INTEGRAL KNOWING-DOING IN A NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Knowing – Doing – an exposition of the work of Bernard Lonergan (See Insight and Method in Theology)

4) The level of responsibility issuing in action-orienting decision to act

Further Questions for Deliberation
What then is best to do?

3) The level of reasonableness issuing in judgment
Judgment as a virtually unconditioned — there are conditions; they are known; they are fulfilled — hence one can say:
Yes. No. Yes, with qualifications. [We don’t know.]

Further Questions for Reflection

2) The level of an enriching act of insight (understanding) – formulated as an answer or theory or book or . . .

Questions for Intelligence (or meaning)
What does this mean?

1) The level of attention to data
The experiential raw material -- phenomena apprehended through the senses with minimal interpretation

For Lonergan, knowing is an interlocking set of activities

(a) A raw experience relatively uninterpreted — (b) raised through an insight to tentative understanding and then (c) checked through the further steps of validation and good judgment Knowing as EUJ

Experiencing –
Understanding –
Judging as to the correctness of the Understanding which is an understanding of the Data Experienced.

The experiencing draws our attention to what is to be understood

The insight moment asks the question: "what does it mean?" and comes up with an idea offered as an answer
The judgment moment asks the question: "Is it just a bright idea or is it true or adequate or the best account? Answers: Yes. Yes with qualifications. No. I don’t know.

As mentioned above, judgments are — for Lonergan — virtually unconditioned, by which he means the answer-theory-plan has conditions, they are known and they are fulfilled. Put more fully,

There are conditions (for the proposition, theory, account, etc) to be true or adequate
The conditions are known and
The conditions are met.

Suppose we think of a plan — we have asked the relevant critical questions — what might cause the plan to fail — and we have addressed these factors adequately. Then we can say: Yes, it is a good plan. Yes, it has met all the relevant objections that we have been able to present. We have sufficient evidence and there are no troubling open questions and hence we can judge that the plan is sound.
A judgment is grounded if you know all the bases to cover and you have covered them. All the relevant objections have been revealed and answered. The airline pilot has run through all the check-out procedures. The engineers have certified that the shuttle is safe to launch. The research team says—yes, we have taken the necessary steps to check and recheck our results, we are ready to publish.

Another way of speaking about this is to say that the people have acted in a reasonable manner—as a person of good judgment would have acted. What the old Anglo-Saxon law called the “reasonable man (or reasonable person) test.”

Can people be reasonable and still wrong? Yes. It may happen that one does all the right things and still fails. Why? Because there are factors that were not known and hence not considered and these factors were relevant. They would have raised relevant questions, objections, etc. In short, one had uncovered all the bases that a reasonable person would have uncovered and one had sufficient evidence that all the bases were covered. But in fact, there were other “bases”—other relevant factors. After they are discovered, then the next reasonable person will have to consider them. Before they are uncovered, one passes the “reasonable person” test. A reasonable person in that arena or field would not have thought to inquire further in the direction of the fatal flaw.

In England there were courts of equity. Such courts might hear a case or whether a sea captain had taken all reasonable measures in, say, the case of a storm. The jury would be composed of experienced sea captains. The judgment—Did Captain X act reasonably in the circumstances?—was theirs to answer.

Broadening the focus—from Knowing to Doing (especially ethical acting)

In a sense I have been running together somewhat in my examples the field of knowing and the field of doing. Now let me separate them and discuss Lonergan’s fourth level—the move from knowing to acting.

Whether something CAN be done is one thing; whether it SHOULD be done—whether there is reason and reason enough based on EC & FC to do it—ah, that is another question.

It may be possible for us to clone humans? Should we? Will it be good for the whole and fair to the parts if we do?

This may be a perfectly good plan—say the plan of Hitler’s generals to invade Britain. All is in order for its success. Still and all, should we do it? Is it right to do? Is there reason and reason enough based in EC/FC to do it? Similarly, the plan for the concentration camps may be a marvel of effective logistical planning. But this does not answer the further question: Is it right to enact such a plan? Is there reason and reason enough based in EC/FC to do it?

Here are the weather conditions for Normandy at D-Day? Is it right to launch the D-Day Invasion under these conditions?

SO THERE ARE QUESTIONS FOR DELIBERATION. And these questions end in action.

Knowing WHAT TO DO:

1) This exposition of knowing as experiencing-understanding and judging + further questions for deliberation regarding right action is a way of “fleshing out” the one sentence mini-method for seeing philosophical ethics as a process.

2) The Star of David Model or Six Step Model for making ethical decisions is another way to flesh out the one sentence guideline. All of this illuminates:

(A) knowing WHAT to do. This is necessary but not sufficient. Also needed are:

(B) knowing HOW to do it (This especially invokes emotional intelligence and “people skills”), and

(C) WANTING to do it (developing virtues—i.e. motivational habits of attitude and action that lead us to “live large” for ourselves and all the relational fields in which we dwell).