

Insight and Beyond

Class 15, Part One: January 20th 2010

“Affirming and Characterizing One’s Self”

(*Insight*, Chapter 11: “Self-affirmation of the Knower”)

Summary of Material

Overview of Part Two of *Insight*, “Insight as Knowledge” & Overview of Second Semester.

Chs: 11-13: Where Lonergan explicitly deals with Insight as Knowledge.

Chs: 14-17: Lonergan lays out the consequences for metaphysics.

Ch. 14: The heuristic approach to metaphysics.

Ch. 15: Elements of metaphysics: Lonergan compares his approach to Aristotle and Aquinas. Much of this chapter an application of his method to the problem of development.

Ch 16: The reality of relations, distinctions, and unities. Especially important for the questions of identity.

Ch 17: Implications of Lonergan’s metaphysics for interpretation, particularly the interpretation of religious experience.

Ch 18: Implications for a method of ethics.

Ch: 19-20: Distinction between metaphysics of being that is proportionate to human knowing, vs. knowledge of transcendent being. Implications for the reality of God and redemption and the problem of evil. Believing in the broad, not exclusively religious belief, discussed in Chapter 20, but could have been placed much earlier in sections on commonsense and science.

Epilogue: The larger context and remaining problems.

Syllabus for the Semester, regarding writings after *Insight*.

Meaning and Hermeneutics after *Insight*.

The evolution of Lonergan's thought on the ontology of History, addressed in *Method in Theology*.

Evolution of Lonergan's ethics subsequent to *Insight*: the transcendental notion of value.

Feelings as intentional responses to value.

Self-Appropriation as Basic Method: Philosophy and Metaphysics as verifiable.

Just as scientific statements imply sensible fact, so also philosophical, metaphysical and ethical statements imply cognitional facts.

Lonergan offers methodical, verifiable metaphysics and ethics based on cognitional facts.

Ch 11 – the appropriation of rational consciousness – deals with cognitional facts, the core of the whole project. Ch 18 will deal with appropriating the rational self-consciousness.

Chapter 11: Self-Affirmation of the Knower.

Making the judgment of cognitional fact.

First half of *Insight* as:

- (1) Re-appropriating natural science to deal with issues that alienated humans from the natural world;
- (2) Promoting attention to data of consciousness and insights into that data, as conditions for making this judgment of cognitional fact.

What is meant by ‘self’? ‘Self’ as concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.

‘Self’ as ‘thing’ in the positive sense: thing as intelligible unity and identity in the data.

Thing as extended in space, enduring in time, and changing;

Example of a mayfly, whose intelligible unity persists through very notable changes in its data: appearances, material composition, behaviours, etc. None of these data is the unity or the being of the mayfly. The unity is intelligible, not sensible or imaginable.

No thing itself, as explained, can be imagined.

Human self, human being, cannot be imagined.

The being that we are is intelligible, not graspable by visual imagining alone.

“No philosopher has ever been able to grasp the being of a single fly” – Josef Pieper.

Each mayfly has its own individual life and history, and thus its own unique aggregate of data; hence, it also has its own intelligible unity, so complex that “no philosopher” can understand it thoroughly in all its concreteness.

Each human being has its own unique concrete intelligible unity.

‘Self’ of self-affirmation is not imaginable!

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

Lonergan *characterizes* the ‘self’ by its cognitive activities.

This is a minimum characterization of a human self.

What is meant by *characterizing* something?

How do we characterize a mayfly?

Characterize in terms of selected data and relations to stand for the whole, but are not the whole.

Danger when the selected characteristics are taken as the whole, the unity.

How can we characterize a human self?

Class discussion on individual traits, social traits, habits, ideas, origins, politics, life histories.

Taking “snapshots” of data on the self, and using those to characterized the complex, concrete unity that that self is.

Contrast those ways of characterizing a self with Lonergan’s characterizing of self.

Characterizations of preceding discussion focus on characteristics of *self-as-constituted*.

Lonergan interested in characterizing the *self-as-constituting*.

Initially Lonergan’s characterization of the self as constituting makes us wonder, “Is that all there is?” to a self?

What is so important about characterizing the self as constituting, in terms of its self-constituting activities of experiencing, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, judging, etc.?

This *seems* impoverished, in comparison to characterizing the self in terms of a narrative; we are authors of ourselves. But *how* do we author ourselves? By our self-constituting activities.

Who am I really and truly?

Social, cultural identities.

A more basic *human* identity.

Persons as composite identities: personal, social, cultural, and human.

Self as constituting: we constitute our own *dramatis personae*.

We constitute our very unity, our human being by these activities;
we thereby place ourselves in the drama and community of
human existence.

Affirming ourselves as constituting: we are what we are because of
our experiences, understanding, reflecting and judging.

Insight and Beyond

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Epilogue: The larger context and remaining problems.

Welcome back to the second semester of *Insight and Beyond, Insight and Beyond Two*. Glad you all made it back safe and sound, and hope you had a restful vacation.

So we're going to start today, as you know, right with Chapter Eleven on "Self-affirmation of the Knower"¹ (*CWL* 3, pp. 343-371). And I want to situate chapter eleven on "Self-affirmation" within the context of the remainder of the book.

Insight: A Study of Human Understanding

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART TWO: INSIGHT AS KNOWLEDGE

Insight, when Lonergan proposed it, he divided into two halves, ten chapters each; we did the first ten chapters in the first semester. We're going to do the second ten chapters in the second semester, plus some other things from work that Lonergan did after the publication of *Insight*. He divided the book into Part One: "**Insight as Activity**", which was the first ten chapters, and **Part Two**, "**Insight as Knowledge**", is the second ten chapters. I'm not convinced [that](#) that entirely describes adequately the division. [However](#), there is a very

¹ Pat said "Self-affirmation of Insight", but this may be a *lapsus linguae*.

natural and spontaneous division of the book where Lonergan made the division, and he tells us why right in the opening paragraph of chapter eleven, which we'll take a look at momentarily. But before we do that, I wanted to look at how that chapter is laid out, and then talk about how the proceedings of our Course are laid out in relationship to that structure.

So the slide displays the titles of the ten chapters in part two of *Insight*. We begin with chapter 11, the “*Self-affirmation of the Knower*”, and then I'll take up chapter 12, what he calls “*The Notion of Being*”. For our next two classes we'll be looking at chapters twelve, “*The Notion of Being*” and chapter thirteen, “*The Notion of Objectivity*.” You could say in a sense that the first three chapters in part two [11 “**Self-affirmation of the Knower**”, 12 “**The Notion of Being**”, and 13. “**The Notion of Objectivity**”] are really where Lonergan takes up “**Insight as Knowledge**”. What he does after that, you could say, is the implications of those three chapters.

So although chapters one through ten, part one, are called “**Insight as Activity**”, we already saw that Lonergan does a lot of exploring of implications in those early chapters. And in the latter half of part two, chapters 14 to 20, he does a lot of exploring of the implications of what he's going to work out in the first three chapters of that part. So we're going to be going through those first three chapters carefully today and next week, and then looking at the implications.

And as you'll notice, the next four chapters in order all have to do with metaphysics [14 **The Method of Metaphysics**; 15 **Elements of Metaphysics**; 16 **Metaphysics as Science**; and 17 **Metaphysics as Dialectic**]. Now Lonergan has a very, I think, unique take on metaphysics, except that he thinks he is doing the same project that Thomas Aquinas was doing in metaphysics, and that he is doing the same kind of project that Aristotle was doing in metaphysics. Not every reader of Aquinas or Aristotle would agree with him. But metaphysics for Lonergan has a very specific meaning. And rather than go into it today, what I'd like to do is to just show how we're going to develop the sequence of the Course.

So we begin our first two classes on those three chapters [11 “**Self-affirmation of the Knower**”, 12 “**The Notion of Being**”, and 13. “**The Notion of Objectivity**”]. We're also going to read what I think is probably one of the most important articles that Lonergan ever wrote. Some people called it the Cliff Notes to *Insight*. But there is a way in which certain

things about what he is doing in *Insight* become much clearer than they do in the three chapters. So we're going to look at "Cognitional Structure"² — that is on the web-site.

Insight and Beyond II
Course Calendar (Spring 2010)
January to March

And then we're going to spend the rest of these classes up to the Spring Break at the beginning of March on the chapters on metaphysics [14 **The Method of Metaphysics**; 15 **Elements of Metaphysics**; 16 **Metaphysics as Science**; and 17 **Metaphysics as Dialectic**]. They are dense chapters; in some cases they're fairly long chapters; but we're going to work our way through them with these key highlights [Pat is presumably referring to the slide that follows below.]

Self - Appropriation as Basic Method

Sixthly, the philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be verifiable. For just as scientific insights both emerge and are verified in the colors and sounds, tastes and odors, of ordinary experience, so insight into insight both emerges and is verified in the insights of mathematicians, scientists, and men of common sense. But if insight into insight is verifiable, then the consequent philosophy and metaphysics will be verifiable. In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to

² Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure" in Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Vol. 4: Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) pp. 205-221.

imply statements regarding sensible fact, so every statement in philosophy and metaphysics can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.
(*CWL 3*, p. 5).

Further, as a metaphysics is derived from the known structure of one's knowing, so an ethics results from knowledge of the compound structure of one's knowing and doing; and as the metaphysics, so too the ethics prolongs the initial self-criticism into an explanation of the origin of all ethical positions and into a criterion for passing judgment on each of them.
(*CWL 3*, p. 23).

Recall that Lonergan said that part of his project was that from taking seriously the project of self-affirmation, of self-appropriation, that it would lead to the verifiable philosophy and metaphysics. I want to come back to this quote in a moment. But I want to go back and look at the layout of the chapters and the proceeding of the Course.

Insight: A Study of Human Understanding

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART TWO: INSIGHT AS KNOWLEDGE

*Lonergan is, in this part of his book, saying how we come to the cognitional facts, and how we then come to a verifiable philosophy and a verifiable metaphysics. Briefly, what is going on in those chapters, what he calls “**The Method of Metaphysics**”, chapter 14, is where he is going to lay out what he thinks is the approach to metaphysics. And it's going to involve a heuristic structure. So in a sense what he's doing in his method of metaphysics is*

learning, in a very general way, and applying, the lessons that he learned from his self-appropriation, his phenomenological investigation, of scientific method.

Now there are people who have attempted to do what you might call *a positivistic method of metaphysics*, in which they want to reduce all metaphysical claims to claims of physics, or at least the natural sciences. *And that is not what Lonergan is doing! He is, on the other hand, taking what he found to be some of the key dimensions of modern scientific method, and using those as a springboard to think about how to do a method in metaphysics!* About that I'm not going to say any more now. We'll take that up in a couple of weeks when we get to that chapter; but *I just want to emphasize that this key discovery that he came to about modern science, namely that it's heuristic, is to be extended into the realm of metaphysics: that it too is heuristic!* And so whatever kind of a science metaphysics is, it's not a science in which everything is going to be known about metaphysics by reading Lonergan's chapter, any more than knowing everything about physics or chemistry or biology or anthropology is going to be known by reading what Lonergan had to say in the first half of the book.

Chapter Fifteen is called **The Elements of Metaphysics** (*CWL 3*, pp. 456-511), in which he draws comparisons, parallels, between himself and some traditional notions of metaphysics drawn from Thomistic metaphysics. However, what he's going to claim is that his metaphysics is methodical, his arrival at some of those positions is methodical, rather than simply authoritative; which is to say that it's a metaphysics which is based on what he does in the first three chapters of *Insight*, rather than based on believing in the authority of say, Aristotle or Aquinas, or someone else. More like two-thirds of that chapter, chapter fifteen called **The Elements of Metaphysics**, is actually already an application of the method of metaphysics. So the first third of that chapter on **Elements of Metaphysics**, is a sort of an application — is sort of an elaboration, the second two-thirds is an elaboration, it's an elaboration in which he takes up the question of development. We'll have more to say about that when we get to that part of the Course. Crucial in that chapter **fifteen** is the section, the long section, on "Human Development" (*CWL 3*, pp. 494-504). *In some fundamental sense, what Lonergan has been about throughout the whole work has been human development.* And yet to get to really have the wherewithal to talk about development **has had to wait** until he gets to chapter fifteen. We'll talk about why that's the case when we get there.

Chapter sixteen, **Metaphysics as Science** (*CWL 3*, pp. 512-552) is a further expansion or if you like, a further application of his method. And the key things that he takes up in that

chapter are the questions of relation, the question of distinction, and the question of unity; and in particular the reality of relations, the reality of distinctions, and the reality of unity; and what kinds of relations there are, what kinds of distinctions there are, and what kinds of unities

there are. That will prove, and for me quite frankly has proved, the most difficult of the chapters, because it seems so abstract. It's not really clear why these are issues that need to be discussed, or where they need to be discussed, and so on. So, we'll do our best to come up with some illustrations.

But I can give you one example: a number of years ago I was in a Fellowship Programme; and one of the people who was being interviewed for the Fellowship Programme had done his dissertation on relationships in — I think it was in Duns Scotus. And needless to say, those in the room who were not philosophers, and even those philosophers who were not into analytic metaphysics, were saying: “Well, why would you spend all of this time talking about relations?” And he had his own way of trying to say that, but it wasn't making any sense. So he turned to me and said: “Well, how would you answer that?” And I said: “Well, I would say ‘do you have any friends? Do you have any friends? ... Well, is the friendship real?’” [In apparent amazement:] “That was a really good way to answer that!”

[Class amusement]

So, in terms of what we saw back in Chapter Eight [“**Things**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 270-295)], when we were talking about things and bodies: from a body based metaphysics, the only realities are corpuscles, which is just a Latinization of ‘bodies’. The only realities are those little bits of space-occupying matter; that's what's real! And friendships aren't real because friendships are relationships. And little bodies, little entities are real, but not friendships. *So that's one of the reasons why Lonergan gets into that. So much of human existence is permeated by and constituted by relationships, that the question of the reality of relationships is important.* Why the reality of distinctions is important is another matter, but *the reality of unity is a very important matter: it's something that's going to be touched upon today, but we will return to; and it's important because of the question of identity: personal identity, and indeed ethnic identity, and social identity, and national identity, and human identity, are of great concern.* And there are philosophies that make it impossible to take seriously

identity, whether it's personal identity, or group identity of any kind. And so *that*, I think, is one of the most important things that Lonergan does in that chapter [sixteen](#) on what is called “**Metaphysics as Science**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 512-552), which I will try to argue, when we take up that chapter; which is an odd title to give it. Be that as it may, that's the title that it has, and we'll be looking at what he's doing.

The next chapter, chapter seventeen, on “**Metaphysics as Dialectic**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 553-617) is where *Lonergan begins to show that his approach to metaphysics has implications for interpretation. It has implications for the interpretation, first of all, of religious experience. The very first thing that Lonergan is concerned with in that chapter is to see what kinds of consequences his approach to metaphysics has for sorting out the meaningfulness and the distortions of religious symbolism and religious language. He then develops what he calls his methodological hermeneutics. And in that chapter he also takes up the question of truth.* Now why it's called “**Metaphysics as Dialectic**” we'll have to wait and see. It has to do with the fact that there's a dialectical distortion in religion, there's a dialectical distortion with regard to the meaning of truth, or what people take to be true, and there's a dialectical distortion in the constitution of human community by means of meaning. So it's a very rich chapter!

Insight and Beyond II

Course Calendar (Spring 2010)

March to May

Then after that chapter, what he intended to do — and I think he *intended* to do it, I'm not sure he was successful in doing it — was to show how his metaphysics has implications for a method of ethics. Of all the chapters in the book, it's the one that is, I think, kind of funny in the way that it's organized — not funny humorous, but kind of odd. And I think that there are some things that happened after *Insight* that give us another way of thinking about what might be a method of ethics for Lonergan. And I think he's up to certain — I think he has certain objectives in mind in writing that chapter [eighteen](#) on “***The Possibility of Ethics***” (*CWL* 3, pp. 618-656), that mean perhaps he compressed certain things, and kind of a certain place that he was headed. We'll see what that place was.

The last two chapters have to do with what he calls “transcendent knowledge”: chapter nineteen on “**General Transcendent Knowledge**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 657-708) and chapter twenty on “**Special Transcendent Knowledge**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 709-751). Back in chapter fourteen, “**The Method of Metaphysics**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 410-455), very early on, he makes a distinction between what he’s going to call ‘metaphysics’, and he’s going to say that *metaphysics, as he understands it, has to do with proportionate being*, that is to say, reality that is proportionate

to the human capacity to know, and he’s going to leave open the question about whether or not there is more to reality, or there are realities other than the reality that is proportionate to human knowing.

And in chapter nineteen on “**General Transcendent Knowledge**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 657-708), he makes the argument that there are realities, or there is reality, that is transcendent to the human capacity, the human structure, of knowing. And he explores it in its general sense, and in its special sense. The general sense has to do with the reality of God. The special sense has to do with the problem of evil, and the problem that we saw was left in a teasing fashion at the end of chapter seven: “**Common Sense as Object**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 232-269): *Is there any possibility of overcoming the longer cycle of decline? So the question of evil, the philosophical approach to redemption, which we saw was broached when we read those chapters in **Topics in Education** (*CWL 10*) on the human good as developing object.*³ There after that, we re-joined the issues in a more methodical way. Remember when we were reading **Topics in Education**, that was a two week lecture course given during the summer programme to a group of Catholic religious educators; and Lonergan just presupposed a common set of assumptions and beliefs about redemption. *In Insight, he’s going to work that out in a much more systematic fashion.*

In the middle of chapter twenty [“**Special Transcendent Knowledge**” (*CWL 3*, pp. 709-751)] is where he takes up the phenomenon of believing. It’s not specifically religious believing. Tim asked a question back last semester about belief, and I gave sort of a long round about answer. And most of that was drawing on the section in chapter twenty on

³ In **Topics in Education**, chapter 2 is entitled “*The Human Good as Object: Its Invariant Structure*”, chapter 3 is called “*The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration*”, and chapter 4 is entitled “*The Human Good as Developing Subject.*”

believing. There's a sort of a way in which a section on believing belongs in the chapters on common sense, because so much of our common sense is believing. It turns out — and this is probably scandalous to many — you could say that it belongs back in the chapters on science, because, as Lonergan says, ninety-nine percent of what a scientist knows the scientist knows by believing. A scientist does not re-perform all of the experiments in the history of science, but rather believes what he or she has been told by the scientific community that goes before them.

Now it's not blind belief, it's a very methodically critical belief! Scientists do in fact find people who either ignorantly or maliciously have distorted their experiments and their findings; and this does turn up, and it's part of the method of scientific investigation. But although from the Enlightenment to the present we have a culture that presupposes that science and knowledge and truth are on one side of the divide, and belief is on the other side of the divide, and this makes it sound as though there is no believing in science. But in fact there is!

So there's a way in which that section on believing might have properly come earlier. It certainly could have come after the [tenth](#) chapter on “**Reflective Understanding**” (*CWL* pp. 304-340)] although there is a little wrinkle in there. It certainly could have come after chapter eighteen [“**The Possibility of Ethics**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 618-656)] in which Lonergan talks about values, and makes a couple of hints about what might be a judgement of value. But it's in chapter twenty [“**Special Transcendent Knowledge**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 709-751)] because *that's where he needs it, because in the context of redemption he has to talk about what kind of role a special kind of believing has to do with the phenomenon of redemption.*

There is also an “**Epilogue**” (*CWL* 3, pp. 753-770) which we'll look at briefly, in which Lonergan talks about how he would situate his work in a larger context, and what he thinks remains to be done, or what he thought remained to be done in 1957 when the book was published. So that give you a little bit of an overview.

**Syllabus for the Semester, regarding
writings after *Insight*.**

Meaning and Hermeneutics after *Insight*.

The evolution of Lonergan's thought on the ontology of History, addressed in *Method in Theology*.

Evolution of Lonergan's ethics subsequent to *Insight*: the transcendental notion of value.

Feelings as intentional responses to value.

I want to look again now at the Syllabus for the Course.

Insight and Beyond II
Course Calendar (Spring 2010)
January to March

We're going in that order, but we're going to take a couple of little side-trips. *So after we come back from the spring vacation, what we're going to look at is his development of his reflections on the phenomenon of meaning and the phenomenon of interpretation after Insight. It would be a little too confusing to try to tell you what, I think, changed in that period. But it did require on Lonergan's part a very big transformation of the way he thought about hermeneutics, for one thing: in part because his category of meaning expanded, and in part also because he changed his mind about a couple of very important things in how he had thought about hermeneutics in the context of Insight.*

*That was a period from the time he published Insight to the time he published Method in Theology; it was a period of fourteen years. During that time he was teaching his students at the Gregorian University in Rome. It was a period of great — There was a great explosion in continental philosophy: there was this period that was known in philosophical circles as the *Methodenstreit*.⁴ Roughly that would translate into “the debate or the struggle about method”. And there were three great forces in that *Methodenstreit*. One was the*

⁴ *Methodenstreit* (German for “method dispute”), was originally an economics controversy commenced in the 1880s and persisting for more than a decade, between that field's Austrian School and the (German) Historical School. The debate concerned the place of general theory in social science and the use of history in explaining the dynamics of human action. It also touched on policy and political issues, including the roles of the individual and state. Nevertheless, methodological concerns were uppermost, and some early members of the Austrian School also defended a form of welfare state, as prominently advocated by the Historical School. When the debate opened, Carl Menger developed the Austrian School's standpoint, and Gustav von Schmoller defended the approach of the Historical School. In German-speaking countries, the original of this Germanism is not specific to the one controversy or to economics in particular, but also embraced questions of method more generally.

hermeneutical approach of Hans-Georg Gadamer,⁵ which came out of his indebtedness to Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Martin Heidegger. There was the development of *critical theory* in which the principal figure was Jürgen Habermas,⁶ who was indebted to the work of the Frankfurt School, and before that to Marx and Hegel. And then there was the work of what you might call the *positivist school* which was represented by kind of a strange group of bed-fellows, including the successors of Ludwig Wittgenstein on the one hand and Karl Popper on the other.

⁵ **Hans-Georg Gadamer** (1900–2002) was a German philosopher of the continental tradition, best known for his 1960 magnum opus *Truth and Method (Wahrheit und Methode)* on hermeneutics. Gadamer was born in Marburg, Germany. He did not serve during World War I for reasons of ill health and similarly was exempted from serving during World War II due to polio. He studied classics and philosophy and defended his dissertation, “The Essence of Pleasure according to Plato’s Dialogues” in 1922.

Shortly thereafter, Gadamer began studying with Martin Heidegger at Freiburg and then at Marburg, and became close to him. It was Heidegger's influence that gave Gadamer's thought its distinctive cast and led him away from the earlier neo-Kantian influences.

Unlike Heidegger, who joined the Nazi Party in May 1933 and continued as a member until the party was dissolved following World War II, Gadamer was silent on Nazism, and he was not politically active during the Third Reich. While in 1933 he signed the *Loyalty Oath of German Professors to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State*, in 1946 he was found by the American occupation forces to be untainted by Nazism and named rector of the university. He completed his *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method* in 1960, and engaged in a famous debate with Jürgen Habermas over the possibility of transcending history and culture in order to find a truly objective position from which to critique society. The debate was inconclusive, but marked the beginning of warm relations between the two men.

On February 11, 2000, the University of Heidelberg celebrated Gadamer's one hundredth birthday with a ceremony and conference. Gadamer's last academic engagement was in the summer of 2001 at an annual symposium on hermeneutics that two of Gadamer's American students had organised. On March 13, 2002, Gadamer died at Heidelberg's University Clinic. He is buried in the Köpfel cemetery in Ziegelhausen.

⁶ **Jürgen Habermas** (1929-) is a German sociologist and philosopher in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism. He is perhaps best known for his theories on communicative rationality and the public sphere. Associated with the Frankfurt School, Habermas's work focuses on the foundations of social theory and epistemology, the analysis of advanced capitalistic societies and democracy, the rule of law in a critical social-evolutionary context, and contemporary politics, particularly German politics. Habermas's theoretical system is devoted to revealing the possibility of reason, emancipation, and rational-critical communication latent in modern institutions and in the human capacity to deliberate and pursue rational interests.

And there were four or five years — when I was in Graduate School this was the pressing set of issues about the *Methodenstreit*. So Lonergan’s students were coming from other classes, some excited by the fervour that was going in intellectual circles in Europe, and they were reading all these figures and bringing them to Lonergan’s attention. *And under the influence of those discussions Lonergan did modify the way he thought about the method of interpretation in historical methods.* We’re going to take a couple of detours into *Method in Theology* and some of his later essays about meaning, and interpretation, and history, and historical method.

Now remember, way back I think perhaps in the first or second class, I shared with you that remark that Lonergan said at one time that “**All my career has been introducing history into Catholic Theology.**” *So the concern with history, the concern with historical method, the concern with, if you like, the metaphysics of history, the ontology of history, was Lonergan’s preoccupation throughout his whole career. And we’ll see how he deals with that in Insight in chapter seventeen, “Metaphysics as Dialectic” (CWL 3, pp. 553-617). Chapter seventeen deals with the interpretation or hermeneutics as historical. And he changes the way that he thinks about that after Insight. In fact, he was always working on it.*

Insight and Beyond II
Course Calendar (Spring 2010)
March to May

And then we’ll take up chapter **eighteen**, the chapter on “**The Possibility of Ethics**” (CWL 3, pp. 618-656), and we’ll consider also how he transformed and sublated what he had to say about ethics and the good in *Insight*, and supplement it with the work that he did after *Insight*, particularly in *Method in Theology*, where he said he did two things of equal importance:

*One is the explicit recognition of what he called the
distinct and independent transcendental notion of value.*

And for today’s reading, you’ll notice that there are three levels of — excuse me, for our reading back at the end of the first semester in chapter nine **The Notion of Judgment**

(CWL 3, pp. 296-303), Lonergan — *that's the first place where he introduces this idea that there's a structured relationship with three different levels of consciousness. And in today's reading again, Lonergan articulates the three different kinds of consciousness and their characteristics.*

By the time Lonergan gets into Method in Theology and is rethinking of the question of the good and the question of ethics, he has discovered that there is a fourth distinct though related level of consciousness and level of conscious operations that he didn't recognize in Insight. That's why, I think, he was trying to work out a methodological ethics in terms of a metaphysics at that time. With the recognition of the distinct notion of value, he discovers that he needs to change the method of ethics, and the approach to it, in conformity with the importance of that distinction!

The other big discovery that he made was the role of feelings as intentional response to value.

And it's language that he got from Dietrich von Hildebrand⁷, who himself was influenced by Max Scheler⁸, a contemporary of Heidegger, and the person who used the phenomenological method to begin to explore the vast domain of feelings.

⁷ **Dietrich von Hildebrand** (1889–1977) was a German Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian. Hildebrand was called “the 20th Century Doctor of the Church” by Pope Pius XII. Pope John Paul II also greatly admired the work of Hildebrand, remarking once to his widow Alice von Hildebrand “Your husband is one of the great ethicists of the twentieth century.” Benedict XVI also had a particular admiration and regard for Hildebrand, whom he knew as a young priest in Munich. The degree of Pope Benedict's esteem is expressed in one of his statements about Hildebrand: “When the intellectual history of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century is written, the name of Dietrich von Hildebrand will be most prominent among the figures of our time.” A vocal critic of the changes in the church brought by the Second Vatican Council, Hildebrand especially resented the new liturgy, saying, “Truly, if one of the devils in C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* had been entrusted with the ruin of the liturgy, he could not have done it better.”

⁸ **Max Scheler** (1874–1928) was a German philosopher known for his work in phenomenology, ethics, and philosophical anthropology. Scheler developed further the philosophical method of the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, and was called by José Ortega y Gasset “the first man of the philosophical paradise.” After his death in 1928, Martin Heidegger affirmed, with Ortega y Gasset, that all philosophers of the century were indebted to Scheler and praised him as “the strongest philosophical force in modern Germany, nay, in contemporary Europe and in contemporary philosophy as such.” In

*With those two additions, the transcendental notion of value and feelings as intentional response to value, what Lonergan had to say about ethics was changed quite dramatically; and so we'll take a look at that. Then we will return to take up chapters nineteen on “General Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 657-708), and chapter twenty “Special Transcendent Knowledge” (CWL 3, pp. 709-751), and then finally to look at Philosophy of God and Philosophy of Religion after *Insight*.*

So what we will be doing, in fact, is kind of jumping back and forth: [Pat gestures from side to side to illustrate these movements back and forth] here's what Lonergan had to say about meaning and hermeneutics in *Insight*, and here's where he went after *Insight*; here's what he had to say about history and historical method in *Insight*, and here's what he did afterwards; and here's what he had to say about God and religion in *Insight*, and here's what he had to say about it afterwards.

There will be a lot to say, but we'll try to stay more or less on time. There is a Review date built in there, so if we get behind, that might be useful [last phrase unclear]. And unlike our first semester, where I originally planned an 'in-class exam', a written exam, I thought in the second semester, we'd do an oral exam. So the oral exams will be about twenty minutes. You will have the opportunity to sign up for them; there will be study questions available beforehand for you to prepare. And the Review Session is sitting there as a time for people to ask and answer questions, that will hopefully help you to prepare for the exam!

**Self-Appropriation as Basic Method: Philosophy
and Metaphysics as verifiable.**

**Just as scientific statements imply sensible fact, so
also philosophical, metaphysical and ethical
statements imply cognitional facts.**

**Lonergan offers methodical, verifiable metaphysics
and ethics based on cognitional facts.**

1954, Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II, defended his doctoral thesis on “An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Basis of the System of Max Scheler.”

Ch 11 – the appropriation of rational consciousness
– deals with cognitional facts, the core of the whole
project. Ch 18 will deal with appropriating the
rational self-consciousness.

Okay! Any questions?? ... Okay. Great!

Self-Appropriation as Basic Method

“Sixthly, the philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be *verifiable*. In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements regarding sensible fact, so every statement in *philosophy* and *metaphysics* can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.” (*CWL* 3, p. 5, emphases added).

“Further, as a *metaphysics* is derived from the known structure of one’s knowing, so an *ethics* results from knowledge of the compound structure of one’s knowing and doing; and as the metaphysics, so too the ethics prolongs the initial self-criticism into an explanation of the origin of all ethical positions and into a criterion for passing judgment on each of them.” (*CWL* 3, p. 5, emphases added).

So this remark that we've seen before:

“The philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be *verifiable*. ... In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements regarding sensible fact, so

every statement in *philosophy* and *metaphysics* can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.”
(*CWL* 3, p. 5, emphases added).

And then, later on in the “Introduction”, he expands that comment: Not only a metaphysics, but also

“an *ethics* results from knowledge of the compound structure of one's knowing and doing; and as the metaphysics, so too the ethics prolongs the initial self-criticism into an explanation of the origin of all ethical positions and into a criterion for passing judgment on each of them.” (*CWL* 3, p. 5, emphases added).

So early on, Lonergan announces this as the project of *Insight*; and *remember he has that remark about the decisive personal act, to which the book leads, and from which it follows.*

The crucial issue is an experimental issue, and the experiment will be performed not publicly but privately. It will consist in one's own rational self-consciousness clearly and distinctly taking possession of itself as rational self-consciousness. Up to that decisive achievement all leads. From it all follows.
(*CWL* 3, p. 13).

It's a little tricky because when he says *this act* to which it leads is *the act of appropriating one's own rational self-consciousness* — that is a phrase that does not get clarified and defined until chapter eighteen. “*Rational self-consciousness*” is a term that he

reserves — it's a specialized technical term that he reserves until chapter eighteen, the chapter on "***The Possibility of Ethics***" (CWL 3, pp. 618-656).

So where exactly does this decisive act take place in the book? Well, one answer is chapter eleven on "**Self-affirmation of the Knower**" (CWL 3, pp. 343-371); *but chapter eleven is the affirmation of oneself as empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious, but not yet as rationally self-conscious!* So there is a distinction there. So in another sense, it's not until you get this prolongation that he talks about there: "**ethics prolongs the initial self-criticism ...**" (CWL 3, p. 5), *and it is an expanded account of human consciousness.* So it's not until you get that that you get really what he's saying is the decisive act that's the objective of [the book](#) *Insight*.

That said, nevertheless, you might say that eighty percent of the battle, or eighty percent of the objective, is achieved in chapter eleven, where we have, *not the appropriation of rational self-consciousness, but self-affirmation*; and at least the first quote on the slide [\[the passage from CWL 3, p. 5\]](#) is what is going to lead *from* self-affirmation, a verifiable philosophy and a verifiable metaphysics. We'll come back to that when we get to chapter fourteen, "**The Method of Metaphysics**" (CWL 3, pp. 410-455).

But I just wanted to recall something that was said, I think, back in the first semester, namely: "That's a very strange way of talking about metaphysics!" Metaphysics is traditionally characterized as speculative. And certainly with Kant, with the positivist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the work of Karl Popper — Popper is not really a positivist, he's a different kind of thinker than a positivist — nevertheless, with the rise of modern natural science, and with the philosophical reflections that are set in motion by the rise of modern natural science, metaphysics is gradually demoted to a second-class-citizenship, if that! *And metaphysics is thought to be speculative, and metaphysics is thought to be that which one can do without any contact with reality, which is a strange way to characterize the science of being.* Nevertheless that is really kind of the reputation that metaphysics has come to.

Now, that's not the only characterization of metaphysics. People who work in metaphysics by and large would not think of it that way. *But certainly the strong criticisms that arise after the development of modern science see metaphysics as some kind of a pseudo form of knowledge.* It gets another kind of articulation in Martin Heidegger's inveighing against metaphysics; that it's project is to destroy metaphysics!

So Lonergan is making a very strange claim here. I just want to draw attention to the strangeness of it: that contrary to a great number of received opinions about metaphysics,

Lonergan is going to say that it is possible to do metaphysics in a way that's methodical, and that is verifiable, it's testable; and that the test comes from statements of cognitional fact, not sensible fact but cognitional fact.

For Lonergan, a fact is what you know in judging! You do not know facts in anything short of judging. And when I say judging, what I mean is judging grounded in the rational grasp of a virtually unconditioned; so not just arbitrary judging but rational kind of judging: that's where facts are known. Cognitional fact, then, has to do with what? Judgments about cognition! That is why chapter eleven is such a crucial chapter. It's in chapter eleven that we're going to get something about the cognitional facts which are going to form the core for the rest of the philosophical project.

Chapter 11: Self-Affirmation of the Knower.

Making the judgment of cognitional fact.

First half of *Insight* as:

- (1) Re-appropriating natural science to deal with issues that alienated humans from natural world;
- (2) Promoting attention to data of consciousness and insights into that data, as conditions for making this judgment of cognitional fact.

Insight: A Study of Human Understanding

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART TWO: INSIGHT AS KNOWLEDGE

[Pat reads from *Insight*, at the beginning of chapter eleven:]

It is time to turn from theory to practice. Judgment has been analysed. Its grounds in reflective understanding have been explored. *Clearly the next question is whether correct judgments occur, and the answer to it is the act of making one.* (CWL 3, p. 343, emphasis added).

So the facts having to do with cognition, the cognitional facts for this project, are going to be: making a judgment. This is the first time that you are actually asked, as a reader engaging in the exercises of the *Insight* project — *the first time that you are actually asked to make a judgment.* That doesn't mean, of course, that you weren't making judgments; that doesn't mean of course that Lonergan wasn't throwing out judgments here and there. But *the context of the first half of Insight was exploratory, learning the landscape, or better than that, learning the inscape; learning about what it is that's going on in your conscious activities, and beginning to notice the various things that we've noticed. Beginning to notice that not everything that goes on in your consciousness is on the same level; that there are differences between your sensible experiences, and your imaginative experiences, and your anticipative imagined experiences, and your remembered experiences; that there are differences between your inquiries and your insights; that there are differences between the inquiries that ask about your experiences, and the inquiries that ask about your insights; that judgment is itself a distinct activity.*

It is not always easy to distinguish: when things are kind of just smeared together, those distinctions are not obvious to everybody. But the first half of the book was meant to give you some exposure to — *really to heighten your awareness of what's going on in your consciousness; but you weren't actually asked to make a judgment. And here's where the first judgement is invited!*

[Pat resumes reading from where he stopped:]

Since our study has been of cognitional process, the judgment we are best prepared to make is *the self-affirmation of an instance of such a process as cognitional.* (CWL 3, p. 343, emphasis added).

What is meant by ‘self’? ‘Self’ as concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.

‘Self’ as ‘thing’ in the positive sense: thing as intelligible unity and identity in the data.

Thing as extended in space, enduring in time, and changing;

Example of a mayfly, whose intelligible unity persists through very notable changes in its data: appearances, material composition, behaviours, etc. None of these data is the unity or the being of the mayfly. The unity is intelligible, not sensible or imaginable.

So self-affirmation! Now what exactly is self-affirmation?

Self-Affirmation

“By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.” (*CWL* 3, p. 343).

So the first thing that he begins with here then is what do you mean by a self?

“By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.” (*CWL* 3, p. 343).

This is not the course in which to get into a discussion about the relationship of Lonergan’s account of self-hood to the great many other discussions of self-hood in the history of philosophy, particularly in the modern and post-modern worlds. For the moment, let’s just stay with what Lonergan says: and notice that he stuck semi-quotes around ‘self.’ **“By the ‘self’”** as I’m going to use the term, says Lonergan, I mean **“a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.”** (*CWL* 3, p. 343).

In this chapter, chapter eleven, on “**Self-affirmation of the Knower**” (CWL 3, pp. 343-371), I think you will begin to see how he is pulling together the various things that he set in play in the first half of the book. On the one hand, as I’ve tried to argue, *there is a kind of continuous development in the first half, where Lonergan’s concern is to do a radical retrieval, a radical re-appropriation of natural science, so as to deal with the issues that have alienated human beings from their natural world; that the world of natural science, as Lonergan re-understands it, is in fact a world that’s a home for human existence. And as he does that, he also is showing us more and more of what it means to be a human being in the universe, and in the world of the developing human history.*

And then we have this chapter that doesn’t quite fit in the flow, and this is kind of an almost time-out chapter, the chapter on things and bodies, the chapter entitled “**Things**” (CWL 3, pp. 270-295). And the first thing that Lonergan does when he gets to chapter eleven on “**Self-affirmation of the Knower**” (CWL 3, pp. 343-371), is *to tell us what do I mean by a self; what is a self!* You can see why he didn’t start chapter one with self-affirmation: because of the big bugaboo⁹ about what is meant by a self.

By a self I mean a thing! Now that *seems* to play into¹⁰ many of the existentialist and postmodern reactions against the mechanization, the dehumanization of the human being. If I had been successful in fixing the formatting of this scanned standard work on “The Subject”,¹¹ you would see that Lonergan takes that set of issues very seriously. But we’ll have to come back to that at another time. So the issues that surround what you might call the received understanding of thing or object are not Lonergan’s. So that’s why the word ‘thing’ is in quotes here. *I think he means what he has already said about a thing, a concrete intelligible-unity-identity-whole.*

Things

⁹ A bugaboo is something that causes fear or worry; a bugbear; a bogey.

¹⁰ “To play into x” = to act in such a way as unintentionally to give x an advantage. Is this the speaker’s meaning?

¹¹ Bernard Lonergan, “The Subject” in *A Second Collection*, eds. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), pp. 69-86.

“Now the notion of a thing is grounded in an insight that grasps, not relations between data, but a unity, identity, whole in data; and this unity is grasped, not by considering data from any abstractive viewpoint, but by taking them in their concrete individuality and in the totality of their aspects.” (CWL 3, p. 271).

And so just to recall for us — Now, this is sort of an aside: I did read the “Course Evaluation”, and thank you for your comments, both critical and affirmative. And one of the things that came out a couple of times in the written comments section was that people wished I didn’t keep repeating what we’d done in the previous class in the next class, because that seemed to slow us down and bog us down. Normally that’s a pretty good procedure to do, but I’ll take that tonic to heart; and so I won’t be repeating stuff that we did the previous week. It will be on Echo360, and you can go back and look at it yourselves. But this is the one exception, because we did have four weeks between the last time we met and now, one exception — well a few exceptions to that.

So we’re going to go back to chapter eight here for a moment, and recall what Lonergan has to say about a thing (“**Things**” *CWL 3*, pp. 270-295). “**Now the notion of a thing is grounded in an insight that grasps, not relations between data**” (p. 271), and not relations of data to us, to our interests and needs and concerns, “**but a unity, identity, whole in data**” (p. 271). There’s that phrase we just saw in chapter eleven: “**By the ‘self’ is meant a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole.**” (*CWL 3*, p. 343). *To be a self is to be a unity-identity-whole in the data. The crucial thing of course is that the unity-identity-whole is known by insight. So the unity-identity-wholeness is intelligible!* You can see what’s — we’ve already talked a little bit about what some of the implications of that. We will see hopefully that it will play itself out even further in the question of human identity.

And says Lonergan, the implications of this is then that *things commonly are conceived of as extended in space, permanent in time, and subject to change.*

They are *extended in space*, in as much as spatially distinct data pertain to the unity at any given instant.

They are *permanent in time*, in as much as temporally distinct data pertain to the same unity. And they are *subject to change*, in as much as there is some difference between the aggregate of data at one instant and the aggregate of data on the same unity at another instant. (CWL 3, p. 271, emphases added).

Things

“They are extended in space, inasmuch as spatially distinct data pertain to the unity at any given instant.

They are permanent in time, inasmuch as temporally distinct data pertain to the same unity.

They are subject to change, inasmuch as there is some difference between the aggregate of data at one instant and the aggregate of data on the same unity at another instant! (CWL 3, p. 271).

Now, I’m not going to repeat all of what we talked about before. So remember that back before the Christmas break. But before the Christmas break I gave you the example of the monarch territory and the *monarch butterfly*.

To refresh your memories, and also to begin to develop a background here, I have another. This is a mayfly. And I just want to read you something that I wrote in an essay about this.

Pat reads from a sheet:

“So think about the temporal data on the concrete individual insect, such as a mayfly.¹² There are actually approximately

¹² **Mayflies** Over 3,000 species of mayfly are known worldwide. Mayflies are aquatic insects whose immature stages, called ‘*nymphs*’, live in fresh water, where their presence indicates a clean, unpolluted environment. Mayflies hatch from spring to autumn, not necessarily in May, in enormous numbers. The brief lives of mayfly adults have been noted by naturalists since Aristotle and Pliny the Elder in classical times. The German engraver Albrecht Dürer included a mayfly in his 1495 engraving *The Holy Family with the Mayfly* to suggest a link between heaven and earth. The English poet George Crabbe compared

two thousand one hundred species of mayfly, believe it or not; but they all begin as eggs and pass through a nymph stage.”

Mayfly:
extended in space... permanent in
time...
Subject to change...
[Three illustrations]

And so mayflies lay their eggs on the top of where-ever they sit down. [Pat indicates top left illustration] They fall under stones. And the first thing that emerges is the *nymph* stage.

“They live around aquatic environments, lay their eggs and deposit them under stones under water. Newly hatched nymphs typically have either two or three, depending on the species, hair-like tails, which grow to a relatively long adult size. Nymphs feed on smaller aquatic organisms and debris. After a series of nymphal stages, mayflies emerge from the water and moult into a form called a *subimago*.”

This is actually a subimago right here [possibly nos. 4 and/or 5 in bottom of slide]. That’s the nymph stage, off to the right there [possibly nos. 2 and/or 3 in bottom of slide].

“The subimago moults once more and becomes a full adult. Mayflies are unique among other insects in moulting after their wings have become functional. They have two pairs of wings, fore-wings larger than hind-wings, which are held together above their bodies when resting. The adult mayflies do not

the brief life of a newspaper with that of a mayfly, both being called "Ephemera", in 1785. The *subimago* physically resembles the adult, but is usually sexually immature and duller in colour. *Subimagos* are generally poor fliers, and after a period, usually lasting one or two days but in some species only a few minutes, the *subimago* moults to the full adult form, the *imago*,

feed; they live for a day or two during which the males swarm; the males form swarms which move up and down in unison as part of the mating cycle.”



Nymph



Subimago



Adult

They don't have the mating part of the cycle here [in the lower part of the slide.] But I thought it was really interesting that mayflies don't eat after they become fully adults; their sole purpose is to form swarms and to mate, and so on.

Now, *why did I go into that detail? Just to begin to enrich your sense of what is the intelligible unity of an individual mayfly.* Our tendency is to say that's a mayfly — this picture off to the right [top right of slide]! But *in fact what you're looking at there in that photo on the right is just some of the data of the multiplicity of changing data, and in particular, that particular set of data. And everything else I've read to you is part of the data on the mayfly. And the unity, the being of the mayfly, is the unity of all that written data.*

So the being of a mayfly is a being whose being incorporates its changing over that whole period of its life-cycle. All those activities — think of those little nymphs skittering around under the water, finding bits of organic material to feed upon, little organisms that they can gobble up, and so on, hiding themselves from potential predators, moulting several times. That's all part of the being, of the unity, of the mayfly; it's the data on the mayfly. But note that none of that data is the being

of the mayfly. None of that data is the unity of the mayfly. As you look at either that photo of the nymph, or of the mayfly off on the right, that's not its unity. That's just the presence in space at a particular time of the appearance at that moment of the mayfly. That's not its unity! That's just spatio-temporal unity. That's not intelligible unity!

No thing itself, as explained, can be imagined.

Human self, human being, cannot be imagined.

The being that we are is intelligible, not graspable by visual imagining alone.

“No philosopher has ever been able to grasp the being of a single fly” — Josef Pieper.

Each mayfly has its own individual life and history, and thus its own unique aggregate of data; hence, it also has its own intelligible unity, so complex that “no philosopher” can understand it thoroughly in all its concreteness.

Each human being has its own unique concrete intelligible unity.

It's important to recall the above points when we're reflecting on what does Lonergan mean by a self. By a self he means, not what somebody looks like, but their intelligible unity. From this “It follows that no thing itself, no thing as explained, can be imagined.” And this comes from chapter eight [“Things” (CWL 3, pp. 270-295)] where he says: “If atoms cannot be imagined, then by parity of reasoning, molecules cannot be imagined,” because molecules are unities of unimaginable unities. “If molecules cannot be imagined, then neither can cells. If cells cannot be imagined, then neither can plants.” Now, Lonergan doesn't go on to draw the implication, but the implication I would ask you do draw is: If plants can't be imagined, then neither can animals. If animals can't be imagined, then neither can human selves, human beings!

Things not Imaginable

“It follows that no thing itself, no thing as explained, can be imagined.

If atoms cannot be imagined, then by parity of reasoning, molecules cannot be imagined. If molecules cannot be imagined, then neither can cells. If cells cannot be imagined, then neither can plants.” (*CWL 3*, p. 275).

So as I was saying, Lonergan doesn't go on to draw the implication, but the implication I would ask you do draw is: If plants can't be imagined, then neither can animals. *If animals can't be imagined, then neither can human selves, human beings! You can't see me, and I can't see you! You can't imagine me, and I can't imagine you, because the being that we are is an intelligible unity that's beyond imagination.*

Things Not Imaginable

“No philosopher ... has ever been able to grasp the being of a single fly.”

(Josef Pieper, *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*, p. 110.

This was — Why did I choose the mayfly in that last part of that essay that I just read to you? Somebody once told me that Aquinas allegedly said that no one can understand a mayfly! And so I kept trying to figure out where that came from; and finally one of my former

students traced it back to Josef Pieper's essay on *Leisure as the Basis of Culture*.¹³ And Pieper didn't actually say 'mayfly'. I'm not sure where that part — do you know, did you ever play a game called [Pat names a parlour game unknown, and indecipherable, to the transcriber] —

[Some student laughter]

So somewhere at it got around the room and the fly became the mayfly. Mayflies are prettier and more interesting! They have this very unusual life-cycle.

So I kind of — So I think if Aquinas would have held that no one's able to grasp the being of *a single fly*, he would agree that no-one's able to grasp the being of *a single mayfly*. Be that as it may *That's sort of an astonishing thing! If it's really the case that you can't grasp the being of an individual fly, how much more elusive then is the grasp of the being of a human self, of a human being!*

Just for the record, Pieper was quoting Aquinas, because somebody then traced it back to Aquinas's *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*. And this, as far as I can tell, is accurate.

“Sed cognitio nostra est adeo debilis quod nullus philosophus potuit unquam perfecte investigare naturam unius muscae: unde legitur, quod unus philosophus fuit triginta annis in solitudine, ut cognosceret naturam apis.”

“But our manner of knowing is so weak that *no philosopher could perfectly investigate the nature* of even one little fly. We even read that a certain philosopher spent thirty years in solitude in order to know the nature of the bee.” [Aquinas, *Commentary on the Apostles'*

¹³ Josef Pieper, *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*, tr. Alexander Dru (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1998) p. 110: “‘No philosopher’, we find Aquinas saying, ‘has ever been able to grasp the being of a single fly.’” It may be noted, however, that Pieper immediately adds that this remark: “is counterbalanced by the other statement that in knowledge, the mind drives forward to the essence of things.” (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, II, q. 31, a. 5).

Creed: Prologue “What is faith? The nature and Effects of Faith, “The evidence of things that appear not”. (tr. Joseph B. Collins)].

So Aquinas did say *that our knowledge is so imperfect that no philosopher has ever been able to discover perfectly the nature of a single fly.* Aquinas goes on to add that we are told that a

certain philosopher spent thirty years in solitude in the endeavour to know the nature of a bee. I’m not sure what philosopher he had in mind; somebody who (some indecipherable words).

[Student laughter]

So, on the one hand, *if you can’t imagine a mayfly, or a fly, or a human self, that’s because of the intelligibility as the ground and the basis and the fundamental reality of the unity. You can’t imagine what is intelligible; and your understanding is not an act which brings to your consciousness an image. They are two different kinds of noetic contents that relate two different kinds of — excuse me — They are two different kinds of noematic contents that relate to two different kinds of knowing activities. You can’t imagine what is! It requires an act of intelligence to bring to consciousness. So you can’t imagine the unity of a fly or a human being!*

But Aquinas goes further and says: “No philosopher has ever been able to *understand the nature.*” And Pieper translated that as ‘being’, which is not exactly correct. But I think the point remains more or less the same: You can’t even understand it. No human beings ever understand it.

Well, a way of thinking why that might be the case is because each individual mayfly lives a different life. Although the characteristics that I gave you are characteristics of mayflies in general, all the different species, nevertheless each individual one has a different life. There are different data on each and every individual mayfly. They don’t all eat the same thing, they didn’t all grow up under the same rocks, they didn’t all join the same swarms for mating, they didn’t all mate, and the ones that did didn’t all mate with the same female mayfly. Their lives are different because their data are different. And the unity that unites them, that unites the data on them, is going to be correspondingly different.

Because remember for Lonergan, drawing on Aristotle, insights are into phantasms, and any significant difference in the underlying phantasm calls for a difference in the insight and a different intelligibility. So there's a different intelligibility for each and every unity-identity-whole of an existing entity, whether it's a fly, or a butterfly, or a squirrel, or a human being.

‘Self’ of self-affirmation is not imaginable!

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

Loneragan *characterizes* the ‘self’ by its cognitive activities.

This is a minimum characterization of a human self.

What is meant by *characterizing* something?

How do we characterize a mayfly?

Characterize in terms of selected data and relations to stand for the whole, but are not the whole.

Danger when the selected characteristics are taken as the whole, the unity.

Self Not Imaginable!

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

By ‘self-affirmation’ is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed.

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

So the project of self-affirmation, the invitation to self-affirmation, has to do with the affirmation of a unity-identity-whole! **“By ‘self-affirmation’ is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed”** (CWL 3, p. 343). *Remember he says that what we’re going to have to do in this chapter is to make a judgment! He’s going to talk about what a judgment is, but in order to appropriate a judgment, you have to make one.*

And this is going to be a very special exercise of self-affirmation, because he is going to put an exercise forward in which the tension of making a judgment becomes an inevitability, primarily for the sake of having the activity which most people have some awareness of, some appropriation of; in this case, the appropriation is going to be, not just noticing that you make judgments; it’s not going to just be understanding what it is to make a judgment, which we’ve been endeavouring to do in chapters nine and ten; but actually judging that you make a judgment. And it’s a judgment about yourself.

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

So the invitation is to self-affirmation; obviously, the invitation is to affirm yourself as the unity-identity-whole who exercises those activities.

<p style="text-align: center;">Character</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-as-Characterized</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Self-as-Constituted</p>

But I want to talk about ‘characterized’! *By self-affirmation of the knower is meant that the self is characterized by these occurrences. I want to point out that this is a minimal way of talking about the self, a minimal way of characterising the self.*

Self Not Imaginable!

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

By ‘self-affirmation’ is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed.

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

Let’s go back a moment!

Mayfly:

**extended in space... permanent in
time...**

Subject to change...

[Three illustrations]

How do you characterize that mayfly? ... Deb?

Deb: By its activity?

Pat: Okay. So I told you a little bit about its activity. So I was characterising! How else would you characterize that mayfly? ... Sean?

Sean: Maybe by using those three, I guess, signs, on how its extended in space, how it's permanent in time, and what is it that is subject to change.

Pat: Okay. So how would you characterize, say, the one on the right?

Sean: It's extended in space as it's presented to my senses, so with its wings and its two tails.

Pat: Okay. Anything else? ... Well, if it's an experience for an exercise in the aesthetic pattern of experiencing, anything else you would say about it? ... Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: It's relationships to other features, and other relationships.

Pat: Uh, huh! Good! That would be what Lonergan would call the explanatory conjugates, explanatory concepts [last four words uncertain]. Anything else? You might characterize it as: well, it's green. It's got shiny wings. It's got a segmented body.

So those are all ways in which you might characterize something. *Notice what we're doing when we're characterizing the mayfly in that way. We're taking some aspects of its data; and we're letting them stand for the whole. They might be Xs.*

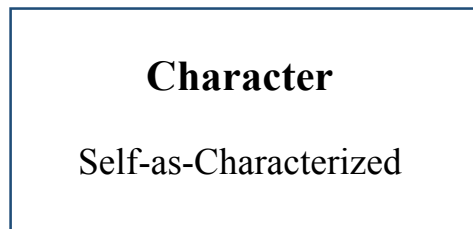
A big problem of course that Lonergan is inveighing against throughout most of the first half of the book, and we'll see again when we get to what he means by consciousness, and then later on when he takes up the method in metaphysics. *It's one thing to characterize something by singling out certain of its data, or certain of its aspects, or for that matter, as Elizabeth just said, by singling out some of its relationships that it has to other things. So you can characterize things by being selective about that! And in fact, you know, given the finitude of our lives, the finitude of our intellects, we more or less have to do that! To communicate anything about anything, we have to characterize things! We characterize things by their behaviours, by their appearances, by their relationships. The big danger of course is when we either knowingly or unknowingly allow those aspects to be the whole of their unity; when we characterize things, not so to speak, as the windows through which, or the portals through which, we enter into the wider and grander and more complex and more complete intelligibility of them, but when we take that characterization to be the whole; when we characterize in terms of selected data and relations to stand for the whole but which are*

*in fact not the whole, there may be a danger when the selected characteristics are taken as the whole, the unity.*¹⁴

How can we characterize a human self?

Class discussion on individual traits, social traits, habits, ideas, origins, politics, life histories.

Taking “snapshots” of data on the self, and using those to characterized the complex, concrete unity that that self is.



How would you characterize a human self? How do people characterize human selves? ... Jeff?

Jeff: Intelligent.

Pat: Okay, that's ... Yeah! Are you using 'intelligent' in Lonergan's sense or in a more colloquial sense?

Jeff: Oh, just colloquial. It's like, a high intelligence.

Pat: Okay. And what would people mean by that? You know, when they say people have a high intelligence; they are intelligent; they have a high intelligence? What would people tend to mean by that?

Jeff: I guess, comparatively, to other things.

Pat: Give me an example; be a little more concrete or specific.

Jeff: Right! I'm smarter than a dog.

¹⁴ Text in blue taken from Pat's outline summary of this class, and inserted here by the transcriber.

Pat: Okay. You are more intelligent than a dog. Okay. Now, just as an aside, what would Lonergan mean by characterizing a self as intelligent? Because he is using going to characterize a self as intelligent! But what would Lonergan mean by it? How would that be different?

Jeff: I might be differentiating the fact that you can verify, the fact that you are so —

Pat: Okay. Yeah! But you didn't tell me about 'intelligent.'

Jeff: Okay.

Pat: What's the difference between the colloquial way of using the word 'intelligent' as Jeff just described for us, and characterizing people by their intelligence that way, and Lonergan's way? ... Matt?

Matt: Is Lonergan's way the reflective intelligence, the self-reflective intelligence: that I know I'm a person? A dog doesn't know it's a dog, can't think about its being a dog.

Pat: That's certainly true! He says that back in chapter eight on "**Things**" (*CWL* 3, pp. 270-295)]. But it's not so much — *Lonergan is going to use the term 'reflection' as distinct from 'intelligence', to separate or distinguish them.* ... Maggie?

Maggie: Maybe our ability to inquire, and then have insights.

Pat: Right! Right! *For Lonergan, to be intelligent is first and foremost, do people have the activities of inquiring? People are intelligent if they can inquire! Some are intelligent if they can inquire, even if they don't have any insights! But it's inquiry and insight, the occurrence of the activities that characterizes intelligence for Lonergan, that characterize a unity-identity-whole as intelligent for Lonergan.*

And to just give an account of the colloquial use of intelligence, how would Lonergan regard that? Since that's not *his* meaning of intelligence, how would he situate the being more intelligent than a dog? Or actually, one human being being more intelligent than another human being? It wouldn't be the same characterization! ... Donato?

Donato: Would he call *that a descriptive definition, more descriptive instead of explanatory?*

Pat: Sure, sure! And *descriptive in the sense of you're more useful to me if you're more intelligent!* If you're a basketball player and you've got basketball savvy, you're more useful to me when you're **playing**. If you're an engineer and you've got more engineering intelligence, you're more useful to me. But for Lonergan — Yeah, Maggie?

Maggie: Maybe also it relates to more common sense knowledge. Some are — the more intelligent person has greater common sense.

Pat: Which for Lonergan would mean, they have greater what?

Meg: Inquiries and insights.

Pat: They've a greater accumulation of insights, yeah. *A person with more common sense just has had more insights. It doesn't make them more intelligent in Lonergan's sense, because everybody is intelligent that can inquire and have insights. But in the colloquial sense, a person is more intelligent if they have more insights. But Lonergan is not going to characterize a self, a human self, by the quantity of insights that they have, but by the activity of having insights.*

So that's what he does. How else might we characterize a self? I put the word 'character' up there, very deliberately. Ahm, Greg?

Greg: I think I would have to say, a sensate being, with a body and a certain way of interacting with their environment, in lots of senses.

Pat: Okay. How else would people characterize selves, or characterize people? ... Sean?

Sean: Maybe by our life, our internal conscious activity; so we can characterize ourselves as, I guess, inquirers; or maybe as people who are afraid of something. That's contra to the accepted view.

Pat: Okay! **[smiling broadly:]** You guys are all being too Lonerganian!

[Class laughter]

I'm trying to get a clarification by contrast here! When people are said to have a character they — when they're characterized, they're **sometimes said to be** very good. Sean got at what might be a more common way of characterizing people; People are then corrupted by taking *Insight and Beyond!!*

[Class laughter]

But Sean was getting at: People are fearful! That's a *characteristic* that people have. Aristotle cites it as one of the moral virtues, or you might say, *one of the moral characteristics*. The Greek word *arête* is sometimes translated, by certain translators, as characteristic. That's not my favourite way of translating it, but it gets back to this way that we characterize, and we describe characters of people, in terms of things like that. Somebody else had something to say over here? Yeah, Byron?

Byron: Would one way of characterizing be the self's role within the community and the society?

Pat: Sure, sure! Give me an example.

Byron: The role of a rabbi, or something like that.

Pat: Okay. Being a rabbi is — I characterize people because of their role. They're rabbinical because they play the role of being a rabbi. ... Ivan?

Ivan: We characterize people in terms of their habitual behaviour.

Pat: Good! *Going back to Aristotle's account of moral virtues and intellectual virtues, it's their habitual behaviour that characterizes people.* One of the recurring questions throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* is: what do we praise and blame people for? *What we praise and blame people for is their character.* We don't exactly praise and blame people as people for the occasional lapses from their characteristic ways of behaving. We tend to be sort of understanding! Or, if they do something good once in a while, we don't give them an awful lot of credit: we say that was very uncharacteristic! Good. Okay. ... Matt?

Matt: I was thinking two things: either characterizing by political ideology, or maybe by skin colour or appearance; we talk about people that way.

Pat: Right! Sure! Characterize people as being a "blue stater" or a "red stater."¹⁵ We characterize people for their political opinions, and so on. Okay. Good. What else? ... Jonathan?

¹⁵ *Red states* and *blue states* refer to those states of the United States whose residents predominantly vote for the Republican Party (red) or Democratic Party (blue) presidential candidates.

Jonathan: This is sort of more of a methodology characterization than a sort of an attribute that we would point out on someone: but *through narrative*? So we either tell stories about people, or we tell stories about ourselves —

Pat: Good! Good!

Jonathan: — If we find a narrative somehow indicative of persons as ourselves.

Pat: Good! And by telling stories, we're getting more concrete about characterizing a person's self. We say they're brave, or they're cowardly, or they're rabbinical, or they're honest, or they're flighty, or — However we do that, *we're referring to these repetitive forms of behaviour*. Or if we characterize them by their skin colour, or if we characterize them by being tall or being short, and so on, *we're sort of taking snapshots of the data*. Just as you did with the mayfly a moment ago. *Those are snapshots. The recurring things are a little less so. But when we say that a person is courageous, or that a person is honest, or that a person is generous, we're characterizing them, but we're not doing it in a way that gets very close to their uniquely intelligible unity-identity-whole.*

If we tell a narrative, we're starting to get at that. That's what a narrative is: a narrative is the beginning of trying to get at that which Aquinas says no human being can hope to capture; but in telling the story we start to sort of say not just that they're brave, but what kind of brave person they are; and that starts to get at — that gets us closer to the person.

Pat: Deb?

Deb: I was going to say that personality, and how people relate to other people, so like, whether you're introverted or extroverted ...

Pat: Good. Good. Okay!

Contrast those ways of characterizing a self with
Lonergan's characterizing of self.

Characterizations of preceding discussion focus on
characteristics of self-as-constituted.

Lonergan interested in characterizing the self-as-
constituting.

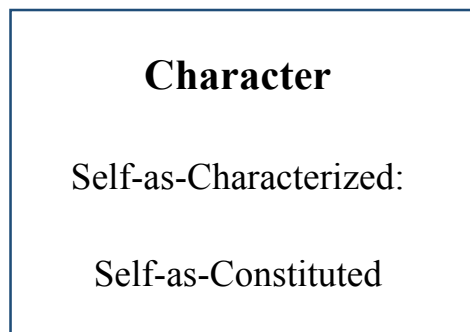
Initially Lonergan's characterization of the self as
constituting makes us wonder, "Is that all there is?"
to a self?

What is so important about characterizing the self
as constituting, in terms of its self-constituting
activities of experiencing, inquiring, understanding,
formulating, reflecting, judging, etc.?

This *seems* impoverished, in comparison to
characterizing the self in terms of a narrative; we
are authors of ourselves. But *how* do we author
ourselves? By our self-constituting activities.

All right. Now, my point in doing this was to give a clarification by contrast; because *Lonergan says that what he's getting at is the self that's characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting and grasping the unconditioned, and affirming. He's talking about a unity-identity-whole that's characterized by those activities.*

What we have been talking about is *characterization of a self as constituted.*



So, so far you have made yourself to be a generous person; you've made yourself to be a cowardly person; you've made yourself to be a person who lives and moves and has their being in this set of relationships with others, and with the environment, and with objects in the world; you've made yourself to be the person of whom this is the story so far! *So what we ordinarily do is characterize people as they are constituted, you might say, as they are so far! Or as they have constituted themselves typically.*

And I think, many of us, certainly me when I first encountered this chapter in Insight, found this account of selfhood a little disappointing!

Self Not Imaginable!

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

By ‘self-affirmation’ is meant that the self both affirms and is affirmed.

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

There’s a great Peggy Lee song: it’s entitled “Is that all there is?” And it begins out — It goes through a series of things. The first thing is a fire. It seems in the song as if people have told her what a great thing a fire is. And then I went and I saw one, and I said:

I remember when I was a little girl ...

Our house caught on fire,

I’ll never forget the look

on my daddy’s face,

As he gathered me in his arms

And raced outta the burning building,

Out onto the pavement.

And I stood there,

Shivering in my pyjamas,

And watched the whole world

Go up in flames.

And when it was all over,

I said to myself,

Pat breaks into song, much to the enjoyment of the class:

Is that all there is,
Is that all there is,
Is that all there is to a fire?
Is that all there is?
If that's all there is,
My friends,
Then let's keep dancing.

[Class laughter of enjoyment]

Let's break out the booze
And have a ball.
If that's all there is

And then the next thing is a visit to the circus, and that is followed by her falling in love.

And then I fell in love with the
Most wonderful boy in the world,
We'd take long walks
down by the river,
and just sit for hours.
Gazing into each other's eyes ...
We were so very much in love.

She falls in love, and her heart is broken, and she falls out of love!

And then one day
He went away,
And I thought I'd die.
But I didn't ...
And when I didn't,
I said to myself,
"Is that all there is to love?"

And then she says:

Is that all there is?

Is that all there is? ...

[Huge class enjoyment and laughter]

And the last challenge is death.

If that's all there is,

My friends,

Then

I know what you must be saying to yourselves,

“If that's the way she fell about it,

Why doesn't she just end it all?”

She says: “Oh no! I know what you're thinking, but I'm not going to take that one on!”

Oh no, Not me,

I'm not ready for that final disappointment.

'Cuz I know,

Just as well as I'm standin' here

talking to you,

When that final moment comes,

And I'm breathing my last breath,

I'll be saying to myself,

Is that all there is?

Is that all there is?

If that's all there is,

My friends,

Then let's keep dancing,

Let's break out the booze

And have a ball,

If that's all there is?

That's how the song ends. You have to listen to it! And Peggy Lee sings it as nobody else can.

[Pat adopts a slightly fake-mocking and pseudo-dismissive tone:] So you get to chapter eleven [“Self-affirmation of the Knower” (*CWL* 3, pp. 343-371)], and say okay! Now to this great achievement this whole project is headed, and from this decisive act everything follows and everything — And you get here and you find that to be a self is to be characterized by experiences such as sensing and perceiving and inquiring [bored tone]. And compared to the rich narrative that Jonathan was just talking about, it seems pretty dull and —

And as many of you, I’m sure, know, *people like Paul Ricoeur*¹⁶ and our own *Richard Kearney*¹⁷ have made strong arguments that to be a self is to be narrative. And I think that’s right!! And as you would have seen if the article on “The Subject”¹⁸ had managed to get on line, *Lonergan himself says that!* Towards the end of that essay on “The Subject”, *Lonergan says that the big realization is the realization that it’s up to you and I to write the first and only edition of ourselves! That’s what we saw in the dramatic pattern of experience! That’s the self!*

¹⁶ **Paul Ricoeur** (1913 – 2005) was a French philosopher best known for combining phenomenological description with hermeneutics. As such, his thought is within the same tradition as other major hermeneutic phenomenologists, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. In 2000, he was awarded the Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy for having “revolutionized the methods of hermeneutic phenomenology, expanding the study of textual interpretation to include the broad yet concrete domains of mythology, biblical exegesis, psychoanalysis, theory of metaphor, and narrative theory.”

¹⁷ **Richard Kearney** (1954 –) is the Charles Seelig professor of philosophy at Boston College and has taught at many universities including University College Dublin, the Sorbonne, and the University of Nice. He studied at Glenstal Abbey under the Benedictines until 1972, and was a 1st Class Honours graduate in Philosophy in the Bachelor of Arts graduate class of 1975 in UCD. He completed an M.A. at McGill University with Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, and a PhD with Paul Ricoeur at University of Paris X: Nanterre. He corresponded with Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida and other French philosophers of the era. He was also active in the Irish, British, and French media as a host for various television and radio programs on literary and philosophical themes. His work focuses on the philosophy of the narrative imagination, hermeneutics and phenomenology. Among his best known written works are *The Wake of the Imagination*, *On Stories*, *Poetics of Imagining*, and *Debates in Continental Philosophy*.

¹⁸ Bernard Lonergan, “The Subject” in *A Second Collection*, eds. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), pp. 69-86.

Universally prior to any choice or action there is just the transcendental principle of all appraisal and criticism, the intention of the good. That principle gives rise to instances of the good, but those instances are good choices and actions. However, do not ask me to determine them, for *their determination in each case is the work of the free and responsible subject producing the first and only edition of himself.* (“The Subject” in *A Second Collection*, p. 83, emphasis added).

So what’s the big deal here in Chapter Eleven [on “Self-affirmation of the Knower” (*CWL* 3, pp. 343-371)], about characterising the self by these activities?

Who am I really and truly?

Social, cultural identities.

A more basic *human* identity.

Persons as composite identities: personal, social, cultural, and human.

Self as constituting: we constitute our own *dramatis personae*.

We constitute our very unity, our human being by these activities; we thereby place ourselves in the drama and community of human existence.

Affirming ourselves as constituting: we are what we are because of our experiences, understanding, reflecting and judging.

Now in his book, *The Quest for Self-Knowledge*,¹⁹ Father Flanagan begins with these remarks: We all have this question: Who am I, really and truly? And then he observes that each of us has many identities.

Self and Identity

“Who am I, really and truly?

Each of us has many different identities ...

As well as these more personal and social identities,

each of us shares with every other person a human identity that is our most comprehensive and foundational one.

To discover and appropriate this human identity has been the goal of a philosophical quest in Western history ...”

(Joseph Flanagan, *The Quest for Self-Knowledge*, p. 3).

[Pat reads from Father Flanagan’s book:]

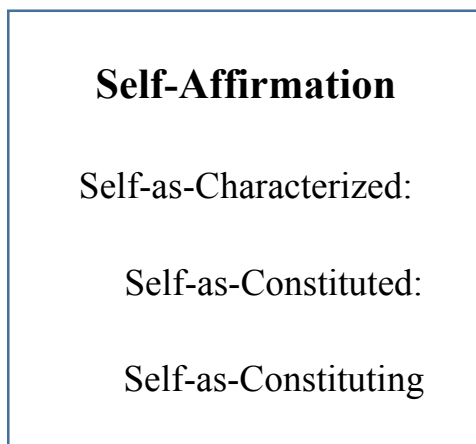
“Who am I, really and truly? Each of us has many different identities: we identify ourselves by our family name —

Say, we characterize ourselves,

¹⁹ Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan’s Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

— identify ourselves by our family name for example, and we have cultural and ethnic identities, as we recognise ourselves as Japanese, or French-Canadian, or German-American, and so forth. *As well as these more personal and social identities, each of us shares with every other person a human identity that is our most comprehensive and foundational one.* To discover and appropriate this human identity has been the goal of a philosophical quest in Western history since philosophy’s early beginnings among the Greek scholars.” (Joseph Flanagan, *The Quest for Self-Knowledge*, p. 3, emphasis added).

So Father Flanagan is talking about an identity that’s more basic than the cultural and social identities. It’s an insertion that’s much in debate in contemporary philosophical, and for that matter literary and historical discussions, about whether there really is any identity that’s not reducible to cultural, ethnic, gender, racial, identity. And Father Flanagan is making the claim that there is an identity that’s more basic. But it’s not more basic in the standard sense of a metaphysical nature identity. It’s more basic in a different way, what I would characterize as the distinction between self-as-constituted and self-as-constituting!



When we were studying the section on the dramatic pattern of experiencing, what we saw was that we constitute our *dramatis persona*, our dramatic personhood, the role that we play in the drama of human existence in the presence of others; that we constitute ourselves to be the dramatic personality that we are, the narrative personality that we are, on the basis of experiencing, inquiring, understanding, and acting — although we didn't have it in the fold at that time: making judgments about our understandings of our experiences. *So we're constituting ourselves! There's a sense then that our various social, and ethnic, and cultural, and religious identities, though they are crucial, and essential, and they do in fact constitute the unity-identity-whole that we are in all its intelligible concreteness, nevertheless that constituted personality rests upon us as selves who are capable of doing the constituting!*

And so Lonergan's invitation to in the chapter on Self-affirmation is to affirm ourselves as constituting ourselves. That we're characterized in many different ways, but most profoundly, we're characterized by these activities of consciousness that we've been exposed to in the first half of the book, because those are the condition for the possibility of being constituted in any of these ways, as a self. So we are what we are because we are experiencers, inquirers, intelligent understanders, reflecters and judges. Okay?

All right. So let's take a break here. This is sort of a bit longer than usual before taking a break. Let's take a break!

Insight and Beyond

Class 15, Part Two: January 20th 2010

“Self-Affirmation”

(*Insight*, Chapter 11: “Self-affirmation of the Knower”)

Summary of Material

Self-as-constituted and Self-as-constituting.

The ‘self’ doing the affirming is more foundational than the self-as-constituted.

Similarity and difference between Lonergan’s procedure and that of Descartes.

Lonergan’s method is not doubt, but ‘re-duplication.’

Difference: not hyperbolic doubting in order to encounter oneself as doubter, but appropriating what we have always been doing.

Similarity: both are heightening experiences of oneself as consciously acting.

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

Does not mean only characterized by those activities. There is more to the self than as performing those activities,

Although this characterization is more basic than almost any other characterization. This characterization anticipates every other way we can be characterized.

The self as performing those activities constitutes the self characterized by the results of those activities.

Characterizing our selves by means of these activities heuristically anticipates everything else about ourselves.

Oddity of Lonergan's statement, "By 'knowing' I mean no more than such performance"; implications drawn out in succeeding chapters and in "Cognitional Structure."

In contrast to characterizing knowledge in terms of performance of certain activities, rather than as knowledge of objects.

Self-knowledge would be impossible if knowledge were restricted to knowledge of objects.

Drawing attention to performances of conscious acts.

Why then should such performance be properly called "knowledge"?

Lonergan will answer this question, but not yet.

Performance is the question that must be answered first in the sequence of his 3 questions:

What am I doing when I am knowing?

Why is doing that knowing?

What do I know when I do that?

Student observation that affirming oneself as a knower (which is not self-affirmation in one's entirety) implies that there is more to oneself than one can communicate.

— The chapter deals only with oneself as a knower, as performing these activities or not.

Self-affirmation as a judgment depends on grasping the unconditioned (the combination of the conditioned, the link between it and its conditions, and fulfillment of conditions).

— The conditioned: "I am a knower."

— The link: being a knower in the sense that Lonergan characterizes 'knower.'

— The fulfillment is given in consciousness; it is the problematic element.

Lonergeran's unique understanding of consciousness.

What consciousness is Not:

- Differs from Kant, Husserl, Sartre; not what Heidegger and Habermas critique.
- It is not a kind of inward look or sudden explicit awareness of one's activities.
- Consciousness not "reflective awareness"; Lonergan's use of "reflective" also different.
- Defining consciousness thusly creates the problem of identity and difference (reflecting vs. reflected) in consciousness.
- Nor is consciousness a kind of thematizing, formulating, or bringing to language: the latter are actually insights into one's experience. Example of class consciousness in Karl Marx.
- There is no inner visual object to behold by "intro-spection"

What consciousness Is:

- Emergence of a new pattern or level or genus of activities over and above biological/neural.
- Experience - There are experiences that are not experiences of the data of sensations.
- Do you experience yourself as performing these acts = conscious of acting these ways.
- Consciousness is a factor in self-knowledge, but not the whole of self-knowledge.
- Awareness immanent in cognitional acts.

Presence, in three senses:

1. as 'in a room', or already-out-there-now, in space and time;
2. the presence of an object to subject;
3. third meaning of presence: "somehow" present to oneself.

Presence to oneself vs. the metaphysics of presence.

Ch. 8 distinguishes the being of intelligibility from the 'being already out there now' of biologically patterned experience.

Consciousness as a "somehow" presence is not the presence of the already-out-there, but a meaning of presence that links to the being of intelligibility.

Consciousness pertains more to the experience of unity immanent in the various activities of consciousness than to the activities themselves. Experience of being present to oneself immanent in those activities.

Heidegger's criticism of Kant: for Kant, knowledge is only of beings as they appear; Heidegger thinks Kant failed to think through the conditions of possibility of appearance; elaboration. Heidegger identifies *Lichtung* as that condition of possibility.

For Lonergan, the conditions of possibility for anything's appearing to us - as sensible, as intelligible, as unconditional - is consciousness.

Consciousness as the condition of the possibility for acts of consciousness to appear/occur.

But even more primordially, in order for intelligible and unconditional acts and contents to occur, human consciousness must be constituted by an unrestricted desire to know.

Question about what 'knowing' means in this context.

- it is the desire both to perform those activities and for what results from them.

Final remarks: each of us has to ask whether he or she carries out affirmative/negative judgments by asking whether the conditions of affirming myself as engaging in these activities are actually fulfilled in the field of consciousness.

Student question about the relation between consciousness and the three-part process of knowing.

- Discussion of models of consciousness. Lonergan sees consciousness as not an inner spectator but rather a field or ground upon which activities take place; Heidegger's *Lichtung*.
- Problem of saying of consciousness, "It is present in all acts of perceiving, understanding, judging, etc."; rather, you are present in all those acts.
- Consciousness is how you are present to yourself, more or less fully.

Question about whether consciousness is a dynamic thing, contracting and expanding?

- In the sense used here, it is just the difference between being awake and not awake; it is the field that makes appearances possible.

Insight and Beyond

Class 15, Part Two: January 20th 2010

“Self-Affirmation”

(*Insight*, Chapter 11: “Self-affirmation of the Knower”)

Self-as-constituted and Self-as-constituting.

The ‘self’ doing the affirming is more foundational
than the self-as-constituted.

Similarity and difference between Lonergan’s
procedure and that of Descartes.

Lonergan’s method is not doubt, but ‘re-duplication.’

Difference: not hyperbolic doubting in order to
encounter oneself as doubter, but appropriating what
we have always been doing.

Similarity: both are heightening experiences of
oneself as consciously acting.

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

Does not mean only characterized by those activities.

There is more to the self than as performing those
activities,

Although this characterization is more basic than almost any other characterization. This characterization anticipates every other way we can be characterized.

The self as performing those activities constitutes the self characterized by the results of those activities.

Characterizing our selves by means of these activities heuristically anticipates everything else about ourselves.

Self-Affirmation
Self-as-Characterized:
Self-as-Constituted:
Self-as-Constituting

So *the self-affirming* that Lonergan is calling for in chapter eleven on “**Self-affirmation of the Knower**” (CWL 3, pp. 343-371) is more basic and more foundational than *this sense of self-as-constituted*.

Now before we go on, I wanted to say one thing that does come up later on, that’s a contrast between what Lonergan is doing in this chapter, and what Descartes does in both of his *Discourse on Method* and his *Meditations on First Philosophy*.²⁰ There is a similarity and a difference! Descartes adopts this method of “hyperbolic doubt”: that we doubt everything, and eventually come to the fact that we can’t doubt the fact that we doubting! *Now, Lonergan’s method is not doubt! Lonergan’s method is what he calls the re-duplication of the structure of*

²⁰ Descartes, (1596-1650) *Discourse on Method* (1637). *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).

knowing. And we'll see that next week in the article entitled "Cognitive Structure."²¹ That it isn't a matter of developing a new method by which we're going to encounter the self as doubter. *It is rather a matter of appropriating the patterns and activities of knowing that we've always been doing, but we didn't have full comprehension of ourselves as doing, and to take possession of that as the way in which we know ourselves.*

*Now, there's a similarity between Lonergan and Descartes in that Descartes's exercise is a provocation to an encounter with the experience of doubting, and Lonergan's exercise is a provocation to an experience of knowing! So there's a difference between them in certain ways! But nevertheless the same strategy is there; that the exercise is for the sake of heightening an experience which is going to form the ground of the judgment: For Descartes, the "Cogito ergo sum!" or the *Dubito* — (sotto voce) I'm not quite sure what to make of that — and for Lonergan's point, that I am a knower, that I am a unity-identity-whole characterized by these activities.*

I want to underscore one more time: *Lonergan is not saying characterized only by these activities. There's much more to the characterization of the intricate, complex, unique, intelligible unity that we are, than is going to be comprehended by grasping ourselves as characterized by the performance of these activities in this structured fashion. Nevertheless, grasping ourselves in that way, proleptically²² and heuristically anticipates everything else about us. What we are we are as constituted, and it's by knowing ourselves as the constitutors of that constitution that we know ourselves at least in a heuristic fashion more comprehensively than we would by all the other ways in which we can tend to characterize ourselves by being very selectively drawing from certain of those experiences.*

²¹ Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitive Structure" in Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Vol. 4: Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) pp. 205-221.

²² **Prolepsis** noun = (1) *rhetoric* the anticipation and answering of possible objections in rhetorical speech. *poetic/literary* anticipation. (2) the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so, as in *he was a dead man when he entered*. DERIVATIVES **proleptic** adjective. ORIGIN from Greek *prolambanein* anticipate. (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English*). Pat's adverbial usage is not listed.

Self-Affirmation

“It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

Oddity of Lonergan’s statement, “By ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance”; implications drawn out in succeeding chapters and in “Cognitional Structure.”

In contrast to characterizing knowledge in terms of performance of certain activities, rather than as knowledge of objects.

Self-knowledge would be impossible if knowledge were restricted to knowledge of objects.

I also want to draw attention to this very odd statement, the oddity of which is not going to be resolved until we look at what he’s doing in chapter twelve, “The Notion of Being”, and chapter thirteen, “The Notion of Objectivity”, and the way in which he pulls it together in the essay “Cognitional Structure”.

“It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

Now compare that with what he says at the very beginning of chapter eleven on the “Self-affirmation of the Knower” (*CWL* 3, pp. 343-371).

[Pat reads the title of chapter eleven, and continues immediately at the second paragraph:]

“Self-affirmation of the knower”

“Since our study has been of cognitional process, the judgment we are best prepared to make is *the self-affirmation of an instance of such a process as cognitional.* By ‘self-affirmation of the knower’ is meant that the self as affirmed is characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming.” (CWL 3, p. 343, emphasis added).

Now if you’re affirming yourself as a knower, and thereby re-duplicating those activities with regard, not to knowledge of plants or mayflies or schemes of recurrence, but with regard to oneself, then presumably self-affirmation of the knower is knowing oneself as a knower.

Self-Affirmation

“It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

“The affirmation to be made is a judgment of fact. It is not that I exist necessarily, but merely that in fact I do. It is not that I am of necessity a knower, but merely that in fact I am. It is not that an individual

performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performance.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

That’s a puzzling statement, isn’t it? Now, what he is getting at in the background to this is his preoccupation with what Kant has to say about knowledge and objects. And so, in part, he is putting off certain kinds of Kantian presuppositions about knowledge as knowledge of objects. So for example, when he — Let me see ... So this is on page 344, under section one, “The Notion of Consciousness.” He’s distancing himself from a certain set of understandings of what people mean by ‘consciousness’. But the thing that I wanted to draw your attention to is this sentence:

Knowing, they will say, is knowing something; it is being confronted by an object; it is the strange, mysterious, irreducible presence of one thing to another. (CWL 3, p. 344).

Now, *that’s* what he’s getting at here. He’s saying, *I’m going to use the word quote-unquote ‘know’ in a very specific way, and not making any claims that answer the presupposition about how it is possible to know without being confronted by an object.* Self-knowledge, it would seem, would be impossible if knowing is being confronted by an object.

Many of you no doubt are familiar with Sartre’s discussion, both in *Being and Nothingness* and in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, where, *if a being reflects on itself, it’s no longer the self that is the object of its reflection, because the self has retreated to be the subject of the reflecting and the self reflected on is no longer that self! That’s the dilemma of knowing construed as confrontation by an object, that Lonergan is distancing himself from here.*

Self-Affirmation

“It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ mean no more than such performance.” (CWL 3, p. 343).

Here he's just saying [Pat looks back at the slide:] by quote-unquote 'knowing', I mean nothing more than the performance of these activities.

Drawing attention to performances of conscious acts.

Why then should such performance be properly called "knowledge"?

Lonergan will answer this question, but not yet.

Performance is the question that must be answered first in the sequence of his 3 questions:

What am I doing when I am knowing?

Why is doing that knowing?

What do I know when I do that?

Now that leaves, as a problem: Well, Lonergan, where do you get the right to use the word 'knowing' for that then?

Self Not Imaginable!

"By 'self-affirmation of the knower' is meant that the self as affirmed is characterized by such occurrences as sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the

unconditioned, and affirming.” (*CWL 3*, p. 343).

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

The self-affirmation of the knower means that the self is characterized by these occurrences. And **“by ‘knowing’ I mean no more than such performances”**, the performance of those occurrences.” (*CWL 3*, p. 343).

So the effort then is to draw attention to performance: that self-affirmation has to do with drawing your attention to your performances. And knowing, the word ‘know’ right now, is being used as an abbreviation for the mouthful of “sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming.” (*CWL 3*, p. 343). It’s just an abbreviated term for those.

That said, the word, the phrase, the verbs, to know and knowing, have connotations to them. We have notions about what it is to know. And you can’t just use a term flying in the face of those connotations! And Lonergan is going to come to terms with those connotations, but not yet!

Self-Affirmation

“It is not that an individual performing the listed acts really does know, but merely that I perform them and that by ‘knowing’ I mean

no more than such performance.” (*CWL* 3, p. 343).

So with this [presumably referring to the assertions quoted in the slide] *what he’s doing is putting off the question about why such performance should be called ‘knowing.’* His three great questions:

What am I doing when I’m knowing?

Why is doing that knowing?

and

What do I know when I do those things?

He’s putting off the second two questions to focus on the first. What am I doing when I am (quote) ‘knowing’? And am I doing those things?

So self-affirmation here is a minimal gamble. It’s just a minimal step of inviting you to contemplate the question: Do I perform these activities, activities that hopefully you have become familiar with through the exercises of the first half of the course.

Student observation that affirming oneself as a knower (which is not self-affirmation in one’s entirety) implies that there is more to oneself than one can communicate.

— The chapter deals only with oneself as a knower, as performing these activities or not.

Self-Affirmation

“As all judgment, self-affirmation rests upon a grasp of the unconditioned. The unconditioned is the combination of

- (1) **A conditioned,**
- (2) **A link between the conditioned and its conditions, and**
- (3) **The fulfilment of the conditions** (*CWL 3*, p. 343).

Okay. We're still on page one of chapter eleven, on "Self-affirmation of the Knower" (*CWL 3*, pp. 343-371). ... Greg?

Greg: Yeah. We're talking about self-affirmation as a knower. Is that correct?

Pat: Yes.

Greg: So we're not necessarily saying if I do this correctly, I am affirming myself in my entirety?

Pat: That's right! Good! *That's a short and sweet way of saying what I've dragged out with this business about characterization. There's more to you than that you are a being who performs those activities. That's right!*

Greg: Would it be fair to say that there's more to me than I can — in some sense, I'm aware that there's more to me than I can potentially communicate to someone else? Would Lonergan agree with that?

Pat: Yeah! Sure! For the same reason that Pieper quotes Aquinas as saying: you could never completely know a fly, you could never completely know that — Or I could never completely know the fullness of the intelligible unity of you, nor you of me! So there's more to — What we do is we characterize!

So notice that the chapter is not entitled "Self-affirmation"! It's not titled "Self-knowledge." It's entitled "**Self-affirmation of the Knower**" (*CWL 3*, pp.

343-371), where 'knower' means no more, for the moment, than one who performs these activities. So the real question, for the moment, is: "Do you perform these activities?" If you say 'Yes' to that, then there are other implications that will follow. But the first step is that.

Okay?

Are there any other questions? ... Okay!

Self-affirmation as a judgment depends on grasping the unconditioned (the combination of the conditioned, the link between it and its conditions, and fulfillment of conditions).

- The conditioned: “I am a knower.”
- The link: being a knower in the sense that Lonergan characterizes ‘knower.’
- The fulfillment is given in consciousness; it is the problematic element.

So now, just as we’ve seen him draw in chapter eight (*CWL 3*, “**Things**”, pp. 270-295) *on the question of unity*, he now draws in chapter ten (*CWL 3*, “**Reflective Understanding**”, pp. 304-340) *on what’s the ground of a judgment. And the judgment is the judgment of self-affirmation. Like everything else, it’s a matter of a conditioned, a link between a conditioned and its conditions, and fulfillment of the conditions.* Or as I put it last semester, *in order to affirm yourself in the sense that Lonergan means it, affirm yourself as characterized in this specific way, you have to know what you have to know in order to make that a firm affirmation, and know that you know that! The affirmation is that I am a unity-identity-whole characterized by the performance of those activities, and that the link is knowing what you have to know in order to affirm that, and the conditions is knowing that you know what you would have to have fulfilled.*

“The relevant conditioned is the statement, ‘I am a knower. The link between the conditioned and its conditions may be cast in the proposition ‘I am a knower, if I am a concrete and intelligible unity-identity-whole, characterized by acts of sensing, perceiving, imagining, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting. grasping the unconditioned, and judging.’ (CWL 3, pp. 343-344).

Self-Affirmation

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“The relevant conditioned is the statement, ‘I am a knower. The link —”
Hopefully that’s not problematic, but *it’s a question for you: Are you a knower, or if you like, with the second remark here which says: “Are you a knower in the sense in which Lonergan is using the term ‘knower’?”* The link between the conditioned and its conditions may be cast in the proposition ‘I am a knower, if I am an intelligible unity-identity-whole characterized by those acts. The condition offers — and *the fulfilment of the conditions, he says, is given in consciousness.*

“The fulfilment of the conditions is given in consciousness. The conditioned offers no difficulty. It is merely the expression of what is to be affirmed. Similarly, the link offers no difficulty; the link itself is a statement of meaning.” (CWL 3, p. 344).

“The link offers no difficulty; the link itself is a statement of meaning; it’s Lonergan’s stipulation that by knowing²³ I mean the performance of those activities. It’s what has been called an Analytic Proposition in chapter ten (*CWL 3*, **“Reflective Understanding”, pp. 304-340). It’s just a matter of by ‘knower’, I mean this! This has some kind of empirical consequences, ‘empirical’ in the broad sense of empirical.**

The link is itself a statement of meaning. It’s an analytic proposition. I am a knower if I perform these activities.

“And the condition which it lists have become familiar in the course of this investigation. The problematic element, then, lies in the fulfilment of the conditions, and we proceed to indicate what is meant and not meant by consciousness and by the fulfilment of conditions.” (*CWL 3*, p. 344).

Self-Affirmation

“The fulfilment of the conditions is given in consciousness. (*CWL 3*, p. 344).

²³ Pat uses the word ‘knower’ at this point.

Self-Affirmation

The conditioned offers no difficulty. It is merely the expression of what is to be affirmed. Similarly, the link offers no difficulty; the link itself is a statement of meaning; and the condition which it lists have become familiar in the course of this investigation. The problematic element, then, lies in the fulfilment of the conditions, and we proceed to indicate what is meant and not meant by consciousness and by the fulfilment of conditions.” (CWL 3, p. 344).

Lonergan’s unique understanding of consciousness.

What consciousness is Not:

- Differs from Kant, Husserl, Sartre; not what Heidegger and Habermas critique.
- It is not a kind of inward look or sudden explicit awareness of one’s activities.
- Consciousness not “reflective awareness”;
Lonergan’s use of “reflective” also different.

— Defining consciousness thusly creates the problem of identity and difference (reflecting vs. reflected) in consciousness.

— Nor is consciousness a kind of thematizing, formulating, or bringing to language: the latter are actually insights into one's experience. Example of class consciousness in Karl Marx.

— There is no inner visual object to behold by "intro-spection"

So consciousness! Are you a knower in the sense of: Do you perform these activities?

Lonergan on Consciousness

What Consciousness is Not:

"First, consciousness is not to be thought of as some sort of inward look. People are apt to think of knowing by imagining a man taking a look at something, and further, they are apt to think of consciousness by imagining themselves looking into themselves" (CWL 3, p. 344).

I was writing a letter, and then I became ~~conscious of myself as writing that letter.~~

Now, let's start with what Lonergan doesn't mean by consciousness! *Lonergan, as far as I can tell, has a very unique understanding of consciousness! It seems to me to be not like that of Kant, or Husserl, or Sartre. It is, I think, in important ways, related to what*

Heidegger's project is. Heidegger specifically avoids the language of consciousness, for reasons that I think Lonergan really means, or re-interprets the meaning of consciousness. When Jürgen Habermas²⁴ said that the project of a philosophy of consciousness is ended, I think he did not mean consciousness as Lonergan means it. So, it's important for us to try to see what Lonergan does and doesn't mean by consciousness. So what consciousness is not:

First, consciousness is not to be thought of as some sort of inward look. People are apt to think of knowing by imagining a man taking a look at something, and further, they are apt to think of consciousness by imagining themselves looking into themselves. (CWL 3, p. 344).

Take for example, I was writing a letter and then I became conscious of myself writing the letter. That would be an example of what he means by this inward look; to become conscious of his — and people use the word 'reflection'. Now, remember, Lonergan uses the word 'reflection' for something a little different.

Lonergan uses the word 'reflection' for what we're doing as we're moving from understanding to trying to determine if we can rationally, reasonably affirm what we've understood, or if there's some flaw in it. So Lonergan is using the word 'reflecting' in a way that's a little bit different from the mainstream philosophical use of the term 'reflection'. But when people talk about "becoming reflectively aware of what I was doing", they mean being conscious, or use the word 'consciousness' in that sense. Think of yourself as driving a car: You're driving a car and listening to the radio, hopefully not merely amusing yourself

²⁴ **Jürgen Habermas** (1929 –) is a German sociologist and philosopher in the tradition of critical theory and pragmatism. He is perhaps best known for his theories on communicative rationality and the public sphere. Associated with the Frankfurt School, Habermas's work focuses on the foundations of social theory and epistemology, the analysis of advanced capitalistic societies and democracy, the rule of law in a critical social-evolutionary context, and contemporary politics, particularly German politics. Habermas's theoretical system is devoted to revealing the possibility of reason, emancipation, and rational-critical communication latent in modern institutions and in the human capacity to deliberate and pursue rational interests. Habermas is known for his work on the concept of modernity, particularly with respect to the discussions of rationalization originally set forth by Max Weber. He has been influenced by American pragmatism, action theory, and even poststructuralism. Global polls consistently find that Habermas is widely recognized as one of the world's leading intellectuals.

tapping the beat of the music on the driving wheel — And then suddenly you say: “Wow, I’ve got my hands on the wheel and I’m trying to wheel to the right, and I’m trying to wheel to the left, and I’m putting my foot on the accelerator, and I’m putting my foot on the brake, and — This is likely to get you into trouble while you’re driving!”

When things that you have become habitually capable of doing with a minimum of awareness, you are attending to just the little bits of experience that deviate from the ordinary expected thing, and you start focusing on them again, you lose that capacity of higher command that you have developed. Think of Jason Day, a [baseball player](#), standing at the plate and saying: “Now, I’m going to rock back on my left foot, and I’m going to take a step of about six inches with my right foot, and swing the bat by extending my shoulder, and so on — *he’s not going to hit the ball!!* The ball is going to be “catch and hit” probably three times when he does that. There was a quarter-back for Boston College, quite a number of years ago, and one of my colleagues in the Philosophy Department said: “The problem with quarter back X is that he gets the ball, he looks down the field, he works out the minor premise, he works out the major premise, he looks to see if the middle term is distributed, and then he throws the ball!”

[Class laughter]

Okay. So this is what Lonergan is saying. If you think of consciousness in that sense — *that’s not what he means by consciousness*; and it has a whole series of problems associated with it. *The most obvious problem that it has associated with it is: if you’re going to be fulfilling the conditions that your performing the activities of experiencing and inquiring and understanding and judging, and by consciousness you mean looking at those activities as they pass before your view, those are not activities that you’re performing, because you’re performing the activity of looking at them! So there’s going to be this problem, this inescapable problem: if by consciousness one means that, there arises this inescapable problem of identity and difference: that what one is conscious of can never be oneself, and the performances are never one’s own performances. So*

there is no self-affirmation of oneself, if that's what one means by consciousness.

Lonergan on Consciousness

What Consciousness is Not:

Thematization, formulation, bringing to language.

I did not know what I was feeling, but then I became conscious of the fact that I was depressed.

Class consciousness: “This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way ...

(Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*).

What he also does not mean by consciousness is what is meant by, for example, Freud²⁵ or Marx, in some of their discussions of consciousness. Consciousness is not

²⁵ **Sigmund Freud** (1856–1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the father of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. Freud was born to Galician Jewish parents in the Moravian town of Freiberg, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Freud qualified as a doctor of medicine in 1881 at the University of Vienna, and then carried out research into cerebral palsy, aphasia and microscopic neuroanatomy at the Vienna General Hospital. Upon completing his habilitation in 1885, he was appointed a docent in neuropathology and became an affiliated professor in 1902. In creating psychoanalysis, Freud developed therapeutic techniques such as the use of free association and discovered transference, establishing its central role in the analytic process. Freud's redefinition of sexuality to include its infantile forms led him to formulate the Oedipus complex as the central tenet of psychoanalytical theory. His analysis of dreams as wish-fulfillments provided him with models for the clinical analysis of symptom formation and the mechanisms of repression as well as for elaboration of his theory of the unconscious. Freud postulated the existence of libido, an energy with which mental processes and structures are invested and which generates erotic attachments, and a death

thematization, not formulation, not bringing to language. People use — Now Lonergan is going to use, occasionally, the words ‘awareness’ and ‘consciousness’ as more or less interchangeable; but people don’t use it that way. When people say: “I became aware of the fact that I was, I became conscious of the fact that I was”, Lonergan would say that what that means is that people are having insights into their experiences, and giving, on the basis of those insights, giving language to those experiences. “I did not know what I was feeling, but then I became conscious of the fact that I was depressed.” Lonergan’s response to this is: “How did you become conscious of it, if you were not already conscious of it?” So the word ‘consciousness’ here is saying that I understood what I was feeling! That big discussion that he has of Dramatic Bias in chapter six (CWL 3, “Common Sense and Its Subject”, pp. 196-231, at pp. 214-231) draws attention to the insight that is being avoided, that is unwanted. ‘Insight’ is a word that people don’t use when they say: “I became conscious of the fact that I was depressed.” The word ‘insight’ is what Lonergan would say is the right word to be using in that context, because one was already consciously experiencing depression without understanding what it is, while it was what one was experiencing. You know, all the sappy love songs: “Can this be love?” “I never felt like this before!” Whatever one is doing, like becoming aware of being in love, is understanding the experience one already is consciously experiencing.

Similarly, Marx’s²⁶ story of class consciousness, the phrase ‘class consciousness’ may be considered in this way — And in the *German Ideology* Marx says that *the real communist revolution is the revolution of consciousness*. What he is really inciting here is for the working class to understand what it is they have been experiencing. They have been experiencing oppression their whole lives; but they then interpret it as freedom, according to the bourgeois ideology of John Locke.²⁷ Or one might say with Janis Joplin: “Freedom’s

drive, the source of compulsive repetition, hate, aggression and neurotic guilt. In his later work Freud developed a wide-ranging interpretation and critique of religion and culture.

²⁶ **Karl Marx** (1818–1883) was a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, journalist and revolutionary socialist. Born in Prussia, he later became stateless and spent much of his life in London. Marx’s work in economics laid the basis for much of current understanding of labour and its relation to capital, and subsequent economic thought. He published numerous books during his lifetime, the most notable being *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867–1894). *The German Ideology* is a set of manuscripts written by Marx and Engels in 1846.

²⁷ **John Locke** (1632–1704) was an English philosopher, widely regarded as one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the “Father of Liberalism”. Considered one of the first

just another word for nothin' left to lose.”²⁸ That’s the state of the working class according to Marx. And the communist revolution is becoming class conscious, which is to say, becoming conscious of the fact that all this malarkey about freedom and enterprise and so on is nothing but — It’s not in your interest, *it’s in the interest of the bourgeois class!* Well, *that isn’t becoming conscious of those experiences; it’s having an understanding of those experiences, at least in the kind of understanding that Marx was asking for.* And that’s reflected here in the slide quotation in the fact that Marx uses the word ‘interpret’. *To change consciousness, “amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way.” To be conscious means to change your understanding. ‘Interpret’ and ‘understanding’ are going to be interchangeable for Lonergan. Interpretation means a certain kind of understanding.*

So that’s what consciousness is not!!

What consciousness is! *First and foremost, consciousness is emergent. But consciousness is not taking a look.*

“First, consciousness is not to be thought of as some sort of inward look. People are apt to think of knowing by imagining a man taking a look at something, and further, they are apt to think of consciousness by imagining themselves looking into themselves. Not merely do they indulge in such imaginative opinions but also they are likely to justify them by argument. Knowing, they will say, is knowing

of the British empiricists, following the tradition of Francis Bacon, he is equally important to social contract theory. His work greatly affected the development of epistemology and political philosophy. His writings influenced Voltaire and Rousseau, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, as well as the American revolutionaries. His contributions to classical republicanism and liberal theory are reflected in the United States Declaration of Independence. Locke's theory of mind is often cited as the origin of modern conceptions of identity and the self, figuring prominently in the work of later philosophers such as Hume, Rousseau, and Kant. Locke was the first to define the self through a continuity of *consciousness*. He postulated that, at birth, the mind was a blank slate or *tabula rasa*. Contrary to Cartesian philosophy based on pre-existing concepts, he maintained that we are born without innate ideas, and that knowledge is instead determined only by experience derived from sense perception.

²⁸ "Me and Bobby McGee" was written by Kris Kristofferson and Fred Foster, and originally performed by Roger Miller. Others performed the song later, including the Grateful Dead, Kristofferson himself, and Janis Joplin who topped the U.S. singles chart with the song in 1971 after her death.

something; it is being confronted by an object; it is the strange, mysterious, irreducible presence of one thing to another. Hence, though knowing is not exclusively a matter of ocular vision, still it is radically that sort of thing. It is gazing, intuiting, contemplating. (CWL 3, p. 344, emphases added).

Lonergan on Consciousness

What Consciousness Is:

Consciousness is emergent

Consciousness is experience — data of consciousness

“consciousness is a factor in knowing.” (CWL 3, p. 344, emphasis added).

“by consciousness we shall mean that there is an awareness immanent in cognitional acts.” (CWL 3, p. 344).

Consciousness as “presence”:

Presence in a room (already-out-there-now)

Presence of an object to a subject

“third meaning of ‘presence’”

And when you see him using the word ‘introspection’ that’s what he has in mind. When he’s negative about introspection, he means consciousness modelled on this reflective notion of knowing as taking a look. You will notice, once in a while, he uses the word ‘introspection’ to mean exactly what he wants, and he uses it, perhaps with better language, “heightening consciousness.” (Cf. CWL 3, p. 345).

Now, while consciousness is a factor in knowing, and while knowing is an activity to which a problem of objectivity is annexed, still it is one thing to give an account of the activity, and it is something else to tackle the problem of objectivity. For the present we are concerned simply with an account of the activity, and so we have defined the knower, not by saying that he knows something, but solely by saying that he performs certain kinds of acts.” (CWL 3, p. 344).

And then he goes on to say:

“In like manner, we have not asked whether the knower knows himself; we ask solely whether he can perform the act of self-affirmation.” (CWL 3, p. 344).

We simply ask whether he can perform these activities.

“Hence while some of our readers may possess the rather remarkable power of looking into themselves and intuiting things quite clearly and distinctly, we shall not base our case upon their success. *For after all, there may well exist other readers that, like the writer, find looking into themselves rather unrewarding.*” (CWL 3, p. 344, emphasis added).

[Murmurs of amusement in the class]

Now, importantly, what he does *not* mean by that is that self-knowledge is impossible; or that self-consciousness is not an actuality! *Importantly, what he does mean by that is that consciousness, self-consciousness, and self-knowledge, are different from this business of looking into oneself! And it precisely has to do with the fact that looking means literally having a visual object; and if looking at yourself is the model of consciousness, there is no visual object to behold by this inward looking!* And a great deal is distorted if you take that as the paradigm of what you think you have been doing in self-knowing!

What consciousness Is:

- Emergence of a new pattern or level or genus of activities over and above biological/neural.
- Experience - There are experiences that are not experiences of the data of sensations.
- Do you experience yourself as performing these acts = conscious of acting these ways.
- Consciousness is a factor in self-knowledge, but not the whole of self-knowledge.
- Awareness immanent in cognitional acts.

Presence, in three senses:

1. as ‘in a room’, or already-out-there-now, in space and time;
2. the presence of an object to subject;
3. third meaning of presence: “somehow” present to oneself.

So what consciousness is is not confrontation of an object, but it's emergent! It's the emergence of a pattern of activities over and above our neural bodily functioning. It's something that supervenes and provides higher organizations. So first and foremost, what consciousness is is emergence! It's the emergence of a new level, or if you like, a new genera of activities over and above the biological and the neural! Why that's important, I'll come back to in a minute.

What consciousness is is experience! It refers over and over again to the data of consciousness; that there are experiences that are available that are not experiences of sensation; and that's really what the reference is here! Do you experience it yourself as sensing, inquiring, understanding? Do those words not only play across the page? Do they not only have some intelligible sense to you, but are they rooted in and make intelligible, experiences that you are actually having, experiences that are not sense experiences, but experiences of another kind and of a different order, data of consciousness?

Consciousness is a factor in knowing; but it's just a factor in knowing! It's not the whole of knowing! So one of the objections that he has against consciousness as an inward look, is that it tries to make consciousness be the be-all and end-all in self-knowledge: I know myself, I'm conscious of myself. Whereas for Lonergan, you know yourself not just by being conscious of yourself, but by understanding your conscious experiences and affirming them as indeed yours.

“By consciousness we shall mean that there is an awareness immanent in cognitional acts.” (CWL 3, p. 344). *That understanding, seeing, hearing, inquiring, making judgments, that constitutive and ingredient in those activities is an experience of them occurring. If you are right now not feeling a sharp pain in your foot, it is not an activity that is occurring with consciousness immanent in it. Consciousness is part and parcel of the reality of those activities.*

And then there is the consciousness as the three — what he calls the three means of presence, which we saw back in the first semester when he was talking about self-appropriation. So this is on page fifteen of “Self-Appropriation” from *Understanding and Being*: **“What exactly happens when one is trying to achieve self-appropriation?”** (CWL 5, *Understanding and being*, p. 15). In this case we can kind of slim [the passage](#) down a bit.

What is happening when one is trying to achieve self-affirmation? Let us take the word ‘presence.’ It is an ambiguous word. First, you can say that the chairs are present in the room, but you cannot say that the chairs are present to the room or that the room is present to the chairs. The latter is a different, a second, sense of ‘presence’: being present to someone. It has a meaning with regard to animals. A dog walks

along the street, sees another dog on the other side, and crosses over. The other dog is present to him, but not in the sense that the chairs are present in the room. Here we have presence to someone: I am present to you, and you are present to me; this presence is different from the presence of the chairs in the room. (CWL 5, *Understanding and being*, p. 15).

So let's stop and reflect on those two for a moment. Presence in the room is what people mean when they say "the already-out-there-now." It's occupying space and time. And the second presence is — may or may not be like it. The second presence in the mode of the biological pattern of consciousness, is the already-out-there-now. I am extroverted towards that which is present in the room, and by that biological extroversion, it's also now present to me. So presence in the sense of the already-out-there-now.

Presence to oneself vs. the metaphysics of presence.

Ch. 8 distinguishes the being of intelligibility from the 'being already out there now' of biologically patterned experience.

Consciousness as a "somehow" presence is not the presence of the already-out-there, but a meaning of presence that links to the being of intelligibility.

Consciousness pertains more to the experience of unity immanent in the various activities of consciousness than to the activities themselves. Experience of being present to oneself immanent in those activities.

Heidegger's criticism of Kant: for Kant, knowledge is only of beings as they appear; Heidegger thinks Kant failed to think through the conditions of possibility of appearance; elaboration. Heidegger identifies *Lichtung* as that condition of possibility.

For Lonergan, the conditions of possibility for anything's appearing to us - as sensible, as intelligible, as unconditional - is consciousness.

Consciousness as the condition of the possibility for acts of consciousness to appear/occur.

But even more primordially, in order for intelligible and unconditional acts and contents to occur, human consciousness must be constituted by an unrestricted desire to know.

But there is a third meaning of 'present'.

Moreover, there is a third meaning of 'presence': you could not be present to me unless I were somehow present to myself. If I were unconscious, you would not be present to in the second sense. If you were unconscious, I would not be present to you in the second sense. So there is a third sense of presence: presence to oneself. (CWL 5, *Understanding and being*, p. 15, emphases added).

Now, what exactly does that mean? As you know, Heidegger and Derrida, and others in the postmodern movement, are extremely critical of the metaphysics of presence. *I suggested that Lonergan is as well!* That the opening gambit of chapter eight [**"Things"** (CWL 3, pp. 270-295)] is to make a radical distinction between the kind of being that is the being of the intelligibility, and particularly the intelligible unity, and the being that's the being there for a biologically patterned experiencing! You already-out-there-now is presence; the there and the now and the already-out are presence, I think, in the sense in which Heidegger and Derrida are critical of.

So Lonergan is using the word 'presence' here, but he's deliberately beginning with his own critique of a metaphysics of presence, and yet holding on to the word 'presence' in another sense, because you can use it that way: *being present to yourself, and an awareness that is immanent in the acts.*

So in the section on “The Unity of Consciousness” (*CWL* 3, pp. 349-350), he says: **“Not only is the percept inquired about, understood, formulated”** — This is on page 349:

“Not only is the percept inquired about, understood, formulated, reflected on, grasped as unconditioned, and affirmed, but also there is an identity involved in perceiving, inquiring, understanding, formulating, reflecting, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming.”
(*CWL* 3, p. 349).

There is a unity involved in all those activities!

“Indeed, consciousness is much more obviously of this unity in diverse acts than of the diverse acts, for it is within the unity that the acts are found and distinguished, and it is to the unity that we appeal when we talk about a single field of consciousness and draw a distinction between conscious acts occurring within the field and unconscious acts occurring outside it. (*CWL* 3, p. 349).

The consciousness is much more of the unity than it is of the acts. So if you say that I am conscious of myself as inquiring, I am conscious of myself as understanding, I am conscious of myself as reaching a virtually unconditioned, consciousness means much more experience of selfhood immanent in those activities than it does consciousness of understanding, consciousness of seeing, consciousness of hearing — Consciousness fundamentally means the experience of being present to oneself in those activities. It's consciousness that makes it possible for one to be present to an intended noematic content.

So Lonergan says: I couldn't be present to you if I weren't already present to myself. I couldn't be present to the idea of the square root of two if I were not already present to myself. I couldn't be present to the movements of the mayflies if I weren't already present to myself.

Now I wanted to share with you just something from one of my students who is working on his dissertation with me. Many of you know Lynn Purcell, and in his dissertation,²⁹ he's doing a complicated comparison of Badiou,³⁰ Ricoeur and Lonergan on the problem of hermeneutics, and things to do with hermeneutics. And in setting up the problem, he reflects on Heidegger's criticism of Kant. And he says that Kant is a person who situates the problem of a finite universe that he's not able to fully work out. But in that, Lynn says that *for Kant, finite knowledge is receptive, and such knowledge only knows beings that appear. And Heidegger's concern is to get at the ground, the condition for the possibility of appearance.* And appearing, in the German is *Erscheinendes*³¹ the shining forth of. And Lynn to that will say this, interpreting Heidegger:

“The first step of regress occurs by showing that any such shining necessarily occurs in some light (*in einer Helle*). This is to say that something can appear only within a certain brightness, only if there is some illumination. This much is not foreign to metaphysics. It is for this reason that Heidegger had earlier in the essay addressed Plato. That the shining of the *eidos* presupposes light is precisely what Plato undertook ‘to think’. The second step is taken when Heidegger writes the following:

²⁹ Lynn Sebastian Purcell, *Infinite Hermeneutics: Events, Globalization, and the Human Condition*, 2011.

³⁰ **Alain Badiou** (1937-) is a French philosopher, formerly chair of Philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure and founder of the faculty of Philosophy of the Université de Paris VIII with Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard. Badiou has written about the concepts of being, truth, event and the subject in a way that, he claims, is neither postmodern nor simply a repetition of modernity. Badiou has been involved in a number of political organisations, and regularly comments on political events. Badiou argues for resurrecting the idea of communism.

Badiou teaches philosophy at the École normale supérieure and the Collège international de philosophie in Paris. In addition to several novels, plays and political essays, he has published a number of major philosophical works, including *Theory of the Subject, Being and Event, Manifesto for Philosophy*, and *Gilles Deleuze*. His recent books include *The Meaning of Sarkozy, Ethics, Metapolitics, Polemics, The Communist Hypothesis, Five Lessons on Wagner*, and *Wittgenstein's Anti-Philosophy*.

³¹ Beings that appear. ‘appearance’ in Kant seems to indicate an *object of experience*, when viewed from the *transcendental perspective*. Though often used as a synonym for *phenomenon*, it technically refers to an object considered to be conditioned by *space and time*, but not by the *categories*.

“But brightness in its turn rests within something open, something free, which it might illuminate [*erhellen*] here and there, now and then. Brightness plays in the open, and wars there with darkness.”³²

Here Heidegger makes the decisive move back to what remains unthought in metaphysics, i.e. back to the openness in which brightness plays. It is in speaking of this openness, which grants any possible letting-shine, Heidegger introduces the term *Lichtung*.³³

Now Heidegger is not saying the same things as Lonergan ah, ... not exactly! But what Lonergan is getting at with this third meaning of consciousness is something very similar to what Heidegger is getting at, namely, it's the condition of the possibility of what appears!

The language of appearance in the tradition of philosophy, especially in the tradition of German philosophy, is very much tied up with Kant's conception of *Anschauung*,³⁴ which puts a great deal of emphasis on seeing, and taking a look, as the model of knowing. And Heidegger is deliberately breaking with that, as is Lonergan. So for Lonergan, the condition for the possibility of anything appearing to us in sight, anything appearing to us in sound, anything appearing to us in touch, anything appearing to us in taste, or anything appearing to us as intelligible, anything appearing to us as unconditioned, is consciousness. Consciousness is what makes it possible for things to appear to us as noematic, as having the relatedness to acts that occur.

³² Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task for Thinking.”

³³ Lynn Sebastian Purcell, *Infinite Hermeneutics: Events, Globalization, and the Human Condition*, 2011, pp. 24-25. *Lichtung: Lighting*. In German the word *Lichtung* means a clearing, as in, for example, a clearing in the woods. Since its root is the German word for light (*Licht*), it is sometimes also translated as ‘lighting’, and in Heidegger’s work it refers to the necessity of a clearing in which anything at all can appear, the clearing in which some thing or idea can show itself, or be unconcealed. Being, but not beings, stands out as if in a clearing, or physically, as if in a space. Thus, Hubert Dreyfus writes, “things show up in the light of our understanding of being.”

³⁴ *Anschauung* = direct or immediate intuition or perception of sense data with little or no rational interpretation.

So the fulfillment of the conditions for the judgment, I am a unity-identity-whole who performs these activities, activities which can only occur, and make present by their occurring, noematic objects — they only can occur if there is consciousness in the third sense, if there is that which makes it possible for that kind of appearance to appear, to use Heidegger’s language.

*It’s not the whole story, because it also turns out that in order for intelligible and unconditioned contents to appear to a consciousness, that consciousness also has to be constituted by an unrestricted desire, manifest in inquiry! So what Heidegger is talking about here as *Lichtung*, in Lonergan’s terms is not only consciousness in the third sense, but consciousness in the spirit meaning, the spirit sense, as permeated by, and made possible by, an unrestricted desire to know. It’s that which functions for Lonergan, like what functions in Heidegger as that which makes it possible for things to appear.*

**Question about what ‘knowing’ means in this context.
— it is the desire both to perform those activities and
for what results from them.**

Pat: Ah, Jonathan?

Jonathan: When you used that formulation “the unrestricted desire to know”, is his parameters run use of the term ‘knowing’ operative, so that when we say “the unrestricted desire to know”, do we mean the unrestricted desire to engage in, or to have the occurrence of the activities listed?

Pat: Ah, it’s tricky! *Yes! But more than that!*

Jonathan: Okay.

Pat: It's the unrestricted desire to do those activities, but it's the unrestricted desire for what comes about by doing those activities; which is why 'knowledge' is the right word for performing those activities.

Final remarks: each of us has to ask whether he or she carries out affirmative/negative judgments by asking whether the conditions of affirming myself as engaging in these activities are actually fulfilled in the field of consciousness.

Let me just make one closing remark, and then I'll take Greg's question. The closing remark is: all I can do in this class is to dance around this. All Lonergan can do in writing this book, or any of his writings, is to dance around it. It is an experiment that you have to perform for yourself in a sense. To a certain extent what I have been trying to do is to heighten the parameters, to heighten your desire to sort this out for yourself, and to punch it away from traps, and to point you in the direction! *But ultimately you have to ask yourself: Is it true that I — and as Lonergan says, and by I, I mean that unity that is experienced as the field within which these differentiating activities take place — am I a person who sees, hears, touches, inquires, has insights, reflects on the insights, reaches the virtually unconditioned?*

Now we did exercises last semester, and without asking you explicitly to make a judgment, Am I a unity-identity-whole that feels what I feel, sees two different witch moths, has insights, because you all wrote papers about — You thought you were writing about one insight, but in fact your papers were about many. So you all did that.

The big question that we haven't had an exercise of appropriation is: *do you make judgements? Do you grasp the virtually unconditioned, and on that basis and on that basis alone, make affirmative or negative judgments?* And that is not something I have an automatic way of plugging into the internet and producing an affirmation; that's something you have to do for yourself, and *you can only do it by asking yourself: are the conditions for affirming myself as engaging in these activities actually fulfilled in consciousness within that comprehending field of consciousness?*

Student question about the relation between consciousness and the three-part process of knowing.

- Discussion of models of consciousness. Lonergan sees consciousness as not an inner spectator but rather a field or ground upon which activities take place; Heidegger's *Lichtung*.
- Problem of saying of consciousness, "It is present in all acts of perceiving, understanding, judging, etc."; rather, you are present in all those acts.
- Consciousness is how you are present to yourself, more or less fully.

Question about whether consciousness is a dynamic thing, contracting and expanding?

- In the sense used here, it is just the difference between being awake and not awake; it is the field that makes appearances possible.

Pat: Greg?

Greg: My question is about the relationship — and you may say we've been talking about this through the whole class — the relationship between consciousness and the three-part process in knowing. We have here [in the slide](#) that it's a factor in knowing. Is it a moment that occurs between perception and insight? Is it the context within which the three steps occur? What exactly is the nature of the relationship?

Pat: It's closer to the context! That's where Lonergan uses the word 'field'. I like his use of the word 'field' there; but again it's another spatial metaphor. And we are kind of torn when talking about things that are not intrinsically themselves spatial, and having this language that has a tremendous rootedness in spatiality. When Daniel Dennett³⁵ writes

³⁵ **Daniel Dennett** (1942-) is an American philosopher whose research centres on the philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, and philosophy of biology. He is currently a University Professor at Tufts

his book *Consciousness Explained*,³⁶ which is to un-explain consciousness, to make it go away —

[Class amusement]

— one of the points of attack is what he calls the “Cartesian Theory”: that there’s a kind of inner spectator. And his argument is that that there isn’t one center of a brain, there are lots of different centers and they do lots of different things, all of which is perfectly correct! But the problem is he has a bit of a straw man³⁷ going there, and it’s the straw man of *a spatially located visualizer*. So Dennett is really, in his own way, criticizing knowing as taking a look; because when you look, you are some place and your focal point is just a little bit behind your eyeballs, just about here [Pat indicates a point on his head above his right temple]. That’s the point at which you look out. If you think of consciousness as taking a look, then you think of a point of consciousness as looking out from it. Lonergan’s word is ‘field’. Consciousness is more like the ground upon which these activities take place. Or, I think, Heidegger’s term of *Lichtung*³⁸ is a really — it’s the lighting that lets the activities be capable of responding to something other than themselves.

So you said ‘context’. Context, field, light. It is definitely not a moment in between anything! *Consciousness is what you are when you wake up. It’s pervading! It’s underpinning! It is immanent in all those activities. But the difficulty is using the word ‘it’:*

University. Dennett is an atheist and secularist, and champions *a naturalistic worldview without supernatural or mystical elements, for whom ethics and actions are based on a naturalistic worldview*. Dennett is referred to as one of the “Four Horsemen of New Atheism”, along with Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and the late Christopher Hitchens.

³⁶ *Consciousness Explained* London: Little, Brown, 1991.

³⁷ A **straw man** is a common form of argument and is an informal fallacy based on giving the impression of refuting an opponent’s argument, while actually refuting an argument which was not advanced by that opponent. The so-called typical “attacking a straw man” argument creates the illusion of having completely refuted or defeated an opponent’s proposition by covertly replacing it with a different proposition (i.e., “stand up a straw man” and then to refute or defeat that false argument (“knock down a straw man”) instead of the original proposition.

³⁸ *Lichtung*: See note 33 on p. 89 above.

it's present in all of those. You are present in all of those! The presence, the field, the pervasiveness, is you! It's you as conscious! You as conscious don't appear now and then, while your insights and your inquiring go off and do some other things, and you kind of pop in and out. No! It's **that** any time, anything that you're doing, is part of your consciousness, whether you are thematically aware of it — which is to say whether you are directing a heightened attention towards it — or you're actually understanding what you're doing, it's still you that is exercising, performing those activities, as you said. Okay?

So no! It doesn't come in a single perceptive, a nuclear perception. It's pervasive throughout all! And that section that he has on "Empirical, Intelligent, and Rational Consciousness" (CWL 3, pp. 346-348) is different ways in which you are present to yourself, but you're still 'presencing' yourself to yourself; you're still lighting so as to make those activities possible, that you love yourself in different ways, lesser or more fully yourself. Okay?

Greg: Uh, huh!

Pat: Okay! Any other questions?

Student: Is consciousness a dynamic field? Can it contract and expand?

Pat: Ah, in another sense, yes! But that's — maybe we can leave that for another time? *Consciousness in this sense is kind of elemental and fundamental and undifferentiated in the way that that is.* He uses that terminology, yes. *But in this sense, it just is! The difference between being awake and being asleep! When you are awake, you are in — you are a field that makes all these activities and all these objects possible.*

Okay. So for next week please read chapters twelve, "*The Notion of Being*" (CWL 3, pp. 372-398), and chapter thirteen, "*The Notion of Objectivity*" (CWL 3, pp. 399-409). Thirteen is very short, twelve is long and complicated. And also *please read the essay* "Cognitional Structure", which hopefully will pull these things together. Okay?

End of Recording.