

D0119

Thes 143, Feb. 2

①

(Sec. 2 needs material on restricted

→ more general use of definitions of "culture.")

We saw 2 different uses of the definition of culture,

(pp. 4-6 of Jan. 30)

a more strict use,

acc. to wh. there is a different culture  
for every operative set of meanings and values  
informing common sense,

and a more general use,

wh. embraces larger totalities of people  
and longer periods of time.

The word "culture," even as defined,  
floats.

We have seen that "culture"

acc. to either usage

is a matter of the mediation of the world by meaning,  
of common understandings

affirmations  
& evaluations.

Now, when we stretch the more general usage of the term as far  
as it will go,

we find that we may speak of <sup>several</sup> qualitatively different  
ways in which the world is mediated by meaning,  
of several different stages of meaning.

The history of consciousness in the West  
seems to reveal three stages of meaning:

mythic consciousness, realistic consciousness,  
and interiorly <sup>self-</sup>differentiating consciousness.

These three stages of meaning reveal three quite distinct  
efforts at the control of meaning.

And the control of meaning is what allows us to speak of a

Theo 143, Feb. 2

(2)

cultural epoch.

Looking more closely at the notion of the control of meaning:

We have said that human consciousness everywhere and at all times

seems to be constituted by a capacity for the same operations or activities.

While this structure does not differ,

the content of the operations

seems to differ enormously from one stage to the next.

This is particularly true

of the mediating operation of understanding.

Thus, a myth

is a very different kind of understanding of the world or mediation of the world from the kind of mediation introduced into the West

by the development of philosophy and science in Greece.

Meaning is controlled in different ways by mythic consciousness and by the systematic consciousness of an Aristotle, e.g.

There is a tremendous difference,

a radical difference,

between the control of meaning

found in Homer

and that which appears in Aristotle.

Thes. 193, Feb. 2

(3)

In either case,

there is understanding  
and understanding performs the  
function of unifying experience  
and providing meaning;

in either case,

there is an appeal to evidence  
in order to justify the understanding,  
and so there is the commitment to understanding  
that is judgment;

and in either case,

there is action in the world  
constituting the world  
on the basis of the mediation  
brought off by understanding and judgment.

But there is a quite different

differentiation of consciousness

operating in either case,

and the dominant differentiation of consciousness  
introduces a distinct control of meaning.

Descriptively, to use the words of Mountain Lake,

it may be said

that Homeric man, mythic consciousness,  
thinks from the heart,

and that in the evolution of Greek philosophy  
from the pre-Socratics to Aristotle,

we have the gradual movement of the seat of understanding  
from the heart to the head.

Thes. 143, Feb. 2

(4)

It is with the rise of science and philosophy in Greece that the white man began to think with the head rather than the heart. About some things, at least.

I refuse for the moment to make any evaluation of this movement in terms of "better" or "worse."

I am simply calling attention to a difference, to the kind of difference that constitutes a distinction in the control of meaning.

The kind of difference that constitutes such a distinction is the difference in the differentiations of human consciousness that are dominant in one period or the other.

It is different dominant differentiations of consciousness that constitute different cultural epochs or mediations of meaning.

In the West,

the dominant mediation of meaning prior to the period of philosophy and science in Greece was mythic;

and the rise of philosophy and science meant the emergence of a new dominant mediation through theory, system, analysis, science, technology.

And today, many say, we stand at the beginning of the emergence of a new dominant mediation, a new stage of meaning, which is essentially the retrieval in interiority of the two previous:

Theo 143, Feb. 2

⑤

the self-appropriation  
in and for itself

of human consciousness  
as both mind (head) and heart, spirit and psyche,  
as capable of both rational analysis <sup>masculine or feminine,</sup>

and as needing for its own wholeness <sup>and archetypal symbolizing,  
science and story, theory and poetry,</sup>  
to differentiate  
and integrate

. these capacities in interiority.

Some different ways of viewing this prospect:

(The <sup>(my)</sup> two major sources of this material on the three  
stages of meaning in the Nest are:

Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of  
Consciousness

and Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology,  
Ch. 3, "Meaning" )

Theo 143, Jan. 30

⑧

SKIP

The basis of this more general notion,  
as it helps us to speak of epochs of culture,  
is found in the notion of the control of meaning.  
I will speak more about what this notion entails on Monday.  
Let me simply indicate today  
that such a major change, the emergence of an entirely new  
cultural epoch in human history,  
is the drama of our time.  
From many sides & many experts,  
we hear it said  
that the entire human race  
is entering upon a new epoch,  
a new stage of meaning.

Feb. 2 → Lonergan speaks of it  
as the epoch of the control of meaning through  
a knowledge of interiority or self-appropriation.  
Mumford speaks of two options before us:  
post-historic humanity  
& world-cultural humanity.  
From my perspective, both of these  
are inevitable.  
P-h humanity will be evolutionary blind alley  
that many will travel  
in the next several hundred years,  
and world-cultural humanity  
the gradually, very gradually  
emerging  
new form of human evolution  
based on an expansion, a stretching, a further  
differentiation  
of human consciousness.

Theo 143, Jan. 30

(9)

Jung speaks of the age of individuation  
or of the pursuit of wholeness  
and takes quite seriously the correlation  
or synchronicity

of this pursuit

with the astrological age of Aquarius.

He calls what is emerging a new religion, wh. will take  
600 years to become  
prevalent but  
wh. is already being  
built.

Scholars of religion  
speak of the coming convergence  
of the major religions of the world  
as basic to this transformation.

Thus, e.g., in the future

one may be simultaneously a Christian & a Hindu,  
as Gandhi, for all practical purposes, was.

Or a Christian and a Taoist,

as many followers of Jung may be  
as a result of being introduced by him to the I Ching.  
(This is what the Jesuit missionaries in China were  
after implicitly).

Common to all these interpretations

is the insistence that the basis of this new epoch  
will be an expansion, heightening, differentiation,  
and <sup>self-</sup>appropriation of human es,

which will result in new operative assumptions of  
meaning & value,

new life-styles,

new patterns of relationship between men & women,  
& among men  
& among women.

} Women's lib  
& men's lib  
so pointing  
to new epoch.

Margaret Farley, in TS, Dec., 1975.