

D0256

1. From alienation to liberation
2. Paulo Freire: conscientization
3. The contribution of Bernard Lonergan
4. Lewis Mumford: Alternative Human Futures

1. For Section 1: I dealt in the last class with the treatment accorded humanity in the social sciences, and focused on behavioral psychology because there the point is so obvious: the social sciences, in some of their major orientations, have succeeded in voiding humanity of its most appropriate characteristics, of what is most distinctive by humans, namely interiority: what can be understood <sup>as distinctively human</sup> only if one is willing to grant, <sup>whether or not:</sup> that the data on humanity are twofold: the data of sense, what one can observe with external sense, what people say and do; and the data of consciousness, what people experience even though they don't see it and cannot measure it: acts of understanding, where one grasps meaning, acts of judgment, where one affirms that indeed one has or has not understood correctly, and acts of decision, where one chooses a certain definite orientation and relinquishes others. That is the main point I wished to make in the last class, and the ~~only~~ one that is most essential before we can move on. There are data on man that cannot be accounted for in the terms laid down by behavioral psychology, which is at best a partial knowledge of humanity.

There is, however, a second point: to the extent that the data of consciousness are overlooked by those who claim to be studying humanity, there is created the very real possibility that these same data will be overlooked by those whose task is the making of humanity. And that task belongs to all of us. We are the makers of the human world. To the extent that our making is informed by an <sup>ideology</sup> ~~understanding~~ that has systematically avoided a large field of data on humanity, to that extent we may be making a world that is unfit for human habitation. And we may also be preparing the way for ourselves and for others who come after us to be the pawns, the objects, of a managerial elite who condition our responses to fit

the demands of a preconceived social and political order. <sup>To put it another way:</sup> By neglecting intelligence, reason, and freedom as constituent features of human beings, we may be allowing intelligence, reason, and freedom to rigidify, harden, be programmed to meet the dictates of social engineers. Every human capacity is developed only by exercise and practice: walking, playing the piano, athletic skills. The same is true of intelligence, reason, and decision. These depend for their development on the exercise of the questioning capacities of the human subject. And the intent of the manipulative dimension of the behavioral approach is to silence the questioning capacity of the human person. The experts know what is best and will modify, shape, our behavior to fit that pattern. Thus Skinner says he wants not only to observe people behaving, he wants to make them behave. And he defines behavior as "simply the ~~the~~ movement of an organism or of its parts in a frame of reference provided by the organism itself or by various external objects or fields of force." Skinner will make people behave by providing that frame of reference, by controlling their environment, by manipulating the fields of force in such a way that <sup>people (organisms)</sup> they make the right response to the right stimuli. And, since the right responses have to be determined by somebody, who better than the expert, the manager behind the scenes, the behavioral scientist?

We have spoken in earlier lectures of the gap that is opened for human freedom by the tremendous advance in knowledge of the world and of humanity: <sup>a)</sup> there is so much to be learned to become good in one small area that one has to specialize, cannot

any longer be qualified in several areas as in the Renaissance;  
2) there are so many human possibilities disclosed by the modern study of history, anthropology, etc., that we find it difficult to decide which of these many life-styles will be our own. The behaviorist is offered his opportunity precisely by this contemporary situation: he presents a tempting solution, tempting because it is so simple -- give up the illusion of self-constitution, let me make you what you will be by <sup>project</sup> controlling your environment that you will unquestioningly make certain responses to the stimuli offered you by your environment. [E.g. of this in student life: how many students make, even are encouraged to make, their 4 years of college life a period of free inquiry, of open exploration of themselves, their world, their heritage, their possibilities? This is the meaning of a liberal education. But for the vast majority, education is professional training, so pressured that there is no free time, no leisure, to ask one's own questions and arrive at one's own answers; no encouragement to find a truly integrating framework for what one is studying. Even our schools are programming people, including their minds and hearts, for adjustment to the demands of a particular socio-economic order. Not all of this is due to behaviorism strictly so-called; rather, behaviorism is one clear symptom of a more substantial, underlying, and far-reaching cultural phenomenon -- the programming of the masses of people for a particular way of life. Essential to that programming is the need to eliminate our capacity for ever further questioning re: meaning, truth, & value. And if intelligence is not exercised by questioning, it, like any other capacity, will atrophy.]

Thus our discussion of behaviorism has actually served a twofold function: a) it manifests a tendency within the human sciences to amputate humanity of a major portion of what rightly belongs to us; and b) it manifests a tendency in human life, in the organization of human affairs, to program us ~~for~~ to the specifications of a managerial elite. Anonymous. Program beyond human control.

Or is it? This second tendency leads us directly into the seventh topic we must discuss in our composite picture of the principal themes of modern life: the theme of integral human liberation. Not an Enlightenment theme. Emerges in a post-modern critique of the Enlightenment. For, over against the dehumanizing elements of the contemporary organization of human life, there is the faint beginning, the distant rumblings, of a dissident voice demanding that human beings be responsible for and free with regard to determining their own style and quality of life. This is, in general, what I mean by the theme of liberation: people are calling for liberation from the domination of the managerial elite, the bureaucrats, the anonymous socio-economic machines that have simply gone too far in controlling people's lives, have begun to touch a raw nerve. Different varieties in different places.

2. But liberation can become a theme only after people have been made aware of their servitude, of the extent to which they have been enslaved as questioners and as deciders within a social system that robs them of themselves, that alienates them from themselves, their work, and one another. One of the principal architects of this awareness is Paolo Freire, and he calls this awareness conscientization.

What, then, is conscientization and how is it the key to the releasing of the theme of integral human liberation? Conscientization is basically, the exposure of <sup>negatively</sup> previously unquestioned assumptions ~~that~~ about man's basic vocation in life that prevent people from developing and exercising their full humanity. There are all kinds of such <sup>assumptions</sup> ~~questions~~: they may be imposed by totalitarian governments, whether rightist or leftist, fascist or communist; they may be more subtly inculcated by a national culture, such as our own, which puts an absolute premium on efficiency, bureaucracy, and management; they may be hidden in everyday responses that are unknowingly racist or sexist or elitist in some other way. But however they are inculcated, they are a denial of the following tenet which Freire puts forward as the basic assumption of all genuine human liberation: "man's ontological vocation... is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively." (PO, 127.). It is precisely this subjectivity that we are deprived of both by social science models which are behaviorist or similar and by governments and social systems that program human responses to fit the specifications of the controllers. Conscientization, then, is learning to perceive ideological, social, political, and economic contradictions or <sup>contrary assumptions</sup> and to act against them, not by way of destructive fanaticism but by way of self-affirmation as a responsible subject.

Some examples of conscientization follow:

a. in the ideological sphere, the basic technique is what we might call the dialectic of performance and concept: thus, we had an example of this in the last class: <sup>a)</sup> if the behaviorist refuses to consider acts of understanding as part of the data on humanity, then how does he account for the importance he gives to his way of understanding human beings as opposed to, say, mine? <sup>b)</sup> if he refuses to allow that human beings are free to choose alternative courses of action, how does he account for his choice of the way the rest of us are to be programmed? <sup>c)</sup> if he refuses to admit that considerations of value are important for human beings, how does he account for the fact that what he envisions is a new and better world? The technique is an old one: Aristotle employed it against the skeptic, who said, "It is impossible for the human mind to arrive at any truth." Aristotle asked the skeptic: "Is that a true statement?" If it is, the skeptic has contradicted himself. If it is not, Aristotle said, then why should we pay any attention to it? The basic idea is: catch the contradiction between what a person says and what that person is doing when he says this.

b. In the social and political sphere, the example Freire gives is a bit more subtle but should be clear. Freire's opponents in Brazil said to him: "Your mode of education is going to lead to anarchy, disorder, and fanaticism." Freire answered

them: "What you really mean is: it is better for the victims of injustice not to recognize themselves as victims of injustice." What you really want and mean is: the status quo is better than what would eventuate if people were free; it is better that I maintain the privileges that are now mine than that there be a democratization of power and a just distribution of goods.

- c. Closer to home: Against the position I am offering that there is a danger that, even in our educational <sup>system in the U.S.</sup>, we are being programmed to fit the specifications of an anonymous managerial elite, it is apt to be objected that I am trying to subvert ~~to~~ smoothly functioning educational institutions that <sup>are</sup> producing responsible, law-abiding citizens for the professions of law, dentistry, medicine, business, etc. To which I would respond: you are assuming that a person will be a responsible citizen to the extent he/she has not had the time and freedom to raise and answer questions of ultimate meaning and value; what you are afraid of, is that if these questions are faced they may demand a change in your educational philosophy and praxis; you would prefer to train rather than to educate, to manipulate rather than to provide opportunities for learning, where learning is a matter of accumulating insights and not a matter of being conditioned to respond automatically in a certain way.

The basic assumption, again, and phrased positively, is: man's ontological vocation is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively. This is, I believe, the basic assumption of all genuine liberation movements. Genuine liberation



depends on recovering ourselves as subjects of our own operations -- recovering our subjectivity from those who would rob us of it, whether there be social scientists, philosophers, bureaucrats, presidents of multinational corporations, dictators, or whatever. The key to liberation is the correct and ~~most~~ most extensive answer we can give to the question: what is human subjectivity? Answering this not in a manner that presents us with another theory, but in such a way that we make our own, claim as our own our operations as human subjects.

To say that our vocation is to be Subjects who act upon and transform the world and to move toward ever new possibilities of fuller & richer life raises the question of norms.

3. The contribution of Bernard Lonergan: It is here that I can begin to introduce you to the thought of Lonergan, for he has made a contribution to this integral human liberation. Lonergan has offered us the most extensive analysis yet provided by any thinker of the data of consciousness, the operations of the human subject as human subject. He lists the following operations: dreaming, seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, <sup>feeling, moving,</sup> tasting, <sup>and</sup> inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, formulating, <sup>and</sup> reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, judging, <sup>and</sup> deliberating, evaluating, deciding, <sup>and</sup> acting, communicating, acting, <sup>and</sup> loving. But just a list of operations is inconclusive, and Lonergan does far more than simply list them. Through painstaking analysis, some of which we will come to see in our reading, he brings us to recognize that our operations as subjects are arranged in a pattern that gives rise to four distinct but related levels of consciousness: (introduce)

The key to integral human liberation, is the recovery of ourselves as subjects of these operations, in this pattern. I am

and thought  
 liberated for authentic human performance, to the extent I am  
 deliberately <sup>par</sup> attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible  
 subject of operations in this pattern. Liberated from manipulation,  
 alienation, lostness in the "out there." Liberated for my own  
 action as one who constitutes the human world and, in so  
 doing, as one who constitutes myself, who takes responsibility  
 for the development of my own personality and character and for  
 the quality of life that I and my fellow human beings are to enjoy.  
 Liberated for self-possession.

LEVELSOPERATIONSNORMS

4. Lewis Mumford: Alternative Human Futures. Our last two  
 classes should make it clear that, in a very definite sense,  
 humankind today stands at a kind of crossroads, if my analysis is  
 correct. Mumford, in The Transformations of Man, outlines the two  
 possibilities: post-historic humanity and world-cultural humanity.  
 Post-historic humanity <sup>(cf. LW)</sup> will result from widening further the  
 split ~~of~~ between human interiority and the management of human  
 affairs that is so pronounced in the behaviorist ideology. As  
 Mumford describes it, it would mean that "all human purposes  
 would be swallowed up in a mechanical process immune to  
 any human desire that diverged from it." (120) Physical activities,  
 environment, biological and social reality will all be controlled by the  
 designs of the managerial elite. Survival will depend on adaptation to  
 the controlling machine. The spontaneity of the artist, the poet, the  
 saint, will be eliminated from the human scene. "To become more

human, to explore further into the depths of man's nature, to pursue the divine, are no longer goals for machine-made man." Intelligence, like instinct, will become unconscious from not being exercised.

The only rationality will belong to the social machine. "Sympathy and empathy, the ability to participate with imagination and love in the lives of other men, have no place in the post-historic methodology; for post-historic culture demands that all men should be treated as things." We would exist, no longer in life, but in a "mechanically engineered coma." The light of consciousness would return to darkness.

World-cultural humanity would be the other possibility, but to realize it, a transformation every bit as momentous as the emergence of intelligence and reason from myth and the consequent birth of a civilized humanity will be required. A new self will have to come into being: a self that can take as its province the entire world and that can make of the planet earth an organic unity based on the fullest utilization of all the resources of nature and of history.

This will be possible by an appropriation through humane education of what is universally human: namely, the dynamism of human consciousness itself. Through this planetization of *es* mankind will become one, not by totalitarian uniformity, as in post-historic humanity, but by appropriating <sup>all</sup> the human values already brought into existence in the history of human differentiation of consciousness. This can take place only if the nature of human consciousness itself is disclosed to each of us for what it is, and if we make it our own possession, by affirming ourselves as the Subjects of distinctively human operations.

Again, perhaps, you can see the importance of Lowygan: wherever there are and have been human beings, they dream, they experience, understand they reach for truth, they have the capacity to love responsibly. A new science of human *es* can help us start there.