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Eric Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture" pp. 59 - 101

60 Justin M, Gospel is philosophy in state of perfection

61 the conflict is not between Gospel and Philosophy

it is between Gospel and possession of Gospel as doctrine wt qq
between Gospel as answer to q about the meanng of life
and Gospel as hardened into self-contained doctrine without
any question to be answered

62 "Both Plato's eroticism of the search (zetesis) and Aristotle's
intellectually more aggressive aporein recognize in man the
questioner the man moved by God to ask the questions that will
lead him toward the cause (arkhn) of BEING. The search itself
is the evidence of existential unrest; in the act of questioning
man's experience of his tension (tasis) toward the divine ground
breaks forth in the word of enquiry as a prayer for the Word of
the answer. Question and answer are intimately relatd ~~in~~ one
one toward the other; the search moves in the metaxy...

63 Western deculturation process

.. In-Between of ignorance and knowledge, of time and
timelessness, of imperfection and perfection, of hope and
fulfilment, and ultimately of life and death

.. if man's existence were not a movement but a fact, it not
only would have no meaning but the ~~question~~ of meaning could npt
even arise

66 And least of all can anything be achieved by ~~put~~ pitting right
doctrine against ~~the~~ wrong doctrine, for doctrinization is precisely
the damage that has been inflicted on the movemement of the search.
There would be no doctrines of deformed existence today, unless
~~with~~ the search of ~~philosophy~~ both Philosophy and the Godpel
had not been overlaid by the late-medieval, radical doctrinization
of both Metaphysics and Theology.

- 66 The searching question for the meaning of life
 Euripides: Who knows if to live is to be dead, and to be dead to liv^{/e}
 Plato: Gorgias 492E resumes Euripides and at end of Gorg
 elaborates the symbolism in the Myth of the Judgment of the Dead
- 67 Jesus: Mt 16: 25 f.
 Paul Rom 8: 13
 Plato Apology: But now the time has come to go. I go to die
 and you to live, but who goes to the better lot is unknown to
 anyone but the God.
 The question expressed by the double meaning of life and death
 is not only the philosopher's but of everyone's existence.
- 68 John 12 23-32; Mt 10:39 16:25 Lk 14:26f 17:33
- 70 The double meaning of death and life is the symbolism engendered
 by man's experience of his being pulled in various directions
 among which he has to choose the right one. Plato has
 identified the variety of pulls, the necessity of choosing
 among them, and the possibility of knowing the right one,
 as the complex of experiences from which arises the question
 of life and death.
- 71 Identification of pulls, experience of them diverse,
 "This luminosity of existence with the truth of reason
 precedes all opinions and decisions about the pull to be
 followed. Moreover it remains alive as the judgement of truth
 in existence whatever opinions about it we may actually form."
 "The terms seeking (zetein) and drawing (helkein) do not denote
 two different movements but symbolize the dynamics in the
 tension of existence between its human and divine poles."
 "... are the results of the existential movement that we call
 Classic Philosophy. Only from the travail of that movement
 there emerges man as the questioner, Aristotle's *aporōn*
 and *thaumazōn* (Met 982^b18), and God as the mover who attracts
 or draws man to himself as in Plato's Laws X *af* or Aristotle's
Metaphysics. These new insights into man's humanity and God's
 divinity which mark the end of the classic search must not be pro-
- 72 jected back into its beginning as ~~the~~ doctrinal premises, or the
 reality of the process from which the answering symbols derive their
 truth would be eclipsed if not destroyed."
 "Behind the Dialogues there stands the author who has found
 the answer before he engages in the work of literary composition

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and his, as well as Socrates', way of finding it was not necessarily the way of dialogical persuasion. What happens in the life of ~~xxx~~ the man who emerges from the movement of existence as the paidagogos for his fellowmen can be apprehended rather in such episodes as the Parable of the Cave. There Plato lets the man who is fettered with his face to the wall be dragged up (helkein) by force to the light (Rep 515E). The accent lies on the violence suffered by the man in the Cave, on his passivity and even resistance to being turned around (periagoge), so that the ascent to the light is less an action ~~for~~ seeking than a fate inflicted. ~~it~~."

"Moreover, this passion of the Parable evokes, if I may anticipate, the passion of conversion inflicted on the resisting Paul by Christ through the vision on the road to Damascus."

73

"In Plato's experience the suffering overshadows the action in the search so strongly that it becomes difficult to translate the pathos in his tauta ta pathe en hemin (Leg 644E), all these pathos in us. Does the pathos express only the experience of the pull /73/ (helkein) that gives direction to the search, or does it want to acknowledge the movement as so strongly tinged by suffering that the terms experience and passion approach synonymity? The context in which the passage appears, the Myth of the Puppet Player, leaves no doubt that the uncertainty is caused by Plato's exploration of the field of existential tension beyond the movement of the search that finds its fulfillment in the saving tale....

"To these questions (why cave, fetters, resistance,..) arising from the experience of "counter-pulling" in existence Plato has given his answer in the symbolism of man as a puppet made by the gods... being pulled by various cords in opposite directions. On man it is incumbent always to follow the golden and sacred cord of judgment (logismos) and not the other cords of lesser metals. The component of human action, thus, has not disappeared from the movement, but it has now been fitted into the larger play of pull and counter-pull. For the pull of the golden cord is gentle, without violence; in order to prevail in existence it needs the support of man who must counter-pull (anthelein) to the counter-pull of the lesser cords. Man's self (autos) is introduced as the force

- 73 which must decide the struggle of the pulls through co-operation with the sacred pull of reason (logos) and judgment (logismos).
- 74 "Neither is there a question vainly looking for an answer, nor is there a truth of the Saving Tale, imposing itself from nowhere on a fact of existence, The movement in the IN_Between is indeed an intelligible whole of question and answer, with the experience of the movement engendering the language symbols for its expression As far as the experiences are concerned, the movement has no 'contents' other than its questioning, the paths of pull and counter-pull, the directional indices of the pulls, and the consciousness of itself that we have called its luminosity; as far as the symbols are concerned, they have nothing to express but the experiences enumerated, the placement of the reality experienced in the wider context of the reality in which the differentiated movement occurs, and the self-conscious movement as an event in man's existence in society and history as an event in which hitherto it has not occurred..."
- 75 "The symbols developed in the movement.. do not refer to objects in external reality but to the phases of the movement as it becomes articulate in its self-illuminating process. There is no In-Between other than the metaxy experienced in a man's existential tension toward the divine ground of being; there is no question of life and death other than the question aroused by pull and counter-pull; there is no Saving Tale other than the tale of the divine will to be followed by man; and there is no cognitive articulation of existence other than the noetic consciousness in which the movement becomes luminous to itself."
- "This theological doctrine (revelation vs philosophy) is empirically untenable -- Plato was just as conscious of the revelatory component in the truth of his logos as the prophets of Israel or the authors of the New Testament writings. The differences between prophecy, classic philosophy, and the Gospel must be sought in the degrees of differentiation of existential truth."

76 "There are finally in the climate of deculturation the difficulties of understanding encountered by the problems of mythical imagination. Myth is not a primitive symbolic form, peculiar to early societies and progressively to be overcome by positive science, but the language in which the experiences of human-divine participation in the In-Between become articulate. The symbolization of participating existence, it is true, evolves historically from the more compact form of the cosmological myth to the more differentiated forms of Philosophy, Prophecy, and the Gospel, but the differentiating insight, far from abolishing the metaxy of existence, brings it to fully articulate knowledge. When existence becomes noetically luminous in the field of pull and counter-pull, of the question of life and death, and of the tension between human and divine reality, it also becomes x luminous for divine reality as the Beyond of the metaxy which reaches into the metaxy in the participatory event of the movement. There is no In-Between of existence as a self-contained object but x only existence experienced as part of a reality which extends beyond the In-Between. This experience of the Beyond (epekeina) of existence experienced, this consciousness of the Beyond of consciousness which constitutes consciousness by reaching into it, ~~it~~ is the area of reality which articulates itself through the symbols of mythical imagination. The imaginative play of the alēthēs logos is the "word" through which the divine Beyond of existence becomes present in existence as its truth. The Saving Tale can be differentiatedx beyond classic philosophy, as x it has historically happened through Christ and the Gospel, but there is no alternative to the symbolization of the In-Between of existence and its divine Beyond by mythical imagination. The speculative systems of the Comtean, Hegelian, Marxian type, favored today as alternatives, are not science but deformations of the life of reason through the magic practice of self-divinization and self-salvation.

77 "The understanding of these complexities by which the Gospel movement differs from the movement of Classic Philosophy, though, cannot be advanced by using such topical dichotomies as philosophy and religion, metaphysics and theology, reason and revelation, natural reason and supernaturalism, rationalism and irrationalism, and so forth...."

"The analysis will have to start at the point where the Gospel agrees with Classic Philosophy in symbolizing existence as a field of pulls and counter-pulls...."

Jn 12 32: And I shall draw all men to myself, when I am lifted up.

Jn 6 44: No man can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me.

Jn 6 45: Everyone who has listened to the Father and learned from him comes to me.

".. John makes it furthermore clear that there is no message of Christ but the event of the divine Logos becoming present in the world through the representative life and /78/ death of a man."

78 Jn 17 25 f: O righteous Father, although the world does not know thee, I know thee, and these men know that thou didst send me. I made thy name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love thou hadst for me may be in them, and I may be in them."

Jn 17 3: This is eternal life: to know thee who alone art truly God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Jn 17 18: As thou hast sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

".. death of a man. The closing words of the great prayer before the passion express the substance of this event (Jn 17 25 f). To follow Christ means to continue the event of divine presence in society and history (Jn 17 18). And finally since there is no doctrine to be taught but only the story to be told of God's pull becoming effective in the world through Christ, the Saving Tale that answers the question of life and death can be reduced to the brief statement (Jn 17 3).

"With an admirable economy of means, John symbolizes the pull of the golden cord, the occurrence of a historical event in the representative man, the illumination of existence through the question of life and death initiated by the pull to the saving

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answer the creation of a social field through the transmission of the insight to the followers, and ultimately the duties incumbent on John to promulgate the event to mankind at large through writing the Gospel as a literary document (Jn 20 30f).

"One can imagine how a young student of philosophy, who wanted to work himself out of the various doctrinal impasses into which the school-philosophers had maneuvered themselves, could be fascinated by the brilliance of these succinct statements that must have appeared to him as the perfection of the Socratic-Platonic movement in the In-Between of existence.

79

2 Cor 4 6

2 Cor 3 18

1 Cor 8: 1 - 3

Gal 4 8f

80

"The noetic core, thus, is the same in both Classic Philosophy and the Gospel movement. There is the same field of pull and counter-pull, the same sense of gaining life through following the pull of the golden cord, the same consciousness of existence in an In-Between of human-divine participation, and the same experience of divine reality as the center of action in the movement from question to answer. Moreover, there is the same consciousness of newly differentiated insights into the meaning of existence; and in both cases this consciousness constitutes a new field of human types in history which Plato describes as: First the spiritual man (daimonios aner) in whom the movement occurs; second, the man of the earlier more compact type of existence, the mortal (thnetos) in the Homeric sense; and third, the man who reacts negatively to the appeal of the movement, the dullard or foolish man (amathes).

Though the noetic core is the same in the Gospel, its spiritual dynamics has radically changed through the experience of an extraordinary divine irruption in the existence of Jesus.

81

Col 2 9; 1 15; 2 10

82

homoiosis theo kata to dynaton may equal Col 2 9

but Plato's daimonios aner is not Paul's eikon tou theou

For Plato the Eikon tou theou and the monogenes theos is the Cosmos

/itself

88 "In the historical drama of revelation, the Unknown God ultimately becomes the God known through his presence in Christ.

This drama, though it has been alive in the consciousness of the NT writers, is far from alive in the Christianity of the Churches today, for the history of Christianity is characterized by what is commonly called ~~is~~ the separation of school-theology from mystical or experiential ~~is~~ theology which formed an ~~is~~ apparently inseparable unit still in the work of Origen. The Unknown God whose theotes was present in the existence of Jesus has been eclipsed by the Revealed God of Christian doctrine.

Irenaeus lets the doctrinal conflict between Gnosticism and orthodox Christianity turn upon the interpretation of Mt 11: 25-27

89 "In orthodox doctrine the God revealed by Jesus is the same God as the creator-god revealed by the prophets of Israel; in Gnostic doctrine the Unknown God of Jesus and the Israelite Demurge are two different Gods."

90 "Jesus answers: 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven' (Mt 16 17). The Matthean Jesus thus agrees with the Johannine (Jn 6 44) that nobody can recognize the movement of divine presence in the Son, unless he is prepared for such recognition by the presence of the divine Father in himself. The divine Sonship is not revealed through an information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his own existence. The Unknown God enters the drama of Peter's recognition as the third person. In order to draw the distinction between revelation and information, as well as to avoid the derailment from one to the other, the episode closes with the charge of Jesus to the disciples 'to tell no one that he was the Christ' (Mt 16 20)"