

D0257

- LECTURE 8: The Second Enlightenment: Hope for a Human future.

The theme of integral human liberation:

1. A new convergence
2. The 2nd Enlightenment
3. Characteristics of a 2nd Enlightenment
 - A. Negatively
 - 1) critique of myth of progress
 - 2) critique of objectivism
 - 3) General critical observations
 - B. Positively
 - 1) The notion of authenticity (Louergan)
 - 2) The discovery of the unconscious (Freud & Jung)
 - 3) The re-discovery of dialectic
 - 4) Universal, humane solidarity: Louergan and Jung
4. Resistance to the 2nd Enlightenment
5. Toward theological correlations

John's office hrs.

Tues. 1:15 - 3:00

Wed. 11:40 - 4:00

1. A new convergence

In the list of the eight constituents of our modern world, with which Christianity is to be mediated by theology, the seventh was "the theme of integral human liberation." If we examine carefully the phenomena covered by this rubric, we will find that the theme of liberation so widely discussed today means primarily liberation from the results of the shortcomings of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment proclaimed liberation from superstition, emancipation from authority, disenchantment with myth. The ^{new, converging} liberation movements -- the Frankfurt school of sociology, political theology, liberation ^{psychoanalytic thought, the Fr. O of Leary's} theology -- are proclaiming liberation from the purely instrumental use of reason ^(no questioning of ends) involved in the Enlightenment's polemic against superstition; emancipation from the oppressive authority of a social system set up by uncritical reason; and disenchantment with disenchantment, with the sterile efficiency, the anesthetic orderliness, the unquestioning perfunctoriness of a mind that has lost all contact with the irrational and spontaneous inevitabilities out of which it emerged but from which it has cut itself off. The air is too thin for human beings, say the liberationists. We can't breathe, we are dying of asphyxiation. The atmosphere is stifling, the very atmosphere promoted by the Enlightenment which wanted to set us free.

2. The Possibility of a 2nd Enlightenment.

From many sides, then, and from a diversity of backgrounds, there seems to be emerging today a consensus, a convergence of voices, calling for a 2nd Enlightenment. These voices in many instances have yet to find each other or to acknowledge their potential complementarity and unity. But there is a unity of conviction that the Enlightenment and

its offspring are not enough, that the offspring is in fact a stillbirth, that secular humanism is not human enough, that the modern world as we have known it is at an end, that a post-modern world is emerging that will take its stand on the 2nd Enlightenment, just as the modern world took its on the first.

3. Characteristics of a 2nd Enlightenment:

Rather than detail all of the varieties of liberation thought, then, it seems best to me to focus on the essential characteristics of a genuine second enlightenment. As I've already indicated, there has yet to emerge a single line of development that includes all of these characteristics in an ordered fashion. At best, they are all still potential contributors to a new mentality, to a new enlightenment.

I will deal with the features of a possible second enlightenment first negatively, then positively.

^{a)} Negatively, the movements of thought I have in mind are bound together by a firm conviction that the first enlightenment has had disastrous consequences for humanity. Some of these are:

- a. the myth of automatic progress, leading to various forms of more or less laissez-faire capitalism, has resulted in social and economic injustice due to the naive (and at times downright malicious) neglect of questions of social responsibility, balance of energies, distribution of wealth and resources, alienation of people from their work, etc.;
- ~~b.~~ the Frankfurt sociologists trace all of this to a reduction of reason to its instrumentalist capacities;

6. The psychologists, Freud and Jung, have emphasized the manner in which Enlightenment reason has repressed and mangled human sensitivity and feeling; others, including Lonergan, would go further: the overemphasis on the manipulable and so-called objective aspects of man's behavior has led to a neglect of the subject in general: of reason as well as of feeling, of intelligence as well as of the dark side, the needs of our bodily nature, the *ues*. What is exposed here is how a false dichotomy can be set up between reason and feeling. Both are neglected by Enlightenment rationality -- so, there may be a dichotomy between Enlightenment rationality and feeling, but not between reason itself and feeling, for there is also a dichotomy between E. rationality and reason itself, E. rationality is not very reasonable, not self-critical, not aware of its impoverishment of the full dimensions of human reason.

At any rate, both from the side of the psychologists and from that of Lonergan, you get the realization that the Enlightenment has resulted in disease and disorder, in a need for therapy, for healing. Freud and Jung offer therapies for our affective lives, Lonergan offers a therapy for our intelligence and reason.

Generally, then, the negative conviction uniting the potential contributors to the Second Enlightenment is the realization, the insight that, for all its good intentions, the first Enlightenment has failed because it naively neglected too much that truly belongs to our humanity. It is essential to grasp the import of this point: the critique is that the first Enlightenment did not go far enough in detailing what is human: not that it went too far, but that in centering on reason, it centered on only a part of reason, and even then on its least noble and truly human aspects.

The critiques do not, then, arise from an essentially conservative or religiously fundamentalist base, however open they are to genuine theological use. The point is rather that the Enlightenment did not go far enough in its championing of human reason, and eventually resulted in the irony of dehumanizing the human beings it set out to liberate from dehumanizing forces.

Thus the positivism and behaviorism that we discussed in the last class show the extent of dehumanization to which the neglect of the subject can go. The human subject has disappeared completely, and is replaced by a manipulable object controlled by a social engineer. On the social plane, this mentality results in the total subordination of individuals and communities to institutions, which have become an end in their own right rather than necessary means to the achievement of the human good.

Individuals have become means to the survival and strengthening of institutions, schools, business corporations, etc. And if one complains about this, he is accused of individualism, of wanting to just "do his own thing." But frequently the point to the criticism is not this at all, but rather is that social institutions exist to promote and further the human good: they don't exist for their own sake, nor is a critique of institutions a matter of individualism or anarchy. The human good is a process that is both individual and social, a continual and progressive making of man, an advancing of human authenticity, a fulfilling of human affectivity, and a directing of human work to ends that really are worthwhile. But the social institutions based on the ~~the~~ instrumentalized reason of the first Enlightenment -- the state, bureaucracy, economic system, public education -- are not fulfilling

this task. They are not promoting the making of man and of a truly human world, are not fostering an advance in authenticity or the fulfillment of our affectivity, are not encouraging us to focus our attention on what is really worthwhile as the criterion of our decisions. Rather, the social and economic institutions have the values become the end, the criterion, the norm: you've got to fit into the system; don't let your curiosity, your desire to know, your interests, get in your way. And so educational choices become based solely on values dictated by the system, "job" becomes the criterion of education, and professional training usurps the place of humane education, education to humanity -- which demands leisure, exposure to the great minds. Career decisions are made before people have had a chance to integrate, reflect, criticize, come to "one's own mind." How many college graduates have not discovered their own minds? Most! Why? Because our universities are part of a system whose very future depends on keeping people from discovering their own minds.

12.) This brings us to the positive features of the 2nd Enlightenment: what it is discovering about the human mind. There are at least three factors, each of which is the discovery of a different group of people or of different individuals:

- 1) From Lonergan, we have the emphasis on the possibilities of being an authentic or inauthentic human being, and the equation of authenticity with objectivity: objectivity is not what the E.-thought it was: looking at all the facts "out there;" objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, of subjectivity that is attentive, intelligent,

reasonable, responsible. Thus the attitude of "I'm just dealing with the facts out there" -- whether it be w. regard to economics or behavioral psychology or politics -- is a most inauthentic and unobjective attitude. It presumes you can be objective by just looking -- "look at the facts, man!" -- rather than only by questioning, by asking questions for meaning, for truth, and for value.

2.) From Freud and Jung, we have yet a further discovery of interiority, namely, of the unconscious side of the human mind, also neglected by the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on instrumental and manipulative reason, on the power of the ego to control. This emphasis has resulted in the neglect and brutalizing of human feeling, in its subordination to the aims of an increasingly technocratic mentality.

3.) Finally, there has been the ^{re-}discovery of the dialectical capacities of the human mind. This is something you necessarily overlook if you emphasize reason as instrumental, manipulative, controlling. Basically, such a rediscovery means that reason is capable, not only of implementing particular means to well-defined ends, but of setting up and/or tearing down ends themselves, of criticizing, of issuing, if need be, a fundamental "No" to the idols of ^{the} instrumentalist mentality. "We can shape you anyway ~~if~~ we want," say the behaviorists. "Not if I'm aware that that is what you are trying to do, and continually on my guard against letting you dictate to what use I shall be put," says dialectically sophisticated reason. CONSCIENTIZATION (FREIRE)

should still be enjoying the leisure of learning for its own sake, social and economic and professional pressures allow one no leisure just to learn, to integrate, to reflect, to criticize, to come to "one's own mind" on things. ^{leisure, the basis of culture.} How many people graduate from liberal arts today having discovered their own minds? I suspect very few, because our universities are part of ^a the system whose very future depends on keeping people from discovering their own minds. What do I mean by this?

→ What is the Second Enlightenment discovering, then, about the human mind? What would it help us to discover if we were to take its advice and follow its guidance? ^{Why would this discovery undermine the present} The answer, I believe, <sup>insti-
tu-
tional
realities?</sup> is threefold, and each element of it has been contributed by a different party or group: Three things about the human mind that the 1st E. overlooked:

- x - First, the dialectical capacities of the human mind; Hegel, Marx, Frankfurt
- x - Second, the unconscious side of the human mind; Freud, Jung
- x - Third, the realization that objectivity is a function of subjectivity; Lonergan.

→ The neglect of those aspects of our minds ^{on the part of the 1st E.} has, according to the Second Enlightenment, resulted in the injustice, the unhappiness, the psychological and social victimization of all of us, whether we be members of the oppressors or of the oppressed. All -- oppressors and oppressed -- have been dehumanized by the First Enlightenment -- this is ironic in that the 1st E. wanted, intended, to liberate us, emancipate us. Instead it has resulted in personal and social alienation,

in injustice and oppression, in the vicious circle of poverty, in social institutions that rob us of our own minds, ^(including schools) for the 2nd Enlightenment, the reason for this ironic result is that the 1st Enlightenment ^{and appreciation} did not go far enough in its understanding of human reason, and so it truncated reason in a cut-de-sac from which it can emerge only by discovering those aspects of its own constitution that were neglected by the 1st Enlightenment. And so, for the 2nd Enlightenment, the radical treatment of our social and psychological ills is to get at their roots by uncovering and making explicit those aspects of the human mind that were ignored by the First Enlightenment, with such disastrous consequences for all of us.

Resistance to 2nd Enlightenment.
(BREAK) There is tremendous resistance on the part

of most people to the emphases of the contributors to the 2nd Enlightenment. In each case, there is a ^{special} threat that the Enlightenment-tutored mind is well aware of and will do anything to avoid.

Against the 2nd Enlightenment's insistence on the dialectical capacities of the human mind, there is the fear that a dialectically tutored mind will expose the ^{special} interests and biases of that keep the present system going. Against the 2nd Enlightenment's insistence on the unconscious side of the human mind, there stands the fear that a discovery of the meaning of one's dreams will expose the sham and hypocrisy

Don't ignore treating the consequences, but fix priorities on the roots: developing a new science of humanity, whose data include in a primary and privileged fashion the data on consciousness → recognition of authenticity (as only a possibility).

of one's conscious everyday life, which seems so nice, so respectable, so upwardly mobile through the ranks of professional and social classes. Against the 2nd Enlightenment's insistence that objectivity is a function of subjectivity, there stands the fear that, if this true, then I cannot be objective, ^{or be deprived of being objective} unless I get to know myself, and the process of getting to know myself may reveal that I haven't really been very objective at all, that I've been, again, biased, self-centred, egotistic, even when I thought I was really being objective -- i.e., dealing with "the facts out there." But if objectivity is a function of subjectivity, then I'm not being objective at all when I just look at "the facts out there," but only when I question authentically my experience so as to discover the truth, however painful it may be. The Second Enlightenment, in general, then, is motivated by a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that ^{from the outset} presumes that the naive attitude of extroverted consciousness, of ego-consciousness, of the "marketing personality" ^{or the bureaucrat} resulting from the social and economic systems of the West, is living under an illusion about what is real, and that the illusion principally affects himself: he does not know who he is, and he relentlessly flees understanding who he is, for that would mean both the confession of his previous stupidity and the conversion of his ways. And so he laughs at talk about authenticity or about the unconscious or about social

injustice. He laughs at it, but deep down he hates it, for it exposes the lie of his own life, the trap he's allowed himself to get caught in by "buying into the system," by trying, in strangely evangelical terms, to gain the whole world and lose himself in the process. ^{5. Toward Theological Correlations:} Very strangely, the 2nd Enlightenment, by uncovering dimensions of our own minds left neglected by the first, and so by pushing further the 1st E's insistence on our own reason and on this world, finds itself rejoicing at the other end the Gospel Christianity so strongly ridiculed by the 1st Enlightenment. Something very strange is happening: a movement that began by insisting on the autonomy of reason from religion, when carried forward by those who take seriously the full life of reason, finds itself saying things that sound strangely like what the religion it rejected 200 years ago may have been trying to say for 2000 years. And if this is the case, two very interesting results emerge:

- 1) those who resist, despise, ridicule the emphases of the 2nd Enlightenment are also enemies of the true meaning of Christianity, even if they call themselves Christians and go to church every Sunday, etc., etc.;

and 2) perhaps here, in the data uncovered by the 2nd Enlightenment, theology can find what it needs if it is to answer the challenge of the first Enlightenment: perhaps there are verifiable foundations in human experience for the fundamental faith of Christianity, perhaps these data are being uncovered in a thoroughly secular (though not secularist) way by the 2nd Enlightenment, by dialectical critiques of social injustice and oppression, by psychoanalytic critiques of the hypocrisy and egoism of the conscious mind, and by epistemological critiques of the false notion of objectivity that led to the construction of the behavioral sciences and of the society that "owes" them so much.

The challenge of the first Enlightenment can be met if theology champions the second Enlightenment, for what the second Enlightenment is disclosing is what may well have been the meaning of Christianity all along, even if the Church itself in many instances betrayed that meaning. The correlations between Christianity's fundamental faith and our experience in this world can be found, are being found by the 2nd Enlightenment. They're revealing a hard fact, however: they're revealing that most of us

have misconceived all along what Christianity is, that we've been co-opted by the systems erected by the 1st Enlightenment, and that in joining these systems we've lost not only ourselves but our Christian faith as well, even if we continue to go through the motions and say the right words and even pray occasionally. For the 2nd Enlightenment is revealing what authentic selfhood is, it is doing so by thoroughly intelligent and rational means, and what it is revealing is startlingly like the most radical statements of the Gospel, those statements that tell what it's really all about:

-- Go, sell what you have, give the money to the poor, and come, follow Me.

-- He who would save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for My sake and that of the Gospel will find it.

-- Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

What the 2nd Enlightenment really threatens is not Christianity but a life that calls itself Christian w/o being so, a life that is built on the ^{egoism and} ^{instrumentalism} of the 1st Enlightenment, a life that refuses to recognize that the human mind is ^{much more,} _{more} than the 1st Enlightenment thought it was.