

Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 4, Part I: Chapter 14: “The Method of Metaphysics”

[0:00]

- Lonergan's way of pursuing Questions of the Whole:
Whole of Being, the Whole of the Good, the Whole of Truth, the Wholeness of Humanity.
- Approaching these questions through self-appropriation leaves them genuinely open; but gives partial answers where these are possible.
- “The whole *in* knowing but not the whole *of* knowing.”
- Some Contending Views about the Whole, or “Worldviews” that try to explain everything.
 - Students identify various “isms” about the whole.
 - In addition: Naturalism, Animism, Darwinism, Power, Marxism, Freudianism, God.
- Everyone has at least an implicit answer to the questions of the Whole.

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- Lonergan on the Whole:
- The Whole is what is to be known in the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.
- An anticipatory, a heuristic approach to the questions of the whole.
- Indirectly, not directly, about the Whole, directly through questions, not directly through answers.
- Judging is a knowing of being, it is not yet knowing being.
- But to say that what being is what we know through judging seems unreal unless intellectual conversion has taken place.

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- Student question (from a Hegelian perspective) about the knower and their self-sufficiency with respect to being.
 - Each subject has to carry out their own autonomous judgments; but humans do their knowing within the context of history. Humans don't do their knowing in isolation. This is indeed a concrete matter of fact, but it cannot be abstracted away.

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- Metaphysics.
- The origins of the word with Aristotle and literal meanings of ‘metaphysics’
 - e.g., beyond nature, beyond the changeable.
- Traditional meanings of metaphysics as the science of being qua being; as the subject of contemplation; as demonstration from first principles, etc.

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- Lonergan's Definition of [Explicit] Metaphysics.
- The Stages of Metaphysics for Lonergan:
 - Latent Metaphysics: the immanent and operative structure of human knowing, guided by the unrestricted desire to know; it is common to everyone.
 - Problematic Metaphysics: the history of human efforts to make latent metaphysics explicit. (Everyone has 2 metaphysics – the latent metaphysics, plus a more or less adequate attempt to formulate latent metaphysics)
 - Explicit Metaphysics: Comes about after humans have achieved self-appropriation and are able to draw upon this as they encounter the totality intended in questioning.
- The Method of Metaphysics is primarily pedagogical and aimed at self-appropriation.
- Starting point of metaphysics is persons as they are; explicit metaphysics is a *personal* attainment.

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- Metaphysics as Methodical is Dialectical:
- Dialectical method makes metaphysics not merely contemplative; it is a *doing*, a *dialectical* doing. it entails the conception, affirmation, *and implementation* of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.
- Lonergan believed that metaphysics has a job to do, and that he has a method for that task.
- Prior to an explicit account of what is normative in knowing, attempts to complete the dialectical tasks of metaphysics will tend to confound one another.
- In order to do dialectical metaphysics methodically, Lonergan distinguishes between:
 - the Basis and the Expansion;
 - between Proportionate and Transcendent Being;
 - he will show the need to conceive and affirm the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, and
 - he will discuss the implementation of that heuristic structure through dialectic and dialogue using these distinctions.
- Subsequent chapters spell out first the formulation and implications of the integral heuristic structure; they also begin to engage in some implementations.

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- From Contemplation to Implementation:
- The basic principle and precept of dialectical metaphysics: “Develop the positions; reverse the counter positions.”
- There is a factual dialectic between positions and counter-positions in human lives and in human history; but Lonergan’s methodical tools are intended to make more effective the reversal of counter-positions and the promotion of positions than would happen merely spontaneously.
- From Deduction to Heuristic:
- Unlike classical science which is demonstration, science for Lonergan proceeds according to a heuristic method; similarly metaphysics will have to follow a heuristic method to qualify as a science.

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- Lonergan already developed a heuristic of the notion of *being*.
- Now he will develop a heuristic of *proportionate being*.
- The distinction between Proportionate and Transcendent Being.
- The ambiguity of talking about “what lies beyond or transcends human experience.”
- Proportionate being is defined as whatever is known by possible human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.
- Proportionate being is a subset of being.
- God defies being known in this way: “There are no data on God.”
- Metaphysics is the whole *in* knowledge, not the whole *of* knowledge.
 - Student discussion of what this might mean.
- There is a correlation between the structure of human knowing and the structure of proportionate being.

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- The Basis and its Expansion:
- How claims about cognitional theory (the basis) serve to ground metaphysical, ethical, and theological pronouncements (the expansion).
- Metaphysics becomes methodical, by tracing disagreements about important philosophical

issues to their strategic roots in disagreements about the nature of human knowing (basic positions and counter-positions).

- The basis-expansion model provides a heuristic for interpreting philosophers and the history of philosophy.
- There is a larger totality of possible judgments, incorrect as well as correct.
- In each philosophy there is a strategic set of judgments that determine the general character of the world, of the whole, for it.

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- Basic Positions and Counter-positions
- Within these strategic sets, there will be basic positions and counter-positions on knowing, objectivity, and reality – components that are compatible or incompatible with the self-appropriated positions on knowing, objectivity and reality (being).
- Any philosophy contains an implicit or explicit cognitional theory, more or less well-formulated, that rests will on either a basic position or a basic counter-position.
- Characteristics of the Basic Position.
- How the basic position conceives of Knowing, Being, and Objectivity

[1:05:09]

- Several students' comments on whether Lonergan has 'set us up' and manipulated us to play the game according to his rules.
 - Such feelings are appropriate; its essential that the individual go through the process of appropriating these at the ideas for him or herself, until those feelings – those further pertinent questions about – of having been 'set up' are resolved one way or the other. "Did Lonergan set me up? Did he overlook something?" is a valid further pertinent question.
 - Moreover, the key to this not being a trap lies in the unrestricted questioning; nothing is excluded *a priori*; all questions are valid (in contrast to the dogmatism of 'physicalism,' for example).