

LECTURES ON RELIGION AND
NAME CULTURE. MARQUETTE '76.
PART TWO

No. D-51

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143, Feb. 9, intro

The main point

of Friday's class

is that the difference between mythic es (and all common sense)
and scientific theory

can be understood

in terms of the operations involved in knowing.

These operations are performed
in both,

but in common sense

they are geared to the drama of living,

whereas in theory

they are made a specialty in their own right.

Theory introduces a note

of detachment

or disinterestedness,

in that it moves from a concern

with persons & things as related to us
to things as related to one another,

to laws & probabilities
defining these relations,

and from a commitment in judgment

to an understanding of things in relation to us

to a more hard-headed, tough-minded

demand for rational evidence

for all of one's judgments.

What served as evidence for mythic es' affirmations of truth

is discounted

or thrown into a different perspective

by theoretic es.

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(Sec. 2: very brief treatment of p. 7 of Feb. 6 notes)

1. For further treatment & details on the three stages of meaning
see Lonergan, Method in Theology, Ch. 3, "Meaning."

2. I have spoken of the ways
in which many thinkers, independently of one another,
speak of an emerging cultural epoch:

Lonergan, Mumford, Jung, scholars of world religions:
I have also indicated

that there is a common denominator
to these interpretations:

each in its own way

speaks of a new expansion
and heightening
and differentiation
and integration,

a stretching,
of human consciousness,
and a self-appropriation
of this stretched consciousness
in and for itself.

3. The main point ~~leading us beyond where we are now in the course~~
is that ^{to this emerging stage of mg}

consciousness is radically a matter of the individual.

From a radical and primordial point of view,

it is individuals who are conscious.

A given individual

may have only the mind-set of a group

-- his peers, e.g., or his church or political party--

i. e., he may have no mind of his own,

but then we refer to him

as being to that extent unconscious,

not conscious.

J. e., since cs is radically individual,
 it is accompanied by the demand
 that one ask one's own questions,
 arrive at one's own insights
 and commitments,
 and take responsibility for one's own decisions.

Only by such procedures
 does one utilize
 the capacities of one's own consciousness,
 and become more fully conscious.

4. But the task of self-appropriation
 is not simply a matter of becoming more conscious,
 but also of becoming knowing of oneself.

It involves not just
 asking one's own questions,
 arriving at one's own insights
 and commitments,
 and taking resp. for one's own decisions,
 but asking questions about oneself,
 understanding oneself,
 committing oneself to that understanding,
 and deciding to live from that commitment.

Self-appropriation, then,
 is self-knowledge,
 and this is something more than consciousness.
 It is consciousness coming into possession of itself.

5. Now, if it is true that only individuals are conscious,
 it is also the case that ~~only~~ individuals ^{provide} the
 arena where cs comes into possession of itself.

Thus the scene of the drama of an emerging epoch
 is the consciousness of the individual.

That is where the drama is being played,
 the struggle being fought,
 the victory being won,
 or the defeat being suffered.

That is where the emerging stage of meaning
 is taking form.

Thus the principal cultural phenomenon of our age,
 in terms of the future of humanity,
 is the drama of self-owning
 on the part of the individual
 and the corresponding life-styles
 that will flow from that drama.

5. This talk of the es of the individual
 leads us back
 to the discussion of religion.

We have spoken of how
 the more general usage of the world, culture,
 helps us understand epochal changes in human history.

We are entering upon such an epochal change in our time,
 the emergence of world-cultural humanity.

Jung said it would take 600 years to accomplish,
 and he spoke of it
 as the birth of a new religion.

It will be different from the births of new religions
 in the past,

since it will not be dependent on one Great Individual
 whom others follow

but on each of us finding the greater self
 that is our truest identity,
 the Christ self, the Buddha self,
 the wholeness of subjectivity.

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The carrier of the new religion, then,
is each individual intent on individuation,
a control of meaning by interiority.

6. What the ind'l does

with his or her own individuality,
then,

is the key to his or her participation
in the emergence of a new cultural epoch.

And I have proposed this

as the basis of my definition of religion:
what the individual does with

his ~~own~~ or her own individuality,
with the moments of ultimate in his or her own experience.

We will be discussing ~~that~~ later
in greater detail

the meaning of "moments of ultimate."

Let me indicate now

that my definition of religion
puts me in the company of some good thinkers.

E.g., Whitehead

has defined religion as

"what the individual does with his own solitariness,"
as "the art and the theory of the internal life of man,
so far as it depends on the man himself
and on what is permanent in the nature of things."

We will return later this week

to these definitions.

For now, I simply note their similarity to my own.

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My definition is similar also
to Kierkegaard's,
for whom religiousness
is relating to oneself by willing to be the self one is,
and in such a way
as to discover
and exhibit
the power that creates one.

7. It is important to emphasize
that
such a notion of religion
does not make of religion
something other than the process
of becoming oneself.

Relating to God
is not something one does
over & beyond this process,
but in this process
and as its ground.

Religion, then, according to this perspective,
is not primarily
a collective phenomenon.

This is seen by Lonergan, too,
for whom religious conversion
or moving into that realm of meaning
which he calls transcendence,
is first individual,
then communal,
then historical.

Thus, if the divine is,
and if it is to be found in human life,
it is to be found in the process of self-constitution,

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and not independently of this process.

Religion is the self-conscious becoming
of the individual

as this particular man or woman.

Inauthenticity in religion

is failure to assume the burden of this process;

authenticity in religion

is assuming this charge to become oneself in free
and responsible self-constitution.

8.

↳ This opens up an interesting correlation
between our discussion of culture
and this treatment of religion.

The carrier of the new culture

is the individual,

the arena of its birth pangs
our own inner space.

But religion is what the individual

does with his or her own inner space.

And thus the form of the emergence

of the new culture is religion.

Religion and the culture-bearing capacity

of men and women

are one.

The individual's participation

in the emergence

of a new cultural epoch

is the individual's religion,

and his or her religion

is participation in cultural evolution.

For these two terms are equal to a third:

what the individual does with his or her own individuality.

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We have arrived, then,
at a correlation of religion & culture:
religion, ~~is~~ what the individual
does with his or her own solitariness,
as commitment to the self-conscious
task of self-constitution,
is the principal bearer of culture.

This is above all the case today,
when a ^{world-}cultural epoch is emerging
which will be a discovery
of our universal humanity (the grid, along w. the symbols of
the collective unconscious)

The latter task is a function, obviously,
of what the individual does
with his or her own solitariness,
making for the differentiated totality
of all that we are.

9. This process of self-conscious self-constitution
we shall name, with Jung,
individuation. Ind'm is both religion & bearer of culture.

Later,
we will see
what Jung includes in this notion.

Beyond Jung,
I include the dimensions or levels
of es disengaged by Lonergan.

For now, I wish only to indicate
my use of the term
in relation to our discussion
of religion & culture.

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10. There are, I think,
two difficulties
with what I am proposing
that we will have to study.
First, am I privatizing religion
and the task of creating culture?
Second, modern culture
is conspicuous for its denial
of ultimacy in ~~its~~ experience,
for its refusal
to admit that talk of God
has any meaning
or validity.

The first of these difficulties
will involve a study of
Whitehead's Religion in the Making, to p. 86.

The second will be the main point
of the next part of our course.