MacDonald King Aston

Fire Eater! Editor

Natura Bestiae: Fun With Leftists

9 August 2004

Leftists have an unusual psychic “tic” that surfaces when asked a direct question: They can't do it. You’ve seen it many times on the news. A prominent leftist (comically disguised as a "liberal") comes for an interview, the interviewer asks a relatively simple question, and the Lefty starts talking about some completely unrelated topic. For example.

"The inability to answer a simple question because the answer is located “out there” is more than just a psychic tic; it is a form of lying (because the truth is readily accessible)."

Host: “So, Mr Lefty, do you believe that the war in Iraq is, in fact, a war, given that it was never declared as such by the Congress?”

Lefty Lou“Well, when you look at the history of American transgressions overseas, you can clearly see the tendency, in some places, to avoid the kind of democracy we have here in America...”

Host: “So, is the conflict in Iraq a war?”

Lefty Lou: “I think the overriding question is what our aims are in Iraq. Are we truly bringing democracy to the people of Iraq, or are we...”

Host: “OK. Never mind. Let me try another approach. You say that we have democracy in America. Do we?”

Lefty Lou: “Well, now, to be sure, there are many abuses of democracy by the right-wingers, and we need to work on correcting those abuses, because....”

Host: “What I mean, sir, is this. Is America a democracy or a republic?

Lefty Lou: “At the end of the day, does it matter what we call ourselves? The democratic impulse is the thing, and what we need to do...”

Host: “Time for a break. Stay with us.”

O the humanity of it all.

Why, do leftists have such a difficult time answering a simple question?

The answer lies in the nature of the beast. Leftists are, by definition, people who believe that institutions are the answer to social

problems. (Folks on the right generally make an equally poor choice in believing that the individual is the locus of all social ill or beneficence.) Because leftists believe so strongly in the power of institutions to affect culture, they tend to find the locus of all truth "out there", that is, beyond them. For leftists, truth is not something inside themselves, it is "out there". Poverty a problem? The blame must lie at the feet of government and, naturally, the cure must be found in erecting some new institution to guide us all to the Promised Land. A Poverty Agency perhaps?

In short, leftists are moral relativists, never locating morality or immorality in individual human beings, but in the larger "cultural environment" in which those human beings live. Naturally, if you believe that such a "culture" is the answer to all problems and the recourse to all questions, then a simple question, asked directly of one individual human being, becomes problematic.

"Do you believe in abortion, the right to kill unborn children?"

"Well, that's a complicated issue when you stop to consider the impact it has both on a woman's right to choose and the larger context...blah, blah, woof, woof."

A leftist will almost always go for the "larger context", the institutional answer, the "big cultural picture", *ad nauseam*.

Now all this is interesting, but there is more. The inability to answer a simple question because the answer is located "out there" is more than just a psychic tic; it is a form of lying (because the truth is readily accessible). It is an attempt to deny that all human discourse ultimately traces itself back to a human being, and not to an institution (which, by definition, is a collection of human beings). More specifically, it is a type of lie that chooses to ignore evil. Once again, evil is a proposition sitting somewhere "out there". People aren't inherently evil says Lefty Lou, it's just their upbringing. Perhaps they were raised in a dysfunctional family. Perhaps they "physically challenged" as youngsters.

Unfortunately for Lefty Lou, there is nothing, nothing at all, located "out there". All human experience traces itself to experience itself. And all experience is owned by human beings, not by institutions. In other words, there is no such thing as experience that lies outside human beings. (If there were, we would never know it anyway.) Because Lefty Lou denies the primacy of individual experience, he is forever looking for an aggregate cause upon which to hang the hat of explanation. All of this is similar to the way physicists attempt to locate "explanation" in, for example, atoms. Atomic theory, though useful for blowing things up, can never causally explain even the simplest of human concepts (because "cause" is always an experientially determined concept itself).

Now take the opposite of Lefty Lou. Take a standard rightist answer to the question of abortion.

"Is abortion wrong?"

"Yes, abortion is killing children, and killing children is wrong. It is, in fact, murder."

Why is the rightist able to answer the question directly, while ol' Lefty is still searching for an institution to match up with the question? The answer is fairly simple. The rightist believes in individual responsibility (or, in philosophical terms, in the experience of the individual). For him, there is no shadowy institution, no collective of any sort, that could possibly answer what only a person can answer.

Dont believe me? Try it yourself. Find yourself a Lefty first. It's easy to do. They're the ones with the hugely concerned look on their faces, the ones with the milk of human kindness souring on their collective chins. Now ask this Lefty a simple question and watch

what you get in reply.

Conversely, here's how a rightist (and I'm not fond of using terminology from the French Revolution, by the way) would speak in the short interview given above:

Host: "So, Righty-O, do you believe that the war in Iraq is, in fact, a war, given that it was never declared as such by the Congress?"

Righty-O: "No. Only Congress has the power to declare a war, and Congress has not done so."

Host: "So, the conflict in Iraq is not a war."

Righty-O: "No."

Host: "OK. Let me ask what I asked Lefty Lou. Given that America seems interested in spreading democracy throughout the world, do we in America have a democracy ourselves?"

Righty-O: "No. We have a republic."

Host: "Right. Let me get your views on abortion, if I may. Do you believe that abortion is murder, as some people say, or that it is the right of women to choose what happens to their bodies?"

Righty-O: "Abortion is murder. Specifically, infanticide."

Host: "What about a woman's right to choose?"

Righty-O: "It is a right that does not exist. We do not give murderers the right to choose freedom. We do not give rapists the right to continue raping those same women's' bodies. Similarly, we should not give women (or men) the "right" to kill babies."

Host: "Definitely time for a break. Stay with us."

The terms "Left" and "Right", as applied to political discourse, are inadequate. Perhaps better terms would reflect the tendencies of adherents to cling either to the collectivist (the institutional) or the individualist approaches. Whom we call "leftists" cling to a collective understanding of reality. Whom we call "rightists" cling to an individualist understanding of reality. Both are wrong. (And perhaps that is the reason why, in the empire, Democrats and Republicans are so similar in their agendas, notwithstanding how they achieve those agendas.) Reality, whatever that term may encompass, does not lie exclusively in either the collective or the individual. The closest to the truth we can get is that reality lies in the interaction between the many and the one (as the Greeks would have put it), or between the collective and the individual.

But I regress.

The next time you have the bad fortune to endure a collectivist (Lefty Lou), you will know that the reason he can't answer a simple question is because all answers lie "out there" in the Great Collective Beyond.

Which leads to the conundrum: How is it that a leftist is able to tie his shoes in the mornings?