

# **Insight and Beyond**

Class 22, Part One: March 17th 2010

**“The Intrinsic Intelligibility of Being”**

**and**

**“Humans as Spiritual”**

**(*Insight*, Chapter 16 §4.3; Chapter 17 §7.4)**

**Class 22, March 17, 2010**

**Chapter 16: “*Metaphysics as Science*”**

## **Summary of Material**

Recapitulation of highlights from Chapter Sixteen.

Being is intrinsically intelligible:

Lonergan argues that potency, form, and act, the hierarchy of explanatory genera, and the finality of the universe are true of reality, and not only to our knowing of it.

But the prior argument is that intelligibility is intrinsic to being as such.

That being is *intelligible*:

The meaning of ‘intelligibility’: what is to be known in understanding.



But to truly comprehend this meaning of intelligibility is not easy.

One of the reasons that Lonergan begins *Insight* with such an intensive focus on modern science — where the distinction between the sensible/imaginable vs. the intelligible is most pronounced.

Visual and intelligible aspects are difficult to distinguish in ordinary experience — where the phantasm and the insight so easily blend together.

Modern physics forces upon us insights that defy imaginative representation. Illustration of impossibility of imagining the curvature of three-dimensional space (vs. imagining a curved two-dimensional surface in a three-dimensional space). But it is possible to *understand* it, because it is intelligible even though not imaginable.

That being is *intelligible* means that being is *constituted* by what it is that understanding understands.

The *intrinsic* intelligibility of being:

After Kant, philosophers speak of the distinction between intuitive content and empty formalism — the kind of formalism which has no content until sensible/imaginary data are added to it.

By contrast, Lonergan claims that intelligibility is not empty formalism, but is a further content all its own — a content that comes to us only insofar as we understand. This content is not merely subjective but intrinsic to what we know.

The argument for the intrinsic intelligibility of being:

Because being is the objective of the pure desire to know, it follows that intelligibility is intrinsic to being.

Why does the intrinsic intelligibility of being follow from the definition of being?

Discussion.

Intellectual conversion consists in no longer taking reality to be the ‘already out there now,’ but taking it to be intrinsically intelligible.

Further discussion; various student proposals.

Student question about why the data of consciousness and sense data can be legitimately equated. So “why does the fact that this method [cognitional structure] works on the data of consciousness mean that it will work on the data of sense?”

— Indeed, the data of consciousness is not the same as the data of sense. The second part of the question is equivalent

to how do we know that intelligibility is intrinsic to what we know about the data of sense?

Student question: Might one say, “If I know how I know, then I know what I am?”

- Discussion of the difference between affirming oneself *as* a knower, vs. knowing all that there is to know about oneself.
- Difference between knowing oneself as intelligible, and knowing that all that is is intelligible.
- Further discussion of the possibility of total self-knowledge.

Resumption of the discussion:

Student proposal: Orientation towards the world questioning about everything, if we can ask questions about ourselves, and know ourselves as intelligible and real.

Reason why *we* are intelligible is because the world is intelligible.

Why is the world intelligible?

We make judgments that affirm the ‘isness’ of ‘what is’, i.e., the being of the intelligibility known in the insight that you affirm.

Whenever we reasonably affirm, we affirm the reality of the intelligibility about which we have asked, “Is it?”

We have an *unrestricted* desire for knowing all the questions for judgment; the “is it so” questions.

But all of those “is?” questions are about some intelligibility; so all the true affirmations are affirmations of the reality of intelligibilities.

Hence, all being is intelligible.

Student question about how being, which is intrinsically intelligible but not imaginable, can be divorced from imaginable sense data.

- Recall the distinction between being and proportionate being; only *proportionate* being is defined as what is to be known by *possible* human experience, understanding and judging.
- But according to Lonergan, human beings are constituted by self-transcendence, by an unrestricted, dynamic orientation of questioning that goes beyond all cultural, etc. limitations — but also beyond all *actual* and even all *possible* experience.
- We ask for and seek virtually unconditioned judgments about what “is”, not just about what is true of human experiences.
- Lonergan’s account of being is not restricted to human experiencing.

- We can ask whether anything lies beyond human experience.
- Lonergan's argument is that intelligibility is intrinsic to *all* being, not just to being proportionate to human experiencing, understanding and judging.

- The empirical residue and human sensibility do not directly enter into the question of the intelligibility of being.

Student question as to whether being and reality are interchangeable terms?

- For Lonergan being and reality are indeed the same.
- Discussion of the intrinsic and the protean notions of being
  - the notions of reality that compete with the intrinsic notion of being rooted in unrestricted inquiry.
- Further discussion of unintelligibility of evil and whether it is a part of being addressed in chapter twenty [**“Special Transcendent Knowledge”** (pp. 709-751)]. Discussion of evil as what occurs for no good reason.

Diagram of Ontological Structure: the most important step — the acid test for intellectual conversion.

Being is not only intrinsically intelligible, but completely intelligible; there are no brute facts.

In every judgment that “something is,” the affirmation concerns the intelligible content.

We can’t affirm anything that is not intelligible; you can have intelligibles that are not real — that are only hypothetical — but no realities that are not intelligible.

Student question about the ‘*intrinsic*’ intelligibility of being.

- Intrinsic means cannot exist without; intelligibility is not just contingently connected with being; being would *not be* if it were not intelligible.

Student question about whether facticity is of only one type in a positive affirmation; does it mean the same in all instances.

- Answer depends on the sections on real distinction and real relations.
- The answer is both yes and no; further discussion.
- All affirmations have the same “*proper*” content, but they are different since they are connected with their ‘*borrowed*’ intelligible contents.
- Is a computer real in the same way as a friendship?  
Discussion.

Reiteration of the importance of the affirmation that the real is intrinsically intelligible. And the importance of realizing that the real is not ‘the already out there now real’.

- Illustration by way of Plato’s dialogues, which are crafted to make the reader uncomfortable with the notion that the real is ‘already out there now’.

Human Beings as Intrinsically Spiritual.

In self-affirmation we affirm the intelligibility of ourselves as knowers (we affirm the intelligibility of performing the dynamism of cognitional structure).

Difference between the kind of intelligibility known in the case of intelligent knowing, and the intelligibility of beings that are not also knowers and cannot also know themselves.

This raises the question: Is Man's central form material or spiritual?

What does "spiritual" mean?

- Discussion of spiritual as dealing with limits, as interiority, as the realm of faith, the realm of feelings, the connection to something transcendent.
- Discussion of the literal vs. the figurative meanings of 'interior'.
- The New Age sense of spiritual is a kind of 'energy'; there is also a tendency to see the spiritual as invisible forces that play a role in events.
- In Chapter seventeen ("**Metaphysics as Dialectic**", pp. 553-617) when Lonergan discusses myth and magic in the pejorative sense, he is talking about those who believe in such spiritual forces.

What Lonergan means by 'spiritual':

First approximation: **“Intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual.”**  
(*CWL* 3, p. 539).

How radical a definition of spiritual this is.

How it is different from spiritual as “inner consciousness.”

How the spiritual seen as ‘intelligent’ is different from logicism, rationalism. In rationalism, whatever is outside the rational system is not rational.

Many spiritual movements are reactions against this idea of ‘rational’.

What Lonergan means by intelligent and rational consciousness is the flow of answers that come in response to unrestricted questioning.

This is key to what Lonergan means by ‘spiritual’ — that which is unrestricted, conditioned only by the unrestricted.

Spiritual as apart from the empirical residue; the material as not without the empirical residue.

The materialist sees matter as real — as space-filling stuff (see Descartes) — and as part of the ‘already out there now.’

But if the real is being as grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably, then we need a new account of the material, as well as of the spiritual.

Matter can no longer be regarded as space-filling stuff; it is rather whatever ‘cannot be’ without being in someplace and at sometime — in the sense of the empirical residuality of place and time.

Extrinsic and intrinsic conditioning:

Humans are obviously conditioned by experiences that are conditioned by space and time.

Yet we can also grasp intelligibilities that are not intrinsically present in space and time — e.g., covariant equations in relativity physics.

Discussion of the sensible as sufficient but not necessary for understanding, paradoxically.

— Example: once people have understood something, they can hypothetically apply it to situations they have never encountered in their sense experiences — situations that have no empirical residue.

— Human intelligence has the capacity to organize material elements of the universe that would not be organized without it.

This means that human acts of understanding are indeed extrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue, but are not intrinsically conditioned by space and time.

Student question about the role of the imagination in the grasping of what isn't present.

— Discussion of the role of intelligence in fashioning imagination.

— The various meanings of imagination (fusion of “image-as-image,” insights, and feelings).

— Why the spiritual can take over the function of material, but not vice versa.

Mircea Eliade on relationship between the extrinsic and the intrinsic conditioning of the human as spiritual.

Eliade focused on the common structures of religious symbolism.

For him, the spiritual fact, as a human fact, is conditioned by various factors (anatomy, physiology, language); a spiritual fact presupposes these other factors; yet these do not add up to the life of the spirit.

Though humans are situated — are conditioned by physical and historical factors, they are not intrinsically conditioned by these conditions.

Question about how one judges what is intelligent and what is not.

— That’s the core of self-affirmation; learning to discern the experience of understanding from the rest of your conscious experiences and data, i.e. to judge your own intelligence. Judging another’s intelligence poses a whole separate problem: that of interpretation.

**End of Part One**

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Recapitulation of highlights from Chapter Sixteen.

Being is intrinsically intelligible:

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But the prior argument is that intelligibility is intrinsic to being as such.

Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome! Good to see you again. As you know from my email hopefully, we’re going to pause a little bit in terms of jumping into the material that I mentioned for last week, for two reasons: one is I left hanging a couple of items we didn’t

complete in our last class, and one of the things that we didn't complete is really crucial to self-appropriation,

and it will be quite important when we get to chapter nineteen (*CWL* 3, “**General Transcendent Knowledge**”, pp. 657-708).

So that as you recall, last week I said that we weren't going to be able to get through all of chapter sixteen on “**Metaphysics as Science**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 512-552) that would deserve really a class unto itself; and I said we could do some highlights, and I listed a set of highlights, and I only got through one and a half of those.

[Student laughter]

### **Highlights from Chapter Sixteen**

- 1 Unity of the universe**
- 2 Unity of the human**
- 3 Intrinsic intelligibility of being**
- 4 Lonergan's estimate of his method**
- 5 Metaphysics and science**
- 6 Distinctions**
- 7 Relations**

So I'm not going to resume all of these because we thought it would take another couple of classes just to do that. But there are two issues in particular that I did want to come back to, and talk about. And the first was our third item, “The Intrinsic Intelligibility of Being.” And the second is actually the last half of [item two](#), the section on “The Unity of the Human” (*CWL* 3, “The Unity of Man”, pp. 538-543), particularly having to do with whether or not human beings are intrinsically material or intrinsically spiritual. So I wanted to take some time to think about

those. And the question about the human and the spiritual is in a nice segue into where chapter seventeen begins (*CWL 3*, “**Metaphysics as Dialectic**,” pp. 553-617).

### **3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible**

**“It may be asked whether the metaphysical elements constitute an extrinsic or an intrinsic structure of proportionate being. Are they merely the structure in which proportionate being is known? Or are they the structure immanent in the reality of proportionate being? To put the issue in its traditional form, are the metaphysical elements notionally distinct or really distinct?”** (*CWL 3*, pp. 522-523).

The section where Lonergan discusses and presents his argument, such as it is, for the intrinsic intelligibility of being is the section on the nature of metaphysical elements (*CWL 3*, “The Meaning of the Metaphysical Elements”, pp. 521-533). And he begins that discussion with the remark that we can ask whether or not they can constitute an extrinsic or an intrinsic structure of proportionate being.

**“It may be asked whether the metaphysical elements constitute an extrinsic or an intrinsic structure of proportionate being.”** (*CWL 3*, p. 522).

And he clarifies that by saying:

**“Are they merely the structure in which proportionate being is known? Or are they the structure immanent in the reality of proportionate being?”** (*CWL 3*, pp. 522-523).

Are they just the way in which human knowledge works, or are they actually essential to being itself. And as you know, his argument is going to be that they are essential to being itself!

He prefaces that argument with another argument. So he's going to argue that potency, form, and act, conjugate potency form and act, central potency form and act, the higher genera and species, the dynamic orientation of proportionate being; that that's all intrinsic to proportionate being. That's not just a projection upon reality, having to do with the fact that we are imprisoned and forced to think only with the structure of the mind that we've been given by nature, but rather that *there is a genuine isomorphism: that not only do we know in that structure, but the reality so known is structured that way as well.* And prior to making that full argument about potency, form, and act, *he presents an argument about the intrinsic intelligibility of being. And I'm only going to focus on that much.* Hopefully, you'll see what I mean in a moment.

### **3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible**

**“A first point, then, is that intelligibility is not extrinsic but intrinsic to being.**

**“By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding.**

**“By the intrinsic intelligibility of being is meant that being is precisely what is so known or, in negative terms, that being is neither beyond the intelligible nor apart from it nor different from it.” (CWL 3, p. 523).**

So, his first point, as he says — So there's an argument that's going on here, and this is so to speak, the *first important premise in a longer argument* about the intrinsic intelligibility — or excuse me — *that proportionate being is intrinsically constituted by the metaphysical elements in their relations and in their dynamic relations with one another.*

That being is *intelligible*:

The meaning of 'intelligibility': what is to be known in understanding.

But to truly comprehend this meaning of intelligibility is not easy.

One of the reasons that Lonergan begins *Insight* with such an intensive focus on modern science — where the distinction between the sensible/imaginable vs. the intelligible is most pronounced.

Visual and intelligible aspects are difficult to distinguish in ordinary experience — where the phantasm and the insight so easily blend together.

Modern physics forces upon us insights that defy imaginative representation. Illustration of impossibility of imagining the curvature of three-dimensional space (vs. imagining a curved two-dimensional surface in a three-dimensional space). But it is possible to *understand* it, because it is intelligible even though not imaginable.

That being is *intelligible* means that being is *constituted* by what it is that understanding understands.

So his first point is that *intelligibility is not extrinsic to being, but intrinsic to being*. **“A first point, then, is that intelligibility is not extrinsic but intrinsic to being.”** (CWL 3, p. 523). And each of those terms needs to be clarified. Intelligibility — *By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding*. **“By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding.”** (CWL 3, p. 523). Now, I’ve been using that terminology for the last semester and a half: *That the noematic<sup>1</sup> content of the supervening act of understanding is distinct from, is qualitatively a quantum leap distinct from the content of the acts of experiencing, particularly sensible experiencing, or imagining, or remembering. That the content of understanding is what we call ‘intelligibility’. So that is what Lonergan is saying. By intelligibility is meant what you do when you’re understanding. That is a simple thing to say, but a difficult thing to appropriate.* It goes back to something he says, all the way back in the “Introduction” to the book *Insight*. So this is on page fifteen in the Toronto Press edition:

**“St Augustine of Hippo narrates that it took him years to make the discovery that the name ‘real’ might have a different connotation from the name ‘body.’”** (CWL 3, p. 15).

That really is the heart and soul of chapter eight **“Things”** (CWL 3, pp. 270-295) about things and bodies.

**“Or, to bring the point nearer home, one might say that it has taken modern science four centuries to make the discovery that the objects of its inquiry need not be imaginable entities moving through imaginable processes in an imaginable space-time.”** (CWL 3, p. 15).

So in one sense, the structure of *Insight*, with its emphasis on modern science, was *to put before us not, as Lonergan says, the most obvious examples of clear and distinct insights, but to the contrary, the examples of insights where imagination, imaginable representation, is extremely difficult, so as to bring forward for our appropriation the unique, purely intelligible*

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<sup>1</sup> “Professor Byrne used the word ‘noetic’ in class at this point, but has kindly indicated, in an email to the transcriber dated 29-03-17, that it would have been more accurate to use the word ‘noematic’; which is accordingly inserted above.”

*content of acts of understanding.* Now, what tends to happen in most of our insights is that we see something and we recognize it. *The seeing is an act of experiencing; recognition, at least in this sense of recognition, is an act of understanding; but they come so quickly together, and in fact, once the understanding takes place before the hard work of formulating our understanding kicks into gear, the image that gives rise to the insight and the insight are fused into one complex integrated activity.* It's only when we're forced to say just what did you understand, and distinguish it from the imaginable elements, and in particular to distinguish it from the parts of the rich image that we had the insight into that we didn't understand by that act of understanding, it's only when we're forced to do that, that we engage in the work of separating insight and its intelligible content, from, let's say, visual experience, visual sensing, and its visual content.

*But in modern physics, precisely because we are forced beyond the realms of our ordinary common sense understanding,* where the immediacy of the image and the immediacy of our insights are rapid and numerous and non-problematic, *precisely because modern science forces upon us insights that defy adequate imaginative representation, that's where the clarification of what's meant by intelligibility comes into play.* When Lonergan refers there to the non-imaginable processes in the non-imaginable space and time<sup>2</sup> the non-imaginable processes have to do with quantum mechanics. You really cannot adequately depict the sorts of knowledge that modern quantum mechanics has by imagining particles moving continuously through space and time.

You cannot really imagine the space-time of Einstein! One of the exercises for this in thinking about space-time as Einstein does is: at the moment our universe seems to have a positive curvature, which means that if you shined a flash-light and were able to stay around long enough, which is probably something of the order of about sixty billion years — If I take out my laser pen and shine it that way [Pat gestures to his front], if I waited long enough, it would come back and hit me on the back of the head; *not because it was reflected anywhere, but because that is the way space and time are.* Now when you try to imagine the curved space, what you can imagine is a curved two-dimensional surface in a three-dimensional box. But try now to

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<sup>2</sup> Lonergan wrote: “**One might say that it has taken modern science four centuries to make the discovery that the objects of its inquiry need not be imaginable entities moving through imaginable processes in an imaginable space-time.**” (CWL 3, p. 15).

imagine a curved three-dimensional box; you might get a funny cube, a cube that's been inflated, or something like that. But what is it inside of? What that cube is in is not a curved space. You're imagining a non-curved space containing a curved three-dimensional object. *That space itself is curved is not imaginable! But it is intelligible! It takes a lot of work to get the insights that you need to understand that kind of space-time, but it is intelligible!*

*So Lonergan is saying that by intelligible I mean what is the proper contribution to human knowing of understanding. And why do we take so long, and so many different examples of exploring what's meant by insight? Because our experience of having insights are always so much embedded with the accompanying phantasms, the accompanying images and experiences, that the non-imaginability of intelligibility is something that will escape us. It's something he returns to over and over again, particularly in chapter seventeen (CWL 3, "Metaphysics as Dialectic," pp. 553-617), the beginning of chapter seventeen, as we saw.*

So the intelligibility of being means that being is intrinsically constituted by what it is that understanding understands, by that kind of content. Right?

**That being is *intelligible* means that being is *constituted* by what it is that understanding understands.**

By the intrinsic intelligibility of being is meant that being is precisely what is so known, is known by understanding; or, to put it in negative terms, that it's neither beyond the intelligible, nor apart from it, nor different from it!

**"By the intrinsic intelligibility of being is meant that being is precisely what is so known or, in negative terms, that being is neither beyond the intelligible nor apart from it nor different from it." (CWL 3, p. 523).**

**The *intrinsic* intelligibility of being:**

After Kant, philosophers speak of the distinction between intuitive content and empty formalism — the kind of formalism which has no content until sensible/imaginary data are added to it.

By contrast, Lonergan claims that intelligibility is not empty formalism, but is a further content all its own — a content that comes to us as we understand. This content is not merely subjective but intrinsic to what we know.

### **3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible**

**“A first point, then, is that intelligibility is not extrinsic but intrinsic to being.**

**“By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding.**

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Okay. Let's take another attack on this for a moment. In the language, at least of Post-Kantian philosophy, there is a discussion of *“the intuitive content”* and *“the empty formalism”*. This is a way of speaking that arises in the Philosophy of Mathematics, but also in the Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics, for example. That if you ask what's the content of quantum mechanics, there's a whole school of philosophy that will say: “Well, quantum mechanics is

*an uninterpreted formalism.* It's just a structure which needs a content put into it!" And the content will be the intuitive content, the *anschauliches* content, which means in the language that we've

just been using, *the imaginative content*. So you've got a formalism, but it doesn't actually have a content until the sensibility, or the imagination, or the memory, is put into that structure. You find that in Kant's remark that sensation without understanding is formless — It's not 'formless'.

Student:       Blind?

Pat:            It's the other way round, isn't it? In the sense that concepts without sensation are blind. So that's where that way of thinking about this comes.

*Lonergan is actually saying something different. He is not talking about understanding or intelligibility as merely formal. He's talking about it as having a content of its own; a further content that's added over and above the sensible or the imaginable content. So when Lonergan is talking about intelligibility, he is not talking about a form that's going to be filled in by sensible content. He's talking about a second distinct kind of content that comes to our consciousness only in so far as we have insights, only in so far as we understand.*

*And now the claim is that that content, that comes to us only in so far as we understand, is not just in our heads. It's not just the *Bewusstseinsinhalt*, it's not just the immanent content of our consciousness; but it actually is intrinsic to what we know.*

### 3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible

**“Now if by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being.**

**For one defines being by its intelligibility; one claims that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly; one denies that being is anything apart from the intelligible or beyond it or different from it, for one’s definition implies that being is known completely when there are no further questions to be answered.”** (CWL 3, p. 523, emphasis added).

*Okay. So that’s the claim! Those are the claims! And these are the claims, so to speak, of the elements that **he is** going to use to establish his position about the intrinsic intelligibility — that potency, form, and act, et cetera, are intrinsic to proportionate being. But this is the first step. And this is the big step! So how does he proceed to do this first step? How does he proceed to argue for this first step?*

The argument for the intrinsic intelligibility of being:

Because being is the objective of the pure desire to know,  
it follows that intelligibility is intrinsic to being.

Why does the intrinsic intelligibility of being follow from  
the definition of being?

Discussion.

Intellectual conversion consists in no longer taking reality  
to be the 'already out there now,' but taking it to be  
intrinsically intelligible.

Further discussion; various student proposals.

*So let's remember now what Lonergan says being is: it's the objective of the pure desire to know.*

**If by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of all intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, and if that's the case, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being.” (CWL 3, p. 523).**

If that's the case, then we have to **“affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being.”** (CWL 3, p. 523). *If we claim that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly, then it's intrinsically intelligible. So in other words, there's not some part of being that's outside of the intelligible! There's not the whole of being that's separate from the intelligible, that the intelligible is intra-mental and reality is extra-mental; it is already out there now!*

### **3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible**

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*So then, it’s not that the intelligible is intra-mental and reality is extra-mental; that it’s already out there now. But reality is what is known precisely by understanding correctly. And that being is going to be completely*

*known when there are no further questions to be asked*  
— *not proportionate being, but being in toto!*

All right. Now, let's see. *What is the basis of him saying that? He's given us the pieces now. Why then is being, is reality, intrinsically intelligible? ... Put it in your own words, without just repeating the slides that have been up there! ... Donato?*

Donato: If — This is probably just saying the same thing that's up on the slide there; so —

Pat: Could you speak up a little bit?

Donato: I mean, you said to say this without saying something that's on the slide, but this is doing exactly that; but — Since being is that which is understood correctly in — like that's what intelligibility — that's what our desire is, to know this; and it's by understanding correctly that we get to being, and being is the goal here. If being is anything other than intelligible, then it wouldn't be an achievable goal.

Pat: Ah, that's true! If it were anything other than intelligible, and if we in fact know the way that Lonergan says we do, and invites us to appropriate, then doing that would not give us the goal of knowing being; that's right! But that is just to say, "Well, tough luck! You had this goal, and it's really too bad that you never managed to satisfy that goal." So that's really not — It's getting in the right direction, but it's not really getting to the heart of the matter. Okay?

Why is being intelligible? ... This is the heart of what — *It seems to me that this is the heart — this is the touch-stone for what Lonergan is going to call later on, after the publication of Insight, what he's going to call "intellectual conversion".*

The book itself has been engaged in an exercise to bring about intellectual conversion. *The intellectual conversion in this case has to do with breaking away from what he, at one point, calls the umbilical cord of the already out there now as the criterion for reality, and taking as a virtually unconditionally held position that reality is not a sub-division*

*of the already out there now; but reality is what is known by correctly understanding. That's intellectual conversion! But the touchstone to that is: You know that you've made that appropriation really your own, when you're convinced that reality is intrinsically intelligible; that that content of the non-imaginable space and the non-imaginable process, that is what really is!*

That's not just the tools we use and project upon reality: that's not just the tools we use to get convenient and useful results by shaping reality with those tools! *That non-imaginable intelligibility is the core of reality.*

*Okay, so how is he making that claim?*

Jonathan: So if I can reduplicate the dynamic structure, and in the end reasonably affirm, and say: "Yes, that is what I'm doing when I'm knowing!"

Pat: Uh, huh!

Jonathan: Then I have a ground for using that method, that dynamic structure, as regards beings that are not just my own cognition?

Pat: Why? I mean that — you've repeated more or less what Lonergan has said up to this point, but why does that tell you that you can now use this method, that you've been using your whole life, legitimately to know how things really are. ... I just gave you a clue.

**Student question about why the data of consciousness and sense data can be legitimately equated. So "why does the fact that this method [cognitional structure] works on the data of consciousness mean that it will work on the data of sense?"**

**— Indeed, the data of consciousness is not the same as the data of sense. The second part of the question is equivalent**

to how do we know that intelligibility is intrinsic to what we know about the data of sense?

Student question: Might one say, “If I know how I know, then I know what I am?”

- Discussion of the difference between affirming oneself *as* a knower, vs. knowing all that there is to know about oneself.
- Difference between knowing oneself as intelligible, and knowing that all that is is intelligible.
- Further discussion of the possibility of total self-knowledge.

Pat: Ah, Greg?

Greg: Does it have to do with breaking down the distinction between inner and outer? So in other words, if I can come to understand and know myself in this way, and, in terms of the world of being: *I am!* But not in a special way to any other, you know, instance of being. And by coming — I can come to know the world in the same way that I can come to know myself!

Pat: Okay. Well, that’s more or less what Jonathan just said.

Jonathan: So I guess — I use — actually I can’t answer it, but I have a question that has been nagging at me. Ahm, *the data of consciousness and sense data — this might be a false assumption — but it seems to me are not the same sort of stuff.* And so I’ve been nagged by the question: Why do I get to use — Why does the fact that this method works on the data of consciousness mean that it will work on the data of sense?

Pat: Okay. The first part of your observation, so to speak, is exactly right!! *The data of sense and the data of consciousness are not the same sort of stuff! That's very well put! And in a way, it anticipates the discussion we're going to have in a few minutes about whether the nature of human beings is spiritual or material. And that's really very much at the heart of it.* So

that's a good observation! And the question is an excellent one. It's exactly the question that we're asking!

Jonathan: Yeh, I just wanted to make sure.

Pat: Yeah. If — How do I want to say this? — *The question of How do I know that the operations that I use to know those operations will work when they are being applied to different kinds of data, is a way of saying How do I know that that's going to be intelligible also?* I've become intelligible unto myself, in a limited sort of a way, by discovering that I can characterize by these operations. And in fact I need to characterize by these operations. But how do I know that that has anything to do with the data that I'm not giving to myself by the performance, which is what distinguishes the data of consciousness from the data of sense? So it's an excellent question. How do I know that that's possible to us?

Pat: Maggie?

Natalie: Ah, I think I'll wait for a minute; I'll come back to it.

Pat: Okay! ... Matt?

Matt: So could you phrase it that: if I know how I know, then I know what I am? ... It sounds too reductive now that it came out of my mouth, but —?

Pat: Ah, well again, I tried to make a point a couple of weeks ago; in fact I think perhaps in the first class of this semester [Class 15, on chapter eleven, "Affirming and Characterizing One's Self"] that *to affirm yourself as a knower is not the same as knowing everything there is to know about you!*

Matt: Right!



### 3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible

**“Now if by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being.**

**For one defines being by its intelligibility; one claims that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly; one denies that being is anything apart from the intelligible or beyond it or different from it, for one’s definition implies that being is known completely when there are no further questions to be answered.”** (CWL 3, p. 523, emphasis added).

Pat: *It’s knowing something really important, indeed profoundly fundamental about yourself. But it’s still not the same as knowing everything that there is to know about you! Okay? So there is that distinction!*

Matt: Is he making the claim that that’s a possibility?

Pat: *Ah, sure! It’s a claim that it’s possible that you are completely intelligible; that you are intrinsically intelligible; because you are part of the community of being! ... But it’s a bigger claim, because it’s a claim that the whole of the community of being is intelligible.*

Matt: I understood you up to the point where you said some people could know all there is: that knowing the way in which you know, and confirming that that really is how you come to know things, is not the same as knowing all that there is to know about oneself.

Pat: Right!

Matt: That much I understand. But what you're saying is that Lonergan's point would be that *there is a way or a point at which one can know all that there is to know about oneself?*

Pat: *It's a possibility! You asked is it possible. Sure, it is possible!*

Matt: Okay.

Pat: But you have to envision what would be involved in that. Remember we talked about what would be involved in knowing the intelligibility of a mayfly; and by a multiplication and exponentiation of what would be involved in knowing Matt Perlstein. So a great deal of elaboration, a great many, many, insights would be required to know everything there is to know about you.

Matt: I'm back to where I started from which was I've got to know everything about everything.

[Student laughter]

Pat: Okay.

Resumption of the discussion:

Student proposal: Orientation towards the world  
questioning about everything, if we can ask questions  
about ourselves, and know ourselves as intelligible and  
real.

Reason why *we* are intelligible is because the world is  
intelligible.

Why is the world intelligible?

We make judgments that affirm the ‘isness’ of ‘what is’,  
i.e., the being of the intelligibility known in the insight  
that you affirm.

Whenever we reasonably affirm, we affirm the reality of  
the intelligibility about which we have asked, “Is it?”

We have an *unrestricted* desire for knowing all the  
questions for judgment; the “is it so” questions.

But all of those “is?” questions are about some  
intelligibility; so all the true affirmations are affirmations  
of the reality of intelligibilities.

Hence, all being is intelligible.

Pat: Maggie?

Maggie: Ah, this might be too simple; but if we understand, or if we have an orientation towards the world such that we ask questions about everything, I’m thinking — and what that of which we can ask questions about we take as reality, or understand to be real. We can ask question about ourselves; therefore we must be real and intelligible, just as the things in the world are.

Pat: Okay. So you’ve actually gone in the opposite direction; which is actually the right way to go. The reason why we’re intelligible is because being is intelligible. So that’s the right direction to come at it. Now, why is the world intelligible?

Maggie: Because we can raise questions about it!

Pat: Okay. And that’s getting at the right direction. So, it’s because we can raise questions about it.

Maggie: And have insights.

Pat: We have insights. And — ?

Matt: Make judgments.

Pat: And make judgments! And what happens when we make judgments, when we make affirmative judgments?

[Several students speak simultaneously.]

Maggie: We affirm the being of —

Pat: We affirm the ‘isness’, of what?

Matt: Terms and relations.

Pat: Okay. But more generally — Matt just said that terms and relations; but more generally we affirm, we affirm that *what* is?

Student Being? The world?

Pat: You can say that you affirm that being is, but what you’re really saying is that *something is a member in the community of being. When you say “It is!” you’re saying it’s part of existence, it’s being existence. What are you affirming to be in existence? ...*

[Some students in murmuring discussion]

Pat: *The intelligibility of the insight that you’ve affirmed. So whenever you affirm, you are knowing the reality of the intelligibility that you affirm.*

*Now, if Lonergan is right, our unrestricted desire is unlimitedly desirous of answering all questions for understanding and for judgment. And that being is to be known only when all answers to the questions for judgment, when all the Is it? questions have been answered; when we know all the answers to Is it? we would know being! But all our Is it? questions that Is it? are about the intelligible content of some understanding, because being is what is to be known by answering all the questions for judgment; and all the judgments are judgments about the ‘isness’ of some intelligible content. All being is shot through with intelligibility! All that is is intelligible content; and there is nothing that is, that is not known in the affirmation of an intelligible.*

That's what makes for Lonergan's argument that being is intrinsically intelligible. It's precisely because it's derived from the structure of our knowing.

Student question about how being, which is intrinsically intelligible but not imaginable, can be divorced from imaginable sense data.

- Recall the distinction between being and proportionate being; only *proportionate* being is defined as what is to be known by *possible* human experience, understanding and judging.
- But according to Lonergan, human beings are constituted by self-transcendence, by an unrestricted, dynamic orientation of questioning that goes beyond all cultural, etc. limitations — but also beyond all *actual* and even all *possible* experience.
- We ask for and seek virtually unconditioned judgments about what “is”, not just about what is true of human experiences.
- Lonergan's account of being is not restricted to human experiencing.
- We can ask whether anything lies beyond human experience.

- Lonergan’s argument is that intelligibility is intrinsic to *all* being, not just to being proportionate to human experiencing, understanding and judging.
- The empirical residue and human sensibility do not directly enter into the question of the intelligibility of being.

Pat: Matt?

Matt: Does that mean then it’s — The intelligibility is not imaginable.

Pat: That’s right!

Matt: And yet we have to have the further insight into the concrete, or to have the insight into the thing, which is a form of the world of intelligibility, unities and identities. But even in there when it’s governed by the empirical residue, or the coincidental manifolds of data of sense, we still have the original insight that gives — that allows me into a thing or into an explanatory definition. None of those things in their intelligibility are in themselves imaginable. So —

Pat: That’s right!

Matt: So then I don’t — I’m having a hard time to see how to say that being is intrinsically intelligible, and that being is what is to be known when there are no further questions to be answered, how that is removed from the data of sense, or of the things that I can imagine, that I can image.

Pat: Okay. Well, let’s remember that there was a subtle move in the transition about a third of the way into chapter fourteen [“**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-455)]: When Lonergan gives his account of the notion of being in chapter twelve [“**The Notion of Being**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 372-398)], he does not define being as that which is to be known by the *possible* human experiencing, understanding and judging.<sup>3</sup> The word ‘possible’ is in there

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<sup>3</sup> “Being, then, is the objective of the desire to know.” (*CWL* 3, chapter twelve, “**The Notion of Being**”), p. 372.

*importantly*, because if you say that being is what is to be known by human experience and understanding and judging without the qualification of ‘possible’, it’s a very anthropomorphic account of being.

*Lonergan’s account of human being is based in human self-transcendence; it’s based in the fact that human beings have this dynamic orientation beyond what they have achieved, both as individuals and as a race. We are constituted, in a profoundly important way, by what we are born into, what we are oriented towards, not by what we have achieved so far. And Lonergan’s claim that our desire to know is unrestricted is such a crucial claim, because it means that we can talk about being in ways that are not restricted to any cultural, or social, or economic, or political, or ideological, or ethnic, or religious, fixing. It’s because the desire to know is completely unrestricted, it’s oriented towards whatever is to be known by all the ‘ises’, all the pronouncements of ‘is’, in so far as — and that’s why*

*I’ve underlined this (“understanding correctly” in the slide) — in so far as they are correct, in so far as they really do arise from a grasp of the virtually unconditioned.*

### **3. Being is Intrinsically Intelligible**

**“Now if by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being.**

**For one defines being by its intelligibility; one claims that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly; one denies that being is anything apart from the intelligible or beyond it or different from it, for one's definition implies that being is known completely when there are no further questions to be answered.” (CWL 3, p. 523, emphasis added).**

*So Lonergan's account of being does not include any reference to human experiencing. His account of proportionate being includes a reference to human experiencing. Remember we started a few minutes ago: this is the section where Lonergan is going to give an account that the metaphysical elements are intrinsic to proportionate being. But his first step is to establish that intelligibility is intrinsic to all being, whether it's proportionate to human knowing or transcends human knowing. Okay.*

*So that's sort of a longwinded way of saying that the empirical residue and human sensibility don't actually enter directly into this. We're going to see it come back later on, with this question about the spiritual and the material.*

Matt:           Okay.

Pat:           *But it doesn't enter directly into this. All that enters into this is, first of all, did Lonergan even get it right in saying: being can be defined properly as the objective of all of our questions, of our unrestricted desire to understand correctly, of our unrestricted desire manifest in our questions for intelligence, for reasonableness, and for judgment.*

Matt:           Because anybody could easily object and say: “Yeah, but there might be questions that you are even incapable of asking.”

Pat:           Right!

Matt: And that would be how somebody could, out of hand, reject this whole —

Pat: — Right. Somebody could reject that, but Lonergan’s strategy on that is: well, how do they know they have no good answer.

Matt: Right.

Pat: Okay. *So, in other words, the objection is based on an awareness of unanswered questions; and those unanswered questions are precisely about what the person was saying **he or she** might not be able to ask about. ... Okay? ...*

Matt: Right.

Student question as to whether being and reality are  
interchangeable terms?

- For Lonergan being and reality are indeed the same.
- Discussion of the intrinsic and the protean notions of being — the notions of reality that compete with the intrinsic notion of being rooted in unrestricted inquiry.
- Further discussion of unintelligibility of evil and whether it is a part of being addressed in chapter twenty [**“Special Transcendent Knowledge”** (pp. 709-751)]. Discussion of evil as what occurs for no good reason.

Pat: Tim?

Tim: We can take, I was thinking at this point, ‘being’ and ‘reality’ as convertible interchangeable terms. Is that fair to say?

Pat: For Lonergan, yes! Being and reality, being and the real, are convertible! But notice he does something — Periodically, he’ll refer to this peculiar phrase, “**the polymorphic nature of consciousness.**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 410-412, 424, 451-452, 704, 712-713). And then he actually throws in this phrase, “**the protean notion of being.**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 509, 545, 590, 609). Okay? Protean refers to Proteus; Proteus was a Greek god who could change his form into anything at a moment’s notice. *And so we have, if you like, an intrinsic notion of being, and then we have a protean notion. Our intrinsic notion of being never goes away, because we always are oriented towards the totality of what is by our inextinguishable unrestricted desire.*

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But we also have kind of: “Well, that’s a little flaky, and that’s a little wispy, and I don’t know if I want to go to the bank with that one. You know, I don’t think I’m going to get a loan on my account by telling him about my unrestricted desire to know!

[Subdued student amusement]

So give me something a little more solid! That’s us being Proteus. That’s us going from our — what later on he’s going to say are our truly spiritual orientation, to some other kind of orientation, whether it’s a more evolutionarily rooted animal orientation, or whether it’s a more scientifically committed orientation, or a politically committed orientation, or an economically committed orientation. *We shift around, you know*: “Well, you know, all that stuff about what you could know through your unrestricted desire, and especially that intelligibility stuff, you know; I can’t really get my hands around it! Quite literally, you know, in German: the way in which *greifen* (verb = to grip, to grasp, to take hold of) is built into the German *der Begriff* (noun = concept, term, idea), as a grip concept, to grasp something, and so on. It goes right back to this sense of being able to grab it with you hands. Well, *intelligibility is not like that! You can’t see it but you also can’t grab it. And so that’s what we mean by intangible.*

Tim: Uhm!

Pat: So the protean notion of being is kind of floating around.

Tim: Well, what I’m wondering about is the problem of evil. Evil as surd, as precisely that which is unintelligible. Then it seems like I’m in this uncomfortable place, where I’m saying that evil isn’t real; that it’s not a part of being; that it doesn’t exist.

Pat: Ahm, well, this is — Greg is always complaining about the fact that we haven’t got to chapter twenty yet!

[Student laughter]

And it’s in chapter nineteen (*CWL* 3, “**General Transcendent Knowledge**”, pp. 657-708) to chapter twenty (“**Special Transcendent Knowledge**”, pp. 709-751) where Lonergan takes that up. Okay.

So to not frustrate people too much about it: Non-intelligibility tends to have consequences! So an act of murder is really not an act of murder — *So murder is unjustifiable taking of a human life. It's really not murder if there's a justifiable to it. If it's justifiable, it may be tragic and it indeed would be sad, because somebody will have lost somebody as heir to that. But it's not murder if it's justifiable. And justifiable is a way of pointing in the direction of a certain kind of intelligibility! There's some reason why this had to happen! Evil is when there is no reason why it's happening. And what happens for no reason can have very palpable consequences.*

You can give all the physiology, and the physics and the chemistry, and the physiology of somebody killing somebody else, and explain exactly how a person's life came to an end; and you can give the whole physiology, and that sort of thing: all of it is explained! Except when you get to the point of “Okay, but why did it happen?” And if you can give a reason for why it happened, then there is an intelligibility to why it happened. But if in the end you can say there is no good reason — You can say, “Well, he was driving me crazy!” Okay! People drive us crazy all the time, but that's not the only solution to people driving you crazy. Or “He made me angry!” That's not the only solution to the problem of being angry about things. That happens to be an unintelligible solution.

Ah, that's going to have to suffice for the moment. but it's not as though we're not going to return to it.

Tim:            Thanks.

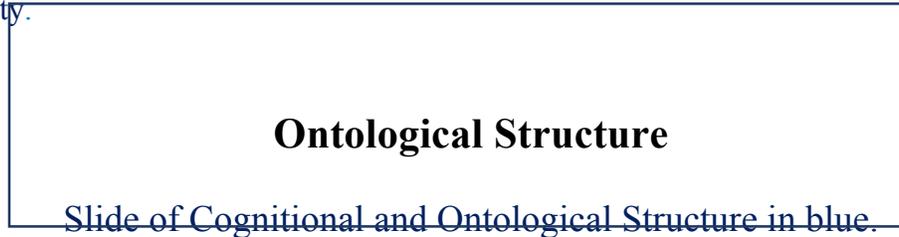
**Diagram of Ontological Structure: the most important step — the acid test for intellectual conversion.**

**Being is not only intrinsically intelligible, but completely intelligible; there are no brute facts.**

**In every judgment that “something is,” the affirmation concerns the intelligible content.**

We can't affirm anything that is not intelligible; you can have intelligibles that are not real — that are only hypothetical — but no realities that are not intelligible.

Okay. I'm bringing us back to a slide we looked at a couple of weeks ago, in fact during Class Twenty.



Why didn't I go to this slide ten minutes ago? Why did I make you all squirm in your chairs with this problem. *It's because this is the most important step in self-appropriation. It is the acid test for intellectual conversion. That being is intrinsically intelligible.* In fact, we're going to see that that leads to what you might call a lemma, or a corollary, with being is not only *intrinsically* intelligible, but being is *completely* intelligible. Now, most people don't think that being is completely intelligible; most people think that reality is just there for no reason. This is a philosophical building up to the fact that reality is intrinsically meaningful. I just made a jump from 'intelligible' to 'meaningful'! We'll talk about that a little bit next week.

[Some class amusement]

But that being — that *reality is intrinsically intelligible: There are no brute facts. There are facts, but there are no brute facts. Whatever is, is intelligible, apart from the problem of evil. But evil doesn't exist! Ahm, to say that evil doesn't exist makes it sound like you're trivializing it. And there is away in which Hannah Arendt's great insight about the banality of evil; there's a non-reality about evil that's intrinsic to evil being evil. So that's Lonergan and Arendt coming at the same issue from very different angles. Neither of them is saying it's trivial; neither of them is saying it's not — it doesn't have — what's the other word you can use? — But the evil consequences! Neither of them is saying that. But it sounds like if you're saying that if it doesn't exist, then it's no big deal. But that's not true! That doesn't follow! But intelligibility here is the stuff of understanding. And what's lacking in the occurrence is any intelligibility for it to*

*have occurred. That it occurs, when it occurs, that it has intelligible consequences is traceable.*  
All right!

Are there any questions about this? Oh, so I didn't talk about the slide — This is what we just did.

## Ontological Structure

*When you judge that something is, the 'is' affirmation is about the intelligible content! And every judgment of 'isness' is about intelligible content! And human beings want to know the answer to all the 'is' questions, and all those answers are about intelligible contents!*

*Now, notice that this isn't the same as saying that every time I have an insight, it's real!* Not at all! So the interesting thing here is that you could say, in a sense — it's a little bit tricky — you could say, in a sense, the intelligible is bigger than the real; because you can have all kinds of bright ideas that turn out not to be affirmable! But you can't affirm anything that isn't intelligible. Now, the thing that makes this tricky is that the ideas occur to you, and you're in being, so what we can always say about those intelligibles is that they are in being under thinking. But they're not in being independently of your thinking! *But whatever the being is that is independent of your thinking, that is completely intelligible.* For the moment, let's just keep it simple: *that you can have intelligibles that are not real, but you can't have anything real that is not intelligible!!* Okay.

**Student question about the 'intrinsic' intelligibility of being.**

— **Intrinsic means cannot exist without; intelligibility is not just contingently connected with being; being would not be if it were not intelligible.**

Student question about whether facticity is of only one type in a positive affirmation; does it mean the same in all instances.

- Answer depends on the sections on real distinction and real relations.
- The answer is both yes and no; further discussion.
- All affirmations have the same “*proper*” content, but they are different since they are connected with their ‘*borrowed*’ intelligible contents.
- Is a computer real in the same way as a friendship? Discussion.

Pat: Okay, Matt?

Matt: I can follow that being is intelligible. It’s the ‘intrinsic-ness’ that I’m having trouble with. Is the rationale behind it being fundamentally intrinsic, is it what Lonergan was talking about, our native orientation in *Method*, chapter four? Is that where he gets that it’s intrinsic to us, because it’s —

Pat: — It’s not from what he has to say in chapter four of *Method in Theology*. The ‘intrinsic’ has to do with — well, extrinsic and intrinsic is whether or not — I’m trying to say this without using the word ‘be’. *Ah, something is intrinsic to something else if they cannot exist apart from one another; something is extrinsic to something else, if they can exist apart from one another.* So you can be Matt without being a student in this class. *That would be an extrinsic thing.*

Matt: *So, would it be like ‘contingent’?*

Pat:           *Yeah, yeah. Contingent! And intelligibility —being is not — how do I want to say this — being is not just contingently connected with reality. Intelligibility is of the very stuff of reality!*

Matt:           So being would not be being were it not intrinsically intelligible?

Pat:           That's right. That's right!

Matt:           Okay. Thank you!

Pat:           Okay. Any other questions?

Jonathan:       Is facticity only of one type, only when we make a positive affirmation, would it mean the same thing in all instances?

Pat:           Ah, that's an ambiguous question and it's one — The stuff that we skipped over about distinctions and relations (*CWL* 3, chapter sixteen, "**Metaphysics as Science**", §§ 1 and 2, pp. 513-520), that's exactly what that stuff is there for. The simple answer is that there is an ambiguity in your question about: "Is it the same thing all the time?" Are there different types of affirmations? Or, is that what you said about —

Jonathan:       — Yeah, that's the sort of language —

Pat:           — Yeah, but you said something different —

Jonathan:       Oh, I think I'll ask the question again about the meaning. When we affirm 'is', do we mean the same thing?

Pat:           Do we mean the same thing! Okay. Ah, do we mean the same thing? Well, in one sense yes, and in another sense, no! *The sense 'no' is: every time we affirm we affirm some intelligibility, and so every time we affirm, we affirm something different.* So there are as many different kinds of existences, or existence, or conjugate or central acts, as there are intelligibles that are linked to those central or conjugate acts. Okay? *So they are different in that sense! Are they the same? Well, in some sense they are, because the proper content of a judgment is just the 'is' part. But the 'is' never sits there as a monad floating around, waiting to get glued on to something. Ah, you know, the intelligent content and 'isness' always come together.* But nevertheless, you can make a distinction. You can make what Lonergan calls an "*inadequate real distinction.*" It's not a notional distinction, it's a real distinction! That's part

of it. *So from one point of view, all the affirmations are the same: they all have the same proper content; but from another point of view, they are all about something different! And so they are different because they are connected with the intelligible contents that they are the 'is' of!*

Jonathan: But the difference would lay at the level of what is understood; I accept that that is not actually a fair way of looking at that distinction. Is this right If I ask, if I say, “my laptop is real, and so is my friendship with Byron.” Are those real in the same way?

Pat: They are! Yes! And so is everything else!

[Student laughter]

In the most important way, No, because they are different intelligible contents. *The reality of something is as much its intelligible content as its actuality.*

**Reiteration of the importance of the affirmation that the real is intrinsically intelligible. And the importance of realizing that the real is not ‘the already out there now real’.**

**– Illustration by way of Plato’s dialogues, which are crafted to make the reader uncomfortable with the notion that the real is ‘already out there now’.**

All right. So the touchstone of intellectual conversion, the touchstone of self-appropriation is when you are comfortable to walk around, depending on who’s present, saying: the real is intrinsically intelligible.

[Student amusement]

And as long as you’re troubled by that, as long as you’ve got further pertinent questions about that — and I hope that everybody in this room does, because it should not come to you easily — As long as you’re walking around saying: “Is the real really intrinsically intelligible?” then you’re not there yet! There’s a lot of little nooks and crannies in the further pertinent questions that you will have to come to terms with, before you are convinced of it.

I think I told you about my little exercise just wondering if the flag-waving in the wind is intrinsically intelligible, and so on. I didn't tell people that that is what I was doing when I was watching — So that is something you really have to do!

*But, that said, I wanted to make a very dramatic presentation about this, because it is so important! It is at the very, very, heart of Lonergan's project: you can see over, and over, and over again, how he is inveighing against the counterposition that the real is the already out there now. The easiest and the most spontaneous human thing is to regard the real as something other than the intelligible.*

And it is not an easy thing to make that turn. Lonergan's read of Plato at least, is that that is what Plato is talking about in the parable or allegory of the cave; it's what he is talking about in the allegory of the navigator who goes up the mast. And all throughout Plato's writings, he is using allegories to cause a discomfort in people who are willing to be satisfied with the notion that the real is the already out there now, and are uncomfortable with the notion that the real is intrinsically intelligible. *Now there is more to Plato than that, especially with regard to the notion of the Good.* But for reasons that we will see a little bit later on, Lonergan was trying to handle the problem of the Good and the problem of ethics within the context of his Metaphysics of Proportionate Being. And so we'll see where he ended up with that, and sort it out shortly. Okay.

### Human Beings as Intrinsically Spiritual.

In self-affirmation we affirm the intelligibility of ourselves as knowers (we affirm the intelligibility of performing the dynamism of cognitional structure).

Difference between the kind of intelligibility known in the case of intelligent knowing, and the intelligibility of beings that are not also knowers and cannot also know themselves.

This raises the question: Is Man's central form material or spiritual?

## What does “spiritual” mean?

- Discussion of spiritual as dealing with limits, as interiority, as the realm of faith, the realm of feelings, the connection to something transcendent.
- Discussion of the literal vs. the figurative meanings of ‘interior’.
- The New Age sense of spiritual is a kind of ‘energy’; there is also a tendency to see the spiritual as invisible forces that play a role in events.
- In Chapter seventeen (“**Metaphysics as Dialectic**”, pp. 553-617) when Lonergan discusses myth and magic in the pejorative sense, he is talking about those who believe in such spiritual forces.

### **Highlights from Chapter Sixteen**

- 8 Unity of the universe**
- 9 Unity of the human**
- 10 Intrinsic intelligibility of being**
- 11 Lonergan’s estimate of his method**
- 12 Metaphysics and science**
- 13 Distinctions**

## 14 Relations

Okay. ... Highlight two-point-two. ... In the twenty-third place —

[Murmurs of amusement]

### **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

**“As known to ourselves, we are intelligible, as every other known is. But the intelligibility that is so known is also intelligence and knowing.**

**It has to be distinguished from the intelligibility that can be known but is not intelligent and does not attain to knowledge in the proper human sense of that term. (CWL 3, p. 539).**

*Lonergan is giving a claim that human beings are intrinsically spiritual! He doesn't actually use the word 'intrinsically' there, but I thought it followed from what he was talking about; I think it does! And this is what people were saying, you know, about fifteen minutes ago, in our discussion here.*

**“As known to ourselves, we are intelligible, as every other known is.” (CWL 3, p. 539).**

*We understand ourselves; we get insights into ourselves; we affirm those insights; and we are affirming the intelligibility of ourselves when we make those affirmations. But there's a*

*difference when the intelligibility that is being known is also intelligent.* Electrons, and chromosomes, and iqama, and virus compositions, don't know what they're doing when they are acting intelligibly. They don't understand what they are doing when they are acting intelligibly.

*So our intelligence, even though we affirm it, has to be distinguished from the intelligible that we affirm that doesn't understand or affirm itself.*

## **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

**“Are we to say that man’s central form is material or spiritual?”** (*CWL* 3, p. 542).

What does ‘spiritual’ mean?

In general?

For Lonergan?

And so [Lonergan](#) raises the question, Are we to say then that — I’m stuck with the gender insensitive case here; I’ll go back to the other usage later on. — *Are we to say that man’s central form is material or spiritual?* ...

What does ‘spiritual’ mean? And let’s begin: what does ‘spiritual’ mean in general? What do people mean, what do you mean, when you use the word, ‘spiritual’? ... There’s a famous thing — and I don’t think it’s unique to the United States — It may have begun in the United States: whether or not ‘religious’ implies ‘spiritual’? What does that mean? ... Byron?

Byron;            I think that Dr. Purnell has an interesting definition; that spiritual is — He says it’s how one deals with one’s constraints.

Pat:              Okay. So that’s one example; how one deals with one’s constraints is spiritual. I’m not sure if I’ve read that essay, but we’d want to know more about: Are there different ways of dealing with one’s constraints that are spiritual and [those](#) that are not spiritual! But at least that’s a beginning. What else do people mean by ‘spiritual’? James?

James: A lot of times people will just mean the interior dimension of the person. So some realm of interiority, over against kind of empirical, material, external, forces of nature, or elements of human life.

Pat: Okay. *I just wanted to draw attention to the metaphors or the prepositions you are usually using; 'internal' and 'external', 'in' and 'out'; and that in fact is one of the things that people use; what's 'inside' and what's 'outside'!* But let's pause for a moment; and say this is not new for us, to pause over this. But just reflect for a moment: what is inside? Your heart, your lungs, your liver, your upper tuberosity: and your "rotator cup muscles"!

[Murmurs of amusement]

*Those are inside, those are your interior. But those are material.* So the word 'inner' is being used in some sense, which calls for a certain kind of clarification. But that's one way that people use 'spirituality'. What else do you mean by 'spiritual'? What else is meant by 'spiritual'? ... Greg?

Greg: I think, maybe more colloquial! Colloquially, people use it as a term to refer to things that I can't quite justify, or I can't — that aren't strictly demonstrable, whether it's attitudes or convictions, or kind of, this other realm; apart from that even just this strictly physical material, but apart from the kind of rational, I'd say.

Pat: Okay. Things that I can't justify are spiritual! What else?

Jonathan: People often use it to refer to our affective lives; that's the spiritual side.

Pat: Spiritual side has to do with your affectivity. And that would put it in opposition to what?

Jonathan: Sort of rational, sort of objective, sort of rationality —

Pat: So put it in opposition to rationality. Well, we'll put it in opposition to affectivity. ... Oh, *put it in opposition to material.* I mean James has said it's what's outside, but if your feelings are inside, we have to have activities inside. So to talk about the spiritual as having to do with the affectivity, actually confines it even further; it's not only what's going on in your inner life, but *it's* in some small portion of your inner life. That's what is spiritual, as opposed to the rational. ... James?

James: A lot of times also people will use it to indicate some relation to some kind of transcendent dimension, whether it's religious, or even some deity; or even not just that, but some sense of the cosmos, or even to some deeper realm of meaning. So it's some kind of — the part of you that would have a tie or sensitivity to that, or to some of these kinds of dimensions.

Pat: Right! So sometimes 'spiritual' has to do with a transcendent, and sometimes it doesn't. When you hear certain people who are associated with what's called "New Age Spirituality", not all of them are using the word 'spiritual' in a way that has anything to do with the transcendent. There's a lot of talk about energy. So you've got the material and the spiritual; and as I kidded one of my student's once: "Oh, it's sort of a squishy matter, that the spiritual is a kind of squishy matter!" And particularly if you think of people, who unlike us very sophisticated educated people, think of spiritual forces in the world; and that spirits — you could put a curse on somebody. Of course, we all know that that happened in Boston for eighty-four years!

[Student amusement]

So the extent to which anybody thinks that there are these forces that you can't see or touch, but that are responsible for things happening, that, you know, is another sort of meaning for the word 'spiritual.' It's relevant to what we're going to talk about when we make the transition to chapter seventeen (*CWL* 3, "**Metaphysics as Dialectic**", pp. 553-617), because Lonergan is concerned about religious expressions, and the distortions of religious expressions; and when he uses the term 'myth', he's using it in a purely pejorative sense. Later on he said: "Look, I was using the word 'myth' with an older connotation, where it was a purely pejorative term." People, beginning with Mircea Eliade among others, were using it in a much more positive sense; and so Lonergan wanted [later](#) to associate himself with that. But certainly when he's talking about myth and magic in chapter seventeen, he's talking about things such as "Okay, there are these spiritual forces: the evil eye!" "Why did that person die?" "Well, so-and-so gave him the evil eye!" It's really kind of — It's very unnerving when you encounter a group of people who are operating with that as being part of their reality. That there are spiritual

forces in the world, that you can put curses on people, that you can cause them to die or get sick, that they really take that seriously.

Of course, religious people in Christian or Jewish or Islamic or Hindu tradition really do believe that prayer makes a difference! And so how is that different from spiritual in this other sense that Lonergan wants to criticize, because Lonergan didn't think that Christian prayer was a meaningless and ineffective exercise?

What Lonergan means by ‘spiritual’:

First approximation: **“Intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 539).

How radical a definition of spiritual this is.

How it is different from spiritual as “inner consciousness.”

How the spiritual seen as ‘intelligent’ is different from logicism, rationalism. In rationalism, whatever is outside the rational system is not rational.

How the spiritual seen as ‘intelligent’ is different from logicism, rationalism. In rationalism, whatever is outside the rational system is not rational.

Many spiritual movements are reactions against this idea of ‘rational’.

What Lonergan means by intelligent and rational consciousness is the flow of answers that come in response to unrestricted questioning.

This is key to what Lonergan means by ‘spiritual’ — that which is unrestricted, conditioned only by the unrestricted.

So these are some of the different meanings of ‘spiritual’; and I just wanted to stop and dwell on them for a moment, before we went on to look at what Lonergan means by ‘spiritual.’

*So if we're going to ask the question, "Is the central form, so to speak, is the essence of being human, spiritual or material?" we ought to be clear about what we mean by the term.*

So first — There's actually a couple of approximations here. *The first approximation is that intelligibility if it's not intelligent is material! And then intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual.*

**"Let us say that intelligibility that is not intelligent is material, and that intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual." (CWL 3, p. 539).**

Now, let us pause there for a moment, because that's a pretty radical remark, I think! *That intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual!* That would work with say James's first meaning of spiritual. But James's first meaning of spiritual would include other things as well. *Affectivity* was mentioned, but also *sensation* would be included in spiritual as what goes on in interiority, whatever that means. And *dreaming* would be spiritual. And the *experience of gastric distress* would be spiritual. So there would be a lot included in 'spiritual' as the inner consciousness, inner conscious experience.

## **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

**"Let us say that intelligibility that is not intelligent is material, and that intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual." (CWL 3, p. 539).**

**"But just as spiritual intelligibility is apart from the empirical residue, so material intelligibility is not without it. The universal can be thought, but cannot be, without the instance; ...**

**“The empirical residue, then, is at once what spiritual intelligibility excludes and what material intelligibility includes.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 540).

*And Lonergan is saying that it's the intelligibility that is intelligent that is the spiritual.* So on the one hand, it's a narrower claim! That's why I wanted to point out that it's not rationalism. 'Rationalism' means a variety of things, and I won't try to exhaust all of them.

But there's a difference between talking about intelligence and rationalism. Lonergan is going to use the word 'rational': [he writes of](#) **“intelligent and rational consciousness”** (*CWL* 3, pp. 346-348, 354-357, 379, 680). *But what Lonergan means by intelligent and rational consciousness is that whole flow of acts of insight that come in answer to questions, and acts of judgment that come in answer to questions. They come out of their dynamic — or they come in response to this dynamic orientation of unrestrictedness. That's really key to what he means by 'spiritual.' That which is intrinsically unrestricted, and is conditioned only by that which is unrestricted: that is what he is going to mean by 'spiritual'.*

By 'rational', it depends on what or who you are talking about; *but part of the rationalist movement is to give a priority to logic; and logic is but a part of being rational. Logic defines terms and sets up sets of conceptual relationships; and once you've done that, anything outside of that logical system then is not rational! In so far as you've got a rational system, anything outside of it is not rational.* Now that's of course not a Hegelian meaning of rationality, but in terms of what people usually mean by the 'Rationalists', that's sort of the underlying notion of rationality. *And then lots of things are regarded as irrational because they are outside of that.*

*Another thing that we've seen is that common sense does not proceed by a logical, deductive, systematic, process. Common sense is very eclectic! Common sense responds to situations that are not expected on the basis of anything that has been encountered before, but it comes up with intelligent and reasonable responses to them, understandings of them, and things that we do in response to them. That's different from rationalism!*

I hope I'm not repeating this story, but I probably am; my stories keep coming back! But when I was in Graduate School, we partied a lot. And we would go and play games. We

played Risk and Monopoly, and all those kinds of things. We would break up, you know, five people at this table and five people at that table, and so on. And the guy who was on the Faculty in my graduate programme who was the Logic specialist; you didn't want to be at the table with him!

[Some student amusement]

He would always tell you what was the rational thing to do; and wow, if it didn't always sort of work out in his favor — what strategy you should take. And I can remember one time, my wife and I had formed friends with a couple of other married couples that were in the graduate programme together; and two of them, you know, husband and wife, decided that they were just going to do whatever favored each other's outcome. And he kept saying: "That's not rational!" ... And *they creamed him, by cooperating!!!*

[Student laughter]

*So rationalism is not exactly — is not at all what Lonergan means by the intelligence. And I wanted to underscore that difference!* Because if you associate being intelligent with being rational in this rationalistic traditional sense, it's going to sound like a very bizarre definition of 'spiritual'; because a lot of spiritual movements are reactions against what is experienced as a very confining and alienating use of one's mind. So Lonergan's account of intelligence is much different than 'rational'. So at the very least, I wanted to ring that as a barrier, as we try to think about what he might call this 'spiritual'.

Spiritual as apart from the empirical residue; the material  
as not without the empirical residue.

The materialist sees matter as real — as space-filling stuff  
(see Descartes) — and as part of the 'already out there  
now.'

But if the real is being as grasped intelligently and  
affirmed reasonably, then we need a new account of the  
material, as well as of the spiritual.

Matter can no longer be regarded as space-filling stuff; it is rather whatever ‘cannot be’ without being in someplace and at sometime — in the sense of the empirical residuality of place and time.

Spiritual intelligibility is apart from the empirical residue; and material intelligibility is not without it. The universal can be thought, but cannot be without the instance.

**“But just as spiritual intelligibility is apart from the empirical residue, so material intelligibility is not without it. The universal can be thought, but cannot be without the instance.”** (CWL 3, p. 540).

So you can think the invariant correlations of electro-magnetism, without being an electron yourself; but you can’t be an electron apart from the empirical residue. Electrons have to be some place, at some time, in some individuality, like your thoughts don’t have to be. So that’s an illustration of what he’s getting at here! *So the empirical residue is what spiritual intelligibility excludes and what material intelligibility includes.*

**“The empirical residue, then, is at once what spiritual intelligibility excludes and what material intelligibility includes.”** (CWL 3, p. 540).

You know, *that’s the difference between being and proportionate being. There’s a tricky thing about human beings in there, but — Being is whatever is to be known by intelligent understanding, correctly, reasonably, affirming it. Proportionate being is what’s to be known*

*also by human experiencing, and there's no human experiencing of the sensible world at least, without some component of the empirical residue being part and parcel of that content.*

## **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

**“The materialist thinks the nature of matter perfectly obvious: matter is the real, and the real is a subdivision in the ‘already out there now.’**

**“But we are committed to the view that the real is being and that being is whatever is to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably. So if we are to say that matter is real, we have first to grasp its nature and then find sufficient grounds for our affirmation.” (CWL 3, p. 540).**

Now, Lonergan throws out something I find very helpful, because it’s his characterization of the materialist, or, you might say, his caricature of the materialist, except it sounds a little bit like Descartes’s account of matter.

**“The materialist thinks the nature of matter perfectly obvious: matter is the real, and the real is a subdivision in the ‘already out there now.’” (CWL 3, p. 540).**

So when Descartes talks about matter, he says that the fundamental — this is in the *Meditations* — *the fundamental property of matter is that it fills up space*. The *res extensa* [extended thing]: it is precisely that what makes it *res* [thing] is its *extensa* [extension]; *that it fills up*. And Descartes is not a materialist; as a matter of fact, Lonergan says something about him as maintaining a kind of incoherence that at least gives him a broader universe. *But the*

*minute you start to accept the “already-out-there-now” as the fundamental criterion of reality, then matter is what’s real, and matter is what fills up space. Space-filling is what matter is all about. That’s why I kidded with my student about the squishiness of energy. It fills it up, but it’s only a little squishy filling up! It’s not the hard, it’s not the hard filling. But you see, that sort of makes that kind of spirituality be squishy materiality! And Lonergan is not going to be satisfied with that.*

But we, that is to say the regal we, i.e., Lonergan,

[Student amusement]

***“We are committed to the view that the real is being, and being is whatever is to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably.” (CWL 3, p. 540, italics added).***

Okay! So if that’s the real, then you can’t say the material is the real; where by material I mean “space-filling-stuff”! *So you have to give a new account of what we mean by materiality. So instead of ‘space-filling’, what we end up with is that matter is what is “intrinsically conditioned by space and time”.* It’s a subtle but important distinction! *So instead of matter being the stuff that fills up space, the material is whatever cannot be without being some place at some time, in the very specific sense of being some place at some time of the empirical residual place and timeness!*

## **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

**“Quite obviously, there is some conditioning. Our inquiry and insight demand something apart from themselves into which we inquire and attain insight; initially and commonly that other is sensible experience, and in it is found the empirical residue.**

**“But if sensible experience and so the empirical residue condition inquiry and insight, it is no less plain that that conditioning is extrinsic.”** (*CWL 3*, p. 541).

Extrinsic and intrinsic conditioning:

Humans are obviously conditioned by experiences that are conditioned by space and time.

Yet we can also grasp intelligibilities that are not intrinsically present in space and time — e.g., covariant equations in relativity physics.

Discussion of the sensible as sufficient but not necessary for understanding, paradoxically.

- Example: once people have understood something, they can hypothetically apply it to situations they have never encountered in their sense experiences — situations that have no empirical residue.
- Human intelligence has the capacity to organize material elements of the universe that would not be organized without it.

This means that human acts of understanding are indeed extrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue, but are not intrinsically conditioned by space and time.

Now, he's building of course towards the argument *that human beings and humanity is not intrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue, not intrinsically conditioned by space and time. And that human beings have a spiritual — that the defining feature of human beings is spiritual rather than material. But he has to deal with the “obviously”! Obviously, there is some condition — Our inquiry and insight demand something apart from themselves into which we inquire and about which we have an insight!* That's what human knowing is; that what we've been talking about for the last fifteen chapters. **“Initially and commonly that other”, that something other, “is sensible experience, and in it is found the empirical residue.”** (CWL 3, p. 541).

*And here is his strong claim: So yes, human knowing is conditioned by experiences which are intrinsically conditioned by space and time. You can't see if there's nothing to see! You can't see if there are no objects somewhere at some time. [Pat gestures towards his table:] You all see that pink cat sitting there on my table right there, don't you? ...*

[Silence]

The reason you don't see it — whatever else is going on in your hallucinations — *You really don't see it is because it doesn't have the empirical residualness that would be required for an act of seeing. ... And I want you all to reach out and grab that mayfly that's flying around there. [Pat makes grabbing motions to thin air].*

[Amusement]

You can't grab it; *you can't use that sensation of touch because there's no there there! That's what the empirical residue is. But you can think about those things; you can understand those things, if not the pink cat or the mayfly. You at least can have insights and understand what is not present! Intelligibilities can be in your thinking without being present.*

But you know, there is an obvious objection to that: which is, but I'm here in the room, and I'm thinking about that; *ergo* my thinking is intrinsically conditioned by me being in the room. *And Lonergan is going to say that that's extrinsically conditioning, but not intrinsically conditioning; because your understanding and your unconditional affirmations, you need those as the conditions to emerge, but they don't need those as the conditions to let be in act. That's why insights are supervening acts over our sensations, and our judgments are supervening acts over our insights. They emerge out of, but once they have emerged, they have an operation all to themselves.*

Jonathan: So me being in the room and my neurons firing, and so forth — if I'm understanding correctly — are necessary but not sufficient conditions for understanding?

Pat: Ahm ... *it's almost the other way around! They are sufficient, but not necessary conditions for understanding.* ... This is a hard puzzle to solve!

Jonathan: Yeah, that's the secret.

Pat: This is even harder than the intrinsic intelligibility of being. But let me give you an example. *Once you understand something, you can apply it to instances and situations that you've never encountered sensibly. You can think out the applications, and those applications are not dependent upon the conditions out of which they emerged.*

Jonathan: So it would be — it gets —

Pat: Another part of the answer has to do with something we talked about last week. *That human intelligence, partly by this application business I just talked about, has the capacity for bringing under its organizing capacity that which would not be organized without it. So the materiality of the universe is disposed towards being organized, not only in intelligible, but also in intelligent ways; but can't do that without the intelligence doing the organizing!* Okay? These are just sort of hints at — This is an area in which there is a lot of further pertinent questions.

This is a —

**Student question about the role of the imagination in the grasping of what isn't present.**

- Discussion of the role of intelligence in fashioning imagination.
- The various meanings of imagination (fusion of “image-as-image,” insights, and feelings).
- Why the spiritual can take over the function of material, but not vice versa.

Pat: I’m sorry, Maggie?

Maggie: Okay. Would it be fair to understand in some way, like imagination like a — to imagine being in a nice place to understand yourself as a — [some words inaudible].

Pat: That’s partly right. You can place yourself imaginatively in another place —

Maggie: Yeah, or you can place yourself into an experience that directly came without experience — is it like an experience — I don’t know if imagination — Is it like the fair term? — [some words inaudible].

Pat: It’s a fair term, because it — How do I want to say this — Lonergan’s got a very strict meaning of imagination which we’re going to see, when we come back after the break, when he talks about “image as image”. But most people want to use the phrase ‘imagination’ to mean some synthesis of *image as image, intelligence, and feeling*, sometimes other things as well. *When people say: “Use your imagination!” or “Be imaginative!” it’s an imagination that’s enriched by understanding and by feeling. I think that’s what people most often mean when they speak about imagination.*

So Lonergan wants to make some distinctions for the sake of clarification. He’s going to limit the word ‘imagination’. But what you were just doing in saying imagining yourself as being in another place, especially if you’re imagining yourself as being in a wonderful place, or for that matter, if you imagine yourself being in a dreadful place, you’re taking the neurons that Jonathan was just talking about, and *you’re selectively allowing some of them to come into your consciousness in arrangements that are being controlled by your intelligence.* That why at the

end, Lonergan is going to say that *intelligence can take over the function of the material, or the spiritual can take over the function of the material, but the material can't take over the function of the spiritual*. The material can't think ideas that abstract from the empirical residue, because by definition the material is intrinsically dependent upon the empirical residue. So it's not capable of transcending the empirical residue.

The other part is the hard part. Is it really the case that the spiritual can take over the function of the material? And so these are sort of examples in which we can kind of think about what that might mean. This is not a slam-down Q.E.D.! *But this is the basis of his argument to show that human beings do in fact function in ways that don't depend on the empirical residue.*

**Mircea Eliade on relationship between the extrinsic and the intrinsic conditioning of the human as spiritual.**

**Eliade focused on the common structures of religious symbolism.**

**For him, the spiritual fact, as a human fact, is conditioned by various factors (anatomy, physiology, language); a spiritual fact presupposes these other factors; yet these do not add up to the life of the spirit.**

**Though humans are situated — are conditioned by physical and historical factors, they are not intrinsically conditioned by these conditions.**

### **Human Beings are Intrinsically Spiritual**

“Everyone agrees that a spiritual fact, being a *human* fact, is necessarily conditioned by everything that works together to make a man, from his anatomy and physiology to language itself. But all these conditioning factors together do not, of themselves,

add up to the life of the spirit.” (Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*), p.32.

When I was preparing the other half of the class, and I went back over one of the books that Lonergan refers to in chapter seventeen (*CWL* 3, “**Metaphysics as Dialectic**,” pp. 553-617, at p. 572, n. 7), I found this quote, in Mircea Eliade’s work, “**Images and Symbols**”. Eliade is — It’s interesting for me, because Eliade was a very big influence on me in my undergraduate and graduate studies. I talked a little bit about him last semester, and I’ll talk a little bit about him later on today. Eliade was making — Eliade regarded himself, called himself a “historian of religions”. And the study of religion tends to go on these kind of pendular swings. And when Eliade was writing, it was also a time when structuralism was making inroads into the study of religions and religious symbolisms. Eliade followed Levi-Strauss, and people like this, who were writing. And they were looking at commonalities across very, very, different kinds of religious traditions, and giving arguments about these commonalities. Psychoanalysis did something of that sort, but in very different terms, and so on. And Eliade had to make the case for what he was doing over against people that said: “Look, if you’re going to study a religious phenomenon, you have to study it in its historical context!” *And next week, we’re going to look at what Lonergan means by “historical context”. He means something a little different than what is commonly meant by Sitz im Leben.* But to take something out of its historical context, which is what you’re doing if you’re talking about common structures of religious symbolism which is what Eliade did, it seems like you’re not talking about anything real; you’re talking about abstractions! So Eliade makes a very strong claim in favor of his position, and what he is doing. People now, if you talk to people about Eliade, people who are scholars in the field of religion, history of religion, or comparative religion, they will basically say “Well, you know, Eliade made these generalizations! He didn’t realize that you have to be talking about religions in the specific — which is exactly the arguments that were being made already against Eliade in his time. It’s not that he didn’t think about them. For what it’s worth!

But this is what he says in that context:

“Everyone agrees that a spiritual fact, being a *human* fact, is necessarily conditioned by everything that works together to make

a man, from his anatomy and physiology to language itself. In other words, a spiritual fact presupposes the whole human being — that is, the social man, the economic man, and so forth. But all these conditioning factors together do not, of themselves, add up to the life of the spirit.

Although it is true that man is always found “in situations”, his situation is not, for all that, always a historical one in the sense of being conditioned solely by the contemporaneous historical moment. The man in his totality is aware of other situations over and above his historical condition; for example, he knows the state of dreaming, or of the waking dream, or of melancholy, or of detachment, or of aesthetic bliss, or of escape, etc. — and none of these states is historical, although they are as authentic and as important for human existence as man’s historical existence is.”

So in other words, he is making a claim here, that yes, we are situated, but there’s a presupposition about being situated historically; that being historically situated means being here and now. And Eliade is making the argument here that to be situated has a broader meaning. So in a way parallel to Lonergan’s, and without Lonergan’s technical analysis, Eliade is making the same kind of an argument. That *yes, human spiritual events, human spirituality, human worship, human adoration, human ecstasy, of course they are conditioned by where one’s body is, in what kind of culture one is in, but he is making the argument that they are not intrinsically conditioned by that. So this is the essence of Lonergan’s argument about the spiritual nature of being human.*

Okay. Let me stop there. I’m not going to go through all the details; just to sort of give you the highlights of what Lonergan’s point is here, for us to consider. Let’s see if people have questions about that; ... or comments. ...

**Question about how one judges what is intelligent and  
what is not.**

— That’s the core of self-affirmation; learning to discern the experience of understanding from the rest of your conscious experiences and data, i.e. to judge your own intelligence. Judging another’s intelligence poses a whole separate problem: that of interpretation.

Pat: Matt?

Matt: Do we discern what his criteria — Because we asserted that Lonergan is not a rationalist, or at least in the sense that —

Pat: — According to Bernard!

[Murmurs of amusement]

Matt: Right. But his quote: **“Let us say that intelligibility that is not intelligent is material, and that intelligibility that is intelligent is spiritual.”** (CWL 3, p. 539); how are we to judge what’s intelligible from what is not?

Pat: Ah! ... Could somebody answer Matt’s question? How do you judge what’s intelligent from what’s not? ... Okay. You see, it’s a different question from judging whether to be intelligent is to be only extrinsically conditioned by the empirical residue. But *how do you judge what’s intelligent and what’s not? ... If you can’t answer that question you’ve wasted the last twenty weeks of your lives.* Matt?

Matt: Yeah, one is intelligent if one enquires into experience, has insights, attains to judgments, goes through the whole three-fold —

Pat: Right. Right! *So the answer to your question Matt, is really your self-affirmation!*

*How do you judge what’s intelligent and what’s not? That’s really what self-affirmation has been about! Learning what it means to be intelligent! And the only way to make that judgment*

*is by discerning — within the vast panorama and profusion of your conscious experiences — discerning, out of that, what are the experiences of understanding. And then knowing what you're doing when you're doing that, and knowing that your understanding about those experiences is in fact the correct understanding of them. That's what the reduplication of the structure is all about. The only way to know what's intelligent and what's not is to judge intelligence, to judge your own intelligence!*

Now, if you're asking: "Well, how do you know that somebody else is being intelligent, or some other activity is intelligent, that's a very good question! *That actually does have to do with the problem of interpretation*, which we are going to look at next week. But *the problem of interpretation is the problem of discerning meaning when it's not your own meaning. It's the problem of understanding meaning.* And — Well, let me just leave it at that; but that *an expression is meaningful if and only if it's the product of acts of intelligence and reasonableness, and other things that Lonergan mentions very briefly here.* But value, and value endowing, and self-constitution and decision: that's what makes something be meaningful.

Okay.

## **End of Part One**

# **Insight and Beyond**

Class 22, Part Two: March 17th 2010

**“Material versus Spiritual”  
and  
“Meaning of Religious Symbolism”  
(*Insight*, Chapter 17 §1)**

**Class 22, March 17, 2010**

**Chapter 17 §1: “Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth”**

***Method in Theology*, Chapter Two: “Religion”**

**“Lonergan’s Universalist View of Religion”**

**(Frederick E. Crowe)**

## **Summary of Material**

Series of Student Questions:

What if the structure of our knowing were to change? How would that affect the structure of proportionate being? E.g., what if humans developed pheromonal responses?

- Various technological and biological modifications of human beings would not change what *knowing* is — i.e., knowing remains understanding the given data correctly.



Question about the precise meanings of ‘matter’ and ‘material’; does

Lonergan have an Aristotelian or modern notion of matter?

- Review of the distinction between the spiritual and the material:
- First approximation: the former is intelligibility that is intelligent, the latter is intelligibility that is not intelligent.
- Second, and full meaning: Lonergan defines the spiritual as not intrinsically conditioned by space and time, while the material is so conditioned.
- By ‘material’ Lonergan means something different from what a materialist means.
- Discussion of the key implications that follow: space and time are in being, not vice versa.
- Neither space nor time, but intelligibility is the criterion for the meaning of being.

The Intellectual Context of Chapter 17 §1: “Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth” (*CWL* 3, pp. 554 – 572); The “demythologization debate”.

Certain questions about mystery and myth versus rationality informed this chapter.

The twentieth century scholarly attempts to come to terms with the meaning of religious expressions which, to people in a modern scientific age, seem fantastic and unbelievable.

Are mystery and myth cognate to the earlier stages of metaphysics, vanishing thereafter?

— Rudolf Bultmann demythologized the New Testament by getting rid of the mythological elements and giving it an existentialist reading: *Kerygma and Myth*.

The question is whether the mythological elements of religious expressions would also vanish in light of Lonergan's *explanatory* metaphysics.

Further in the background is Auguste Comte's "Introduction to Positivist Philosophy."

Comte proposed three successive ages: the mythical, metaphysical, and positive ages.

The earlier ages and forms of explanation have been eclipsed by the 'positive,' i.e., scientific age.

The age when explanations are restricted to those based on 'positive' evidence of sensation.

Loneragan aims to restore the meaning of religious expressions despite the positivist critique, and to do so in a way that is in keeping with his explanatory metaphysics.

Loneragan will argue that there is some permanent meaningfulness to human religious expressions that will survive in a fully explanatory context.

Thus in Chapter Seventeen (“**Metaphysics as Dialectic**”, pp. 553-617), Lonergan is concerned with the problem of interpretation in general, and with the interpretation of religious expressions in particular.

The problem of interpretation for Lonergan arises from the different kinds (‘polymorphism’) of patterns of experience.

What is real for one pattern is different from what is real for another pattern.

Certain patterns of experience are incompatible with others; e.g., the aesthetic and the pragmatic.

Basic to Lonergan’s approach to interpretation of religious expressions arises from his distinction among: Image as Image, Image as Symbol, and Image as Sign.

*As image*: sensible content operating on the sensory level,

*As symbol*: linked with the paradoxical “known unknown”,

*As sign*, the image is linked with some interpretation of the import of the image.

The “*known unknown*”: all of our knowing occurs with awareness of a great horizon of still unanswered questions; the unknown is not just absolutely unknown, but we have an awareness (‘known’) of the unknown by means of our remaining questions.

The “known unknown” is Lonergan’s guiding heuristic principle in *Insight* for the interpretation of religious expressions.

The symbol parallels the unrestricted desire to know, and thus opens up a way to discuss religious experience — one that is appropriate to the modern era.

How the image as symbol relates to the image as sign — the latter is the already interpreted symbol.

Symbols get situated in myths; and myths themselves are already ‘signs’ in Lonergan’s sense, because they give interpretations of the image-symbol.

Mircea Eliade identified the heart of religious symbolism as a “center within chaos”; i.e., an inhabited microcosm surrounded by the ‘unknown’, the formless, mysterious domain occupied by demons, ghosts, the Other, chaos, etc.

The Image and Symbol of the Tree.

Exercise in recognizing our different modes of perception of the tree (image as image, image as symbol).

The Image as Constructed: the Cosmic Tree.

The Tree as foundation of the cosmos.

Since the “known-unknown” never vanishes, there’s always a permanent human need for images as symbols.

**End of Part Two.**

**Insight and Beyond**

Class 22, Part Two: March 17th 2010

**“Material versus Spiritual”**

**and**

**“Meaning of Religious Symbolism”**

*(Insight, Chapter 17 §1)*

**Class 22, March 17, 2010**

**Chapter 17 §1: “Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth”**

*Method in Theology, Chapter Two: “Religion”*

**“Lonergan’s Universalist View of Religion”**

**(Frederick E. Crowe)**

**Series of Student Questions:**

What if the structure of our knowing were to change?

How would that affect the structure of proportionate

being? E.g., what if humans developed pheromonal

responses?

- Various technological and biological modifications of human beings would

not change what *knowing* is — i.e.,  
knowing remains understanding the  
given data correctly.

Pat: — Well, while we're waiting for people to come back, no problem.

Maggie: So what if things — This is just like a kind of science-fiction based like sort of question. What happens if our structure of knowing changes? Like, for instance, supposing we like develop some way and get like, you know, pheromonal, or devolve into something like — How does that change, I guess, being, or change this whole outline?

Pat: Ah, ... I'm trying to stay with the example of pheromonal —

Maggie: Yeh!

Pat: And if I understand what you mean by that ... It's a ...

Maggie: Anyway, would it just be that —

Pat: Well, I'm — So, here's about the limits of my biology, my biochemistry. Pheromones for certain creatures give rise to sensations of smell. And in those creatures it triggers patterns of behaviour, maybe. I think there are also creatures for whom the sensation itself is not an intermediary, where the occurrence is directly chemical. Is that true? Or is that not true?

Maggie: Well, I don't know specifically.

Pat: Okay.

Maggie: I was even kind of thinking of something like if we change how we know through like all plugging into the internet one day.

Pat: Okay. Well, let's stick with pheromones, because the internet one — Well, let me answer the Internet one because it's easy!! ... One way of thinking about the plugging into the internet is, we have a chip in our brain, or God forbid, we have a connector here [Pat taps the side of his skull] like in "The Matrix". But, you know, if you think of "The Matrix": what's going on in "The Matrix is that the machine world has figured out how to stimulate the neural systems of human beings in ways that produce certain kinds of imagery. But

the tricky thing is that they are kept asleep. And so they are not exercising their intelligence and their reasonableness. But if you were plugged into the internet and you are able to exercise your intelligence and your reasonableness, nothing would change! You know. It would still be: *what you know by correctly understanding your experience.*

Could you think your way out of the limits? Could you figure out: “Oh, my God, this, you know — All I’m understanding is the images that are coming to my consciousness through the internet! *I think people probably could, because of the unrestrictedness of our questioning.* I’d have to think about that a little bit more! But at the very least, *you’re judgments would be correct understandings of the data that you’re being given.* Whether you’re given it by your eyes, or your finger-tips, or your ear-drums, or the internet, it’s still correct understanding! It still would be: You are being manipulated and you will understand yourself and your experiences even though they were being manipulated. Could you get to the point where you figure out that they’re being manipulated? Probably! That’s a harder argument to make. But it doesn’t mean that the reality of the manipulations, as you understand and judge them, the ‘manipulence’. That’s still going to be proportionate being. So that’s kind of an easier one.

The pheromone thing is more complicated! Pheromones still give rise to sensations in the insects that I’ve heard about. So I think there are some direct contact ones, where touching the pheromones sets off a chemical reaction without the inner mediation of sensations. Well, suppose we became pheromonal but we still had an unrestricted desire to know. The only thing that changes is if we don’t have the unrestricted desire to know, and we don’t have insights into those pheromones that produced the sensations; that’s the only thing that’s different. *And that doesn’t change Lonergan’s account! Because Lonergan’s account is based on your self-affirmed structure of your knowing as you now have it, and what that implies about the universe within which pheromonal mutation is a possibility! But it doesn’t change the universe as being intrinsically intelligible! It doesn’t change pheromonal mutants as being potency form and act, or complex combinations of those.*

Question about the precise meanings of ‘matter’ and  
‘material’; does Lonergan have an Aristotelian or  
modern notion of matter?

- Review of the distinction between the spiritual and the material:
- First approximation: the former is intelligibility that is intelligent, the latter is intelligibility that is not intelligent.
- Second, and full meaning: Lonergan defines the spiritual as not intrinsically conditioned by space and time, while the material is so conditioned.
- By ‘material’ Lonergan means something different from what a materialist means.
- Discussion of the key implications that follow: space and time are in being, not vice versa.
- Neither space nor time, but intelligibility is the criterion for the meaning of being.

Jonathan: It seems — Some of the difficulties I’m having are because of what would seem like an ambiguity about the meaning of ‘matter’, and ‘material’ here; that there’s a switching back and forth from a modern usage of ‘matter’, and, what I’m going to call, for the purposes of this comment, an Aristotelian understanding of matter. So that, when asked like — when we asked a question about neurons firing, or we talked about a computer that could be the material for human mental, that — how do I want to say this exactly — Yeah, that if you’re given the Aristotelian sense of the supervening intelligibility as being determinative of what matter is, as opposed to the other direction in the sort of modern sense of matter. I guess this is

the difficulty I'm having: when Lonergan talks here about material versus spiritual, does he just mean the modern sense of matter there, as a sort of extended self?

Pat: No! No! .... I'm not going to go back to the slide, because I'd have to go too far back.

*But remember he says that he's building up to his conclusion that the central form of being human is fundamentally spiritual. That's going to be his argument. And as he's building up to that, he says: Okay, so we have to make a distinction of spiritual and material. First approximation: Spiritual is the intelligibility that is also intelligent, and material is the intelligibility that is not also intelligent. And then Matt asks, how do we know what's intelligent? A second, and arguably more fundamental distinction, is that the spiritual is the intelligible that is **not** intrinsically conditioned by space and time, and the material is that which **is** intrinsically conditioned by space and time. But remember, along the way he says that we have to figure out what we mean by 'material'! Why would we have to figure out what we mean by material? Because the modern sense of material, which is not uniquely modern; it's also ancient, you know. I'm not a Democritus scholar, but arguably Democritus is a materialist. Yeah. And Epictetus is, and so on. So there are materialists of that sort going pretty far back. What are geo-materials? Geo-materialists are those who think that the material is the real, period!! And so, because Lonergan doesn't think that the already-out-there-now is the real period, he's got to mean something different by 'material' than a materialist does. And so his offer is that by 'material' is meant "intrinsically conditioned by space and time".*

Now one of the things you have to do in Lonergan — Matt was just showing me a passage which I didn't go into in Chapter sixteen [**"Metaphysics as Science"** (CWL 3, pp. 512-552)] where Lonergan talks about — makes *the argument that being is not in space and time; that space and time are in being. I think that's fundamentally correct! That calls an awful lot of the most profound modern philosophical thinking into question.* Some of you perhaps were here last year when Professor Figal offered his course on "Being and Space". It was meant to be a critique of Heidegger: that Heidegger was wrong in thinking that temporality was the fundamental category for the meaning of being; and offering instead that spatiality is the fundamental category for the meaning of being. *Lonergan is having neither of the above. Intelligibility is the fundamental criterion for the meaning of being. And by space and by time he*

*means intelligible connectedness*. So I think you could — That’s perhaps the one place where he goes back and touches on — Okay, so people mean by material this. By material because I’ve got a different standard of reality, material is going to mean this. Now, what we should really do is go back and look and see how well this fits with sort of the common idea about materiality if you subtract the ingredient that it has to be the real. And that’s why the space-filling and the intrinsically conditioned have a correspondence; so that Lonergan is not totally abandoning the term ‘material’ that has nothing to do with the tradition.

Jonathan: Sure. Thanks.

Pat: Okay. Quite correct, good question! All right.

The Intellectual Context of Chapter 17 §1: “Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth” (*CWL* 3, pp. 554 – 572); The “demythologization debate”.

Certain questions about mystery and myth versus rationality informed this chapter.

The twentieth century scholarly attempts to come to terms with the meaning of religious expressions which, to people in a modern scientific age, seem fantastic and unbelievable.

Are mystery and myth cognate to the earlier stages of metaphysics, vanishing thereafter?

— Rudolf Bultmann demythologized the New Testament by getting rid of the mythological elements and giving it an existentialist reading: *Kerygma and Myth*.

The question is whether the mythological elements of religious expressions would also vanish in light of Lonergan's *explanatory* metaphysics.

Let's move ahead in the time that we have remaining here, which is not a lot, to at least begin talking about this first section, Chapter 17 §1: "Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth" (*CWL 3*, pp. 554 – 572). And I wanted to begin with this quotation which comes early on in that chapter.

**"While we have been engaged in indicating the character of explicit metaphysics, we also have acknowledged prior stages of latent and of problematic metaphysics; and naturally enough there arises the question whether mystery and myth are cognate to these earlier stages and whether they vanish in the measure that the earlier stages are transcended." (*CWL 3*, p. 555).**

**Context of chapter Seventeen,  
§1: "Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth"**

**"While we have been engaged in indicating the character of explicit metaphysics, we also have acknowledged prior stages of latent and of problematic metaphysics; and naturally enough there arises the question whether mystery and myth are cognate to these earlier stages and whether they vanish in the measure that the earlier stages are transcended." (*CWL 3*, p. 555).**

**Rudolf Bultmann and Demythologization**

**Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy***

It may not be the most “naturally enough” question to arise.

[Murmurs of amusement]

Arguably, it’s a fairly historically conditioned set of questions that arise. And you can tell some of the authors that Lonergan was reading at the time he was composing this chapter, because he cites some, at least the major books by them: Rudolf Otto, Ernst Cassirer, Eliade we’ve already mentioned, and also Rudolf Bultmann, whom I’ll mention in a moment.

So there is this issue about metaphysics and myth and replacement. And certainly one of the strong contexts for that was what was called “The demythologization debate”. And the German scholar Rudolf Otto who was a New Testament scholar, was a leading exponent of this. Somewhat after the time that Lonergan wrote *Insight*, another famous philosopher and theologian, maybe a theologian, by the name of Leslie Dewart published a book called “*The Future of Belief*”; and his slogan was “The Dehellenization of Dogma.” So there’s a long tradition of people coming to terms with what to make of the expressions of religions.

And I just want to give you a little taste of some of what Bultmann says, although his writings are pretty extensive and massive. So this is from an essay entitled the “New Testament and Mythology”, in an edited book, in which his is one of several essays, including some of his critics. The book is entitled “*Kerygma and Myth*”. And Bultmann writes this:

“The cosmology of the New Testament is essentially mythical in character. The world is viewed as a three-storied structure, with the earth in the center, the heaven above, and the underworld beneath. Heaven is the abode of God and of celestial beings — the angels. The underworld is hell, the place of torment. Even the earth is more than the scene of natural, everyday events, of the trivial round and common task. It is the scene of the supernatural activity of God and his angels on the one hand, and of Satan and his daemons on the other. These supernatural forces intervene in the course of nature and in all that men think and will and do.

Miracles are by no means rare. Man is not in control of his own life.

Et cetera, et cetera. And then he goes on to say this:

“Can Christian preaching expect modern man *to accept the mythical view of the world as true?* To do so would be both senseless and impossible. It would be senseless, because there is nothing specifically Christian in the myth of the world as such. It is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age.<sup>4</sup>

And so on.

Towards the very end — So demythologization then becomes: “Well, okay, so you’ve got all this mythological baggage in the New Testament, or in the Bible, or in any religious text. And that mythological stuff — well, that was okay for the unwashed who were contemporaries of the times when it was written, but in our day you can’t take it very seriously; so we have to demythologize! We have to take out the mythological elements, and find a meaning that is valid for modern man, as he puts it. And he ends [the first part](#)<sup>5</sup> of the essay — this is something he develops in great detail in his longer writings — but he ends [the first part](#) of this essay by saying this:

The meaning of [these two types](#) of mythology lies once more, not in their imagery with its apparent objectivity but in the understanding of human existence, which —

There are two types of mythology that he distinguishes —

— which both are trying to express. In other words, they [\[that is, the two types of mythology\]](#) need to be interpreted existentially. ....

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<sup>4</sup> *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, vol. 1, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Bultmann’s essay “New Testament and Mythology”, as found in the book *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, vol. 1, is divided into two parts, the first part entitled “The Task of Demythologizing the New Testament Proclamation”, pp. 1-16, and the second part entitled “Demythologizing in Outline”, pp. 17-44. Pat’s reference to “the end of the essay” picks out the end of the first part of the essay.

Our task is to produce an existentialist interpretation of the dualistic mythology of the New Testament along similar lines.

Okay. So that's part of the context at the time that Lonergan was writing this chapter seventeen in *Insight* ("**Metaphysics as Dialectic**", pp. 553-617). It's the problem that is a modern problem of the expressions that are used in religious writings of seeming to a person, in a scientific age, as being fantastic. And if they're fantastic, then you can't believe in them. Or, as Bultmann is suggesting, they need to be reinterpreted in a context that doesn't buy into the things that we can

no longer believe in. So Bultmann is using existentialist philosophy, he uses Jaspers, but he specially also uses Heidegger — at least his understanding of Heidegger — to give an account of what he thinks the message of the New Testament, and the key to Christian scriptures in general, is all about. It got a lot of criticism! Not everybody agreed with what he did, or for that matter with his particular way of relying on Heidegger's philosophy and other existentialist philosophy.

But that's the background, where Lonergan is saying: Okay, we've developed an explanatory metaphysics. *Remember 'explanatory' is really essential to Lonergan's account of metaphysics; which means that Lonergan is endorsing the rigorous development of explanatory thinking that comes to the fore in modern science. And so it would seem that that's going to call into question the meaningfulness of symbolic mythical expressions.* And so Lonergan's reference here to whether 'mystery' and 'myth' are cognate to the earlier stages of the problematic metaphysics, and whether they vanish in the measure that the earlier stages are transcended, that's part of the background!

Further in the background is Auguste Comte's

"Introduction to Positivist Philosophy."

Comte proposed three successive ages: the mythical, metaphysical, and positive ages. The earlier ages and

forms of explanation have been eclipsed by the ‘positive,’  
i.e., scientific age.

The age when explanations are restricted to those based  
on ‘positive’ evidence of sensation.

Lonergan aims to restore the meaning of religious  
expressions despite the positivist critique, and to do so in  
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**Context of chapter Seventeen,  
§1:“Metaphysics, Mystery and Myth”**

**“While we have been engaged in indicating the character of explicit metaphysics, we also have acknowledged prior stages of latent and of problematic metaphysics; and naturally enough there arises the question whether mystery and myth are cognate to these earlier stages and whether they vanish in the measure that the earlier stages are transcended.” (CWL 3, p. 555).**

**Rudolf Bultmann and Demythologization**

**Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy***

A little bit further in the background is something that you certainly hear echoes of in those passages from Bultmann that I just read, [echoes namely](#) of Auguste Comte in his positivist philosophy. Comte’s [major six-volume](#) *Course of Positive Philosophy* was a big, big, volume, or [set of volumes](#), in which he spelled out the different kinds of positive philosophies, by which he meant the modern sciences. And the biggest part of it was what he called “Positive Sociology”, in which he argued that, [like the physical world, society operated under its own set of laws](#); so that in one sense he can be regarded as one of the founders of modern scientific sociology. Comte’s “*Introduction to Positive Philosophy*” is a story, or if you like, a history, although it’s a history that he kind of made up to support the philosophy that he is going to support. He’s not unique in that!!

[Loud student laughter]

But he's the first person to do it quite this way. So, some of you already know this story.

So I apologize for repeating what you already know. So for Comte, there are three ages. There's the *mythical age*, the *metaphysical age*, and the *positive age*. And the mythical age sounds very much exactly like what I just read from Bultmann. The mythical age is the age in which there be spiritual entities that run around doing things, and pushing the stars and the moon and the sun around, and causing people to have misfortunes, and causing floods and earthquakes that punish people, and all that sort of thing. We talked about this before the break: these are the squishy already-out-there-now-reals. But because they are — you can't see them, but they're really already out there and *they are just invisible*. *That's what makes them be spiritual!* And so Comte says, you know, that clearly is a kind of child-like mentality. But at the very least what he can say is that it got the philosophers thinking; because Plato, and even Aquinas for that matter, are reflecting on the difficulties of taking the symbolic meanings and mythical meanings absolutely seriously. They question the myths; and their ways of explaining why events in the world happen are in terms of metaphysical features, — whether they are potency and form, whether it's form in Plato, potency and form in Aristotle, or *Geist* in Hegel, whichever of those [features](#) great metaphysical thinkers use in their regard — their concern is exactly the same as the concern of mythical thinkers, namely, to explain why events happen!

And just as the only good you can find in the mythical thinkers is that they got the metaphysical thinkers going, the good that you can discern in the metaphysical thinkers is that they set the stage for the emergence of DA Dah!! of positive thinking!! And positive thinking is that the only truths are the truths that you know by sensitive evidence, evidence of the senses. And then he makes his account of that. So that's kind of an overview of Comte. *And Comte is saying that the metaphysical age was eliminated by the scientific age.*

In some sense, Bultmann is, on the one hand, giving an account, about a century later, of what has happened to western culture under the influence of positivism; and on the other hand, he is the next stage in positivism. But he's going to turn back to another kind of philosophy, an existentialist philosophy. And he himself implicitly agrees with Comte and his criticism of metaphysics as being an inferior form of knowing. And which is perhaps is one of the reasons why he finds Heidegger so inviting, because Heidegger has himself this great critique of metaphysics. So where Bultmann is not a positivist, nevertheless that's the spirit that he's in!

Lonergan is thinking of this as the problem that he's got to deal with. The meaning of religious expressions when we live in an age when people call into question whether there is any residue, any meaningfulness, to be left to religious expressions; or whether they would be completely replaced by scientific expressions. And given the fact that Lonergan's metaphysics is an explanatory metaphysics, it looks like the answer to that would be: "Yeah, they're going to be completely replaced!" But DE,DE,DAW!!!: *Lonergan doesn't do that!! He does something different!*

Lonergan will argue that there is some permanent meaningfulness to human religious expressions that will survive in a fully explanatory context.

Thus in Chapter Seventeen ("**Metaphysics as Dialectic**", pp. 553-617), Lonergan is concerned with the problem of interpretation in general, and with the interpretation of religious expressions in particular.

The problem of interpretation for Lonergan arises from the different kinds ('polymorphism') of patterns of experience.

What is real for one pattern is different from what is real for another pattern.

Certain patterns of experience are incompatible with others; e.g., the aesthetic and the pragmatic.

So let me try to explore what he does in *Insight*, and then contrast it briefly to what he does in *Method in Theology*. I expect that we'll return to this next week for full discussion. But just to put the basic claim and pieces on the board here. *So Lonergan is going to argue, No, there is some meaningfulness to religious expressions that is not going to vanish, that in fact is a permanent feature of human existence. This is a very strong statement.* But it's a very long argument that he's going to make here.

The crucial thing in here, of course, is interpretation; which is why this is situated at the beginning of chapter **seventeen** called “Metaphysics as Dialectic” (CWL 3, pp. 553-617), which is primarily concerned with the problem of interpretation. So on the very first page of chapter seventeen “Metaphysics as Dialectic” (CWL 3, p. 553), *he’s talking about the various complexities that come from this polymorphism of consciousness. That, to be a little more explicit about polymorphism than I was earlier in the lecture: in the context of Insight, there are different kinds of patternings of experience; and when we are in one, it’s got orientations and operations all of its own; and when we shift to another one, it’s got orientations and operations that are different. And what seems or counts as real in one pattern of experiences is going to seem to become as unreal in another.*

So the patternings of experience that Lonergan lists back at the beginning of chapter fourteen (CWL 3, “**The Method of Metaphysics**” pp. 410-455) are the biological, the aesthetic, the artistic, the intellectual, the dramatic; but then he adds the practical, and the mystical. Now, *we’ve talked a lot about the dilemma, or the incommensurability, between the biological patterning of our experience and the intellectual patterning of experience. But think also of the aesthetic patterning of experience: when you’re in the aesthetic patterning of experience, when you’re just allowing your experiencing to speak to you and draw you in to the ulterior meaning, the elemental meaning, the ulterior significance, that is communicated, you’re in a world, you’re in a realm, that is very, very, unpragmatic! You’re in a realm in which what counts as real, and what counts as a real profound communication of aesthetic meaning is not at all pragmatic. And if you walk around in the aesthetic patterning of experience your whole life, people are going to think you’re a ‘whacko’, because you haven’t mastered the interpersonal skills and the practical skills you need to just navigate the basic necessities of surviving in a human culture, let alone in a biological realm. On the other hand, if somebody comes to a painting, or a musical composition, or a piece of architecture, and regards it only from the pragmatic point of view, they are not entering into that reality! So the polymorphism of consciousness, as Lonergan understands it here is this mixing, and blending, and interfering, and jumping back and forth, between different criteria of reality.*

**“From the polymorphism of consciousness there has followed a series of brief but highly effective refutations of**

**contrary views. However, our method possesses still further significance.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 553).

The “**still further significance**” has to do with interpretation.

He says that “**No one would deny that conclusions follow from premises**” (*CWL* 3, p. 553), but *the problem is getting people to accept the premises*.

**“No one would deny that conclusions follow from premises or ... considerable resistance would meet the claim that the procedure yielded results that were strictly coincident with the views of other philosophers.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 553).

Basic to Lonergan’s approach to interpretation of religious expressions arises from his distinction among: Image as Image, Image as Symbol, and Image as Sign.

Image as *image*: sensible content operating on the sensory level,

Image as *symbol*: linked with the paradoxical “known unknown”,

Image as *sign*, the image is linked with some interpretation of the import of the image.

The “*known unknown*”: all of our knowing occurs with awareness of a great horizon of still unanswered questions; the unknown is not just absolutely unknown, but we have an awareness (‘known’) of the unknown by means of our remaining questions.

The “known unknown” is Lonergan’s guiding heuristic principle in *Insight* for the interpretation of religious expressions.

The symbol parallels the unrestricted desire to know, and thus opens up a way to discuss religious experience — one that is appropriate to the modern era.

How the image as symbol relates to the image as sign — the latter is the already interpreted symbol.

Symbols get situated in myths; and myths themselves are already ‘signs’ in Lonergan’s sense, because they give interpretations of the image-symbol.

*And so he gets into the question of how do you interpret other philosophers, or how do you interpret in general. And he is looking for the basis upon which you can do any interpretation. Now that’s going to be explored in section three of this chapter (CWL 3, Chapter seventeen “Metaphysics as Dialectic”, pp. 553-617, § 3 “The Truth of Interpretation, pp. 585-617). But before he does that, he launches into this discussion of religious symbolism, because he does accept that the difficulty of coming to the kind of self-knowledge that he is setting forth in this book requires a long human history; that Lonergan is one with Hegel<sup>6</sup> in the sense of situating his thought within the broad movement of history, and seeing the kinds of dilemmas and issues that had to be overcome. And so he is interested in the problem of how do you interpret attempts at expressing something like metaphysical meanings, at a time when you don’t have the tools that self-affirmation gives you. So that’s why he gets into this — that is at least one of the reasons why he gets into this.*

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<sup>6</sup> This reference to Hegel is little more than surmise, as the sound is not clearly audible to the transcriber.

And his first foray into this is to make the distinctions between *image as image*, the *image as symbol*, and the *image as sign*.

## **Image, Symbol, Sign**

**“The image as image is the sensible content as operative on the sensitive level ...”**

**“But as symbol, the image is linked simply with the paradoxical ‘known unknown.’”**

**“As sign, the image is linked with some interpretation that offers to indicate the import of the image” (CWL 3, p. 557).**

The primary field of mystery and myth consists in the affect-laden images and names that have to do with this second sphere. ... The primary field is not the only field, and so it will be well to distinguish between the image as image, the image as symbol, and the image as sign. The *image as image* is the sensible content as operative on the sensitive level; it is the image inasmuch as it functions within the psychic syndrome of associations. (CWL 3, pp. 556-557, emphasis added).

So it's the image with — Remember, there is not — It's abstract to think of a *sensation*, so the image as image doesn't occur with no associations; but he's going to focus on the associations that are strictly experiential, strictly sensitive.

**“But as *symbol, the image* is linked simply with the paradoxical ‘known unknown’. *As sign, the image* is**

**linked with some interpretation that offers to indicate the import of the image.”** (CWL 3, p. 557, emphases added).

*The crucial thing here is the term, the “known unknown.” By that, Lonergan means not just the unknown, but the fact that our knowing is always within horizon of our awareness of our unanswered questions. All of our understanding, all of our judging, and indeed all of our sensing, happens in the dynamic structure that is underpinned by our unrestricted desire to know; and that desire is either intensely at the fore of our consciousness, or dimly at the recesses of our consciousness, but never gone! That is what constitutes us as human: or is one of the key things that constitutes us as human is that unrestricted desire that underpins our consciousness. So it’s unknown in the strict and proper sense, which is to say we don’t yet have correct understanding of that about which we wonder. But it’s known in the sense that we have a consciousness of that which we do not know. So there’s a kind of knowing, and Lonergan likes this sound-bite of “the known unknown”.*

Right. So that’s the basic experience that he is referring to. He’s using that term, for the first time to be his guiding principle in his hermeneutic of religious expressions. So in the context of *Insight*, the “known unknown” is the thing that is going to give him the ability to talk about religious expressions in a way that does, he thinks, justice to them and does not eliminate them in the advance of advancing knowledge. Why? Because of the unrestrictedness of our inquiry. You see, Bultmann and Comte are saying we have now arrived at the happy-hunting-ground of where we don’t need images that are symbols, images that are mysteries, any more, because we’ve attained the scientific age.

Lonergan is saying, in our scientific age, there is a heck of a lot more that we don’t know than that we do. And that when we really stop and recognize what’s involved in understanding everything about everything, answering all the further pertinent questions, the idea that in the twenty-first or in the twentieth century we got beyond that, is just foolish, it’s naive, it’s childish! So there is this dimension of human experience which was swept aside by the hubris of modernity that thought scientific thinking had said all that’s said. So that’s going to be his heuristic for looking at this.

**Image as image** is just the same as seeing! **Image as symbol**, in Lonergan’s understanding of the word ‘symbol’, which is not everybody’s — It’s his take on what’s meant

by ‘symbol’ — Image as symbol is the image as image correlated with his experienced sense of the unknownness of what we don’t yet know. **Image as sign** is already interpreted symbol. So in other words, image as symbol is just an experience of the unknownness that comes in association with some image. Image as sign is a very unusual, I think, use of the word ‘sign’ here — image as sign is that the symbol gets some elaboration, gets some articulation, gets some other things associated with it, to clarify, elaborate, and enrich its meaning.

Now, I’m saying that — I’m worried about using the term ‘words’, although those would be the most obvious. So symbols get situated in myths. Myths are words that are stories about symbols and they relate symbols to one another. So a myth in that sense is already a sign. It’s already images situated within other things, but symbols can be situated also in relationship to other, say, visual symbols. I’ll give you a couple of examples.

**Mircea Eliade identified the heart of religious symbolism as a “center within chaos”; i.e., an inhabited microcosm surrounded by the ‘unknown’, the formless, mysterious domain occupied by demons, ghosts, the Other, chaos, etc.**

Mircea Eliade is going to talk about what’s at the heart of religious symbolism as “*a center in chaos*”. So in this book,<sup>7</sup> he’s got five different essays, and one of them is just called “Symbolism of the ‘Centre.’”

**[Slide of Dark Disordered Void]**

“In archaic and traditional societies, the surrounding world is conceived as a microcosm. The surrounding world means the world that we see; more or less the world within the banner of the

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<sup>7</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*.

blue sky. At the limits of this closed world begins the domain of the unknown, of the formless.”

You can see Lonergan — whether Lonergan thought this before he read Eliade or after, I’m not sure; but *this is a clear connection*: that our microcosm, our world, is situated within something wider and vaster, which is a chaotic, unformed void. So some of you are familiar with the creation story in *Genesis* chapter one is “in the beginning there was a void.” Light comes; but one of the key moments in that creation story is that God says: “Let there be a firmament in the void.” Well, that literally means, opening up a space in the vast unstructured chaotic storm, ocean, in which there is water in every direction, and storm in every direction — opening up a space that separates the un-chaotic from the chaotic. *But what Eliade is arguing here — and I think he’s right about this — is that every religious peoples live in a cosmos with the awareness, either a greater or lesser awareness, of that being situated in a vast chaotic exterior.*

“At the limits of this closed world begins the domain of the unknown, of the formless. On this side there is ordered — because inhabited and organized — space; on the other, outside this familiar space, there is the unknown and dangerous region of the demons, the ghosts, the dead and of foreigners, in a word, chaos or death or night. This image of an inhabited microcosm, surrounded by desert regions regarded as a chaos or a kingdom of the dead, has survived even in highly evolved civilizations.”

And so on. *So symbolism is the experience of something as surrounded by the unknown, the chaotic.*

### The Image and Symbol of the Tree.

Exercise in recognizing our different modes of perception of the tree (image as image, image as symbol).

The Image as Constructed: the Cosmic Tree.

The Tree as foundation of the cosmos.

Since the “known-unknown” never vanishes, there’s  
always a permanent human need for images as symbols.

Now, I was going to read some of the passages in here where Eliade talks about the symbolism of the tree. I won’t do that today; we’ll come back and pick it up next week. But I wanted to give you illustrations of what Lonergan means by image as image and image as symbol and image as sign, at least on an elementary level here. So he’s got the symbolism of the tree. I looked around on the internet for a while before I came upon the right image. On one level this is just an image: it is just what is coming to your awareness in your act of perceiving this photo.

**Slide of tall imposing tree  
with others less tall.**

It’s already image as symbol to the extent to which there is something awe-inspiring about this image; that’s why I chose this one as opposed to other images of trees. It’s shot from an angle that tends to invite a certain experience of awesomeness. When you go from just looking at this image to experiencing it with a certain sense of awe, you move from the image as image to the image as symbol, accompanied by that uncanny sense of the known unknown.

**Foto of Larger and More Widespread Tree**

This one perhaps less dramatically so; but again the illustration of image as image, image as symbol. Now I chose this larger and wider tree because it is closer to this next image, which is a constructed image.

**Constructed Image of Eliade’s Cosmic Tree.**

This is an image as constructed, so I was deliberately using natural images up until now to give you some experience of image, also experienced with some sense of the awe and wonder of the known unknown. But this is one of the elaborations of what Eliade calls the “Symbolism of the Cosmic Tree”; that the whole universe is a tree; that the founding of the universe is the founding of a tree in which you will notice below, the roots go down unto the underworld, and above, the branches hold the sky up. And the tree is the means of communication between the settled world represented by the various levels of being within the trunk of the tree and the cosmic heavens and the nether world below.

So image as image, image as symbol, image as sign. And Lonergan is going to make the argument that because the known unknown never goes away, that there is always a permanent need and a permanent presence of image as symbol as part of human existence. Now he relates this to the levels of human development; we won’t have time to go into that today; I’ll pick it up next week. So I would ask you for next week to finish reading chapter seventeen (“**Metaphysics as Dialectic**,” pp. 553-617). We’ll come back to the material that you prepared for today. I’ll begin with that, and situate it in relationship to the material he has on his methodological hermeneutic. Okay.

## **End of Part Two.**