

Questions for Symbol & Analogy Seminar, 10/21/77:

A. These questions seek a further grasp of the relationship of cognitive meaning and constitutive meaning (1) as they are expressed in doctrines, and (2) as they derive from other ways of knowing:

1) Re. cognitive meaning: Both historical facts and doctrines (e.g. I Cor 15:3ff: "that Christ died for our sins...that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day") function cognitively; they deal with knowledge: a "historical fact" may be reached when events are known through judgments that grasp the virtually unconditioned (Method, p. 202); doctrines "express judgments of fact" (p. 132). But doctrines and historians arrive at the facts in different ways. Is there, then, the possibility of conflict between the honest historian's judgment and the facts of doctrines?

2) Re. cognitive and constitutive functions of meaning: The same meanings which function cognitively also function constitutively so as to determine the being-becoming of every believing Christian. If the reasonably concluded facts of a historian were to differ from the facts of the Creed, could Christians still authentically base their lives on that belief statement?

3) Re. constitutive meaning: Please clarify the notion of constitutive meaning in a consideration of a) human institutions (e.g. a courtroom), b) the human being and c) God. a) The courtroom is what it is by the meaning people attribute to it; yet it includes physical realities like benches, walls, bar, etc. It is an intelligible reality but is itself not intelligent. b) Human beings are what they are through the meanings which they embody, both by accident of birth and by--hopefully--ever increasing responsibility for themselves; yet they, too, are physical "givens," bodies apart from which they do not exist, so it seems that there is more to them than sheer meaning. They are both intelligible and intelligent. c) God is fully constituted by meaning, is pure meaning; in God intelligence and intelligibility fully coincide.

human meaning is inadequate
is wrong
with his heart
is pure
constitutive function
then meaning
in God
intelligible =
intelligible
p. 132 + 133
? source
and then

B. Only in ourselves and in our own conscious experience do we recognize the structures of consciousness articulated in Lonergan's operator, operations and levels of consciousness. For if we are to objectify human subjectivity, the only agent subject available to our experience is our own selves.

Does this mean that we do not know anyone else but ourselves as subjects, that we cannot know others as subjects? If through self-appropriation we can articulate to some degree what human subjectivity is but if we cannot verify these elements of subjectivity in others, how can we know that these others are indeed subjects? And if to be a human being is to be a subject and if we cannot verify the subjectivity in others about us, do we even know if these others are really human beings?....

This line of reasoning works us back into a solipsistic position. There are a number of issues confused here: objectification of subjectivity (one's own), recognition of subjectivity (in others) and affirmation of subjectivity (in self and others). Where did this reasoning go wrong? Would you clarify these three issues as they relate to one another.

subject as
subject
5 subject
as object
without know
then as self
fact as
subject
subject
XX verification

in dialectic history
intelligence → progress
→ objective intelligible
reception → structure of
intelligible

- 1 Historical technique: nature and limitations MT 195 f.
Two components in historical knowledge MT 245-47
judgments of fact, of causal connection
judgments of value
Meinecke, Becker
History as technique is incomplete 246
first task of dialectic: add evaluation
second task: confront gross differences
Thwology in its first phase is incomplete if only research,
interpretation, and historical technique 247
Becker on Bernheim's rule 221-224
Becker, Collingwood, Marrou 203-208
- 2 Doctrine
NCE 10, Notes, theological, Forman (Durandus OP, Petrus Olivi OFM)
Vat II, On divine revelations, Abbott p 119.
Newman reprehended for view on question, Would it be wrong to
doubt that Tobias' dog wagged its tail?
- 3 Conflict between history and doctrine
History conceived as technique, based on value-free judgment,
easily runs into conflict with religious doctrines which
have a basic component in value judgments
Esp. "Theology and Praxis" read at plenary session of CTSA in June
and will appear in 1977 Proceedings of CTSA
- 4 Doctrinal hermeneutics
of juridical or legal hermeneutics: favorabilia amplianda, odiosa restr
ingenda
in general, what was the main issue, what the intention, DS 1980
- 5 Cognitive meaning: what is meant; the meaning as corresponding to
the meant and so true, or else not corresponding and so false
Constitutive meaning: the meanings you entertain and the values
you appreciate as constitutive of your mentality, of the context
within which further development has to work its way
- 6 All meaning subsists not simply in itself
but in identity with the infinite being
or in non-identity with the rest of a finite being
words in articulate sound, courtrooms in buildings furniture,
constitutive meaning of men and women in human bodies
- 7 Distinguish subject as subject and subject as object

~~Each subject is conscious of self as subject~~

Each subject is conscious of self as subject

No subject is conscious of another as subject

Each subject can advance from self-consciousness to self-knowledge, and then what is known is the subject as object
The subject as subject is never known; it is given in the first of the three stages (experiencing) by which we come to know

In the measure that subjects work out a satisfactory account of the types of operations constitutive of subjects, they can discern whether other objects also happen to be subjects