

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

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- Self-as-constituted and Self-as-constituting.
- The ‘self’ doing the affirming is more foundational than the self-as-constituted.
- Similarity and difference between Lonergan’s procedure and that of Descartes. Lonergan’s method is not doubt, but ‘re-duplication.’
- Difference: not hyperbolic doubting in order to encounter oneself as doubter, but appropriating what we have always been doing.
- Similarity: both are heightening experiences of oneself as consciously acting.
- “By ‘self-affirmation of the knower’ is meant that the self as affirmed is characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming.” (p. 343)
- Does not mean only characterized by those activities. There is more to the self than as performing those activities,
- Although this characterization is more basic than almost any other characterization. This characterization anticipates every other way we can be characterized.
- The self as performing those activities constitutes the self characterized by the results of those activities.
- Characterizing our selves by means of these activities heuristically everything else about ourselves.

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- Oddity of Lonergan’s statement, “By ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance.”; implications drawn out in succeeding chapters and in “Cognitional Structure.”
- In contrast to characterizing knowledge in terms of performance of certain activities, rather than as knowledge of objects.
- Self-knowledge would be impossible if knowledge were restricted to knowledge of objects.

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- Drawing attention to performances of conscious acts.
- Why then should such performance be properly called “knowledge”?
- Lonergan will answer this question, but not yet.
- Performance is the question that must be answered first in the sequence of his 3 questions:
 - What am I doing when I am knowing?
 - Why is doing that knowing?
 - What do I know when I do that?

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- Student observation that affirming oneself as a knower (which is not self-affirmation in one’s entirety) implies that there is more to oneself than one can communicate.
 - The chapter deals only with oneself as a knower, as performing these activities or not.

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- Self-affirmation as a judgment depends on grasping the unconditioned (the combination of the *conditioned*, the *link* between it and its conditions, and *fulfillment* of conditions).
 - The *conditioned*: “I am a knower”
 - The *link*: being a knower in the sense that Lonergan characterizes ‘knower’
 - The *fulfillment* is given in consciousness; it is the problematic element.

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- Lonergan's unique understanding of consciousness.
- What consciousness is Not:
 - Differs from Kant, Husserl, Sartre; not what Heidegger and Habermas critique.
 - It is not a kind of inward look or sudden explicit awareness of one's activities.
 - Consciousness not "reflective awareness"; Lonergan's use of "reflective" also different.
 - Defining consciousness thusly creates the problem of identity and difference (reflecting vs. reflected) in consciousness.
 - Nor is consciousness a kind of thematizing, formulating, or bringing to language: the latter are actually insights into one's experience. Example of class consciousness in Karl Marx.
 - There is no inner visual object to behold by "intro-spection"

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- What consciousness Is:
 - Emergence of a new pattern or level or genus of activities over and above biological/neural.
 - Experience – There are experiences that are not experiences of the data of sensations.
 - Do you experience yourself as performing these acts = conscious of acting these ways.
 - Consciousness is a factor in self-knowledge, but not the whole of self-knowledge.
 - Awareness immanent in cognitional acts.
 - Presence, in three senses:
 1. as 'in a room', or already-out-there-now, in space and time;
 2. the presence of an object to subject;
 3. third meaning of presence: "somehow" present to oneself.

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- Presence to oneself vs. the metaphysics of presence.
- Ch. 8 distinguishes the being of intelligibility from the 'being already out there now' of biologically patterned experience.
- Consciousness as a "somehow" presence is not the presence of the already-out-there, but a meaning of presence that links to the being of intelligibility.
- Consciousness pertains more to the experience of unity immanent in the various activities of consciousness than to the activities themselves. Experience of being present to oneself immanent in those activities.
- Heidegger's criticism of Kant: for Kant, knowledge is only of beings as they appear; Heidegger thinks Kant failed to think through the conditions of possibility of appearance; elaboration. Heidegger identifies *Lichtung* as that condition of possibility.
- For Lonergan, the conditions of possibility for anything's appearing to us – as sensible, as intelligible, as unconditional – is consciousness.
- Consciousness as the condition of the possibility for acts of consciousness to appear/occur.
- But even more primordially, in order for intelligible and unconditional acts and contents to occur, human consciousness must be constituted by an *unrestricted desire to know*.

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- Question about what 'knowing' means in this context.
 - it is the desire both to perform those activities and for what results from them.

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- Final remarks: each of us has to ask whether he or she carries out affirmative/negative judgments by asking whether the conditions of affirming myself as engaging in these activities are actually fulfilled in the field of consciousness.

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- Student question about the relation between consciousness and the three-part process of knowing.
 - Discussion of models of consciousness. Lonergan sees consciousness is not an inner spectator but rather a field or ground upon which activities take place; Heidegger's *Lichtung*.
 - Problem of saying of consciousness, "*It* is present in all acts of perceiving, understanding, judging, etc."; rather, *you* are present in all those acts.
 - *Consciousness is how you are present to yourself, more or less fully.*
- Question about whether consciousness is a dynamic thing, contracting and expanding?
 - In the sense used here, it is just the difference between being awake and not awake; it is the field that makes appearances possible.

End of Part II