

Insight and Beyond

Class 17, Part One: February 3rd 2010

“The Notion of Objectivity,” “Cognitional Structure” “Tripartite Objectivity”

(Insight, Chapter 13: “The Notion of Objectivity”)

Summary of Material

Topics unfinished from previous lecture: the tripartite structure of objectivity, and the question of whether self-affirmation is of subject-as-subject, or subject-as-object.

Review of Lonergan’s notion of Objectivity.

Objective knowing amounts to the cognition of reality.

“Startling strangeness” of the realization that knowledge of reality results from this cognitional structure.

Why should knowing result from experiencing, understanding, and judging?

The counter-positions falsely attribute objectivity to one component or activity of knowing (e.g., the myth of knowing as looking).

Mistaking one act of consciousness for the whole occurs not only in epistemology, but also in ethics.

Difficulty with the counterpositions on knowing is not that what they emphasize is not a component of knowing, but that they regard it as the whole of knowing.

Knowing as looking amounts to naive realism.

Empiricism is a very consistent form of naive realism, rejecting any knowledge that isn't confirmed by taking a look.

'Knowing as looking' leads to the model of objectivity as the *already out there now and immediately accessible*.

Looking is one way of having unmediated, uncomplicated, direct access to reality.

Touching is similarly direct and perhaps more primal, as Piaget showed in his studies of integrating tactile & visual sensations.

In the counterposition, what is obvious in knowing (or in ethics) is taken for what knowing obviously is.

What would be excluded as objective knowledge — as merely subjective — on the counterposition of 'knowing-as-looking'?

Thoughts and feelings would be regarded as merely subjective.

Discussion of the objective expression of feelings, i.e. body positions, voice changes. Can we see anger itself?

Student question about whether such expressions are being part of anger's essence, i.e. in animals we recognize such responses.

- Discussion of socially constructed *versus* natural constructions of emotions. We mediate visual cues of emotions by means of concepts, but we never perceive emotions as such.
- So we can't know that animals have emotions simply by looking. On the counterposition, that means we cannot know that animals have anger.

Other things that would have to be 'merely subjective' on the counterposition:

- causes (Hume) and relationships.

Question whether attractions are objectively knowable.

Question of whether discrimination among sensations can be objective on the counterposition.

Discussion of how logical positivism attempted to build up perceptions and higher concepts from objective sensations using language and logic.

Question as to whether judgment as having a reflective meaning.

- For the counterposition, judgment has no objective meaning.

Meaning in general would have to be a subjective projection, if knowing were only taking a look.

Other ‘merely subjective’ things: substances, atoms and molecules (Mach), scientific theories in general (conventionalism), evolution — since they cannot be directly observed, similarly for evolution.

Additional ‘merely subjective’ entities include families, institutions, societies, and cultures; history, ethical principles, God.

Student question about how the time frame for ‘taking a look’ is determined. When is an ‘instant’ over, and what about continuity of perceptions?

- The problem of what counts as a perception is indeed debatable; there is the question of continuity versus the instant. For some, the entire observable duration is allowable; but when the observer falls asleep there is a problem of discontinuous perception. Although the observer reorients his new to remembered

perceptions automatically, there is still an interruption.

Student question whether there is objectivity in language, or it is a means of expressing what we know subjectively?

- Different philosophers have different views. Logical positivism defined meaningful language as that which could be reconstructed from sense sensations.

Whatever cannot be known by sense contact is regarded as a merely subjective projection on external reality.

Student question about a blind person's ability to know objectively.

- Discussion of sight and other paradigms of knowing in western philosophy (cf. Shubert Ogden).

Question about Lonergan's references to 'illumination' and other ways in which he uses metaphors of light.

- Discussion of illumination and insight, and how the latter always presupposes a visible image upon which understanding supervenes.

Any reality that is constituted by meaning, is excluded from any model of objectivity that is modeled on sensations (on knowing as 'taking a look').

This is one reason why Lonergan's account is much more inclusive — it is open to realities that are constituted by meaning.

Breaking the duality in knowing is necessary to accept (appropriate) that understanding correctly is indeed knowing reality.

Being is known in understanding correctly and judging thereupon.

‘Knowing-as-looking’ vs. Self-Transcendence.

Objectivity is the result of authentic subjectivity (*Method in Theology*) that follows the standards of the dynamism of our self-correcting structure, of our self-transcendence.

Series of student questions:

Question about why we trust the desire to know.

- Many people in fact don’t trust it as the legitimate criterion for knowledge of reality.
- Inquiry begins as spontaneous and innocent, until something prompts us to stop trusting it.
- Self-appropriation consists in winning back this initial state. The structure of knowing and the unrestrictedness of knowing together ground its ability to produce objective knowledge.

- Crucial questions are not about others, but about oneself:
Do *I* perform the structured cognitional activities?
Do *I* have an unrestricted desire giving rise to my inquiries?
- The answers to these two questions are the basis for answering, why should we trust that desire.
- Discussion of the element of *desire* in knowing and its unique form of manifestation.
- We “know” this desire by letting it be, giving it free rein, by letting rational consciousness freely pursue its inquiry.
- The unrestrictedness of desire is the precondition for arriving at the virtually unconditioned.

Structured Objectivity: the Tripartite Structure of Cognition.

Human knowing is a structure of several operations, not a single one, and so objectivity is a combination of distinct properties residing in several operations.

Three-fold Objectivity consists in **experiential objectivity, normative objectivity, and absolute objectivity.** (The fourth objectivity, ‘principle objectivity,’ combines and goes beyond these three).

But not in a simplistic sense — *not* that three levels of acts automatically implies three kinds of objectivity.

Experiential Objectivity is mediated givenness.

The pragmatist Wilfred Sellars, in “*The Myth of the Given*” critiques the idea that knowing is based on givenness — which seems to contradict Lonergan’s assertion of experiential objectivity — but upon closer reading, Sellars is making the same point as Lonergan.

Mediated and Immediate Givenness.

Cognitional activities and their relationship to reality are:

- Not sense experiences, but the intention of being provides our *immediate* relation to being.
- Our relation to being is only *mediate* in the data of sense and of consciousness (since the intention of being makes use of such data).

Hence, even though objectivity does not consist solely in the givenness of experience alone, yet some portion of objectivity does involve the experiential givenness of data.

Question about the constitution of reality versus constitution of experience.

- The present issue is how *objectivity* is constituted, not *reality*. Discussion of the role of the given in the objectivity of our knowing; and how our experience of objects is *not* immediate.

Normative Objectivity is not just the correlative of the second level of consciousness (intelligence), because it has to do with all questioning — questions for intelligence and questions for reflection — not just questions on the second level of consciousness.

Normative objectivity is grounded in the unrestricted desire to know; it results from unprejudiced inquiry.

The opposite of normative objectivity — prejudice, bias — is interference with the unrestricted desire.

Student question about whether this unrestricted desire to know allows us to connect to the third level of identifying desires and then letting them go.

- Not all desires, but the unique, unrestricted desire.
- The unrestricted desire is the desire for inquiry, and letting it have its way brings us to a knowledge of reality.

Absolute Objectivity.

The unconditioned judgment is no longer relative to the person who articulates it, or the time or place of the judgment.

Absolute objectivity asks “is it so?” under any conditions, after all pertinent questions have been asked.

The publicity of objectivity results from intersubjective agreement, born of the commonly shared and unrestricted desire to know.

Agreement, even agreement of all human kind, does not ground objectivity (because of *general* bias); but absolute objectivity grounds the possibility of human agreement.

End of Part I.

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Let’s begin. You did prepare chapter fourteen on “**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455) for today. We will get to that. But I left you with a couple of topics that I said I was going to finish up in today’s class before going on to “**The Method of Metaphysics**”. One was *the tripartite structure of objectivity* that Lonergan talks about in chapter thirteen, “**The Notion of Objectivity**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 399-409); we didn’t spend very much time at all talking about that last time. And then I also left you with a question as to whether or not self-affirmation of the knower was a matter of knowing the subject as subject

or subject as object? So we'll begin with those, and then we'll move to the chapter on method in Metaphysics.

Review of Lonergan's notion of Objectivity.

Objective knowing amounts to the cognition of reality.

“Startling strangeness” of the realization that knowledge of reality results from this cognitional structure.

Why should knowing result from experiencing, understanding, & judging?

The counter-positions falsely attribute objectivity to one component or activity of knowing (e.g., the myth of knowing as looking).

Mistaking one act of consciousness for the whole occurs not only in epistemology, but also in ethics.

Difficulty with the counterpositions on knowing is not that what they emphasize is not a component of knowing, but that they regard it as the whole of knowing.

Why Doing *That* is Knowing.

“The objectivity of human knowing, then, rests upon an unrestricted intention and an unconditioned result. Because the intention is unrestricted, it is not restricted to the immanent

content of knowing, to *Bewusstseinsinhalte*.”

(“*Cognitional Structure*”, p. 213, emphases added).

So a brief recapitulation on objectivity, as Lonergan understands it. Remember we talked about *the notion of knowing*, and *the notion of objectivity*; *that underlying knowing and objectivity is that knowing is truly knowing, or is what we anticipate of what we have a notion of, when it’s cognitional reality*; and *objectivity is the characteristic of knowing when it is cognition of reality*. And at a crucial point in the article “*Cognitional Structure*”, Lonergan says:

“*The objectivity of human knowing, then, rests upon an unrestricted intention and an unconditioned result. Because the intention is unrestricted, it is not restricted to the immanent content of knowing, to *Bewusstseinsinhalte*.”* (“*Cognitional Structure*”, p. 213, emphases added).

So that’s Lonergan’s account of the objectivity, or as he puts it *the intrinsic objectivity*, of the cognitional structure that we come to know in the activity of self-affirmation.

“Why is Doing That Knowing?”

“At this point one may ask why knowing should result from the performance of such immanent activities as experiencing, understanding, and judging.” (“*Cognitional Structure*”, p. 211).

But I wanted to emphasize again the disparity and the strangeness of that way of conceiving of objectivity, because it should be a little disconcerting! As Lonergan says in the “Introduction”: *if you don’t have a startling strangeness about what this means, then you really haven’t got it*.

For the appropriation of one’s own rational self-consciousness, which has been so stressed in this introduction, is not an end in itself but rather a beginning.

It is a necessary beginning, for unless one breaks the duality in one's knowing, one doubts that understanding correctly is knowing. Under the pressure of that doubt, either one will sink into the bog of a knowing that is

without understanding, or else one will cling to understanding but sacrifice knowing on the altar of an immanentism, an idealism, a relativism. From the horns of that dilemma one escapes only through the discovery—and *one has not made it yet if one has no clear memory of its startling strangeness*—that there are two quite different realisms, that there is an *incoherent realism*, half animal and half human, that poses as a halfway house between *materialism* and *idealism*, and on the other hand that there is an *intelligent and reasonable realism* between which and materialism the halfway house is *idealism*. (CWL 3, "Introduction", p. 22, emphases added).

You should have something like the experience that Plato narrates in the *Republic* (Book VII, 514a-518c), in the allegory or the cave, of being dazed and bewildered when dragged out of the cave into the sun, into the world of the sun.

So to underscore that, so that we really begin to make sure that we've got the full impact of what he means by this notion of objectivity, let's review just a little bit. And as he says. Well, why should knowing result from performing those activities? "At this point one may ask why knowing should result from the performance of such immanent activities as experiencing, understanding, and judging." ("Cognitive Structure", p. 211). His answer is as follows:

Knowing results from those activities insofar as it is underpinned by this unrestricted intention, and insofar as it results, at least momentarily, at moments, in this unconditioned act, this unconditioned result.

"The objectivity of human knowing, then, rests upon an unrestricted intention and an unconditioned result. Because the intention is unrestricted, it is not restricted to the immanent

content of knowing, to *Bewusstseinsinhalte*.”

(“Cognitive Structure”, p. 213, emphases added).

That stands in relationship to what he calls ‘*counterpositions*’. We’ll talk about counterpositions in more detail when we turn to chapter fourteen on “**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455) later on in today’s class.

**Cognitive Structure Objective:
Knows Reality**

The counter-position “mistakenly attributes the objectivity of human knowing, not to human knowing, but to some component in human knowing If theoretically this dialectical process could begin from any confusion, commonly its starting point is the myth that knowing is looking.” (“Cognitive Structure,” pp. 214-215).

Lonergan says the counterposition “mistakenly attributes the objectivity of human knowing, not to human knowing, but to some component in human knowing.” (“Cognitive Structure,” p. 214). And recall how big a deal he’s making in the article “Cognitive Structure” of the fact that *human knowing is not one act, not one activity, or one cognitive activity, but rather is a group of very different kinds of activities, sui generis, which is to say not adequately ‘analogisable’ to one another*; so that human knowing is a structure, and the counterposition is the tendency to make human knowing be but one component rather than the interrelated structure of those. And then he throws out this remark that: **“If theoretically this dialectical process,”** this counterposition, **“could begin from any confusion, commonly its starting point is the myth that knowing is looking.”** (“Cognitive Structure,” p. 215, emphases added). The counterposition could result from someone saying

that this, or that, or some other component in cognitional structure, is all there is to human knowing. But typically, and commonly, and pervasively, its starting point is the myth that knowing is looking, which

is to say, of all the activities that we do and perform in the cognitional structure of human knowing, the tendency is to think that looking is the one and only activity of knowing; and that everything else that we do is somehow problematic in its status, because in so far as it's not like knowing *as looking*.

When we get to chapter eighteen (*CWL* 3, **The Possibility of Ethics**, pp. 618-656), I'm going to look at this again, this comment, and do a sort of an extension or an extrapolation of it. So if the problem with epistemology, is the tendency to make one or another component in the complex, integrated, structure of human knowing, to make one of its components be the whole rather than a part, you could say the same thing about human ethical activity! The tendency is to make one component be the whole rather than a part within a whole of what constitutes **human ethical activity**.¹ So for example, you could say that *Utilitarianism* takes something analogous to *experiencing* to be the whole story about what ethics is! And you could say that *Kant* takes either *understanding or judgment*, probably *understanding*, to be the whole of what is constitutive of the ethical life. And you could say — and this is certainly an oversimplification — you could say that *Libertarianism* takes *choice* to be the whole of what there is to ethics. *And Lonergan's approach to this is going to be to look at the structure of ethical activity in its interrelated parts, and therefore to find fault with these positions.* And as he is going to say later on, as we'll see, the difficulty with any of these positions about ethics, or any of these positions about knowledge, is not that what they affirm as knowing isn't a component of knowing; *it's just that they make it be the whole of knowing.* And that's where he sees the real difficulty, in fact.

Knowing-as-Looking

[looking at a tree]

¹ Pat's word at this point is 'objectivity', but the line of thought in context seems to suggest a mere *lapsus linguae* and to require that the term 'objectivity' be replaced by "human ethical activity."

Knowing as looking amounts to naïve realism.

Empiricism is a very consistent form of naïve realism,
rejecting any knowledge that isn't confirmed by taking
a look.

'Knowing as looking' leads to the model of objectivity
as the *already out there now and immediately
accessible*.

Looking is one way of having unmediated,
uncomplicated, direct access to reality.

Touching is similarly direct and perhaps more primal,
as Piaget showed in his studies of integrating tactile
and visual sensations.

So knowing as taking a look. We saw this slide last week: *that knowing the tree is looking at the tree*. You could say in a certain sense — And we talked about *naïve realism: you could say in a certain sense that naïve realism takes it for granted that there is such a thing as human knowledge, and that it consists in looking!* You could say that empiricism is just naïve realism taking itself seriously!

[murmurs of appreciation]

It's a thoroughly consistent naïve realism! If knowing is taking a look, then let's find out what we really can know by taking a look, and in some sense that's the genius of David Hume. To take absolutely seriously the notion that knowing is taking a look, and then criticising everything that we can't know by taking a look!

Now from the model of knowing as looking, there follows a notion of objectivity; and it's the objectivity of the already-out-there-now.

Any cognitional activity, as he says, that does not sufficiently resemble ocular vision *cannot* be objective; for it lacks what is essential to objectivity! ...
(Cognitional Structure, p. 215).

It is not immediate, but mediate. So I kind of chopped a few sentences out of that passage on the slide, for the sake of emphasis. In other words, *one of the things about the model of knowing as taking a look is that it is by looking, at least for naïve realism, that we really have immediate access to reality.*

Objectivity

Objectivity of the already-out-there-now:

“any cognitional activity that does not sufficiently resemble ocular vision *cannot* be objective; for it lacks what is essential to objectivity.” (Cognitional Structure,” p. 215).

vs. Objectivity of human knowing

is not immediate but mediated.

Now, think about this for a moment. Somebody comes and tells you — I’ll begin this again. When my brother was about, I think, four years old, he had a cousin who was just a month, I think, younger, or a couple of months younger than him. And they were really good buddies; in the playground they did all kinds of things. And then some dispute broke out. I wasn’t there, so I don’t know what it was about. Some dispute broke out. And my nephew (the younger little cousin) goes crying to my grandmother: **[Pat mimics the crying child:]** “Hughie² is not going to be my cousin any more!”

[Class amusement]

² First word or words here are inaudible.

He was just broken-hearted because my brother wasn't going to be his cousin any more. My Grandmother explained the fact of life to him!

[Class laughter]

But my brother was in the position of mediating reality to my nephew, or my cousin. He told something that came in between the reality and the pronouncement. *When you put mediations in between reality and what people are saying, you're putting barriers there. You're lacking objectivity. And the only way to really check whether or not what someone is telling you is objective is to go back to the source, go back to the unmediated source, the immediate source.*

So one of the reasons why people tend to think of looking as objective in a way that they tend not to think of other kinds of cognitional activities as objective, is because there you've got the unfettered, uncomplicated, un-messed up, un-obfuscated, access to reality! Now, as we know, Lonergan is going to say that this very, very, deep-seated, almost impossible to root out notion about reality, about knowing, and about objectivity, comes to us as part of our heritage as evolved animals, and our biologically inherited sense of reality. If you can put your hands on it, if you can eat it, if you can mate with it, then it's real! That's unmediated access to reality. And knowing is taken to give us that unmediated access to reality.

I think, you know, I think that if Lonergan were to rewrite the book, he might say "touching!" He might say that our fundamental sense of reality is really touching! Both Jean Piaget, on the one hand, and John Locke on the other hand, as they develop their approaches to human knowing — Piaget on the development of human knowing, and there's a little bit of a developmental approach to human knowing in Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* — *Touch* is the most basic sensation; and *seeing* develops as sort of the second layer³ in our perception, on our touching.

We talked a little bit about how *Jean Piaget has this account of how children start to put together into integrated patterns by their insights, the sensations that they have by way of touch with the sensations that they have by way of seeing.* John Locke does something similar, as he starts to give us his account of simple ideas. The first thing he talks about is not

³ Pat's word at this point is not clearly audible, and 'layer' is merely the transcriber's guess.

sight, but touch. And then he builds upon that as the second kind of idea that he talks about is those that come to us through visual perception.

It's that sharing, that fellow-traveller, of looking with touching, that if we self-appropriate ourselves, if we self-appropriate how we are putting together our experiences now, as something that we started to do back in early childhood, we'll discover that's why we tend to think of looking as immediate; and that immediacy being the keystone to objectivity. If we have immediate access to reality, then you've got the real reality; you've got real knowledge! But if it's only mediated access to reality, then it isn't really objective!

In the counterposition, what is obvious in knowing (or in ethics) is taken for what knowing obviously is.

What would be excluded as objective knowledge — as merely subjective — on the counterposition of 'knowing-as-looking'?

Thoughts and feelings would be regarded as merely subjective.

Discussion of the objective expression of feelings, i.e. body positions, voice changes. Can we see anger itself?

So if the counterposition is in control, as Lonergan says, then what's most obvious in knowing is taken for what knowing obviously is, namely looking. And again looking ahead to our discussion of ethics later on in the semester, you could say the same sort of thing: What is obvious in Ethics is taken to be what Ethics obviously is. So that some component of knowing, or some component of ethical behaviour, is taken to be the whole.

So if we're in a counterposition, and the counterposition of knowing is taking a look, and looking is the ultimate guarantor of objective knowledge, what sorts of things could you

not know that way? Or to put it another way, what sorts of things would be regarded as merely

subjective because they can't be known because you can't see them, you can't take a look at them? What sorts of things would be excluded, as objective knowledge, on the counterposition that knowing is taking a look? And that the objectivity of knowing consists in the immediacy of contact that we get by looking and touching?

Objectivity

“What is obvious in knowing is, indeed, looking. Compared to looking, insight is obscure, and grasp of the unconditioned is doubly obscure. But empiricism amounts to the assumption that what is obvious in knowing is what knowing obviously is.” (CWL 3, p. 441).

Pat: What would be excluded?

Natalie: Thoughts.

Pat: Thoughts! Very good! So *thoughts* in the sense that we've been talking about, *insights*, would be excluded. *Concepts* are excluded, because you can't see concepts. Now Lonergan mentions: Well, you can develop an epistemology that gives an account of a faculty where the knowledge of concepts is by looking at the concepts. So you can kind of fudge that a little bit. Ultimately it falls apart, but you could probably do that with thoughts. But what else could you not objectively know? Yeah, Natalie?

Natalie: Feelings?

Pat: Feelings?

Natalie: Feelings. But then, can you not because people express it and you identify with, like, in your life, people look angry? And so then, and you can see that? ...

Pat: Okay. Let's dwell with Natalie's example for a moment. People express anger, and you can *see* that. What do you see? *When people express anger, what do you see?* We're going to be Humeans here for a few moments. What do you see, when people express anger? Sean?

Sean: I guess maybe like facial cues? Or maybe their skin gets more reddened.

Pat: Okay. So you see the redness of skin. Jeff?

Jeff: You sort of just — I don't know, you sort of — aggressive postures, different positions! There's a lot of body language —

Pat: Right! So you just see bodily positions. Okay. Let's leave the word 'language' out of here for a minute; let's come back to body language. But you see different positions, different postures, redness of face. What else do you see? What else do you observe?

Shabith: You hear a different tone in their voice.

Pat: Yeah, you hear different sounds. Okay? ... All right! And Hume is going to come along and say: I saw the postures. I saw the redness in the face. I heard that gruff sound in the voice. Show me anger! *Show me the anger!* All I see are those visual things!

So anger is something you can't see! So you know, Natalie was saying — I've forgotten your exact words. But they're expressing anger!

And Hume would say we customarily, we habitually, associate those with this notion of anger! It's not even really an idea for him. It's an habitual — that set of things co-active we habitually call 'anger', but there is nothing that corresponds to the word 'anger'. There's just that bundle of sensations that we associate that with.

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Scientific Theory in General (Conventionalism)

Evolution

Families, Institutions, Societies, and Cultures

History

Ethical Principles, Values

God

“Merely subjective projections onto external reality”

Student question about whether such expressions are being part of anger's essence, i.e. in animals we recognize such responses.

- Discussion of socially constructed *versus* natural constructions of emotions. We mediate visual cues of emotions by means of concepts, but we never perceive emotions as such.

– So we can't know that animals have emotions simply by looking. On the counterposition, that means we cannot know that animals have anger.

Pat: Natalie? A follow up comment?

Natalie: But isn't it just a *natural biological thing*, that's how like different emotions are expressed, like it's not a *societal thing*. Then, isn't that an aspect that is part of the seeing, like the visual representation of it that is partly what it is? Just like a tree like, just like seeing it is like partly what it is, but you can't see like what it is, like it's purpose is what's it's doing in the environment and stuff like that, you know!

Pat: Okay. You're making an interesting distinction. Natalie is making the distinction between what people have come to call "*socially constructive*" versus "*natural*." Now the people who get interested in the socially constructive tend to push the socially constructive back too far. And Hume in fact was doing that. So let's say — I'm not sure if this is what you mean, but say when dogs get angry. Dog anger is not socially constructed. Dogs don't live in societies — they sort of do: they live in our society!!

[Some class amusement]

I'm not sure if wolves get angry, but they get aggressive. *So there's a notion that, well, anger is part of the natural organic response, and so it's really real, because it's in nature.* We could spend a lot of time talking about that. But Hume would say: "No, you're just projecting your notion, your culturally acquired notion of anger, on to something natural. You're saying it comes out — *But all you really see are the dog getting it's back up, the rigidity of its muscles, the snarl of its teeth, and the intensity and almost heatedness of its movements as it's about to attack something. And then we come along and we attribute anger to that. But there's no anger there. All you see is the tenseness of the muscles, the bark and the growling. That's all you see.* Okay.

So let's differentiate here for a moment between *what you quite rightly recognise*, namely that there are — that *some animals definitely do have something that's very closely analogous to human anger*; whether it's exactly analogous is a matter perhaps for another

class. And you recognise that! But if you're going to be very consistent, and claim that knowing is fundamentally looking, it's fundamentally immediate contact, and not some kind of mediation; *what you're doing is you're mediating those visual cues by means of language, by means of concepts; and therefore you are putting something between you and reality, by using language, by using concepts.*

So is that, is your affirmation about that true? I think it is! We'd have to discuss exactly what we mean by 'anger', and how it applies to animals and so on, but there's something — animals do have emotions: I would argue that. But *we can't know that if knowing is limited to the counterposition on knowing as taking a look.* Okay? Right.

Other things that would have to be 'merely subjective' on the counterposition:

– causes (Hume) and relationships.

Question whether attractions are objectively knowable.

Question of whether discrimination among sensations can be objective on the counterposition.

Discussion of how logical positivism attempted to build up perceptions and higher concepts from objective sensations using language and logic.

Question as to whether judgment as having a reflective meaning.

– For the counterposition, judgment has no objective meaning.

Meaning in general would have to be a subjective projection, if knowing were only taking a look.

Other ‘merely subjective’ things: substances, atoms and molecules (Mach), scientific theories in general (conventionalism), evolution — since they cannot be directly observed, similarly for evolution.

Additional ‘merely subjective’ entities include families, institutions, societies, and cultures; history, ethical principles, God.

Pat: There were some hands-up over here? Matt?

Matt: Can you talk about anger then if knowing is not taking a look? Can you talk about anger as a kind of unity, identity, whole? Can you use that?

Pat: Sort of! But let’s stay with the counterposition for a moment, because we’re going to come back to it. Okay?

Matt: Uh, huh.

Pat: What are some other things that would just be subjective, because you wouldn’t be able to know them objectively? They would just be subjective phenomena.

Jonathan: I was going to say causality?

Pat: *Causality!*

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective
Causes (Hume)**

Pat: Okay. What else? ... James?

James: Relationships.

Pat: Relationships. Very good! Because *you can’t see a relationship!* You can see — I think I gave that as an example in a previous class — *You can see the persons or*

the things in their relationships, but you can't see the relationship. So relationship is just something subjectively known, not objective. Causality is one kind of relationship. ... Ian

Ian: Different interactions.

Pat: Yeah; give me a little more of an example of what you have in mind?

Ian: Well, if there are certain like emotional contacts to connecting with the this different — occur so within a counterpoint, then the different subjects that are out there; I guess, the only connection I can see to the words, or it's like an emotion or sort of anything like anger would be some sort of attraction towards something.

Pat: Okay. *So anything being attracted towards something, you can't see that attraction; you can only see the movements.*

Ian: Well okay, like there is some sort of gravity towards like the movements and, you know, how it all sort of interplays and reacts to that.

Pat: Okay. Well, I'm not quite sure if I understand the example that you're using. And the fact that, say, Homer Simpson⁴ is attracted to ice-cream, I couldn't observe that! That would be one example. I'm not sure if that's quite what you had in mind.

Ian: The facts would see to that!

Pat: I'm sorry?

Ian: Well, then, if there's sort of an attraction towards an idea which you sort of feel emotion towards a response. Then, wouldn't you just be constantly attracted towards that emotional response?

Pat: Yeah. *But what we're trying to get at here is whether or not that would be — the statement of being attracted towards that emotional response or towards that object with that emotional response, whether or not that would be something that one could know objectively on this criterion of objectivity.*

Ian: Uh, huh.

Pat: Okay. ... Elizabeth?

⁴ The name used by Pat is unfamiliar and unclear to the transcriber, who substitutes 'Homer Simpson' as hopefully an appropriate alternative name.

Elizabeth: You also — if you wanted to distinguish anything within a visual field, wouldn't it almost be like an expressionless speaking? That you can't interpret because you can't distinguish one colour or pattern from another without insight?

Pat: That's something we learned when Lonergan says that to talk of 'a sensation' is an abstraction.

Elizabeth: Uh, huh!

Pat: And this is actually a problem that both empiricism and positivism get into; because pretty soon they start to discover that the attempt to discriminate within the richness of a visual field involves the use of language, involves the use of concepts; that becomes problematic, because they want to make the bedrock of knowledge be the direct contact by means of *immediate* sensations of reality.

Logical Positivism, a movement at the beginning of the twentieth century tried the *Aufbau*. *Aufbau* was a big word for them: that's the "building up". *They tried to build up the whole account of the world on propositions that had nothing — no content to them except statements about sensations. And then they wanted to build up all knowledge of any kind by a logical connectedness among those. And they ran into various kinds of difficulties in doing that. So anything that's a building up from that would be rooted in something immediately that they had contact with objective. Anything that involved any kind of interpretation is going beyond objective. And going to the subject. ... Greg?*

Greg: Would judgment here have any sort of reflective meaning under this criterion that what I experience is.

Pat: Okay. Judgment has a *reflective meaning*! Did you mean to say that for the counterposition judgment wouldn't have an *objective meaning*?

Greg: ... Yes.

Pat: Okay!

[Some class amusement]

Pat: Yes, that's right! ... Maggie?

Maggie: I was just going to say *meaning in general*. Meaning anything!

Pat: That's right. *Meaning in general*. Very good! In fact, you anticipated one of the things that I was going to — that I have later probably on this slide, or on the next slide. *So anything that involves meaning: meaning is a subjective projection, okay.*

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

So just some of the things that I listed here [on the slide](#). In addition to *causes*, *substances* or what Lonergan calls 'things', intelligible unities. *So there are no perduring things. There are just fleeting impressions, and we make a subjective imputation of something that we can't see!*

Atoms and molecules! Ernst Mach⁵ talked about that. *Mach was quite convinced that they weren't real. And the basic reason why he thought they weren't real was that they were not directly observable.*

⁵ **Ernst Mach** (1838–1916) was an Austrian physicist and philosopher, noted for his contributions to physics such as the Mach number and the study of shock waves. As a philosopher of science, he was a major influence on logical positivism, American pragmatism and through his criticism of Newton, a forerunner of Einstein's relativity. Mach thus became well known for his philosophy developed in close interplay with his science. He defended a type of phenomenalism recognizing only sensations as real. This position seemed incompatible with the view of atoms and molecules as external, mind-independent things. He famously declared, after an 1897 lecture by Ludwig Boltzmann at the Imperial Academy of Science in Vienna: "I don't believe that atoms exist!" From about 1908 to 1911 Mach's reluctance to acknowledge the reality of atoms was criticized by Max Planck as being incompatible with physics. Einstein's 1905 demonstration that the statistical fluctuations of atoms allowed measurement of their existence without direct individuated sensory evidence marked a turning point in the acceptance of atomic theory.

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Whenever you hear the word ‘direct’, that should be a trigger for you, that: “Hmm, I wonder if ...” That’s never the smoking gun, but it is certainly a: “I wonder if what’s behind that is a counterposition about knowing as taking a look, or knowing as touching!” And for Mach you couldn’t directly observe atoms and molecules. *You had to infer their existence. That was a mediation that wasn’t the direct objectivity. So it was a subjective thing; very useful, but subjective nonetheless!*

And this, taken to the next step, is that *scientific theory in general* lacks objectivity, because scientific theory is always an addition over and above the immediacy of sense data. And one branch of philosophy, particularly the philosophy of science, that holds that view is called ‘conventionalism’.

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Scientific Theory in General (Conventionalism)

Conventionalism holds that our scientific concepts, in fact Euclidean Geometry, is just a conventional notion, because you can't directly observe Euclidean principles and rules, and so on.

I mentioned this before: *Evolution* is a subjective projection. You can get into a lot of trouble telling people who are committed to evolution, that it's just a subjective projection. So be careful who you say these things to!

[Some amusement in class]

But nevertheless, evolution would, on the account of knowing as taking a look, be merely subjective and not objective, because you can't actually directly observe it.

Families, institutions, societies, and cultures. You can see the shapes of individual bodies, you can see motions back and forth, you can hear what people say, but you can't see families, you can't see institutions, you can't see societies, you can't see cultures!

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Scientific Theory in General (Conventionalism)

Evolution

Families, Institutions, Societies, and Cultures

And one of the origins of logical positivism was its revulsion against the idealism in the nineteenth century in its notion of *Geist*, or spirit — the spirit of a people — to characterise a culture as though it were some kind of reality. That was one of the things they really wanted to attack, because of the way that some of that thought went and turned into

ideology! It led to violence: that *Geists* or spirits of people had destiny! They had destinies to become — to rule and to conquer, and so on. And so **logical positivists** wanted — one of their biggest attacks of this *Aufbau* from the data, the positivistic data of sensation, one of their big points of attack was to undermine this notion of *Geist* of the culture. Culture is just a subjective notion, there is no objectivity to it! History is merely subjective. It's just — You can't see history happen. You can see the data about historical events, about historical movements. But to start talking about movements, to start talking about history as though it were something, is to just project a subjective impression upon it.

Ethical principles and values cannot have any objectivity, because you cannot see them.

God cannot be something one knows objectively. It's merely a subjective impression. So on the counterposition of knowing being one of the components of what Lonergan calls the cognitional structure, and *particularly if that component is knowing as taking a look, all of these ideas, or what I would say, realities, are merely subjective projections.*

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Scientific Theory in General (Conventionalism)

Evolution

Families, Institutions, Societies, and Cultures

History

Ethical Principles, Values

God

Student question about how the time frame for ‘taking a look’ is determined. When is an ‘instant’ over, and what about continuity of perceptions?

- The problem of what counts as a perception is indeed debatable; there is the question of continuity versus the instant. For some, the entire observable duration is allowable; but when the observer falls asleep there is a problem of discontinuous perception. Although the observer reorients his new perceptions to remembered perceptions automatically, there is still an interruption.

Pat: Jeff, did you have a question?

Jeff: Yeah. I do. I understand that there’s a lot more other things that I could reduce this question to, but just kind of for the sake of this argument, *are we putting a temporal-like constraint on taking a look?* That for the example of the butterfly, you know, if you watch it from the day it was born, as it’s alive, and through its life until it died, and you sat there looking, and somehow you didn’t sleep, would that be sufficient, or still not?

Pat: You actually get into a problem: people who start to work on empiricism, they run into a problem: it’s “what do you count as a perception?” And some of them are willing to count the continuity of perception, as long as it’s still in your visual field: you will count that as a visual perception. Others will say no, it’s only the instant. But then you have the problem that you don’t actually experience an instance. You experience at least

in millisecond spans. So there's something — There's quite a bit of debate within empiricism about exactly that question!

So for some empiricists, they would say that as long as you can see the whole duration, then that counts as objectively knowing in taking a look. The difficulty is: *every human being falls asleep*. So you really can't know anything as objectively real that lasts for more than, well, twenty-four hours. I once stayed up for thirty-six hours, doing all-nighters and stuff! Sorry, actually I was awake for three days without stop with an asthma attack once. That's about it!

[Broad class laughter]

And I want to tell you: I wasn't being very objective after thirty-eight hours!!

[Even wider class laughter]

But on that account sooner or later, there's a discontinuity in the perception

[Pat refers back to the slide]

and what in fact we do *Lonergan of course would say is when we wake up we use our inquiry, our insights and our reflections and our judgments to put together our immediate present experience with the no longer immediate experiences that we remember!* And everybody does that.

And as long as you're not trying to say how is it that you know that that's really so, people do it fine! You know, it's a little bit like hitting a baseball! You can — Some people —

[Subdue amusement]

Some people can hit a baseball, no problem. But if you start asking, well, how can you do that? You know, they start thinking about the ball as it was in the catcher's mitt, and —

Most people are able to exercise, to perform these activities, as Lonergan says, but most people don't have a second order reduplication knowledge of what they're doing.

And so the tendency is to say: if somebody asks, “well, how do you know how to do that?” and they say: “Well, I saw it! I saw him! That’s how I know how it happens!”

You go into a courtroom procedure. *Hearsay is not admissible as evidence. That’s mediated knowledge. If you were there and you saw it happen, then that’s admissible knowledge. And there are some very good reasons for that. As we’ll see, that in fact is part of objectivity! It’s just not the whole of objectivity!* So if you see the butterfly go from the egg, through the caterpillar, through the pupa [chrysalis] stage and hatch out,⁶ and you never close your eyes and you’re conscious the whole time, you’re blind!!

[Class laughter]

That would be objective reality, at least for some empiricists. But the problem is, I don’t think anybody ever did that! You could run a camera. And you could start like to watch — But then you have the problem of you’re going to have to either skip parts of the play-back, or you’re going to fall asleep, and then you have to patch together the part of the play-back you saw yesterday and the part that you’ve seen today —

[Class amusement]

The problem just never goes away! And it never will go away as long as knowing is said to be taking a look.

⁶ Butterflies go through a life cycle. There are four stages. The first stage is *the eggs*. This is where a female butterfly lays eggs. She lays them on a leaf. The second stage is *the caterpillar*. This is where the eggs hatch. It takes about five days for the eggs to hatch. A caterpillar then comes out. At this stage, the caterpillar eats all the time. It also grows really fast. Once it is all the way grown, the third stage starts. This stage is *the chrysalis*. The caterpillar makes a chrysalis. The caterpillar is inside the chrysalis. Inside the chrysalis, it starts to change. It soon changes into a butterfly. Once the caterpillar has changed into a *butterfly*, the fourth stage starts. This is also that last stage in the life cycle. The butterfly comes out of the chrysalis. It can now learn to fly. It can also find a mate. When it finds a mate, it lays eggs. Then the lifecycle process starts all over again.

Student question whether there is objectivity in language, or it is a means of expressing what we know subjectively?

- Different philosophers have different views. Logical positivism defined meaningful language as that which could be reconstructed from sense sensations.

Pat: Maggie?

Maggie: In this framework, with respect to language, is it just a means of expressing what we know subjectively — Like, is there any objectivity in it?

Pat: Ahm, it does depend on which philosopher you're talking about. So, as I said, the logical empiricists, who were the persons who really took this to its extreme limit, the Humeans, the logical positivists: they fudged things a little bit because they said there are two kinds of meaningful statements; there are statements that are tied to sense perceptions, and then there are logical statements. And as long as you could build up something by logical deduction from empirical statements, that counted to them. It's completely inconsistent, because it's mediation! But there was a sense that logic gave you a firm foothold, and that sensation gave you a firm foothold. So as long as you could reconstruct language as a logical construction from nothing but sense data, then language could count! But the minute you start using language, you couldn't do that with — that was — There was actually a criterion of meaningfulness, and anything you couldn't reconstruct that way was meaningless! Okay?

So I think it was you who a little bit earlier had said anything meaningful — meaningful in anything but the narrowest sense of logically constructed from statements about sensation, that's just subjective! Okay? All right!

**What Cannot be Known Thusly,
Must be merely Subjective**

Causes (Hume)

Substances (i.e., things = intelligible unities) (Hume)

Atoms and molecules (Mach)

Scientific Theory in General (Conventionalism)

Evolution

Families, Institutions, Societies, and Cultures

History

Ethical Principles, Values

God

“Merely subjective projections onto external reality”

**Whatever cannot be known by sense contact is
regarded as a merely subjective projection on
external reality.**

So in other words, *anything that cannot be known directly by looking or by sense contact is going to be a [Pat refers to the slide] “merely subjective projection onto external reality.”* I suspect that you may have heard somebody say something like that. *Notice the word ‘external’; so that criterion of the biological patterning of experience, and the strong hold that it has over us is exerting its influence on you. What is external reality is what I know by the extroversion of seeing and touching, and the internal in the sense that we talked about last week, the internality of my activities of understanding and judging, my experiences of my understanding and conceiving and judging: that’s all just subjective, and I’m*

projecting it on to external reality, according to the counterposition, which Lonergan is not going to hold to.

But Lonergan is going to argue that this is a very pervasive dialectical troubling of the water in the history of philosophy.

Student question about a blind person's ability to know objectively.

- Discussion of sight and other paradigms of knowing in western philosophy (cf. Shubert Ogden).

Pat: Natalie?

Natalie: So according to the counterposition, would they say that a blind person doesn't know — only knows things subjectively?

Pat: There's ways of getting around it. So remember that *touch is still an immediate contact with reality. Lonergan is saying this about knowing as taking a look, because if you start to read philosophy, sight in western philosophy takes a very strong leading role as the paradigmatic instance of knowing.* There's a very good book, and I've forgotten the name of it. The author is Shubert Ogden. And he makes a strong argument that looking becomes predominant in the West because of the polemic influence on western culture. But that if you step outside of the cultures that were influenced by Ancient Greece, that *hearing is the predominating sensation.*

So it sort of doesn't matter whether it's touch, or sight, or hearing, from Lonergan's point of view. Now, Ogden makes a very good point. He's mainly trying to help us understand the difference between the Hellenic culture and the Hebraic culture that the Bible comes out of. And it doesn't really matter whether somebody is going to say looking is the predominant access to reality, or touching is, or hearing is, or something else is! *Lonergan's point is that: well, they're all parts of objectivity, just not the whole of objectivity!* And the

tendency is to want one or the other of those, because of this criterion of immediacy that's rooted in the biological patterning of experience. Okay?

Question about Lonergan's references to 'illumination'
and other ways in which he uses metaphors of light.

- Discussion of illumination and insight, and how the latter always presupposes a visible image upon which understanding supervenes.

Jonathan: Actually I have a quick question about Lonergan's language. Occasionally he will use the language of illumination, but he will use it at the level of intelligence, not the level of experience; whereas in other places you have this sort of causal relationship between sort of light making sight possible, on that sort of thought or metaphor of knowing. If you could you just say a little bit about how it is that you can't — instead of using light to refer to the experiential level, he uses light to refer to the intellectual level?

Pat: Okay. Ahm, I might want to look carefully at the passages that you have in mind ... In his articles on Aquinas's Trinitarian Theory,⁷ he is tracing a variety of things going on in Aquinas, where *the notion of intelligence as illumination, the intellectual light, is a phrase that occurs over and over again in Aquinas. And Lonergan is giving his own account of what he thinks Aquinas means by that.* ... There's a very long tradition of association of intellect and light. It isn't even strictly western. There's a long — Some of the symbols of the Divine are in light and intellect, in the interplay in non-western religions as well as western. So there is that association.

I think the reason for that association is that human insight always presupposes an image. And until you have the image, you don't have the insight. The content of the insight and the insight itself are never reducible to the image. But you need the images: the

⁷ Pat is doubtless referring to Lonergan's "Verbum Articles": Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

condition for the possibility of the emergence of the insight! And we all have the experience of having groped around in the dark, putting on the light and then recognising. And whenever you hear somebody use the word ‘recognise’, it almost always means having an insight, having understanding! So when you turn the lights on, the images are suddenly visual, they’re visible. And *because the images are visible, the understanding can supervene upon them, and the understanding can come instantaneously upon the appearance of the images.* So I think there’s a tendency for people to say: “Ah, the light went on! Right, I got the point!” So that association of intelligence and light, I think, comes from that! It would be hard to prove that because you would have to go back thousands of years to find the first person who introduces that, and why it caught on. But I think that is why that association is there! But when Lonergan is using ‘illumination’, he almost always has Aquinas specifically in mind, and Aquinas’s use of illumination for his purposes [last word unclear]. Okay? Okay!

Any reality that is constituted by meaning, is excluded from any model of objectivity that is modeled on sensations (on knowing as ‘taking a look’).

This is one reason why Lonergan’s account is much more inclusive — it is open to realities that are constituted by meaning.

**What Cannot be Known Thusly
Must be Merely Subjective**

Anything where meaning is constitutive of its reality is excluded if knowing and objectivity are modelled on taking a look — “the-already-out-there-now” model of objectivity and reality.

So this is what Maggie said a moment ago: that *anything where meaning is constitutive of its reality is going to be excluded from knowing and objectivity if knowing and objectivity are modelled on taking a look* — **“the-already-out-there-now”** model of objectivity and of reality (CWL 3, pp. 276-277, 437-440; and see Index under ‘real’).

So whenever “meaning is constitutive” — So think back on some of those things that I had on the list a moment ago [slide on p. 37 above], Family, Institution, Culture, *they are realities that are constituted by meaning*. But meaning is not something you can take a look at, it’s not something you can touch, and it’s not something you can hear. You can hear a meaning in what people say, and you can recognize the meaning in what you see them doing; and in intimacy there are meaningfulnesses in touch, but they’re not reducible to those sensations.

And so the tendency is, in knowing as taking a look to regard anything where meaning is constitutive as merely subjective, and not as objective or real. Now, this is one of the reasons why Lonergan’s approach to objectivity in metaphysics is so important. It is much more inclusive; that meaning at least *can be* constitutive of reality; whereas on the model of knowing as taking a look and objectivity as immediate contact, meaning is always going to be excluded as merely subjective, and not constitutive of reality but simply a projection on our part. We’ll hopefully have a chance to look at what some of the consequences of that are as the semester rolls along.

**Breaking the duality in knowing is necessary to
accept (appropriate) that understanding correctly is
indeed knowing reality.**

**Being is known in understanding correctly and
judging thereupon.**

So Lonergan says: **“Unless one breaks the duality in one’s knowing”** — this is all the way back in the “Introduction” — **“Unless one breaks the duality in one’s knowing,”**

the duality between *the animal criterion of knowing and the biological extroversion*, and *human knowing as the structured dynamic activity, the dynamic structure*, **“one doubts that understanding correctly is knowing.”** (*CWL 3*, p. 22).

Cognitional Structure Objective

Knows Reality

“Unless one breaks the duality in one’s knowing, one doubts that understanding correctly is knowing.” (*CWL 3*, p. 22).

“Being is known in judgment. It is in judgement that we affirm or deny, and until we are ready to affirm or deny, we do not yet know whether or not any X happens to be” (*CWL 3*, p. 377, emphasis added).

“It follows that the notion of being goes beyond the merely thought, for we ask whether or not the merely thought exists.”
(*CWL 3*, p. 378).

And it’s now that we begin to see why he makes such a big deal of the fact that *understanding correctly is knowing*. Because if knowing means cognition of the real, and the real is what you know only objectively only by immediate contact with it, then understanding, correct or not, cannot get you to the promised land.

Now I want to emphasize a couple of things! This comes up over and over again: Lonergan is going to say that to know — that *reality is what we know in judging, and in understanding correctly*. Remember *understanding correctly gives us the virtually unconditioned of an invulnerable insight which is the ground for the judgment of the correctness of the insight*. So there’s not exactly an identity between *understanding correctly*

and *judging*, but there's a close affiliation between understanding correctly and judging!
That our knowledge of reality comes in something that is not immediate, but is mediated.

And I just added the last sentence there:

“It follows that the notion of being goes beyond the merely thought, for we ask whether or not the merely thought exists.” (CWL 3, p. 378).

When we're merely thinking something, we're not yet judging. *Our knowledge of judging is to go beyond the mediation of thought. It's a double mediation: we mediate our experiences with our thinking, and we mediate our thinking with our judging; and Lonergan's comment is that it's by going beyond mere thinking towards unconditional judgment that we really have knowledge of reality!*

Knowing-as-Looking
[looking at a tree]

Ah, I was looking for the book by Philip McShane where I got this idea from. I thought he actually had this diagram. So I must have been painting the diagram in my mind when I was reading him, but I couldn't figure which [one of his books](#) it was. But this is the diagram we saw a moment ago [\[back on p. 16\]](#). *Knowing is looking: so objectivity is that immediate contact between the eyes and the tree; as opposed to self-transcendence as objectivity!*

Knowing-as-Looking
vs.
Self-Transcendence

Now as depicted on the slide here, it looks like it's merely immanent activities. That's part of what we talked about last time; that if we're performing those activities and they are inside our brain, then they don't have contact to the already-out-there-now! But the point of our discussion last week was that that upward arrow, that self-transcendence, which

obviously is not taking place inside of our brains; it's actually not taking place anywhere! Our cognitional activities are not in space, although they are in time, and in a sense they transcend time. But it's by going through the series of self-transcending questions and responding authentically to them that we come to knowledge of reality, not as immediately seen, but as truly affirmed.

'Knowing-as-looking' vs. Self-Transcendence.

**Objectivity is the result of authentic subjectivity
(*Method in Theology*) that follows the standards of
the dynamism of our self-correcting structure, of
our self-transcendence.**

Objectivity and Subjectivity

**“Objectivity is the fruit of authentic
subjectivity.”**

(Method in Theology, p. 292).

And so Lonergan has this wonderful sound-bite: **“Objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.”** (MiT, p. 292).

Authentic subjectivity means following the standard of the self-correcting process of knowing, not affirming as true, as real, as objective, anything where you still have further pertinent questions.

Authenticity is the winning back of the spontaneity of our dynamic structure.

Self-appropriation is the taking possession of the dynamism of our dynamic structure as what counts as what we really are! Self-appropriation, remember we said, is making oneself one's own! And the self that we are making our own is our self-

transcendence, through question and answer, and not settling for anything less than the answers that truly answer the questions.

Structured Objectivity

“Against the naïve realist of the type in question he maintains that the essence of the objectivity of human knowing does not stand revealed in seeing or in any other single cognitional operation.

“His reason is simple: first, human knowing is not some single operation but a structure of several operations; secondly, the objectivity of human knowing is not some single property but a combination of distinct properties that reside severally in distinct operations.” (*CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,”* p. 217).

Series of student questions:

Question about why we trust the desire to know.

- Many people in fact don’t trust it as the legitimate criterion for knowledge of reality.**

- Inquiry begins as spontaneous and innocent, until something prompts us to stop trusting it.

- Self-appropriation consists in winning back this initial state. The structure of knowing and the unrestrictedness of knowing together ground its ability to produce objective knowledge.

- Crucial questions are not about others, but about oneself: Do *I* perform the structured cognitional activities? Do *I* have an unrestricted desire giving rise to my inquiries?

- The answers to these two questions are the basis for answering, why should we trust that desire.

- Discussion of the element of *desire* in knowing and its unique form of manifestation.

- We “know” this desire by letting it be, giving it free rein, by letting

rational consciousness freely
pursue its inquiry.

– The unrestrictedness of desire is the
precondition for arriving at the
virtually unconditioned.

Okay. Let me pause there, because that's just the background, so that we can now go on to what was left out, namely this business about the tripartite structure of objectivity. Questions about what we've been going over? ...

I would say that Lonergan's account of being and of objectivity, are the most important contributions of his philosophy to the history of philosophy; and many of the other things that are important about his thinking rest upon the powerfulness of those key breakthroughs!

Pat: Questions about what we've been going over? Greg:

Greg: This may be something that you are going to get to later on; in which case I'll postpone the question; but I have a question about the self as subject versus the subject as object.

Pat: We are going to come back to that, so we'll come back to it in a minute. ... Tim?

Tim: Just a question about the unrestricted desire, and that if objectivity comes from a judgment with conditions, and you reach the virtually unconditioned through a concrete judgment of fact with this invulnerable insight: The question is how do we trust the desire? Like how does — the desire is ultimately absurd in some ways. What's the — Is it a matter of faith that this desire that we can affirm in ourselves is to be believed?

Pat: Ahm, let me — That's a good question, that's a really good question! And part of the answer is obviously a lot of people don't trust them! And the counterposition that Lonergan has just been talking about is an account of people who don't trust that as the legitimate criterion for knowledge of reality. So it's almost more of a question why no nobody trusts than why do they!

There's a kind of a spontaneous, innocent, child-like dimension that we, because this is part of our nature to inquire and to have insights and to have judgments that respond to our inquiries, we just do it, we just perform it! Until for some reason or another, we stop trusting! Sometimes that has to do with childhood traumas or traumas in later life. But it can also be just being countered with the problem of giving an account of why you should trust that. And it's not particularly easy to give a good account of why we should trust it!

So *self-appropriation is really the winning back of the spontaneous trust in ourselves as self-correcting conscious beings, by explicitly understanding what it is that we are doing, and why that is knowing! And Lonergan's answer, at least to why we should trust it, is this combination of the self-appropriated, or let's say the self-affirmed, structure of knowing and the affirmation of the desire to know as really unrestricted!* That human beings — let's just begin with yourself — never mind the rest of the people in the room —

The crucial thing is to ask yourself "Do I in fact perform these activities in the structured fashion as Lonergan describes them? And do I in fact have an unrestricted desire to know?" Those are the two crucial questions! And the answers to — The answers of 'Yes!' to both of those are the seeds of the answer to why should we trust doing that?

So, I'm not going to repeat the structure of knowing; but I think it's important, in the light of your question — but I think it can't be repeated too many times — that our desire to know has no limits to it. There isn't anything that we don't desire to know.

'Desire' is the tricky word in this. 'Desire' means a variety of things. As Lonergan says — Okay. So this is in Chapter Twelve, "**The Notion of Being**", and it's page 372: "**By the desire to know is meant the dynamic orientation manifested in questions for intelligence and for reflection.**" (CWL 3, p. 372, emphasis added). There are lots of different desires. The desire he is talking about is a desire that is "**manifested in questions for intelligence and for reflection.**" Your desire for food is manifested by growls in your stomach. Your desire for something to drink is manifested by the dryness in your mouth. Your desire for sleep is manifested by the achiness in your muscles; and so on and so forth. *Desires are manifested! They are phenomena that show forth, that are the "showing forths" of what lies behind them, namely the desire!*

This desire that Lonergan is talking about is the desire that is shown forth by our "questions for intelligence and reflection." And then, interestingly he continues — and

this is the part on page 373 that I was meaning to refer to initially: **“Because it differs radically from other desire, this desire has been named pure.”** So he’s not saying it’s any⁸ desire.

And maybe ‘pure’ is not the best word for it, but he gives his reasons why he calls it ‘pure’. **“It is to be known, not by the misleading analogy of other desire.”** (CWL 3, p. 373). So it’s not like sexual desire, it’s not like the desire for food, it’s not like desire for rest, it’s not like desire for affirmation. *It’s a different desire. Just as you can’t adequately understand the act of understanding on the analogy of looking, so also you can’t properly characterise the desire that Lonergan is talking about by means of analogising it to something else.* We say “I have a hunger for knowledge!”, but that’s an imperfect metaphor. *What Lonergan is asking us to do is to know this desire by what are its own proper and specific manifestations, those questions.* So how do we know this desire? We don’t know it by analogies with other, perhaps more familiar, desires.

This desire “is to be known, not by the misleading analogy of other desire, but by giving free rein to intelligent and rational consciousness.” (CWL 3, p. 373, emphases added).

We know this desire by giving free rein to intelligent and rational consciousness; we know this desire by letting it be, and not getting in its way!

So the desire that he’s talking about is the one that is manifest in questions! So you say to somebody: “Well, do you have an unrestricted desire to know?” And I would venture that nine out of ten people you ask that question to — it probably goes up higher if they haven’t had a class in Lonergan’s philosophy — would say “No! I hate physics! I hate maths!” —

[Growing class amusement]

“— I hate sociology! I hate history! I hate Spanish, you know! I don’t desire to know everything about any of those subjects!!

So Lonergan’s response to that is to say: “Yeh, yeah, yeh! But you’re using the word ‘desire’ in a different sense! You’re using the word ‘desire’ in a sense like: “Do you like it?”

⁸ Pat’s word here is unclear, and ‘any’ is merely a surmise.

Do you desire it? Is it fun? Is it desirable in the sense of something that you desire to have because it gives you pleasure? Do you desire it in the sense that you are committing yourself to pursue it? But *Lonergan is not talking about a desire that's manifest through our decisions to pursue; Lonergan is talking about a desire that's manifest in the questions that precede decisions!*

So when somebody says, “No, I don't desire to know everything about everything, Lonergan's response to that would be: *“Well, I believe you that you don't care to do that, or that you are not willing to spend the rest of your life asking everything about everything; but in fact you know that you haven't willed that, because of this more fundamental desire! You know that you haven't committed yourself to will everything about everything because you know that you don't know everything about everything. And you know that you don't know everything about everything because of the unlimitedness of your questions. So it's desire in this sense.*

Now, if the desire is truly unrestricted, and if knowing occurs — or if human beings execute and perform those activities as they do, the culmination of each cycle is the pronouncement: “It is so!” on the basis of a virtually unconditioned, that I know because I was able to ask and answer every further pertinent question. If my desire to know weren't unrestricted, there would be no way I could have a virtually unconditioned. So what we come then is by the reduplication, we've appropriated why we should trust in what we did trust in a very spontaneous way as children. Okay? ... There's probably a million other questions you might want to ask about that, but that would be the outline, the skeleton, at least, of Lonergan's answer! Okay? Good question! Okay? Other questions about objectivity in general?

Structured Objectivity: the Tripartite Structure of Cognition.

**Human knowing is a structure of several operations,
not a single one, and so objectivity is a combination of
distinct properties residing in several operations.**

Three-fold Objectivity consists in **experiential objectivity, normative objectivity, and absolute objectivity**. (The fourth objectivity, ‘principle objectivity,’ combines and goes beyond these three).

But not in a simplistic sense — *not* that three levels of acts automatically implies three kinds of objectivity.

Okay. So now we’re going to talk about Structured Objectivity. As he says — This slide is actually from “Cognitional Structure.” I tried to make sure that I was always putting in “Cognitional Structure” when necessary on the slides. Generally speaking, the page numbers on the slides, if they are not modified always refer to *Insight*. This one is actually from “Cognitional Structure.”

Structured Objectivity

“Against the naïve realist of the type in question he maintains that the essence of the objectivity of human knowing does not stand revealed in seeing or in any other single cognitional operation.

“His reason is simple: first, human knowing is not some single operation but a structure of several operations; secondly, the objectivity of human knowing is not some single property but a combination of distinct properties that reside severally in distinct operations.” (CWL 4, *Collection*, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 217, emphases added).

Against the naïve realist, *the critical realist*

maintains that the essence of the objectivity of human knowing does not stand revealed in seeing or in any other single cognitional operation. (CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 217).

And the **“reason is simple.”** And the knowing is not a **“single operation but a structure.”**

Therefore the **“objectivity of human knowing is not some single property but a combination of distinct properties that reside severally in distinct operations.”** (CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 217, emphases added).

And in “Cognitional Structure” itself, he just basically breezes over that. But in chapter thirteen of *Insight*, **“The Notion of Objectivity”**, we get it in greater detail.

Structured Objectivity

“Objectivity in act, because it resides not in a single operation but in as structured manifold of operations, is not some single property of human knowing but a compound of quite different properties. *Empiricists* have tried to find the ground of objectivity in experience, *rationalists* have tried to place it in necessity, *idealists* have had recourse to coherence. All are partly right and partly wrong, right in their affirmation, but mistaken in their exclusion.” (CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 212, emphases added).

And his remark is that *various philosophers give accounts of objectivity, and they're right in the part, but they're wrong in taking that part as the whole.*

And so *the three-fold objectivity is experiential objectivity, normative objectivity, and absolute objectivity.*

Three-fold Objectivity

Experiential Objectivity

Normative Objectivity

Absolute Objectivity

The three-fold objectivity is *experiential, normative, and absolute objectivity.* Let me dwell for a moment on this, and **add** a caution. It would seem the most simple and obvious thing is that

there is experiential objectivity because the first level of human knowing is experiencing;

there is normative objectivity because the second level of human knowing is understanding, the level of intelligence;

and that the third level of objectivity is absolute objectivity because the third level of human cognitional structure is grasping the unconditioned and making the judgments.

It might seem that way, but it doesn't quite work that way! And plenty of people fall into the trap of thinking experiential, normative, and absolute, because experiencing, understanding and judging. *And it's not quite that way! To make matters worse, there is actually a fourfold account of objectivity, principal objectivity.*

Four-fold Objectivity

Experiential Objectivity

Normative Objectivity

Absolute Objectivity

Principal Objectivity

Experiential Objectivity is mediated givenness.

The pragmatist Wilfrid Sellars, in “*The Myth of the Given*” critiques the idea that knowing is based on givenness — which seems to contradict Lonergan’s assertion of experiential objectivity — but upon closer reading, Sellars is making the same point as Lonergan.

Mediated and Immediate Givenness.

Cognitional activities and their relationship to reality are:

- Not sense experiences, but the intention of being provides our *immediate* relation to being.
- Our relation to being is only *mediate* in the data of sense and of consciousness (since the intention of being makes use of such data).

Hence, even though objectivity does not consist solely in the givenness of experience alone, yet some portion of objectivity does involve the experiential givenness of data.

So we're going to tease these out — We're going to tease them out, not in the order that Lonergan presents them; he starts with principal, and then he does the absolute, then the normative, and then the experiential. We're going to go the other way round, because *I think it is helpful to see what he is doing, especially with absolute and principal objectivity by starting with experiential objectivity.*

Experiential Objectivity

Mediated Givenness:

“Again, it is not true that it is from sense that our cognitional activities derive their immediate relationship to real objects; that relationship is immediate in the intention of being; it is mediate in the data of sense and in the data of consciousness inasmuch as the intention of being makes use of data in promoting cognitional process to knowledge of being.” (*CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,”* p. 218).

“In fully human knowing experience supplies no more than materials for questions.” (*CWL 3, p. 277*).

Experiential objectivity — I think I mentioned this briefly last week — *is mediated givenness!* ...

“The third partial aspect of —” This starts on page 405 bottom, and goes over to p. 406: **“The third partial aspect of objectivity is the experiential.”** He has it in a different order there. **“It is the given as given.”** (*CWL 3, pp. 405-406*). *The tricky thing is that the given is never just given. It's always just mediated given.* And there's been quite a bit of

discussion — There was quite a bit of discussion in the second half of the twentieth century about what a great American philosopher named Wilfrid Sellars⁹ called “The Myth of the Given.” And there’s a — I’ve forgotten the name of the article. I think it’s called *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*.¹⁰ I can’t remember the exact title of the article. It’s a very, very, long piece. And he starts out with this kind of *torpedo into the bow of lots of things, about the myth of the given. But if you read it very carefully, he is saying the same thing as Lonergan*. He’s saying that people — *He actually says very explicitly, early on in the article, that “I’m not saying there isn’t such a thing as the givenness of experience.” What he says “the myth of the given,” has to do with is the framework in which “the given” is used. And the framework in which the given is used is very much the framework that Lonergan calls ‘knowing as taking a look.’ So what Sellars does, in his own way, is to give a criticism of the tendency to say that all our knowing is based on givenness. And Sellars is perfectly willing to admit that there’s a mediated givenness, but to deny that givenness is a standard for objectivity in knowledge.*

And Sellars doesn’t come down in the same place as Lonergan does, ultimately, for a variety of reasons. He stands within the pragmatist tradition in American philosophy; and there are some very powerful parallels between Lonergan and pragmatism, and there are also a couple of fairly significant differences. But it seems like Lonergan is naïve, from the point of view of Sellars, when he says that the experiential notion of objectivity has to do with the given as given, because there never is a given that’s just purely given! It’s always mediated givenness! Well, Lonergan was aware of that!

⁹ Wilfrid Sellars (1912–1989) was a systematic, original, and profound philosopher. Broadly educated in philosophy, the influences on his work range from logical positivism to German Idealism and phenomenology. He was said to have “revolutionized both the content and the method of philosophy in the United States.” His effort in philosophy was “to formulate a scientifically oriented, naturalistic realism which would ‘save the appearances.’” Sellars is regarded as a prominent developer of critical realism.

¹⁰ Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

And these [referring back to the “Experiential Objectivity” slide] are just a couple of remarks, one pulled from “Cognitional Structure,” one pulled from earlier on in *Insight*. It shows what Lonergan’s attitude about the givenness of experience is!

It is not true that it is from sense that our cognitional activities derive their immediate relationship to real objects; that relationship is immediate in the intention of being. (CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 218, emphases added).

So any immediate contact, quote-unquote ‘contact,’ that we have with reality, with being, is in the unrestricted desire to know! ‘Contact’ is already a very, very, metaphorical, or an inadequate metaphor. So if by your unrestricted desire, your unrestricted wondering and questioning, you have an immediate relationship to being, it’s very weird! It’s not like, you know, standing up against the wall! (Pat demonstrates by leaning against the wall). It can feel nice and comfortable there. The unrestricted desire to know is kind of a spooky, mushy way to have any kind of immediate relationship with being.

But the relationship with reality

“is mediate in the data of sense and in the data of consciousness inasmuch as *the intention of being makes use of data in promoting cognitional process to knowledge of being.*” (CWL 4, Collection, “Cognitional Structure,” p. 218, emphasis added).

So the data of sense and the data of consciousness are mediated to us by the way in which our unrestricted desire to know nominates how we’re going to be selectively attentive to sense experiences. Now, in being selectively attentive — I think I mentioned this example from C. P. Snow’s book *The Search*¹¹ last semester — You could be going along in looking at data from an experiment, and not noticing elements of the data, until *your training and your inquiry direct you to a heightened form of attention to those data*. But if they are not in

¹¹ C. P. Snow, *The Search*, (Cornwall: House of Stratus), 2000.

some sense given, you, try as you might, you're not going to be even mediatedly aware of them. *So there is some part of our objectivity that depends upon the givenness of data of sense and data of consciousness.* If you've never had an insight, you can't understand what an insight is! If you've never had a question, you can't understand what a question is. *There has to be some experience that in fact has been yours at some point in time, or there is no basis for an objective statement that I've had an insight.* **“In fully human knowing, experience supplies no more than materials for questions”** (CWL 3, p. 277), *which is to say, it's mediated.* Okay?

But nevertheless, it's part of our knowing; if the conditions are not given, then the conditions for our grasp of the virtually unconditioned cannot be fulfilled! *But all that givenness does, is give us the possibility of fulfilling the conditions for making our grasp of the virtually unconditioned. It doesn't give us the immediate contact with reality. In and of itself, it's not the whole of objectivity; it's a component of objectivity!*

**Question about the constitution of reality versus
constitution of experience.**

– The present issue is how *objectivity* is
constituted, not *reality*.
Discussion of the role of the given
in the objectivity of our knowing;
and how our experience of objects
is *not* immediate.

Pat: Greg?

Greg: So, is he clarifying more the definition of what would constitute reality, or what would constitute experience? In other words, is there some sense in which he is still saying: sure, my experience of data, cognitional or experiential, is immediate, but that is only a partial constitution of reality?

Pat: *Well, remember we're not talking about reality right now! We'll talk about that in chapter fourteen ["The Method of Metaphysics" (CWL 3, pp. 410-455)], and chapter fifteen ["The Elements of Metaphysics" (CWL 3, pp. 456-511)], and chapter sixteen ["Metaphysics as Science" (CWL 3, pp. 512-552)]. We're not talking about reality, we're talking about objectivity! What he's giving is an account of the parts of objectivity. We're going to talk about the parts of reality next! Remember the three questions are: What am I doing when I'm knowing? Why is doing that knowing? And that's his theory of objectivity as a whole and in its parts. And then he's going to talk about: What do I know when I do that? And that's giving his account of metaphysics.*

And so *what he's talking about here is not anything having to do with whether there's reality attached to the given; what he's talking about here is the role that the given plays in the objectivity of our knowing. It's a part of the objectivity of our knowing!*

Greg: So then in what sense is my experience relationship to its objects immediate, if —

Pat: — *In no sense whatsoever! There is no sense whatsoever that your experience of objects is immediate to the objects. It's immediate to your experience; your experience of the given is immediate to your experience! You have no idea on the basis of that alone what, if anything, it has to do with objects. The givenness of experience is —*

Greg: I think that's what I meant by 'reality'! So in other words —

Pat: — Okay. The givenness of your experience is — you know — the example that Lonergan actually uses is those times you have a daydream **as you're** walking down the stairs, and you think there is one more step, and suddenly your life comes up short, because you're trying to take a step down —

[Student murmurs of recognition]

You couldn't mediate that into being another step! So there's some part of your pattern, intellectual pattern of experiencing, which is not the product of the intellectual pattern. And yet it's in the intellectual pattern. What it has to do with objects is a further question. But it is part of our objectivity, because it's the givenness that is used, as he says, that our inquiry makes use of that givenness as it moves itself towards the full and complete sense of objectivity. Okay?

Normative Objectivity is not just the correlative of the second level of consciousness (intelligence), because it has to do with all questioning — questions for intelligence and questions for reflection — not just questions on the second level of consciousness.

Normative objectivity is grounded in the unrestricted desire to know; it results from unprejudiced inquiry.

The opposite of normative objectivity — prejudice, bias — is interference with the unrestricted desire.

Normative Objectivity.

Being Subjective = Being Biased

vs.

Normative Objectivity

“The ground of normative objectivity lies in the unfolding of the unrestricted, detached, disinterested desire to know.”

(CWL 3, p. 404).

Normative objectivity. Okay. So why is this not just the parallel correspondent of the second level?

“The ground of normative objectivity lies in the unfolding of the unrestricted, detached, disinterested desire to know.” *(CWL 3, p. 404).*

So would you tell me why then is it not just objectivity that corresponds to this — correlated with the second level of consciousness?

Jonathan: Because **“the unfolding of the unrestricted ... desire to know”** is experiencing, or is asking questions about experiences, having insights, and then reflecting and judging.

Pat: Right! *So the unrestricted desire to know covers all three levels. So normative objectivity is what we mean by not being prejudiced.* Prejudice for Lonergan, remember, does not mean that you have ideas that you bring to your attempt to know things.

Being prejudiced, for Lonergan, means the things that interfere with the self-correcting cycle of knowing. Normative objectivity is rooted in the unrestrictedness of our desire to know; that there isn't anything we can't ask about, until we get in the way of it, so that other desires, other passions, other resentments and bitternesses, get in the way of the spontaneous flow of our questions. So a prejudiced person is not a person who has thought about things before, and brings those prior thoughts into the discussion or the debate and the conversation, about any topic about whether it's true or not. That's not a prejudiced person, at least not on Lonergan's account. *A prejudiced person is a person who cuts off the further questions that are raised by the ideas that are brought into the discussion.*

Student question about whether this unrestricted desire to know allows us to connect to the third level of identifying desires and then letting them go.

- Not all desires, but the unique, unrestricted desire.
- The unrestricted desire is the desire for inquiry, and letting it have its way brings us to a knowledge of reality.

Pat: Ian?

Ian: So then, even with this unrestricted desire to know, can we ever connect to this sort of third level of sort of identifying what your desires are, and then just letting them go, and just identifying them as what they are, just as desires?

Pat: Okay. *Remember, it's not 'desires' in the plural.* A moment ago I said *Lonergan affirms that there are a lot of different desires.* I mentioned a couple: desire for food, for drink, for rest, for sexual gratification, *et cetera.* *There are lots of desires.*

He's talking about one particular desire, the one that's manifested in questions! If you allow that desire its proper unfolding — the proper way to know that desire is to let it

have its way! Then yes, we will come to know reality; or at least you'll know enough to not say you know something when in fact you don't. Okay? Good question!

Absolute Objectivity.

The unconditioned judgment is no longer relative to the person who articulates it, or the time or place of the judgment.

Absolute objectivity asks “is it so?” under any conditions, after all pertinent questions have been asked.

The publicity of objectivity results from intersubjective agreement, born of the commonly shared and unrestricted desire to know.

Agreement, even agreement of all human kind, does not ground objectivity (because of *general* bias); but absolute objectivity grounds the possibility of human agreement.

Absolute objectivity has to do with the unconditionedness of judgments. Because they're unconditioned, they are

“withdrawn from relativity to the subject that utters it, the place in which he [or she] utters it, the time at which he [or she] utters it.” (CWL 3, p. 402, emphasis added).

He gives the example of Caesar crossing the Rubicon. Any historical event that actually did take place, took place at a place in time, but it's not dependent upon the time or the place of the person that's making the judgment about it having happened. Somebody raised this last

week, about whether Lonergan's notion of being includes the past and the future. Now it is, what was, and what will be! So it does!

Absolute Objectivity

“Because the content of the judgment is an absolute, it is withdrawn from relativity to the subject that utters it, the place in which he [or she] utters it, the time at which he [or she] utters it. ...

“Hence it is in virtue of absolute objectivity that our knowing acquires what had been named its publicity. For the same reason that the unconditioned is withdrawn from relativity to its source, it also is accessible not only to the knower that utters it but also to any other knower.” (CWL 3, p. 402),

So objectivity, because it asks not *What do I think this is, What is my opinion, but Is it so?* — And that we don't make a judgment about *What is so,* until we've got the unconditioned ground for it. *That our unrestricted questions are not going to be satisfied, until we've got the virtually unconditioned, the fulfilment of all the further pertinent questions and conditions that need to be — that our intellect makes demands upon us for;* only then do we reach a virtually unconditioned, and *then it's not just I think it's this way. It is so!*

Now, do we ever make such judgments? That's one of the reasons why Lonergan starts with the question about self-affirmation. We'll come back to that in a moment.

But it's a good exercise to start to find out the times that you have come to a firmness of a judgment, and then discovered that there were questions that you hadn't yet asked. Now the virtually unconditioned doesn't rest on your failure to have noticed **the questions not asked**¹². It rests on the fact that those questions will come back to haunt you.

And you will find, as you start to get deeper into the self-appropriation question, that there are instances where in fact you can ask and answer all the further pertinent and relevant questions; and in doing so, your judgment is withdrawn, as he says, from the one who is making the judgment, and there is grasped an absolute that's not dependent on your making it. It's dependent upon the unrestrictedness of your desire to know; and that you can ask about anything; and that you did ask about everything that needed to be asked about.

And as he says, that is the source of the publicity of objectivity. Karl Popper, Jürgen Habermas, and the Pragmatists, put a great deal of emphasis on objectivity as rooted in intersubjectivity; that objectivity, science, depends upon a community of agreement.

For Lonergan, the community of agreement is the community that is underpinned by the unrestricted desire to know, which is intrinsic to all human knowers. And it's because everyone can ask about everything, and because everyone quote unquote knows or has a notion of what needs to be known before something can be affirmed, that the community of agreement — when the community are authentic subjects — is a standard for absolute objectivity! It isn't because people agree on it, because he's already given a very powerful account of group and general bias. People can agree on the basis of bias. The real publicity of absolute objectivity, the real intersubjectivity of absolute objectivity is the unconditionedness or the unrestrictedness of our desire to know.

¹² The preceding four words, "the questions not asked" are mere conjecture, since the sounds are indiscernible.

Principal Objectivity

“Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments.” (*CWL 3*, p. 399).

A is.

B is.

A is a knower.

A is not B.

“The principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence. How does the knower get beyond himself [or herself] to a known?” (*CWL 3*, p. 401).

Okay. I'm going to take a break here, and we'll come back and talk about the principal notion of objectivity, and then that question about whether the self-affirming-self is subject as subject or subject as object. But I think we're going to take a break here.

Insight and Beyond

Class 17, Part Two: February 3rd 2010

“The Notion of Objectivity,”

“The Principal Notion of Objectivity”,

“Cognitive Structure”

“Tripartite Objectivity”

“Self-Knowledge.”

(Insight, Chapter 13: “The Notion of Objectivity”)

Insight and Beyond

Class 17, Part Two: February 3rd 2010

“The Principal Notion of Objectivity”, and “Self-Knowledge.”

(Insight, Chapter 13: “The Notion of Objectivity”)

Summary of Material

The Principal Notion of Objectivity

Principally, objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments:

A is. B is. A is a Knower. *A is not B.*

The principal notion of objectivity is (at least) four judgments; each of which is an instance of absolute objectivity, which in turn are conditioned by normative and experiential objectivity.

This is the principle way in which we know that we know beings which are really distinct from, which are not dependent upon ourselves or our thinking them.

Thus the principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence, i.e. knowing objects as existing and as distinct from ourselves.

Student question: Could one replace “A is” with “I am”?

What can we not know on the counterposition of knowing, knowing as taking a look?

One cannot know oneself as a knower, if knowing is taking a look:

- We cannot see the intelligible unity of the ‘self’, i.e. as a unity-identity-whole.
- We cannot see the data of consciousness or the activities of consciousness (sensing, inquiring, insight, reflecting, etc.) that are the very activities constituting the self.

Student question about Lonergan’s work with respect to Kant, that there are all sorts of things we know by not taking a look.

- The Kantian solution does not solve the problem of knowing reality in itself; Kant recognizes the inadequacy of naïve realism but retains the same notion of reality and concludes we can only know phenomenal reality.

- What is missing from Kant, from Lonergan's point of view, is the unrestricted desire to know, and judgment as unconditioned positing of 'is'.

Student question about the potential naïve realist objection that Lonergan still gives up too much to the idealist by starting with the data of consciousness and therefore cannot result in genuine objectivity.

- Lonergan's account of the principal notion of objectivity (patterned context of four judgments) is the proper answer to the objection.
- Certain philosophers claim that starting with consciousness means you cannot break out of it and get to the real world.
- Lonergan, however, points out that their notion of consciousness is flawed.
- Moreover, objectivity is not extroversion. Objectivity is making virtually unconditioned judgments about what is.
- A real lack of principal objectivity would consist in never making any judgments – never experiencing, inquiring, or engaging in the self-correcting cycle of knowing.

- Person who holds that knowing is by extroversion, cannot ground the truth of that statement in extroversion.
- Further discussion on this same question of how consciousness attains objective knowledge.
- Inverse insights play a role — the very expectation of what knowing is must be reversed.
- Chapter 14 discusses “problematic metaphysics” – metaphysics as learning, the process of human learning (individually and as a race) about the relation between knowing and the known.
- Lonergan differs from Descartes insofar as he never tries to prove something external exists, but only asserts that consciousness objectively performs certain activities, and that such performance constitutes knowledge of beings distinct from the knower.

Self-Affirmation: Subject-as-subject, or subject-as-object?

Is self-affirmation knowledge of the subject-as-subject, or the subject-as-object?

- Subject-as-object: it seems that the content of judgment is distinct from the judging subject (p. 344).
- Subject-as-subject: how can self-affirmation of the knower be knowing the subject as subject?

Student responds using a distinction between ‘intending’ versus ‘consciousness’ in self-affirmation.

- Discussion of experience as tantamount to consciousness, and how sense data always implies consciousness and thus a concomitant (self) awareness.
- Moreover, the subject is more than self-experiencing; it is a unity-identity-whole which is however not given immediately, but known by understanding.

The implicit analogy of looking is inappropriate for self-knowledge, which does *not* amount to taking a look at oneself!

The problem of subject-as-subject vs. subject-as-object arises from the tacit construal of judging and understanding on the model of taking a look — one cannot look at looking, but one can understand understanding and one can judge judging.

Looking is a spatial form of perception, yet understanding and judging are not spatial forms of knowing.

Introspection fails as a model of self-knowledge.

The looker is always behind the look, whereas the judgment is not behind the judger. Rather, a person simultaneously fulfills the condition for the affirmation in consciousness while making the judgment.

Self-affirmation means the self both affirms and is affirmed.

Mistake to think of my real self as identical with the experience of consciousness, rather than my real self as the self affirmed.

The real self is not identical with the experience of consciousness, but is a fuller self in which the data of consciousness is an essential constituent.

Series of student questions:

Question as to whether the object and subject are at that moment an identity.

- Realization that actually engaging in the process of self-affirmation involves many layers and self-correcting cycles.

Where does Lonergan get the phrase unity-identity-whole?

Question about the value, philosophically or psychologically, of grasping the subject as an object?

- In philosophy, there is much discussion, particularly in Sartre, who holds that consciousness is nothingness, not being.
- The impossibility of self-objectification is taken for granted in much contemporary philosophy, with many repercussions.
- But Lonergan does not agree, because of their presumption about what knowledge would have to be ('objectification' on the model of taking a look).
- Self-affirmation is a genuine form of self-knowing and is the basis for further knowing.

Insight and Beyond

Class 17, Part Two: February 3rd 2010

“The Principal Notion of Objectivity”, and “Self-Knowledge.”

(Insight, Chapter 13: “The Notion of Objectivity”)

The Principal Notion of Objectivity

Principally, objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments:

A is. B is. A is a Knower. A is not B.

The principal notion of objectivity is (at least) four judgments; each of which is an instance of absolute objectivity, which in turn are conditioned by normative and experiential objectivity.

This is the principle way in which we know that we know beings which are really distinct from, which are not dependent upon ourselves or our thinking them.

Thus the principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence, i.e. knowing objects as existing and as distinct from ourselves.

Principal Objectivity

“Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments.” (CWL 3, p. 399).

A is.

B is.

A is a knower.

A is not B.

“The principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence. How does the knower get beyond himself [or herself] to a known? (CWL 3, p. 401).

So we left off with this fourth thing: Lonergan talks about the three-fold — the three components of objectivity, and yet there actually is a fourth. And *in some sense it's the whole of objectivity, in which each of the three components is arrayed as components of components. Principally the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments.* So this is right at the very beginning of chapter thirteen on **“The Notion of Objectivity.”**

**For one may define as object any A, B, C, D,
...where, in turn, A, B, C, D, ... are defined by the
correctness of the set of judgments**

A is; B is; C is; D is;

A is neither B nor C nor D nor ...

B is neither C nor D nor ...

C is neither D nor ...

(CWL 3, pp. 399-400).

I have to admit I never quite figured out why Lonergan wrote it in this order. I have a sort of a guess as to why he wrote it in this order. It really does, I think, pedagogically make a little more sense to proceed in the order in which I have presented it, and to conclude with the principal notion of objectivity. Why? Because the principal notion of objectivity is, as he says, a patterned set of judgments —

**“Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained in
a patterned context of judgments.” (CWL 3, p. 399).**

— *And each of those judgments, so to speak, is what’s addressed in the absolute notion of objectivity, which in turn is conditioned by the normative notion of objectivity and the experiential notion of objectivity. You need both normative and experiential objectivity as the condition for the ground of absolute objectivity; and you need absolute objectivity for each of the judgments in the pattern!*

But the pattern is a little confusing because he throws out all these A’s and B’s, and this is A and it’s not B and B is not C, and you can’t figure out where he’s going. But the crucial thing is four judgments; and the four judgments are:

A is.

B is.

A is a knower of B.

A is not B.

Why is this the principal notion of objectivity? This is the principal way in which we know that we know beings that are not just our fictitious, made up, ideas. So, in this case, whatever B is, B just is standing there for some judgment of fact, presumed, for the sake of

argument, to have been arrived at as a matter of absolute objectivity, a judgment B made on the basis of an unconditioned grasp of the virtually unconditioned, the conditions that one would have to have to say one truly knows that B is.

But what if B is just something I know that I've made up? That's why you need "A is not B"; that A, me, the knower, I am, I am a knower, I know myself to be a knower; which means I know myself to execute, perform, those activities in that structured pattern, and know I've come to the proposition B; and by another absolute unconditioned statement, I know that A is not B.

Now, when we get to chapter sixteen [**"Metaphysics as Science"** (CWL 3, pp. 512-552)], the first thing that Lonergan talks about are relations and distinctions. And I ask, what is this all about? ...

How is it that we know — And what we tend to say is
"How do we know what's really out there?" *when in fact,*
what we should be saying is: "How do we know anything
that's distinct from ourselves?" And we don't know
anything distinct from ourselves by one component in
cognitional structure; and we don't even know it by one
judgment in cognitional structure. We need four! So
that's what he means by the principal notion of
objectivity. And why it is that the principal notion of
objectivity solves the problem of transcendence: How
does the knower get belong himself or herself to a known?
We get beyond ourselves to a known by that fourth
judgment that we know that B is distinct from us. But like
any other judgment, that also has conditions which have
to be fulfilled, and only when they are fulfilled do we have
a virtually unconditioned basis for affirming that we know
something, B, which is distinct from us!

So knowledge of distinction is knowledge gotten in judgment, just as much as everything else. Okay? ... All right!

Let me pause there, *because that's the basic set of terms and relations that Lonergan is setting forward in saying that there's more objectivity than one kind of objectivity: there are components; they are components in a whole!* But *the big thing that he's getting at there is that cognitional self-transcendence — cognitional self-transcendence is attained, not with the one judgment, but in making this patterned set of judgments!* Okay.

**Student question: Could one replace
“A is” with “I am”?**

Pat: Questions? ... Yeah, Matt?

Matt: Regarding the third and fourth statements: when I look at them, the first thing I want to do is replace “A is” with “I am”, just as I'm trying to think this through. So could I — Is it in a sense saying “I am a knower” and “I am not B”, but I fully understand in your —

Pat: — You could reduce it to three. You could reduce it to three. “A knows itself to be a knower” — or — “I know myself to be a knower” and “I know B” and “I know that I'm not B”.

Matt: Okay.

Pat: That would do it!

Matt: Okay!

Pat: Okay. Other questions about this? ...

Okay. This takes a while to rattle around to see, you know, what's the big deal about this? But *the reason why this is called the “principal notion of objectivity” is the principal question about objectivity is: “How do I know that I'm knowing anything that's distinct from me?” “How do I know that I know anything that is distinct from just my thinking?” And this is his answer to it.* Okay?

What can we not know on the counterposition of
knowing, knowing as taking a look?

One cannot know oneself as a knower, if knowing is
taking a look:

- We cannot see the intelligible unity of the
‘self’, i.e. as a unity-identity-whole.
- We cannot see the data of consciousness
or the activities of consciousness
(sensing, inquiring, insight,
reflecting, etc.) that are the very
activities constituting the self.

**What Cannot be Known Thusly
Must be Merely Subjective**

Oneself as a Knower

**“By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and
intelligible unity-identity-whole.**

**By ‘self-affirmation of the knower’ is meant
that the self as affirmed is characterized by
such occurrences as sensing, perceiving,
imagining, inquiring, understanding,
formulating, reflecting, grasping the
unconditioned, and affirming.” (CWL 3, p.
343).**

Conditions fulfilled in consciousness.

Okay. So let's move on here! Now, what can we know — or — Let's go back to *What can we not know on the counterposition of knowing?* I gave you a list a little bit earlier. *What can we not know if knowing is modelled on taking a look?* We had a long list [See above pp. 23 or 37, of this transcription]. *There is one more thing to add to this list: yourself as a knower! You cannot know yourself as a knower if knowing is taking a look! Why? Because by 'self' is meant the unity-identity-whole!*

And just as much as Hume criticizes the notion of *substance*, of the unity that is not given in acts of sensation, so also he criticizes the notion of the *self* as a unity that is not immediately given. There is a big preoccupation in Locke and Hume in particular about *human identity*, and about where resides human identity, and about where resides the objectivity of making comments about human identity! And because they committed themselves to an empiricist notion of knowing, and an empiricist notion of objectivity, it's ultimately a problem they can't solve. When they give their solutions to it, they are ones which I would regard as unsatisfactory.

But if by self is meant a concrete intelligible unity-identity-whole, and knowing is a matter of correctly affirming our correct understanding of the data of our consciousness, then there is the possibility of objectively knowing yourself as a knower. And by self-affirmation — remember it doesn't mean knowing everything about yourself, knowing your full biography, knowing the meaning of everything you've ever done, because a lot of what we do we ask why did I do that? Self-affirmation is a limited judgment about ourselves as knowers that Lonergan is talking about in chapter eleven (“Self-affirmation of the Knower”, pp. 343-371). And the other thing, that, from the point of view of knowing as taking a look, makes self-knowledge of oneself as a knower impossible, is that the data is data of consciousness. There is no seeing the data of consciousness!

For a number of years, I had a colleague, he was a Jesuit here in the philosophy department, a philosopher of science. And I have the misfortune of being in the philosophy department long enough to have lost to death two Jesuit philosophers of science as my colleagues. This was Father John Strong who died probably thirty years ago. There was actually a tree planted in his memory outside of the Bapst Library. If you cross from the St Mary's side to the Bapst Library side, there's a tree off to the left with a little plaque that's a

memorial to him. So, it was a sad loss. But he used to make fun of me and my interest in

Lonergan, and he said: “Some day I’m going to set up a little booth out in the dust-bowl,¹³ and with a little peep-hole in it, and I’m going to ask students to come by and look through there, and see if they see any insights in it.”

[Class laughter]

He was trained in an empiricist tradition about philosophy of science. So he was pulling my leg; but there was a part of it that was kind of serious about that part of it.

You can’t see the data of consciousness; you can’t touch it; you can’t hear it; your thoughts may sing out to you, but *that’s just a metaphor*. The data of consciousness is not visual. *So you’ve got two strikes against self-knowledge of the knower as objective, if knowing is what the counterposition takes it to be. You can’t know it because it’s an intelligible unity, and you can’t see intelligible unity; and you can’t know it because the conditions for the affirmation are the experience of yourself, are your consciousness immanent and operative in those activities, and you can’t see that either. So neither the conditions nor the content fall within the narrow realm circumscribed by the counterposition that knowing is taking a look.* So among the things that would be merely subjective, you can only have a subjective opinion of yourself as a knower. You can’t know yourself as a knower.

Student question about Lonergan’s work with respect to Kant, that there are all sorts of things we know by not taking a look.

– The Kantian solution does not solve the problem of knowing reality in itself; Kant recognizes the inadequacy of naïve realism but retains the same

¹³ Dust bowl: an area of land where vegetation has been lost and soil reduced to dust and eroded; the transcriber surmises that the term may be used colloquially at BC for some derelict area.

notion of reality and concludes we can only know phenomenal reality.

- What is missing from Kant, from Lonergan's point of view, is the unrestricted desire to know, and judgment as unconditioned positing of 'is'.

Pat: Jonathan?

Jonathan: So then from there how do you reply to the person who says we are sure that Kant already solved all these problems, insofar as you say: No, there's all sorts of stuff we know a priori, that we know objective — before — that we bring to experiential knowing; we bring our concepts to our experiences, that's formed, and all that. Why do we need to go to this extent in terms of affirming these things, and why can't we just settle it and say: Kant's *First Critique*,¹⁴ in terms of solving the problems brought about by Hume, as knowing is just taking a look?

Pat: Ahm, well, at least Lonergan's dissatisfaction — mine also — with the Kantian solution is that *that really is not an account of knowing reality*. Remember, at the beginning of the last class, I think I said: You know, what's the ordinary person's notion of knowing? *The ordinary person's notion of knowing is: it has to do with cognition of the real as it really is. And Kant was really up front that human knowing cannot reach that! And Lonergan is fundamentally disagreeing with Kant on that!*

So notice what he does when he's talking about naïve realism in "Cognitive Structure"? He says the naïve realist embraces the intrinsic objectivity of ordinary human knowing, but mistakenly gives an account of it that doesn't work. And then "the idealist" — which is his phrase for Kant — comes along and recognizes the inadequacy of the naïve realist's account of how we know, recognizes all the constructive — well, some of the

¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited and translated by Paul Guyer and Alan W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1999.

constructive dimensions of our knowing, but holds on to the naïve realist's idea of what reality is, and concludes that we don't have objective knowledge — Well, we have phenomenally

objective knowledge, but not noumenally objective knowledge. We don't know reality as it really is!

You see, for Lonergan, that principal notion of objectivity means that if and when we do reach those four judgments on the basis of a virtually unconditioned, we know things as they really are, and indeed, we know them as independent of our knowing them. Okay?

So that's — I mean, that's his response to it. Sure, Kant solved the problem if you're satisfied with that kind of solution. But Lonergan is not! And he wants to argue that the ordinary person is not going to be satisfied with that as an account of knowing; that's not our notion of what real knowing is. And so Kant, in effect, says: We don't really know! And Lonergan thinks that's incorrect! And what's missing in Kant from Lonergan's point of view is the unrestricted desire to know; and also the key addition to knowing that judgment is; that it's not just synthesizing, it's also the positing! There's no — I won't say there's no mention of positing in Kant, because there is. *But it's not thematic; it's not what he means by judging, and it doesn't have a way of justifying positing!* Whereas Lonergan is saying: This is what you would have to be able to give as the ground for your positing, for your saying: It is! That's missing from Kant.

So those two things, exactly what he says is crucial to human objectivity are both missing from Kant. What is missing from Kant, from Lonergan's point of view, is the unrestricted desire to know, and judgment as unconditioned positing of 'is'.¹⁵

Jonathan: And by 'synthesis' you mean every subject is predicated?

¹⁵ Sentence in blue inserted by the transcriber from Pat's "Outline" of the class.

Pat: Yes. Right! So synthesis is the putting together of concepts, or it's the putting together of concepts with experiences, or 'intuitions' for Kant.

Student question about the potential naïve realist objection that Lonergan still gives up too much to the idealist by starting with the data of consciousness and therefore cannot result in genuine objectivity.

- Lonergan's account of the principal notion of objectivity (patterned context of four judgments) is the proper answer to the objection.
- Certain philosophers claim that starting with consciousness means you cannot break out of it and get to the real world.
- Lonergan, however, points out that their notion of consciousness is flawed.
- Moreover, objectivity is not extroversion. Objectivity is making virtually unconditioned judgments about what is.
- A real lack of principal objectivity would consist in never making any judgments – never experiencing, inquiring, or engaging in the self-correcting cycle of knowing.

– Person who holds that knowing is by
extroversion, cannot ground the truth
of that statement in extroversion.

Pat: Donato?

Donato: Couldn't the naïve realist say to a Lonerganian, (arguing with an idealist), say that the Lonerganian still gives too much up to the idealist by beginning with consciousness, and therefore can't actually establish that the judgments are going to result in objectivity?

Pat: Not only "can they", they have! There are people who have published articles on exactly that topic!

Donato: Right. I know!

[class laughter]

Pat: Okay. Sorry!

Donato: Is there — but is there an answer?

Pat: Okay. Let's go back!

Principal Objectivity

“Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments.” (CWL 3, p. 399).

A is.

B is.

A is a knower.

A is not B.

“The principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence. How does the

knower get beyond himself [or herself] to a known? (CWL 3, p. 401).

That's Lonergan's answer, [expressed in the slide](#). So people of the sort that you are talking about — and not only have I read the articles, but I've had these conversations — [those people](#) are going to say, if you start with consciousness, you can never get out to the real world. If you start with consciousness, you are trapped within consciousness; and so you can never get objective knowledge. Okay.

And what's Lonergan's answer? Lonergan's answer — *There is a Lonergan answer to that*. He didn't respond to these people; they wrote these things towards the end of his career when he was preoccupied with other things. But people who were students of Lonergan's thought, have written responses. What's the response to that? If you start within consciousness, you can never get back outside! And what's the Lonergan response to that?

...

Pat: Matt?

Matt: I think it's a mistaken notion about consciousness —

Pat: — *First and foremost, it's a mistaken notion of our consciousness*. It's not —

Matt: — It's not what he means.

Pat: That's right. That's right. So if consciousness is internal — remember that's actually part of the reason I spent some time talking about internal and external experience the last time. *If internal experience means trapped inside my skin, then you've got the bridge problem. But that's not what Lonergan means by consciousness! He's using 'internal' in a metaphorical sense! Okay. So that's part of the answer.*

There's another part of the answer. It may have been better if Lonergan had never used the metaphor of interiority which he uses quite a bit in his later work, or never used the phrase 'internal experience'; but we're stuck with that! It is a misleading metaphor, as Matt said! Matt?

Matt: Oh, this is just: objectivity is not extroversion!

Pat: Right! *Objectivity is not extroversion!! Objectivity is not a matter of getting from 'in-here' to 'out-there'! Objectivity is a matter of making virtually unconditioned judgments about what is!*

And somebody — So the charge, that you can't really have objectivity on Lonergan's account, presumes *an account of knowing*. And Lonergan is going to say that *it's a false account of human knowing; that what in fact we do, and what in fact we confirm ourselves as doing, is this inquisitive form of self-transcendence*.

Now the only time that you have lack of objectivity, in the principal sense, is if you never make any judgments. Or, if you never make any judgments about yourself as a knower. Now, remember what knower means for Lonergan: it means executing those activities, performing those activities; it means that you never — that you don't experience, inquire, answer your inquiries with insights, reflect, and ask questions about your insights as to whether they *are*, and never reach any judgments about whether they *are*, and never make those judgments about yourself! Then you don't have objectivity; but you don't have anything else either! You're just sort of stuck at a very elemental point in the self-correcting cycle. Okay?

So a couple of things:

One is the problem gets posed in a context that presupposes an account of knowing which Lonergan is saying is not self-consistent; it's not performatively consistent. A person that's giving an account that knowing is by extroversion cannot say that, itself, on the basis of knowing is by extroversion! And

then the other thing is, it gives a caricature of consciousness, which is definitely not what Lonergan means by consciousness!

- Further discussion on this same question of how consciousness attains objective knowledge.
- Inverse insights play a role — the very expectation of what knowing is must be reversed.

- Chapter 14 discusses “problematic metaphysics” – metaphysics as learning, the process of human learning (individually and as a race) about the relation between knowing and the known.
- Lonergan differs from Descartes insofar as he never tries to prove something external exists, but only asserts that consciousness objectively performs certain activities, and that such performance constitutes knowledge of beings distinct from the knower.

I mean, I’m sure that — I know that there’s a lot of further pertinent questions that answer the questions that you pose, Jeff. Do you want to try another angle on it? ...

Jeff: ... Not right now.

[Class amusement]

Pat: Okay. All right! I think the question you are asking is one of the most important questions to ask about Lonergan’s thought. They are questions that are answerable, and part of the answer to the questions are these inverse insight type things; that the expectation of what knowing is and getting to the real objects already out there is itself something that needs to be reversed. That’ part of the answer to it.

Shabith: But what you’re saying is he’s not engaging with the question. Nowhere is he asking if we know whether objects exist. He presupposes they do!

Pat: No! The book — You know, as he says in chapter fourteen on “**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455), he says that there are three stages to metaphysics: what he calls *latent metaphysics*; there’s *problematic metaphysics*; and then there is *explicit metaphysics*. Most of us most of our lives are somewhere in the stage of problematic metaphysics: we’re trying to sort all this stuff out!

The way the book is organized, is in that area that he says that what we’re doing here is the learning. It’s *metaphysics as learning*; and *metaphysics as learning to appropriate our cognitional structure as it actually happens*. He’s never presupposing the existence of objects, but he is presupposing a reader who actually does inquire and does have insights and does reflect and does make judgments. But the book is written in such a way as to invite the reader to become more familiar with things that he or she has been doing all his or her life.

*So there is that presupposition! But it’s a presupposition
about the reader! It’s not a presupposition of reality!*

There is a sense in which the judgment that he invites us to make in chapter eleven (“**Self-affirmation of the Knower**”, pp. 343-371), “I am a unity-identity-whole who performs these activities in this dynamic pattern”, but that underpins everything that comes afterwards!

But you’ll notice here that Lonergan does not do what Descartes does. So there is a big difference between Lonergan’s procedure and that of Descartes. And Descartes has been roundly and in many cases — not in all — apart from criticizing [meaning unclear]. Descartes starts off by doubting the existence of everything; and then gradually comes to the judgment, Lonergan would say, that he can’t doubt that he doubts. And so now he’s got one little fact. But he’s got the problem now that every judgment that he’s ever made about anything in the external world is in abeyance. And he has to somehow reconstruct that. And his attempt at reconstruction is first of all to prove that, on the basis of his indubitability criterion, that the existence of God is indubitable, and that God is not a deceiver. And therefore God wouldn’t deceive us about the external world. You can drive a truck through the whole scenario of that argument. And people have!

Nowhere here does Lonergan say: Okay, now I am going to prove to you that something besides you exists. What he’s done here is to say: This is what *you* do when *you*

affirm; this is what *you* do when *you* objectively know that something exists that is independent of yourself. This is different to you. That's the objectivity of your doing it; he doesn't prove to you that you do it. He identifies that that's what your objectivity is. So there's no proving of an object on the basis of self-affirmation. There's a revelation of what the objectivity of your own judgments is, by showing you what objectivity really is. That's all he does!

There's only really two affirmations that he argues for here, and

one is the affirmation of yourself as a knower, on the basis of the data of consciousness; and

the other is the affirmation of the existence of an unconditioned act of understanding, which he says has all the characteristics that people traditionally identify with God.

Those are the only two judgments in the book. There's a few other things he sneaks in, but he doesn't do it on the basis of his philosophical argumentation. Okay?

All right. So let's not say that we've settled that question. It is a big and important question, but let's just move on. Okay? Okay. So oneself as a knower is something you cannot know on the basis of the counterposition of knowing.

**Self-Affirmation: Subject-as-subject, or
subject-as-object?**

**Is self-affirmation knowledge of the subject-as-subject,
or the subject-as-object?**

- Subject-as-object: it seems that the content of judgment is distinct from the judging subject (p. 344).**

- Subject-as-subject: how can self-affirmation of the knower be knowing the subject as subject?

**What Cannot be Known Thusly
Must be Merely Subjective**

Oneself as a Knower

“By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.

By ‘self-affirmation of the knower’ is meant that the self as affirmed is characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

Conditions fulfilled in consciousness.

Now, this is where I thought we were going to be sixty minutes ago.

[Class laughter]

But here we are! ... *Is self-affirmation knowledge of the subject-as-subject or knowledge of the subject-as-object?*

Shabith: Knowledge of the subject-as-subject.

Pat: Okay. Well, why? ... Because that certainly seems counter-intuitive!

Shabith: Because if knowing is the performing of the tripartite — of the particular activities of knowing together, and it would be to affirm oneself as a subject performing those activities.

Pat: Okay! Well, fine! But if you're *making a judgment*, then there's *the content of a judgment*, and the content of the judgment is distinct from *the being that's doing the judging*, isn't it?

Shabith: Right!

Pat: Okay. Well, then it seems you're wrong! [Two or more voices speaking together, so meanings inaccessible].

Shabith: Sorry! Could you say that again?

Self-Affirmation

& Introspection

**Is self-affirmation knowledge of
the subject-as-subject,
or the subject-as-object?**

**“By self-affirmation is meant that the self both
affirms and is affirmed.” (CWL 3, p. 343).**

Pat: Yeah. In self-affirming you're making a judgment!

Shabith: Yeah.

Pat: And in making a judgment there is a content to the judgment, and the content of the judgment is distinct from the being that's doing the judging. And if that's the case, then self-affirmation is affirmation of the subject as object. ... Right? ... Donato?

Donato: In self-affirmation, we're affirming that I know that I'm a knower.

Pat: That's right!

Donato: But since the 'I' is in both —

Pat: That's right!

Donato: — then we know that it is a subject because it can say 'I'.

Pat: Okay. There isn't the subject. Remember we had that conversation earlier about — I think it's here [Pat takes up his copy of *Insight*]. Let's see if I can find it? ... Yeah. So this is on page 344. It's under the heading of “**The Notion of Consciousness.**”

People are apt to think of knowing by imagining a [person] taking a look at something, and further, they are apt to think of consciousness by imagining themselves looking into themselves. Not merely do they indulge in such imaginative opinions but also they are likely to justify them by argument. Knowing, they will say, is knowing something; it is being confronted by an object; it is the strange, mysterious, irreducible presence of one thing to another. Hence, though knowing is not exclusively a matter of ocular vision, still it is radically that sort of thing. (CWL 3, p. 344).

So in other words, isn't self-knowing then knowing an object? But the object that's known is distinct from the subject that's doing the knowing? ... Natalie?

Natalie: Okay. Could it be both? Knowing and self-affirmation as knowledge of subject-as-subject *and* subject-as-object? Because we were saying that objectivity is authentic subjectivity, so they're always in relationship with one another. So if we attain authentic subjectivity, then we can identify the knower as *subject and object*. I don't know if that makes sense?

Pat: In the end, oddly enough, it does make sense; but for the moment, I want to really press it. Because if knowing is knowing an object; so I've got a subject here that's intending an object over there [Pat gestures appropriately for 'here' and 'there'], then when I turn my attention towards myself, it's not myself as subject I know, but myself as

objectified. And myself as subject is not the content of my objectification. It's the subject. So in that sense then, you can have it both ways. You can kind of say, well, it's both subject and object, depending on what you mean by 'subject' and 'object'. But if it means what he's laid out here [Pat indicates his copy of *Insight* on the table], what I've just said — something like that appears also in “Cognitional Structure” — then it can't be true that it is both subject and object. It's got to be one or the other!

Now, the hint to this is — *the answer is ...* [little trumpet blast from Pat] *it's knowing the subject-as-subject. So the problem is: how can that be the case? How can it be that self-affirmation of the knower* — and remember self-affirmation of the knower means affirmation of oneself as a unity-identity-whole performing those activities in that structure — *And if that's the case then, how can it be that self-affirmation is knowing the subject-as-subject, when it seems like it's got to be knowing the subject-as-object? ...*

Student responds using a distinction between
'intending' versus 'consciousness' in self-affirmation.

- Discussion of experience as tantamount to consciousness, and how sense data always implies consciousness and thus a concomitant (self) awareness.
- Moreover, the subject is more than self-experiencing; it is a unity-identity-whole which is however not given immediately, but known by understanding.

The implicit analogy of looking is inappropriate for self-knowledge, which does *not* amount to taking a look at oneself!

The problem of subject-as-subject vs. subject-as-object arises from the tacit construal of judging and understanding on the model of taking a look — one cannot look at looking, but one can understand understanding and one can judge judging.

Looking is a spatial form of perception, yet understanding and judging are not spatial forms of knowing.

Pat: How can that be? ... Tim?

Tim: Is it that there are two elements in the structure, in the sense that there is the consciousness factor and the intentionality factor? So on the level of just basic experience, there is a consciousness of what I experience, and a consciousness of I am conscious. But when you, sort of, when you become involved in the process of experiencing, what I'm conscious of is the sensation; whereas the intending is that which brings it to the level of intelligence; so when intelligence becomes conscious it is experience, the intending is the question what is, is the striving of the question, is what is this that I'm experiencing. When you become the self-knowledge, you become what you're intending is, it becomes sort of, he talks about the reduplication of the process.

Pat: Right!

Tim: Then it becomes I experience my experience and my understanding, and if I can understand the unity of those factors, then I confirm the unity of that which affirms myself as doing those things.

Pat: But is yourself doing those things? Or is yourself as said in those words, is it really the object of those activities [Pat gestures forwards to a putative object], while the self doing them is on this side of those activities [Pat gestures back towards himself] doing them, and not in the object of those activities?

Tim: It's the —

Pat: *You see, philosophy is hard!!*

[Loud laughter]

Tim: But in doing that, you heighten the activity itself. And there's a — ...

Pat: Okay. Let's go back to something Tim said when he first started that reply. And I'm going to paraphrase it, and if I get it wrong, correct me. But, when you're experiencing something — so let's say I'm experiencing the purple water bottle on Aaron's knapsack there; that *I'm experiencing that, and that's what I'm experiencing. Let's just stop right there! Is that a complete statement?* I mean, it's a complete sentence ... I think. What I'm experiencing is the color and the shape of Aaron's water-bottle. Okay? ... Sean?

Sean: Aren't what you're trying to say is that you're just focusing on it, and not just experiencing it, because experiencing involves everything else that's going on, the consciousness factor —

Pat: Right! And so, tell me more about the consciousness factor?

Sean: I think *you* should!

[Laughter]

Pat: You think *I* should! [Huge and warm smile] Okay. Fair enough! Remember what Lonergan says: *that consciousness means experience. There is the data of consciousness and the data of sense. And you never have data of sense as experience without also having data of consciousness as experience. It's the data of consciousness as experience that makes it possible, as he says, for other things to be present to us.* Those three senses of presence, we talked about that. *We talked about the difficulties with using presence as a metaphor.* But he says *that there is a concomitant awareness: as I am aware of anything as a content of perception, I am simultaneously having also the additional dimension, the widened experience of myself as doing that.*

Recall Pat's outline summary of some of these points:

“The problem of subject-as-subject vs. subject-as-object arises from the tacit construal of judging and understanding on the model of taking a look — one cannot look at looking,

but one can understand understanding and one can judge judging.”

So first and foremost, Tim started off by giving the store away. Instead of saying that my experience is a rich field that includes both the experience of myself as acting and the contents of the things that, for example, I sense experience. He said “my experience is of the

content of those perceptions.” So it’s a richer field, experiencing! Okay. So first and foremost, experiencing is broad, and includes the experiencing of oneself!

The second thing is the tendency to equate subject-as-subject with subject as self-experiencing! But think you are more than self-experiencing; you are an existing, intelligible, unity-identity-whole. And in your consciousness, in your self-consciousness, in the experiencing that is accompanying your acts of sensation, your inquiries, your insights, your reflections, your judgments — in that experience, no unity is given! I mean, Lonergan says that, and I can’t figure out what he means by that; but it’s not an intelligible unity. Intelligible unity is not given as given. Intelligible unity of ourselves is what we know by understanding, not what we know by being conscious! And yet self-affirmation says “I am.” Are you intelligent, concrete, intelligible, unity-identity-whole? So there is more to me than is present just in myself as conscious!

Introspection fails as a model of self-knowledge.

The looker is always behind the look, whereas the judgment is not behind the judger. Rather, a person simultaneously fulfills the condition for the affirmation in consciousness while making the judgment.

*And then the third thing is — and this is why Lonergan says it *ad nauseam* — is the other activities of knowing are not analogically comparable to looking. Why is he railing*

against introspection there, at the beginning of that section on “**The Notion of Consciousness**” (CWL 3, pp. 344-346)? Because *self-knowledge is not taking a look at oneself! And the problem that crops up about the self-as-subject and the self-as-object is a problem because we hold on to the analogy with looking!* You can’t look at your looking, because your focal point is about an inch and a half behind your eye, the exterior of your eyeball. *That’s why we tend to think of me as being inside.* Daniel Dennett dances all over the mountain on this. *That’s not what I am, you know. I’m not an inch and a half behind my eyeballs [Pat points to his right temple]. In fact, I’m not anywhere! I’m not in space and time.*

Looking is a very, very, highly developed spatial form of perception. Understanding is not a spatial form of knowing. Judging is not a spatial form of knowing. The reason you can't look at your looking, the reason why introspection as a model of self-knowledge fails, is you can never — any time you try to look that way, the looker is always behind the look! But the understanding is not always behind the understood. And the judger is not always behind the judging. *That's why it's a unique judgment of myself as a knower, because I am simultaneously fulfilling the conditions for the affirmation in consciousness while I am making that judgment. There is an identity of the person judging and what the person judges. One is being an intelligible unity-identity-whole exercising those activities while one is using the experience, the data of consciousness, as the fulfilling conditions for that judgment.*

Self-Affirmation & Introspection

**Is self-affirmation knowledge of
the subject-as-subject,
or the subject-as-object?**

**“By self-affirmation is meant that the self both
affirms and is affirmed.” (CWL 3, p. 343).**

**“By self-affirmation is meant that the self both
affirms and is affirmed.” (CWL 3, p. 343).**

Recall Pat's outline summary of some of these points:

“The implicit analogy of looking is inappropriate for self-knowledge, which does *not* amount to taking a look at oneself! The problem of subject-as-subject vs. subject-as-object arises from the tacit construal of judging and understanding on the model of taking a look — one cannot look at looking, but one can understand understanding and one can judge judging. Looking is a spatial form of perception, yet understanding and judging are not spatial forms of knowing.”

Self-affirmation means the self both affirms and is affirmed.

Mistake to think of my real self as identical with the experience of consciousness, rather than my real self as the self affirmed.

The real self is not identical with the experience of consciousness, but is a fuller self in which the data of consciousness is an essential constituent.

“By self-affirmation is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed.” (*CWL* 3, p. 343).

If you affirm yourself as a unity-identity-whole performing those activities, fulfilling the conditions for that statement in consciousness, you are saying: I am being that being that I am affirming while I am affirming it! You can have an identity of understanding and judging, when you can't have an identity of looking and looked at! Okay?

Questions about that? ... So one of the mistakes is to sort of think that this is almost a kind of a romantic way of thinking; that my real self is the self of consciousness; it's not *the fuller self in which the data of consciousness are partially constitutive of the fullness of being a self*. So is the self as affirmed identical with the experience of consciousness? *No!* Not any more than the experiential objectivity is the whole objectivity of anything we know!

Series of student questions:

Question as to whether the object and subject are at that moment an identity.

- Realization that actually engaging in the process of self-affirmation involves many layers and self-correcting cycles.

Where does Lonergan get the phrase unity-identity-whole?

Question about the value, philosophically or psychologically, of grasping the subject as an object?

- In philosophy, there is much discussion, particularly in Sartre, who holds that consciousness is nothingness, not being.
- The impossibility of self-objectification is taken for granted in much contemporary philosophy, with many repercussions.

- But Lonergan does not agree, because of their presumption about what knowledge would have to be ('objectification' on the model of taking a look).
- Self-affirmation is a genuine form of self-knowing and is the basis for further knowing.

Pat: Shabith?

Shabith: You know, someone said that it should be subject-as-subject, because if knowing is in the performing, then, you know, one is to affirm the performance of them and oneself as performing, you know, as the subject that would be attending. And it was a question that you asked: you know, in the moment that, in the judgment and the content of the judgment, then, you know, isn't the subject then becoming an object? And you're saying that we are actually simultaneously fulfilling the contents of that judgment, so that object and subject at that moment are an identity.

Pat: Right! That's right! And so Maggie was really right.¹⁶ But what I was trying to do was to get at — And you were right, you know, the first thing you said was right.

Shabit: Yeah.

Pat: But I was testing you to see if you had asked all the further pertinent questions, and I was beginning to suspect that there might be a few more pertinent questions.

[Some amusement in class]

That's because, you know, I've struggled with this myself, and, I mean, the questions keep coming back and haunting me, until I feel like I kind of get it right!

¹⁶ The point here is not clear.

Shabit: I guess my question is: that would be correct if we, I guess, affirmed in correct thinking that, you know — when I was thinking about that whole section on the self-affirmation, I was going back and thinking: why should I think I was actually objectifying my —

Pat: — Yeh! The first ten times I read *Insight*, that's exactly what I was doing!

Shabit: So as I was doing it for myself, was I doing it correctly? I was wondering if I was doing it right?

Pat: I thought you were getting there!

[Laughter]

Shabit: Okay. And I guess it would be important to say I was thinking back to the way that I did it. Because the way that I did it was actually the more introspective one where, you know, I objectify the acts, and not actually —

Pat: — Well, it's important that you discovered that. And I mean certainly that's what I did the first — as I said — ten times around. And it's all a bit misleading — If you look back at that slide I had up about a minute ago, [the passage from where chapter thirteen, "The Notion of Objectivity" \(CWL 3, pp. 399-409\) begins](#). Well, it looks like it's just four judgments! Well, each of those four judgments you get to on the basis of a lot of other virtually unconditions, and a lot of other further pertinent questions. And that's basically what you should do. And some of the rest of you are discovering: *Whoop! you have to go back and do this again*. ... But we're not going to spend the whole semester doing just that chapter. ... Good. ...

Principal Objectivity

“Principally, the notion of objectivity is contained in a patterned context of judgments.” (*CWL 3*, p. 399).

A is.

B is.

A is a knower.

A is not B.

“The principal notion of objectivity solves the problem of transcendence. How does the knower get beyond himself [or herself] to a known?” (*CWL 3*, p. 401).

Pat: Matt?

Matt: I was just curious: where does Lonergan get that “unity-identity-whole”, that phrase, or that language, from?

Pat: I don’t know. I honestly don’t know where that name would come from. That would be a really good research thing to find out. There are certain things that I know he picked up from Kant. That one I don’t know that he did pick up from Kant. So, I don’t know the answer to that. ...

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or the subject-as-object?**

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affirms and is affirmed.” (CWL 3, p. 343).**

Pat: Greg?

Greg: All right, I know it's seven o'clock. ... Is there value in the subject as an object? Is that psychology as opposed to something — Like, is there a value to that? And if it is, what is the value of understanding the subject as an object, so even if I've objectified it?

Pat: Is there a value to it? I guess I'd have to think of other things. Is it philosophy or psychology? Well, that depends on what you mean by those! The reason I'm making a big deal of it is there's a lot of discussion about this. There's discussion that goes all the way back to Locke and Hume. There's a great deal of discussion about it in Sartre. Sartre's philosophy is predicated on the fact that the subject always escapes the gaze. And there's a great deal of philosophy that comes out of Sartre, and that position. On Sartre's account, we never really know ourselves. *Being and Nothingness*:¹⁷ Those who've read it: what is nothingness? ... Consciousness! Consciousness is not being. So an awful lot of very, very, important modern philosophy takes this problem of self-objectification, and the impossibility of self-objectification, as a really crucial component. And a lot of consequences follow from that.

¹⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel Barnes. London: Routledge, 2003.

Loneragan doesn't agree! *But remember that his basis for his disagreement is the presumption about what knowledge would have to be, and why you can't have that about the subject as subject. When his account of knowledge is different, and arguably different! And so he can come to a very different, radically different, conclusion: that when you affirm yourself as knower you affirm yourself as a knower as subject, and not just as object. Is there a value to that? For me, the value is: I feel like I've only known something about myself and not some construct of myself.*

Then to repeat, we know self-affirmation of the knower is not the self-affirmation of my total being and self-hood. There's a great deal more to it than that — to us, then, each of us. But nevertheless, we know something: we are indeed characterized! It's not like some objectification of us that's characterized as knowers! *We are knowers! We are the ones with the unrestricted desire to know! We are the ones that know by self-transcending and grasping independent being, of at least a few things. In comparison to an awful lot that is taken for granted in our culture, that's pretty big stuff!!* There's a great deal more to the question about the value of knowing ourselves as subjects, but that's just a —

Okay so. We'll move on to chapter fifteen, “**The Elements of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 456-511), having done — No!

[Laughter]

So normal assignment for next week! We're officially a week behind. So next week chapter fourteen, “**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455).

End of Class Seventeen.