

D0269

April 6

1. OFFICE

- 2. Next paper: "The Subject," due April 20. Qu. next Tues.
- 3. 6 out of 8 papers, r. th. 7 out of 9.

I. Theology and Education

In the last class, I elaborated the following three statements:

1. Despite the distinction between the everyday level and the superstructural level of culture, there is a reciprocal relationship between them. The everyday level feeds the superstructure with its materials. The superstructural understanding filters down to the everyday level to influence the meanings and values in terms of which people live their lives.

2. The contemporary American University is fundamentally an Enlightenment institution. It is modelled on the myth of value-free education, and so fails to teach students to raise value questions. This superstructural failure is related in the form of a vicious circle to the everyday acceptance of the way things are as normative. On both the everyday level and the superstructural level, human intelligence is amputated by its failure to pursue the questioning process to its term in questions of value. Task of rectifying situation becomes ever more difficult.

3. The Catholic University in America resisted the myth of value-free education until the mid-1950's, but it did so in a classicist manner. The concern for the education of a value-conscious student became out of touch with the concern for the education of a knowledgeable student, since the disciplines of philosophy and theology, which concerned themselves with questions of value, were unable to relate themselves coherently to modern science, modern human studies, and modern philosophy. (To last class notes on Thesis 3).

fails to include value of process of academic inquiry. Academy becomes, not agent of change, but a servant of the society. Univ's task is cultural, not social.

Take questions.

April 17, 1955

Kate ...

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Thesis 4: With the collapse of the classicist framework, Catholic University education became increasingly cast in an Enlightenment mode. ^{Nothing to replace classicist framework.} The attempt at a synthesis of superstructural knowledge from the standpoint of philosophy and theology was abandoned. The everyday result was that religion came to appear even more marginal to the concerns of life in this world, since at the superstructural level theology could not relate religion to the other aspects of life studied in other disciplines. Value-free science and value-free professional training came to characterize the education of students in Catholic universities, and this acceptance at the superstructural level of things as they are as normative made the ^{Catholic} University another training ground to enable students to adapt to things as they are, rather than a place where students could prepare through education to engage in the world as transforming agents -- i.e., as human beings who have claimed their humanity as their own, and who grant to the questioning spirit of human intelligence the normative status that belongs to it.

Thesis 5: Catholic theology is being restructured today, however, and the basis of the restructuring is Donagan's claim that reflection on conversion is the foundation of theology. Catholic theology had itself suffered from the collapse of the classicist framework, and had for a time lost its identity and sense of responsibility to Christian faith. It too had for a time fallen victim to the trap of granting

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to things as they are a normative status. It tried, then, to be "relevant" at all costs, even at the cost of Christian faith. But Lonergan's insistence that theology is reflection on conversion rescues theology from this trap. For conversion is a turning away from things as they are and an approximation to things as they should be, starting with oneself. And reflection on conversion will thus be also a reflection that contrasts the way things are with the way they could and should be. It turns the mind to the consideration once again of values as a central concern of the human mind and heart. If theology becomes a reflection on conversion, then the myth of value-free education is broken, but not in a classicist fashion, but in an empirical fashion -- for conversion is a human experience, not a logical first principle.

Thesis 6: A theology that makes reflection on conversion its foundational moment, then, etc. (next page).

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5. Theology and other disciplines.

Praxis 6: A theology that makes reflection on conversion its foundational moment, then, has a contribution to make to other scientific and scholarly disciplines, and to professional training in higher education. Such a theology will challenge at its roots the Enlightenment myth of value-free knowledge and the implicit educational philosophy that assumes one can be truly educated without having ^{posed the question of personal transformation} ~~been profoundly changed as a human person~~. If such a theology enters ^{respectfully} into dialogue with other disciplines and with professional educators, it will slowly effect a profound change in the contours and atmosphere of Catholic University education.

This is theology's vocation today: to effect at the superstructural level the same change in modern culture that religion is called to effect at the everyday level. Theology will do this primarily by continuing to work on its elaboration of the experience of conversion in modern life, and by articulating this experience in such a way that its meaning can be integrated with the experiences that are reflected on in the other disciplines and departments of modern education. Out of this collaborative venture there will arise a new integrating factor in Catholic University education: what will integrate modern Catholic education in a manner analogous to what scholastic philosophy and theology did for classicist Catholic education — is the articulation of the ^{subject's} conversion experience in all its depth, its ^{its varieties,} aspects, its history, its ups and downs, advances and breakdowns, effects and ramifications. If such a theology can enter into dialogue with