

Lecture 12 Chapter 7: “Common Sense as Object” & “The Good as Developing Object”(Topics in Education, Chs. 2 & 3). Part II.

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- Common Sense as social and historical.
- Class discussion of regularly performed tasks, jobs, skills and how they are situated in the dynamics of the history of common sense as object.
- Such activities are the stuff of the construction of human history.

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- So much of what happens in the human social world is recurrent.
- ‘Human schemes of recurrence’ as helping to construct social reality.
- What is special about schemes of recurrence as human:
 - They depend upon acquisition of insights and intelligent, self-correcting adaptation to new situations by adding “at least one further insight.”
 - Human schemes also depend upon the understandings of other people as well
 - Involve relations to other people: *operating* is *co-operating*.
- Example of the recent economic collapse as a compounding of biases (general, group, individual).
- The contrast between *human* schemes of recurrence and *natural* schemes of recurrence.
 - *Insights* required for human schemes.
 - But for this very reason, likewise it is only in human schemes of recurrence that *biases* can operate.

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- Occurrence of insight in social construction is itself one of the recurrences
- The self-correcting cycle as the self-correcting transformation of history
- The objective social situation is transformed as a multiplicity of people have experiences derived from it, which give rise to questions, insights, and then actions which modify it.
- Concrete description of the intelligent, recurrent activities that constitute ‘objective social situation’ that is a university.
- The self-correcting cycle not only pertains to material and technological progress, but also the development of the insights informing our modes of cooperation and institutional arrangements.
- Learning to do things in cooperation that we could never do alone.
- Illustration from laundry at a summer camp.
- Transformation and progress of social situation not only of the material products, but more importantly of the intelligible modes of cooperation.

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- The set of insights making up an objective social situation, common sense, is parceled out among many people, constituting a good of order.
- The characteristics of the “Good of Order”: it is the reciprocal pattern in which we receive fulfillment our needs, desires and fears, by cooperating to provide fulfillment and protection for others, and this cooperation all underpinned by insights.
- It is merely a normative ‘ideal’ but constitutive of all social reality – as people cooperate intelligently in recurrent patterns.

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- Some concrete examples of ‘the good of order’ implicit in traditional US cities, drawn from the thinker about urban social reality, Jane Jacobs, author of *The Death and Life of American Cities*.
- Jacobs as an example of a cosmopolis person – withdrawing from practicality in order to save it.
- Cities as “marvelous orders,” analogous to ballets, that maintain the safety and life of cities.
- The good of order is a social construction arising out of insights into informal patterns of cooperation; in contrast to bureaucracy.

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- Levels in Social Situation: Technological, Economic, Political, & Cultural
- Briefly, how Lonergan understands these levels

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- Intersubjectivity and Dialectic
- In one sense, “common sense as intellectual” is about intersubjectivity – about *understanding* one another.
- But when Lonergan uses the term “intersubjectivity” he means the felt, affective form of intersubjectivity where “the experience each resonates to the experience of others.”
- Intersubjectivity in this sense is the ground of primitive community – the belonging together – that is more basic than the good of order.
- Sympathy, compassion, sorrow, elation, are all examples of this more basic form of intersubjectivity.
- Positive aspects of this kind of intersubjectivity:
 - Indispensable foundation of human living.
 - Basis of tribalism, family, gender identification, racial and national identification.
 - Basis of life’s emotional richness; humans as *social* animals.

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- But there are also tensions involved in living according to this kind of intersubjectivity:
 - *Not the same* as living according to one’s own questioning and understanding.
 - Not necessarily a tension between intersubjective and intelligent living, but there is a potential for conflict
 - Group bias arises when a person may choose their own group over their own intelligent, self-correcting process:

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- Group bias as analogous to individual bias: one’s self preservation instinct interferes with questioning about those outside one’s self or group.

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- The objective social surd: not self-correcting but increasingly distorting.
- Dramatic bias is a filtering of the images we would normally question and have insights into.
 - Actions then are robbed of the intelligence that a bias-free actions would have.
- The specifically social biases (individual, group, general) act consciously to block pursuit of questions or to block actions that would implement good insights.
- Intersubjectivity is a good thing, but it is limited; one can have intersubjective compassion people own knows, but not for ‘humanity’.
- How unrestricted inquiry can inquire into the good for all humanity, beyond the limits of intersubjectivity.
- Intellectual responsibility arises when questioning transcends intersubjective identifications.

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- General bias: being only concerned with immediate consequences, it sets aside questions not dealing with concrete particulars.
- The concern for the immediate and practical is a good thing about common sense; it facilitates normal everyday life.
- Yet it sets aside theoretical explorations about what is not immediate – long-term consequences.
- In general bias, ideas and inventions are put into play before their long-term effects are known, leading to material and social consequences.
- Example of gases (CFC's) damaging the ozone layer, as a long-range possible effect, before it was actually observed.
- Global warming as a second example.
- Business practices that led to economic crises as a third example.
- The most serious source of social decline is the general bias

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- Common sense as adequate for taking care of individual and group biases, given time.
- Yet it has no means to deal with the corruption and decline of general bias's neglect of theoretical ideas.

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- Student question about Lonergan's thought as compared to Lewis, author of *The Abolition of Man*.
- Closing remarks on next week's topic: Chapter 8 of *Insight*, and the difficulty of the section on "Species as Explanatory."

End of Part II.