

Insight & Beyond

Class 10, Part 1. January 7th 2010

Chapter 6 §§ 2.1-2.4

“Patterns of Experience”

Summary of Material

- Introductory remarks: Due to a technical difficulty, the audio for this class, originally given on November 11, 2009, was lost. The presentation you will be watching is a re-recording that was done on January 7, 2010. Unfortunately the students were on break, so Parts I & II are lectures and have no student participation.
- Review: Common Sense as Intellectual from previous class.
- What is “common” in common sense?
- Common sense is an inventory of shared insights accumulated in a culture.
- As such, common sense is communal, the inventory is a community’s possession.

- Common sense accumulates that inventory by a self-correcting cycle of learning: experience/questions/insights/actions/new experiences.
- Common sense accumulates through the sharing of others in the community who have already accumulated many of those insights. They share insights indirectly by throwing out images (phantasms) with the intention of allowing insights to emerge in others in the community.
- “The only interpreter of commonsense utterances is common sense.”
- It restricts further questions to the immediate practical level (in contrast to explanatory understanding).
- The meaning of “particular” in the phrase “concrete and particular” vs. in the empirical residue.
- Common sense is intrinsically incomplete and reverts to a normal state of incompleteness when a problem has been addressed. It cannot master all the irregularity of human reality.
- Common sense is not only intellectual: it is also comprises shared inventories of judgments of fact, judgments of value, shared feelings, shared stories, symbols, and beliefs.
- Patterning of Experience in Relation to Self-Identity.
- What constitutes us; what changes us?

- Insights of self-constitution are essential to our sense of identity, especially in the dramatic pattern of experience.
- For Lonergan (influenced by Aristotle and Aquinas), insights, understanding emerges from phantasms – i.e., sensations and images (not from concepts).
- Which sensations and images (or ‘phantasms’) are available to us depends upon how we pattern our experience.
- Thus who we are, what we make of ourselves – our praxis or human self-making – depends upon how we pattern our experience.
- Patterns of Experience.
- Lonergan’s “definition” of the phrase “pattern of experience” is in need of clarification.
- Patterning of experience means how the components of our experiencing are related to each other.
- The ‘Abstractness’ of Sensations: a sensation is never occurs in isolation, but is always already situated in a context, in a flow composed of other experiences as well.
- What distinguishes the pattern of one person from that of another is the differences among their interests and concerns, which govern their patternings of experience.

- Interests and concerns, then, provide the basic answer to the question, “Why is this set of experiences in this arrangement (pattern) occurring in this person’s flow of consciousness?”
- That is, when Lonergan says that a pattern of experience “as conceived, is the formulation of an insight,” he means the formulation of an insight into an individual’s interests and concerns as determining the composition of the flow of their experiencing.
- Lonergan resembles Heidegger insofar as he views perceiving as situated in a more fundamental context of human concerns.
- Sensation is always in relation to associations, anticipations and concrete concerns.
- Pattern of Experience and Neural Demand Function.
- Many kinds of concerns or “horizons” that structure the dynamic patterns of experience.
- Among these interests and concerns is the spirit of inquiry, which itself can effect the patterning of experiencing.
- The interests and concerns, and their patterning of our experiencing, is prior to our acts of understanding (i.e., prior to our insights).

- “Neural demand function”: consciousness selects from the various potential experiences latent in our neurophysiology, selects from among the various demands upon our consciousness for representation that are made by those components in our neurophysiology.
- Lonergan identifies 7 various patterns of experience in *Insight*: the biological, aesthetic, artistic, intellectual, dramatic patterns, as well as the practical & mystical ones.
- The present class focuses only on the biological, intellectual, and dramatic (or “interpersonal”) patterns. Others are treated elsewhere.
- Why Chapter Six is structured as it is: The question, “But who are we?” is ultimately answered by the self-constitution that occurs in the dramatic patterning of experience.
- But dramatic patterning draws upon resources found in their more simplified forms in the intellectual, artistic, aesthetic and biological patternings. Hence, those are treated first in order to build up to his account of dramatic patterning.
- The brain is a dynamic ‘non-system’ capable of trillions of nerve impulses per second.
- Therefore this ‘non-system’ forms a coincidental aggregate of impulses open to higher patterning.
- From this vast reservoir of neuro-physiological function, some elements are brought to consciousness, and patterned further.

- Thus we are constantly selecting from this ‘coincidental aggregate’ in ways that serve our interests and concerns.
- Why Lonergan uses the term ‘neural demand function’; illustrations from bodily awareness.
- The Animal Biological Patterning of Experience and its Concerns
- The animal evolutionary advantages over plants: quick responses to outer stimuli, i.e., to biological opportunities and danger.
- Example of predator and prey.
- In the biological pattern, the contents of consciousness are organized by the basic needs of survival: nutrition, reproduction, self-preservation.
- The Orchid Wasp
- The orchid wasp versus the bee: the co-evolution of certain species of orchids and wasps enabled the orchids to take advantage of the wasps’ reproductive concerns in order to promote pollination; versus in the case of bees, where plant pollination is facilitated by nutritional patternings of its experiences.
- Environmental stimuli can thus trigger this or that mode of biological patterning.

- Biological Experience versus Biological Patterning of Experiences.
- All human sensitive experience is biological, but not all patterning of experience is biological.
- All sensitive experiencing is rooted in bodily-based neurological functioning – the reservoir of nervous functioning based in our embodiment.
- Biological originating of experiences, versus biological patterning of those experiences.
- Patterning for the sake of biological, evolutionary factors (nutrition, reproduction, self-preservation) versus patterning for other interests and concerns.
- The Intellectual Patterning of Experience:
- The Canon of Selection: What criteria determine whether insights qualify as empirically scientific insights?
- Scientific observation is not purely passive “seeing what is there to be seen.” Scientific observation is a highly developed, practiced, and specialized intellectual patterning of experiences.

- The Subordination of sensing to scientific interests and concerns.
- Examples: imagination and observation in Barbara McClintock's chromosome research.
- Kekule's discovery of benzene after dreaming of the circular snake, Ouroboros.
- Reflective Inquiry, aimed at reaching judgments, is also selective and patterning of experiencing with regard to its concerns.

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“Patterns of Experience”

- **Introductory remarks: Due to a technical difficulty, the audio for this class, originally given on November 11, 2009, was lost. The presentation you will be watching is a re-recording that was done on January 7, 2010. Unfortunately the students were on break, so Parts I & II are lectures and have no student participation.**

Welcome to *Insight and Beyond*. Today's Video is going to be a little different than the ones that you've seen before. The classes that were held on November the eleventh and November eighteenth — unfortunately we had a technical problem. We lost the Video entirely for both of those classes; and so we are now re-recording the classes of those dates. Unfortunately the students are not present: they are on Christmas break and so this is going to be more in the format of a lecture. And we'll miss the stimulation, and the liveliness, and the exchange that comes from having real students present. But the only alternative to just not having those classes available for those of you who are viewing this online was to do it without the class present.

So I hope you will find this lecture stimulating and helpful despite the fact that you won't have the interactions and the further pertinent questions that our students will raise and have raised.

- Review: Common Sense as Intellectual from previous class.
 - What is “common” in common sense?
- Common sense is an inventory of shared insights accumulated in a culture.
- As such, common sense is communal, the inventory is a community’s possession.
- Common sense accumulates that inventory by a self-correcting cycle of learning:
experience/questions/insights/actions/new experiences.
- Common sense accumulates through the sharing of others in the community who have already accumulated many of those insights. They share insights indirectly by throwing out images (phantasms) with the intention of allowing insights to emerge in others in the community.
- “The only interpreter of commonsense utterances is common sense.”
 - It restricts further questions to the immediate practical level (in contrast to explanatory understanding).
- The meaning of “particular” in the phrase “concrete and particular” vs. in the empirical residue.

So let us begin!

In our last class we focused on the question of common sense as intellectual, section one of Lonergan's *Insight*, chapter six [CWL 3, Chapter 6, "Common Sense and Its Subject," § 1 "Common Sense as Intellectual," pp. 196-204]. And this is just a review of where we were.

Common Sense as Intellectual

What is "common" in common sense?

A common fund of tested answers from which each may draw.

"It is parceled out among many, to provide each with an understanding of [one's] role and task." (CWL 3, p. 237).

Different for different eras, locales, cultures classes.

To answer the question "common sense is intellectual," or "what is common in common sense?" or "what is common sense as intellectual?" we have a number of things that we reviewed.

As a fundamental way in which Lonergan answers the question of "what does common sense consist in" is to say that *common sense is a common fund of tested answers from which each member of the common sense community may draw*. **"It is parceled out among many, to provide each with an understanding of [his or her] role and task."** (CWL 3, p. 237). And as he says, common sense doesn't reside in any one particular person. It is parceled out through the community, and everyone provides understanding, insights, into that common fund; and it is shared as people learn and communicate with one another.

And, as he says, common sense is very different depending on locale, period of time, culture, ethnicity, profession, geographical location, and so on. *So there are different funds of common sense, different funds of common sense insights, that make up the understanding of a community. And it's a community's possession: common sense understanding, common sense as intellectual is a community's possession.* It doesn't — It isn't just one person who knows everything and tells everybody else. *It's a very dynamic, mutual, interactive form of human understanding and human intelligence.*

So one answer to the question “what is common sense?” and “what does insight have to do with it?” is to say that common sense is a vast inventory of insights that are shared and communicated and passed back and forth within a community of human beings.

Common Sense as *Intellectual*

What is ‘common’ in common sense?

The self-correcting process of learning.

But “**such learning is not without teaching that ... throws out the clues [images], the pointed hints, that lead to insight.** (CWL 3, p. 197).

“**The only interpreter of commonsense utterances is common sense.**” (CWL 3, p. 200).

It is self-correcting (CWL 3, p. 197).

But another sense — *another meaning of common sense as intellectual is the self-correcting process of learning.*

This cycle of experience, giving rise to questions, questions to insights, insights being insights into action, whether those actions are actions of bodily motion or

actions of speech, and by those actions the field that's available for human beings to experience has been thereby transformed; which leads to further questions, further insights, further actions, and further transformations of experience.

Because the questions that arise are questions that arise only because of previous insights, there's a phenomenon in which the further questions lead to modifications, corrections, nuances, in the previous accumulation of insights. So self-correcting takes place!

And as Lonergan remarks, common sense understanding, common sense learning, common sense as self-correcting, takes place, not just in the individuals doing the learning, but also in the community of teachers. Learning is not without teaching. Teachers throw out clues, throw out images, throw out phantasms, that are adapted to the needs of the individuals with whom they are speaking and with whom they are interacting. *Insights are always into phantasms, they are always into images.* And the fundamental way in which [the](#) understanding of a community is communicated to its members is not by transplanting an insight from one person's brain into another person's brain, but rather by producing images, which common sense understanding understands, or at least hypothesizes, will help and facilitate the understanding of the persons to whom they are being communicated.

And as Lonergan says, "**The only interpreter of commonsense utterances is common sense.**" (*CWL* 3, p. 200). And what he means by this, and what he means by situating it within the context of the self-correcting cycle of understanding, is what people who study language and philosophy of language know very well, namely that *meaning is very contextual*: that a word spoken, and I am now speaking words, are sonorous images; I am putting sound-waves into space which you are now hearing. Those are sonorous phantasms. What they actually mean is very much contingent upon your background of understanding, your acquired accumulation of insights, and the further questions that occur to you, if they do occur to you, about what I might have meant when I spoke! And in general, that's what happens in a community.

So it's that accumulation of insights that are shared by many in common sense community that provide what linguists call *the context of understanding*. And without that

acquisition, what is said, what is written, what is expressed in some other form, will not be understood until there is a sufficient accumulation of those insights through the self-correcting process.

So Lonergan's assertion that common sense is "**the only interpreter of commonsense utterance**" (*CWL* 3, p. 200) means that people have to acquire a sufficient portion of the inventory, the reservoir, of insights in common sense community to be able to understand it. And they do this through the self-correcting process that we've seen previously in scientific mode, and now in a common sense mode.

Common Sense as *Intellectual*

What is 'common' in common sense?

"the supreme canon of common sense is the restriction of further questions to the realm of the concrete and particular, the immediate and practical." (*CWL* 3, p. 201).

What is the difference between particular & concrete?

"particular places and particular times ... [possess] no immanent intelligibility to be grasped by direct insight." (*CWL* 3, p. 51).

Concrete = complex, often unique intertwined intelligibilities.

Again to ask "what is common in common sense?" or to put it another way, that the self-correcting cycle of common sense and the acquisition of insights is of course characteristic of scientific understanding just as it is of common sense understanding. *What*

differentiates common sense understanding from scientific or explanatory understanding is what narrows down the range of further pertinent questions! “**The supreme canon of common sense,**” as Lonergan says, “**is the restriction of further questions to the realm of the concrete and particular, the immediate and practical.**” (CWL 3, p. 201). *The restriction is to the realm of the concrete, the particular, the immediate, the practical.*

So explanatory understanding wants to know everything about everything. It wants to know how everything is related to everything else. But common sense doesn't have to await the indefinite future in which that vast project of scientific understanding of the relatedness of things to one another will finally be completed. *In the immediate situation, common sense is concerned with: what do I have to understand to meet my immediate concerns, interests, needs, practical interests. And this is what allows common sense to be concrete and particular!*

As we saw in the last class, there is a meaning of ‘particular’ in Lonergan that pertains to the empirical residue: that particular times and places possess “**no immanent intelligibility.**” (CWL 3, p. 51). So particularity in that sense of what it is in experience that's left over after all of experience has been understood is going to include things like the particularity of place and time.

*That is **not** the particularity that Lonergan means when he talks about the particularity and concreteness with which common sense is concerned. Particular and concrete in common sense understanding has to do with the particular situation I happen to be in, with interests and needs of the time, whether those needs are needs for rest, their needs for food, their needs for change to take the subway, their needs for affection or protection or support and encouragement. Those are the things that are going to set the parameters within which the self-correcting cycle of understanding is going to operate.*

So that's another thing that makes common sense *common*, or that's another thing that's *common* in common sense.

What differentiates the various common sense communities are their places, their times, their professions, their cultural backgrounds, their historical epochs. But every single social community always has particular and concrete and immediate needs and concerns, and

people in those communities use their intelligences to try to make sense and to try to solve the issues and the problems as they arise — those concrete particular concerns that they have.
Every common sense community does that!

So the things that are common in common sense are

First of all, every common sense community has an inventory, its inventory, its very large inventory, of accumulated insights.

Secondly, every common sense community comes by that inventory and perfects that inventory by the self-correcting cycle of understanding.

And **thirdly**, every common sense community is specialized in the work of dealing with the concrete, the particular, the immediate **needs**, and its concerns and interests.

Now *the fourth and last thing that we might say is common to common sense is its intrinsic incompleteness.*

- **Common sense is intrinsically incomplete and reverts to a normal state of incompleteness when a problem has been addressed. It cannot master all the irregularity of human reality.**

Common Sense as *Intellectual*

What is ‘common’ in common sense?

“Common sense at once reverts to its normal state of incompleteness. (CWL 3, p. 199).

So now *the last thing that we might say is common to common sense is its intrinsic incompleteness*. As Lonergan says: once common sense people have solved the problems and have answered the questions that dealt with their needs and interests and concerns for the moment, *the accumulation of insights that they have goes back to an incomplete state*.

This recalls remarks that Aristotle has at the beginning of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he says that of the various sciences, one can only expect as much exactitude and certitude as the subject matter permits. And with regard to Political Science — which is to say, we might translate that in contemporary terms, to say, the science that has to do with the living of human life in community — that **with regard to Political Science**, there is so much irregularity, there is so much variation, there are so many nonsystematic dimensions to human living, that you can't expect the same kind of account of a political or a social or a community science, as you could from say, mathematics or mathematical physics.

That's what Lonergan is getting at here by saying that common sense **“reverts to its normal state of incompleteness.”** (*CWL 3*, p. 199).

Common Sense as *Intellectual*

What is ‘common’ in common sense?

“Common sense at once reverts to its normal state of incompleteness. (*CWL 3*, p. 199).

Common sense is never going to be capable of complete mastery of all natural reality or of all human reality. What common sense does is to deal with the irregularities of human life, by having this capacity for the self-correcting process of understanding that meets the needs as they arise in intelligent and self-correcting fashion.

- Common sense is not only intellectual: it is also comprises shared inventories of judgments of fact, judgments of value, shared feelings, shared stories, symbols, and beliefs.

Now in section one of chapter six of *Insight*, [CWL 3, Chapter 6, “Common Sense and Its Subject,” § 1: “Common Sense as Intellectual,” pp. 196-204], Lonergan focuses on common sense as intellectual. *This is the place where he is starting to show the richness of the implications of what he calls the oft neglected act of insight: that it [insight] is a very pervasive and fundamental mode of human communal common sense living.*

But common sense is not only intellectual. By the time we get to chapter six [CWL 3, Chapter 6, “Common Sense and Its Subject,” pp. 196-231], Lonergan is midway in what he calls the “**moving viewpoint**” of *Insight* [CWL 3, p. 18]. There’s a lot that he hasn’t yet taken up, and so, among other things, **he hasn’t yet taken up** acts besides insights that are part and parcel of common sense. Sometimes what people often mean by common sense are not treated, at least explicitly in chapter six, and especially not in section one of chapter six [CWL 3, Chapter 6, “Common Sense and Its Subject,” § 1 “Common Sense as Intellectual,” pp. 196-204]. There he is only focusing on what he thinks is the often neglected, oversight of the presence of insight in common sense living.

Common Sense Not Only Intellectual

Accumulated, socially shared inventories of:

Insights

Judgments about facts

Judgments about values

Feelings and associated images, stories
symbols

Beliefs

Certainly, in addition to an accumulated, socially shared inventory of insights, there are also communicated socially shared inventories of **judgments about facts**. People just grow up learning facts about how corn grows, and about how automobiles work, and how elevators and escalators work.

I can remember when I was a really young child, my Grandmother took me on what I think was the first escalator in the city that was near where I grew up. And she really didn't know how to use an escalator, and she tried to get us children on the up-escalator, but to go down. And it actually chewed a hole in my younger brother's boot, because she didn't quite understand what was going on. She needed the insights; we all need the insights on how to use what are the facts about the environments, both natural and technological and social, that we live in.

Common sense also communicates to its members an inventory of **judgments about values**. *So it's not only judgments about facts, but also judgments about values, that make up a great deal of common sense.* And quite frequently when people talk about a person not having any common sense, they don't only mean that the person has not yet accumulated the insights, doesn't *understand* what's going on; frequently when people say that a person doesn't have any common sense, they often mean that the person doesn't have *good judgment*; hasn't acquired the accumulated community of judgments about how things stand.

When a person moves to a new community, they have to learn the facts and the values of that community in order to be able to operate. And when they do weird and unexpected and unintelligible things in their new situations, people will say the person doesn't have any common sense. They're not saying they don't have any insights. They are not necessarily even saying **that** they haven't accumulated an adequate fund of insights, although that's implied in that. What they're really saying is that that person doesn't yet have the acquired set of judgments in the community.

And among other things, common sense also includes *the communication and the sharing of an inventory of feelings and associated images and stories and symbols*. People who are in a new community, and they see something happen, and they don't respond with the appropriate respect, or they don't respond with the appropriate decorum, or they don't respond with the appropriate humour, are people who haven't yet acquired that part of the inventory that makes up common sense.

And last of course are **beliefs**. *Beliefs are forms of judgments, but they're different than what Lonergan will call "immanently generated judgments."* When we get to chapter twenty of *Insight* [CWL 3, Chapter 20, "Special Transcendent Knowledge," pp. 709-75], Lonergan will give his account of believing, and the phenomenon of believing. But certainly common sense includes not only judgments of fact and judgments of value that are immanently generated, but also *judgments of facts and of values that are believed in*. And that too makes up a large portion of common sense!

So there is a great deal more to common sense than *the socially shared inventory of insights which is emphasized in the beginning of chapter six* [CWL 3, Chapter 6, "Common Sense and Its Subject," pp. 196-231]; but Lonergan, in his own vision of where he was going with this book, saw that the first step that had to be put in place, the first piece of the puzzle that had to be put in place to give an account of common sense and common sense living, was to pay attention to the overlooked role of insights.

- **Patterning of Experience in Relation to Self-Identity.**
 - **What constitutes us; what changes us?**
- **Insights of self-constitution are essential to our sense of identity, especially in the dramatic pattern of experience.**
- **For Lonergan (influenced by Aristotle and Aquinas), insights, understanding emerges from phantasms – i.e., sensations and images (not from concepts).**
 - **Which sensations and images (or 'phantasms') are available to us depends upon how we pattern our experience.**
- **Thus who we are, what we make of ourselves – our praxis or human self-making – depends upon how we pattern our experience.**

Patterning of Experience

**“There is, then, a subtle ambiguity in the
apparently evident statement that
common sense relates things to us.**

“For who are we?

**“Do we not change? Is not the acquisition of
common sense itself a change in us?
(CWL 3, p. 204).**

Now the transition from section one in chapter six to section two [CWL 3, Chapter 6, “Common Sense and Its Subject,” § 2 “The Subjective Field of Common Sense,” pp. 204-231]. Lonergan makes by this observation:

**“There is, then, a subtle ambiguity in the apparently evident
statement that common sense relates things to us. *For who
are we? Do we not change? Is not the acquisition of common
sense itself a change in us?* (CWL 3, p. 204, emphases added).**

Those are of course rhetorical questions, because indeed we do change, and the acquisition of common sense insights is certainly one of the things that changes. What the acquisition of common sense insights has to do with our self-constitution is something that we’ll see a little bit later on in today’s class sessions when we talk about the dramatic pattern of experience.

But I want to come back to that central question: *Who are we?* Why is it that Lonergan is introducing this notion of the patterning of experience as a way of coming at the question: Who are we? It is indeed the case that every time we have a new experience, we change. Every time we have a new insight, we change.

There used to be on Public Television in the Boston area a fairly well-known social psychologist who had a weekly show. And at the end of the show, he would say: “Thank you so much for spending this last hour with me. I’ve been changed, and I hope you’ve been

changed!” And it was frankly a bit silly, because yes of course, every experience that we have changes us, and we don’t really always draw attention to the fact that every time we have an experience that we’ve had this profound change in us.

So there is a fundamental sense in which, yes, whenever we have new experiences, new insights, new questions, we do in fact change. But what we’re going to see is that *the more fundamental issues about personal change really have to do with insights that have to do with our self-constitution*; which Lonergan deals with in the context of what he calls the Dramatic Patterning of Experience.

Patterning of Experience

Since insights are into phantasms, how we understand and behave is conditioned in a most fundamental way by what phantasms come to us.

But why begin the question about the Patterning of Experience with the question: Who are we? It goes back to the fundamental theorem, or if you like, the fundamental thing that Lonergan learned from Aquinas and from Aristotle, namely, that *understanding understands the ideas in the images!*

This runs counter to — as I think I’ve mentioned before — it runs counter to the tradition that comes from Scotus (c. 1266-1308), through Kant (1724-1804), and into contemporary thinking, that understanding has to do with concepts; that concepts pop into the mind, almost automatically. This is one of the things that Lonergan railed against in the tradition of what he called conceptualism. *And he thought that the fundamental oversight of that approach was its neglect, not only of insight proper, but the fact that insight is always into phantasms, it’s always into images.* And so, if our insights, and particularly our insights that are going to have to do with our self-constitutions as people with certain kinds of identities, then we’re determined in a certain way, or conditioned in a very profound way, by the kinds of phantasms that come to us.

Patterning of Experience

Since insights are into phantasms, how we understand and behave is conditioned in a most fundamental way by what phantasms come to us.

Phantasms come to us through the ways and modes in which we pattern our experiences.

And what Lonergan is going to draw our attention to, in the second section of chapter six [*CWL 3*, Chapter 6, § 2 “The Subjective Field of Common Sense,” pp. 204-231], is that *our phantasms that are there available for us to enable us to have any insights at all, come to us through a patterning of our experiences.*

Patterning of Experience

Since insights are into phantasms, how we understand and behave is conditioned in a most fundamental way by what phantasms come to us.

Phantasms come to us through the ways and modes in which we pattern our experiences.

So in an important way, “Who are we?” is answered by first answering,

“How do we pattern our experiencing?”

So in an important way, in an important way, the question “Who are we?” is going to be set by the way that we pattern our experiences; because the way that we pattern our experiences is then going to be determinative of the kinds of understandings that we have; and the kinds of understandings that we have will then be determinative of what we can make of ourselves! *Praxis* in the classical Greek sense of *praxis*, *praxis* as the activity of human self-making; that our human self-making is going to depend vitally upon the insights that we have to make ourselves with; and in turn our insights are going to be dependent upon the patterns of experiencing that make available to us phantasms that we have to have insights about!

- **Patterns of Experience.**

- Lonergan’s “definition” of the phrase “pattern of experience” is in need of clarification.
- Patterning of experience means how the components of our experiencing are related to each other.
 - The ‘Abstractness’ of Sensations: a sensation is never occurs in isolation, but is always already situated in a context, in a flow composed of other experiences as well.
- What distinguishes the pattern of one person from that of another is the differences among their interests and concerns, which govern their patternings of experience.
 - Interests and concerns, then, provide the basic answer to the question, “Why is this set of experiences in this arrangement (pattern) occurring in this person’s flow of consciousness?”

- That is, when Lonergan says that a pattern of experience “as conceived, is the formulation of an insight,” he means the formulation of an insight into an individual’s interests and concerns as determining the composition of the flow of their experiencing.
- Lonergan resembles Heidegger insofar as he views perceiving as situated in a more fundamental context of human concerns.
- Sensation is always in relation to associations, anticipations and concrete concerns.

Patterning of Experience

“The notion of the pattern of experience may best be approached by remarking how abstract it is to speak of a sensation.” (*CWL 3*, p. 204).

Now Lonergan begins this section, after the observation that the changes in us are very much conditioned by, and in the penumbra of the ways in which we pattern our experience, he begins by saying that:

“The notion of the pattern of experience may best be approached by remarking how abstract it is to speak of a sensation.” (*CWL 3*, p. 204).

— which is an odd thing to say! Because presumably, the most concrete, the most specific, the most particular dimension of our cognitive apparatus is our sensations. Are not sensations the most concrete, as opposed to the most abstract, sorts of things? So what could he possibly mean by that?

Patterning of Experience

“The notion of the pattern of experience may best be approached by remarking how abstract it is to speak of a sensation.” (*CWL 3*, p. 204).

“Nor is it difficult for us to say just what we mean by such a pattern. As conceived, it is the formulation of an insight; but all insight arises from sensitive or imaginative presentations, and in the present case the relevant presentations are simply the various elements in the experience that is organized by the pattern.” (*CWL 3*, p. 205).

And in response to the puzzlement that that statement sets off, he doesn't give a direct response. He says rather this:

“nor is it difficult for us to say just what we mean by such a pattern. As conceived, it is the formulation of an insight; but all insight arises from sensitive or imaginative presentations, and in the present case the relevant presentations are simply the various elements in the experience that is organized by the pattern.” (*CWL 3*, p. 205).

Now that is one of the more obtuse and dense sentences in this whole chapter!

What exactly is he getting at by that? *What he's getting at is that the pattern of experience has to do with relatedness! As we've seen before, to a large extent, insights are insights into how things relate to one another. Now, though we are in the mode of common sense where we are talking about how things are related to us, Lonergan is giving an **explanatory** account of a pattern of experience. And so his focus is on what is meant by a pattern by saying that in a pattern of experience **his explanatory account must focus** on how the components relate to one another.*

Patterning of Experience

“Thus the flow of sensations, as completed by memories and prolonged by imaginative acts of anticipation, becomes the flow of perceptions. It is of the latter, perceptual flow that we are conscious.” (CWL 3, p. 96).

His focus is on what is meant by a pattern, by saying **of course that in giving an explanatory account of a pattern of experience the focus must be on** how the components relate to one another. Components of what? *The components of our experience as a flow!*

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) in his phenomenological writings draws great attention to the fact that any of our perceptions is never just an isolated sensation. It is always already in a flowing of experiences, both of those experiences that we retain in a form of memory or retention, but also those experiences that we anticipate in a form of imagination and anticipation. So whatever we receive immediately with our eyes, or hearing immediately with our ears is always already constituted in a flowing of experiences. William James (1842-1910), before Husserl, the same sort of thing, focussing on the flowing of our experiences.

When he's talking about *patterning of experiences*, then, what Lonergan is talking about is the way in which a sensation is situated in a context of relatedness to other sensations immediately present, but also to other activities of imagination and memory, past and in the future; and not only to other, say, visual sensations — It's not just that I'm seeing something; I'm remembering what I saw; I'm anticipating what I'm going to see; but as Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) points out in great detail in his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), my seeing is always already situated and related to my bodily posture, my sense of erectness, the sense of how my head and body are positioned, maybe the sense of how my body is about to move or has been moving as I'm doing my seeing, and also my hearing and my touching and my tasting.

So that when we have *a sensation*, say as the classical empiricist might say, a sensation of a patch of redness, that's always concretely related to a rich field of other sensations, other visual sensations, other auditory sensations, tactile, bodily, kinaesthetic sensations. And all of those in both retentive and protentive modes, so that our experiencing is in fact a flowing! And in that flow, there are relationships among all those different sensitive components.

Patterning of Experience

“Thus the flow of sensations, as completed by memories and prolonged by imaginative acts of anticipation, becomes the flow of perceptions. It is of the latter, perceptual flow that we are conscious ...

Now what differentiates the perceptual flow in one man from that of another is found in the pattern of interests and objectives, desires and fears, that emphasize elements and aspects of sensible presentations, enrich them with the individual’s associations and memories, and project them into future courses of possible fruitful activity. (CWL 3, p. 96).

Now, what differentiates the flow of experience for one person or another, as Lonergan says, is to be found in the interests and objectives, the desires and fears, that emphasize elements and aspects of sensible presentations, and enrich them with the individual’s associations and memories, and project them into courses of possible fruitful activity.

So Lonergan is interested in the question of what is the answer to: Why are — Why is *this* array of experiences, in *this* flow, in *this* relation, with *this* emphasis and *this* de-emphasis, why are *these* contents flowing in *this* pattern at *this* time and in *this* sequence. And *his answer is that it has to do with our interests and concerns!*

In this way, Lonergan is doing something rather like what Heidegger does in the beginning sections of *Being and Time*: that our perceiving is already situated in the context of *Sorge*, **care or concern**.¹ And that *it's the concern that is more fundamental than the perceiving*. The concern does the structuring, does the patterning, of what gets into our consciousness — and with what intensity, and with what order, and with what arrangement, do those contents get into consciousness.

So when Lonergan says **that** it's abstract to speak of a sensation, what he means is that sensations always already occur in relationship to other sensations, and to things remembered, and to things anticipated; and those more profoundly situated within the concreteness of the concern one is currently enmeshed in, that's doing the situating.

Patterns of Experience & Neural Demand Functions

“For the stream of sensitive experience is a chameleon; and as its pattern can be biological or artistic, so too it can become the automatic instrument, or rather the vitally adaptive collaborator, of the spirit of inquiry.”
(*CWL* 3, p. 209).

“Consciousness selects; it floats upon the series of demands for attention.” (*CWL* 10, *Topics in Education*, p. 84).

¹ See Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 10 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), pp. 83-84.

- Pattern of Experience and Neural Demand Function.
- Many kinds of concerns or “horizons” that structure the dynamic patterns of experience.
- Among these interests and concerns is the spirit of inquiry, which itself can effect the patterning of experiencing.
- The interests and concerns, and their patterning of our experiencing, is prior to our acts of understanding (i.e., prior to our insights).
- “Neural demand function”: consciousness selects from the various potential experiences latent in our neurophysiology, selects from among the various demands upon our consciousness for representation that are made by those components in our neurophysiology.
- Lonergan identifies 7 various patterns of experience in *Insight*: the biological, aesthetic, artistic, intellectual, dramatic patterns, as well as the practical & mystical ones.
 - The present class focuses only on the biological, intellectual, and dramatic (or “interpersonal”) patterns. Others are treated elsewhere.

And he points out that “**the stream of sensitive experience is a chameleon**” (CWL 3, p. 209); that the set of concerns can shift, and that the pattern can be *biological* at one time, *artistic* in another; it can become *practical* at one time, and *interpersonal* at another, and it can be *scientific* at one time, and *playful* at another; that *there are many different kinds of horizons or concerns that constitute the field within which our experiences are patterned, and that do the structuring and the patterning of our experiences.*

And among those, of course, is *the spirit of inquiry!* Inquiry itself can be a concern that is doing the structuring of our experience.

Now, *the fundamental characteristic of the patterning of experience then is that it's doing some selecting and arranging, and that it's doing it prior to understanding. This is a terribly important thing.*

It's not that prior understanding may not be playing some role in that structuring. *It is rather that the concerns and the interests that are the determinative forces in the patterning are not previously thought out. It's rather that the structuring of our experiences is done, and followed up upon, by our desire to understand!*

That's one of the reasons why for Lonergan it is such an important question to ask, ‘Who are we?’ in relationship to the question ‘How are we patterning our experiencing?’ *And so consciousness does the selecting.* As Lonergan says: “**Consciousness selects; it floats upon the series of demands for attention.**” (CWL 10, *Topics in Education*, p. 84).

Now this is related to this very strange phrase that he has in chapter six, “**neural demand function.**” (CWL 3, p. 213). We'll elaborate that a little bit more; but what he has in mind is that our nervous system, our neurophysiology, is a vast reservoir of potentiality for experiencing. There is always a great deal that is going on in our nervous system that is not yet being experienced. But it presents a variable set of demands for conscious representation,

for conscious experience. And consciousness, as that which is doing the patterning of our experiencing, is fundamentally concerned with selecting from among the range of demands for conscious representations, which of those demands is going to be met now. *So consciousness, by selecting from our neurophysiology, is doing the patterning.*

When Lonergan says that our “**sensitive experience is a chameleon**” (*CWL 3*, p. 209), and that it can therefore have a — change into different patternings, he gives an account in chapter six of several different patterns of experience. (*CWL 3*, 205-214).

Patterning of Experience

“There are, then, different dynamic patterns of experience ...” (*CWL 3*, p. 205).

Biological

Aesthetic

Artistic

Intellectual

Dramatic [Interpersonal]

(*CWL 3*, 205-214).

Practical

Mystical

(*CWL 3*, 410).

There is a focus particularly on the **biological**. There’s a section on **aesthetic** patterning, but if we read carefully, we will discover that there’s also a discussion of **artistic** patterning, so that the aesthetic pattern and the artistic patterning are not one and the same.

In the next class, we will spend some time exploring what Lonergan means both by artistic and aesthetic patterning. We’re not going to do it in this class session, but we’ll do it in the next class session, which was the one that would have taken place on November eighteen.

So we're going to skip over those for today, and focus really on the three other patterns of experience that Lonergan treats in chapter six, namely the **biological**, the **intellectual** and the **dramatic**, or as I'm going to call it, the **interpersonal** patterning of experience. There are two other patternings of experience that are mentioned in *Insight*, but not in chapter six. They're not mentioned until we get to chapter fourteen (*CWL 3*, "The Method of Metaphysics," pp. 410-455), and those are what he calls the **practical** and the **mystical** patterns of experience.

The practical pattern of experience is something that he talks about, though he doesn't advert to the fact that he's talking about it as a patterning of experience. He talked about it a little bit already in the section on "Common Sense as Intellectual", [*CWL 3*, Chapter 6, "Common Sense and Its Subject," § 1: "Common Sense as Intellectual," pp. 196-204], in so far as human beings are using their self-correcting cycle of learning to figure out how to solve problems in the immediate situation, whether they're technological, or dealing with natural occurrences and natural disasters. That would be a *practical patterning of experience*, but he doesn't dwell on it in this chapter.

And the other is what he calls the *mystical patterning of experience*. He mentions it twice in *Insight*, but says very little about it. And Lonergan once said, with regard to mystical experiences: "Those who talk about them do not know, and those who know do not talk about them!" I think he took that as a sort of a caution. It's not to say that he didn't regard it as a terribly important field of human experience. And we will have an opportunity in the Second Semester to learn a little bit of what Lonergan meant by *religious experience*, which is intimately related to *mystical experience*. But in the book *Insight*, he doesn't say much about it.

I simply have those two other patterns of experience there in the overhead display, to indicate that Lonergan did not think that he had given an exhaustive list of the possible patternings of experience, all kinds of patternings of experience, that there are. And I think that even this list is open to the possibility of other differentiations or other types of patternings of experience. Be that as it may, those are the seven patterns of experience that Lonergan mentions in *Insight*. And we're going to focus in most of this class on the biological, the intellectual and the dramatic patterns of experience.

- Why Chapter Six is structured as it is: The question, “But who are we?” is ultimately answered by the self-constitution that occurs in the dramatic patterning of experience.
- But dramatic patterning draws upon resources found in their more simplified forms in the intellectual, artistic, aesthetic and biological patternings. Hence, those are treated first in order to build up to his account of dramatic patterning.

Patterning of Experience

Strategic Ordering of Presentation in Chapter 6:

“For who are we?”

Biological

Aesthetic

Artistic

Intellectual

Dramatic [Interpersonal]

(CWL 3, 205-214).

Practical

Mystical

(CWL 3, 410).

But why did Lonergan choose those patterns of experience to focus on in chapter six? And why did he put them in the order that he did? I think the answer has to do with where he ends up!

You remember he starts out in section two with the question: *Who are we?* And his answer to that, I think, ultimately is going to be: *We are who we make ourselves to be in the dramatic pattern of experience.* The most fundamental answer to *Who we are?* is *who we are as self-constituted: as mainly constituted in the dramatic pattern of experience.*

But in order to do that he has to work his way through a series of stages. And one of the things that we'll see, for example, is he'll — after treating the aesthetic and the artistic patterns of experience — he'll say that *the fundamental human artistry is the artistry of their own living!* So if that is the way in which he's going to characterize the dramatic pattern of experience, he needs to talk about the aesthetic and the artistic. So too he needs to talk about the intellectual pattern of experience to get a clearer understanding of a certain aspect of the dramatic pattern of experiencing, namely the role that inquiry plays in doing the patterning of experience in the dramatic pattern. And in order to do that, he wants to talk about, and feels he needs to talk about, the way in which the inquiry does the patterning in the intellectual, or if you like, the explanatory patterning of experience. *So there's an order there!* And it's important for him also to begin with the biological pattern of experience as the most elemental patterning of experience, and then to show the contrast, and the emergence, of other patterns of experience with respect to the biological. So that is why, I think, he has structured it in this way.

- The brain is a dynamic ‘non-system’ capable of trillions of nerve impulses per second.
- Therefore this ‘non-system’ forms a coincidental aggregate of impulses open to higher patterning.
- From this vast reservoir of neuro-physiological function, some elements are brought to consciousness, and patterned further.
 - Thus we are constantly selecting from this ‘coincidental aggregate’ in ways that serve our interests and concerns.
 - Why Lonergan uses the term ‘neural demand function’; illustrations from bodily awareness.

Patterns of Experience & Neural Demand Functions

Most nerve cells are capable of 1000 electrical impulses per second.

This would mean that there are something like 10 trillion nerve impulses per second in the active adult brain.

Now to return again to this topic of the relationship between

consciousness as selecting, consciousness as doing the patterning of experience, our concerns and interests and the existential commitments as doing the patterning of our experiencing,

the relationship of that to

our nervous system, our neural demand functions,

I just thought that maybe a reflection on what happens [might be helpful](#). People say my brain made me do this, or our brains do this!

Well, what exactly are our brains? Don't think of a brain as a lump of matter, which is what most people think of! A brain is a brain because it's a dynamic system, or as I would prefer to say, a dynamic 'non-system.' At any given moment, most of our nerve cells are capable of about a thousand electrical impulses a second. They usually don't excite with that kind of rapidity and that kind of frequency, but they have that capacity. But at any second, many of our nerve cells are firing at something like a hundred to three hundred times a second. And given the number of brain cells that we have, that would mean that there is something like ten trillion nerve impulses per second going on in the adult human being.

Now not all of those ten trillion nerve impulses are completely random, completely dissociated, completely disconnected, with every other one. There are *patterns of nervous activity, electrical activity, in our brains*. But even if we were very generous and saying that ten thousand nerve impulses a second were *interconnected* with one another, *that would still leave something like almost a million disconnected patterns of firing in our brains! And that means that there's not a full deterministic system of the ways in which our brains are operating! Rather there's a vast reservoir of electrical activity in our brains which is available to be organized in different kinds of systems by selectivity.*

And that is what Lonergan is getting at by this notion of *consciousness selecting from neural demand functions*. Our nervous system has this vast reservoir of things that we can select from, and bring to consciousness, and add further patterning to, because not all the patterns are determined electrically, and biologically, and chemically, in our brains.

Patterns of Experience & Neural Demand Functions

Most nerve cells are capable of 1000 electrical impulses per second.

This would mean that there are something like 10 trillion nerve impulses per second in the active adult brain.

“it is always an open question whether any particular content thus discriminated will eventually appear as an element in conscious experience ... as subject to continual editing by many processes distributed around in the brain ...” (Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (113).

I think almost despite himself, Daniel Dennett, who would not be a great supporter of what I just said, says in fact almost the same thing:

“It is always an open question whether any particular content thus discriminated will eventually appear as an element in conscious experience.” (Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p. 113).

And so what he's getting at there is the fact that sensation has led to a stimulation of electrical activity in our brains, **but this** does not automatically determine that that stimulus will emerge into our consciousness. It is, as he says,

“subject to continual editing by many processes distributed around in the brain ...” (Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, p. 113).

Now, Dennett uses this as a way of criticizing what he calls the Cartesian theatre, the Cartesian spectator theory of knowing: that there is a single consciousness that looks out and is the focal point, that consciousness is being a focal point. Whether or not that's a fair characterization of Descartes and to Descartes' scholars, but it's certainly what you might call a straw man, or a straw person, for Dennett to knock down. Because *he's very aware of the fact that there are multiple layers and multiple centers within the brain that play different kinds of organizational roles in our — let's say, the bio-chemical electrical functioning of our nervous system.*

Lonergan by talking about neural demand functions is simply drawing attention to the fact that *what we are consciously experiencing is a selection out of the nonsystematic aggregate*, the coincidental aggregate of all these various centres, these various patterns of activity in the brain; that some of them are brought and given a further higher integration in consciousness, in response to our interests and concerns.

Patterning of Experience

All patterning of experience is selective, from the vast reservoir of neuro-physiological functioning that underpins actually conscious contents.

So in a sense, all patterning of experience is selective, and it's selective from this vast reservoir of our neuro-physiological functioning.

Patterns of Experience & Neural Demand Functions

“Since, then, the demands of neural patterns and processes are subject to control and selection, they are better named demand functions. They call for some psychic representation and some conscious integration, but their specific requirements can be met in a variety of different manners.” (CWL 3, p. 214).

Now why does Lonergan call them “neural demand functions”? He gives his rationale.

The demands of neural patterns and processes are *subject to control and selection*, therefore, they are better named [neural] demand functions. (CWL 3, p. 214, emphases added).

What he means by that is that the demands don’t have to be met in any particular way. They’re not what — that the stimulus doesn’t automatically, necessarily, lead to a one to one occurrence of a conscious content in our experiencing; that rather they can be brought into consciousness in a variety of different situations, patterns, relationships. That’s what he means by using this phrase, [neural demand functions](#).

To just give an illustration of this: it’s — Something that I did with the class when they were present, is, I just said to them: “How many of you, until I said this, were aware of the feeling of your feet against the floor, or against your shoes?”

That is an illustration of how consciousness is selective! The nerve fibers in your feet were doing the very same thing before you became aware of their feelings as they were after you became aware of the feelings. What changed was the selectivity of your consciousness in bringing them into consciousness; or that those nerve endings were there, and they were doing their neuro-electrical functioning, but *consciousness doesn't necessarily have to allow those sensations into consciousness if they're not part and parcel of the sorts of things with which it is concerned and interested.*

Lonergan will also say that there's a variation, there's a spectrum, or if you like, a threshold; that some nervous functioning is very, as he calls it, imperious. It's demanding. It's like a little kid, on the one hand, saying: "I want this now, Mummy!" Or, like a dictator who says "You shall do this now!" So some of our nervous impulses are very imperious; they demand attention; they demand to be brought into consciousness. And that would be the sort of thing, when, of course, if you suffer a sharp pain, if you cut yourself, or step on a sharp rock, stumble and fall. Then those neural functionings make very great demands for attention, and they shove other things out of the way. But within the ordinary course of our living, most of our nervous functioning can wait; it's not as imperious; it can be deferred to another time.

There was a time when I was ice-skating, and I was not conscious of the fact that I had developed a blister on my toe, because I was focusing on my balance, my posture, and on where my weight was distributed, on whether or not I was making a turn; and all those sorts of things that you have to concentrate on if you're doing a sport. But when I went to sleep at night the awareness of the blister came into my dream. I had this big white spot on my foot, and when I woke up in the morning and I looked, and said sure enough, there was a blister! The blister formation was not so severe as to be extremely painful; it was one of those just before the blister breaks type of experiences. It wasn't so imperious as to invade and interrupt and interfere with my other interests and concerns, and my need to maintain a certain integrity of the flow of my experiences in the pursuit of those interests and concerns. But instead, in my dream state, that deferred neural demand was brought to my attention by my dream.

- The Animal Biological Patterning of Experience and its Concerns.
- The animal evolutionary advantages over plants: quick responses to outer stimuli, i.e., to biological opportunities and danger.
 - Example of predator and prey.
 - In the biological pattern, the contents of consciousness are organized by the basic needs of survival: nutrition, reproduction, self-preservation.

**The Animal Biological Pattern
& Its Concerns.**

[Picture of lion and zebra]

“if we endeavour to understand the sudden twists and turns both of fleeing quarry and pursuing beast of prey, we ascribe to them a flow of experience not unlike our own. Outer senses are the heralds of biological opportunities and dangers.” (*CWL* 3, p. 206).

Now in the **biological pattern of experience** — what Lonergan calls “the biological pattern of experience” — the first of those three types or kinds of patterns of experience — All of those patterns of experience admit vast variations, but he has identified three, or seven

basic kinds! And this is the first one, the biological pattern of concerns, or excuse me, the biological pattern of experience. And he begins with the observation that animals have a specific advantage, in terms of their evolution, over plants. Plants *can* adapt to changes in their environments, but they do so slowly: there are for example plant tropisms:² very slowly, plants can tilt their stems towards light or away from light depending on what they need to do! But it's a very limited kind of response to the environment; by and large, plants are very passive! They have to sit there and hope — They don't hope of course! They have to sit there and wait for water, and nutrients, and carbon dioxide, and sunlight, to impinge upon them, so that they can process those in ways that are maintaining the form of biological living that they have as the particular kind of plants that they are.

Now animals, on the other hand, develop an advantage over plants that they can respond to movements, to vibrations, to light rays, to heat, to sound, of various kinds; that they can respond to those as either in ways that either take advantage of the biological opportunities that they afford, or protect themselves from the kinds of biological dangers that they [are threatened by](#). So what is specifically the animal biological patterning of experience is its concern with the sort of thing that evolution has given animals, that kind of sensitive consciousness for, namely its concern for the basic evolutionary functions of *finding sources of nutrition, fleeing sources of danger, and finding opportunities for reproduction*. Those are the three things that underpin “the survival of the fittest,” as Herbert Spencer put it, and thereby infected Darwin's account of evolution. Evolution is concerned with biological survival and biological propagation, and that's its specific advantage.

Now if we look at the biological patterning of experience in a concrete fashion. I have here [[in the overhead display](#)] a photo of a lioness chasing down a zebra. And Lonergan has a great line that gives us a feel for what's going on:

“If we endeavour to understand the sudden twists and turns both of fleeing quarry and pursuing beast of prey, we ascribe to them a flow of experience not unlike our own. Outer senses are the heralds of biological opportunities and dangers.” (*CWL* 3, p. 206).

² A **tropism** (from Greek *τρόπος*, *tropos*, “a turning”) is a biological phenomenon, indicating growth or turning movement of a biological organism, usually a plant, in response to an environmental stimulus. In tropisms, this response is dependent on the direction of the stimulus.

And so that there you see, and it's a marvelous interplay between the lioness's gaze and the zebra's gaze: the lioness is regarding the zebra as a biological opportunity, and the zebra the lion as a biological danger.

And if you've seen — I'm sure you've seen — a National Geographic or other natural displays of lions hunting down animals, and the ways in which the animals attempt to escape and by making a veer to the left or a veer to the right, or halting and twisting and turning, and turning back, and the lion adjusting to that as their eyes and their muscles are completely organized and patterned by the concern that is fundamentally biological, on the one hand to gain nutrition, and on the other hand to escape annihilation. So this interplay in the biological encounter between predator and prey is a great illustration of what Lonergan means.

Think of each of those animals now outside of the context of this predator-prey experience; think of each of them as in a different context: the zebra grazing with its herd; the lioness lying peacefully with its cubs, the cubs are scrambling around, the cubs come tumbling upon it, and it gives them a whack [Pat demonstrates the whack with a sweeping gesture]; its experience is organized with *still a biological, but a different biological concern*. The zebra is — its experiences are organized with *a biological, but still a different biological concern than when they're caught in the midst of the hunt*. At that moment of the hunt [Pat has turned back to the predator-prey photo], I cannot say with absolute certainty, but I suspect the zebra is not thinking about anybody else in its herd in the way that it would when it's grazing calmly with its herd — The lioness has not got the playfulness of its cubs on its mind. It's eyes are riveted: it has specialized its attention and its organization of its experiences completely on the twists and turns and moves of that zebra lest it get away.

That's what Lonergan means by the biological patterning of experience: *the selectivity and the organization and the exclusiveness of what gets into their consciousnesses of these two animals as they endeavor to play their part in the drama of biological life.*

The Animal Biological Pattern & Its Concerns.

“The pattern is a set of intelligible relations that link together sequences of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, and bodily movements; and to name the pattern biological is simply to affirm that the sequences converge upon terminal activities of intussusception or reproduction, or, when negative in scope, self-preservation.” (CWL 3, p. 206).

And to return to what Lonergan says about patterns of experience: a pattern of experience as expressed is the content of an insight; the content of an insight that understands why these are the contents of sensations, the flow, the patterning, the relatedness, as they are actually occurring. And as he says, to call it a **“biological pattern”** is to simply affirm that the sequences of experiences, visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, **“converge upon terminal activities of intussusception or reproduction, or, when negative in scope, of self-preservation.”** (CWL 3, p. 206).

*So **the** biological pattern of experience is the organizing of experience whose concerns are these evolutionary concerns of nutrition, reproduction and self-preservation.*

- The Orchid Wasp

- The orchid wasp versus the bee: the co-evolution of certain species of orchids and wasps enabled the orchids to take advantage of the wasps' reproductive concerns in order to promote pollination; versus in the case of bees, where plant pollination is facilitated by nutritional patternings of its experiences.
- Environmental stimuli can thus trigger this or that mode of biological patterning.

**The Animal Biological Pattern &
Its Concerns.**

[Picture of an orchid wasp]

“Thus extroversion is a basic characteristic of the biological pattern of experience. ... concerned, not with the immanent aspects of living, but with its external conditions and opportunities.” (CWL 3, p. 207).

This is one of my favourite, interesting, curious, fascinating examples from the field of biology. On the slide to the right there's a wasp; and the wasp is on an orchid. And hopefully [the picture has](#) got a fine enough resolution so that you can see the wasp and the orchid: it's on the stalk of orchids. This is called an orchid wasp. There are several species

of orchid wasp; this is one of them. This orchid wasp is doing something that is a little different than what we're used to seeing insects do with flowers. We're all familiar of course with the ways in which bees will go into flowers and extract the nectar that they can then take back to their hive and manufacture into honey and other kinds of foods for the nutrition of the colony of the bees. And so you would say that if you see a bee hovering around a flower, that its experiences are being patterned by its concerns for nutrition, and for — and also patterned by the way in which its activity is related to its membership in a hive.

The wasp is doing something a little different. So where the bee's concern is a concern that is nutritional, the wasp's concern here is actually a concern that's reproductive! *This is very odd!* When the bee is seeking the nectar in the flower, it does the flower the by-product service of pollinating. It picks up pollen from the flower, it goes to seek nectar in another flower, it deposits some of the pollen that it's picked up on its — usually on its hind quarters — in the second flower; and thereby stimulates the process of reproduction in the flower. But the bee itself is not engaged in activities of reproduction.

In the case of the orchid wasp, however, that is exactly what is happening. There is a mutual reproductive advantage **that** is taking place in this relationship between the wasp and the orchid. The orchid has developed, first of all, morphological features that are at least similar in shape to that of the wasp. Now, you and I can look at this and say, “Well that orchid doesn't look anything like a wasp!” But we're not wasps!! **The orchid** has at least the topological features that are similar to the body shape of the wasp!

So this is a male wasp that wants to mate with a female wasp. In addition to the morphological features, these species of orchids which are matched with various species of orchid wasps, also secrete pheromones that are mimicking and sufficiently resemble the pheromones that female wasps exude. So the wasp is going to actually mate with the orchid, or it's going to attempt to mate with the orchid; it's going to, what I might call *think*, it's mating with the orchid. In fact what it does is the same thing that the bee does when it's getting nectar from the flower: namely, it gets some pollen from the orchid. And then when it tries to mate with another orchid, will pollenate the second orchid. So in its attempts, its

consciousness is focused, both in terms of what would be, roughly speaking, its smell organs, the pheromones, and its visual experiences, it's tricked into a reproductive patterning of experience, and is being tricked by the flower so to speak, into thinking that it's doing the reproduction that's appropriate to it as a wasp species; but in fact what it's doing is contributing to the reproduction of the orchid species, and its own labors of love, unfortunately, are lost to the wasp colony!

So this is another example of what Lonergan means by the animal biological patterning of experience: that certain stimuli will put animals into one of these modes of nutrition, of survival, or of reproduction, and that it will pattern its experiences in that way.

- **Biological Experience versus Biological Patterning of Experiences.**
- **All human sensitive experience is biological, but not all patterning of experience is biological.**
- **All sensitive experiencing is rooted in bodily-based neurological functioning – the reservoir of nervous functioning based in our embodiment.**
 - **Biological originating of experiences, versus biological patterning of those experiences.**
- **Patterning for the sake of biological, evolutionary factors (nutrition, reproduction, self-preservation) versus patterning for other interests and concerns.**

**Biological Experiences vs.
Biological Patterning.**

In one sense, all experiencing is biological
— of the body.

But not all patterning of experience is biological.

Now frequently readers, or at least introductory readers of Lonergan's *Insight*, get confused about what Lonergan means by the biological patterning of experience; and they will then have a number of reactions to his treatment. First of all, Lonergan is going to give a very brief account of biological patterning of experience and then move on, and the intellectual pattern of experience comes later. And some people read this as yet another indication of how another western philosopher is neglecting the body in favor of the disembodied *Cogito* of Descartes; it's yet another example of this disembodied, this detachment, that is characterized and victimized and has been responsible for so much evil in western civilization, and so on. That's not a correct reading of Lonergan!!

There is a distinction between *biological experiences* and *biological patterning of experience*. In one sense, *all* of our experiencing, for Lonergan, is biological. In one sense, it's *all* experiencing that originates from nowhere else but the body! All of our experiencing comes to us through the mediation of our nervous system. And our nervous system is, first of all, supported by our biological functioning; and secondly, as stimulated by the ways in which the external environment interacts with our biological organism. *We don't have direct experience of anything except through our bodies and the nervous system that is part and parcel of our embodiment!* All of our experiences then are that, whether we are in the biological pattern of experience, or in the intellectual pattern of experience, or the aesthetic, or the mystical, or the practical — whatever patterning of experience we are doing, it's

always a patterning of our experiences as biological! It's always a patterning, it's always a selecting and arranging, from out of the reservoir of our biological embodiment; and especially the nervous system that plays such an integral role in the kind of bodies that human beings in particular, and animals in general, have!

That said, while it's the case that *all experiencing*, all animal, all human experiencing, is *intrinsically biological*, *it's not the case that all patterning of our experiencing is biological!* So the distinction between biological experiences and the biological patterning of experience is whether or not our biologically originating experiences are being patterned for the sake of evolutionary factors, reproduction, survival, nutrition, or whether they're being patterned for the sake of some other interests and concerns.

And it's with regard to the other kinds, the other grand types of interests and concerns that Lonergan moves on to talk about these other patterns of experiencing.

- **The Intellectual Patterning of Experience:**
- **The Canon of Selection:** What criteria determine whether insights qualify as empirically scientific insights?
- **Scientific observation is not purely passive “seeing what is there to be seen.”** Scientific observation is a highly developed, practiced, and specialized intellectual patterning of experiences.
- **The Subordination of sensing to scientific interests and concerns.**
- **Examples: imagination and observation in Barbara McClintock's chromosome research.**

- Kekule's discovery of benzene after dreaming of the circular snake, Ouroboros.
- Reflective Inquiry, aimed at reaching judgments, is also selective and patterning of experiencing with regard to its concerns.

And the first — and because we're skipping over, for the purposes of this class, the aesthetic and the artistic patterning of experience, the next one in order he addresses is the **Intellectual Pattern of Experience**. And this we already encountered when we were back in Chapter Three, where Lonergan is talking about, among other things, the "Canon of Selection" (*CWL* 3, pp. 94-97).

Remember the Canon of Selection in Chapter Three is concerned with: Well, what types of insights, what types of hypotheses, are properly the realm of empirical modern science. And the types of insights that we're going to select out are the ones that have some sensible consequences that can be used as the basis of testing the veracity of those insights.

Intellectual Pattern & Neural Demand Functions

"Hence to become a scientific observer is ... to bring the raw materials of one's sensations within a new context. The interests and hopes, desires and fears, of ordinary living have to slip into a background. In their place the detached and disinterested exigences of inquiring intelligence have to enter and assume control." (*CWL* 3, p. 97).

This is very much like what Karl Popper in his book, *Logik der Forschung* (1934), which should have been translated as *The Logic of Research*, but has been translated as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959). In that major work of Popper, he begins with what he calls the criterion of demarcation. What separates science from all other kinds of intellectual endeavors? And he has an answer [to this](#) that is different from Lonergan's, but at least has some parallels with Lonergan's. [Lonergan's](#) answer is going to have to do with something *like* sensible consequences, but is going to be articulated in a different fashion.

So Lonergan's Canon of Selection is: *how do we select the realm of ideas that we're going to regard as potentially empirical scientific ideas? And he says that the ones that we are going to select are the ones that have some sensible consequences.* And then he immediately says but don't think that this is a very simple criterion. In fact it's very subtle and very complicated! And towards the end of that discussion, he says:

“Hence to become a scientific observer is ... to bring the raw materials of one's sensations within a new context. The interests and hopes, desires and fears, of ordinary living have to slip into a background.” (*CWL 3*, p. 97).

So that is to say [that](#) the concerns that are doing the patterning of our experiences in ordinary living have to be let go of, so that the community can change from the interests and concerns of ordinary to the interests and concerns of scientific observation.

“In their place the detached and disinterested exigences of inquiring intelligence have to enter [in](#) and assume control.” (*CWL 3*, p. 97).

Intellectual Pattern & Neural Demand Functions

“Hence to become a scientific observer is ... to bring the raw materials of one’s sensations within a new context. The interests and hopes, desires and fears, of ordinary living have to slip into a background. In their place the detached and disinterested exigences of inquiring intelligence have to enter and assume control.

“Memories will continue to enrich sensations, but they will be memories of scientific significance. Imagination will continue to prolong the present by anticipating the future, but anticipations with a practical moment will give way to anticipations that bear on a scientific issue ... for the impartial and accurate observer, no less than anyone else, is under the dominance of a guiding orientation.” (CWL 3, p. 97).

“Memories will ... enrich sensations, but they will be memories of scientific significance.” (CWL 3, p. 97). The *imagination* can also enter in to the patterning of experience, but *it’s an imagination that is brought forward, from the reservoir of all that we can imagine, by our scientific concern.*

Barbara McClintock for example — a person whom Evelyn Fox Keller called a virtuoso of observation³ — in her published articles she would have photographs, micrographs, taken through her microscope, of chromosomal features, and then right underneath them there would be diagrams; and in the diagrams it's much easier to get the insights into the chromosomal features that she's talking about, than it is in the micrographs themselves. In other words, Barbara McClintock is giving us an expression of what she herself did, which is to use her imagination in relationship to her keen observations, and that the two are worked together under the organization of patterning of the intellectual patterning of experience.

So even at the level of observing, people in the intellectual, or if you like the explanatory scientific patterning of experience, are *not without concerns*. *There's not an immediate contact with external reality through observing: it's a mediated contact, and it's mediated by inquiry, and especially the kind of inquiry that's characteristic of people trying to get explanatory insights.*

Intellectual Pattern & Neural Demand Functions

“In the theorist intent upon a problem, even the subconscious goes to work to yield at unexpected moments the suggestive images of clues and missing links, of patterns and perspectives, that evoke the desiderated insight and the delighted cry ‘Eureka!’ (CWL 3, p. 209).

³ Evelyn Fox Keller, *A Feeling for the Organism: the Life and Work of Barbara McClintock*. New York: W. H. Freeman, (1983).

And what is true of the observer, the scientific observer, is also true of the scientific thinker! And here Lonergan draws attention to *something that's very important*. There are some wonderful stories in the history of science about this: for example, [August Kekulé](#)⁴, who had this great insight into the structure of benzene. He was troubled trying to figure out what could be the molecular structure of benzene; and then he had this dream, one of these classic Jungian dreams, about the snake biting its tail. And he suddenly realized that what would make sense of the data that he had was: if the sequence of carbon and hydrogens that he knew to be characteristic of the formula of benzene were to circle around and join one another. He had this as a dream. *The subconscious was at his disposal as he was carrying around this concern that was dictated by the inquiry that he had*. [This is](#) another example of how it is that — out of the reservoir of potential experiences that lies waiting in that vast functioning, that vast set of coincidental aggregate of neural impulses — how that can be brought forward into images that will meet the concerns and interests of scientific and explanatory inquiry.

And Lonergan also talks about how we move from *trying to get insights* to *trying to make judgments*; [about](#) how that *concern with reflective inquiry* — something that we'll see in a later class in greater detail — *how the interests and concern of reflective inquiry, of reaching not just an insight but a judgment, will also structure what we select and admit into our consciousness for the sake of the concern of reflection*.

⁴ August Kekulé (1829- 1896) was a German organic chemist, one of the most prominent of his time. He was the principal founder of the theory of chemical structure.

Intellectual Pattern & Neural Demand Functions

“In reflection, there arises a passionless calm. Memory ferrets out instances that would run counter to the prospective judgment.

Imagination anticipates the shape of possibilities that would prove the judgment wrong.

So deep is the penetration, so firm the dominance, so strange the transformation of sensitive spontaneity, that memories and anticipations rise above the threshold of consciousness only if they possess at least a plausible relevance to the decision to be made.” (*CWL 3*, p. 209).

Okay. We're going to take a break here, and resume with a discussion of the dramatic pattern of experience and the dramatic bias.

Dramatic Pattern of Experience

“Not only, then, is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living.” (*CWL* 3, 210).

“Such artistry is dramatic. It is in the presence of others, and the others too are also actors in the primordial drama.” (*CWL* 3, 211).

“The characters in this drama of living are molded by the drama itself.” (*CWL* 3, 211).

Insight & Beyond

Class 10, Part 2. January 7th 2010

Chapter 6 §§ 2.5-2.7:

“Dramatic Pattern of Experience and Dramatic Bias”

Summary of Material

Introductory remarks: Due to a technical difficulty, the audio for this class, originally given on November 11, 2009, was lost. The presentation you will be watching is a re-recording that was done on January 7, 2010. Unfortunately the students were on break, so Parts I & II are lectures and have no student participation.

The Dramatic Pattern of Experience.

The first work of human artistry concerns our own living.

The dramatic artistry of shaping one's own life amid others.

Aristotle's notion of *praxis* (= self-making) vs. our ordinary meaning of “practical” (Aristotle's “*poesis*”).

Dramatic pattern of experience selects from among neural demands for the sake of gaining insights into how to live with others in an artistically elegant way.

Incorporation of feelings into a dramatic way of life (in contrast to role of feelings in scientific patterning).

Importance of feelings of values in the drama of human living.

Dramatic insights are essential for the constitution of human personality.

Intelligence and the Dramatic Constitution of Dramatic Subjectivity.

The Dramatic Pattern concerns *how* we live amid others (our role, our character).

As the dramatic pattern organizes experiences for the sake of seeking dramatic insights, the pattern transforms itself as it gains those insights.

Example of persuading someone, the cues we pick up on, and the role of the self-correcting cycle.

Various roles are constantly tested out, and insights into these roles are constituted by the continual accumulation of dramatic insights.

Performing versus Rehearsing (acting upon our insights or only imagining acting on them).

What is acted out in play at early stages, we are later able to “act out” in imagination in the dramatic quest for insights into how to live.

What comes to consciousness in the dramatic pattern are images in service of insights into how to live.

The imaginative and affective elements come into consciousness because of the intellectual *desiring* of those insights into how to live.

The self-correcting process not only gives rise to dramatic insights, but refines and improves them in constituting the well-integrated *persona*.

The relation of Lonergan to the thought of Carl Jung: construction and aberrations in self-correction.

Normatively, the cycle of rehearsal should be in support of the cycle of performance; but aberrations (dramatic biases) cause a separation of the two.

Lonergan's take on Jung's aim of reintegrating of the internal *ego* with the external *persona*.

The Dramatic Pattern and Neural Demand Functions: The censor or gatekeeper.

Dramatic Intelligence and Embodied Subjectivity: How the censor serves our interests.

Dramatic Pattern and Embodied Subjectivity

All our experiencing is rooted in our embodied, biological constitution.

Further, our bodies are situated in the natural, physical, biological universe, so our actions have causal consequences in the natural world, which in turn thereby bring about changes in our experiences and initiate a new turn in the self-correcting cycle.

We thus set experiences of ourselves in motion (speaking, gesturing, performing among others).

The Dramatic Subject is thus always an Embodied Subject.

Not only does our patterning select from our neural processes, but those processes also “demand” psychic representation and conscious integration, with greater or lesser degrees of intensity.

Our nervous systems communicate to our consciousnesses of the states of our bodies.

Respecting one's own neural demands: avoiding integration leads to the anguish of abnormality.

Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society*.

The relatively long childhood of humans and its effects on personality/identity.

There is less predetermination of neural patterns in humans at birth than in most other animal species – more plasticity, more numerous residues of non-systematic processes that can be integrated by learning.

How a good culture, community, and family provides resources for children to learn to elegantly integrate neural demands in an elegant, intelligent way that promotes good living.

But also, when particular cultures or individual circumstances fail to provide resources (i.e., sufficient accumulated insights) needed for such integrations, then dramatic bias (psychological distortions) result. (E.g., traditional identities developed for one culture and time can become obsolete.)

More correction by the self-correcting cycle is required to modify the culture's inventory of insights needed to intelligently integrate neural demands under changed circumstances.

Erikson's theory of infantile sexuality; five or so major organic developments that pose major challenges for intelligent integration.

Example of the intense trauma of teething during infancy.

Identity accrues on the basis of insights accumulated during each of the 8 critical stages of childhood development that Erikson identifies.

Failure to negotiate these 'crisis periods' leaves unresolved tensions and anxieties that hamper human judgment.

Erickson focuses on three cultures (German, American, and Russian) and the difficulties each culture faces in assisting its children in successfully growing through these 8 stages.

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

The social nature of human development: the experiences that are given to us to pattern are largely derived from the actions of other human beings in a social and cultural milieu.

Learning our roles in the presence of other ‘characters’ in the ongoing drama of human history.

Case study of Sam: the complex relation between a child’s organic development and his social context.

The complex social and cultural dimensions of nursing a child.

Differing cultural practices in child rearing (swaddling, scheduled feeding, etc) serve the culture’s general aims and condition the child’s cultural persona.

In Lonergan’s terms, nursing is a variable phenomenon that always takes place in a drama of living.

Erikson’s phrases “intrinsic wisdom” and “unconscious planfulness” correspond to Lonergan’s idea of the social accumulation of commonsense insights.

The American cultural context: the frontier society and the resulting tension between Americans as sedentary vs. migratory; as having both ‘roots and wings.’

Dramatic Bias and Psychological Disturbance.

The problem – i.e., the *desire* to learn how to live with elegance and dignity in the presence of other humans.

Lonergan's unique claim that dramatic bias (psychological disturbance) is due at least in part to the inverse of the *desire* of inquiry – namely, the *fear* of insights.

This fear can take over the patterning and exclude images conducive to not only the first unwanted insight, but the retinue of further self-correcting insights that lead to a refined way of living.

Primary censorship (constructive and oriented toward insights) *versus* aberration of censorship which functions principally to introduce images that interfere with attaining the unwanted insights.

Examples of the above: Wilhelm Stekel's case study of Mr. Iota and his counting fixation; case study of Sam and his fear of causing his grandmother's death.

Dramatic Bias and Non-Intelligibility.

Besides the lack of images, the perspective or arrangement of images might also obscure insights.

Example: Mr. Iota's inability to see how his dreams clearly depicted his own life traumas.

The essential role of inquiry and insight in therapeutic process.

Dramatic Bias

The answer to “Why are all these experiential elements in this person’s consciousness?” when the person is suffering dramatic bias – the answer is that there is no answer.

A lack of coherence in one’s experience, or *scotosis*, results in the exclusion of insights.

§ 2.7.7 A Note on Method: How Lonergan overcomes Freud’s deterministic model of the libido.

Lonergan saw Freud’s achievement as distinct from the latter’s determinism (an extra-scientific opinion).

Lonergan using his “dialectical method” to promote the “position” and reverse the “counterposition” in Freud’s work.

The determinism of Freud’s thermodynamic model of consciousness/libido.

Lonergan reminds us of the non-systematic nature of neural impulses and the possibility of higher integration of what was not systematized at lower levels.

The non-systematicity of the neural impulses makes it possible to gain insights by trial and error process; after which our imagination and experience can be reorganized.

This preserves the genuine human autonomy – self-rule – of intelligence and free will in human action.

End of Part 2.

Insight & Beyond

Class 10, Part 2. January 7th 2010

Chapter 6 §§ 2.5-2.7:

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Importance of feelings of values in the drama of
human living.

Dramatic insights are essential for the constitution of
human personality.

Welcome back to the second session of our class on Patterns of Experience, the
Dramatic Pattern of Experience, and Dramatic Bias.

Dramatic Pattern of Experience

“Not only, then, is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creativity, but his first work of art is his own living.” (*CWL* 3, p. 210).

“Such artistry is dramatic. It is in the presence of others, and the others too are also actors in the primordial drama.” (*CWL* 3, p. 211).

“The characters in this drama of living are molded by the drama itself.” (*CWL* 3, 211).

And we begin our discussion of the Dramatic Pattern of Experience, as Lonergan does, with the observation that **“Not only are human beings capable of aesthetic liberation and creativity”** (*CWL* 3, p. 210), which is referring back to his discussions of the Aesthetic Pattern of Experience, but *their* **“first work of art is [their] own living!”**

I referred a little bit earlier to Aristotle's notion of *praxis*. In Aristotle, and in Greek thought in general, there's a distinction between two dimensions that we use the word 'practical' to cover. On the one hand, we use the word 'practical' to cover being able to have practical common sense: things like how to get one's car started, how to use an ATM machine, how to put up your umbrella, how to fix a broken leg on a table, how to turn on a computer and start up a search engine; all these sorts of things are what we normally mean by "being practical." And *they all have to do with the realm of making and producing events and things and relations that are outside of us; that are not part and parcel of us! For that notion of practical, Aristotle used the word poesis*. We use 'poetry' to mean something quite different. But *poesis* for Aristotle did have to do with — did include things like the making of statues, because the statues were not part of the making of the fabric of human life.

For the making of the fabric of human life, Aristotle used the word praxis: a word that was picked up over and over again in the successive generations of philosophers, particularly by Hegel, and by Marx. But praxis has to do with the project of human self-making, both the making of the individual human being and the making of a human community.

So when Lonergan talks about *the artistry of human living*, he's using [the phrase](#) in the sense of *praxis*, *praxis* being the word from which we get the modern term 'practical', which we now use mostly to mean *poesis*. But *human self-making, praxis, is the artistic creativity of being human*: It's the difference between being just an animal, where any activity, any experiencing, any patterning of experiencing, so long as it meets basic survival needs, will do. *Human beings want not just to live, but to live in a dignified fashion, they want to live in a praxis way, they want to live in a way that is enriched and filled by artistry!*

So it's not as though in the dramatic patterning of experiencing that biological needs are not met; it's rather the function within which those neural demands are met, the pattern within which they are met, and that that pattern, as Lonergan says, is artistic, and *not only is it artistic, but it's dramatic; it has to do with the artistry of living with and in the presence of other humans; and that the characters that we have are moulded by that drama.*

Dramatic Pattern of Experience

“These insights must occur, not in the detached and disinterested intellectual pattern of experience, but in the dramatic pattern in which images are tinged with affects.” (CWL 3, p. 225).

Now, what he’s really interested in here is, once again, *giving us a phenomenological focus, an attentiveness, to the role that insight plays in the artistry of human living.* Again that concern, that abiding concern he has, for the neglect of insight in so many areas, in so many realms! Now in the realm of the artistry of human living and the construction of human personality: that *insights are essential to putting together human personality.* We’ll see this a little more concretely in a moment!

But for Lonergan, one key component to the drama of human living is humans having some *understanding of how* to live dramatically and artistically and with aesthetic dignity. And key here is something that is very distinctive, and arguably very different from the way in which insights occur in the intellectual or explanatory pattern of living, namely, that they have to occur, not with a detached and disinterested intellectual pattern, but *in the dramatic pattern in which images are tinged with affects, with feelings.*

Now arguably, scientists’ insights do occur in contexts that are permeated by feelings. Particularly we’ve seen that phrase ‘*Eureka!*’ occur several times. Scientists do get excited by their discoveries, and rightly so, because they are of great value in the insights that they come upon. But Lonergan is getting at something different here, namely that *the kinds of feelings that are constitutive of the drama of human living will tend to interfere with the kind of concentration and the interests and the pursuits and the concerns of explanatory*

investigation. But if you move out of the ground of explanatory investigations, scientific investigations, into the realm of human living and fail to re-engage the wealth of human feelings, then you're only living a very shallow, thin, paper-slice version of what a human life is all about.

However, in human living, in the dramatic pattern, the insights that occur have to be insights that include insights into feelings. At this stage of his career, Lonergan knew that to be the fact, but he didn't yet have the apparatus, the ideas, the framework to be able to say why that was important. After the publication of *Insight*, after encountering the work particularly of Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hildebrand, he came to realise that the reason why it's important that in the dramatic pattern, images and insights occur in the context of feelings is because it's feelings that imbue and endow human living with its senses of values. And without feelings, when we have, instead of a full dignified and worthy way of living, worthy in the sense of having value, you have instead something that's rather mechanical! And he was aware of that at this point when he was writing *Insight*, but did not yet have the full explanatory context for thinking about what that meant.

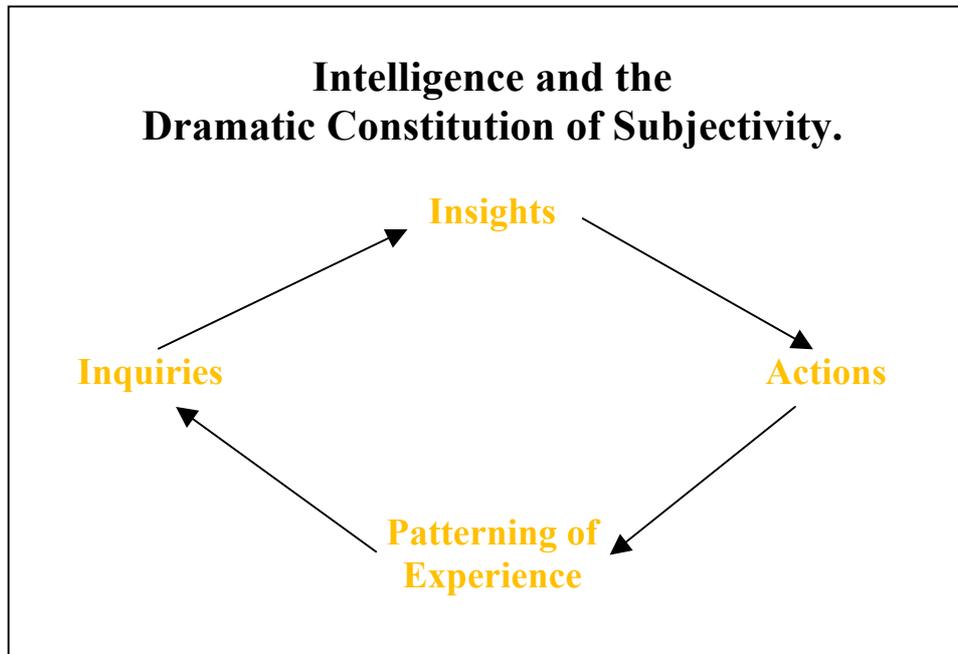
Intelligence and the Dramatic Constitution of Dramatic Subjectivity.

The Dramatic Pattern concerns *how* we live amid others (our role, our character).

As the dramatic pattern organizes experiences for the sake of seeking dramatic insights, the pattern transforms itself as it gains those insights.

Example of persuading someone, the cues we pick up on, and the role of the self-correcting cycle.

Various roles are constantly tested out, and insights into these roles are constituted by the continual accumulation of dramatic insights.



Now we've seen the pattern of Self-correcting Cycle of Understanding before. This is just another repetition of it, with a slight difference: the slight difference here is that where in past versions of this diagram I've had *Experiencing* leading to *Inquiries*, leading to *Insights*, leading to *Actions*, leading to *Transformations of Experiencing*. Here I've emphasised the *Patterning of Experiencing*! So it's the *Patterning of our Experiencing* that is giving rise to our *Inquiries*, our *Insights*, our *Actions*.

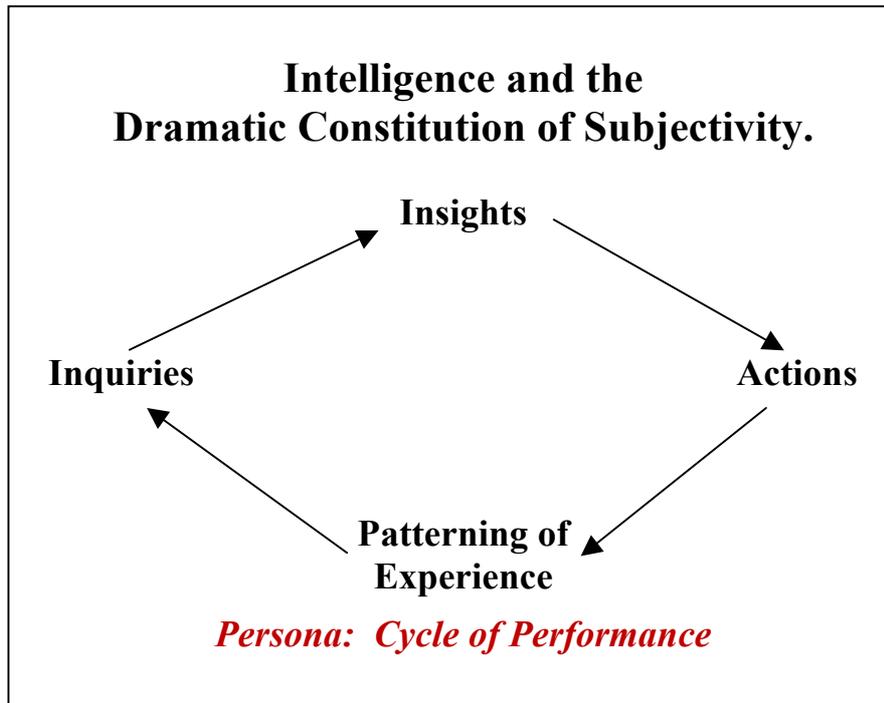
And in particular, the patterning that we're focusing on now is the *Dramatic Patterning of Experiencing*. So what does this mean? Remember [that](#), for Lonergan, the Dramatic Patterning of Experiencing is a matter of how answering the question, meeting the problem, finding the solution, to *how do we live in the presence of others, how are we to live in the presence of others!* And the emphasis here is on *How!* *How is the drama!* *What drama are we going to play?* *What role are we going to play in that drama?* *What character are we going to be in the drama as we live with other human beings?* Those are the insights that the Dramatic Patterning of Experience is concerned to find, and by finding them will be itself transformed.

Just think of some examples! Think of any time that you were in a situation of needing to persuade somebody of something. It might be needing to persuade somebody to hire you for a job **if you're** going for a job! It might be needing to persuade somebody to go out on a date with you. It might be needing to persuade somebody to forgive you for an offence that you've done. It might be needing to persuade a friend to stop engaging in a risky form of behaviour.

Now think of yourself in any of those situations, where your job, so to speak, or your task, your problem, your question, is: *How am I to persuade the person? What's going on as you do that?* When you start to talk to the person, you'll be noticing their facial expressions. You'll be noticing whether their eyes are looking at you, or averting from you. You're going to be focussing your attention on that person, on their bodily expressions, and when they're speaking, on their words. *If, on the other hand*, you're in that situation, and you're talking to the person and suddenly you're looking to see: Who's that person that's walking down the sidewalk? And then you're talking to the person and then you say: "Oh, that's an interesting bird up there in the tree! *You're not patterning your experiencing in such a way as to get the insights that will help you to be successful in playing the role of a persuader in this context!*

So the cycle of inquiry, insight, action: you see the person react in a certain way, you wonder why they react that way, you get an insight into why you think he reacted in that way, you adjust what you're saying, or you adjust how you're saying it, you change the experience, you get a slightly more receptive response from the person. You say: A-hah!

This is what Lonergan means by *the role of the self-correcting cycle of learning in the cycle of performance, the cycle of interaction with other people*: the actions that you're doing in co-ordination with the experiences that you're having of the other person's actions, and the way in which your inquiries, insights, actions are in a cycle of self-correction!



Now, as you are taking on a larger role, and not just the role of persuading this person, but in particular, as you're developing the kind of role that you're going to play in your society, in your community, in your culture, in your family, it's a much, much larger undertaking. There's a lot more understanding that needs to be acquired and accumulated and **be** tested out!

People are trying out roles all the time; and seeing what kind of responses they get from people; and whether or not these are dramatically satisfying and artistically satisfying responses. This is particularly true of children: when they're playing, children will pretend to be giants, they'll pretend to be fairies and kings, they'll pretend to be baseball players and athletes, they'll pretend to be Mummies and Daddies; they try these things out by performing and seeing how the responses from — usually other children, but sometimes from their parents, their grandparents, their aunts and uncles, their teachers, clergy people, and so on, other people maybe. They get a sense of how people are responding to them; if they provoke a certain kind of laughter, it's delightful, or if they just provoke a certain kind of frown — *They're in this self-correcting cycle of performance.*

Performing versus Rehearsing (acting upon our insights or only imagining acting on them).

What is acted out in play at early stages, we are later able to “act out” in imagination in the dramatic quest for insights into how to live.

What comes to consciousness in the dramatic pattern are images in service of insights into how to live.

The imaginative and affective elements come into consciousness because of the intellectual *desiring* of those insights into how to live.

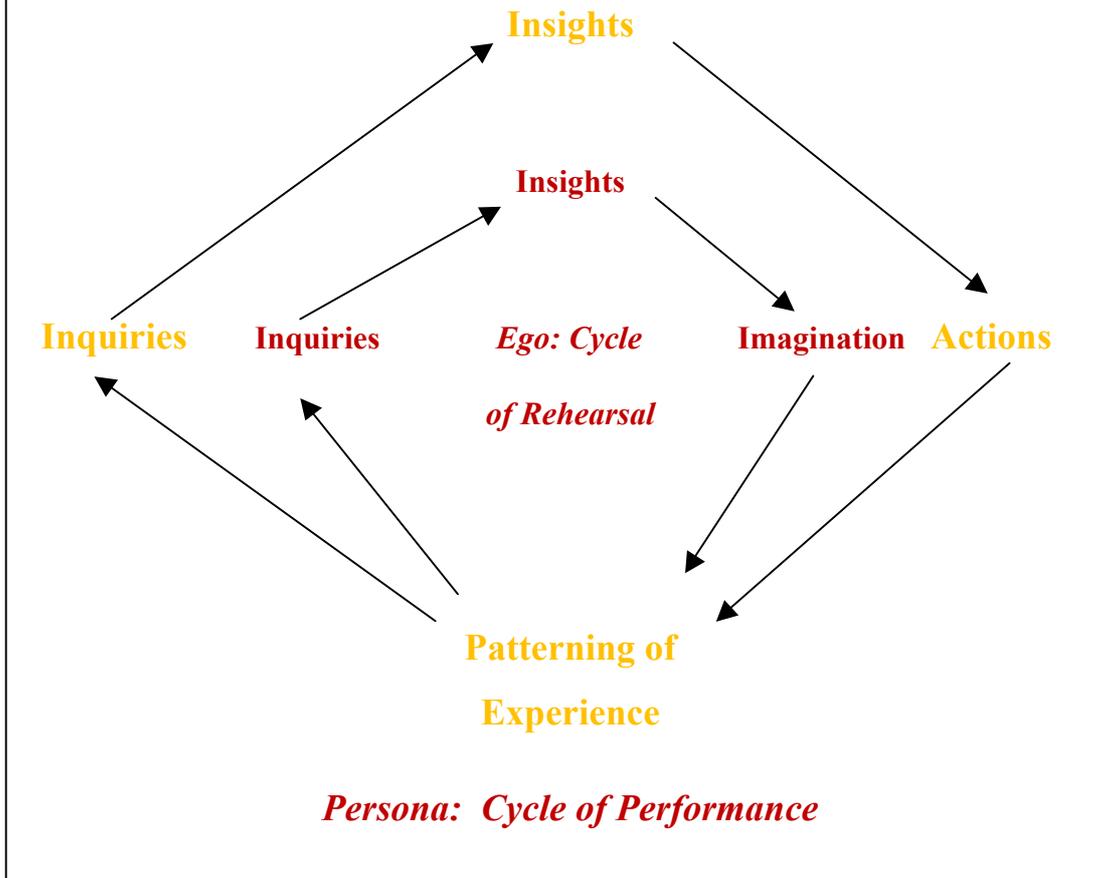
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The relation of Lonergan to the thought of Carl Jung: construction and aberrations in self-correction.

Normatively, the cycle of rehearsal should be in support of the cycle of performance; but aberrations (dramatic biases) cause a separation of the two.

Lonergan’s take on Jung’s aim of reintegrating of the internal *ego* with the external *persona*.

Intelligence and the Dramatic Constitution of Subjectivity



But we don't just perform. We also rehearse! And the difference between the *Cycle of Performance* in the self-constitution of our personality, and the *Cycle of Rehearsal*, is whether or not we're *actually acting* on our insights or *imagining acting* on our insights. So for example, if we go back to the situation of you going to persuade somebody about something: think of yourself on the way rather than as already being there; as you're on the way, you are, in your imagination, saying to yourself: "Well, I will say this to my friend; but he might say this in response. Well, then I will say this. But what if he says this? Well, then I'll try that!"

So there's a certain amount of rehearsing that's going on, prior to the actual engagement; and *there's an interplay then between imagination and action in performance as we compose ourselves to be the people who are capable of playing out these various social, communal, cultural roles.*

When I was in college I had a room-mate who was, somewhat, let's say, socially backward, in his senior year; through all his high school career, all his junior high school career, all his college career, he had never once been on a date! And in the second semester of his senior year, he was working up the courage to go on a date. And he rehearsed for us, day after day, what he was going to say, how he was going to present himself, how he was going to open the door, how he was going to order food at the restaurant. And of course, we sat there and listened to him very supportively, because we wanted this poor fellow to finally make this big breakthrough and go on a date. But, when he wasn't in the room, we had quite a few laughs about the over-dramatization of what he was doing.

Well, in a sense, this is what children do: children play out in action at early stages of their lives what we are later able to do in our imaginations as we become more sophisticated and more mature and more comfortable in our social roles.

And so Lonergan talks about the way in which we make ourselves be what we are by the insights that we use to constitute ourselves and our actions in this self-correcting process of the dramatic constitution of our subjectivity, of our personality. This is what he means by the Dramatic Patterning of Experience, and the role that inquiry and insight play in that patterning.

What is coming to consciousness is in the service of playing the dramatic role! Just as even in scientific investigation sometimes the sub-conscious goes to work, so also here the wanting, the desiring of inquiry, of how to play my role, is going to play the role of selecting and drawing out of our neural physiology into consciousness the images that we need to be able to perform the role. And by saying that *it's a self-correcting process*, we mean, not just to play the role, but to play it *with nuance, and elegance, and subtlety, and wit!* The difference between a person who can **just** make a request or get a point across or give a suggestion in an interpersonal situation, and a person who can do it but with a certain amount of elegance, is a function of how much self-correcting accumulation of nuance and modifying insights have taken place.

Now one of the things that Lonergan talks about here very briefly — I just want to allude to it, not dwell on it; but just for those who are interested in it, and those in particular who are familiar with the work of Father Robert Doran — There’s an allusion by Lonergan here to the work of Jung. I don’t think he actually mentions Jung directly, but he talks about — he uses Jung’s language of the *persona* and the *ego* and the *anima* and the *shadow*. And what Lonergan has in mind there is *what happens when our ordinary normative self-correcting cycles of performance and rehearsal run into difficulties such that they stop being purely self-correcting and start to become aberrant!* And one of the things that Lonergan says is that *where normally our use of the imaginative Cycle of Rehearsal is supposed to be in support of our actual living, our performance, sometimes it can become the preferred mode of our dramatic patterning of experience.*

“The world doesn’t understand me! Only I know what my personality really is! Only I know what my true intentions are! And I will put up with the stupidities and the misunderstandings of the world. But I know who I really am!”

This is a retreat into the cycle of imagination, where something seriously has gone wrong in the self-correcting pattern of performance. So Jung’s psychology is a psychology that is concerned with the integration of the whole person. And in Lonergan’s terms, what Jung is concerned with, among other things, is a reintegration of the internal ego with the outer persona, to put them back into harmony of a self-correcting cycle again, rather than having the inner ego become the preferred arena and stage of performance.

The Dramatic Pattern and Neural Demand

Functions: The censor or gatekeeper.

Dramatic Intelligence and Embodied

Subjectivity: How the censor serves our interests.

Dramatic Pattern & Neural Demand Functions

“So deep is the penetration, so firm the dominance, so strange the transformation of sensitive spontaneity, that memories and anticipations rise above the threshold of consciousness only if they possess at least a plausible relevance to the decision to be made.” (*CWL* 3, p. 209).

Now in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience — this is actually a remark that Lonergan makes in the subsection where he is talking about the Intellectual Pattern of Experience, but it applies equally well, and perhaps even better, in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience — When we’re in the process, and particularly when we are in fairly intense interpersonal relationships, whether they be intensities of anger or intensities of love or intensities of fear, whenever we’re in Dramatic Patterns of Experience that have a special intensity, there is something that is very much analogous to the way in which the lion and the Zebra are riveted upon each other for the sake of fulfilling their patterns, the concerns and interests that dominate their Biological Patterning of Experience! Of course the zebras or the lions are not having insights in this fashion, at least I don’t think so! *Whereas when we’re in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience, we’re experiencing for the sake of understanding so that we can better live, experiencing for the sake of better understanding, for the sake of knowing what’s the right thing to say, at right time, in the right way, in the right manner, towards the right person, as Aristotle puts it in the Nicomachean Ethics.* That’s all a matter of forming the kind of character that we have.

And as he puts it:

So deep is the penetration, so firm the dominance, so strange the transformation of sensitive spontaneity
(*CWL* 3, p. 209)

when the concern, the abiding concern, that's driving our inquiry, is *the concern for living with dignity and elegance in the presence of others,*

that memories and anticipations rise above the threshold of consciousness only if they possess at least a plausible relevance to the decision to be made. (*CWL* 3, p. 209).

This is what Lonergan means by the *ensor*; or at least it's his interpretation of the psychoanalytic discussions about censorship. The censor is a response, is so to speak, the gatekeeper between our neurophysiology and our actual conscious experiencing! And the gatekeeper, for Lonergan, is the concern that's determining the kind of patterning of our experience, in this case, the dramatic patterning of our experiencing, and the concerns that it has.

Dramatic Pattern and Embodied Subjectivity

All our experiencing is rooted in our embodied, biological constitution.

Further, our bodies are situated in the natural, physical, biological universe, so our actions have causal consequences in the natural world, which in turn thereby bring about changes in our experiences and initiate a new turn in the self-correcting cycle.

We thus set experiences of ourselves in motion (speaking, gesturing, performing among others).

The Dramatic Subject is thus always an Embodied Subject.

Dramatic Intelligence and Embodied Subjectivity.

Now, I want to expand the Pattern of the Cycles of Rehearsal and Performance a little bit further; and go back to this issue that I raised a little bit earlier, that for Lonergan, *all experiencing is embodied experiencing; all experiencing is biological*, in the sense that it's rooted in our biological existence, our bodily organic existence; and that all of our experience is mediated by our bodies and our neurophysiology. And in that sense, *all of our experiencing is biological. It's not a biologically patterned experiencing, but it is biologically grounded experiencing.*

And I want to emphasize that — here, with another kind of diagram, that gets at this business about the censor as the selector from our neurophysiology of the demands that it's going to admit to consciousness, only in so far as they are potentially helpful to the living out of us living out of all as dramatic subjects in the drama of human living.

So *our interests and concerns, so to speak, reach down* — that metaphor of our interests and concerns penetrating down into — not our subconscious — Okay, Lonergan does use the words that — the word 'subconscious' a few times: but it means something different in psychoanalytic literature than it would mean for Lonergan.

So I want to emphasize here that what's operating here is our interests and concern in answering the dramatic questions about how to live, that plays the role of bringing into our consciousness those resources from our reservoir of neurophysiological functioning that are going to be supportive of the insights that we need in order to be able to nuance our performance in ways that meet our dramatic standards.

And as I said before, our body is situated in a physical and natural and biological and chemical universe, so that what we do, our actions, have causal consequences in the natural world. So what we do with our body, through the mediation of our neurophysiology, affects the world; and from the world, stimuli arise in response to our actions. So in other words,

among the things that we set into motion by our actions is experiences of ourselves. When we speak, we have experiences of ourselves speaking, we hear ourselves speaking. When we gesture, we see our hands and our arms and our legs and our bodies moving. We see the world moving as *we* walk.

But also we elicit responses from others. What we do is received by others; they react to it with their facial expressions, with their words, with their deeds. And that then affects our bodies, and our bodies are modified, and our nervous system is modified, and gives us a new reservoir of nervous impulses which can be brought into our patterning of experiencing.

So for Lonergan, a dramatic subject is always an embodied subject! Lonergan doesn't spend the ink and the time and the intense detail of drawing attention to this fact, but *his account of the dramatic subject is an embodied subject; it's an organic subject.* We'll see this again when we come to chapter fifteen, when Lonergan talks about human development: where he'll talk about *the interrelationships between organic development, psychic development, and intellectual development.* That's a further complication of the basic point that he's making here.

The point that he's making here is that our intelligences, our inquiry, our insights and our accumulation of insights, are situated, and arise out of, and affect, our embodied being, and the way in which we artistically compose our embodied being.

Not only does our patterning select from our neural processes, but those processes also “demand” psychic representation and conscious integration, with greater or lesser degrees of intensity.

Our nervous systems communicate to our consciousnesses of the states of our bodies.

Respecting one's own neural demands: avoiding integration leads to the anguish of abnormality.

Dramatic Pattern and Neural Demand Functions.

“Inverse to the control of the psychic over the neural are the demands of neural patterns and processes for psychic representation and conscious integration.” (CWL 3, p. 213).

Now, what I’ve been focussing on so far is *the way in which our dramatic patterning of our experience and our inquiry in that patterning, is the determining factor of what neural demands get admitted to our consciousness*. What Lonergan says: **“the control of the psychic”** or the control of the censor in psychoanalytic terms, **“over the neural are the demands of the neural patterns and processes for psychic representation and conscious integration.”** (CWL 3, p. 213).

So, in other words, complementary to the way in which consciousness is going to pattern and determine and select what neural demands get admitted to consciousness, there is nevertheless something on the side of our neurophysiology that does demand representation. Some neural demands can be deferred indefinitely; some, as I said earlier, are very imperious; some are in-between: there are things that you can defer for a while but not forever! For example, the feeling of being hungry! You can defer that for a certain period of time, but sooner or later it becomes more and more pronounced in your consciousness and starts to interfere with your ability to pattern other experiences until you take care of that demand.

But the fact that our nervous system is a communicator to us of our bodily situation means that there are these demands that cannot be deferred forever! And Lonergan uses this wonderful metaphor.

Dramatic Pattern of Experience

“For [a person’s] own body and actions cannot be treated as the painter treats his [or her] uncomplaining oils.” (*CWL* 3, p. 211).

“The demand functions of neural patterns and processes constitute the exigence of the organism for its conscious complement; and to violate that exigence is to invite the anguish of abnormality.” (*CWL* 3, p. 214).

A person’s own body and action cannot be treated as a painter treats the uncomplaining oils. You can pattern, within a wide range of variability, what goes on in the constitution of your personality as it, in very flexible and cogent ways, meets the needs that your nervous system is making demands for attention, but you can’t do it forever! You can’t do it just arbitrarily, any way that you like. There are some limits that are imposed by the neural demands, and the neural demands as they are evolutionarily in contact with and communicating the state of your body. And if you don’t respect those limits, you run the risk, as he says, of **“the anguish of abnormality.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 214).

And this is where he is suggesting *the problem of dramatic bias*: that there are ways in which, if the needs of your nervous system and your body are not respected, then you have to start doing things that are self-destructive, and certainly destructive of your role in harmonious and aesthetically dignified and elegant interpersonal situation.

Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society*.

The relatively long childhood of humans and its effects
on personality/identity.

There is less predetermination of neural patterns in
humans at birth than in most other animal species –
more plasticity, more numerous residues of non-
systematic processes that can be integrated by
learning.

How a good culture, community, and family provides
resources for children to learn to elegantly integrate
neural demands in an elegant, intelligent way that
promotes good living.

But also, when particular cultures or individual
circumstances fail to provide resources (i.e., sufficient
accumulated insights) needed for such integrations,
then dramatic bias (psychological distortions) result.
(E.g., traditional identities developed for one culture
and time can become obsolete.)

More correction by the self-correcting cycle is
required to modify the culture's inventory of insights
needed to intelligently integrate neural demands under
changed circumstances.

Erik Erikson & Dramatic Patterning of Experience

Now to illustrate some of the features of what Lonergan means both by the dramatic patterning of experience and by dramatic bias, I want to refer to the work of Erik Erikson, [in particular](#), his classic work of 1950, *Childhood and Society*.⁵ It's a *very* impressive piece of work; and I'm only going to be touching on just a few features of it. *It is really an amazing integration of quite a number of different insights and points.* And I just want to sort of give you a feel, an overall feel, for what Erickson is up to, and how I think it illustrates, and in some senses, might be supplemented by some of the ways in which Lonergan thinks about the formation of personality in the dramatic patterning of experience.

Erikson: His Project

“It is human to have a long childhood: it is civilized to have an ever longer childhood. Long childhood makes a technical and mental virtuoso out of [humanity], but it also leaves a lifelong residue of emotional immaturity.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 17).

Modern historical transitions “threaten the identities which man has inherited” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 413).

Erickson says, early on, [he](#) makes the observation about something very distinctive about human beings: that *to be human is to have a long childhood*. Lonergan used to remark that certain species of deer could run at twenty miles an hour within an hour after their birth.

⁵ Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*. New York: W. W. Norton, (1993).

Ah, human beings can't do that! That means that there is a certain plasticity to the neural patterning of eye and muscle coordinations that species like gazelles don't have. Gazelles can run fast immediately, but gazelles can never learn to play football, and they can never learn to play the piano. *Human beings can, but this means that a great deal more of the patterning and coordinating of our sense experiences and our muscle experiences is a matter of learning, is a matter of insight.* And Erickson is drawing attention to this:

It is human to have a long childhood: it is civilized to have an ever longer childhood. Long childhood makes technical and mental virtuosos out of human beings but it also leaves a lifelong residue of emotional immaturity.”
(*Childhood and Society*, p. 17).

So in the first part of that sentence, beginning at “Long childhood makes ...,” Erickson is talking about something like Lonergan was talking about, namely, what you might call *the normative, unimpeded, self-correcting development of the human person into an elegant and beautiful and excellent performer of a human life.*

In the second part of the sentence, he is talking about the dark side, which Lonergan takes up in his treatment of *dramatic bias, the distortions of that normative self-correcting process that makes up a good human person; that there is a residue of emotional immaturity if the neural demands are not successfully understood and integrated into that pattern, that life-long pattern that makes up the narrative of a human life.*

Towards the end of the book, he identifies several things, industrialization, globalisation, and other things, that he says have posed threats to the identities that humans have inherited; and that his concern in writing this book is to provide some guidance for dealing with precisely that problem. You have to read the book to get a full sense of exactly what he is talking about, and the seriousness, and the depth and sweep of his analysis.

But what he's getting at here is something like what Lonergan means by that accumulated inventory of insights; that how to deal with the neural demands in an intelligent and elegant way in a dramatic life is something that one is helped and aided by *a good culture and a good community and a good family.* Those are the sources that provide children, and adults for that matter, with the resources that they need to be able to integrate their neural demands into a life that is a beautiful life.

Just as you can take paint and throw it any which way on a canvas, and not have a work of art, or you can take the paint with care and concern, and begin to put together a retinue of colours and shapes and associations to generate something that's quite magnificent, so also what Lonergan and Erickson are getting at here is that there are developments in our organism, in our body and in our nervous system, that can either be met in ways that promote good living, or can be met in ways that fail to promote living.

And that what you might call traditional identities were identities that worked in times and in places; and they no longer work in the new times and the new places! In Lonergan's terms, more self-correcting processes of understanding are needed to figure out how to integrate these neural demands into ways of living that fit in the drama, which is not the same drama as it was fifty or a hundred, or three hundred years ago, on a different continent!

Erikson's theory of infantile sexuality; five or so major organic developments that pose major challenges for intelligent integration.

Example of the intense trauma of teething during infancy.

Identity accrues on the basis of insights accumulated during each of the 8 critical stages of childhood development that Erikson identifies.

Failure to negotiate these 'crisis periods' leaves unresolved tensions and anxieties that hamper human judgment.

Erickson focuses on three cultures (German, American, and Russian) and the difficulties each culture faces in assisting its children in successfully growing through these 8 stages.

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

Critical developments in the
body and neurophysiology of children:

Sucking and feeding

Biting and teething

Grasping, standing, walking

Anal and sphincter control

Genital and erotic developments

In his book, Erickson develops an account of what he sees as critical developments in the body and neurophysiology of children. He does this in a chapter called “The Theory of Infantile Sexuality” (pp. 48-108). And he sees himself as giving articulation to Freud’s theory of infantile sexuality. I’m not enough of a Freud scholar to know how much of this is really Erickson’s going beyond Freud, and how much of it is Erickson giving a good and careful reinterpretation of Freud. I’ll have to leave that to Freud scholars to sort out! But it’s certainly a very different presentation to anything that I’ve encountered in my readings of psychoanalytic literature prior to Erickson.

So he focusses on several key bodily and neurophysiological developments that he identifies as being *critical developments* that need to be met in what Lonergan would call an intelligent and self-correcting fashion. And those are Sucking and Feeding, so that’s clearly new-born infancy, and then a little bit later on, Biting and Teething, and then Grasping and Standing and Walking, then Anal and Sphincter Control, control of one’s bowel movements, elimination, and then Genital and Erotic Developments, which have several different stages.

I just want to say something — I'm going to focus in a moment on *sucking and feeding* and some of the illustrations he gives of that. But I wanted to just talk about *biting and teething*. One of the things that happens — that's one of the most difficult things for children, usually happening before they are verbal — is *the irruption of teeth!* And it's painful, and it's a kind of lasting pain; and children will cry, more or less inconsolably. And it's one of the most disturbing things — other than when children get sick and have a cold or a fever — it's one of the most disconcerting experiences that parents have with their children is when they're teething, because they will cry for long periods of time, and rocking and holding and feeding and none of that will solve it because it's a pain in the teeth, and it's really, other than pain of hunger with which by that point they are familiar, and there is also that that's in combination which we'll talk about in a moment.

Teething is a really, really, difficult moment, and children need some way to relieve it. And one of the easiest ways to relieve it is by biting! If children can bite on things, it relieves some of the pain. People do things like put different kinds of numbing factors, including alcohol, whisky, and in the accounts of the child's mother, give it aspirin, and so on. That does happen! But it's — for that period of time, that period of about a year when the teeth are coming in, the first teeth are coming in, it's one of the most challenging concerns that parenting a child, and bringing up a child: it's kind of one of the things that really dominates attention.

And then likewise, these other periods are periods in which something new develops organically and neuro-physiologically, and needs to be met with the resources of a culture, and, as Lonergan would say, the intellectual resources of a culture in its insights.

So a key to Erikson's work is his identification of these *five major organic developments*; the genital and erotic development actually has a couple of different sub-stages or stages there — And he works out what he calls the *eight stages of human development*, and the needs that need to be met at each of those stages, in what Lonergan would call an intelligent and self-correcting fashion.

Erikson: His Project

“We concluded that only a gradually accruing sense of identity, based on the experience [insights] of social health and cultural solidarity, at the end of each major childhood crisis, promises that periodical balance in human life which ... makes for a sense of humanity.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 412).

“This then is one of our jobs: to perfect methods which, in given situations, facilitate the elucidation of such prejudices, apprehensions, and lapses of judgment as emanate from infantile rage.⁶” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 413).

At the end of the book, Erikson is giving a sort of overview of what he’s done in the book. And he says: “We concluded that only a gradually accruing sense of identity,” — in Lonergan’s terms that means a gradually accruing inventory of insights into how to live, with this body that I have, in the presence of others who are living a drama of characters, and roles, and meanings and values, “based on the experience of social health and cultural solidarity;” and I would say that really the word ‘experience’ there means insights: based on the insights about what it means to live well, together with others. So “We concluded that only a gradually accruing sense of identity, based on the experience” of insights ... at the end of each major childhood crisis,” so that’s the major challenges posed by these organic developments, “promises that periodical balance in human life which ... makes for a sense of humanity.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 412).

⁶ Pat’s slide uses the term ‘anxiety’ at this point; but Erikson wrote, at slightly more length, “... rage and from the adult’s defences against his latent infantile anxiety.”

“This then is one of our jobs:” — and ‘our’ there means the field of professional psychology or psychiatry — “to perfect methods which, in given situations, facilitate the elucidation of such prejudices, apprehensions, and lapses of judgment as emanate from infantile ... anxiety.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 413).

Now there’s a long distinction — He has a careful distinction in the book between *fears* and *anxieties* which, obviously, I don’t have time to go into today, but I do encourage you to look at what he has to say there. But his basic thesis is that societies and cultures, or families for that matter, which do not have the resources to successfully negotiate these “transitional crisis periods”, as he calls them, are going to give this reservoir of unresolved tensions and anxieties that lead to “prejudices, apprehensions, and lapses of judgment” (413). And he traces to this to some of the great disasters in the world.

In the book he focusses on three cultural personalities, the German personality, the American personality, specifically the United States of America, and the Russian personality. And in particular he looks at Maxim Gorky, the Russian writer and poet, and Adolf Hitler in his context; and he gives an account of how he understands Gorky’s creativity on the one hand and Hitler’s nihilism on the other hand, to have been — to be related to this problem, these challenges and problems of negotiating the transitions at these critical periods.

And he sees his work — It’s called *Childhood and Society*, but actually *it* reaches the stages which reach well into mature adulthood — and he sees his work as being a resource for people to rethink how to raise children and to live together in society *in a manner* that reduces the amount of “prejudices, apprehensions, and lapses of judgment” (*Childhood and Society*, 413).

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

The social nature of human development: the experiences that are given to us to pattern are largely derived from the actions of other human beings in a social and cultural milieu.

Learning our roles in the presence of other 'characters' in the ongoing drama of human history.

Case study of Sam: the complex relation between a child's organic development and his social context.

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

“Roles ... grow out of the third principle of organization, the *social*. The human being, at all times, from the first kick in *in utero* to the last breath, is organized into groupings of geographic and historical coherence: family, class, community, nation. A human being, thus, is at all times an organism, an ego, and a member of a society.”
(*Childhood and Society*, p. 36).

Case studies of crises in integrating needs of bodily developments with socio-cultural roles (e.g., *Childhood and Society*, pp. 25-38).

Now one of the things that Ericson does is to emphasize the significance and the intrinsic social nature of human development. We saw this a moment ago in the diagram of the “Constitution of the Dramatic Subject” [Is Pat referring back to the diagram entitled “Dramatic Intelligence and Embodied Subjectivity”, or to that entitled “Patterning of Experience and Neural Demand Functions,” both of which include the term ‘World’? Or does he have yet another diagram in mind?] by that part of the diagram that I just labelled “World.” The world of course is not just the natural world; it’s also the social world and, in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience, in some sense the social world is the more — looms much larger than does the natural world.

When we do our learning of the role that we are to play, it’s the role that we are to play in the presence of others who themselves are living out dramatic roles. So in the Dramatic Patterning of Experience, each of us is not only the actor, but also the author, and the director, and the producer, of the drama; and the world is a stage! The world stage is populated with other characters who are also operating with the self-correcting cycle of learning in the Dramatic Pattern of Experience, to learn the roles that they are to play in the drama that’s largely staged and set by people other than themselves. There’s a drama that was going on, that we are born into, that our experiences come to derive from, that our insights are from the experiences that derive from that social setting! And our actions are responses that modify the social setting, and therefore are experiences of the social setting, while we work out the character that we are going to be in the drama of human living.

That’s what Erikson is getting at here: it is that the social is something that is always part and parcel of the formation of the human personality of — beginning from childhood, “from the first kick *in utero* to the last breath,” human being is always already in a social world, and needing to learn how to live in that social world, a world that has a drama to it.

The human being, at all times, from the first kick in *in utero* to the last breath, is organized into groupings of geographic and historical coherence: family, class, community, nation. A human being, thus, is at all times an organism, an ego, and a member of a society.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 36).

And different cultures have different dramas, and the children need to learn the drama, but also to learn how to integrate their organic development in those dramas, *if they can!*

In *Childhood and Society* he has quite a number, perhaps a dozen, of fairly lengthy case studies, where he illustrates some of the issues that he has in the book. As indicated in the slide, these are: “case studies of crises in integrating needs of bodily developments with socio-cultural roles (e.g., *Childhood and Society*, pp. 25-35).” And I just want to share with you something of one of the first that he has: the case study of a boy he calls “Sam.” And it illustrates his understanding of this theory that he has about how organic development is situated in and needs to be negotiated by self-correcting understanding in the social setting in which it occurs.

So this is just talking about Sam [Pat picks up his copy of *Childhood and Society*]. Sam comes to Erikson’s attention because he’s had something like what you might call a kind of series of epileptic or catatonic episodes of rage followed by almost paralysis. And his parents bring him to Erikson. And Erikson is getting a little bit of their background. And he says of Sam, and of his parents, that he was very precocious and they were very ambitious for him.

The boy ... was a rather self-willed, vigorous, and precociously intelligent little fellow, not easily fooled. His ambitious parents had big plans for their only son; with his brains he might go east to college and medical school, or maybe to law school. They fostered in him a vigorous expression of his intellectual precocity and curiosity. He had always been wilful and from his first day unable to accept a “no” or a “maybe” for an answer. As soon as he could reach, he hit — a tendency which was not considered unsound in the neighbourhood in which he had been born and raised: a neighbourhood mixed in population, a neighbourhood in which he must have received at an early age the impression that it was good to learn to hit first, just in case. (*Childhood and Society*, pp. 27-28).

So this was when he was first born, but now they’ve moved —

But now they lived, the only Jewish family, in a small but prosperous town. They had to tell their little boy not to hit the children, not to ask the ladies too many questions and —

— the precociousness that characterises him —

and — for heaven’s sake also for the sake of business — to treat the Gentiles gently. In his earlier *milieu*, the ideal image held out for a little boy had been that of a tough guy (on the street). (*Childhood and Society*, p. 28).

So ‘ideal image’ here would mean *role*. What role is that child to play in his social setting, in his original location? Tough guy on the street because that’s how you survived in that setting. Those are the roles that were available, those were the roles to imitate!

In his earlier *milieu*, the ideal image held out for a little boy had been that of a tough guy (on the street) and a smart boy (at home). The problem now was to become quickly what the Gentiles of the middle class would call “a nice little boy in spite of being Jewish!” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 28).

So what Erikson is getting at here is that the *relocation geographically* of the family from *one socio-cultural drama* of a somewhat tough neighbourhood to *another socio-cultural neighbourhood* where they are the only Jewish family, and where there are prejudices operative in that community: and *roles that are expectation roles about what Jewish people are like* that he now has to renegotiate how (*the manner in which*) he has *earlier* dealt with his precociousness as ‘energeticness,’ as aggressiveness.

What happens in this context is that — His grandmother comes to live with them; and shortly thereafter she dies. And he has a series of crises that result after the death of his grandmother. This is in part because his grandmother, when she arrives, as he was told, has a delicate heart condition, and he has to be very careful not to be too rambunctious or he might excite her and harm her. And it so happens that the grandmother actually does die when his mother leaves the grandmother to care for him while she goes out. And then clearly as the narrative unfolds, the boy thinks that something — that in some way he’s been responsible for her death.

And Erikson is exploring how to help him gain the insights to recompose a sense of well-being and self-understanding *with* which he can live a more fruitful life. So that’s one of the examples of his case studies.

I'm going to go back a little bit later on and talk about some of the things that Erikson does with him that help him do what Lonergan would say gives him the insights that he needs to overcome the distortions in his self-understanding and his personality.

The complex social and cultural dimensions of nursing
a child.

Differing cultural practices in child rearing
(swaddling, scheduled feeding, etc) serve the culture's
general aims and condition the child's cultural
persona.

In Lonergan's terms, nursing is a variable phenomenon
that always takes place in a drama of living.

Erikson's phrases "intrinsic wisdom" and
"unconscious planfulness" correspond to Lonergan's
idea of the social accumulation of commonsense
insights.

The American cultural context: the frontier society
and the resulting tension between Americans as
sedentary vs. migratory; as having both 'roots and
wings.'

Another thing I want to focus on — This is another example of this interaction between *physical and neurological development* and the *social-cultural drama* within which one has to gain insights as to how to accommodate the neural demand functions. It has to do with *sucking* and *nursing*! And Erikson talks in a very interesting way about this. From the outside, that is to say, for people who don't have the actual experience of it, babies suck and mothers nurse, and that is all there is to it! But it turns out that that is far from all there is to it! It takes a while, and sometimes there is a certain amount of difficulty with children learning to nurse.

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

Sucking and Nursing:

“What, then, is “good for the child” ... depends on what [he or she] is supposed to become, and where.”
(*Childhood and Society*, p. 73).

American Cultural Roles:

“Thus the functioning American, as the heir of a history of extreme contrasts and abrupt changes, bases [his or her] final ego identity on *some* tentative combination of dynamic polarities such as migratory and sedentary, individualistic and standardized, competitive and co-operative, pious and freethinking, responsible and cynical, etc.”
(*Childhood and Society*, p. 286; see also p. 293).

So with regard to sucking and nursing, Erikson says the following: The child’s

inborn and more or less co-ordinated ability to take in by mouth meets the breast’s and the mother’s and the society’s more or less co-ordinated ability and intention to feed him and to welcome him. At this point he lives through and loves with his mouth; and the mother lives through and loves with her breasts. For her this is highly dependent on the love she can be sure of from others, on the self-esteem that accompanies the act of nursing — and on the response of the newborn. (*Childhood and Society*, p. 72).

So in other words, what Erikson is getting at there is that nursing, as he says, earlier on, always already takes place in a social context. In Lonergan's terms, nursing always already takes place in a drama that has a dramatic story to it, that gives its meaning to it.

And he continues [a few lines](#) later by saying:

While it is quite clear, then, what *must* happen to keep the baby alive (the minimum supply necessary) and what *must not* happen, lest he die or be severely stunted (the maximum frustration tolerable) there is increasing leeway in regard to what *may* happen. (*Childhood and Society*, p. 72).

So in other words, what Erikson is pointing to here is that there is *a flexibility in the relationships between sucking and nursing*. It's not just a biological experience. *It's a human experience; and what makes it human is the drama within which it takes place.*

Different cultures make extensive use of their prerogative to decide what they consider workable and insist on calling necessary. (*Childhood and Society*, p. 72).

So in other words, Erikson is saying [that](#) what cultures do isn't necessary in the sense of some biologically rooted necessity. It's what people mean by: "It's the right thing to do!" But they say: "It's necessary that they be nursed this way!"

Some people think that a baby, lest he scratch his own eyes out, must necessarily be swaddled completely for the better part of the day throughout the greater part of the first year; but also that he should be rocked or fed whenever he whimpers. Others [\[other cultures\]](#) think that he should feel the freedom of his kicking limbs as early as possible, but should 'of course' be forced to wait for his meals until he, literally, gets blue in the face. (*Childhood and Society*, pp. 72-73).

I can remember when my oldest daughter was an infant, less than six months old, a friend telling my wife: “You’ve got to make that child learn to get on a schedule; put that child on a feeding schedule!” Which we did not do! But that was one of those cultural phenomena: “This is the right way to do the nursing!”

All of this depends on the culture’s general aim and system. As will be pointed out in the next chapter, there seems to be an *intrinsic wisdom*, or at any rate an *unconscious planfulness*, in the seemingly arbitrary varieties of cultural conditioning — [with regard to nursing!](#) (*Childhood and Society*, p. 73, emphases added).

I just want to point out that when Erikson was saying, “intrinsic wisdom” and “unconscious planfulness”, that in Lonergan’s terms what he’s talking about is *the spontaneous accumulation of the inventory of insights about nursing; about the various ways in which the biological functioning of sucking and nursing can be met in the context of the drama*. But as he says, everything “depends on the culture’s general aim and system.” But then “what is “good for the child”, what *may* happen to him, depends on what he is supposed to become, and where” (*Culture and Society*, p. 73), what role they’re supposed to play.

Critical Stages of Ego Formation

American Cultural Roles:

“Thus the functioning American, as the heir of a history of extreme contrasts and abrupt changes, bases [his or her] final ego identity on *some* tentative combination of dynamic polarities such as migratory and sedentary, individualistic and standardized, competitive and co-operative, pious and freethinking, responsible and cynical, etc.” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 286; see also p. 293).

Another part of the book that Erikson develops is some reflections on the American cultural role, and how parenting and childhood are constructed in the American cultural context. He writes of how the various needs of things, not only like sucking and nursing and keeping alive, but like locomotion and so on, how they are nurtured to develop a certain kind of cultural personality, a *dramatis persona*, the person, the *persona* that's going to play a role in the American drama.

And he points out that one of the real tensions that is ingredient in American culture is the tension that comes from us having been a frontier society, in a way that many other societies did not have; that when the European settlers landed on, and then took over, the North American continent, that *there was always a frontier that was yet to be settled*; and a fundamental part of the American culture was the settlement of the unknown frontier.

This, as Erikson says, means that there is a funny kind of tension in the American personality between *being sedentary and being migratory*, to being a frontier's person and a town person. And even now that our last frontier of the geographical continent has taken place, American personalities have an orientation towards frontiers and exploration of the unknown, whether it's the frontier of space, it's the new frontier of the war on poverty, or if it's the frontier of the frontiers person, originally the Daniel Boone character, who now becomes the detective in the city, whose always out to conquer and to solve the case, and take over the territory occupied by the evil persons. That's a very, very, fundamental dynamic that's been built into the American cultural story, and to which American children are adapted in the ways that they are brought up in these different stages.

Although it was not a phrase at the time Erikson wrote this book in 1950, a very common phrase that you'll hear people say, particularly mothers and fathers, is: "I raised them to have "roots and wings!" Now, stop and think about that! Those are two utterly contradictory qualities. What has roots cannot fly! And what flies isn't rooted to the ground, and doesn't love the ground and love the land and be attached to the land, in the same way as something that has roots. And yet we say with great pride that we raise people to have roots and wings! I'm not sure if any other culture says that, but it's very common to hear that said in American culture.

Now what Erikson does is to show the challenges, and the sometimes failures, that are predictable, in a culture whose story is a story of having roots and wings, when it has to meet the neural demand functions that emerge at these various critical stages in the development of children.

Dramatic Bias and Psychological Disturbance.

The problem – i.e., the *desire* to learn how to live with elegance and dignity in the presence of other humans.

Lonergan's unique claim that dramatic bias (psychological disturbance) is due at least in part to the inverse of the *desire* of inquiry – namely, the *fear* of insights.

This fear can take over the patterning and exclude images conducive to not only the first unwanted insight, but the retinue of further self-correcting insights that lead to a refined way of living.

Primary censorship (constructive and oriented toward insights) *versus* aberration of censorship which functions principally to introduce images that interfere with attaining the unwanted insights.

That gives us a transition to talk about Lonergan's account of Dramatic Bias, or what you might call psychological disturbance, emotional disturbance, mental disturbance; it's given many terms! Lonergan wants to focus it by saying that *the disturbance has to do with the problem of learning to live with elegance and style and dignity in the drama and in the presence of other human beings*. That's how he is going to situate the problem. He's read a great deal of psychoanalytic literature, and tried to make sense of it, and tried to add his own, I think, unique contributions to that discussion.

Loneragan: Dramatic Bias

“Just as insight can be desired, so too it can be unwanted. Besides the love of light, there can be a love of darkness.

“To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it, and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint.

....

“To suffer such incomprehension favors a withdrawal from the outer drama of human living into the inner drama of fantasy.” (CWL 3, p. 214).

So he makes a transition from talking about the *complexity* of the dramatic construction of subjectivity to the *distortions* of dramatic subjectivity. And the key to it is his claim — it’s an interesting claim: as far as I know, no one had had made any efforts to give empirical verification of the claim — but his fundamental claim here is that

just as *inquiry, the desire to understand*, can be that which patterns our experiencing, that which selects from the available neurophysiological dimension what’s going to become [come?] into consciousness and pattern experience,

so also it can be unwanted.

Just as you can desire insight, you can fear insight.

This is a very important thing! *It is not fearing what you've understood!* There can be very good reasons to fear what you've understood: if you understand that the person standing at the door has a machete and wants to kill you, there are very good reasons to fear that. But that is *fearing what you've understood!*

What Lonergan is talking about is *something that's inversely analogous to inquiry*. When you're inquiring, you don't yet know what you're inquiring after! It's only when you get the insight that your desire to understand will be satisfied. *Lonergan's claim is that there can be, and frequently is, a fear of understanding prior to actually having an insight*. That's a very innovative, radical idea! I don't know of anyone else who speaks in these terms. But of course Lonergan is speaking in these terms because he's the person who's giving an account of insight that's unique and original; and *he's looking at the implications and the consequences of his realization of the importance of insight*.

“Just as insight can be desired, so too it can be unwanted. Besides the love of light, there can be a love of darkness.” (CWL 3, p. 214).

But matters get worse; because if there is a fear of *an* insight, what that does then is to set off a process in which *the correcting and nuancing and refining insights that would have followed from the first insight, don't occur!* And so the social awkwardness that we encounter sometimes in people is an awkwardness that's a lack of the further refining insights because the original insight was not had, and not had because the patterning of the experience developed in such a way as to make sure that it wouldn't be had!

That's what Dramatic Bias is. Dramatic Bias is when the fear of understanding takes over the patterning, and then its fundamental role is to exclude images that would lead to insights.

“To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it, and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint. To suffer such incomprehension favors a withdrawal from the outer drama of human living into the inner drama of fantasy.” (*CWL 3*, p. 214).

Dramatic Bias

“Primarily, the censorship is constructive; it selects and arranges materials ... in a perspective that gives rise to an insight ...”

“In contrast, the aberration of the censorship is primarily repressive ... its positive activity ... is the admission to consciousness of any materials in any other arrangement or perspective” [other than images that would give rise to the unwanted insight.] (*CWL 3*, pp. 216).

“Primarily, the censorship is constructive; it selects and arranges materials ... in a perspective that gives rise to an insight.” (CWL 3, p. 216).

So as he says, *the censorship is primarily constructive*, constructive in the sense that its role is to select and to bring forward. *But the aberration of censorship is primarily repressive! Distorted censorship is fundamentally concerned with bringing into consciousness any materials whatever in any arrangement or perspective whatever so that the insight won't occur.*

Examples of the above: Wilhelm Stekel's case study of Mr. Iota and his counting fixation; case study of Sam and his fear of causing his grandmother's death.

And let me give you a couple of examples. The first is drawn from a case study from Wilhelm Stekel's *Technique of Analytic Psychotherapy*,⁷ a book to which Lonergan refers in Chapter Six of *Insight*. (CWL 3, pp. 222, 224-227). And this case study is about a person that he calls Mr Iota.

[Pat reads from a paper printout:]

“I found Mr Iota, an American Croesus, sitting in the veranda that fronted his palace in a fabulously beautiful park. He told me that there was nothing lacking to his perfect happiness, for he had all that the heart of man could desire. But the fact that he had an electric heater lying upon his belly showed me that there must be a fly in his ointment.” (*Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, p. 228).

⁷ Wilhelm Stekel, *Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul, New York, 1950. See CWL 3, pp. 222, 224-227.

And [Stekel](#) goes on to say that he had these gastro-intestinal attacks and he put the heater there to make him feel better.

“Now and again he had obsessions, but, he insisted, they were not of a kind to make him unhappy. For instance, he would find it necessary to count and recount the pictures on the walls, although he knew that none of them were missing. Again, he would count the windows, or any other objects lying within his visual field.” (*Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, p. 228).

Now, *this is an example of a manifestation of a Dramatic Bias*. Stekel goes on to talk about this a little bit more, about what is behind this. But the fixation on counting windows, or counting pictures, or counting other objects, when you know there is no good reason to count them — What’s going on there?

Lonergan would say that what’s going on there is [that](#) Mr Iota is filling up his consciousness with images to take the place of the images that he’s trying to avoid; because *were those images to come to his consciousness, they would give him insights that he fears having*.

So that’s one example of the way in which consciousness gets filled up with something “other than,” [that is, other than images that would give rise to the unwanted insight](#).

Another [example](#) goes back to the child that Erikson refers to, [the child he called Sam](#), whose Grandmother had died.

And [Erikson](#) gets the child to play with some dominos and some blocks; and he notices that the child has arranged them in such a way as they could only be seen if one were on the level of the dominoes; they could only be seen from being *inside this box that the child had constructed*. And Erikson talks to him and says: “This seems like you would have to be inside this box to see this. Is this like the coffin that they carried your grandmother out in?”

Pat reads from *Childhood and Society*:

I said: “If you wanted to see the dots on your blocks, you would have to be inside that little box, like the dead person in a coffin.”

“Yes,” he whispered.

“This must mean that you are afraid you may have to die because you hit me.”

Breathlessly, “Must I?”

“Of course not. But when they carried your grandmother away in the coffin you probably thought that you made her die and therefore had to die yourself. That’s why you built those big boxes in your school, just as you built this little one today.” (*Childhood and Society*, pp. 29-30).

Now a little bit earlier on, the child was told — Initially the child was told that the grandmother had gone to Seattle, that she had lived on but she had just gone to Seattle. And then finally, the parents, as his condition got worse and worse, and he became more obsessed with his grandmother’s absence, they said to him

That the grandmother had, in fact, died. “You’re lying,” he said. “She’s in Seattle!” (*Childhood and Society*, p. 27).

So, this is another example of him holding in his consciousness images other than the ones that would lead to the insight which he feared. The insight which he feared is the one that Erikson helped him articulate, namely, that *he caused her death and he would have to die also*. That’s what he feared to have, and so these obsessions that the child had, just as Mr Iota’s obsessions, were there to screen off some other kind of insight: *they were the experiences that were taking place so as to block the occurrence of the unwanted insight*.

Dramatic Bias and Non-Intelligibility.

Besides the lack of images, the perspective or arrangement of images might also obscure insights.

Example: Mr. Iota's inability to see how his dreams clearly depicted his own life traumas.

The essential role of inquiry and insight in therapeutic process.

Dramatic Bias and Non-intelligibility

“In contrast, the aberration of the censorship is primarily repressive its positive activity is the admission to consciousness of any materials in any other arrangement or perspective” [other than images that would give rise to the unwanted insight.] (CWL 3, p. 216).

“For a situation is ‘random’ if it is ‘any whatever provided specified conditions of intelligibility are not fulfilled.’ But nonsystematic process results from any basic situation provided it lacks intelligible unity from a definitive viewpoint.” (CWL 3, p. 74).

That's Loneragan's theory about *the Dramatic Bias, the origins of Dramatic Bias*. And it can be very subtle! It isn't necessarily that some image, like say the face of his grandmother, is being blocked. It can be, as he says, *in a perspective or arrangement* that's just — It's not simply *what* appears, but *what intensity it appears with, how it appears in relationship to other images, other sounds, other memories, other anticipations*. So that the work of curing a Dramatic Bias is very much *the work of curing, not only the absence of an image, but the absence of the perspective or arrangement of the phantasms that will be responsible for giving rise to the insight*.

And so I wanted to go back to the example from Stekel. And Stekel remarks that Mr Iota had been taking what he calls soporifics, so opiates; and the reason that he was taking them, it turns out, was so that he wouldn't have dreams! Because he had very disturbing dreams; and the dreams were always explosive dreams. And Stekel gives an account of the general understanding of what explosive dreams, dreams in which explosions occur, what they have to do with. And so Stekel takes him off the drugs. And he immediately has a dream. And this is the dream he has:

In a motor car, accompanied by an unknown lady, I am driving down a steep hill. Suddenly I notice that smoke is pouring from within the bonnet — the carburettor must have caught fire. I save myself by jumping out, just before the automobile explodes with a deafening crash. The lady is blown out of the car, and, as she falls, is caught by a big, bearded man. A second car is waiting. He lifts her into it, and they drive off at top speed. Swiftly they roll down the hill, while I look at my singed clothes and say to myself: "Lucky to have got off so cheap." (Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy, p. 229, italics in source, presumably indicating words of patient).

Stekel ask him: "What does that remind you of?"

He can produce no associations to the lady or to the big, bearded man. "It was a stupid dream; and dreams mean nothing anyway." (*Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, pp. 229-230).

That's a clear clue that some kind of insight is being blocked! That some image, some insight is being blocked there.

But at length Mr Iota remembers that his brother's beard is like that of the man in the dream. (*Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, p. 230).

Now this is important: It's not that he's forgotten his brother, or his brother's beard. His brother or his brother's beard had not appeared in the arrangement or perspective that's going to give him the insight that he's been fearing.

By way of the brother I reach the most momentous experience of his life, the great trauma. He had once been very much in love. (Before, he strenuously denied this.) Soon he was to be married. At this juncture his brother came back from a trip round the world. The brother was a great contrast to the timid and asthenic patient, being robust, athletic, and a dare-devil — really a ne'er-do-well who never did a stroke of work, and lived only for pleasure. My patient could not marry as soon as he wanted, being in quarantine because of the recent syphilis. After a few days' acquaintance, his betrothed eloped with the brother. The pair married, and lived in another town. (*Technique of Analytical Psychotherapy*, p. 230).

Now the pain of understanding, among other things, that was him, his disease, and his prior sexual involvements, that was responsible for the loss of the love of his life, that's the insight that Mr Iota had been repressing. And his preoccupation with counting pictures, and counting windows, and other things, is there just to keep his imagination, his closed sense experiences, filled up with stuff so that he will never have to acknowledge and admit that to himself. With Stekel's aid he does, and with Stekel's aid he finds, just as the little boy Sam, that he doesn't have to die; his life doesn't have to end with that. And Stekel helps him recover.

But Lonergan says that he found a piece of evidence for his theory about Dramatic Bias and its cure, namely, that the cure has to do with getting the image that's going to give the insight that's been feared; and **so getting** the subsequent self-correcting, further refining, and nuancing insights, that have been missed out on, to enable a person to integrate their own body and their own ideas and their own experiences into a larger drama of meaningful human life.

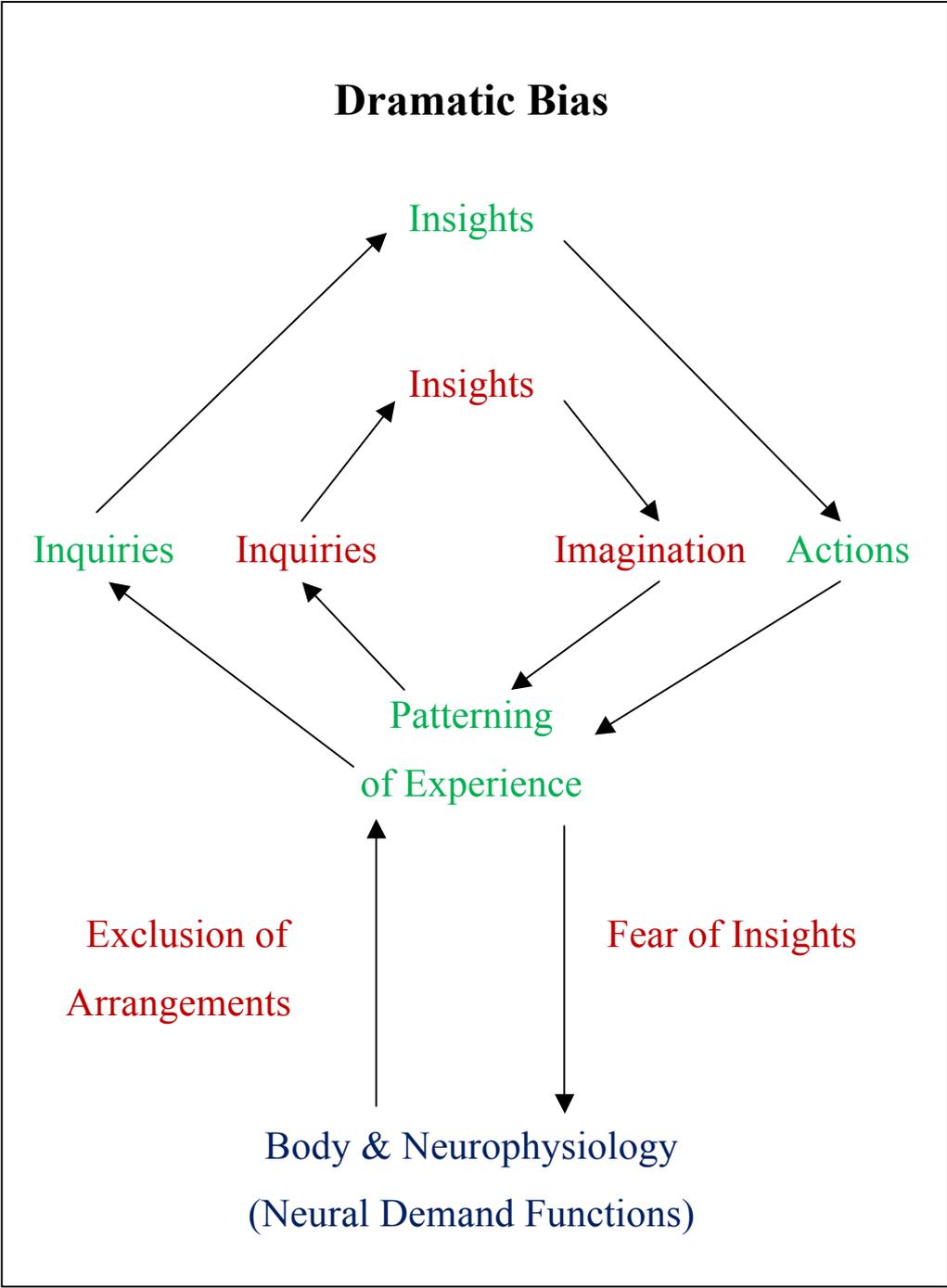
Lonergan says **that** he found an instance in Stekel that gives him evidence for this — I'm not sure if this was the instance, or if there was some other one. But *Lonergan's emphasis on the role of inquiry and insight in the formation of the personality, and in the therapeutic process, is what I think is his original contribution.*

Dramatic Bias

The answer to “Why are all these experiential elements in this person's consciousness?” when the person is suffering dramatic bias – the answer is that there is no answer.

A lack of coherence in one's experience, or *scotosis*, results in the exclusion of insights.

So in Dramatic Bias, where instead of inquiry that is desiring insight, that's the concern that elicits and selects into consciousness images and patterns of images, the fear of insights functions to exclude imaginative phantasms, arrangements, and the exclusion in the patterning of experience.



So, to repeat, in Dramatic Bias, where instead of inquiry that is desiring insight that's the concern that elicits and selects into consciousness images and patterns of images, the fear of insights functions to exclude imaginative phantasms, arrangements, and the exclusion in the patterning of experience.

So in other words, if you ask the question: why are all these experiential elements in this person's consciousness in a normative, dramatic, self-correcting, self-constituting patterning of experience, *the answer is because they're living the best life they can in the drama of the community into which they were born, and live.*

If you ask that question about a person suffering from Dramatic Bias, and say: why is all this stuff there, the answer is: *there isn't one reason, and for some of it there's no reason, except the unreason of avoiding intelligibility!*

So the **scotosis** in the patterning of experience means that the stuff that's going forward, is flowing in experience, doesn't have a *coherent intelligible pattern* to it. It's got a *nonsystematic unintelligible pattern* to it rather than an intelligible one. *And because of the scotosis in the patterning of experience, there results excluded insights and excluded further insights, which lead to a scotosis not only in the patterning but in the understanding.* So Lonergan's language of scotosis, that's what he's getting at! *And scotosis can occur not only in the patterning of performance, but also in the cycle of rehearsal.*

§ 2.7.7 A Note on Method: How Lonergan
overcomes Freud's deterministic model of the libido.

Lonergan saw Freud's achievement as distinct from
the latter's determinism (an extra-scientific opinion).

Lonergan using his "dialectical method" to promote
the "position" and reverse the "counterposition" in
Freud's work.

The determinism of Freud's thermodynamic model of
consciousness/libido.

Lonergan reminds us of the non-systematic nature of
neural impulses and the possibility of higher
integration of what was not systematized at lower
levels.

The non-systematicity of the neural impulses makes it
possible to gain insights by trial and error process;
after which our imagination and experience can be
reorganized.

This preserves the genuine human autonomy – self-
rule – of intelligence and free will in human action.

§ 2. 7. 7: “A Note on Method”

“Freud represents the outlook of his time and tends to regard observable psychic events as appearance and unobservable entities as reality.” (CWL 3, p. 229).

“Again, Freud was professedly determinist.” (CWL 3, p. 229).

And just to conclude, just a comment on how Lonergan sees himself in relationship to Freud in particular:

Just as we saw in his discussion of natural science, that a big barrier to human living and the world in the fullest sense was what he called “*the extra-scientific opinions*” about reality, about science, about nature, about the universe, about causality, about the human being, *the extra-scientific opinions are what he is inveighing against! What his Philosophy of Science is concerned with — maybe not exclusively but certainly in a central and important way — is to show what science is, so that the extra-scientific opinions can be set to the side.*

So also his concern with Freud is to do what later on he is going to call “**Dialectical Method.**” We’ll talk about that when we get to Chapter Fourteen (CWL 3, pp. 410-455, “The Method of Metaphysics”). The *Dialectical Method fundamentally means promoting what is intelligible and what he calls the “position” in somebody’s work, and reversing the “counterposition.”*

And Lonergan at this time was reading Freud, and finding in Freud much of great worth. But he was also finding in Freud extra-scientific opinions. As he says, Freud shares the outlook of his day on what it means to be scientific. And if Freud was going to do a scientific psychology, what kind of cast he would have to put it in?

And he says that “**Freud was professedly determinist.**” (CWL 3, p. 229). And the determinism is an extra-scientific opinion that Lonergan argued against in the section on the “Canon of Statistical Residues” in Chapter Three of *Insight* (CWL 3, pp. 109-125), among other places. And so he’s going to say that Freud’s normative achievement, his positional thinking, has been mixed up with his extra-scientific opinions, his counter-positional thinking.

And what Lonergan sees himself as doing is taking from Freud and psychoanalytic writings that he is familiar with, what can be brought forward in a positional and positive way. Now the first of these quotes here, in the slide:

“Freud represents the outlook of his time and tends to regard observable psychic events as appearance and unobservable entities as reality.” (CWL 3, p. 229)

What he means by that is: “**observable psychic events as appearance**” will be sort of like Galileo’s secondary qualities. They are something in experience which is to be reduced to something else, and explained by something else; they are to be explained by “**unobservable entities as reality.**” And about that, what he is referring to, I think, there, is *Freud’s theory of the libido*,⁸ about which Ericson says the following:

Early psychoanalysis ... describes human motivation as if libido were the prime substance, individual egos being mere defensive buffers and vulnerable layers between this substance and a vague surrounding “outer world” of arbitrary and hostile social conventions. (*Childhood and Society*, p. 64).

⁸ Sigmund Freud defined libido as “the energy, regarded as a quantitative magnitude ... of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love'.”- It is the instinct energy or force, contained in what Freud called the id, the strictly unconscious structure of the psyche.

Clearly there Erikson is signalling that he is going to depart company with the psychoanalytic tendencies in those directions, and **is going to** think about psychoanalysis, and personality formation, and the libido, in very different ways. Erikson on the previous page refers to — as does Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) — **Erikson there makes the point** that *Freud tended to regard libido in the context of thermodynamic theory*.

“Freud used the thermodynamic language of his day, the language of the preservation and transformation of energy. The result was that much that was meant to be a working hypothesis appeared to be making concrete claims which neither observation nor experiment could even attempt to substantiate. (*Childhood and Society*, pp. 63-64).

Erikson is pointing out that the hot science of the days was thermodynamics. Thermodynamics has to do with the dynamics of heat: how heat moves around. That was the development of what was actually a quite remarkable period of about fifty years in which thermodynamic theory emerged.

And Freud tended to think of libido, of energy — and one of the big developments in the theory of thermodynamics was the discovery that heat and energy were equivalents — So *Freud tends to think of libido as energy*, as indeed we tend to do when we think of nervous impulses, electrical impulses, as being energy.

And so Freud tended to think of his theory as being grounded in a libido, a prime substance as Erikson describes it, that flows around and gets channelled, and blocked, and finds ways round the blocks, in the psyche, in the nervous system, in a very, very, deterministic and mechanical fashion; a fashion that, from Lonergan’s point of view, eliminates both the fundamental constitutive role of human intelligence, and the fundamental constitutive role of human freedom. Erikson is a writer who is much more sympathetic to the kinds of things that would be Lonergan’s concerns, than perhaps Freud was.

§ 2. 7. 7: “A Note on Method”

“For in the first place, an acknowledgment of the nonsystematic leads to an affirmation of successive levels of scientific inquiry.” (CWL 3, p. 229).

“If the nonsystematic exists on the level of biology, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher psychic level without violating any biological law.” (CWL 3, p. 230).

“If the nonsystematic exists on the level of the psyche, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher level of insight and reflection, deliberation and choice, without violating any law of the psyche. (CWL 3, p. 230).

And from this Lonergan goes on to say something about what his response to the Freudian deterministic reduction of human behaviour to a deterministic causality of this energetic libido was. He says

“For in the first place, an acknowledgment of the nonsystematic leads to an affirmation of successive levels of scientific inquiry.” (CWL 3, p. 229).

In the first place, you have to acknowledge the facticity of the nonsystematic in the neural impulses; and that an acknowledgment of the nonsystematic opens up the possibility of a higher integration of the nonsystematic, of what is not then totally determined and systematized at the lower level.

He goes on to say: **“If the nonsystematic exists on the level of biology”** — so this refers back to what I was getting at, particularly with regard to the coincidental aggregate of, let’s say, islands of organized impulses at various places in our neurophysiology. If not, everything that’s happening in the brain has one formula to it, as Laplace wanted to say; *then the nonsystematic collection, aggregate, of these systematizations of electrical impulses, are open to higher integrations.*

“If the nonsystematic exists on the level of biology, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher psychic level without violating any biological law.” (CWL 3, p. 230).

That means that *the consciousness itself can be selective without violating biological law, but also without being determined by biological law.*

And again:

“If the nonsystematic exists on the level of the psyche, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher level of insight and reflection, deliberation and choice, without violating any law of the psyche.” (CWL 3, p. 230).

Now what he means by that is a little more complicated; but the gist of it is that *there is always a certain amount of fooling around that we have to do as we’re struggling to get insights.* We don’t have a foolproof method, in at least the non-Lonergan sense of method, where we run a formula and it automatically produces the images that we need to get the insights. There’s a certain amount of trial and error until the right image emerges that gives us the insight. Once the insight has been had, then we can re-organize our imagination, our experiencing, just as the scientific observer can organize her or his experiencing by the guidance of insight as well as reflection and inquiry!

The complete paragraph drawn upon above maybe worth inserting here:

For in the first place, an acknowledgment of the nonsystematic leads to an affirmation of successive levels of scientific inquiry. If the nonsystematic exists on the level of physics, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher chemical level without violating any physical law. If the nonsystematic exists on the level of chemistry, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher biological level without violating any chemical law. If the nonsystematic exists on the level of biology, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher psychic level without violating any biological law. If the nonsystematic exists on the level of the psyche, then on that level there are coincidental manifolds that can be systematized by a higher level of insight and reflection, deliberation and choice, without violating any law of the psyche. In brief, an acknowledgment of the nonsystematic makes it possible to conceive (1) psychic health as a harmonious unfolding of a process that moves at once on distinct yet related levels, (2) psychic aberration as an orientation of the stream of consciousness in conflict with its function of systematizing underlying manifolds, and (3) analytic treatment as an effort to reorientate an aberrant stream of consciousness and to effect a release from unconscious obstructions with a psychic origin. (*CWL* 3, pp. 229-230).

So Lonergan's comments there at the end of "A Note on Method" (*CWL* 3, pp. 227-231), are the ways in which *he sees himself as having overcome the counterposition, the nonscientific, the extra-scientific opinion, about human behavior being determined by libido, or by brain impulses, in a way that eliminates real human freedom, and real human autonomy, and real human self constitutions; autonomy meaning "self-rule."* We give the law of our behavior to ourselves. And we do it primarily, in the first instance, by having the insights that we're going to use as a way of living our lives.

So that is how I understand the primary objectives and the primary insights that Lonergan is communicating in the second section, that long second section of Chapter Six, "The Subjective Field of Common Sense" (*CWL* 3, pp. 204-231).

And we'll stop for now, and we'll return to take up specifically the Aesthetic and the Artistic Patterns of Experiences in our next class.