

Cosmopolis - Peterson - Conversion-04 - May 22nd, 2019 - Intellectual Conversion

MEDIATION ET AL

MEDIATION

1. Mediation in General
2. Mutual Mediation
3. Self-Mediation
 - a. Living
 - b. Consciousness
 - c. Self-Consciousness
4. Mutual Self-Mediation

Self-transcendence is achieved through mutual self-mediation. To encounter the reality of another, especially that of the Divine Mystery, is to embrace a radical change in direction, a radical change in priorities (a radical shift in terminal value).

The sensate world, the descriptive world in which we live, is mediated through an abstract world. In short we live in a world mediated by meaning where meaning is not “out-there-to-be-known but ultimately grounded in the self.

Our world is mediated through our foundational stance, an stance that can be studied using Lonergan’s functional specialty of Foundations. But the stance we choose, either deliberately or by tradition, is a function of the dialectic between positions and counter-positions prevalent in society. Through mutual self-mediation we decide which of these positions are in fact positions and which are counter-positions. This is the “pivot” point.

The control mediator for making such distinctions is one’s foundational stance. The energy mediator is the drive toward transcendence.

In short, the decision to adopt the terminal value that one does emerges from a process of mutual self-mediation. This process works itself out at the third reflective level of intelligence, one involving the personal freedom to follow the good achieved or actualized through personal encounters with others leading to the selection of true terminal value.

JASPER’S AXIAL AGE

At some point, human population growth exceeded the capacity for self-control (Amish and other self-correcting cultures have found an upper limit in community size to be around 150 tops; beyond that, shame cannot be used to regulate human behavior). What was needed was

FOUNDATIONS

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

St. Ignatius, in his classic “Spiritual Exercises”, notes that there are two different ways in which people can experience the Holy Spirit depending on their foundational stance.

1. If, over the course of their lives, individuals have taken up with the desire to dominate others regardless of any consideration of a Divine Mystery, then the lightest touch of the Spirit is felt like a drop of water falling on a hot skillet.

2. If individuals take to the call to transcendence, then the harshest touch of the Spirit is perceived as the gentlest of all caresses.

This foundational difference lies between two fundamental generative principles in a dialectic between good and evil. The former make decisions based on the life-affirming principles of the Divine Mystery, while the latter take up the death-embracing spiteful and resentment-ridden delusions of a “Satan.”

Note that like coalesce around like, for each speak the same foundational language and so recognize each other. At the same time, individuals living at opposite ends of the spectrum are innately hostile to each other.

There is an interesting difference. Because of the lack of conversion, those who have given their allegiance to the death-embracing “satanic” generative principle are incapable of understanding those whose existence is given meaning through the Divine Mystery, while those who have can understanding the interests and concerns of those who have reject the Divine presence.

a broad cultural set of standards, hence the rise of various belief systems such as Buddhism, etc.

In our mixed cultural milieu no one culture can set ethical norms for all. The elite turned to the hard sciences as the model for controlling meaning. Unfortunately the canons of the empirical method do not allow for the full understanding of what it means to be human. Part of the problem of a rising “populace” rebellion is that it has its roots in an elite who have adopted “scientific” methods of ruling over others, a method that is extremely compatible with bureaucratic desires to regulate human behavior. Such a truncated mentality not only fails to recognize what it means to actually govern human beings but cannot recognize the presence of a Divine Mystery operating in human affairs. For the soft sciences trying to model themselves after the hard cannot measure the Divine. Neither can they accept an “outside” power.

AN EVALUATIVE HISTORY (DIALECTICS)

The affirmation of a Divine Mystery creates a dialectic between that mystery and human concerns, a dialectic known as the struggle between good and evil.

In this universal struggle, there are two basic generative principles people can rely upon when deciding on their foundational stance: life-affirming or death-embracing. The former is grounded in revelation augmented by the innate drive of human consciousness towards transcendence, while the latter is grounded in a rejection of the Divine in favor of human dominance. The former are characterized by faith, hope, and charity; the latter by deceit and false promises.

In our own times, our cultural heritage has been corrupted by a cultural Marxism with its primary doctrines that there is no truth only agendas, that good intentions are sufficient to justify any course of action, the rise of the Frankfurt’s School’s Critical Theory, and class affiliation beats individual character.

But this could not have been achieved had there not been the Enlightenment, for the Enlightenment disregarded any Divine authority over human affairs in favor of “man being the measure of all things.” Control over meaning had devolved into human hands. Behind all this lies a gnosticism, a belief in special knowledge known only to a few adapts (in our times, “scientists”).

We are currently living in a “spiritual vacuum,” a time in which God reveals His presence by His absence. This means living in a culture where the loss of the life-affirming generative principle leads to an existential crisis, a deep distress in facing an abyss of meaninglessness when it comes to knowing who one really is, what one’s existence really means. There is a deep tension, a desperate need to know that has no possibility of resolution without some form of religious conversion.

This is reflected in a cultural inability to recognize evil for what it is (socialism as the “devil’s palace, climate fear to generate support for global dominance, etc.) combined with a loss of hope and deep despair for any future (e.g., sharp drop in the birth rate).

THE “SELF”

1. The self is a “x” to be known? Are a mystery to ourselves, not “puppets” to control as we would wish? We cannot create ourselves through will alone.

2. There are mechanisms at work that operate deep within the non-conscious psyche; consciousness is only part of who we are, and probably a small part at that.

3. Deep within there are drives toward wholeness, growth, and self-transcendence.

WHERE THE CHURCH WENT WRONG? (A FOUNDATIONAL PROBLEM)

1. Christianity is a universal religion, one that transcends any one tribal affiliation. It is a call to rise above family, clan, tribe, or cultural definitions of who one is, to join in the Community of Saints.

2. The spread of Christianity occurred in part due to the conversion of high status chiefs, etc., whose dependents were experted to adopt the same religion.

3. People tended to adhere to their own traditional cultures, which meant that the universal features of the church often became a thin veneer over traditional practices and beliefs.

4. What happened in Europe was that leaders of different cultural groups came to envision themselves as the true church, the real “light unto the nations”, all others being heretics.

5. Wars ensued.

6. Motto: it is truly hard to transcend one’s own inherited normative culture and embrace a truly transcendental perspective.

There is a fundamental difference between traditional cultures that are largely static in terms of one’s position and rank within society and dynamic cultures engaged in transcending themselves. In the former, mutual self-mediation takes the form of enforcing existing class structures and economic routines. In the latter, the individual can no longer depend upon tradition to give meaning to their lives but must find another route to meaningfulness.

Traditional societies often revolve around issues of honor. Dynamic “universal” cultures tend to revolve around laws, duties, and the responsibilities of citizenship. In the latter, justice is “blind” when it comes to enforcing the law, while in the former justice is met when honor is satisfied.

4. Inadequate foundational stances can severely distort such drives toward sanity, wisdom, and transcendence.

5. As the “self” matures, different possibilities for acting, for being in the world come into existence. This is part and parcel of adjusting and assimilating to a radical new notion of being.

6. This may well mean waking up to one’s true self (satori in Buddhist terms).

7. In might also mean a shift from identifying oneself with one’s transcended self to a transcending self where what is important above all else is ongoing conversion made manifest through the need to meeting the transcendental injunctions.