

## Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 1, Part I: Chapter 11, “Self-Affirmation.”

[0:00]

- Overview of Part Two of *Insight*, “Insight as Knowledge” & Overview of Second Semester.
- Chs: 11-13: Where Lonergan explicitly deals with Insight as Knowledge.
- Chs: 14-17: Lonergan lays out the consequences for metaphysics.
  - Ch. 14: The heuristic approach to metaphysics
  - Ch. 15: Elements of metaphysics: Lonergan compares his approach to Aristotle and Aquinas. Much of this chapter an application of his method to the problem of development.
  - Ch 16: The reality of relations, distinctions, and unities. Especially important for the questions of identity.
  - Ch 17: Implications of Lonergan’s metaphysics for interpretation, particularly the interpretation of religious experience.
- Ch 18: Implications for a method of ethics.
- Ch: 19-20: Distinction between metaphysics of being that is proportionate to human knowing, vs. knowledge of transcendent being. Implications for the reality of God and redemption and the problem of evil. Believing in the broad, not exclusively religious belief, discussed in Chapter 20, but could have been placed much earlier in sections on commonsense and science.
- Epilogue: The larger context and remaining problems.

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- Syllabus for the Semester, regarding writings after *Insight*.
- Meaning and Hermeneutics after *Insight*
- The evolution of Lonergan’s thought on the ontology of History, addressed in *Method in Theology*.
- Evolution of Lonergan’s ethics subsequent to *Insight*: the transcendental notion of value.
- Feelings as intentional responses to value.

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- Self-Appropriation as Basic Method: Philosophy and Metaphysics as verifiable.
- Just as scientific statements imply sensible fact, so also philosophical, metaphysical and ethical statements imply cognitional facts.
- Lonergan offers methodical, verifiable metaphysics and ethics based on cognitional facts.
- Ch 11 – the appropriation of rational consciousness – deals with cognitional facts, the core of the whole project. Ch 18 will deal with appropriating the rational self-consciousness.

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- Chapter 11: Self-Affirmation of the Knower.
- Making the judgment of cognitional fact.
- First half of *Insight* as”
  - (1) Re-appropriating natural science to deal with issues that alienated humans from natural world
  - (2) Promoting attention to data of consciousness and insights into that data, as conditions for making this judgment of cognitional fact.

[39:31]

- What is meant by ‘self’? ‘Self’ as concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.
- ‘Self’ as ‘thing’ in the positive sense: thing as intelligible unity and identity in the data.
- Thing as extended in space, enduring in time, and changing;
- Example of a mayfly, whose intelligible unity persists through very notable changes in its data:

appearances, material composition, behaviors, etc. None of these data is the unity or the being of the mayfly. The unity is intelligible, not sensible or imaginable.

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- No thing itself, as explained, can be imagined.
- Human self, human being, cannot be imagined.
- The being that *we* are is intelligible, not graspable by visual imagining alone.
- “No philosopher has ever been able to grasp the being of a single fly” – Joseph Pieper
- Each mayfly has its own individual life and history, and thus its own unique aggregate of data; hence, it also has its own intelligible unity, so complex that “no philosopher” can understand it thoroughly in all its concreteness.
- Each human being has its own unique concrete intelligible unity.

[57:53]

- ‘Self’ of self-affirmation is not imaginable!
- Self-affirmation means both that the self affirms and is affirmed.
- Lonergan *characterizes* the ‘self’ by its cognitive activities.
- This is a minimum characterization of a human self.
- What is meant by *characterizing* something?
- How do we characterize a mayfly?
- Characterize in terms of selected data and relations to stand for the whole, but are not the whole.
- Danger when the selected characteristics are taken as the whole, the unity.

[1:03:57]

- How can we characterize a human self?
- Class discussion on individual traits, social traits, habits, ideas, origins, politics, life histories.
- Taking “snapshots” of data on the self, and using those to characterize the complex, concrete unity that that self is.

[1:13:41]

- Contrast those ways of characterizing a self with Lonergan’s characterizing of self.
- Characterizations of preceding discussion focus on characteristics of self-as-*constituted*.
- Lonergan interested in characterizing the self-as-*constituting*.
- Initially Lonergan’s characterization of the self as constituting makes us wonder, “Is that all there is?” to a self?
- What is so important about characterizing the self as constituting, in terms of its self-constituting activities of experiencing, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging, etc.?
- This *seems* impoverished, in comparison to characterizing the self in terms of a narrative; we are authors of ourselves. But *how* do we author ourselves? By our self-constituting activities.

[1:18:05]

- Who am I really and truly?
- Social, cultural identities.
- A more basic *human* identity.
- Persons as composite identities: personal, social, cultural, and human.
- Self as constituting: we constitute our own *dramatis personae*.
- We constitute our very unity, our human being by these activities; we thereby place ourselves in the drama and community of human existence.
- Affirming ourselves as constituting: we are what we are because of our experiences, understanding,

reflecting and judging.