western cognitive science can be found in Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 110-17.

⁸Girard would differ here, since he maintains that the very idea of spontaneous desire is a fiction designed to cover up the role unwitting mimesis of the desires of others plays in our own.

⁹This generates what Girard has called “metaphysical desire.” *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp. 83-95

¹⁰Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 1-7.

¹¹A well known biographical anecdote about Aquinas is that once at a royal banquet he became characteristically absorbed in his own thoughts as he puzzled over an argument and then on finding a solution startled the others at his table when he slammed down his fist and exclaimed, “That will settle the Albigensians.”

¹²*Order and History*, 4, *The Ecumenic Age*, p. 137.

¹³See, for example, Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985).

¹⁴*Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), p. 169.

¹⁵*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 3, a. 5.

¹⁶Sabrina P. Ramet and Donald W. Treadgold, eds., *Render Unto Caesar* (Washington, D.C.: American University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁷Cf. Bernard Sichère. *Le Moment lacanien* (Paris: Grasset, 1983), pp. 26-27.

¹⁸ Lacan, *Le Séminaire, 7: L'éthique de la psychanalyse*. (Paris: Seuil, 1986), pp. 208-9, 212.

¹⁹Lacan, *Le Séminaire, 11: Les Quatres concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*. (Paris: Seuil, 1973), pp. 246-47, quoted in Sichère, pp. 87-89.

²⁰Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, Ed. Y.-G. Le Dantec and Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 1247.

²¹That phrase, by the way, would be an accurate translation of the Greek *basileia tou theou* of the New Testament — a more precise one, really, than the standard “Kingdom of God,” since the reference is not to a kind of place but to a mode of existence.

²²Trans. George Evans. (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 14.

²³Trans. Manfred H. Vogel (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), p. 52.

²⁴“Formally” here means that the positive perfections of entities are implicitly but genuinely present in the eminent divine source; “eminently” means that they are present there in an analogous rather than univocal manner because they are without the limitations that characterize them in entities (to be an entity, a particular type of being, according to the principles of scholastic theology, is necessarily to be finite because restricted by the characteristics of an essence or nature). See chapter eight, on “Divine Eminence,” in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, trans. Patrick Cummins (St. Louis: Herder, 1950.)

²⁵In *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 168. Levinas shares Voegelin's wariness of traditional scholastic metaphysics, however. In order to avoid the risk of drawing the divine transcendence into ontology by using the analogy of height and speaking of “eminence,” Levinas prefers himself to speak of God as “*antecedent to being*.”

²⁶*Essence of Christianity*, p. 15.

²⁷Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, Translated with an Introduction by Jon R. Snyder (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 105, 164, 179. Vattimo speaks of post-modernism as requiring a *Verwindung*, a “getting over” of modernist thinking, as compared with an *Überwindung* or “overcoming.”

²⁸ *Plato and Aristotle*, p. 112

²⁹In Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), p. 104.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 92-3

³¹Following the usage of Bernard J. F. Lonergan, in “What is Political Reality?” *Anamnesis*, p. 201, citing Lonergan's *Insight*, pp. 191-203, and *Order and History*, 4:267.

³²*Order and History*, 4:330.

³³“Reason: The Classic Experience,” p. 101.