

Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 5, Part II: Chapter 15: “The Element of Metaphysics”

[0:00]

- Finality as both upward and indeterminate.
- What makes the universe of proportionate being indeterminately directed is the nonsystematic.
- What makes it upwardly directed is that systematicity arises from non-systematicity.
- The final end of the universe is a unknown. To know finality – to know the dynamically structured wholeness of the universe – does not rule out that even a total collapse of the universe might occur.
- Metaphysics cannot guarantee that there is any point to our efforts to improve the human condition.

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- Student question about ‘incomplete universe heading towards fuller being’ and what that means. Is a human a fuller or higher being than a tree, for instance? Is a tree or a human being moving toward being a fuller being? There is a saying, “The glory of God is man fully alive.” Is that fuller living an example of fuller being?
 - Discussion of the relation of the individual to the universe.
 - In terms of the natural theology language of Ch. 19, the glory of God is manifest in the development of the universe, and the development of each human being is withing that universal development.
 - But, in Ch. 15, fuller being is not conceived of in relation to God; fuller being here does not mean heading toward God. Rather, it is a statement that every instance of emergence is an instance of fuller being.
 - The uniqueness of Lonergan’s account of emergence.
 - Discussion of potency as the metaphysical condition for the possibility of the real emergence of new being.

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- Further Student questions:
- Question about the relation of human intelligence to finality. Finality being the objective parallel to the dynamism of human intelligence as the subjective component.
 - Indeed, finality becomes conscious in human intelligence. The unrestricted desire to know is finality that previously operated unconsciously now operates unconsciously.
 - Using one’s intelligence is participating in the finality of the universe; being unintelligent is fighting against finality.

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- Student question: If the universe were to devolve or collapse, would it still be ‘fuller’ being? i.e., since a series of new facts and conditions would be born?
 - Discussion of Lonergan’s optimism and the real possibility of collapse.
 - In his bold statement about ‘fuller being’ slips in an element of optimism that is not yet warranted strictly within the terms of Ch. 15.

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- Question about whether fuller being can be understood in terms of intelligibility?
 - Indeed, what makes the u move towards fuller being is more actual intelligibility.
- Question about whether we might, even by going against what is normative, ultimately be participating in finality?
 - Discussion of the concordance and/or conflict between of human efforts and the intelligibility of the universe. Lonergan’s optimism is based on the fact that new

things set conditions for further emergences. But the reverse can also come about, as seen with the anaerobic bacteria.

[26:36]

- Humanity and Finality.
- Reveals a universe in which humans and our desires and fears are not at center stage.
- Why metaphysics needs to be done in an *explanatory* way.
- Explanation is a *disinterested* way of seeking to understand how everything relates to everything else, as opposed to common sense (which is always egocentric).
- Self-appropriation is appropriating oneself as a participant in the finality of the universe.
- Not as an animal in a habitat, but as an intelligent participant in an intelligible order.
- Raises for us the challenge of relating oneself to the intelligible whole, and living as citizens of the entire universe.
- The *seeming* non-grandeur of human life, overagainst the *true* grandeur of human life.
- Living without pretense and guile (example of Billy Budd) as a way of living authentically.
- The romanticized ideal of authenticity (“genuineness”) vs. real authenticity.
- Thus, filling out finality as integral heuristic structure is the first aspect of Ch 15; the second part is Human Development.
- These sections reveal why Lonergan thought same method used for metaphysics would also serve for ethics.
- Simply taking on the challenge of being a metaphysician would reveal to oneself the challenge of living in fidelity to being a participant in the finality of proportionate being.

[40:10]

Discussion of agenda for the following week: review the sections on potency and act, explanatory genera and species, development and genetic method.