

Le Nouvel Esprit: A Video Series on the Theology of the Body

TOB 46, General Audience of Oct. 29, 1980

Warning: Not Safe for Work

A Third Interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount

- How to interpret the Sermon on the Mount
 - Manichaeism: one false solution, understood the body, matter, and sex to be evil; entails the rejection of the body
 - Christ: Affirms the body, but its full meaning is understood within the context of value, the value of the human person and the communion of persons
 - Must overcome the threefold concupiscence
 - Threefold concupiscence: 1) concupiscence of the flesh; 2) concupiscence of the eyes; 3) the pride of life; cf. 1 John 2:16
 - The masters of suspicion
 - Based on concupiscence, condemn the heart, hold it in suspicion

Paul Ricoeur

- French phenomenologist, specialized in the philosophy of hermeneutics, 1913-2005
- His views on myth in Genesis are cited in TOB 3:1fn4, 3fn6.
- Coined the term “masters of suspicion” in his *The Conflict of Interpretations*, also discussed in his *Freud and Philosophy*
- The three masters of suspicion are Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche
 - These three thinkers were revolutionary in that they doubted the content of consciousness itself. Consciousness is not as it appears to itself. Due to this situation, consciousness must be deciphered. A principle must be utilized to decipher the authentic contents of consciousness.
 - Marx: decipher was the liberation of the working class
 - Nietzsche: decipher was the will to power
 - Freud: decipher was the sexual instinct and destructive instinct
- For more on this topic, check out our article The Hermeneutic of Suspicion at: <https://www.lenouvelesprit.com/vatican-ii-hermeneutics/hermeneutic-of-suspicion>
- JPII cites *The Conflict of Interpretations* in TOB 46:1fn54, the page numbering is inaccurate if you are referencing the English edition by Northwestern University, should be pages 148-150

JPII and these Masters of Suspicion

- The three masters and the threefold concupiscence
 - Nietzsche's hermeneutic of the will to power falls into the pride of life
 - Marx's hermeneutic of the liberation of the masses falls under the concupiscence of the eyes
 - Freud's hermeneutic focusing on the sexual and destructive instincts falls under the concupiscence of the flesh
- The temptation is to see the data concerning concupiscence, and from this, draw the conclusion to hold the heart in suspicion
- According to Christ, concupiscence is not the final, absolute principle defining man or interpreting him, though it is an important factor for understanding him
- The three masters of suspicion give final deference to concupiscence in their philosophies

Some Review on Concupiscence

- 1 John 2:15-16 introduced the threefold concupiscence
- The man who looks at woman and commits adultery in his heart, according to Matt. 5:27-28, is the man of threefold concupiscence
- When man looks with concupiscent desire and leaves it at the mercy of the forces of nature, he cannot avoid the influence of concupiscence of the flesh

The Difference of the New Testament Ethos

- Christ's words from the Sermon on the Mount are
 - Not an accusation of the heart that leads to suspicion of it
 - But an accusation of the heart that is more so an appeal to the heart to live by value and not concupiscence
- The datum of concupiscence means
 - We cannot stop at a mere accusation of the heart due to concupiscence and desire
 - We cannot hold the heart in suspicion
 - Reason: the body and heart are redeemed by Christ, the body will be resurrected
- Man must rediscover the spousal meaning of the body and learn mastery over himself in order to conquer concupiscence
 - In doing such, man rediscovers the mystery of creation and the original vision God has for man
- The Sermon on the Mount cannot be interpreted according to Manichaeism, Nietzsche, Marx, or Freud's concept of the libido

Quote

- “It is important that precisely in his “heart” he does not feel himself irrevocably accused and given up to the concupiscence of the flesh, but that in the same heart he feels himself called with energy. Called precisely to this supreme value, which is love. Called as a person in the truth of his humanity, and thus also in the truth of his masculinity and femininity, in the truth of his body. Called in that truth which has been his inheritance “of the beginning,” the inheritance of his heart, which is deeper than the sinfulness inherited, deeper than the threefold concupiscence. Christ’s words, set in the whole reality of creation and redemption, re-activate that deepest inheritance and give it real power in human life.”
TOB 46:6, (p. 314)

Sigmund Freud

- Founder of psychoanalysis, 1856-1939, cocaine and tobacco addict, example of assisted suicide
- The libido is sexualized energy, the sex drive
- Freud sexualized children
 - Boys were moral because of fear of castration
 - Women were amoral because they did not have penises
 - Instead they suffered penis envy
 - 5 stages of child development followed sexual development
 - Infants had oral fixation and so this was their erogenous zone
 - The toddler's control of their bowels is the anus stage, the anus is the erogenous zone
- Oedipus complex
 - Boys hate their fathers and want to have sex with their mothers; the father is their sexual competitor
- References: TOB 8:3; 21:1; 46:1-2,4,6; 49:6

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