

Lecture 2: Self-Appropriation as Basic Method & Ch. 1, “Elements.” Part II

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- Chapter 1: Elements. Table of Contents.
- ‘Elements’ as laying the groundwork for Lonergan’s integral heuristics.
- Overview of the Elements.
- Definitions & Concepts: philosophy traditionally privileged concepts while neglecting insights.

[3:52]

- Inverse Insights: a reversal in the direction of inquiry.
- Higher Viewpoints:
 - A response to the impasse of inverse insights.
 - Allow for qualitative distinctions in being and value.
- Empirical residue:
 - Consists in those parts of experience left over once it has been understood.
 - Can be seen as the noetic dimension of prime matter and prime potency.
 - Is open to any intelligible possibility.

[11:20]

- §2. “Definitions and Concepts.”
- Lonergan’s critique of traditional epistemology as overly preoccupied with universals.
- Two views of the understanding’s role in our acquisition of concepts:
 - As becoming conscious of a concept that subconsciously entered the mind; i.e. induction of universal concepts from particulars.
 - As expressing concepts that arise through insight.
- Lonergan sees concepts as creatively generated by our understanding.

[15:30]

- How Lonergan’s account of understanding solves the old puzzle of primitive terms.
- A definition:
 - Is a nexus of terms and relations.
 - Emerges from a context of insight, imagining, and activity.

[18:52]

- The 3 kinds of definitions and concepts:
 - Nominal definitions: Knowing how to use it in context.
 - Descriptive definitions: Describing things in terms of resemblances.
 - Explanatory Definitions. [*continued next lecture*].

[26:10]

- The creative dimension that underpins use of concepts and language formation is generally overlooked.