

Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 7, Part II: Chapter 16: “Metaphysics as Science.”

[0:00]

- The Unity of the Human: “Man is one.”
- The word ‘man’ indicates not only the individual, but also the human race.
- An important ambiguity for understanding what Lonergan is addressing in this section.

Lonergan is uncharacteristically ambiguous here.

- Is Man’s central form material or spiritual?
- Central forms are differentiated by conjugate forms; while the latter are unified by the former.
- “By the [human] ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible *unity-identity-whole* ... characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming” (343).
- To ask about the unity of the human being is to ask about the kind of central form of the human, that is, Man is seen as the unification of certain conjugate acts; the central form is constituted by the conjugate acts it unifies: physical, chemical, biological, psychic, etc.

[5:54]

- Lonergan argues that Man’s central form is a spiritual unity.
- This means that the central form is a spiritual unity independent of materiality and thus sees the soul as immortal.
- Lonergan thus takes on the second of Kant's three metaphysical questions – freedom, immortality, and God.
- We will consider whether his is a satisfactory argument for immortality.

[8:45]

- How the conjugate forms of human intellectual activity constitute the higher system of man’s sensitive living.
 - Example: groping in the dark for something versus searching in the light.
 - Being guided by intelligence rather than by sense data
 - When searching in the light we order our sensations and movements by means of accumulated insights as the “higher integrations of our sensitive living.”

[14:03]

- Student question about whether there are individual conjugate forms of intellectual activity.
 - This is exactly the right question: do we acquire the insights that integrate our sensitive living individually, or are they bequeathed to us?
 - Discussion of intersubjectivity in the learning process and how sensitive living is a combination of both collective and individual insights.
 - The human conjugate forms that integrate sensitive living are both an individual and a communal possession – constitutive of the unity of both the individual and the human race
 - Human interactions are always by means of phantasms – sensible elements – but out of that emerges intelligent, informed, reasonable, responsible and loving human living.

[21:00]

- Return to discussion of Human Development from Chapter 15.
- The unity of the human is a developmental unity; not born with our unity; we develop our unity.
- Human Development as a tripartite structure differentiated by our central form.
- It operates on three interrelated levels: the organic, psychic, and intellectual (= intelligence + reasonableness).

- Human authenticity (“genuineness”) as facing the challenges arising from the intersection of these three levels.
- Changes on any of the levels can initiate challenges for development on the other levels and set the conditions for them.

[26:32]

- Even though developments on any level require adaptations (developments) in the other levels, usually we think of how the organic sets conditions for developments on the psychic and intellectual [and rational] levels.
- For example, Erik Erikson in *Childhood and Society* explored how organic changes influence psychic developments.
- Understanding the proper way to integrate the new changes into authentic living.
- Moreover, this process never ends because unlike other organisms, the challenge of human development is never-ending; humans are always learning something new.

[31:10]

- Discussion of the two-fold way in which the conjugate forms of human intellectual activity constitute the higher systems of human sensitive living: “unconsciously” and “unconsciously.”
- [Here Lonergan is not using “conscious” in his technical sense, but rather in the more colloquial sense of *understanding* what is going on in one’s own activity.]
- “Unconsciously” as when intelligence patterns our flow of experiencing.
- “Consciously” intelligence aims grasping systems that organize the contents of sensitive experiences – in other words, it is directed at the universe of proportionate being.
- Elaboration of this idea:
 - Knowing oneself as a knower has to do with knowing one’s place within proportionate being
 - Proportionate being encompasses both material and spiritual (i.e., intellectual) reality.
 - Proportionate being is a whole, and human activity is part of that whole.
 - Considerable intellectual development of humankind to comprehend oneself as really being who we are as a spiritual reality functioning in a comprehending reality of the universe.
- Knowing our place and our proper activity in the universe affects how we will and act in that universe
- Man’s knowledge of his place and function in the universe is the starting point of Lonergan’s ethics, in the context of *Insight*

[40:20]

- Therefore, the universe brings forth its own unity by bringing forth developing human unity (544).
- Discussion of our awareness of finality, and the human role in advancing the unity of the universe.
- But where does human development come from?
- Human beings (and therefore human development) emerges within and as an essential constituent of the finality of all of proportionate being
- Human activity of understanding the universe and acting on that understanding is part of the way the way that finality works out the solution to the “problem” posed by the coincidental (potency)
- Humans have the unique capacity to think of intelligent forms that don’t yet exist, and to put them into play, and use them to influence the potency of the universe; hence, our activity is a means by which the universe organizes itself.
- Here we have Lonergan’s only claim about the unity of the universe (rather than its potential unity) but only in the context of the discussion of *human* unity.

- *This* is what Lonergan means by metaphysics as science.
- When Lonergan speaks of “intellectual conversion” after *Insight*, recognizing that this is true of reality is part of what he has in mind.
- Self-appropriation means understanding ourselves as part of a process that we continue by our own activity.

[47:19]

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. and *The Divine Milieu*.
- Fred Lawrence once asked Lonergan what he meant by metaphysics, and he responded that it what he meant can also be found in *The Divine Milieu*.
- Teilhard de Chardin was a 20th century Jesuit scholar, paleontologist, scientist, and mystic.
- Lonergan's metaphysics was epitomized by Teilhard's book, *The Divine Milieu*
- Teilhard endeavored to explain how he had come to understand the harmony of science and Christian faith.
- How Teilhard's reception in theological and scientific circles influenced Lonergan.
- Teilhard's project was to show that human actions matter, despite our seemingly minor place in the universe
- “In each of us the whole history of the world ... is in part reflected”
- We both “make our own souls” and also contribute to a much larger “*opus*” of the universe.
- Human actions are enduring *because* they participate in the divine will.
- The finality of universe becomes conscious in us, and the universe is completed in our actions.
- Lonergan took up Teilhard's project of showing the relation of humanity to finality and unity of the universe, but he based it upon self-appropriation rather than harmony with the divine will.