

Eric Voegelin, Propositions regarding the constant structure of existence

The fundamental proposition:

- 1) Man participates in the process of reality

Implications of the fundamental proposition:

- 2) Man is conscious of reality as a process, of himself as being part of reality, and of his consciousness as a mode of participation in its process.

- 3) While consciously participating, man is able to engender symbols which express his experience of reality, of himself as the experiencing agent, and of his conscious experiencing as the action and passion of participating.

- 4) Man knows the symbols engendered to be part of the reality they symbolize -- the symbols consciousness, experience, and symbolization denote the area where the process of reality becomes luminous to itself.

Cautionary corollaries:

- 5) Reality is not a given that could be observed from a vantage point outside itself but embraces the consciousness in which it becomes luminous.

- 6) The experience of reality cannot be total, but has the character of a perspective.

- 7) The knowledge of reality conveyed by the symbols can never become a final possession of truth, for the luminous perspectives that we call experiences, as well as the symbols engendered by them, are part of reality in process.

From Order and History, Vol. I, Israel and Revelation, p. 1

"God and man, world and society form a primordial community of being. ... [which is] knowable only from the perspective of participation in it."