Insight and Beyond

Class 18, Part One: February 10th 2010

“The Method of Metaphysics,”

(Insight, Chapter 14: “The Method of Metaphysics”)

Summary of Material

Lonergan’s way of pursuing Questions of the Whole: the Whole of Being, the Whole of the Good, the Whole of Truth, the Wholeness of Humanity.

Approaching these questions through self-appropriation leaves them genuinely open; but gives partial answers where these are possible.

“The whole in knowing but not the whole of knowing.”

Some Contending Views about the Whole, or “Worldviews” that try to explain everything.

— Students identify various “isms” about the whole.

— In addition: Naturalism, Animism, Darwinism, Power, Marxism, Freudianism, God.

Everyone has at least an implicit answer to the questions of the Whole.
Lonergan on the Whole:

The Whole is what is to be known in the complete set of answers to
the complete set of questions.

An anticipatory, a heuristic approach to the questions of the whole.
Indirectly, not directly, about the Whole, directly through questions,
not directly through answers.

Judging is a knowing of being, it is not yet knowing being.

But to say that being is what we know through judging seems
unreal unless intellectual conversion has taken place.

Student question (from a Hegelian perspective) about the knower
and their self-sufficiency with respect to being.

Each subject has to carry out their own autonomous
judgments; but humans do their knowing within the
context of history. Humans don’t do their knowing in
isolation. This is indeed a concrete matter of fact, but
it cannot be abstracted away.

Metaphysics.

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


The Stages of Metaphysics for Lonergan:

Latent Metaphysics: the immanent and operative structure of human knowing, guided by the unrestricted desire to know; it is common to everyone.

Problematic Metaphysics: the history of human efforts to make latent metaphysics explicit. (Everyone has two metaphysics — the latent metaphysics, plus a more or less adequate attempt to formulate latent metaphysics).

Explicit Metaphysics: Comes about after humans have achieved self-appropriation and are able to draw upon this as they encounter the totality intended in questioning.

The Method of Metaphysics is primarily pedagogical and aimed at self-appropriation.

Starting point of metaphysics is persons as they are; explicit metaphysics is a personal attainment.
Metaphysics as Methodical is Dialectical:

Dialectical method makes metaphysics not merely contemplative; it is a *doing*, a *dialectical* doing.

It entails the conception, affirmation, *and implementation* of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.

Lonergan believed that metaphysics has a job to do, and that he has a method for that task.

Prior to an explicit account of what is normative in knowing, attempts to complete the dialectical tasks of metaphysics will tend to confound one another.

In order to do dialectical metaphysics methodically, Lonergan distinguishes between:

— the Basis and the Expansion;
— between Proportionate and Transcendent Being;
— he will show the need to conceive and affirm the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, and
— he will discuss the implementation of that heuristic structure through dialectic and dialogue using these distinctions.
Subsequent chapters spell out first the formulation and implications of the integral heuristic structure; they also begin to engage in some implementations.

From Contemplation to Implementation:

The basic principle and precept of dialectical metaphysics: “Develop the positions; reverse the counter positions.”

There is a factual dialectic between positions and counter-positions in human lives and in human history; but Lonergan’s methodical tools are intended to make more effective the reversal of counter-positions and the promotion of positions than would happen merely spontaneously.

From Deduction to Heuristic:

Unlike classical science which is demonstration, science for Lonergan proceeds according to a heuristic method; similarly metaphysics will have to follow a heuristic method to qualify as a science.

Lonergan already developed a heuristic of the notion of being.

Now he will develop a heuristic of proportionate being.

The distinction between Proportionate and Transcendent Being.

The ambiguity of talking about “what lies beyond or transcends human experience.”
Proportionate being is defined as whatever is known by possible human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.

Proportionate being is a subset of being.

God defies being known in this way: “There are no data on God.”

Metaphysics is the whole in knowledge, not the whole of knowledge.

Student discussion of what this might mean.

There is a correlation between the structure of human knowing and the structure of proportionate being.

The Basis and its Expansion:

How claims about cognitional theory (the basis) serve to ground metaphysical, ethical, and theological pronouncements (the expansion).

Metaphysics becomes methodical, by tracing disagreements about important philosophical issues to their strategic roots in disagreements about the nature of human knowing (basic positions and counter-positions).

The basis-expansion model provides a heuristic for interpreting philosophers and the history of philosophy.
There is a larger totality of possible judgments, incorrect as well as correct.

In each philosophy there is a strategic set of judgments that determine the general character of the world, of the whole, for it.

Basic Positions and Counter-positions.

Within these strategic sets, there will be basic positions and counter-positions on knowing, objectivity, and reality — components that are compatible or incompatible with the self-appropriated positions on knowing, objectivity and reality (being).

Any philosophy contains an implicit or explicit cognitional theory, more or less well-formulated, that rests on either a basic position or a basic counter-position.

Characteristics of the Basic Position.

How the basic position conceives of Knowing, Being, and Objectivity.
Several students’ comments on whether Lonergan has ‘set us up’
and manipulated us to play the game according to his rules.

— Such feelings are appropriate; it’s essential
  that the individual go through the process
  of appropriating these as the ideas for him
  or herself, until those feelings — those
  further pertinent questions about — of
  having been ‘set up’ are resolved one way
  or the other. “Did Lonergan set me up?
  Did he overlook something?” is a valid
  further pertinent question.

— Moreover, the key to this not being a trap lies
  in the unrestricted questioning; nothing is
  excluded a priori; all questions are valid
  (in contrast to the dogmatism of
  ‘physicalism,’ for example).
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Lonergan’s way of pursuing Questions of the Whole: the Whole of Being, the Whole of the Good, the Whole of Truth, the Wholeness of Humanity.

Approaching these questions through self-appropriation leaves them genuinely open; but gives partial answers where these are possible.

“The whole *in* knowing but not the whole *of* knowing.”

Some Contending Views about the Whole, or “Worldviews” that try to explain everything.

— Students identify various “isms” about the whole.

— In addition: Naturalism, Animism, Darwinism, Power, Marxism, Freudianism, God.

Everyone has at least an implicit answer to the questions of the Whole.

Well, here we are, officially a week behind in our syllabus,

[Class Laughter]

and hopefully, not getting too much further behind for the rest of this semester.

**The Question of the Whole**

Self-appropriation as an approach to the questions regarding Wholeness:

- The Whole of Being
- The Whole of the Good
- The Whole of Truth
- The Wholeness of Humanity

In ways that leave the questions genuinely open, And yet provides at least partial answers.

And I thought a way to begin this was to recall things that we talked about in the very second class of this two semester course, back in September. We talked about the question of the whole, that *Lonergan’s philosophy is fundamentally about the questions of the whole.* And as I mentioned, *Lonergan sees self-appropriation as a way of thinking about the questions of the wholeness, whether it’s the question of the Wholeness of Being,* which is obviously the primary topic of this chapter, although implicitly the topic of other chapters as well; *the Whole of the Good,* which he doesn’t treat in this chapter, but which he’s going to use the method of self-appropriation to deal with at a later point in time; *the Whole of Truth,* which we’ll see in chapter seventeen, *Metaphysics as Dialectic* (*CWL* 3, pp. 553-617); that is where Lonergan picks up the question of truth, which is the first time that he takes that up; *the Wholeness of Humanity* is something that we will address in — it’s passively discussed in chapter fourteen “The Method of Metaphysics” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455) as we’ll see in a few moments, but it’s taken up much more thematically and explicitly in chapter sixteen, “*Metaphysics as Science*” (*CWL* 3, pp. 512-552).
And as I said back in September, Lonergan is approaching the question of the whole in a way that leaves the question genuinely open, but nevertheless takes the stand on giving partial answers where they are possible. Later on we’ll see that Lonergan says that metaphysics consists of the whole in knowing, but not the whole of knowing. And that’s a signal that he’s thinking about wholeness without pretending to give a comprehensive knowledge of everything about everything!

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<th>Views of the Whole</th>
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<td>(“Worldviews”)</td>
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And I thought that perhaps by way of contrast, we might start out and just think about the various contenders for an account of the whole, an account of what explains everything about everything, world-views. There are of course many, and many philosophers, some of which Lonergan deals with in chapter fourteen “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455) in a very summarily kind of outline fashion; but just some of the things that are not even mentioned there in his concluding chapter, I thought worth thinking about as a way of getting a sense about the contrast between many ways in which people think about the whole, and the ways Lonergan does.
So for example, let’s go back! What would be some ways that you folks would be familiar with, where people think that this is what explains everything about everything; this is what the whole story is all about. What would be some approaches to that? … Matt?

Matt: I’m thinking — The first thing I thought of was: the will to power, the will to power!¹

Pat: Right! Power, the will to power explains everything! Okay. So that’s one account! … Geoff?

Geoff: I was thinking about the relations of production, and an economic type of outlook.

Pat: Right! I had Marxism up there; we’ll come back to that in a moment. But even if you’re not a Marxist, there are people that say economics explains everything. If you go round to any department in this university, and many departments that are not in this university, and ask them what’s the basic study, the most basic study upon which everything else rests, every single one of them will name their own discipline!

[Laughter]

And, of course, philosophy is the right answer!!

[More Laughter]

But what are some other accounts of the wholeness? … Matt?

Matt: I was going to say class struggle, for Marx.

Pat: Class struggle. Marx’s class struggle. Sure! … Chris?

Chris: Yeah. I was originally going to say the Marxism as well.

Pat: Okay. … Greg?

¹ The will to power is a prominent concept in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. The will to power describes what Nietzsche may have believed to be the main driving force in humans — achievement, ambition, and the striving to reach the highest possible position in life. Definition of will to power: (1) the drive of the superman in the philosophy of Nietzsche to perfect and transcend the self through the possession and exercise of creative power; (2) a conscious or unconscious desire to exercise authority over others.
Greg: Determinism.
Pat: Determinism, yeah. … James?
James: Various forms of materialism.
Pat: Various forms of materialism, and so on. Okay.

So I have, just my own sort of off the top of my head list; that physicalism or naturalism, or materialism; they’re not all quite the same thing. Naturalism is the — There are many different kinds of naturalisms, and many different kinds of physicalisms. But one way of characterizing naturalism is; there isn’t anything beyond nature; that the laws of nature explain everything. You don’t need to invoke any kind of supernatural principle; that would be a way of talking about naturalism.

Animism: I just threw that in, not because I think perhaps it’s very wide-spread, at least in university campuses, but certainly through the history of human cultures, the notion that spirits inhabit things, and are responsible for things. And in an animistic culture, people will think, for example, that diseases are the results of spirits being invoked, curses being invoked, and so on; that the plants grow because of their animistic spirits; that the seasons come and go as they do: that there are spirits everywhere that need to be placated and appeased. It’s not quite the same as placating or appeasing the gods — but an animistic culture is the reason why things happen is their little spirits or little animating forces inside of everything that are causing them to communicate with one another.

Darwinism, the struggle for existence, natural selection, the survival of the fittest, that explains everything; the reason why you’re all in this class is because it gives the species of human beings a survival advantage to study Lonerganian philosophy. It’s all — Everything can be explained!

Power relations: people talked about that! Perhaps not beginning with, but certainly pre-eminent in Hobbes,² that the fundamental reality — where we get — where German got

² Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) was an English philosopher, best known today for his work on political philosophy. His 1651 book Leviathan established social contract theory, the foundation of most later Western political philosophy. Though on rational grounds a champion of absolutism for the sovereign, Hobbes also developed some of the fundamentals of European liberal thought: the right of the individual; the natural equality of all men; the artificial character of the political order (which led to the
the term *Realpolitik*. The “reality of politics” is not virtue as Plato and Aristotle and Aquinas thought; it is rather power, and that if you want to have a science of politics, what you have to do is have a science of power relations. And although Nietzsche had very little tolerance of Hobbes, I think Nietzsche and perhaps Foucault also, in one way or another, they are thinkers who are approaching the account, at least of the whole of the human, if not the whole of everything, in terms of power relations. Hobbes thought he was simply doing — or at least he claimed, not only thought — but he claimed he was doing the equivalent of Newtonian mechanics that was more generalized and applied to human affairs as well.

**Marxism** you’ve talked about, that everything is class struggle.

**Freudianism:** that everything is the result of this complex interplay between the sexual drive and cultural forces, and so on.

And people are going to say that God explains everything.

So those are various ways in which people have an account of the whole. And *almost everyone has at least an implicit, if not a worked out, account of what the whole is, what the all of it is, what everything to be known, everything to be explained, is; and how it is that.*

**Lonergan on the Whole:**

The Whole is what is to be known in the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.

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later distinction between civil society and the state); the view that all legitimate political power must be ‘representative’ and based on the consent of the people; and a liberal interpretation of law which leaves people free to do whatever the law does not explicitly forbid. Hobbes was one of the founders of modern political philosophy and political science. His understanding of humans as being matter and motion, obeying the same physical laws as other matter and motion, remains influential; and his account of human nature as self-interested cooperation, and of political communities as being based upon a “social contract” remains one of the major topics of political philosophy.

3 *Realpolitik* (from German: *real* ‘realistic’, ‘practical’, or ‘actual; and *Politik* ‘politics’), is politics or diplomacy based primarily on considerations of given circumstances and factors, rather than explicit ideological notions or moral and ethical premises. It is often simply referred to as pragmatism in politics, e.g. “pursuing pragmatic policies”. The term *Realpolitik* is sometimes used pejoratively to imply politics that are coercive, or amoral.
An anticipatory, a heuristic approach to the questions of the whole.

Indirectly, not directly, about the Whole, directly through questions, not directly through answers.

Judging is a knowing of being, it is not yet knowing being.

But to say that being is what we know through judging seems unreal unless intellectual conversion has taken place.

Lonergan on the Whole

“What, one may ask, is that totality? It is [what is to be known in] the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.” (CWL 3, p. 374).

“Judging is a complete increment in knowing; if correct, it is a knowing of being; but it is not yet knowing being, for that is attained only through the totality of correct judgments.” (CWL 3, p. 378, emphasis added).

So by way of contrast, Lonergan says, we may ask what the totality, what the whole is; and his answer is that the whole is what is to be known in the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.

“What, one may ask, is that totality? It is [what is to be known in] the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.” (CWL 3, p. 374).
That’s not chapter fourteen, “The Method of Metaphysics” *(CWL 3, pp. 410-455)*; that’s back in chapter twelve, “The Notion of Being” *(CWL 3, pp. 372-398)*. *That’s his account of the*
whole. As we saw, it’s a heuristic, it’s an anticipatory, it’s a second-order definition of the whole. He was using the word ‘being’, but I wanted to draw attention to the fact that he is using the word ‘totality’ here. So his metaphysics is an investigation of what is it that we can know about wholeness? And what we can know about wholeness is what we can know by knowing how we anticipate wholeness. So what is the whole is what’s to be known in a complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.

And as I tried to point out in the last two classes, the emphasis here is on the complete set of questions. The extent to which the questions, the extent to which our questioning is impaired, and degraded, and deflected, to that extent the set of answers that we have to an imperfect, to a restricted set of questions, will be an imperfect account of the whole, an imperfect way of talking about the whole.

I also threw this in:

“Judging is a complete increment in knowing; if correct, it is a knowing of being; but it is not yet knowing being, for that is attained only through the totality of correct judgments.” (CWL 3, p. 378, emphasis added).

We talked about this a little bit last week, so I’m not going to repeat it! But I think it is a — It’s almost like an aphorism, that invites an awful lot of reflection.

First and foremost, that only in judging, only in correct affirmative judging, do we know being, just doesn’t seem — It seems like certainly we know what’s real before we get around to the business of forming propositions and judgments; that our contact with reality is much more immediate, and much more aboriginal, than is the this abstruse and complicated business of forming judgments. So there’s a sense of reality that Lonergan is saying that the whole has to do with, and that just seems unreal: that “startling strangeness” that he mentions in the “Introduction”.

4 Pat in fact uses the preposition ‘in’ at this point, as does the slide. CWL 3, Insight, however, uses ‘through’.
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, p. 22).*

And the second thing is that the whole is not known in a judgment! Every time we make a judgment, we know something about being, but the wholeness of being is only known, or would only be known, in the totality of all correct judgments. And that’s something we don’t have! It’s only something we anticipate. As he says, we don’t have a concept of being; we have a notion of being; because in order to have a concept of being, we would first have to have understanding of being; and in order to have an understanding of being, we would have to understand everything about everything; we’d have to have the totality of the total set of answers to the total set of questions. And since we don’t have that, we can’t form a concept of being. What we have instead is a notion of being, a notion of the whole.
Student question (from a Hegelian perspective) about the knower and their self-sufficiency with respect to being.

Each subject has to carry out their own autonomous judgments; but humans do their knowing within the context of history. Humans don’t do their knowing in isolation. This is indeed a concrete matter of fact, but it cannot be abstracted away.

Jonathan: I have a question very quickly about the second [presumably referring to the second paragraph on the slide] — In the clause “it is a knowing of being”, is it implicit in this that it’s a knowing of being by a knower, or by knowers, or —

Pat: Sure.

Jonathan: Okay. So the reason I ask is I’m sort of curious about the sort of status of knowers as sort of “self-standing”. So it’s written in the Phenomenology of Spirit, for example, that for Hegel you have the selves are not sort of self-standing, but you become a self insofar as you are inter-subjective, at least on certain readings of Hegel. So I am a little bit curious about that. Because, I mean, if you’re being a little bit creative you could say that — you could talk of in terms like a knowing of being in which sort of the word ‘of’ talks of being knowing itself, in sort of a closed system sort of, so I just wanted to ask. So, that

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Phänomenologie des Geistes (1807) is Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s most important and widely discussed philosophical work. Hegel's first book, it describes the three-stage dialectical life of Spirit. The title can be translated as either The Phenomenology of Spirit or The Phenomenology of Mind, because the German word Geist has both meanings. The book’s working title, which also appeared in the first edition, was Science of the Experience of Consciousness. On its initial publication, it was identified as Part One of a projected “System of Science”, of which the Science of Logic was the second part. A smaller work, titled Philosophy of Spirit (also translated as "Philosophy of Mind"), appears in Hegel’s Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, and recounts in briefer and somewhat altered form the major themes of the original Phenomenology.
being said, there does have to be a sort of — there has to be a knower for that instance to happen in that sort of self-standing thing?

Pat: Ahm, yes, with some qualifications.

Jonathan: Okay.

Pat: So the first thing is just to point out what he is saying here [Pat gestures to the still displayed “Lonergan on the Whole” slide]. What he is saying here is that you don’t know being every time we say “It is!” What you know is the “isness of it”! So you don’t know the totality of being in any given judgment! But nevertheless, it is only in the totality of judgments that we do know being, that one would know being!

The thing about the subject being ‘self-standing’, as you put it: each and every judgment is something that an individual subject does. I can’t do it for you, and you can’t do it for me. Each of us has to go through the process of assembling all the conditions that would constitute a virtually unconditioned, and no-one can do that for us. So there is an autonomy that’s involved in that! But as I pointed out — I think it was when we were doing Chapter Seven (CWL 3, “Common Sense as Object,” pp. 232-269) — human beings only do their knowing in the context of history. Our common sense is inherited; our capacity for forming judgments is conditioned by the insights and the education that we’ve got; so human beings don’t do their knowing all by themselves as though they had no dependence on historicity and community. I’m not quite sure if that is what you had in mind. I know it means something a little different —

Jonathan: —But that’s more a matter of fact than something that is essential about humans as knowers!

Pat: Yeah. *It’s a matter of fact, but it’s not a fact that we can abstract from.*

Jonathan: Sure.

Pat: It’s not something essential in the sense that, were there only one human being, that human being could still experience, understand, judge, decide, love, value, and so on. What they could do with that given capacity would be critically limited. But — how do I want to say this? — *there isn’t anything intrinsic to community in Lonergan’s account of knowing; but there’s something concretely true about being in Lonergan’s account of knowing.*
Metaphysics.

The origins of the word with Aristotle and literal meanings of ‘metaphysics’, e.g., beyond nature, beyond the changeable.

Traditional meanings of metaphysics as the science of being qua being; as the subject of contemplation; as demonstration from first principles, etc.

Metaphysics

Aristotle:

The word: \(\mu\varepsilon\tau\alpha - \varphi\upsilon\sigma\varsigma\) = “beyond nature”

Or “beyond ‘the Physics’”

Ahm, so metaphysics, in which we’re talking about the whole, and the whole is what Lonergan’s metaphysics is about. And now to make the transition to metaphysics as such. The word ‘metaphysics’: as far as I know it comes into circulation because of Aristotle. And in the collected edition of Aristotle’s work, the early one, the book was called the Metaphysics. It doesn’t seem to have actually had a title. Aristotle’s titles don’t necessarily come down to us. The Nicomachean Ethics was not what Aristotle called it. It was called that because his son, Nicomachus,\(^6\) edited the lectures that he gave on — that set of lectures, the set of notes

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\(^6\) The *Nicomachean Ethics* is the name normally given to Aristotle’s best-known work on ethics. The work, which plays a pre-eminent role in defining Aristotelian ethics, consists of ten books, originally separate scrolls, and is understood to be based on notes from his lectures at the Lyceum. The title is often
that he had on ethics. The Prior and the Posterior Analytics don’t come down to us with Aristotle’s titles. He only refers to them as the Analytics, and they were four books. Somebody later divided them into two; philologically and structurally they look very different. The first two books look very different from the third and fourth books, so we now call them the Prior Analytics and the Posterior Analytics.

The Metaphysics is\(^7\) like that. It comes down to us, and the title was inserted by some editor at some later point. But *the word φύσις* (phusis), *from which we get the word ‘physics’, means nature. And in Aristotle’s account at least, physics has to do with the changeable.* It’s often said that physics has to do with motion. But we have this modern tendency to think of motion as local motion, locomotion, movement through space and time. But Aristotle was much more interested in all change; all change, whether it is the changeableness of physical location or the changeableness of plant growth, or the changeableness of human thinking or of human perceiving. All of those are changes, all those fall within the sphere of *phusis*. And in his book on *physics*, he is interested in what is the principle, or what is first, in the realm of that which changes.

*When he gets to metaphysics, he’s got a more comprehensive set of concerns. But the word ‘metaphysics’ literally means, “beyond nature.” And so people tend to think of metaphysics as that which is about what’s beyond the physical.* And for a variety of reasons, people whom one might call ‘physicalists’ will reject the validity of anything metaphysical. *All that there is is the physical, and there isn’t anything more than the physical, however they defined it. Therefore, metaphysics is meaningless.* And certainly the Logical Positivists, a movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, began with a very great revulsion against anything metaphysical. As I mentioned before, particularly Hegelian and Vitalistic

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\(^7\) It’s not clear to the transcriber whether Pat says ‘is’ or ‘isn’t’ at this point.
metaphysics, since that which wasn’t physical wasn’t observable; and therefore their attempt was to rid the world of this idle speculation about that which is beyond the physical.

So metaphysics could mean “beyond nature”; or it could mean, as my teacher in Graduate School said, it could mean “What comes after the Physics.” It doesn’t literally come after the book ‘the physics’ in the Collected Works, but it comes after all the things that are within the purview of physics. So you know, the ‘physics’ and the ‘meteorology’, and the works on ‘the animals’, and so on. And then you’ve got this book, which if Aristotle called it anything, he probably called it “First Philosophy.” That would have been his title for it. It’s metaphysics because it comes after the book ‘physics.’ And there’s no commitment therefore that metaphysics is about only that which is outside the physical.

Metaphysics, traditionally, is understood as the science of being qua being; not the being of eternal things, not the being of mathematical things, not the being of living things, not the being of human things, but being qua being. But what is it that can be said in a scientific way about being qua being? And at least one possible construal of metaphysics is that it has to do with contemplation; it has to do with contemplation of the eternal things.

Metaphysics

Traditionally:

The science of being qua being

Contemplation

Science: Deduction from First Principles

Lonergan:

“There now let us say that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation
of the integral **heuristic structure** of proportionate being.” *(CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added).*

At the end of Aristotle’s *Ethics*, having considered a variety of different excellences of the soul — ‘virtues’, as we’ve come to call them — he’s interested in the question of what is the highest of all the virtues, the highest of all the excellences. And he gives a strong argument that the highest of the excellences are the excellences of thinking, the excellences of ‘logos’, of reason. And there’s at least a suggestion there, it’s not a full-blown argument, but people tend to read him that way — but the reading is at least open to other options — people tend to read him as saying that *theoria*, or the habit of thinking that is concerned with the unchanging, with the eternal, is the highest of all the excellences. And that’s sometimes called ‘contemplation’; *theoria* is sometimes translated as contemplation, partly because of the way in which ‘theory’ is now used in our sciences. ‘Theory’ as it’s used in our sciences would not qualify for what Aristotle calls ‘theoria’, so contemplation. So people who are doing metaphysics are just contemplating. *And if metaphysics is the science of being qua being, the science that Aristotle puts forward is the science of demonstration from first principles; demonstration here means logical proof, logical valid proof from principles or premises that are knowable in themselves, intelligible in themselves, not just intelligible to us.*

**Lonergan’s Definition of [Explicit] Metaphysics.**

**The Stages of Metaphysics for Lonergan:**

**Latent Metaphysics:** the immanent and operative structure of human knowing, guided by the unrestricted desire to know; it is common to everyone.

**Problematic Metaphysics:** the history of human efforts to make latent metaphysics explicit. *(Everyone has
two metaphysics — the latent metaphysics, plus a more or less adequate attempt to formulate latent metaphysics).
Explicit Metaphysics: Comes about after humans have achieved self-appropriation and are able to draw upon this as they encounter the totality intended in questioning.

The Method of Metaphysics is primarily pedagogical and aimed at self-appropriation.

Starting point of metaphysics is persons as they are; explicit metaphysics is a personal attainment.

So those would be some of the ways in which metaphysics is traditionally thought of; it’s also traditionally thought of by as many — in as many ways as there are metaphysicians who think it, and as many stages as they think that passes through the — I’m doing this just to give us a little bit of a contrast to how Lonergan thinks of metaphysics. He gives this as his definition:

“Now let us say that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.”

(CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added).

A typical Lonergan sentence!

[Some murmurs of agreement]

And we’re going to try to unpack as much of that as we can in this class, and perhaps in succeeding classes.

The first thing I wanted to draw attention to there is the word ‘explicit’. “Let’s say that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.” (CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added). I’m going to try as best as I can to walk through each of those words in the remainder of this class, and put them in connection with what he’s doing in chapter fourteen, “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455).
So Lonergan identifies stages of metaphysics, and of course he’s not the first person to do that; Plato of course does that, Whitehead does that, Aristotle himself does it. But for Lonergan there is first the latent metaphysics. Now, what does he mean by latent metaphysics? This is on page 416:

> It would appear that metaphysics can exist in three stages or forms. In its first stage, it is latent. Empirical, intellectual and rational consciousness are immanent and operative in all human knowing; from them spring both the various departments of knowledge and the attempts that are made to reverse counterpositions and to attain coherence. (CWL 3, p. 416, emphasis added).

We haven’t yet talked about “reversing counterpositions.”

> So latent metaphysics then is just the immanent and operative structure of human knowing underpinned and guided by the unrestricted desire to know, guided by our questioning; that’s latent metaphysics. Latent metaphysics is always operative! Everybody has a metaphysics! People have actually two kinds of metaphysicses! Everybody has got a latent metaphysics. And for Lonergan, it’s the same latent metaphysics. But everybody also has some kind of an explicit metaphysics, or a thematic metaphysics. And that’s what I was trying to illustrate by asking: “What do people say is the account of the whole?” So everybody has got both a latent metaphysics, which they share with every other human being;
and they’ve also got a more or less well-thought-out explicit metaphysics, which can vary from person to person. So that’s what he means by latent metaphysics.

Then there is **problematic metaphysics**. Problematic metaphysics is the history of metaphysics. It’s the history of the human race.

In its second stage, metaphysics is problematic. The need of a systematic, or you might say, a methodical, effort for unification is felt; studies of the nature of knowledge abound; but these very studies are involved in the disarray of the positions and counterpositions …. *(CWL 3, p. 416, interposition by Pat not in bold).*

So problematic metaphysics is the history of human thinking in its attempt to make the latent metaphysics explicit.

Now, this brings us back to something we did back at the beginning of the first semester, when Lonergan is giving his account of self-appropriation, and he talks about “the ideal of knowledge.”

8 Now the shift is, if you like, to the ideal of the whole. So there’s the ideal of knowledge, but now it’s the shift to the ideal of the whole, what the whole is all about! And what he’s saying here is that human history goes through this process, which he uses Hegel’s way of talking about thesis and antithesis and synthesis and alienation, to characterize the way in which when you try to make explicit an ideal, you alienate the ideal from the latent capacity of the ideal of knowledge. Here in fact he is saying that as the history of humankind has attempted to come to terms with the question of what’s the whole, what’s the whole in being, that it has problematic tensions in it. But here, unlike in the chapter on self-appropriation, here Lonergan is giving us some specificity about exactly why there are going to be some tensions between the ideal, the implicit ideal of knowledge, and the explicit ideals of knowledge, and he’s going to sort that out!

So there’s problematic metaphysics, and then there’s **explicit metaphysics**, which of course is Lonergan! And explicit metaphysics is when human beings have managed to do

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8 Pat is referring to material he used at the start of the course from *CWL 5, Understanding and Being*, lecture one: “Self-appropriation and Insight”, pp. 3-32).
self-appropriation, have managed to really understand the dynamics of human knowing, and their implications for the whole, the implications for what is to be known in the totality of answers to the totality of questions.

Stages of Metaphysics.

“Bluntly, the starting point of metaphysics is people as they are.” (CWL 3, p. 422).

“The first directive, then, is to begin from interest, to excite it, to use its momentum to carry things along.” (CWL 3, pp. 422-423).

“In other words, the method of metaphysics primarily is pedagogical; it is headed towards an end that is unknown and as yet cannot be disclosed.” (CWL 3, p. 423).

So the movement, as Lonergan says, to explicit metaphysics — So that first word, ‘explicit’, is that:

“explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.” (CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added).

The first is ‘explicit.’ So methodical metaphysics depends upon having reached a certain level of attainment with regard to self-appropriation. And as he says:

“Bluntly, the starting point of metaphysics is people as they are.” (CWL 3, p. 422).
“The first directive of metaphysics, then, is to begin from interest, to excite it, to use its momentum to carry things along.” (*CWL* 3, pp. 422-423 (interposition by Pat not in bold)).

“In other words, the method of metaphysics primarily is pedagogical; it is headed towards an end that is unknown and as yet cannot be disclosed.” (*CWL* 3, p. 423).

So he’s basically saying that what I’ve been doing in the previous thirteen chapters is pedagogical. And I was not in a position to say anything thematically about what the whole is until I have engaged you, the reader, in the process of self-appropriation. And prior to the process of self-appropriation is to get people interested enough to want to endure the difficult passages that we’ve ploughed our way through for the last seventeen or so weeks.

**Lonergan on Metaphysics**

“Metaphysics, then is not something in a book but something in a mind.” (*CWL* 3, p. 421).

“Metaphysics is a personal attainment.” (*CWL* 3, p. 421).

*That means then that metaphysics is not something in a book; but it’s something in a mind. That’s to say that explicit metaphysics is a personal attainment.*


Now how that exactly is the case, well, we’re going to try to sort out. But his emphasis here is that metaphysics can’t just presuppose that the concepts that are being used are already well-understood. That there has to be a preparatory process in order for
metaphysics to come — It’s pointless to begin with metaphysics. Not every author does, but some authors begin with metaphysics; and there’s — at least from Aristotle — a reason for beginning with metaphysics, because that’s First Philosophy; if it’s First Philosophy, then that’s what you ought to do first. What you find if you try to do metaphysics first is that the students just look at you with glazed-over eyes and puzzlement on their faces, that look like they don’t know what you’re talking about. So Lonergan is saying: What’s the proper preparation for doing metaphysics, and it is a certain kind of pedagogy that emphasizes and brings about self-appropriation.

Metaphysics as Methodical is Dialectical:

Dialectical method makes metaphysics not merely contemplative; it is a doing, a dialectical doing.

It entails the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.

Lonergan believed that metaphysics has a job to do, and that he has a method for that task.

Prior to an explicit account of what is normative in knowing, attempts to complete the dialectical tasks of metaphysics will tend to confound one another.

In order to do dialectical metaphysics methodically, Lonergan distinguishes between:

— the Basis and the Expansion;

— between Proportionate and
Transcendent Being;
— he will show the need to conceive and affirm the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, and
— he will discuss the implementation of that heuristic structure through dialectic and dialogue using these distinctions.

Subsequent chapters spell out first the formulation and implications of the integral heuristic structure; they also begin to engage in some implementations.

Metaphysics as Methodical

Method as Dialectical
Distinguish Basis and Expansion
Distinguish Proportionate and Transcendent Being
Conceive and Affirm
Integral Heuristic Structure of Proportionate Being
Implement through Dialogue and Dialectic
with Sciences and Commonsense Culture

If the first stage of metaphysics is — If the crucial stage in metaphysics is the transition from problematic metaphysics to explicit metaphysics by way of a proper pedagogy, then metaphysics becomes methodical in so far as self-appropriation has been
So the first thing is that the method of metaphysics is dialectical. I’m going to say some things about this a little bit more in a few moments. But remember, one of the things that is associated with traditional metaphysics is that it’s contemplation. It’s contemplation about being qua being. But the operative word in Lonergan’s account — I would say that the operative words in Lonergan’s account of metaphysics is that it is “the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.” (CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added). Metaphysics is a doing! As Lonergan understands it, metaphysics is doing something. It isn’t just contemplating something. That’s part of the reason why he says that it’s a personal attainment. He doesn’t just mean it in the sense of metaphysics is a body of wisdom that resides within a person. He actually conceives of this as a human activity that accomplishes things. Method is, as he’ll say in the book Method in Theology, it’s a set of operations that yields cumulative and recurrent results. He does think of metaphysics as something that is — that has a job to do! And that he’s got a method that is going to make the doing of that job more effective.

A hint of what he has in mind is provided by that the same place I read from before about the stages of metaphysics. It’s on page 416, which means he is still talking about latent metaphysics. He says that from the structure of human knowing, that’s implicit in everybody, come forth

“The various departments of knowledge and the attempts that are made to reverse the counterpositions [mistakes⁹] and to attain coherence and unity; but the common source of all knowledge is not grasped with sufficient clarity and precision; the dialectical principle of transformation is not a developed technique; and efforts at unification are haphazard and spasmodic.” (CWL 3, p. 416).

⁹ Pat substitutes the word ‘mistakes’ at this point for Lonergan’s term ‘counterpositions’, presumably because the latter term had not yet been explained in class.
So in other words, as people try to sort out the questions that we talked about last time — What is knowing? What is reality? What is objectivity? What is good? What is true? What is of value? What is deserving of devotion? All those kinds of questions — As people try to sort those things out, there are principles, as he says, upon which answers can be found; but until they are explicitly formulated, the attempts are going to be caught up in the biases and the dialectical tensions; and the things that people say will have a kind of mixture of coherence and incoherence. And until there is an explicit, thematic, account both of what’s normative in human knowing, and what are the possible sources of ‘interferencing’ so that the attempts to do some sorting out of the dialectical tasks of metaphysics, are going to be haphazard; which means sometimes you are going to be reversing a position and developing a counterposition, instead of vice versa. And that’s what dialectical process is!

So first and foremost, metaphysics is a dialectic; it’s doing something, it’s doing something dialectical, whatever that means, which we hopefully will get sorted out a little bit later on. But the basic doing that’s the doing of metaphysics is a dialectical doing.

In order to do the dialectic methodically, which is to say, get around the difficulties posed by not having a sufficiently well-thematised and articulated account of what’s latent in human knowing, with the latent envisioning of the whole we talked about, the first move is to make a distinction between what he calls the basis and its expansion. That is to say that every philosophy has a basis and has an expansion.

And then he’s going to make a distinction between proportionate being and transcendent being. He doesn’t use the word ‘transcendent’ in chapter fourteen, “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455), but later on it comes up in Understanding and Being (CWL 5). But there’s a distinction between proportionate and transcendent being; and methodically, he’s going to find it more productive to deal with questions about proportionate being first, and questions about transcendent being later. The questions about transcendent being are deferred until chapter nineteen [“General Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 657–708)], and chapter twenty [“Special Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 709–751)] of the book Insight.

And so chapter fourteen [“The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410–455)] through seventeen [“Metaphysics as Dialectic” (CWL 3, pp. 553–617)], actually fourteen

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10 Pat says ‘basic’ at this point, but this is surely a lapsus linguae.
through eighteen [“The Possibility of Ethics” (CWL 3, pp. 618 – 656)], he’s using as much of the method of proportionate being — that pertains to proportionate being — as he can. And then when he finally gets to the end of chapter eighteen he makes a transition to the other kind of metaphysics, so to speak. Although he does — But his definition of metaphysics in Insight is that metaphysics is about proportionate being. He does talk about metaphysics of transcendent being in Understanding and Being (CWL 5); but he reserves the word ‘metaphysics’ for proportionate being in Insight. There would really be the Philosophy of Transcendent Being, which is what chapters nineteen [“General Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 657–708)], and chapter twenty [“Special Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 709–751)] are about.

Having made the distinction between proportionate being and transcendent being, then the task is to conceive and affirm “the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being” (CWL 3, p. 416, emphases added). And then finally to “implement through dialogue and dialectic with sciences and commonsense culture” — to implement that heuristic structure.

So roughly speaking, that, overall, is what Lonergan’s metaphysics is all about. In this chapter, chapter fourteen of Insight on “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455), and to some extent in the first half of the next chapter, chapter fifteen, Elements of Metaphysics (CWL 3, pp. 456-511), he is laying out the first parts of this, and then he’s going to start to do some implementation of it, dealing with questions of development, then questions of unity and distinction and relation, then dealing with the questions of history and hermeneutics, and ethics as he goes — so it’s implementation is what he is doing in the latter half of chapter fifteen, Elements of Metaphysics (CWL 3, pp. 456-511), and then chapter sixteen Metaphysics as Science (CWL 3, pp. 512-552), chapter seventeen Metaphysics as Dialectic (CWL 3, pp. 553-617), and chapter eighteen The Possibility of Ethics (CWL 3, pp. 618 – 656)].

From Contemplation to Implementation:

The basic principle and precept of dialectical metaphysics: “Develop the positions; reverse the counter positions.”

There is a factual dialectic between positions and
counter-positions in human lives and in human history; but Lonergan’s methodical tools are intended to make more effective the reversal of counter-positions and the promotion of positions than would happen merely spontaneously.

From Deduction to Heuristic:

Unlike classical science which is demonstration, science for Lonergan proceeds according to a heuristic method; similarly metaphysics will have to follow a heuristic method to qualify as a science.

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From Contemplation to Implementation

Active:

Dialectical Method

“Develop the Positions”

“Reverse the Counterpositions”

*(Method in Theology, p. 249)*

Dialectic of positions and counterpositions as fact

Dialectic of positions and counterpositions as methodical

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So I mentioned this a little bit before, that Lonergan’s metaphysics is not a contemplative science, but rather an implementation science; it’s an active science with its dialectical method; and this shows up in — *He says in Insight that positions invite*
development and counterpositions invite reversal. But he’s much more assertive when he gets to Method in Theology: and he says that the basic principle, or the basic precept, of dialectical method is:

“Develop the Positions!” and “Reverse the Counterpositions!”

It’s do something! It isn’t just know something; it isn’t just: “Oh, I know that Jonathan has got a counterposition there, and so I’m better than he is, because I know he’s got a counterposition, and he doesn’t!” It’s actually to do something about it; to do something creative, and this developing and reversing!

In the beginning of chapter fourteen, “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455), he talks about just the fact of dialectic, that human beings have a dialectic in their living; and human beings who do philosophy or who articulate philosophical opinions are guided by what they think is the answer to the whole, what they think is the answer to the reality. And so there is a dialectic of positions and counterpositions in human history. It’s just a fact that there is a dialectic going on! But his interest is to make thematic and to make explicit the tools that will more effectively reverse the counterpositions and develop the positions. So it’s one thing to say “Do it!” It’s another thing to give us the tools to do it, and that’s what he sees himself as doing.

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From Deduction to Heuristic

Science as Heuristic:

“implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being” (CWL 3, p. 416).

The notion of being “is determinate inasmuch as the structure of our knowing is determinate, and so it can be defined at a second remove by saying that it refers to all that can be known
Remember that traditionally metaphysics is thought of as the science of being *qua* being; and that science in the traditional sense is deductive, it’s demonstrative, it’s a logical proof beginning from better known or more intelligible principles. *What for Lonergan is science?* … Matt?

Matt: It’s the progression from descriptive definitions to explanatory definitions.

Pat: Okay. Well, we have a version of that already in Aristotle, right? When Aristotle says that science begins from what’s better known to us and proceeds to what’s better known in itself; or from what’s natural for us to what’s natural in itself. So you have that movement. And Lonergan is taking that right from Aristotle. But he does something that’s different from what Aristotle does. … Tim?

Tim: It’s starting with the known and reaching out to an unknown through a process?

Pat: And what’s the process?

Tim: The heuristic process.

Pat: Right! Right! *So for Lonergan what characterizes modern science is its heuristic quality*. That’s why we start from the Greeks and thus earn dividends after all that confusion and hard work for the first semester.11 *For Lonergan, to do a science is to do a heuristic method; and for him, metaphysics is going to be scientific to the extent that it’s heuristic*. So just as he gave an articulation to what he saw as the immanent and operative heuristics of classical and statistical sciences — he didn’t have to invent those, they were already going on — *What he was doing is giving a philosophical account of those heuristics. So from modern science, Lonergan learned that to be scientific is to be heuristic; and so if you’re going to have a science of metaphysics, what you have to do is to figure out the heuristic of metaphysics.*

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11 Parts of this sentence are inaudible, so its precise meaning is uncertain; the version suggested above is the transcriber’s conjecture.
Lonergan already developed a heuristic of the notion of being.

Now he will develop a heuristic of proportionate being.

The distinction between Proportionate and Transcendent Being.

The ambiguity of talking about “what lies beyond or transcends human experience.”

Proportionate being is defined as whatever is known by possible human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.

Proportionate being is a subset of being.

God defies being known in this way: “There are no data on God.”

Metaphysics is the whole in knowledge, not the whole of knowledge.

— Student discussion of what this might mean.

There is a correlation between the structure of human knowing and the structure of proportionate being.

And so for Lonergan, metaphysics is going to be the implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. And what does he mean by a heuristic or a notion of being? Well, we already saw that in chapter twelve “The Notion of Being” (CWL 3, pp. 372-398), when we were looking at the notion of being. It’s as determinate as the structure
of our knowing is determinate. And so it can be defined, at a second remove, by saying that it refers to all that can be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. So his metaphysics is going to be a metaphysics of anticipation, and as structured as the anticipation is structured; the structure of the anticipation comes from our unrestricted desire to know. We’ll come back to that in more detail.

Proportionate Being and Transcendent Being

“It will simplify matters enormously if, in the present chapter, we prescind from the complicated and disputed question of the possibility of man’s knowing what lies beyond the limits of human experience.

“Accordingly, we introduce the notion of proportionate being.” (CWL 3, p. 416)

Okay. So the first distinction that he’s going to make within his refining of the tools that one needs to do this method in metaphysics is the distinction between proportionate being and transcendent being. Proportionate being we’ll see in a moment. So to get into this distinction, he says that he is going to prescind from the complicated and disputed question about the possibility of human knowing what lies beyond the limits of human experience.

Prescind: verb (used with object)
1. to separate or single out in thought; abstract.
2. to cut off, terminate, or remove.
   verb (used without object)
3. to withdraw one’s attention (usually followed by from).
4. to turn aside in thought.

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“It will simplify matters enormously if, in the present chapter, we prescind from the complicated and disputed question of the possibility of man’s knowing what lies beyond the limits of human experience. (CWL 3, p. 416).

So he’s going to temporarily withdraw our attention here from the matter of the known that lies beyond the limits of human experience. That in itself is an ambiguous question. And he’s going to defer what he means about it until the beginning of chapter nineteen “General Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 657-708): to postpone to later the question exactly what does it mean to ask about what can be known of that which lies beyond human experience? There’s a lot that lies beyond the range of human experience, depending on what you mean by it. As I’ve said before, no human being ever experienced evolution. So it seems that evolution lies beyond experience. The Big Bang lies beyond human experience. The moons of Jupiter lie beyond human experience, in the sense that we can’t see them directly, or touch them. So the phrase “what lies beyond human experience” is ambiguous!

But at least for the moment, Lonergan is going to tell us what he means by a limited sense of being, namely “proportionate being”. And he does it by way of contrast. And so here we can begin to get a little sense of what he might have in mind by “transcendent being”.

Proportionate Being and Transcendent Being

“In its full sweep, being is whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation.

But being that is proportionate to human knowing is not only to be understood and
affirmed, but also is to be experienced. So proportionate being may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” (CWL 3, p. 416).

“In its full sweep, being is whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. But being that is proportionate to human knowing is not only to be understood and affirmed, but also is to be experienced. So proportionate being may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” (CWL 3, p. 416).

Okay. So there’s his definition of proportionate being: “proportionate being may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” (CWL 3, p. 416).

Now, the distinction there is that proportionate being is clearly a subset of being, because proportionate being includes that which is known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation; but it adds the qualifier that there also would have to be some element of — and here I think you would have to include the words — possible human experience, possible sense experience and possible experience of data of consciousness.

And what we have here is simply the open question as to whether or not there is anything that can be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed that does not involve some component of human sense experience or human data of consciousness, the internal experience. The simple answer is God. Chapter nineteen, “General Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 657–708), is about is what we can know about God. And for
Lonergan — Something that Lonergan said almost as a mantra: there are no data on God. There is no sense experience of God. Whatever is to be known, intelligently grasped, and reasonably affirmed, about God, does not involve any direct human experience. That would seem to mean that it can’t be known at all! But here he’s just left this as an open question! So first, then, is to narrow the field from being qua being, being qua what can be known by the structure of human knowing, of experiencing, understanding, and judging.
And this is a slide that I used in one of our early classes to give you a hint of where Lonergan was going with this question of the whole: *that the structured relationships among our cognitional activities have an implication for the structure of the whole, the whole of proportionate being.* That’s really what he’s working out here in this idea of the heuristic proportionate being. *Metaphysics, as he says, is then not the whole of knowledge, but a whole in knowledge.* Okay.

**Lonergan on the Whole**

“Metaphysics, then, is the whole in knowledge, but not the whole of knowledge”

*(CWL 3, p. 416)*
Okay. Tell me what you think he means by that almost aphoristic remark! “Metaphysics, then, is the whole in knowledge, but not the whole of knowledge!” (CWL 3, p. 416). The whole of knowledge would be knowing everything about everything; the whole in knowledge is what? … Ian?

Ian: Understanding and confirming our own correct judgments of what it is that we can know.

Pat: Good. Good. That’s a first approximation to it, so understanding and affirming what we can know. Okay! And what more could be said about it, then? … The whole in knowledge, not the whole of knowledge. … Matt?

Matt: Would he be proposing that some of our further relevant questions, that you wouldn’t be able to answer, but at least would intimate to me that there is a whole to be known about?

Pat: Okay. So it is — Sure! There is a whole to be known by way of anticipating the entirety of my questions. … What else? … Greg?

Greg: Maybe knowing the limits of metaphysics; I mean however expansive they are, by knowing that beyond which we can know, which may in fact just be God, but kind of know the whole of the X that we’re inquiring about, presently.

Pat: Okay. And now we’ve got metaphysics as specifically trying to think about things to do with proportionate being. So yes! Knowing what lies beyond metaphysics in the sense that Lonergan is using the word ‘metaphysics’; in a way that’s more limited than traditionally it’s used, sure! What else? …

Well, okay. The heat? here — Let’s go back to the previous slide!
The heat here is the fact that human knowing is structured is going to suggest some things about the structure of proportionate being. The proportionate being is not just a lot of stuff floating around out there! That proportionate being has some ‘structuredness’ to it; and that ‘structuredness’ is correlate to the structured consciousness of human knowers.

Lonergan on the Whole

“Metaphysics, then, is the whole in knowledge, but not the whole of knowledge”

(CWL 3, p. 416)
So when he says that metaphysics is “the whole in knowledge, but not the whole of knowledge” (CWL 3, p. 416), what he is getting at is that it’s important, in order to be able to do the effective work of metaphysical method, that we know as much as we can about how the whole of being, or at least the whole of proportionate being, is structured, so as to be effective in promoting the positions and reversing the counterpositions. There’s something about structuring: it’s correlative! And the next thing he is going to do — So he makes a distinction between transcendent and proportionate being, as a step towards developing his method for implementing metaphysics.

The Basis and its Expansion:

How claims about cognitional theory (the basis) serve to ground metaphysical, ethical, and theological pronouncements (the expansion).

Metaphysics becomes methodical, by tracing disagreements about important philosophical issues to their strategic roots in disagreements about the nature of human knowing (basic positions and counter-positions).

The basis-expansion model provides a heuristic for interpreting philosophers and the history of philosophy.

There is a larger totality of possible judgments, incorrect as well as correct.

In each philosophy there is a strategic set of judgments that determine the general character of the world, of the whole, for it.
Basis and Expansion

“First, in any philosophy it is possible to distinguish between its cognitional theory and, on the other hand, its pronouncements on metaphysical, ethical, and theological issues. “Let us name the cognitional theory the basis, and the other pronouncements the expansion.”

“there are two aspects to the basis … (CWL 3, p. 412).

The next distinction he is going to make is between what he calls the Basis and its Expansion. And here he says:

“In any philosophy it is possible to distinguish between its cognitional theory, and on the other hand, its pronouncements on metaphysical, ethical, and theological issues.” (CWL 3, p. 412, emphases added).

We saw that — I think I have that on a slide earlier this semester, but we saw it back at the very beginning of the course when we were looking at the “Introduction”, when Lonergan says that his method of philosophy is going to be a verifiable metaphysics.

Sixthly, the philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be VERIFIABLE. .... In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements regarding sensible fact, so every statement in PHILOSOPHY and METAPHYSICS can be shown to imply

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statements regarding cognitional fact. (CWL 3, p. 5, emphases added).

Lonergan says that his method of philosophy is going to be a verifiable metaphysics — a verifiable metaphysics because it’s going to be possible to show that philosophical, metaphysical, theological, ethical, pronouncements are correlated to cognitional theory, the pronouncements of our cognitional theory. That depending on the pronouncements of our cognitional theory, we’ll have pronouncements that follow as a result in metaphysics, philosophy, ethics, theology, and so on. So he’s going to be methodical by finding the strategic issues as they are rooted in agreements and disagreements about cognitional theory.

So the basis of any philosophy, any theology, any ethical system, is its explicit, or its implicit, commitments with regard to cognitional theory. So the basis has to do with cognitional theory. And its expansion then is the things that it says about being, about the universe, about reality, about the theological issues, about ethical issues, what should and shouldn’t be done, what is and isn’t good. Those all are going to follow as an expansion from the fundamental commitments in the cognitional theory. So he’s going to name the cognitional theory the basis, and the pronouncements in those other areas that result, its expansion.

“Let us name the cognitional theory the basis, and the other pronouncements the expansion.” (CWL 3, p. 412, emphases added).

Now the tricky thing, of course, is: although Lonergan is organizing it this way, of course people don’t actually think this way, or they don’t explicitate their thinking in this way. So what he’s doing is giving what philosophers sometimes call a “rational reconstruction.” He’s not actually trying to give a rational reconstruction of what people do, but he’s giving heuristic guidance as to how to interpret what people are saying and doing.

In one way of thinking about this chapter on “The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455) and the things that follow, is he’s giving us a heuristic for reading philosophers,
or interpreting philosophers. Now I’ll have more to say about interpretation in a later chapter. But this is a way to read; how to read a philosophical text, how to read the history of philosophy; and we’ll see that again in a few moments.

So it isn’t as though everybody’s going to start chapter one with their cognitional theory! It is rather that a person who is exercising the self-appropriated method of metaphysics is going to read with an eye to what are the implicit commitments with regard to questions about cognitional theory, and to what extent this is showing up in the results or positions that are taken, in philosophical arguments. So that is what he means by this distinction between the basis and the expansion.

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**Basis and Expansion**

“However, there is a still larger totality of possible [incorrect] judgments; within it there are strategic sets that serve to define the general character of the concrete universe in accord with the varying viewpoints of different philosophies.” *(CWL 3, p. 386).*

And then he says that “there are two aspects to the basis … *(CWL 3, p. 412).* There are two aspects to the basis, because there is a larger totality of possible judgments — not only correct judgments, but also incorrect judgments. And if you’re reading philosophers, or if you’re reading anything, you can anticipate — you should anticipate — that some of the judgments are going to be incorrect ones. In some sense you could say that that is what philosophy has always been — certainly from the time of Socrates, arguably from the time of
Parmenides — that philosophy has always been about the rigorous examination of judgments, beliefs that people hold, and scrutinising them for their correctness or incorrectness.
Basic Positions and Counterpositions.

Within these strategic sets, there will be basic positions and counter-positions on knowing, objectivity, and reality — components that are compatible or incompatible with the self-appropriated positions on knowing, objectivity and reality (being).

Any philosophy contains an implicit or explicit cognitional theory, more or less well-formulated, that rests on either a basic position or a basic counter-position.

Characteristics of the Basic Position.

How the basic position conceives of Knowing, Being, and Objectivity.

Lonergan’s method is that within the things that people say, both correct and incorrect, that people aren’t pure logic machines, that people make judgments some of which are correct and some of which are incorrect; and they mix and blend with one another in the writing of philosophers; Lonergan says that within those judgments there are going to be

“strategic sets that serve to define the general character of the concrete universe in accord with the varying viewpoints of different philosophies.” (CWL 3, p. 386).

Within the judgments that people make, there are going to be strategic sets that set the general character of the concrete universe with varying viewpoints of the philosophers. So their sense of the whole is going to be marked out by certain strategic pronouncements, or at least implicit judgments, in what they’re writing.
Basis and Expansion

“Such strategic sets have already been illustrated; for example, there is matter and nothing but matter, or there is appearance and nothing but appearance, or there is thought and nothing but thought, or the structure of our knowing is determinate and so the structure of being proportionate to our knowing is determinate.” (CWL 3, p. 386).

And as he says, in some of the strategic sets that have already been illustrated are materialism: “there is matter and nothing but matter”; phenomenalism: “there is appearance and nothing but appearance”; and then the last set is really his, that: being is proportionate to our knowing, and so the strategic set in that case is the strategic set about the structure of human knowing: “the structure of our knowing is determinate and so the structure of being proportionate to our knowing is determinate.” (CWL 3, p. 386, emphases added).

So within the strategic sets then, he’s going to make a distinction between positions and counterpositions. And positions within the whole set of judgments that the philosopher, or anybody, makes, there are going to be things that are said there that are coherent with basic positions on the real, on knowing, and on objectivity; and counterpositions that are incoherent with them. So this is his broad sense of sorting out the positions and counterpositions in what is written, and what is said, and implicitly in what’s institutionalized.
Positions and Counterpositions

“any philosophic pronouncement on any epistemological, metaphysical, ethical, or theological issue will be named a position if it is coherent with the basic positions on the real, on knowing, and on objectivity; and it will be named a counterposition if it is coherent with one or more of the basic counterpositions.” (CW3, p. 413).

But there’s the basis, the basic, not just the expansion but the basis. The key to his method then is to find what are the implicit basic positions and the implicit basic counterpositions, and then identify those as having defects in what people say about other issues, and how they act, and what they think about.

Basic Positions and Counterpositions

“the inevitable philosophic component immanent in the formulation of cognitional theory will be either a basic position or else a basic counterposition.” (CW3, p. 413).
So inevitable in any philosophy is a cognitional theory which will be more or less well formulated; and it will be formulated as either a basic position or a basic counterposition.

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**Basic Positions and Counterpositions**

“It will be a basic position (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.

On the other hand, it will be a basic counterposition if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions.” (*CWL* 3, p. 413).

“It will be a basic position (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’ (*CWL* 3, p. 413),

I’m going to go back to this in a moment. It will be a basic position:
(1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now,’ [of biologically extroverted consciousness];  (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction. (CWL 3, p. 413).

So it’s basic position: if knowing is what he asked us to affirm in chapter eleven (‘Self-affirmation of the Knower’, pp. 343-371), being is what is to be known by asking and answering all questions of the unrestricted desire to know; and objectivity is attained through the unfolding of the cognitional structure under the guidance of the pure desire to know, and only under the guidance of the pure desire to know, and not under the guidance of some other patterning of experience.

Several students’ comments on whether Lonergan has ‘set us up’ and manipulated us to play the game according to his rules.

— Such feelings are appropriate; it’s essential that the individual go through the process of appropriating these as the ideas for him or herself, until those feelings -- those further pertinent questions about -- of having been ‘set up’ are resolved one way or the other. “Did Lonergan set me up? Did he
overlook something?” is a valid further pertinent question.
— Moreover, the key to this not being a trap lies in the unrestricted questioning; nothing is excluded a priori; all questions are valid (in contrast to the dogmatism of ‘physicalism,’ for example).

Pat: Matt?

Matt: I have to admit that when I got to this point, I kind of got mad at him. Because the whole point of the — when he talks earlier about the pedagogy, that you know, I feel kind of like I’ve been duped, or I have been led into a trap here — he’s been setting me up all along to affirm this. Frankly, I’m happy to affirm it because I think it’s right. But, I got the sense when I got to this point that if I wanted to take on Lonergan, I’d feel like he’s sort of — he’s set all the rules earlier with his own cognitional theory, and that he’s got me so far in playing his game, that I don’t really have a leg to stand on. And I can — take for example the number of places where he said that cognitional theory is not capable of revision, because it’s the highest — the heuristic is ruggy\(^\text{13}\), whereas other scientific viewpoints are capable of higher syntheses. And in some sense when I got to this, I felt like he — Either he’s so right and everything is so coherent and so correct that I have to affirm this, because this is absolutely true; or he’s been setting me up to play his game the whole time, and then if that’s the case, then none of this is true! And I’m wondering if anybody else is feeling that, or if I’m right to feel that, like I’ve been tricked, or —

Pat: So, I’m off the hook, because the question has been put to the class!

[Class Laughter]

Anybody else feel — Matt wants to know if anybody else is feeling that way!

Student: I’ll have a go. What I got from chapter fourteen (“The Method of Metaphysics” CWL 3, pp. 410-455) — I read it to the very end — is that basically it’s not

\(^{13}\) The word Matt uses at this point (ruggy?), and indeed the meaning he intends, are not clear to the transcriber.
who’s doing the metaphysics, it’s what method are they using! And he talks about how the method chosen, from the outset, dictates what the final product will be! And is he trying to say — I just want to make sure I get it right — is that the method he is choosing to employ is cognitional theory?

Pat: Yes!

Student: So the product that we’re going to get is going to be proportionate to whatever cognitional theory can tell us. He has set the parameters for what cognitional theory is! And it’s almost like the argument that it’s impossible to have, because if you say this is what cognitional theory is, and we all have the faculty for cognitional theory, and it’s identical, how do you even evoke a counterposition because you’d be arguing against what you yourself are part! And so you are kind of left, like Matt said, with no leg to —

Pat: — Right. Let me just point out where you went as opposed to where you started, and where Matt Sanders was a moment ago. Where you ended up with is — I’ve already forgotten the exact way you put it, but — you said that you end up with where you are, or with who you are. And that’s right! But what was being said a little bit earlier was that Lonergan got me to play his game: “He duped me into: ‘If you buy this is what cognitional theory is, then these are the consequences.’” ... Other people? Anybody else sort of finding it like this? ... James?

James: I haven’t worked through the first half as rigorously as everyone else; — but it seems to me that part of Lonergan’s strategy — not quite a ‘strategy’ there, that could have negative connotations, which I’m sure Matt just said — but part of his choice in working through the material of, you know, science and fields that were not his own, was to show that these are activities that we are engaging in, you know: “I’m not inventing this stuff, but this is what humans are doing when they’re knowing!” And therefore that kind of, for me, would give him some degree of immunity from this sense that he’s roped you in to playing his game. He intentionally went off his own turf into different disciplines and different fields, you know, in order to just: “let’s have a look and see what’s going on here!” And that’s what we found, in a very honest way! And I think that working through the material, people find that, yeah, that this is what is going on. People come to a consensus! And so yes, it’s pedagogical, and he is kind of structuring people to have a certain
experience! But it’s not — I wouldn’t say the dice are really loaded. It’s just kind of taking people on a tour in an orderly fashion, so that they identify a correct perspective on the whole.

Pat: Okay! Let me just sort of pick up on one thread in what James just said. I think there’s a lot that’s accurate in what James said about Lonergan going outside his own field, which really wasn’t so much metaphysics as it was theology and certainly was the question of knowledge. That was really a question that concerned him for much of his life, and then the question of history. Those were his two big questions! And theology was something — Initially he didn’t think he would be able to do it. He didn’t think that was really something he was capable of. So the question of knowledge and the question of history, those really were, from early on to certainly his dying day, those were his questions. Towards the end — And so there’s something to be said on Lonergan’s behalf by saying he turned to the science field, to physics, and chemistry, and biology, and depth psychology, and so on, to show that these are also places where this structure of human knowing is immanent and operative. That’s true!

But I want to come back to something at the very end of what James said, which is that there’s a sort of a consensus that Lonergan is right; that these are the operations immanent and operative in the sciences, and in psychoanalysis, and so on. First of all, there’s not a consensus. Lonergan is a very marginal figure right now. I hope that in the twenty-second century that’s no longer true. But most people come to Boston College and say: “Who’s this Lonergan person; I never heard of him before!” And so there’s certainly not a consensus!

But more importantly from the point of view that Lonergan is getting at here: though it’s important — though he knew that it was important for human destiny that he be right and that this grow in acceptance, from a methodological point of view, consensus is not the point. Whether there’s a consensus about this is not important! What is important is exactly what Socrates says to Callicles in the Gorgias.\(^\text{14}\) — I can’t remember whether this part is with

\(^{14}\)Gorgias is a Socratic dialogue written by Plato around 380 BC. The dialogue depicts a conversation between Socrates and a small group of sophists (and other guests) at a dinner gathering. Socrates debates with the sophist seeking the true definition of rhetoric, attempting to pinpoint the essence of rhetoric and unveil the flaws of the sophist oratory popular in Athens at this time. The art of persuasion was widely
Callicles or with Polus — I think he says it twice in two different fashions. But he says: “Your procedure is to get the crowd to agree with you; my procedure is I only want one person to agree, and that’s the person you’re talking with!”

And that’s why I wanted to go back to what Matt was saying at the end of his comment. It brings us back to: “What I am!” And that’s the only thing that matters in this! Going back to Matt Sanders first question originally: I know exactly what you’re talking about! It’s exactly how I felt the first time I read through this: probably the first five times I read through it. You know, even though Levinas was writing, I didn’t even know he existed; and I certainly didn’t read anything of his. But the whole sense that this is just too neat and too complete, and the sense of not really liking that, certainly was part of my first reaction to reading Lonergan.

So let me just say a couple of things, and then we’ll take a break. And I don’t — And I want to underscore your — Part of your question was “Is it okay for me to feel this way? Is it right for me to feel this way? Absolutely! Absolutely! And until you don’t feel that way, until you no longer feel that way, for reasons that come from within you, you must feel that way. You want to feel that way. There’s something chafing against this, and it should be!

Maybe a good place to begin the response is: Lonergan said: “There will be no ‘Lonerganians’!” I myself, and a number of other persons, give the lie to that.

[Student amusement]

And he was quite emphatic that it isn’t: what I say! It’s what you say!

considered necessary for political and legal advantage in classical Athens, and rhetoricians promoted themselves as teachers of this fundamental skill. Some, like Gorgias, were foreigners attracted to Athens because of its reputation for intellectual and cultural sophistication. In the Gorgias, Socrates argues that philosophy is an art, whereas rhetoric is a skill based on mere experience. To Socrates, most rhetoric in practice is merely flattery. In order to use rhetoric for good, rhetoric cannot exist alone; rather it must depend on philosophy to guide its morality. Socrates, therefore, believes that morality is not inherent in rhetoric and that without philosophy, rhetoric is simply used to persuade for personal gain. Socrates suggests that he is one of the few Athenians to practice true politics (521d).

15 At one point in the Gorgias, Socrates claims: “you don’t compel me; instead you produce many false witnesses against me and try to banish me from my property, the truth. For my part, if I don’t produce you as a single witness to agree with what I’m saying, then I suppose I’ve achieved nothing worth mentioning concerning the things we’ve been discussing.” (472c).

16 It is not clear to the transcriber why Pat refers to Levinas at this point.
But it is a structured set of exercises. It is a pedagogy. Primarily metaphysics is pedagogical. That this rests upon the latent metaphysics that is immanent and operative in all of us. That’s what matters! The extent to which Lonergan has managed to make that explicit in an effective way, that’s going to make it methodically transformative! As you read through here, he is talking about how metaphysics transforms, how it reorients! He sees it as having an important mission for commanding. And it isn’t a mission that he is going to carry out all by himself. He knows that there is going to have to be a community of people who are operating dialectically, who have a sophisticated sense of this!

**Basic**

**Positions and Counterpositions**

“It will be a basic position (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.

On the other hand, it will be a basic counterposition if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions.” (CWL 3, p. 413).

But the first step in it, i.e., the first step in the pedagogy of metaphysics, is self — It’s the conception, affirmation, and then implementation. And until you get affirmation you can’t do the implementation. Until you’ve got the further pertinent questions, which you
have, and which Matt has, and which other people no doubt have — Those have to be dealt with! You know, as long as there are further pertinent questions, the ideas that Lonergan is setting forth are — maybe intelligible to you, but they’re not virtually unconditioned for you, until they are virtually unconditioned. Then it can feel like it’s just a trap!

But it — When it feels like it’s really you, then it’s not a trap any more; that’s the basic ‘liberatory’ function of self-appropriation; and that is what this is about!

Now, one thing to be said on the side of sort of an explicit answer is: Remember that for Lonergan metaphysics is the envisioning of the totality of answers to the totality of questions. So nothing is being excluded! If Lonergan’s account of the cognitional structure — Or let’s put it this way: Is Lonergan’s account of cognitional structure correct, did it leave something out? That’s one of the questions! So by saying that the ground of metaphysics is the unrestricted questioning is an indication that it isn’t a trap! It may be scary, but it’s not a trap! It really doesn’t close off any questions. So there’s a way in which physicalism, or naturalism of a certain kind, is very dogmatic: “There ain’t nothing more than what’s natural!” Okay. Well, where’s the natural proof for that? And it’s usually not out there. We could have discussions about that.

But the sense that have that we get to this point, or some other point in chapter fourteen (“The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455)), or in chapter twelve (“The Notion of Being” (CWL 3, pp. 372-398)), these are usually the points where it starts to get a little bit: “Wait a minute; this is just a little too neat!” Keep in mind that it rests on the unrestricted questioning. And furthermore, it’s about the whole in knowledge, not the whole of knowledge.

It’s going to turn out that what Lonergan is going to say is that the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being is pretty minimal. It’s important, strategically important, but minimal! Hopefully we’ll get to that section of the chapter later on in the second session today.

Recall Pat’s Outline for this section
quoted above on pp. 52-53:

Several students’ comments on whether Lonergan has ‘set us up’ and manipulated us to play the game according to his rules.
Pat’s outlined his response to these misgivings as follows on pp. 52-53 above:

— Such feelings are appropriate; it’s essential that the individual go through the process of appropriating these as the ideas for him or herself, until those feelings -- those further pertinent questions about -- of having been ‘set up’ are resolved one way or the other. “Did Lonergan set me up? Did he overlook something?” is a valid further pertinent question.

— Moreover, the key to this not being a trap lies in the unrestricted questioning; nothing is excluded \textit{a priori}; all questions are valid (in contrast to the dogmatism of ‘physicalism,’ for example).

But those are just some offerings that anybody that’s going to take this invitation to join in the community of the implementation, the transformation, the reorientation, has to answer the questions that you are asking. So I think they are well taken; and absolutely, this sounds like I’ve been set up and I’ve been manipulated. You have to ask yourself: “Have you been, or did you discover things about yourself through his ministering, and through his exercises, that really are fundamentally satisfying to that set of questions?”

Okay. So let’s take a break and come back in five minutes.

\textbf{End of Part One.}


Insight and Beyond

Class 18, Part Two: February 10th 2010

“The Method of Metaphysics”

(Insight, Chapter 14: “The Method of Metaphysics”)

Summary of Material

Basic Positions & Counterpositions, continued.

Basic positions are the correct answers to the three questions about cognitional fact, objectivity, and what is known (i.e., being and proportionate being) in exercising cognitional structure.

The basic positions accept knowledge about the whole of proportionate being insofar as this knowledge is underpinned by the affirmation of one’s own structure of cognition.

Self-appropriation becomes the basis for discerning and interpreting what philosophers and others say, for their coherence or incoherence with the basic positions.

Dialectic in Metaphysical Method and the Whole.

Philosophy seems never to reach final conclusions, unlike other disciplines.

Yet the many disparate philosophies may all contribute to “some basic yet polymorphic fact...”
Metaphysics as dialectical method helps identify the wider significance of a philosopher’s thought.

The Hermeneutics of Generosity and the *Spiritual Exercises*.

How the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola were important for Lonergan: They are meant to lead to true spiritual freedom, which has to be ‘won back.’

This is also what Lonergan’s exercises of self-appropriation are meant to be.

And as with the director of the Ignatian exercises, for the good of both the metaphysician and the object of inquiry, he or she must be more ready to ‘save the proposition’ and develop or reverse it rather than ‘condemn’ it.

The dialectical method of metaphysics is *not* a weapon to be used to beat down counterpositions.

Dialectical method is hard; reversing positions (not just refuting propositions) is hard.

Counterpositions are *performative* incoherences, not merely logical ones (for example, this occurs in both Hume and Kant).

Student question about how the spiritual exercises and how the pure desire to know relate to other desires, and the discernment of spirits. Are humans so able to make judgments based on reason alone? Does this mean complete, clean break from all feelings?
– The goal is to integrate passions and give them an appropriate role, neither to leave them aside nor to let them take over. We saw how dramatic pattern requires that our insights be linked with affects, in chapter six. Feelings are to be integrated, not ignored and not left to blindly interfere. Lonergan’s dialectic differs from Hegel’s. Lonergan thought that Hegel included under one dialectic several different processes that should be distinguished: natural changes, the emergence of higher viewpoints, and also the purely human consequences that result from conflicts between the pure desire and forces that oppose it. Lonergan reserves the term ‘dialectic’ for the latter alone.

– Moreover, the desire to know is not analogous to our other desires; it is enduring, but not so powerful. The other desires have limited objectives; but the detached desire to know is attached to everything, to being.

Further question about whether Lonergan’s language is a means of fostering disinterested desire?

– The suggestion that there is a deliberateness and method to the impenetrability of Lonergan’s writing an interesting one.

The Hermeneutics of Generosity, continued.
Lonergan’s hermeneutics of generosity applies to the contradictions in all human affairs, not just to the writings of philosophers.

Lonergan’s dialectic of generosity becomes methodical through his stress on inverse insights in the philosophical process.

Metaphysics as heuristic: What is meant by an integral heuristic structure?

A heuristic notion is the notion of an unknown content, and it is determined by anticipation of the kind of act that makes the unknown become known; assembled together, these notions form a heuristic structure.

An integral heuristic structure is the ordered set of all heuristic notions.

Discussion as to why the definition of proportionate being fulfills the definition of a heuristic structure, but not of the integral heuristic structure.

Yet it is “not an instance of an integral heuristic structure, for it doesn’t exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what it is to know.”

What “resources of the human mind” are not explicitly included in the definition of proportionate being? What more is needed?

Are there any heuristic notions not mentioned in the definition of proportionate being?

Answers proposed in the next class (Lecture 19, Part I, Chapter 15, “Elements of Metaphysics.”).
The Implementation of Metaphysics.

Metaphysics does not undertake to meddle with the methods of other disciplines in knowing; but strives to reverse their counterpositions and ‘work them into coherence’ by discerning in them the concrete prolongation of its own integral heuristic structure.

Metaphysics, Science and Culture: due to egotistical, group and general biases, extra-scientific content enters science, and common sense also includes common nonsense; the role of the metaphysics is to help distinguish any biased content from contents that do conform to the integral heuristic structure.

Metaphysics engages common sense and scientific culture in a dialogue, the tools of which are derived from self-appropriation.

But this is only possible for a self-appropriated metaphysician who has undertaken the difficult work of recognizing and reversing her or his own biases.

An example to reflect upon for next week: How would a self-appropriated metaphysician view the statement: “There is a gene for everything ...”? 

End of Part Two.
Insight and Beyond

Class 18, Part Two: February 10th 2010

“The Method of Metaphysics,”

(Insight, Chapter 14: “The Method of Metaphysics”)

Basic

Positions and Counterpositions

“It will be a basic position (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior ‘existential’ state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.

On the other hand, it will be a basic counterposition if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions.” (CWL 3, p. 413).
Basic Positions & Counterpositions, continued.

Basic positions are the correct answers to the three questions about cognitional fact, objectivity, and what is known (i.e., being and proportionate being) in exercising cognitional structure.

The basic positions accept knowledge about the whole of proportionate being insofar as this knowledge is underpinned by the affirmation of one’s own structure of cognition.

Self-appropriation becomes the basis for discerning and interpreting what philosophers and others say, for their coherence or incoherence with the basic positions.

So the basic positions have to do with the questions, with the issues of:

**What’s the structure of human consciousness?**

**Why is doing that knowing?**

and

**What do we know when we do that?**

And what we know when we do that in the sense that *every time when we bring it to a full complement in a virtually unconditioned affirmation, we're knowing a being, but not knowing the whole of being*. What Lonergan is doing in the chapter on metaphysics (“The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455)) is saying: What is it that we can know about the whole
of at least proportionate being, prior to knowing everything about everything, which would be to know the whole of being.

And the strategy for that is to appropriate for oneself, to conceive and to affirm one’s own structure of cognition, and then to read philosophers or to listen to people talk, and consider what are their basic commitments with regard to knowing, objectivity and being, and the positions that they take about a variety of things. And if there is a contradiction between the explicit or the implicit cognitional theory in an author and what is actually going on in cognitional structure, then that’s going to be a basic part of this.

So remember, positions are the expansions of basic positions; counterpositions are the expansions of basic counterpositions. And the strategy is to identify what’s basic and use that as the lens through which to scrutinize what people have to say about philosophical issues. … Ah, there was something else I wanted to say here. …

Dialectic in Metaphysical Method and the Whole.

Philosophy seems never to reach final conclusions, unlike other disciplines.

Yet the many disparate philosophies may all contribute to “some basic yet polymorphic fact...”

Metaphysics as dialectical method helps identify the wider significance of a philosopher’s thought.

So the implementation of this dialectical method is going to help us read the history of philosophy; and it’s something that perhaps you folks have run into: “Philosophy is a worthless study because you can never get two philosophers to agree about anything!”

[Class murmur of amused recognition]

Unlike physicists, who all agree on things, mathematicians all agree on things, chemists all agree on things, biologists all agree on things; economists, well, you know the famous statement about — I think it was Harry Truman who said: He would ask an economist for
advice and the economist would reply, “Well, on the one hand, this …, on the other hand, that …; Somebody get me a one-armed economist!!”

[Class laughter]

Dialectic in Metaphysical Method and the Whole

“From the welter of conflicting philosophic definitions and from the Babel of endless philosophic arguments, it has been concluded that the object of philosophy either does not exist or cannot be attained.

“But this conclusion disregards two facts. On the one hand, the philosophers have been [people] of exceptional acumen and profundity.” (CWL 3, pp. 411-412).

But at least you know, real knowledge, real science, is in disciplines that are worthy of study; people know what they are talking about. Philosophers: it’s endless disagreement. Lonergan uses the biblical story about the Tower of Babel, where everybody is talking a different language, where there is no agreement, nothing but disunity!

“From the welter of conflicting philosophic definitions and from the babel of endless philosophic arguments, it has been concluded that the object of philosophy either does not exist or cannot be attained.” (CWL 3, pp. 411-412).
And in any case, it’s a waste of time. Some of you have certainly been chided for that; at some point in my life, I certainly have. *But this is where you start to see Lonergan’s remarkable — what I’m going to call — hermeneutical generosity.*


But this conclusion disregards two facts. On the one hand, the philosophers have been [people] of exceptional acumen and profundity. On the other hand, the many, contradictory, disparate philosophies can all be contributions to the clarification of some basic but polymorphic fact; because the fact is basic, its implications range of over the universe; but because it is polymorphic, its alternative forms ground diverse sets of implications.” (CWL 3, p. 412).

**Dialectic in Metaphysical Method and the Whole**

“On the other hand, the many, contradictory, disparate philosophies can all be contributions to the clarification of some basic but polymorphic fact …” (CWL 3, p. 412).

“In the light of the dialectic, then, the historical series of philosophies would be regarded as a sequence of contributions to a single but complex goal.” (CWL 3, p. 414).

This “is the ground for finding in any given philosophy a significance that can extend beyond the philosopher’s horizon and, even in a manner he or she did not expect, pertain to the permanent development of the human mind.” (CWL 3, p. 412).
So to dismiss the activity of philosophising on the basis of the fact that there is so much disagreement, just ignores the fact that these disagreements were among very very smart people. There is a bit of a will to power behind that kind of criticism; there’s a bit of resentment behind it, which is the wilful ignorance of the fact that very smart people have spent a lot of time worrying about these things, and doing the best they could. And that it might not be worthwhile to pay some attention to their efforts even though contradictory.

And the second fact that this ignores is that:

“On the other hand, the many, contradictory, disparate philosophies can all be contributions to the clarification of some basic but polymorphic fact …”

(CWL 3, p. 412).

So this is what I mean by the hermeneutical generosity: that he clearly has his disagreements, and he tells us how he is disagreeing with Descartes, and how he is disagreeing with Hume. We all know that he’s having this running battle with Kant; underneath the surface, there is an even more subtle running battle with Hegel. So he clearly has his disagreements! And yet he is saying that the right way to read the history of philosophy is that the conflicting opinions, even as conflicting, are contributions to something, something very important.

“In the light of the dialectic, then, the historical series of philosophies would be regarded as a sequence of contributions to a single but complex goal.” (CWL 3, p. 414).

And in the light of this dialectic, then — So in other words, dialectic means being able to read, and listen, and act, with an ability to make the distinction between position and counterposition. And in light of that, to be able to see these complex, contradictory comments as indeed contributions to something that can only be realized, or is only being realized let’s say, in that fashion. And that

This “is the ground for finding in any given philosophy a significance that can extend beyond the philosopher’s horizon and, even in a manner he or she
did not expect, pertain to the permanent development of the human mind.” (CWL 3, p. 412).

And that’s part of the work of metaphysics as dialectic: to find a significance in the work of a philosopher, or a theologian, or an ethicist, that extends beyond what they themselves articulate. And it is important to let that significance be known because the welter and the babel is coming to obscure it. So that’s what the method of metaphysics: Develop the positions! Reverse the counterpositions!

I was looking for the quote — “I wasn’t able to find it — Lonergan said: “There is no such thing as a pure counterposition!” And so, it was his attitude to make the best of every argument that he encountered. Something that was very characteristic of Gadamer, for example; And in his own way, of Aristotle. At the beginning of the Metaphysics, Aristotle gives very explicit recognition and praise to everyone who went before him, and saying that if it weren’t for them, I wouldn’t be able to do what I am doing!

Remember Lonergan says this in the “Introduction”: I wouldn’t be able to do the kind of clarification that I’m doing were it not for the development of modern science and the history of modern philosophy. So even though he’s going to disagree with positions taken by some of the greats of modern philosophy, he regards everyone as worthy of being treated as though they are making a valuable contribution in this complicated and contradictory fashion!

The Hermeneutics of Generosity and the Spiritual Exercises.

How the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola were important for Lonergan: They are meant to lead to true spiritual freedom, which has to be ‘won back.’

This is also what Lonergan’s exercises of self-appropriation are meant to be.

And as with the director of the Ignatian exercises, for the good of both the metaphysician and the object of inquiry, he or she must be more ready to ‘save the
proposition’ and develop or reverse it rather than ‘condemn’ it.

The dialectical method of metaphysics is not a weapon to be used to beat down counterpositions.

Dialectical method is hard; reversing positions (not just refuting propositions) is hard.

Counterpositions are performative incoherences, not merely logical ones (for example, this occurs in both Hume and Kant).

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**Hermeneutics of Generosity**

“In order that both those who are giving the Spiritual Exercises, and those who are receiving them, may more help and benefit themselves, let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save the neighbour’s proposition than to condemn it. If one cannot save it, inquire how they mean it; and if it is meant badly, correct them with charity. If that is not enough, seek all the suitable means to bring them to mean it well, and save themselves.”

“Presupposition,” *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*

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Lonergan was a Jesuit. I’m not sure exactly when the point to the *Spiritual Exercises* became explicitly familiar to him. There was a moment when he heard a lecture by Father Harvey Egan who is now retired from the Theology Department here at Boston College; and
whose field was Mystical Theology. And Father Egan was giving a lecture on the *Spiritual Exercises*, and a light went on for Lonergan. He wrote about it in a letter. It was very very significant thing for him. It wasn’t as though it was the first time that he ever had the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* and what they were about. But it was the first time that he was able to thematise what the *Spiritual Exercises* were all about.

This slide passage is from what is called the ‘Presupposition’ of the *Spiritual Exercises*. It comes at the very beginning. [Pat picks up a copy of the text]. And it’s mainly addressed to the person giving the Exercises, but you’ll notice that it’s inclusive of both the person giving the Exercises and the person undergoing the Exercises. And this is the translation in the sort of a Commentary by David Fleming. There’s about a million different translations and commentaries on this book. Ignatius’s own words about the point to the Exercises are as follows:

“To conquer oneself and regulate one’s life
without determining oneself through any
tendency that is disordered.”

Father Fleming expands upon it in the following way: he says:

“The structure of the Exercises has the purpose of leading a person to a true spiritual freedom. We attain this goal by gradually bringing an order of values into our lives so that we make no choice or decisions because we have been influenced by some disordered attention or love.”

That seems to me — that it goes to the point that Matt and James and perhaps others were raising just before we broke. The point to Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises* is to lead a person to true spiritual freedom. Arguably, that’s what Lonergan’s exercises of insight are all about. He did, after all, call them ‘exercises.’ I don’t think that’s an accident!

One doesn’t come to true freedom by being left alone. True freedom, as we’ll see in the next chapter, chapter fifteen, *Elements of Metaphysics* (*CWL* 3, pp. 456-511), true genuineness, is something that has to be won back. It has to be won back, Lonergan thinks, through a certain kind of pedagogy. *Now, it’s up to you folks to decide whether that pedagogy has duped you, and seduced you, or whether or not it has liberated you. And until you can know to say that it has liberated you, don’t buy it!* But in the meantime, it’s hopefully tantalizing enough for you to go back and think about it some more.
So after this account of what the *Spiritual Exercises* are about, that it leads to true spiritual freedom by appropriating what’s going on in the pushes and the pulls, and the tugs and the counter-tugs, of the positions and the counterposition, as they are in your living, Ignatius then goes on to say this: And this is directed to the person giving the Exercises so as to bring about this attainment of true spiritual freedom.

**Hermeneutics of Generosity**

“In order that both those who are giving the Spiritual Exercises, and those who are receiving them, may more help and benefit themselves, let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save the neighbour’s proposition than to condemn it. If one cannot save it, inquire how they mean it; and if it is meant badly, correct them with charity. If that is not enough, seek all the suitable means to bring them to mean it well, and save themselves.”

“Presupposition,” *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*

**PRESUPPOSITION**

“In order that *both those who are giving the Spiritual Exercises, and those who are receiving them*, may more help and benefit themselves —” (Presupposition,” *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, emphasis added).
Notice the inclusion! This isn’t addressed in saying in order that you may help the poor slob who’s here for the exercises; it’s inclusive! The presupposition is for the benefit of both the person giving the exercises and the person undergoing them.

“Let it be presupposed that every good Christian is to be more ready to save the neighbour’s proposition than to condemn it. If one cannot save it, inquire how they mean it; and if it is meant badly, correct them with charity. If that is not enough, seek all the suitable means to bring them to mean it well, and save themselves.”

(Presupposition,” Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola).

Now, this is clearly a different context; “every good Christian.” The question of salvation is there in Lonergan; he’s not talking about salvation in his treatment of Method of Metaphysics, [“The Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455)]. It’s not addressed to Christians; it’s addressed to human beings, and human beings as he understands them, who are characterized by this cognitional structure and this unrestricted intention.

*But I think, in some ways, you could say the same thing is going on here. That for the good of both the metaphysician, and the one with whom, or those with whom, the metaphysician is in dialogue; there’s this interpretative phenomenon that’s going on in the metaphysics. The reading of other people, and the interpreting of other people in a methodical way using the lens of cognitional structure as a basis for thinking about what people claim about all sorts of things. In order that, both for the person who is using the method of metaphysics, and also for the person who is being studied by the use of that method of metaphysics, that the person is to be more ready to save the person’s proposition than to condemn it.*

So it’s very easy to read this distinction between positions and counterpositions as a big hammer: “Oh, that’s a counterposition! Whack!!”

[With a large smile, Pat demonstrates with two mighty downward ‘whacks’]
Beat those counterpositions down!! That’s not what it’s about! Especially since it’s both to develop what’s good in the other person’s argument and to reverse it, and reversing — Notice, he doesn’t say ‘correct’! He doesn’t say ‘refute!’” Reversing is hard! It’s hard because counterpositions are not just logical. Counterpositions are performative contradictions! The incoherence of the counterposition is not in the concepts used to express that cognitional theory. It’s perfectly possible that someone can give a completely conceptually coherent

account of what knowing is, about what objectivity is, and the only difficulty is it isn’t something that they are actually doing! Or it’s only partially what they’re doing. Or it’s not completely compatible with what they’re doing in giving that account. That’s what Lonergan says over and over again.

Hume is brilliant! The counterposition in Hume comes to light when you realize that on Hume’s own grounds, he can’t be making the assertions that he’s making in the book! Something similar, which is certainly not unique to Lonergan: the things that Kant says about the noumenal realm, he can’t be saying on the basis of his own account of human knowing. Where he gets the grounds for talking about things in themselves that are beyond our knowing and that are the sources of the phenomenal appearances, he has no grounds. So there is this — It isn’t just being in conceptual inconsistency; it’s inconsistency between what he’s doing, which from Lonergan’s point of view is being a very intelligent and very reasonable and profoundly inquiring person. And that that is not consistent with what he is saying about knowing and objectivity!

So that’s what Lonergan means: that the counterposition is a tension between the more or less explicated cognitional theory of a thinker, and the implicit latent performance of the thinker.

That’s the basis of the counterposition, and that’s the basis of the dialectic of human history, or one of the bases anyway. Okay.
Student question about how the spiritual exercises and how the pure desire to know relate to other desires, and the discernment of spirits. Are humans so able to make judgments based on reason alone? Does this mean complete, clean break from all feelings?
The goal is to integrate passions and give them an appropriate role, neither to leave them aside nor to let them take over. We saw how the dramatic pattern requires that our insights be linked with affects, in chapter six. Feelings are to be integrated, not ignored and not left to blindly interfere. Lonergan’s dialectic differs from Hegel’s. Lonergan thought that Hegel included under one dialectic several different processes that should be distinguished: natural changes, the emergence of higher viewpoints, and also the purely human consequences that result from conflicts between the pure desire and forces that oppose it. Lonergan reserves the term ‘dialectic’ for the latter alone.

Pat: May I ask if people have any questions at this point. … Ah, Tim?

Tim: Yeah. I’m curious about this connection with the *Spiritual Exercises*. And particularly Lonergan’s account of knowing and how he relates the pure disinterested desire to know to other desires, which he guards us against talking about it in terms of analogy —

Pat: Right!

Tim: — Because it’s something that is of a different order; it’s more of an orientation. And this is a constant kind of rallying cry I’ve noticed in Lonergan, throughout the work so far. He mentions it in the chapter on Method in Metaphysics (chapter fourteen:
“The Method of Metaphysics” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455)), where he is talking about his dialectic in comparison to Hegel. And he says, and this is on page 447:

“Hegel’s sublation is through a reconciling third concept, but our development is both the accumulation of insights moving to higher viewpoints and the reversal of the aberrations that were brought about by the interference of alien desire.” (*CWL* 3, p. 447).

And when he talked about normative objectivity on p. 404, he mentioned how — he’s talking about the ground of objectivity:

“The ground of normative objectivity lies in the unfolding of the unrestricted, detached, disinterested desire to know. Because it is unrestricted, it opposes the obscurantism that hides truth or blocks access to it in whole or in part. Because it is detached, it is opposed to the inhibitions of cognitional process that arise from other human desires and drives. Because it is disinterested, it is opposed to the well-meaning but disastrous reinforcement that other desires lend cognitional process only to twist its orientation into the narrow confines of their limited range.” (*CWL* 3, p. 404).

And earlier, on page 322,\(^{17}\) when he’s talking about common sense reflective understanding, he says:

“Above all they know that they must master their own hearts, that the pull of desire, the push of fear, the deeper currents of passion are poor counsellors, for they rob a man of that full, untroubled, unhurried view demanded by sure and balanced judgment.” (*CWL* 3, p. 322).

\(^{17}\) Tim erroneously identifies the passage to be quoted as on p. 327, but the passage is in fact found on p. 322.
And again this comes up when he talks about egoism and individual bias. The egoist kind of gives in to their passions and fears and it shuts off the furthering question.

Now in the Exercises, Saint Ignatius talks about three times to make an election. The first time his example is Paul who just kind of gets knocked off his horse. He is just completely overwhelmed! He has that “Aha God” moment. And the third time is the time where your interior is like a placid lake, where everything is still inside. And the proposes some very — some rational experiments like what you would advise to someone who came asking you for your advice, or what you would like to have done if you were looking back at the moment of death on your life. But then there’s that second time that he says is particularly right, and that’s when you do have this push and this pull and you have this discernment of spirits, and that you discern that push and the pull, and through the help of a spiritual guide, God’s will becomes made evident through the discerning of the spirits.

So that’s fine. we’re going to have this picture of Lonergan, Lonergan as knower, which isn’t the complete person; sometimes we’re in this tough kind of armour, wherever a kind of an outside passion or desire approaches him, it just kind of bounces off him. Or the image of that electric bug-zapper that you have in the course of the summer: when you see a passionate desire come in, it just gets zapped right away.

[Class amusement]

That just seems like a terribly difficult task! And I’m just wondering about if our human anthropology allows us to kind of so neatly do that? And he’s not suggesting that we need to do that, because that’s why we do have all these biases that accumulate into the general bias and the longer cycle of decline, right? But even on an individual basis, I can often think of examples where I make decisions based upon a gut or a feeling, and it’s not always, you know, reason and reason alone.

So I guess my question more has to do with: is he really asking us to make that very explicit clean break, to leave all of our passions, all the emotive, all the affectual behind; and to just make that judgment on reason and reason alone?

Pat: That’s a really good question. And those passages that you brought to light, the sequence in which you brought them together, really highlight that dimension of Lonergan’s thinking, and I think highlight the relationship between it and Ignatius’s Spiritual

18 Tim’s word here is uncertain: ‘fine’ is the transcriber’s conjecture.
Exercises. I think the word — you say “to leave those passions behind.” I think the word is ‘integrate’, integrate rather than ‘leave behind’!

The difficulty that Lonergan is drawing attention to in the second and third passages that you quoted, is not that desires are operating, it is that they take over; and that they take over a role that they don’t deserve to have.

“Because it is disinterested, it is opposed to the well-meaning but disastrous reinforcement that other desires lend cognitional process only to twist its orientation into the narrow confines of their limited range.” (CWL 3, p. 404).

“Above all they know that they must master their own hearts, that the pull of desire, the push of fear, the deeper currents of passion are poor counsellors, for they rob a man of that full, untroubled, unhurried view demanded by sure and balanced judgment.” (CWL 3, p. 322).

So in these two passages, Lonergan’s point is not that desires are operating, it is that they take over; and that they take over a role that they don’t deserve to have. Passions and desires are not inappropriate in human living! And after he published Insight, he would say that the structure of knowing is paper-thin, and that feelings give the mass and momentum to human living: and I think that was a clarification about feelings. Most of what we hear in Insight, not all, but a lot of what we hear in Insight, is that the emotions have this role of interfering with the proper functioning of the unrestricted desire. So insofar as our intelligence and our reasonableness are doing the integrating of our other passions, then we’re living a full human life. Remember in chapter six (“Common Sense and its Subject” CWL 3, pp. 196-231) when he talks about the dramatic patterning of experience, that it’s absolutely essential that the insights be into the images linked with affects.

That as you get insights into how to compose the story of your life, feelings are part of what’s being shaped. He has that image of you can’t do to your own psyche what a painter can do to his or her uncomplaining oils or clays! And part of what you can’t just do anything whatever to, is your feelings! They have to be integrated in, so that the whole idea of the neural demand functions being brought into the pattern that is the pattern of your living!
That means that you’re not leaving them behind! But they do have a tendency to take on the role of not being just integrated, but interfering with the integration; and that’s really what he’s getting at!

The thing on Hegel is, he’s making a distinction. That he thought Hegel spoke of the dialectic in too unrefined a fashion; that Hegel included several things as dialectic: of how a concept brings to birth its negation, and brings to birth the negation of the negation so to speak to bring a new synthesis. And he didn’t distinguish between just the ordinary way in which insights emerge with respect to sensibility and the emergence of higher viewpoints! And then what Lonergan himself says really is dialectical, which is the tension between the unrestricted desire and the things that interfere with the unrestricted desire; that for Lonergan is what dialectic really means in his term. So there isn’t a dialectic of nature, there is only a dialectic of human beings!

Jonathan: Would you give that first tension the term ‘emergence’?

Pat: Yeah, the emergence of insights with respect to sensibility would be an example of the Hegelian dialectic, but for Lonergan that’s emergence! The emergence of higher viewpoints, or if you like, higher integrations, or higher genera with respect to lower genera. And then, what’s the truly human dialectic is the actions that people do out of half-baked ideas and failing to reach the virtually unconditioned as the basis for their actions, which then set miserable conditions for the people that follow them, who respond with bewilderment and confusion and bias of their own kinds which just make things worse. And for Lonergan, that’s the real meaning of dialectic!

– Moreover, the desire to know is not analogous to our other desires; it is enduring, but not so powerful. The other desires have limited objectives; but the detached desire to know is attached to everything, to being.

So, I hope that meets part — The other thing of course — Oh, yes, this is the other thing! The other thing of course is that it is a desire to know. It really is a desire! It’s a different desire! And it’s not to be known by the mistaken analogy of the other desires, because it is subtle! I’m brought to mind of a — and now I can’t remember if it’s Elijah or
Elisha in the cave. He goes to the cave and there’s an earthquake and God is not in the earthquake,
and there’s a storm and God is not in the storm; and then there is a gentle breeze, and that’s where God is.\textsuperscript{19} That’s like — \textit{The pure unrestricted desire to know is not imperious! It’s imperious in the sense of it never will go away, it never will leave you alone; but it’s not as powerful as the other desires.} That’s part of what he’s getting at. And it’s not to be known by the misleading analogy of the other desires, but it’s not as powerful as the other desires; but it’s persistent! The language of ‘detachment’ and ‘disinterestedness’ is — It’s almost like ‘therapeutic’, but not accurate.

Because one of those passages that you just read — I think it was the one from chapter six: he talks about how the other desires have limited objectives.

\begin{quotation}
\textit{And when Lonergan uses the phrase, “the detached and disinterested desire to know”, it’s really not detached, and it’s really not disinterested. It’s attached to being; it’s attached to everything about everything! It’s interested in everything about everything!}
\end{quotation}

But compared to the way that we usually use the phrase ‘attachment’ and ‘interest’, we tend to think of those as narrowing, and kind of restricting. So there’s something about that language that’s helpful, given our tendency to use ‘attachment’ and ‘interest.’ It’s almost more healthy to say: “I’m working on being more detached, so that I can be attached to what’s really most important! Okay?

\textsuperscript{19} 1 Kings, 19: 11-13: Elijah meets God at Horeb.

Then the word of the LORD came to [Elijah], saying, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah”? He answered, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.’

[The angel] said. ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake, a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ [NRSV. Some other translations of this passage render ‘sound of sheer silence’ as ‘a gentle breeze.’]
So, I mean those are very good questions!

Tim: Yeah. That’s very illuminating!

Further question about whether Lonergan’s language is a means of fostering disinterested desire?

– The suggestion that there is a deliberateness and method to the impenetrability of Lonergan’s writing an interesting one.

Tim: Is there any suggestion that even his style of writing — I mean you had mentioned Levinas, and some people have been critical of Lonergan’s style and saying it should go back to its style of being communicated to a wider audience; is there any suggestion that that’s kind of part of his strategy of really fostering this disinterested desire, so that the use kind of a mode of evocative language of Levinas or Marion would be more of an emotive appeal which would in a sense kind of run contrary to designer like thesis?

Pat: I don’t know. That’s a really good question! There’s probably a good scholarly article too on it. I hadn’t thought of that. That’s a very interesting suggestion. I’ve always — you know, because I clearly am very enthusiastic about what Lonergan has to offer, I’ve always been frustrated by how impenetrable he is; which is part of why we’re doing this class, and why we’re video-taping it. But that’s a really interesting suggestion: that there’s a method to the impenetrability!! I hadn’t thought of that, but it’s a good point. I’m not sure it’s — what to make of it, but we might want to talk about that some more.

The Hermeneutics of Generosity, continued.

Lonergan’s hermeneutics of generosity applies to the contradictions in all human affairs, not just to the writings of philosophers.

Lonergan’s dialectic of generosity becomes methodical through his stress on inverse insights in the philosophical process.
Okay. Well, let’s move ahead here! So the comparison with Ignatius hopefully makes some sense even for those of you who perhaps are not familiar with Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises.*

**Hermeneutics of Generosity**

“The possibility of contradictory contributions to a single goal [a single complex whole] is, in its main lines, already familiar to the reader.” (*CWL* 3, p. 412).

“Moreover, inasmuch as the philosopher employs both direct and inverse insights in her or his survey and estimate of the philosophic process, her or his mind and grasp become the single goal in which contradictory contributions attain their complex unity.” (*CWL* 3, p. 412).

And here’s where he’s doing what I said before: there is a dialectic of generosity that operates within human history, just as there’s a dialectic of counterposition that operates within human history.

*But what is it that makes Lonergan’s approach hopefully more methodical? It’s this business about indirect — inverse insights. That just as the other methods, particularly statistical method, draws upon inverse insights, the reversal of the anticipation of intelligibility to say that there is a non-intelligibility, so also using inverse insights with respect to the philosophical process enables a reader to recognize in the contradictions this complementary set of contributions to a complex goal, the complex goal of philosophy you might say; but in a deeper sense, the complex role of human history.*
Metaphysics as heuristic: What is meant by an integral heuristic structure?

A heuristic notion is the notion of an unknown content, and it is determined by anticipation of the kind of act that makes the unknown become known; assembled together, these notions form a heuristic structure.

An integral heuristic structure is the ordered set of all heuristic notions.

Metaphysics as Heuristic

“What is meant by an integral heuristic structure?

A heuristic notion, then, is the notion of an unknown content, and it is determined by anticipating the type of act through which the unknown would become known.

A heuristic structure is an ordered set of heuristic notions.

Finally, an integral heuristic structure is the ordered set of all heuristic notions.” (CWL 3, p. 417).

Okay. So we’ve talked about the distinction that Lonergan makes in order to make his method in metaphysics more methodical. And we’ve talked about, to some extent, at least
the basic ideas of the position and counterposition, in which he’s going to give him the ability to think about metaphysics as dialectical. And last but not least, we’ve come to metaphysics as heuristic. So remember it’s the — Explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. So the integral heuristic structure is what we’ve got left to look at.

What is meant by an integral heuristic structure? So a heuristic notion, as you will remember is an anticipation; it’s the anticipation of an act. So you can say some things about the known, without yet knowing it, by talking about the act or acts that will know it. So you have a heuristic notion; anticipating the known by having some knowledge about the act through which it will become known.

And a heuristic structure, is an ordered set of heuristic notions. And we didn’t work that out in any detail, this particular line in any detail when we were talking about classical and statistical heuristic structures. But if you go back and look at the scissors that I did for both of those: each level of the scissors as the scissors are closing to hit the insight either of the classical correlation or of the intelligible probability, each of those is an operation or a set of operations which are being assembled in the metaphor of the closing of the scissors to reach the desired insight. That’s why they’re heuristic structures. There’s a bunch of heuristic notions that it would be that, for example, you can reach a probability by counting, and by sampling, and by making tables and charts, and so on. Those are all, each of them, a heuristic notion; where there are several there is a heuristic structure whose point is grasping the ideal frequency. And so that’s what he means by a heuristic structure. So it’s a set, an ordered set of heuristic notions, an ordering of activities in certain sequence, so that by the set of activities you will arrive at the known that you’re seeking.

So an integral heuristic structure is the organized set of all heuristic notions. So that’s what he means by an integral heuristic structure.

Two scissors slides
Discussion as to why the definition of proportionate being fulfills the definition of a heuristic structure, but not of the integral heuristic structure.

Yet it is “not an instance of an integral heuristic structure, for it doesn’t exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what it is to know.”

What “resources of the human mind” are not explicitly included in the definition of proportionate being?

What more is needed?

Are there any heuristic notions not mentioned in the definition of proportionate being?

Answers proposed in the next class (Lecture 19, Part I, Chapter 15, “Elements of Metaphysics.”).

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**Metaphysics as Heuristic**

“In illustration, one may point to the definition of proportionate being. It is whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” *(CWL 3, 417)*.

It assigns “an ordered set of types of acts, and it implies that every proportionate being is to be known through such an ordered set.” *(CWL 3, 417).*
And there’s an illustration:

“One may point to the definition of proportionate being. It is whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” (CWL 3, 417).

Okay. So why is that an illustration of a heuristic structure? … So a heuristic structure is an ordered set of heuristic notions. And the definition of proportionate being is whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. So why is that a heuristic structure? … Matt?

Matt: Because the definition is doesn’t seem to contain any content. It just — it gives you a framework for anticipating future contents to be known.

Pat: Okay. That’s partly — Would you go back again, one more time please: “Heuristic structure is —”

Matt: — And also each of the three stages of the experience, intelligence, and reasonability, each of those has its own heuristic anticipation, its own orientation. So all three of them group together.

Pat: Okay! And what else? There is one other thing that Matt hasn’t said: … A heuristic notion anticipates the unknown by knowing the activities by which the unknown is going to be known, right? So this is a heuristic structure because it’s a structuring of anticipations; each anticipation is an anticipation specified in terms of an activity. And what we don’t have here [Pat gestures to the first paragraph of the slide] is the whole nine yards of experiencing that’s connected and ordered to understanding by inquiring, and reasonable affirmation is ordered to understanding and experiencing by second order inquiry, and so on. That’s meant to be implicit here! So that’s a heuristic structure, okay?

So it assigns ordered sets of types of acts and it “implies that every proportionate being is to be known through such an ordered set.” (CWL 3, 417). Okay? So the definition, or proportionate being,

“is an instance of a heuristic structure; but it is not an instance of an integral heuristic structure, for it does not exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what it is to know.” (CWL 3, p. 417).
Why not? … Was anybody puzzled when they got to this sentence? … [Pat smiles broadly:] This drove me nuts for at least ten years!

[Student reactions of surprise and puzzlement]

Metaphysics as Heuristic

“Accordingly, the definition [or proportionate being] is an instance of a heuristic structure; but it is not an instance of an integral heuristic structure, for it does not exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what it is to know.” (CWL 3, p. 417).

I could not figure out what more needed to be said … than that! What’s missing? And I’m not going to tell you … today! And I’ll leave you with that as a question; because I had to suffer with it for ten years, you guys got to suffer with it for a week.

[Student laughter]

What’s missing? What’s missing? And you can do a google search and you’ll never find any place where Lonergan tells you what the “integral heuristic structure” is. He actually does provide it, but he never says: “Oh, by the way, this is it!!”

[Student laughter]

But it takes a while to figure it out.

So we got this great build-up, that our method is going to be the implementation of this here; it’s the structure that is going to have the advantage of having the strategy of working at philosophical issues through the lens of basic positions and basic counterpositions. And we’re going to have this integral heuristic structure to guide us. And then he doesn’t really tell us what it is; and he doesn’t tell us in chapter fourteen, “The
Method of Metaphysics” (CWL 3, pp. 410-455). That was one of the things that took me a long time to figure out.

So for homework, think about what is — Let’s look at two things, and I’ll give you a couple of hints. One is this last thing in the slide: it does not exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what it is to know.” (CWL 3, p. 417). That doesn’t mean in anticipating what knowing is; you have to get the grammar of the sentence right! It isn’t anticipating what knowing is that doesn’t exhaust the resources of the human mind in anticipating what knowing is. It means that it doesn’t exhaust the resources of the human mind’s anticipations about knowing. There’s something more than the structure of experiencing, understanding and knowing — that we’ve already learned about, it turns out — that will help us flesh out or make more complicated this integral heuristic structure.

I want to go back for just a minute to the earlier “Metaphysics as Heuristic” slide.

Metaphysics as Heuristic

“What is meant by an integral heuristic structure?

A heuristic notion, then, is the notion of an unknown content, and it is determined by anticipating the type of act through which the unknown would become known.

A heuristic structure is an ordered set of heuristic notions.

Finally, an integral heuristic structure is the ordered set of all heuristic notions.” (CWL 3, p. 417).
Look at the bottom line of that slide:

“Finally, an integral heuristic structure is the ordered set of all heuristic notions.” (CWL 3, p. 417).

Are there any heuristic notions that are not mentioned in the definition of proportionate being? … Okay, think about that one too! Just think about the number of ways, places, instances, where Lonergan uses the word ‘notion’, in the pages leading up to this.

The Implementation of Metaphysics.

Metaphysics does not undertake to meddle with the methods of other disciplines in knowing; but strives to reverse their counterpositions and ‘work them into coherence’ by discerning in them the concrete prolongation of its own integral heuristic structure.

Metaphysics, Science and Culture

“Metaphysics does not undertake either to discover or to teach science; it does not undertake either to develop or to impart common sense;
It does not pretend to know the universe of proportionate being independently of science and common sense;
But it can and does take over the results of such distinct efforts, it works them into coherence by reversing their counterpositions, and it knits them into a unity by discerning in them the concrete prolongation of the integral heuristic structure which it itself is.” (CWL 3, p. 418).
Lastly, I just wanted to talk a little bit about what Lonergan means by the implementation of metaphysics. And again it’s the generosity and, if you like, the humility of real metaphysics as Lonergan thinks of it. *It doesn’t take over everybody else’s business!* *Metaphysics lets science be science!* And *it lets common sense be common sense!* It doesn’t substitute for these. Remember it’s the whole in knowing, so the whole in knowing is the integral heuristic structure which is going to give the metaphysician an advantage in the work that’s properly the work of a metaphysician, which is the reorientation, the transformation, of the dialectical messiness of the history of human beings and the history of philosophy. “It does not pretend to know the universe of proportionate being independently of science and common sense.” (CWL 3, p. 418). It doesn’t pretend to know the universe independently of science and common sense. So it doesn’t pretend to substitute for, or to devalue, or to denigrate, their contributions. It depends upon them. And it’s clear that Lonergan has high regard for the immanent operativeness of intelligence, and reasonableness, and attentive experientialness in all human endeavours!

But metaphysics does something that common sense or science don’t do.

“But it can and does take over the results of such distinct efforts, it works them into coherence by reversing their counterpositions, and it knits them into a unity by discerning in them the concrete prolongation of the integral heuristic structure which it itself is, [which we don’t know what that is yet],” (CWL 3, p. 418).

But remember how he talks about being able to find in the work of any philosopher a significance that goes beyond what the philosopher himself or herself would be thematically aware of. And it’s by this reversing the counterposition, and putting them in a place that’s the place of the progress of human philosophy. that gives them a significance that is beyond what they recognise.

Metaphysics, Science and Culture: due to egotistical, group and general biases, extra-scientific content enters science, and common sense also includes common nonsense; the role of the metaphysics is to
help distinguish any biased content from contents that do conform to the integral heuristic structure.

Metaphysics engages common sense and scientific culture in a dialogue, the tools of which are derived from self-appropriation.

But this is only possible for a self-appropriated metaphysician who has undertaken the difficult work of recognizing and reversing her or his own biases.

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**Metaphysics, Science and Culture**

“Still, this is not the whole story. For it would be excessively naïve for the self-knowing subject to suppose that his scientific knowledge and his common sense are purely and simply the product of experience, intelligent inquiry, and critical reflection. The subject knows the polymorphism of his own consciousness; he knows how it generates a dramatic, an egoistic, a group, and a general bias in common sense; he knows how it intrudes into science confused notions on reality, on objectivity, and on knowledge.” *(CWL 3, p. 424).*

But that’s not the whole story! *We have already seen that scientific knowledge and common sense are not in fact pure products of inquiry, understanding, and unconditional judgment!* We know about the polymorphism of consciousness which I — well, perhaps I
can talk a little bit about at the end of the class. And that it generates these biases, and that the biases are alive, and if not well they’re certainly alive, in culture and in science; and that they intrude into science with notions of reality, objectivity and knowledge.

Metaphysics, Science and Culture

“While, then, science and commons sense are to be accepted, the acceptance is not to be uncritical. There are precise manners in which common sense can be expected to go wrong; there are definite issues on which science is prone to issue extrascientific opinions; and the reorientation demanded and effected by the self-knowledge of the subject is a steadily exerted pressure against the common nonsense that tries to pass for common sense and against the uncritical philosophy that pretends to be a scientific conclusion.” (CWL 3, p. 424).

“While, then, science and commons sense are to be accepted, the acceptance is not to be uncritical.” (CWL 3, p. 424). That’s the role of the metaphysician. The metaphysician is to develop the positions and reverse the counterpositions; and being critical is knowing how to make the difference, the distinction, between guided by whatever the significant heuristic structure is, and being guided by this fundamental tension between basic positions and basic counterpositions about cognitional theory objectivity and reality. “There are precise manners in which common sense can be expected to go wrong;” (CWL 3, p. 424) in the light of self-appropriation. Which means you have to worry about
your own biases to know how you can expect people in general to be biased. “There are definite issues on which science is prone to issue extrascientific opinions.” (CWL 3, p. 424). And remember we talked about that several times in the first semester.
“The reorientation demanded and effected by the self-knowledge of the subject is a steadily exerted pressure against the common nonsense that tries to pass for common sense and against the uncritical philosophy that pretends to be a scientific conclusion.” (CWL 3, p. 424).

So the work of metaphysics then is to not take the place of, or to denigrate, or to substitute, but to engage common sense, culture, and scientific culture, in the dialogue, the dialogue that is going to be a more effective dialogue because of its methodical tools derived from self-appropriation.

An example to reflect upon for next week: How would a self-appropriated metaphysician view the statement: “There is a gene for everything ...”?

An Illustration

There is a gene for everything

I just wanted to give you an illustration, something to think about perhaps for next week: how would a self-appropriated metaphysician think about something that is said explicitly, and assumed implicitly even more frequently, “There is a gene for everything ...”? There’s the God gene. There’s the philosophy gene. You guys have all got the philosophy gene!

[Class laughter]

How would a Lonergan metaphysician respond to that? Think about some of what’s involved; there are people that are doing very, very, significant and intelligent research into identifying genetic correlations with a whole variety of mental phenomena, in addition to all sorts of things. Lonergan would say that that’s — that that is positional. The intelligent work that’s being done and the questions that are being raised, it’s all positional. You can probably guess that Professor Byrne thinks that there’s a counterposition lurking in the midst there somewhere! Okay! How would this distinction between basic positions and basic
counterpositions begin to give us ways of thinking about the research that people are doing that perhaps is underpinned by the expressed, or perhaps unexpressed, view of the whole that there is a gene for everything? Just consider that! It is something to think about!

Okay. Let’s stop and see if people have questions before we stop for today. … Sean?

Sean: Do you remember how you reformulated that line about “exhausting the resources of the human mind in anticipating”? You said there — You reformulated it in a certain way

Pat: — … Ah, I’m not sure what to do … If you wait twenty-four hours you can see it on the video.

[Class laughter]

I don’t remember a — I remember saying something more about what’s — the line about the integral heuristic structure being the structure of all heuristic notions; and putting the emphasis upon: “what heuristic notions were missing?” But I don’t remember what I said about that — Sorry. Okay. Any more questions? …

Okay. So next week chapter fifteen Elements of Metaphysics (CWL 3, pp. 456-511); and so I’ll see you all next week. Drive safely!

Class Eighteen Concluded.