

D0118

Theo 143, Jan. 30

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We ended our last class
w. a discussion
of ^{the} empirical vs. the normative
notion of culture
and began to discuss
one way in which
the normative notion
prevailed in the West --
the classical notion of culture.

Otto Rank, Beyond Psychology,
has emphasized how difference
is a very difficult thing
for human consciousness to deal with,
and pleads for a psychology of difference.

Loneragan emphasizes
that common sense in particular
seems threatened by difference,
and that the threat is overcome
only by transcending common sense
to a more theoretical, philosophical, or intentionality-analysis
point of view.

Common sense tends to regard
what is different
as inferior.

And rather than transcending its own point of view,
it makes a theory out of its own point of view,
thus producing one form of ideology.

No clearer instance of this
than racism, e.g. Nazism.

What is working here
is a combination of
the general bias of common sense
and group bias.

Explain these for Lec. 2:

General bias

is the divorce of theory from praxis,
and the assumption of praxis (D)
as all-important.

n. the seeing both as part of a single
unfolding of es.

Group bias

is the elevation
of cultural or group standards
to normativity.

"What's good for General Motors
is good for the country."

Then for the classicist mentality,

certain canons of art
literary forms
rules of correct speech
norms of interpretation
ways of thought
styles of philosophy
notion of science
concept of law
moral standards
methods of education

were assumed to be normative for humanity

n. the one particular way of being human.

Egs: Haitian art
James Joyce
Schubert

e.g.:
speaking of
economic
changes

In the 20th century,
but beginning earlier (Enlightenment in some ways,
19th c.)
classical culture has broken down
in the West
and has given rise to modern culture, modernity,
of which we shall say much.
A principal instance of modernity
is the replacement
of classical notions
with empirical notions
of culture.

But even so,

and even if we no longer regard
classical culture
as our culture,

common sense tends to hold to the notion
that our culture is the best.

It tends to take the experience of difficulty
in making one's way in a strange culture --
an eg. of experience w/o understanding --

as a sign that the strange culture is inferior,
rather than simply different.

(cf. my spontaneous c. s. reactions
to Swiss & French culture --
based on the difference in difficulty).

There is something very important here,
even if exaggerated:

because we are historical beings, finite,
rooted in a culture,
our own culture's mediation of the world
in common sense

is very important for us,
and to be uprooted from it against our will
is to suffer violence
and psychological damage.

Part of the lower levels of cs-- spontaneous performance,
a second nature.

To bring
closer
to home: } for every operative set of meanings and values
informing common sense
there is a different culture.

If we take this statement in strict fashion,
we could say

there are many cultures in the U. S. today:
various white middle-class suburban cultures,
the culture of the super-rich,
black militant culture,
other forms of black culture,
various American Indian cultures,
feminist culture,
playboy culture,
youth cultures,
various forms of the "counter-culture,"
various religious and ersatz-religious cultures.

To the extent

one is sharing in
common operative assumptions
of meaning and value
that really inform and determine
a given style of life,
one is a participant
in a given culture.

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According to this notion of culture,

one may,

probably does,

participate in several cultures at once.

One may, e.g.,

share in the operative assumptions

of white middle-class suburban culture

and the culture of feminism,

or in a form of black American culture

along with the culture of a religious movement

or of a University.

To the extent one participates

in two or more cultures

whose operative assumptions clash,

one experiences conflict.

The conflict is resolved, first, on an individual basis,

but such cumulative resolutions

may then lead to modifications

in cultural assumptions

on the part of a group

or perhaps even to the formation

of a new culture. E.g., later on the new culture.

Along with this stricter notion of culture,

we may speak also

of a more general notion

that still satisfies our definition

but that embraces

larger totalities of people

and longer periods of time.

Actually, classical culture
is an eg. of this more general notion,
stipulating general assumptions of mo^r & value
that still allow for local variations
of customs in other manners.

Thus, for ^{another} example,

there is a certain legitimacy
in speaking of a dominant American culture
informed by a certain set of operative assumptions
shared by members of different
smaller & more restricted cultural units.

Or we may speak of Graeco-Roman culture
as distinct from medieval culture
and Renaissance culture
and modern
and even post-modern culture.

The word "culture", then, floats.

And this more general notion,
while perhaps less precise
than the stricter notion
still fits the definition.

Lewis Mumford, in The Transformations of Man,
speaks quite intelligently of
archaic man,
civilized man,
axial man,
old world man (includes civilized & axial)
new world man
post-historic man
or world-cultural man.

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In each instance

he is speaking
of at least implicit assumptions
of mg & value

shared in common by groups of people,
and thus he is speaking of cultures.

We will often use the word "culture"
in this broader sense.

skip: { But it is imp. to note
that the two usages
are not unrelated to one another.

Thus there are various restricted instances of "culture"
that are all instances of civilized as opposed to archaic man.

And some of them -- e.g., some variants of feminist culture --
may be incipient instances of world culture,

while others -- e.g., some variants of middle-class
common sense --

are incipient instances of post-historic "culture." (used loosely)

Thus the more general usage of the word
is also, from a historical perspective,
more basic,

in that it states a general framework of intelligibility
for understanding what is going forward
in the inter-relations & conflicts of
smaller cultural units,

and of individuals within these units.

It also serves particularly well

to help us understand

those major transformations in human history
that make off one age or epoch from another.

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Now cs

is radically a matter of the individual.

It is individuals who are conscious.

And as the primary arena of the drama
of an emerging cultural epoch
is the consciousness of the individual.

Here is where the emerging epoch is taking form,
where the struggle is being fought,
and the breakthrough either made or refused.

The principal cultural phenomenon of our time,
in terms of the future of humanity,
is the struggle for ^{a liberated} greater consciousness
and a corresponding life-style
on the part of the contemporary individual
intent
on the psychological
and social
liberation

from the now constricting pressures
of a dying cultural epoch.

liberated cs, truly expanded cs,
is dependent on
cs coming into possession of itself
acc. to the map or grid of cs
presented earlier.