

CIRCULATION OF THOUGHT - 1949

Lectures 1-6
Feringer notes
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Lecture 1

WHY MUST SCIENCE AND RELIGION BE INTEGRATED TO MAKE OUR LIVES MORE FRUITFUL?

1/1 "The Holy Spirit" always ties together two times, father & son; B.C.-A.D.; Old and New Testament; this is clearly expressed in the Trinity and in the law and grace. This means it takes two generations for change (ideas to be accepted by others, even if "others" means a small group).

2/1 IF ONE IS TO CHANGE, one must divest him/her self of the old ways by acting on new ideas, "...the thinker must deliver the goods before he's paid for them..."

Founders are those who take the first step before anyone else knows. Often, perhaps always, one pays a heavy price of slander, persecution, being called insane. Abelard, Paracelsus, Jesus, Einstein are examples.

3/1 Natural science is to be differentiated from teaching by the fact that the teacher teaches accepted (traditional) knowledge while searching for something new. The idea of research is just that (re-search) for new knowledge. **THE IMPLICATION OF THIS NOTION IS FUNDAMENTAL**, that with teaching, students must be taught that at any moment knowledge

might be overthrown.

4/1 Theology is different from natural science. THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE MEANING OF PARADOX. Theology, addressing only issues of social science, is filled with paradox; we are cruel and loving, we curse and forgive, we gain lasting social order (peace) by allowing one freedom (only when one does something voluntarily will it last - in other words, only when one has accepted an idea into one's spirit). The constant battles of life are between issues such as good and evil, between acceptance of a government and resistance, between war and peace, between punishment and forgiving, between just and unjust laws. THESE ARE THE BASIC TYPES OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS EVERY GENERATION FACES. THEOLOGY IS THE SCIENCE OF BRINGING CONCORDANCE (RECONCILIATION) TO CONTRADICTIONS.

5. Teaching must be centered on what is important and what is unimportant, otherwise the next generation will have to learn by themselves, by re-inventing the foundations of society.

...the question of importance always involves a distinction between eternal values and immediate values. You have always to pause if you wish to give importance to a legal question. (i.e. between the eternal and the temporary) (p.6)

6. In the medieval university (1100 A.D. -1500) the teaching was between two opposing sides to an eternal social questions (for instance, how to resist tyranny). Eternal questions are in constant battle against the temporal (immediate) questions.

7. To deal with eternal questions representing eternal values is to take a risk because the outcome of our actions is never known. Our neighbor may respond to our love and tolerance by tyrannizing us, or even killing us. We may give a stranger shelter, not knowing if he will rob us. BUT WHAT TYPE OF WORLD DO WE CREATE IF WE DO NOT FOLLOW THE ETHICAL MANDATES? To take on and live such mandates is the essence of being "alive" spiritually. ERH contends that most people don't live, they don't face life's problems, they merely exist physically as consuming organisms, using resources.

8. There is an important distinction here between academies and universities. With academies the battle is between old and new knowledge, which compete. There must be a commitment to one or the other. In the university the battle is between different points of view about eternal questions, and here disputation and concordance are taught.

Lecture 2

1/2 From 1600 to 1800 universities (teaching) and academies (research institutions) were separate, then in 1800 research entered the university. Here ERH points out the phases of new information from new idea to commonplace. 1) One man dares to have the laboratory, 2) this spread to scientific institutions with research laboratories, 3) then universities build laboratories, and 4) finally, everyone can have a laboratory. (p.4) [RF - in modern times these phases have

just been reflected in the evolution of the computer, but the time-span was much faster.]

3/2 In social science the phases will be repeated, but by different methods. One can't find human nature in the abstracted atmosphere of the laboratory, but it may be by "camps", work service camps, summer camps, exploration camps. (p.4)

3/3 In the middle ages (500-1450) the old logic of Aristotle held forth, of syllogism (what ERH calls "lower logic"). Higher logic is concordance:

...the concurring is done where two minds think differently, but in unity of heart overcome their discord. (p.5) (the principle of dialectical concurring)

Lower logic begins with an assumption that cannot be proven (all men are mortal), and proceeds, (Socrates was a man, therefore Socrates was mortal). There are, of course as many logics as there are people who put forth assumptive premises, and there is no way to solve differences between the assumptions, except by commonly agreed - upon methods of proof over time.

4. ERH contrasts higher and lower logic with areas in the natural sciences, lower mathematics (arithmetic), and higher math (the introduction of infinity and zero). In another essay he contrasts lower grammar (vocabulary, rules of semantics, spelling, etc.) with higher grammar (the phases of social roles as between thought and action, and between speaker and listener). When the speaker gives orders he is acting as a god. The "I," role ERH calls it. In the parlance of this higher grammar, the listener is "you." When one addresses dead things, or things outside society, the subject is treated as an "it." Parallel of the "it," in social science, is the third person, objectively treated as the "outsider."

5. The power to speak has 3 aspects, 1) theological, reflecting the role of a truth-seeker, 2) a material aspect, the content of the message, and 3) social, the willingness of the speaker to address someone.

Lecture 3

3/1 The church was not necessarily opposed to natural science; from 1450 to 1650 the Catholic church embraced the new science. There was a distinction between the academy (research, but not teaching) and university (teaching, but not research). There was also a distinction between the future (new knowledge) and the past (what should be preserved).

(RF - I interpret ERH's assertions to mean, That the natural sciences grew out of the Middle ages (Catholic church), because previous to 1450 the churches created the university, which was teaching only about past liturgical knowledge. The academy, dedicated to creating new knowledge based on objectivity, was a very different creature.

In 1550 the Jesuit universities taught the natural sciences, to identify the miracles of the natural

world. Today, (beginning in 1600) the tendency is to go back to the pre-Jesuit phase of the university, which was theological only, as in the time of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Since the evolution of academies, which were subsumed by the modern universities, the focus of universities shifted away from teaching. THE UNIVERSITIES TODAY, ASSERTS ERH, HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT THEY EVOLVED FROM A CONCERN FOR ETHICS AND THEOLOGY.

2.If to live in the future is to be liberal, and to live in the past is conservative, either of these extremes is impossible.

They (liberals), have denied their own tree out of which they have grown...a liberal today is the most unhealthy creature in the world. He has a background of only a hundred years; and that's too short for any mind to be healthy...Liberalism...in this country means that a liberal can be without the conservatives. Now that's impossible. (p.3)

In other words, modern liberals fail to make the distinction between what should be preserved from the past and carried forward, and what should be forgotten. That is why their prescriptions are impossible!

He goes on to say that the modern liberals force a choice between atheism and the old religion, this isolating each from the other.

3.The evidence of liberalism is all around us. Liberals send their children to Sunday school or church, but don't go themselves. Knowledge in the university is taught with no references to the ethical considerations for practice. There is little or no willingness to make sacrifices for principles. Little is sacred, thus, there is little motivation to make the extraordinary effort (sacrifice) to establish peace, or to save a marriage, to save the environment, or to concern oneself with the plight of the homeless.

In other words, the practice of ethics in an effort to create a better community takes an "infinite effort," and that liberals are no longer inclined to do.

4.For instance, it is a very traditional thought to suggest that change, the creation of a new future and human growth, can be achieved:

...without an infinite investment. Because the three powers by which we create -- love, faith, and hope -- when they are treated as parts of space and time. (p.6)

In scientific and technological thinking, liberalism dominates and guide our values today. And at the other extreme, the so called super-religionists (fundamentalists?) separate their beliefs from the consequences of practice, believing that all will be right in heaven. WHERE THEN IS THE MOTIVATION TO ACT "WITH INFINITE INVESTMENT" IN EITHER CASE? "Doing God's work," as traditional religionists spout, is too abstract, and infers absolute guides for action out of the context of our everyday life. Liberalism, on the other hand, sets human judgement,

with all its frailties as an absolute standard. (i.e. growth only in terms of physical amenities). After 1789, the scientific curriculum in the universities was considered totally sufficient. (p.10)

5. Academies of the middle ages, as research institutions, were intolerant of the religion of their member; they would not tolerate science being guided by ethics. The Liberals say, "You are the captain of your Soul." On the other hand, belief in the Holy Spirit posits, "The Holy Spirit is captain of your Soul." Before 1789, the Catholics were not hostile to research, but they couldn't tolerate the beliefs of non-Catholic researchers. **THE RESULT WAS A SEPARATION OF THEOLOGY FROM SCIENCE.** (p.9)

Nobody is captain of his soul, or he has no soul. Soul is your part in God. And how can you be the captain of your soul, the one thing with which you are not yourself, but better than yourself... "I am captain of my soul" condemns a man not only to loneliness and isolation, but it condemns him even to supervise his only growing point, his soul...from the point of his mind. (p.12)

Inspiration, intuition, the source of creativity does not derive from logic.

"The decision is whether the mind, which is fixed, shall govern growth, or whether it shall not...The mind is insufficient for making peace and for begetting children. (p.13)

6. The result of this separation was a continuing atomism of knowledge into separate compartments, between disciplines, and especially between science and values.

7. Three sources of enmity between science and religion:

a. 1500 - 1640: Protestants say salvation comes from purifying the church. (Luther) Protestants were against science. Then, beginning with Descartes, the scientists said, "purify the mind to better see the world around us."

b. 1640 - 1789: Catholics oppose cooperation with Protestants. "They don't want to let their sheep lie with the wolves." (p.15)

c. 1789 - 1940: the liberal mind of the scientist wants to subjugate the soul, and the soul is lowered to the position of the "psyche."

8. The anticipated consequence of accepting the basic tenets of science as a guide to social analysis:

a. Brotherhood of all scholars.

b. The right of all men to benefit by the findings of this brotherhood.

c. Progress in science meant progress in life.

d. The public will sacrifice for scientific truth.

The actual consequence was:

- a. This belief was exploded along with the atomic bomb (after 1940); some stayed with science, some were guided by ethics first.
- b. All mankind did not benefit from every discovery because unprincipled people can use the knowledge for evil.
- c. Monopolies formed and technological progress did not necessarily benefit mankind.
- d. The masses don't like truth, they preferred their legends.

IN SUM, THE BASIC TENETS OF SCIENCE ARE NO LONGER UNIVERSALLY BELIEVED TO BE VALID AS GUIDES TO SOCIAL THOUGHT, I.E. TO PROGRESS IN THE COMMUNITY.

9. The tenets of the chapel are:

- a. Mankind is one; the human race must be seen in solidarity.
- b. Progress is possible if guided by the Holy Spirit. Mankind can better itself by this method.
- c. Progress will benefit mankind when its end is peace based on voluntarily accepted ethics.
- d. The clergy and laity are identical in their purposes. Scientists can be bought by governments or private interests. This could never be accepted as valid for churches.

KNOWLEDGE SHOULD MEAN SERVICE IS ABOVE POWER. "WITHOUT CHAPEL, SCIENCE BELONGS TO THE PIGSTY." (p.19)

10. There must be mutual dependency between science and the chapel. Ethics, ungrounded in concrete behavior and observation of consequences are just as unthinkable as knowledge unbridled by standards.

ERH asserts that today the basic tenets of the chapel are unpracticed, and we see other races and socio-economic groups as different. He gives an example in law of the relationship between the judge and judged to show the principle of the solidarity of the human race is essential for justice.

Lecture - 4

1/4 The goal of human effort is to bear fruit, to create a society at peace. A fruitful individual (a person whose thought bears fruit in others) is a person who can serve three basic roles, as a teacher, as a ruler and as a parent. (p.1/4)

2/4 Knowledge devoid of charity and love is poison! Here ERH makes the point that knowledge,

put to use by and for greed destroys the society.

The idea is that scientists, and by inference all persons who create new knowledge must be guided by the four dogmas of the chapel described in the previous chapter.

3. Creating new knowledge is always a risk to one's own reputation, but if truth is sought in charity and love, one is willing to take such risk. Thus, ethical belief always must control one's dogma, as it "...prunes the tree of knowledge..." Pruning just as with trees, directs and engenders finer growth. This occurs with:

...only people whose knowledge is so pruned, so ennobled, so cultivated that they will bear the brunt of slander, of false appearances, of misunderstanding. (p.4)

A man who has never been misunderstood has never said anything important. (p.5)

Man is at his best when he is in danger, second best when at work, third best with friends, and fourth best when alone without anything to do. "The modern fiction is that man at leisure is better than at work. That's the opposite.." (p.5)

4 Science will not survive if the four tenets (and a 5th, "let there be science") are not followed. These are ethical tenets, not from science but from theology, and supported by the Catholic church before 1500. Without them science would collapse, rotting from the inside out, raising questions that do not bear fruit, cutting off communication between scientists, eliminating trust between the laity and the scientists. **WHEN THE FIVE TENETS ARE PRACTICED, THEY ARE COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIANITY!**

ERH contends that every one of the 4 are abandoned in this country.

5 "...a decent man in the circulation of thought always tries to make himself superfluous." Thus, a good scientist always shares his discoveries with others.

6 The circulation of thought, by its very process as described by these tenets, transforms thought. It is the seed of the apple, the link between the old and new tree.

One should manifest this idea by speaking on an important issue, saying in public what needs to be said and what nobody else is saying. For instance, in a city Council meeting one might need to say:

"I have to tell you that you are corrupt." That's not intellectual,..but that is taking upon yourself in a personal expression...what before you thought everybody knew, and which has not been forgotten, and which you now have to bring back into circulation. (p.13)

7. "The miracle in creation is man. And the miracle of man is that he grows. And the miracle of man is that he grows in season, when the time has come in his life." (p.15)

By this ERH means that we grow when we speak the truth at the right time, at the time when it will impress others to act in the right way, in a way that allows others (the community) to benefit.

8. St. Augustine said there are four ways to love; love above himself, love himself, love that which is like himself, and love below himself (people and creatures over-which he has power). These four tenets must underlay our thought. Loving those below us gives us humility and also admits we must be wards of those we can control, such as children and animals and other life. Love truth and believe in its importance.

a. To love truth means also that we are willing to be guided by our teachers and by the Holy Spirit, and to listen to authorities, who by definition speak the truth.

b. To love ourselves means that we are willing to speak out, to respect ourselves, to see ourselves one day as authority.

To awake every morning and have to look at the world as though we had never seen it before, is to be willing to renew ourselves and grow.

Uninteresting is a man who thinks he is already in existence. Interesting is a man who thinks he has never existed before today. (p.18)

You can't love yourself if you have no secret. You need to say "I know something which other people don't know about me...The only interesting people are those who still don't know who they are." (p.18) That is, they are still growing.

We love ourselves most when we give to others, when we sacrifice for the community. And we must love ourselves before we can love others.

9. In sum, we must love authority (above us), we must love ourselves, we must love our comrades, and we must love below us. (When we fall, we are "below" our normal selves, and to resurrect ourselves we must be willing to love ourselves in this state; as we do with others.

Lecture 5

1/5A "concept" or a "sphere of thought" or an "arena" within which some theory functions (what ERH calls a "cycle") is always unique to any "problem," and the method cannot exceed those boundaries. e.g. The laws for arithmetic cannot comprehend infinitely small, or infinitely large conceptions, these must be handled by a new system called "higher mathematics".

THE POINT HE MAKES IS THAT EACH CYCLE IS UNIQUE AND REQUIRES ITS OWN METHOD, AND THERE IS NEVER A LOGICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE GAPS. The rules (logic) for one level of thought in a given system never leads us to rules for the other. One must make a "jump" mentally. [RF, -These concepts have everyday application. They are consistent with some of my own work focusing on criteria for problem formulation.]

2/5 Logic is always based on a founding proposition that cannot be proven, but must be assumed. Thus, there are as many "logics" as there are propositions. ERH points out that in society, there are an infinite number of individual "logics." Syllogisms therefore have no power to answer the larger question of HOW TO INTEGRATE CYCLES. Such principles always derive from specific situations.

For instance, examining the commonly known Socratic syllogism; All men are mortal... ERH CONTRADICTS THIS LOGIC BY POINTING OUT THAT SOCRATES IS MORE THAN MERE FLESH AND BLOOD. His spirit has lived on. "You are a man plus something else." (p.3)

3/5 ERH also points out that labeling an individual tends to associate him/her within a logical context from which it is difficult to escape. He cites the case of an accused person in danger of being found guilty, solely because of the accusation.

ERH proceeds to show how the great achievement of the middle ages was to find a (CONCORDANCE), a method of freeing individuals from these labels. The simple method is to place one's self in the position of the other, then judge their behavior. (p.4)

The super-logic of the conscience means that the man whom I am judging is inside myself. As soon as you have this conscience, you have two starting points to judge any event in the world,...the man as he appears from the outside. And you have the man as you identify yourself with from the inside. (p.5)

4 THIS POINT OF VIEW **MAKES AN ENORMOUS DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY ONE JUDGES EVENTS IN LIFE.** One sees an event from both inside and outside. In one instance the inside may be most important, and in another, the opposite. TO LIVE A MORAL LIFE, TO EVOLVE A SOUL, TO HAVE ONE'S SPIRIT LIVE INTO THE FUTURE, one must apply super logic and assume that physical death is only one factor in one's entering eternity. Conscience and evidence must be weighed and balanced in decision making.

From the year 1100 on there were distinctions made between evidence (outside) and intent (inside).

5. The phrase, "the brotherhood of man" is not empty, but an indication of our relations with our fellow humans.

ERH points out that today in the U.S. we are reverting back to evidence only. [RF - For example, the persistent, seemingly indiscriminate practice of judgment in American courts of "not guilty by virtue of technical error" in cases where the defendant is guilty of a crime.

Likewise, any evidence of social separation, by race, creed, etc. between churches, is an example of grouping by (outside) criteria only. Originally the Catholic Church saw Christianity as the universal religion. Concordance teaches us to see from both inside and outside.

The brotherhood of early scientists (before 1500) "...had to be prepared by the development of a highly refined conscience...scientific progress in the Middle Ages, is based on the identification with all men. (p.8)

6. Anselm of Canterbury laid down four propositions for Concordance:

a. Paradox: Although Anselm prayed to God, he admitted to only knowing the absence of God. Thus, his application of super-logic, that at times we act "in the presence of God," (morally), and at other times we do not. Or at times we act from conscience, and at others, by our logic (of self preservation). "So the paradox is, that God is omnipresent and omni-absent." (p.10) So, also, we must conclude that the evidence of God on a purely physical level is not enough.

"God is not to be seen in our consciousness. You can only have Him in your conscience." (p.13) The mind can only grasp things which are "beneath man." (p.14)

b. Progress is possible only through super-logic. The law of concordance in science is that we go from knowledge to ignorance, that we set aside (forget) the known and begin again with a clean mental slate. All great leaps in science have followed this method. **THIS IS CROSSING THE GREAT GAP MENTIONED ABOVE, THE ABYSS OF IGNORANCE, IN ORDER TO PROGRESS.** As the old propositions are never broad enough to solve the new problem at hand, the old proposition is therefore "primitive logic." And such creativity is the meaning of the term RE-search.

Lecture - 6

1/6 Continuing the #b proposition of concordance, all of work exists in the context of other persons with different points of view. Doubting, leading, teaching, protesting, etc. all take place in relation to other people.

2/6 Regarding timing, teachers, leaders (founder of new institutions) must suspend hope for acceptance for their ideas in their own life times.

3/6 We never possess "our own mind".

"The mind is our participation in the social process of thinking. What you call your mind, is only the reflection of your relation to the thinking of humanity." (p.3)

Once we discover that our thinking makes us a part of the thinking of mankind we are set free. [RF - I am reminded of Hegel's aphorism, "Freedom begins with a recognition of necessity."] This forms a unity of mankind because humans at their best wish to think "the" truth, about valid (significant) things. This is a social concept, not a scientific one.

4. Religious truth, or eternal truth takes a lifetime to come true. Mathematical truths are unrelated to time.

Social truth (eternal truth) cannot be proven by what had gone on before, because it is constantly evolving to the end of time. It must "grow into" the thinking of people. It must be re-proven each generation. [RF - Racial prejudice, for example, is still acceptable in most of the world, recently renewed in Serbia and Croatia.

In order for social truth to have universal participation, everybody must be ready for it. It only becomes part of our lives when we put it into practice.

5Fruitful thinking, creative thinking begins when self-interest has been set aside. We must admit that we are cowards, that there is a struggle to find truth, that we must overcome our cowardice by being indifferent to danger (of speaking and acting on our truth), by overcoming our fear and trembling.

6Today the rules of eldership are threatened; we need to look for those powers that create the relation between one man and the seed of an idea, and the next man in whom that seed is likely to bear fruit. **THIS IS THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING.**

7[RF - ERH now touches on "super-grammar," the grammatical method, whereby, in the context of this lecture, the first stage for us (listening to authority), engenders the next stage (action, transforming the listening "you" into an acting "I"), then the next stage, acceptance by others, when the "I" turns into a "we".]

8These three stages of "setting down roots" are analogous to the trilogy -- the father, son and Holy Spirit. The role of the son is to listen when addressed as "you," of then later acting as god "I," and of instilling the idea into others, "we." These three stages are reflected in a circulation of thought:

His youth, where he must trust in something waiting for him eternally; the adult man's interest in manipulating in the world around him and mastering it; and the necessity of bearing fruit in future times when we ourselves are no longer alive, of surviving in our thought, since we cannot survive in the flesh. (p.13)

In carrying through these stages we achieve the goals of teaching, to pass on the keeping of all of the features that universities, academies, and future social thinking require. **BUT THEIR PURPOSE IS TO DEVELOP CONSCIENCE IN THE INDIVIDUAL. THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS "MEDIEVAL CYCLE."** (p.13)

9These stages are difficult to achieve, but they represent fruitfulness. Fruitfulness in the individual means devotion to seeking the truth and having the courage to speak it at the right moment.

But fruitfulness does not only depend upon the individual, it also depends upon responses from the rest of mankind, on laity, and rulers.

10The scientist needs three disciplines to be fruitful - law, theology, and politics. In addition to

science, he requires a super-grammar and a super-logic, as described above.

11.(p.19) ERH confirms the centrality of the problem statement as the fundamental basis for organizing all knowledge.

Circulation of Thought - 1949 - Review

It is a truism to point out that how we think effects every corner of our lives. In this essay Rosenstock-Huussy raises the question, "How can we make our lives fruitful?" His answer is through circulating thought. But the statement raises many more questions than it answers. Thought becomes transformed into helping us see and understand our experience more clearly when it proceeds through certain stages and those stages are not based on logic, but rather Concordance. The thrust of this essay is to provide a detailed description of how Concordance is to take place. The issues covered overlap considerably with those covered in his UNIVERSAL HISTORY, that is, teaching, theology differentiated from science, how we change, the university differentiated from the academy, the centrality of time, and of speech and the like. But the cast of these issues are given meaning as they relate to how a society at peace with itself is to be created, and in turn, how thought must be regenerated to achieve that end.

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