

Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 15, Part II: Review for Final Exam

[0:00]

- First student question not recorded; something about the unrestricted desire to know; the problem of offering a definition of all that is and whether this runs into the problem of Russell's Paradox; and how it is possible to know that the desire to know is truly unrestricted
 - Summary of Russell's Paradox, which came out of issues in the foundations of mathematics
 - Set membership and set theory is a particular kind of intelligibility, and its limitations do not necessarily apply to every possible kind of intelligibility
 - Originally hoped that it would be possible to explain everything through set theory
 - The unrestricted desire to know not limited to set theoretic intelligibility
 - One consequence of Gödel's theorem is that there is more to intelligibility than can be captured in set theory
 - Second part of the question – how do we know the desire is truly unrestricted
 - The desire is properly known by participating in it, "giving its head"
 - When we ask a particular question about a particular object, we experience how our unrestricted desire is manifested in a restricted fashion
 - Knowing the desire as unrestricted therefore is not by experiencing it
 - The way we know it as unrestricted is by asking and answering questions about it
 - Lonergan offers reflective exercises toward this goal (p. 375)
 - That the desire is unrestricted is a judgment each person must come to himself or herself until there are no remaining questions about that issue

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- Student question about the argument about the intrinsic intelligibility and its dependence upon the unrestricted desire to know
 - Human knowing that the universe is intrinsically intelligible does rest on the affirmation of the desire to know as unconditional
 - But the intelligibility of the universe does not rest upon the fact that humans have an unrestricted desire to know

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- Student question about whether affirming the unrestricted desire to know is what Lonergan means by intellectual conversion
 - Probably not, although it is a major component in intellectual conversion
 - Many people are aware that questioning is endless
 - The major additional component in intellectual conversion is that following the lead of the unrestricted desire really leads to knowledge of reality
 - And that this entails abandonment of the animal sense of reality (already-out-there-now reality)
 - The fullest measure of intellectual conversion is to affirm that being is completely intelligible

[13:05]

- Student question about the problem of grounding Lonergan's whole project on something constant. That is, the fact that the unrestricted desire has always been part of humanity and this seems to make it constant, not dynamic. Couldn't the desire change – break down or emerge into something higher?

- Difference between philosophical anthropology and physical anthropology
- Physical anthropology attempts to determine whether something was human from remains
- The unrestricted desire as such leaves no immediate remains, but the first human would be the first being constituted by the unrestricted desire
- That the desire is always unrestricted means it always has the same infinite horizon
- But that does not mean it is always manifesting itself and moving in the same way
- To name it is not to make it static

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- Student question about the relationship and difference between genuineness and authenticity; the role played by the conscious and the unconscious in genuineness
 - Lonergan did shift over to use “authenticity” in place of “genuineness” after *Insight*
 - “Genuineness” has a somewhat different meaning from what Heidegger, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard mean by “authenticity,” or even of Lonergan’s own later use of “authenticity”
 - In *Insight* genuineness is the admission of the tension between limitation and transcendence into consciousness (502)
 - But the tension of the unrestricted desire (and the exigence for consistency between knowing and doing) is always conscious, so he means more than this
 - The contrast between the genuineness of a simple and honest soul, and a genuineness that has to be won back
 - Persons who live by what they know, and have no pretenses about what they don’t know
 - In Chapter 15, he situates that problem in the context of the challenges for living genuinely by new developments in body, psyche and mind
 - The ways embodied development put us in contact with the contingencies of the universe of emergent probability

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- Student question about whether the genuineness of the simple and honest soul is deeper than the one that has to be won back
 - The simple and honest soul is an ideal type – perhaps no one ever existed
 - Meaning of “deeper” is ambiguous – in a sense, the genuineness that is won back does involve seriousness, but is still affected by the remnants of ungenerineness
 - Later, authenticity involves an explicit decision

[30:48]

- Student request to expand upon Lonergan’s remark, “Objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.”
 - Suggestion that it has to do with knowing knowing so that one can better understand it when performing it
 - Authenticity means being oneself; and knowing oneself as a knowing is an important part of that
 - Knowing one’s knowing also makes it possible to recognize one’s capacity for objectivity
 - In addition to knowing oneself as a knower, it is also a willing cooperation with being a knower – “owning” oneself as a knower, valuing and choosing the value of being a knower
 - Discussion of the relation between authenticity and self-transcendence
 - Questioning as the core of self-transcendence; in attaining answers, going beyond the going beyond of questioning
 - Such self-transcendence arrives at knowledge of what truly is – objectivity
 - This sounds merely subjective; what makes it objective is the unconditioned

[40:50]

- Student question whether the intelligibility of being and that the unrestricted desire intends being are premises for that argument
 - They are results of it, consequences, not premises
 - It is the data of our consciousness that bring us to affirm the tripartite structure of our knowing and that it is underpinned by the unrestricted desire
 - The conclusion from that is that we thereby arrive at knowledge of what is, knowledge of being

End of Part II.