VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Dovydas
CATURIANAS

Philosophy of consciousness as the centre of political philosophy in the works of E. Voegelin

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Humanities,
Philosophy (H 001)

VILNIUS 2022

This dissertation was written between 2013 and 2022 at Vilnius University.

Academic supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Vytautas Radžvilas (Vilnius University, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001).

Academic consultants:
Doc. Dr. Arūnas Mickevičius (Vilnius University, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001).
Prof. Dr. Hartmut Behr (Newcastle University, Social Sciences, Political Science – S 002).

This doctoral dissertation will be defended in a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel:

Chairman – **Prof. Dr. Naglis Kardelis** (Vilnius University, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001).

Members:
Doc. Dr. Danutė Bacevičiūtė (Vilnius University, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001);
Dr. Vytautas Rubavičius (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001);
Prof. Dr. Tomas Sodeika (Vilnius University, Humanities, Philosophy – H 001);
Prof. Dr. Eugene Webb (University of Washington, Humanities, Philology – H 004).

The dissertation shall be defended at a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel at 2 pm on 16 December 2022 in meeting room 201 of the Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University.
Address: 9 Universiteto St., Room No. 201, Vilnius, Lithuania
Phone No.: +370 5 266 7600; email: fsf@fsf.vu.lt

The text of this dissertation can be accessed through the library of Vilnius University as well as on the website of Vilnius University: *www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius*

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITAS

Dovydas
CATURIANAS

Sąmonės filosofija kaip politinės filosofijos centras E. Voegelino darbuose

DAKTARO DISERTACIJOS SANTRAUKA

Humanitariniai mokslai,
Filosofija (H 001)

VILNIUS 2022

Disertacija rengta 2013 – 2022 metais Vilniaus universitete.

Mokslinis vadovas:

prof. dr. Vytautas Radžvilas (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001).

Moksliniai konsultantai:
doc. dr. Arūnas Mickevičius (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001).
prof. dr. Hartmut Behr (Niukaslio universitetas, socialiniai mokslai, politikos mokslai – S 002).

Gynimo taryba:

Pirmininkas – **prof. dr. Naglis Kardelis** (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001).

Nariai:
doc. dr. Danutė Bacevičiūtė (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001);
dr. Vytautas Rubavičius (Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001);
prof. dr. Tomas Sodeika (Vilniaus universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filosofija – H 001);
prof. dr. Eugene Webb (Vašingtono universitetas, humanitariniai mokslai, filologija – H 004).

Disertacija ginama viešame Gynimo tarybos posėdyje 2022 m. gruodžio mėn. 16 d. 14 val. Vilniaus universiteto Filosofijos fakulteto 201 auditorijoje. Adresas: Universiteto g. 9, 201 auditorija, Vilnius, Lietuva, tel. +370 5 266 7600; el. paštas fsf@fsf.vu.lt.

Disertaciją galima peržiūrėti Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekoje ir VU interneto svetainėje adresu: *www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius*

SUMMARY

Research problem and its relevance. The work examines the problem of the link between E. Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and his political philosophy, which is expressed by Voegelin's statement that the "centre of a philosophy of politics has to be a theory of consciousness" (Voegelin 1990a: 3). The main question raised in the dissertation is - what specific function(s) does the philosophy of consciousness play in E. Voegelin's political philosophy? The choice of the topic and its relevance are determined by several factors. First, despite the aforementioned fundamental claim, the connection between the philosophy of consciousness and political philosophy remains largely unexplained by Voegelin himself. In other words, it is not totally clear to what extent and in what respects the knowledge of political reality should be considered as rooted in the processes of consciousness and in the philosophy of consciousness that examines these processes. The ambivalence of the relationship between the philosophy of consciousness and political philosophy results in the fact that fundamental methodological and theoretical assumptions underlying Voegelin's framework for political evaluation remain inarticulate. Secondly, currently, there are very few works in Lithuanian devoted to the analysis of E. Voegelin's philosophical legacy. Therefore, it is expected that the dissertation will help the Lithuanian public to better familiarise with E. Voegelin's works and provide a theoretical introduction to his political philosophy. Third, the question raised in the dissertation is relevant for understanding Voegelin's analysis of totalitarianism, the disintegration of the political order in the West and his notion of political normativity in general. The topic discussed in the work should help to better illuminate Voegelin's notion of totalitarianism and political normativity, while at the same time contributing to the debate on these topics in the context of contemporary political philosophy. Finally, the question examined in the dissertation is also relevant in the context of a broader debate about political philosophy as a discipline and politics

as a separate field of human activity. The dissertation argues that for Voegelin, politics and political history is not an enclosed and autonomous field of research, mainly because the political reality itself is not completely autonomous: from an ontological point of view, it is constituted by pre-political experiences. E. Voegelin's political science, centred on the philosophy of consciousness, therefore, offers a new paradigm that allows us to take a fresh look at the basic theoretical assumptions of political science.

Research aim: Provide a systematic analysis of the problem of the link between the philosophy of consciousness and political philosophy in the works of E. Voegelin, while systemically reconstructing the fundamental theoretical assumptions underlying E. Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology, as well as the implications of these theoretical assumptions for political philosophy.

Research tasks:

1. Based on the critical analysis of E. Voegelin's texts, to reconstruct E. Voegelin's theory of consciousness in the context of the main problems related to this theory (primarily, the notion of experience). The work aims to show that the starting point in E. Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness was an effort to transcend the limitations drawn by the egological concept of consciousness. The main axis of this effort is to demonstrate the theoretical limitations inherent to Husserl's concept of intentionality, while at the same time showing that experiences understood as intentional objects are merely a narrow segment in a wider plethora of all the possible meaningful experiences. The work also aims to show that in restoring a non-reductionist and authentic notion of human experience, Voegelin adopts the concept of "pure experience" borrowed from W. James.

2. To unravel the main theoretical assumptions underlying E. Voegelin's philosophical anthropology and systematise the main arguments used to support these assumptions. The work aims to explore the notion of man as a unified process that combines ontologically heterogeneous sub-processes within itself, which was of central importance in E. Voegelin's philosophical anthropology. The human ontic structure is perceived here as combining heterogeneous, mutually irreducible ontic classes. The dissertation aims to show that such a philosophical concept of man in Voegelin's philosophical anthropology is epitomized in the symbol of *Metaxy*, which expresses the basic status of man as a participant of being, balancing between different ontic classes both ontologically and epistemologically.

3. To assess how the fundamental assumptions underlying Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology are used as a theoretical point of departure for political science. The dissertation aims to critically assess in which specific regard the political order for Voegelin is rooted and reflects the experiential reality unfolding in consciousness.

4. In this context of the problem of the link between consciousness and political philosophy - to identify the main theoretical assumptions and goals of political science as a scientific discipline.

5. To provide the analysis of Voegelin's notion of totalitarianism as the "modern Gnosticism", while demonstrating how it is inextricably linked and embedded in the fundamental theoretical assumptions underlying his philosophy of consciousness. More generally, in the context of this analysis, the dissertation aims to reveal some of the broader implications for understanding political normativity and its autonomy that is relevant to the debate in contemporary political philosophy.

Research thesis and statements to be proven. The philosophy of consciousness in E. Voegelin's political philosophy unfolds itself as an epistemological principle for political knowledge, which is based on the theoretical assumption that primordial experiential reality transcending the subject-object duality is the constitutive principle of the genesis of political order.

In addition to the main thesis, the dissertation also defends the following specific claims:

- The philosophy of consciousness, as a central part of E. Voegelin's philosophical anthropology, has an instrumental function with regard to the social sciences and the political

8

science specifically. Voegelin's theory of consciousness and philosophical anthropology represent the effort to create an ontologically based philosophical notion of man, which would serve as a system of criteria for selecting empirical facts relevant from the point of view of social reality. Philosophy of consciousness provides a philosophically grounded framework for identifying and assessing socially relevant motivating factors in human action. In this way, the philosophy of consciousness is a preparatory step in political philosophy and political knowledge more generally.

- The genesis of E. Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology is based on the synthesis of the classical (Plato, Aristotle) and modern (W. James, M. Scheler, J. Schelling) philosophical traditions. On the one hand, this synthesis means that experience in Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness should be treated as ontologically primordial *pure experience* preceding the subject-object duality, rather than as the field of mental representations of external reality beyond the consciousness. On the other hand, this synthesis means that experience in Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness should also be understood as a compact form of understanding, which has the horizontal experiential dimension of participation in-between subjective and objective realms, as well as the vertical experiential dimension of participation in-between transcendence and immanence.

- Social and political order in Voegelin's philosophy should be understood as isomorphically structured by participatory experience, which implies the perspective of participation in a comprehensive order of being. It is for this reason that

the philosophy of consciousness, which helps to unfold the specific configuration of experiential reality, is relevant for political knowledge. Similarly, the concepts developed within the framework of the philosophy of consciousness are used to explain social and political phenomena and their origins. The philosophy of consciousness, in this way, is not only a preparatory step but also the very methodological basis of political knowledge in Voegelin's political philosophy.

- The openness of consciousness to specific non-intentional experiences of participation in the broader context of being, experiences that are not reducible to mere cognitive objects, should be considered as a fundamental regulative principle for political order in Voegelin's political philosophy. The openness of consciousness to this type of experiences is the ontological basis for political normativity. A philosophy of consciousness facilitating and enabling the restoration of these experiences, thus, has not only the epistemic but also a practical or therapeutic function in the political philosophy.

Literature review and research method. Primary literature, i.e. the works of E. Voegelin can be divided into several groups, according to the time period and the thematic focus of these works:

- The early works of E. Voegelin, which were prepared by the authors in his native German while still working in Europe (i.e. before emigrating to the USA in 1938).

- The second major block of Voegelin's works consists of the *History of Political Ideas*, which was prepared as a textbook for students in 1939-1950.

- The third block of Voegelin's published works consists of his five-volume *magnum opus*, *Order and History* (the first volume was published in 1956, whereas the fifth has never been finished) (Voegelin 1999a, Voegelin 2001, Voegelin 2000b, Voegelin 2000c, Voegelin 2000e). A collection of articles devoted to the topic of "Gnosticism" and political religions (Voegelin 2000d) and the *New Science of Politics* (Voegelin 1952) are also often attributed to this "mature" period of his works,

- Finally, a group of works prepared in the late period of Voegelin's life can be singled out, including e.g. the collection of articles and essays prepared in the period 1966-1985 (Voegelin 1990b), correspondence (Voegelin 1978), an autobiography (Voegelin 2011). Voegelin's late period of work is also associated with his work focusing exclusively on the philosophy of consciousness, a collection of essays first published in 1966 and subsequently republished several times (see Voegelin 1966, Voegelin 1990a, Voegelin 2002). Voegelin's important late works also include the 4th Volume of *Order and History* (*The Ecumenical Age*), published in 1974, after a long break since the publication of the 3rd volume of the series.

The dissertation primarily focuses on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th groups of Voegelin's works, i.e., the "mature" and late works written by Voegelin after his emigration to the United States (although in some cases, some of the works prepared during the early period of Voegelin's career, such as "Race and the State", are also included in the analysis).

In terms of the secondary literature, the dissertation makes extensive use of some of the most detailed recent studies prepared

by prominent contemporary Voegelin scholars (especially Webb 2014; Sandoz 2012; also, Keulman 1990; Cooper 1999; Federici 2002). The work also relies on important collections of articles devoted to specific issues and themes of Voegelin's work: e.g. Voegelin's political philosophy and philosophy of history (McKnight 1987b; Torres and Monserrat-Molas 2022b), the relevance of Voegelin's philosophy in the context of the philosophy of religion (Hughes 1998a), as well as the collections of articles devoted to Voegelin's work in general (Sandoz 1982; Sandoz 1991). Whenever relevant, the dissertation also makes use of individual articles focusing on specific problems related to Voegelin's works: e.g. Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness (McCarl 1992; McMahon 1999; Walsh 1981; Poirier 2009), the reception of Ancient philosophy in Voegelin's works (e.g. Corey 2002; Planinc 2013; Torres 2022), articles devoted to discussing Voegelin's notion of "Gnosticism" (Franz 1998; Franz 2005; Webb 2005; Wiser 1980), articles on Voegelin's notion of revelation, religion and myth (Bussanich 2007; Anderson 2000; Niezgoda 2022), articles comparing Voegelin's thought to other thinkers, e.g. Voegelin - L. Strauss (Rhodes 1987), Voegelin-Husserl (White 2012), Voegelin-Schelling (Day 2003; McGuire 2011).

The final group of literary sources, extensively used in the dissertation, involves the works of thinkers who had a significant influence on the genesis of E. Voegelin's philosophical anthropology and philosophy of consciousness. The works of this type used in the dissertation include those of Plato, Aristotle, W. James, E. Husserl, M. Scheler, J. Schelling and A. Lovejoy. In order to contextualize and expand in more detail the fundamental assumptions of Voegelin's own thinking (first of all, the theoretical assumptions underlying his notion of experience, philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology), the dissertation pays considerable attention to the works of these authors.

The basis of the dissertation's method is the critical analysis of Voegelin's political philosophy texts in the broader context of the main theoretical assumptions underlying his philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology. Dissertation is largely limited to Voegelin's "mature" and late works prepared after the emigration to the US (after 1938). Based on the collection of essays in *Anamnesis* and other relevant works, the core theoretical assumptions underlying Voegelin's theory of consciousness and philosophical anthropology are reconstructed by highlighting their key aspects (such as the critique of Husserl's concept of egological consciousness, the reception of W. James's concept of "pure experience"; the principles of consubstantiality and participation in being expressed in terms of *Metaxy* in Voegelin's philosophical anthropology). In the light of these key theoretical assumptions underlying the theory of consciousness and human nature more generally, the dissertation explores Voegelin's works in political philosophy and philosophy of history ("History of Political Ideas", "The New Political Science", "Order and History", etc.). In this way, the dissertation systematically explicates the multivariate theoretical linkage between the philosophy of consciousness and politics in Voegelin's philosophy.

Structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters and conclusions. The first chapter examines the problem of Voegelin's notion of experience, mainly by highlighting the polemic with Husserl and the reception of W. James' concept of "pure experience" in Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness. The work aims to systemically explore Voegelin's philosophical notion of experience and the main controversies related to this notion. In the dissertation's second, other key elements of Voegelin's philosophical anthropology are consistently explored, including the principle of consubstantiality and man's participation in being expressed in terms of the symbol *Metaxy*. Finally, the third chapter of the dissertation expands upon these

fundamental theoretical assumptions underlying Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness by exposing their adaptation in political philosophy together with their broader implications on Voegelin's notion of totalitarianism and political normativity in general.

Overview of the descriptive part of the research.
Chapter 1

The dissertation's first chapter discusses Voegelin's notion of experience and shows that this notion is defined by its two constitutive elements: (1) the critique of Husserl's concept of *egological* consciousness and (2) the reception and adaption of W. James's concept of "pure experience".

With regard to (1), following the analysis of *Anamnesis* and other works focusing on Voegelin's theory of consciousness, the dissertation argues that Voegelin considered the reduction of all the meaningful human experiences into the flow of cognitive objects in temporal perspective as the key theoretical limitation of Husserl's egological concept of consciousness. This reductionist notion of human consciousness, which tends to eliminate non-intentional experiences that are not characterised by the object-like structure (including e.g., experiences of transcendence, the experience of belonging to a specific community), was for Voegelin symptomatic of the modern epistemological tradition in general. Moreover, the emergence of the *transcendental ego* and the assimilation of all the fields of reality into cognitive objects turns out to be mutually supportive and mutually constitutive poles of the same process. On the one hand, the "pure self" can emerge only when we focus our attention on elementary, object-like experiences, when we leave no room for more intense experiences related to transcendence that do not have the structure of an object. On the other hand, the assimilation of all the experiences into a homogeneous totality of cognitive objects or "facts" arranged in a single logical space is possible to the extent that the *transcendental ego* or "pure self" emerges as the central point of reference and the organising principle, which acts as the agent of this assimilation. This trend is particularly detrimental to social sciences (including the science of politics): certain important aspects of reality are never experienced

as cognitive objects, whereas treating them *as if they are* objects distorts the authentic experience of these areas of reality and obscures the social relevance of these experiences. Moreover, the dissertation claims that in E. Voegelin's political philosophy, experiences having non-objective, non-intentional structure were the source of rational grounding to the normative principles of ethics and politics (e.g., the ones that grounded natural law theory in the Classical and Medieval periods). Once we eliminate these experiences or downgrade them to the status of cognitive objects, we also remove the rational and substantial foundation of the normative principles that were based on them. As a result, rationally-grounded principles for ethical and political order are downgraded to mere preferences or choices of will (i.e., "value judgments"). Overcoming the limitations inherent to the egological notion of consciousness, therefore, was for Voegelin one of the key preconditions to restore important experiences going beyond intentional acts (in the Husserlian sense). These experiences are important not only because very often they are socially relevant as the motivating forces of human action, but also because their restoration enables the rational grounding of normative principles and, therefore, overcoming the so-called value-neutrality in social sciences.

Regarding (2), following the analysis of W. James' ''Essay on Radical Empiricism" and Voegelin's late works, the dissertation claims that Voegelin's notion of experience (and his theory of consciousness more generally) is rooted in James' concept of "pure experience", which essentially sought to close the epistemological chasm between subject and object, *phenomena* and *noumena.* According to this notion, mental and physical, subjective and objective realities are mere derivative aspects of a certain primordial substrate of being, pure experience, which is more basic than the two former aspects of reality. Following this analysis, the dissertation argues against the view held by some commentators (e.g. Poirier: 2009), according to which Voegelin's notion of

consciousness and human experience is rooted in the tradition of classical German idealism and, more specifically, the Kantian distinction between the appearance (*phenomenon*) and the "thing-in-itself" (*noumenon*). According to this latter view, experience for Voegelin referred to the mental realm or appearances, whereas the reality as such (*noumena*) is not directly accessible to the intuition of our experience or speculative reasoning. Arguing against this interpretation of Voegelinian notion of experience, the dissertation claims that - in contrast to the above dualistic perspective – Voegelin adopted Jamesian notion of "pure experience". For Voegelin, as for James, experience refers neither to the mental realm, nor to the "external" world of things, but, rather, it is a primordial point of intersection between the two latter poles, which are derivative with respect to pure experience. Consciousness should not be treated here as a mental substance or *transcendental ego*, heterogeneous with regard to the "objective being" outside of it. Instead, consciousness was for Voegelin an integral part of a continuum of consubstantial being, which is "made" from this substrate of pure experience. The dissertation then identifies other important implications that follow from this adaptation of the Jamesian notion of pure experience in Voegelin's theory of consciousness. First, it is argued that experience in Voegelin's theory of consciousness implies a kind of pre-reflective, compact form of rationality or *understanding* – over and above discrete bits of sensual perception data. Following the postulate of the radical empiricism (which states that one must not admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced), Voegelin's notion of experience was not limited to experiences derived from sensual data: rather, it is shown that Voegelin's notion of human experience also embraces and considers as equal the experience of participation in a comprehensive context of being, an invisible order. This experience is never subject to the intentionality of our consciousness, i.e., participation in a comprehensive order of

being is never experienced as an "object in front of us". The "in-betweenness" of experience for Voegelin, therefore, had not only the horizontal aspect of mediation between subjective and objective realms but also the vertical aspect of mediation between transcendence and immanence. Finally, it is argued that adaptation of the Jamesian radical empiricism means that for Voegelin (pure) experience must always retain the foundational and constitutive status with regard to more abstract modes of cognition (such as concepts or symbols). Pure experience is the ultimate form of reality accessible to us and, therefore, in order not to lose the grip of this reality, symbols and concepts must always refer to and reinstate their underlying experiences.

Chapter 2

Following the analysis of Voegelin's notion of experience, Chapter 2 of the dissertation focuses on other key aspects and theoretical assumptions underlying Voegelinian philosophical anthropology. The chapter consists of two key sections focusing on the two key themes. First (1) the dissertation discusses the philosophical notion of man as ontologically consubstantial and isomorphic with the rest of being, as well as the key theoretical assumption underlying this notion, which is implicit in Voegelin's philosophical anthropology. Second, (2) the dissertation examines in detail the notion of *Metaxy* and its role in the broader context of Voegelin's philosophical anthropology.

One of the main steps in restoring the theoretical foundations of social science for Voegelin was the development of an adequate, ontologically-grounded theory of human nature, which would take into account the material, psychic and rational-noetic aspects of the human nature. Without this theory, it is impossible to assess which phenomena of social reality are significant and which of them should be taken into consideration when conducting scientific

research. The dissertation shows that at the core of the Voegelinian philosophical anthropology was the notion that man participates and simultaneously is constituted by heterogeneous ontic classes, including the inorganic, vegetative, animal, psychic and divine-noetic principles. All these heterogeneous, mutually irreducible ontic principles are unified in human nature, and, therefore, man inevitably experiences the constant pull from all these natures, which constitute the basis of his ontic structure. The dissertation also demonstrates multiple origins of this notion of man as a "synthetic" being in Voegelin's philosophical anthropology. It is shown that, on the one hand, Voegelin's philosophical notion of man as a process that unifies ontologically heterogeneous sub-processes, is rooted in Max Scheler's philosophical anthropology. On the other hand, the notion that the human ontic structure isomorphically reflects the ontic structure of the universe has classical origins: primarily, the anthropology and cosmology of Plato and Aristotle, where man is understood as a *microcosm*, whereas the cosmic order is analysed using the analogy of man possessing the reason, body and soul. The universe is perceived as *meganthropos*, whilst man is perceived as *microcosm*. To support the thesis of the isomorphism and consubstantiality of human and cosmic structures, Voegelin adopted the argument from classical philosophy that can be described as follows: since we are capable of experiencing different ontic classes, including the material, psychic, and spiritual-transcendent, the constitution of our own ontic structure must at least to some extent involve all these ontic classes. The dissertation argues that the notion of consubstantiality and structural isomorphism between man and the rest of being was for Voegelin the key theoretical precondition for overcoming epistemological solipsism, i.e., the "epistemological chasm" between consciousness and reality. At its core, human consciousness is consubstantial with regard to the process of being. Moreover, consciousness has the grasp of being precisely by virtue of its consubstantiality with regard to this being. It is for this reason

that knowledge of reality in Voegelin's philosophy was first and foremost the knowledge from the perspective of *participation* in being (rather than that of an external observer of being).

Finally, the dissertation claims that Voegelin's key philosophical symbol – *Metaxy* – epitomized the above theoretical assumptions in philosophical anthropology, i.e., the status of human consciousness as a participant and a part of being constituted by material, psychic and spiritual-noetic ontic classes. By discussing the origins of the Metaxy symbol in Voegelin's philosophy, the dissertation demonstrates that it is based on a loose interpretation and adaptation of the Greek word *metaxy* ("between") found primarily in Plato's dialogues. In Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness, *Metaxy* becomes a technical-philosophical term. which expresses the key parameters of consciousness as a participant in different ontic classes of being that balances between different radical experiential poles: the experiential pole of *apeironic* depths (which expresses the constant flux and indefiniteness, inevitable dissolution into nothingness associated to the material being); and the experiential pole of *noetic* heights (which expresses the absolute definiteness, eternity and pure being associated to the experience of transcendence). The dissertation then discusses other key features of *Metaxy* thus understood. First, it is shown that experience of participation in being (epitomized by the symbol *Metaxy*) is defined not only in terms of the objectifying, intentional structure of experience but also in terms of the experience of participation in a broader order of being that eludes the objectifying-intentional view. In Voegelin's philosophy, the latter, more comprehensive aspect of consciousness is defined by the term "luminosity of consciousness" (as opposed to the intentionality of consciousness). Second, the dissertation argues that although the dynamics of experience of participation in being is structured by the above-mentioned radical experiential poles of *Metaxy*, this does not mean that the content or boundaries of

experience for Voegelin were fixed. On the contrary, the study shows that consciousness for Voegelin is always *concrete* and constituted by concrete experiences of participation in being. The configuration of experiential reality is always realized concretely through the process of searching for the order of being. Finally, the dissertation shows that in Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness the non-intentional, non-objectifying experience of participation in the order being is expressed through symbols. Symbols function as transparent lenses, mediators orienting the consciousness towards the order of being, which is never experienced intentionally, that is, as a cognitive object.

Chapter 3

The dissertation's third chapter discusses the relation between experiential reality and political reality, as well as the multifaceted role that the philosophy of consciousness and its key theoretical assumptions (reconstructed in the previous sections) played in Voegelin's political thought.

First, the dissertation elaborates on the implications of the previously discussed theory of consciousness and its underlying theoretical assumptions on Voegelin's notion of political science as a scientific discipline. It is argued that experiential reality, i.e., comprehensive experience of participation in the order of being expressed in the *Metaxy* symbol, is the basic datum and empirical point of departure in Voegelinian political science. The main reason for this is that experience thus understood is considered as the underlying principle behind community's self-interpretation, which finds its expression in political and societal order. Political scientists' key goal must be to grasp the experiential reality that is the constitutive principle of a specific societal order and its character. One of the best ways to do this is by analysing the symbols through which this constitutive experiential reality is articulated by the members of the respective society. Scientific

theory in political science thereby involves detailed reconstruction and reflection upon the experiential reality that constitutes the basis of the community's self-interpretation and the societal and political order.

The dissertation then demonstrates that the above approach, which takes experiential reality as the basic datum of science, was implicit in Voegelin's political science approach already before his *Order and History*. For this purpose, the dissertation conducts three case studies addressing three different themes covered in Voegelin's *History of Political Ideas* and *New Science of Politics*: (1) Voegelin's notion of political representation, (2) his account of the rise and decline of the Western Christian imperial order (*Sacrum Imperium*) and (3) the analysis of the English national polity and its political institutions. It is argued that in all the three cases, experiential reality is at the core of Voegelin's account of the political order and its dynamics. In the case of (1), Voegelin's notion of political representation in the existential and transcendental sense (as opposed to representation in the elemental sense, i.e., mere external procedures and institutions of political representation) shows that political representation is intrinsically rooted in experiential reality the parameters of which were previously exposed in the philosophy of consciousness. For Voegelin, political representation in the deepest sense was always the representation of a certain comprehensive order of being, which unfolds itself in the experiential reality of participatory consciousness. Order of any political community (*cosmion*), in this sense, represents and imitates this comprehensive order of being. Similarly, in the case of (2), the analysis reveals that at the core of the Western Christian imperial organisation was the experiential reality as symbolized by the mystical body of Christ (*corpus mysticum*), whilst all the layers and institutions of society were experienced as the integral part and participant of this mystical body. Institutions of imperial Christianity - the constitutive

principle of which was this experience of participation in the mystical body of Christ the King - declined and disintegrated to the extent of the decline of their constitutive (experiential) principle. Finally, the analysis of the English national polity (3) reveals that English constitutional parliamentarism and the institutions of representative democracy emerged from the experiential reality that has formed together with the substance of the English national polity in the course of history. Institutions of representative democracy were not arbitrary or conventional forms of political organisation but developed as an articulation of a specific experiential background, a community's substance. These representative institutions, therefore, can be lively and functional only in those political communities, where the equivalent experiential background exists (the most important feature of this experiential background is the differentiation of the individual as a politically articulate unit).

Finally, the dissertation explores Voegelin's *Order and History*, where the above paradigm is applied to analyse the order of Ancient Near Eastern societies, as well as the Classical political theory of Plato and Aristotle. A study of Voegelin's *magnum opus* in the philosophy of history reveals that the dynamics of social and political order historically vary together with and as a result of the differentiation of experiential reality. The dissertation then turns to the discussion of the notion of "modern Gnosticism", the emergence of totalitarian movements and the disintegration of the political and societal order in the West. "Gnosticism" and totalitarian movements turn out to be the result of a specific deformation of the experiential reality. The most important feature of this deformation is the elimination of the transcendent pole from the experiential reality, which takes the form of the "immanentization of eschaton". The dissertation argues that Voegelin's account of "Gnosticism" as a deformation of consciousness provides a unique way of looking at the source of

political normativity. Balance of consciousness is the openness of consciousness to the source of order, the experience of participation in the order of being that does not have an objective structure. The openness of consciousness to these types of experiences is the fundamental regulatory principle in politics ensuring the sustainability of political order and its connection to ethical and moral norms, whereas the closure of consciousness to these experiences is associated to the disintegration of societal and political order. This notion of political normativity is different from both the liberal school (which traces the sources of this normativity in the abstract, a-priori principles of ethics and justice) and the so-called realist school (which states that there is an autonomous, unique form of political normativity).

Conclusions

(1) The dissertation reveals multiple roles that the philosophy of consciousness played in E. Voegelin's political thought. A proper assessment of this role allows not only a better understanding of the entire project of E. Voegelin's political philosophy but also sheds new light on individual elements of this political philosophy, that were often subject to misinterpretation in the past, including the questions related to Voegelin's method of political science, his notion of political representation, the origins of "Gnosticism" and totalitarian movements, as well as the source political normativity.

(2) The genesis of Voegelin's philosophical anthropology and philosophy of consciousness took place as a reaction to the reductionist traditions of thinking about human experience and consciousness prevailing at the time, the most prominent example of which was represented by Husserl's egological concept of consciousness. This reaction manifested itself in the aspiration to create a comprehensive and ontologically grounded theory of consciousness, which would not eliminate, but, on the contrary,

integrate into the analysis and allow to explain the significant (non-intentional, non-objectivist) forms of human experience. It was also influenced by a broader methodological approach, stating that a solid theoretical foundation of social (including political) sciences must be based on an equally comprehensive, ontologically grounded philosophical notion of man, which would take into account the status of man as ontologically rooted in different classes of being.

(3) The research revealed that Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness and philosophical anthropology is implicitly based on the original synthesis of classical (Plato, Aristotle) and modern (W. James, M. Scheler, J. Schelling) philosophical traditions. The fundamental motive underlying this synthesis is the attempt to explicate and theoretically justify the ontological and epistemological primacy of human participation in being over the objectifying intentionality: the participation of consciousness in different ontic classes and the resulting perspective of participation in cognition is logically and ontologically prior to the perspective of objectifying intentionality. Although developed as a preparatory step for Voegelin's political philosophy, this synthesis of classical and modern philosophical traditions offers unique ways to address problems relevant in the areas of phenomenology and philosophical anthropology, e.g. problems related to the meaning and limits of intentionality, epistemological solipsism, subject-object dualism in the theory of knowledge, philosophical notion of human experience and other issues.

(4) The analysis of Voegelin's works of political philosophy in the light of his philosophy of consciousness reveals a specific social and political research programme, the methodological basis of which is the philosophy of consciousness and the theoretical-conceptual framework developed on this basis. This approach to political science follows from Voegelin's very notion of politics

itself, where experience of participation in the broader context of being is isomorphically reflected in political reality and is the constitutive principle of this reality. Human consciousness is characterized by the experiential perspective of participation in a larger context of being (or, in other words, order of being). This experience is articulated in the order and institutions of the political community. The philosophy of consciousness, in this way, allows us to identify the constitutive factors underlying the dynamics of political reality. In essence, this paradigm in political philosophy, with the philosophy of consciousness at its centre, offers a new approach that could be described as "political hermeneutics".

(5) Political science presupposes the hermeneutic interpretation of the experiences that constitute the basis of the political community's self-interpretation. Voegelin's methodological approach to political philosophy, centred on the philosophy of consciousness, thus, encodes an alternative to the theoretical approaches characteristic to contemporary political science (e.g., behavioralism, institutionalism, or rational choice theory) that often tend to abstract from the questions related to community's self-interpretation in a wider experiential field. The fruitful use of this alternative approach in social sciences does not mean that we must necessarily agree with all the theoretical assumptions of Voegelin's philosophical anthropology or adopt Voegelin's theoretical vocabulary.

(6) Finally, the dissertation reveals an original way of grounding political normativity, which is implicit in E. Voegelin's political philosophy. The source of sustainable political and social order here is located in the openness of consciousness to specific, non-intentional forms of experience, which provide a rational ontological basis for ethical and moral norms. The closure of consciousness to this type of experiences is the essential factor in the disintegration of social and political order. Philosophy of consciousness that allows us to restore and re-evaluate the forms of

experience that underlie the ethical and political order, therefore, has a therapeutic function in political philosophy. This notion of political normativity originally complements and expands the current debate on the autonomy of political normativity.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Caturianas D., 2018. The Critique of E. Husserl's Notion of Egological Consciousness in E. Voegelin's Works. *Problemos*, *93*, 114-128. https://doi.org/10.15388/Problemos.2018.93.11756

2. Caturianas D., 2021. The Problem of Experience in E. Voegelin's Philosophy. Problemos, 99, 34–47. https://doi.org/10.15388/Problemos.99.3

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dovydas Caturianas obtained his BA in Political Science at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University (2006–2010) and his Msc in Political Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science (2010-2011). His main research interests lie in political philosophy and history of philosophy.

NOTES

NOTES