99100A0E080

Morfin Interview Clips on Insight

34:50

Lonergan: He [someone they've been talking about briefly] has a plan, he's working on a plan, to introduce into elementary education children's adverting to their own operations – 'Do you understand?' and 'What do you mean when you say you understand?' and all this sort of thing; and 'Are you sure?' What does that mean? And the human good, eh? You start off with particular goods, go on to the good of order, and then the values immanent in the order, and the personal values, terminal values.

(Question is raised about reflection on the process, the question to the person to reflect about it.)

Lonergan: It's tricky, though, eh? because insight is into phantasm, and there are no phantasms of our acts of understanding. What have you got to do? You set up dummies, eh? with the language symbols, linguistic symbols, and you relate the linguistic symbols to one another: sensation, imagination, feeling, inquiry, understanding, formulation, reflection, reflective understanding, judgment, Is it good? Is it worthwhile?, judgment of value, and decision, being in love with God transforming you whole life, eh? But you have to have all these things, eh? You enumerate them, on the different levels. You relate them to one another, each on their own level. You relate the lower levels to the higher levels, and the higher levels down to the lower levels. When you make your retreat, it's the higher levels reflecting on the lower levels.

Question: But you said it was 'tricky.'

Lonergan: You *create* the phantasm. Just as a mathematician – well, first of all, in arithmetic, the infinity of natural numbers, go on to infinity, and then add operations – addition, subtraction, you start getting positive and negative numbers, and multiplying and division, and when you get to the division, you can get fractions, and then powers and roots, and surds. The square root of 2, eh? There's no number that corresponds to that. And if there's no fraction m/n to give you that is equal to the square root of 2 when all the common factors have been removed from m and n, it's quite simple to prove it. (Goes through the proof, probably with paper and pencil.) What the root of 2 is, it's an infinite decimal, 1 followed by an infinite decimal that is not repeating. It's not like 3, 3, 3, 3, … or any of the other repeats … (question about the reference) The reference is, Your insights are into these symbols, eh? And you know what the symbols mean. So you have not only the symbols but their meaning. And you have insight into the collection of meanings. And that provides you with the phantasm. You have the insight into the phantasm, and the formulation of the insight, and then the proof that that formulation is correct … You have to create the phantasm … It provides the phantasm. It does for understanding – it gives an image, eh? a sensible presentation. And just as you understand other systems, so you understand this one. That's what the mathematician's doing. You don't solve mathematical problems in your head. You write them down. And the same is true of intellectual theory, cognitional theory. You need these phantasms, these structures. **43:13**

49:05
I think it's good to put these questions to children, and so on. But don't keep insisting on it if they're not following you … [don't keep insisting] on them trying to become aware of them. Because it takes time. You have to be able to use words in a tricky way, as symbols, as though they were images. They stand for something else, and if the words are standing for something, you're using them that way. **49:47**