Lecture 12 Chapter 7: “Common Sense as Object”
& “The Good as Developing Object” (Topics in Education, Chs. 2 & 3). Part II.

[0:00]
• Common Sense as social and historical.
• Class discussion of regularly performed tasks, jobs, skills and how they are situated in the dynamics of the history of common sense as object.
• Such activities are the stuff of the construction of human history.

[3:19]
• So much of what happens in the human social world is recurrent.
• ‘Human schemes of recurrence’ as helping to construct social reality.
• What is special about schemes of recurrence as human:
  – They depend upon acquisition of insights and intelligent, self-correcting adaptation to new situations by adding “at least one further insight.”
  – Human schemes also depend upon the understandings of other people as well
  – Involve relations to other people: operating is co-operating.
• Example of the recent economic collapse as a compounding of biases (general, group, individual).
• The contrast between human schemes of recurrence and natural schemes of recurrence.
  • Insights required for human schemes.
  • But for this very reason, likewise it is only in human schemes of recurrence that biases can operate.

[11:02]
• Occurrence of insight in social construction is itself one of the recurrences
• The self-correcting cycle as the self-correcting transformation of history
• The objective social situation is transformed as a multiplicity of people have experiences derived from it, which give rise to questions, insights, and then actions which modify it.
• Concrete description of the intelligent, recurrent activities that constitute ‘objective social situation’ that is a university.
• The self-correcting cycle not only pertains to material and technological progress, but also the development of the insights informing our modes of cooperation and institutional arrangements.
• Learning to do things in cooperation that we could never do alone.
• Illustration from laundry at a summer camp.
• Transformation and progress of social situation not only of the material products, but more importantly of the intelligible modes of cooperation.

[19:20]
• The set of insights making up an objective social situation, common sense, is parceled out among many people, constituting a good of order.
• The characteristics of the “Good of Order”: it is the reciprocal pattern in which we receive fulfillment our needs, desires and fears, by cooperating to provide fulfillment and protection for others, and this cooperation all underpinned by insights.
• It is merely a normative ‘ideal’ but constitutive of all social reality – as people cooperate intelligently in recurrent patterns.
Some concrete examples of ‘the good of order’ implicit in traditional US cities, drawn from the thinker about urban social reality, Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of American Cities*. Jacobs as an example of a cosmopolis person – withdrawing from practicality in order to save it. Cities as “marvelous orders,” analogous to ballets, that maintain the safety and life of cities. The good of order is a social construction arising out of insights into informal patterns of cooperation; in contrast to bureaucracy.

Levels in Social Situation: Technological, Economic, Political, & Cultural
Briefly, how Lonergan understands these levels

Intersubjectivity and Dialectic
In one sense, “common sense as intellectual” is about intersubjectivity – about understanding one another. But when Lonergan uses the term “intersubjectivity” he means the felt, affective form of intersubjectivity where “the experience each resonates to the experience of others.” Intersubjectivity in this sense is the ground of primitive community – the belonging together – that is more basic than the good of order. Sympathy, compassion, sorrow, elation, are all examples of this more basic form of intersubjectivity.

Positive aspects of this kind of intersubjectivity:
- Indispensable foundation of human living.
- Basis of tribalism, family, gender identification, racial and national identification.
- Basis of life’s emotional richness; humans as social animals.

But there are also tensions involved in living according to this kind of intersubjectivity:
- *Not the same* as living according to one’s own questioning and understanding.
- Not necessarily a tension between intersubjective and intelligent living, but there is a potential for conflict
- Group bias arises when a person may choose their own group over their own intelligent, self-correcting process:

Group bias as analogous to individual bias: one’s self preservation instinct interferes with questioning about those outside one’s self or group.

The objective social surd: not self-correcting but increasingly distorting.
Dramatic bias is a filtering of the images we would normally question and have insights into.
- Actions then are are robbed of the intelligence that a bias-free actions would have.
- The specifically social biases (individual, group, general) act consciously to block pursuit of questions or to block actions that would implement good insights.
- Intersubjectivity is a good thing, but it is limited; one can have intersubjective compassion people own knows, but not for ‘humanity’.
- How unrestricted inquiry can inquire into the good for all humanity, beyond the limits of intersubjectivity.
- Intellectual responsibility arises when questioning transcends intersubjective identifications.
General bias: being only concerned with immediate consequences, it sets aside questions not dealing with concrete particulars.

The concern for the immediate and practical is a good thing about common sense; it facilitates normal everyday life.

Yet it sets aside theoretical explorations about what is not immediate – long-term consequences.

In general bias, ideas and inventions are put into play before their long-term effects are known, leading to material and social consequences.

Example of gases (CFC’s) damaging the ozone layer, as a long-range possible effect, before it was actually observed.

Global warming as a second example.

Business practices that led to economic crises as a third example.

The most serious source of social decline is the general bias

Common sense as adequate for taking care of individual and group biases, given time.

Yet it has no means to deal with the corruption and decline of general bias’s neglect of theoretical ideas.

Student question about Lonergan’s thought as compared to Lewis, author of The Abolition of Man.

Closing remarks on next week’s topic: Chapter 8 of Insight, and the difficulty of the section on “Species as Explanatory.”

End of Part II.