

# **BODY-PSYCHE-MIND IN THE SELF-APPROPRIATION OF THE SUBJECT: COMPLEXIFYING LONERGAN'S ACCOUNT OF NATURE AND SUPERNATURE**

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**by**

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**Toronto, 2014**

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# **Body-Psyche-Mind in the Self-Appropriation of the Subject: Complexifying Lonergan's Account of Nature and Supernature**

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## **Abstract**

In the opening page of *Method in Theology*, Bernard Lonergan expresses a concern that theology would understand its role at this important juncture in history—a time when the modern world enters a new realm of meaning, one that represents a shift from classicism to interiority. In order to fulfill its task of mediating “between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix,”<sup>1</sup> Lonergan states that theology must understand that it is no longer a “permanent achievement,” but rather “an ongoing process.”<sup>2</sup> In proceeding, therefore, theology must become acquainted with the “framework for collaborative creativity” in the “ongoing process” that Lonergan calls method.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Lonergan emphasizes that “a contemporary method would conceive those tasks in the context of modern science, modern scholarship, modern philosophy....”<sup>4</sup>

This thesis has sought to “collaborate creatively” with “modern science” in order that both theology and the cultural context might be mutually enriched. By drawing on the insights of the science of neuroplasticity, this thesis undertakes the methodological

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

task involved in developing an understanding of the bodily aspect of the human person in an interiority analysis. Within the eight functional specialties that Lonergan outlines in a contemporary method of theology, this work performs tasks within Foundations. While inclusive of Foundations, the primary goal of this work is the development of a theological anthropology. Development occurs by bringing to light the significance of the body in a theological anthropology.

Lonergan's question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" in "Mission and the Spirit,"<sup>5</sup> along with his articulation of the body-psyche-mind relations in his principle of correspondence in *Insight*,<sup>6</sup> provide the framework for this development. A developed understanding of the body's role in the transition from the natural to the supernatural furthers Doran's work on psychic conversion by including "body data" in the self-appropriation of the unconscious. Such an integration of the organic and psychic spontaneities with conscious operations increases the probability of authentic agency in the unfolding of the Reign of God.

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Mission and the Spirit," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 23.

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 555.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction and Methodology**

#### ***Introduction***

This chapter outlines the basic intention of the thesis, namely, to highlight the significance of the human organism, or body, in the body-psyche-mind correspondence of Lonergan's theory of emergent probability, and follows with the method for approaching its successful completion. The broader historical context for this study constitutes what Lonergan means by the modern shift to a new realm of meaning, a shift from theoretical consciousness to interiority.<sup>1</sup> Notably, a new understanding of world process accompanies such a shift. Awareness of the realm of interiority allows one to move from a static, classicist world view to knowledge of the dynamic world process that Lonergan called "emergent probability." An understanding of this shift to interiority accounts not only for the significance of Lonergan's contribution, but also explains the "tone" of the present cultural context, which includes various holistic and integral perspectives on what it means to be human.

In "Mission and the Spirit," Bernard Lonergan, S.J., asks a question that prompts his abbreviated explanatory account of both an evolutionary world process and its further unfolding in the human person, who knows, feels, wills and loves.<sup>2</sup> He asks, "What in

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter Two will outline what Lonergan means by the modern shift from theoretical consciousness to the new realm of meaning that he calls interiority.

<sup>2</sup> For the expanded philosophical discussion on Lonergan's theory of emergent probability, see Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?”<sup>3</sup>

His response proceeds from an account of finality in an evolutionary view of the universe to its correlation with the operators in human intentional consciousness. Such notions as “emergence,” “unfolding,” “development,” and “maturity,” which portray an evolutionary process, are paralleled with human intentional operations that are likewise dynamically related to one another in their self-assembling pattern.

[T]his dynamism [within human intentional operations] rests on operators that promote activity from one level to the next.... Such operators are questions for intelligence..., questions for reflection...[and] questions for deliberation.... Three types of operator yield four levels of operation [which are experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding]. Each lower level is an instance of vertical finality, and that finality is already realized as the higher levels function. The lower level, accordingly, prepares for the higher and is sublated by it.... Such process is to be understood in accord with emergent probabilities and under divine planning and action.<sup>4</sup>

Lonergan’s concluding remarks in “Mission and the Spirit” answer the question by elucidating the role that divine self-communication plays in the transition from the natural to the supernatural, and more precisely, by proposing how it enters into human consciousness. He draws our attention to the fact that, in the relation of the natural to the supernatural, the divine, as infinite and absolutely transcending all finite being, is beyond the proportion of any created reality. Yet, at the same time, to speak of the natural in terms of its vertical finality to the supernatural means that we can understand humanity’s relationship to God in this way. Human nature is “not merely subordinate to God but somehow enters into the divine life and participates in it.”<sup>5</sup> Human nature has an

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Mission and the Spirit,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

unrestricted openness to the intelligible, the true and the good and to falling in love.

Through this unrestricted openness, the human person encounters the twofold mission of Son and Spirit, which constitutes God's self-communication. The first mission is the visible mission of the Son as Word that is heard, and "mounts up the successive levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, deliberating."<sup>6</sup> The second is the invisible mission of the Spirit that "descends from the gift of God's love [downward in human consciousness] through religious conversion to moral, and through religious and moral to intellectual conversion."<sup>7</sup>

The position that is foundational to this thesis is the belief that Lonergan made a significant contribution to the field of theology with his answer to the question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" His answer explains that, in order to understand the supernatural, we need to look at the natural.<sup>8</sup> The starting point, therefore, is not the object (God and a subsequent metaphysical account of God's nature); rather, it is the existential subject who is a knower, and whose capacity to fall in love with God is the condition by which the reign of God renews the earth. By this turn to the subject, Lonergan provided theology with a transcultural base in the intellectual and religious interiority of the existential subject. As such, the priority accorded to the object in the earlier classical period of theology, which gave metaphysics a dominant role, has shifted to the subject. Lonergan's intentionality

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 32

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> On the point of the human person's "natural love of God," Lonergan attributes the "analogy of nature" to Phillip the Chancellor. See *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (University of Toronto Press, 2000), 17.

analysis releases an earlier theology from its dependence on metaphysics by providing the categories of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness.<sup>9</sup> This shift to interiority, and its concomitant categories, marks an entry into a new realm of meaning, one that promotes the realization that the proximate ground of all truth, goodness and beauty is the authentic subject. Given this broader theological context, with its emphasis on the operations in human consciousness, how are we to understand the role that the human organism or body plays in the emergent unfolding of vertical finality of the human person?

The human person is an *embodied* knower and an existential subject. In *Insight*, Lonergan referred to the embodied aspect of the human person as his or her being is involved in the self-transcending unfolding of the desire to know. Lonergan wrote that the unfolding is involved in a principle of correspondence by which

higher integrations of the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator; and if its developments on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators.<sup>10</sup>

The present study serves to draw attention to the “organic” or “bodily” aspect of dynamic relationship between body-psyche-mind of the human person in Lonergan’s principle of correspondence. Referring once again to Lonergan’s explanatory account of

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<sup>9</sup> The prior dominance of metaphysics led to what Lonergan called “a vast arid wasteland of theological controversy.” Lonergan’s intentionality analysis affords to theology a verifiable base for adjudicating between valid and invalid metaphysical terms. The advantage of turning to the subject consists in the ability to verify terms and relations. See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 343.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555. For example, the psychic level acts as both an integrator and operator as follows: the psychic level integrates the organic by drawing it up into a higher system—neural functions become psychic images in dreams—but as an operator the dynamism of the psychic level acts in a manner that prompts psychic images forward to the higher level of interpretation by intelligence.

his question in “Mission and the Spirit,” the thesis question is this: How are we to understand the significance of the human body in the transition from the natural to the supernatural?

The interest in pursuing the topic of an integrated body-psyche-mind understanding of the human person grew out of the desire to resolve conflicting messages about the body within Roman Catholic tradition. Messages such as “[The human person] is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God” portrayed the *dignity* of human embodiedness.<sup>11</sup> Yet at the same time, images of the medieval practice of self-flagellation presented a contrasting, negative understanding of the bodily aspect of the human person.<sup>12</sup> The Roman Catholic’s tradition, therefore, exhibits two different interpretations of Church teaching on the body in its relationship to the psychic and rational aspects of being human. The first is one that conveys the body in the positive light of divine likeness, and so suggests a more integrated understanding of the embodied person, while the latter interpretation portrays the influence of a dualistic philosophy that holds that the body “encumbers” the rational spirit in its heavenly pursuit.<sup>13</sup> How did two such disparate understandings of the human person find their way into Catholic thought and practice?

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<sup>11</sup> Michael A. McGuire. *Father McGuire’s The New Baltimore Catechism and Mass*. Official Revised Edition (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1941), 23.

<sup>12</sup> For example, in her journals, St. Beatrice of Nazareth describes self-flagellation as a penitential means to be freed from her body’s sinful desires. The penance of self-flagellation with yew branches and tying thorns and ropes to her breasts was severe to the point that she was “burdened with pain and scarcely able to walk on her feet.” *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth*, trans. Roger de Ganck (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 43.

<sup>13</sup> A dualistic philosophy would suggest that self-transcendence entails an escape from the body in the pursuit of perfection. In a philosophy of mind, dualism is a set of views about the relationship between mind and matter. Its starting point begins with the claim that mental phenomena are, in some respects, non-physical. Ideas on mind/body dualism originate as far back as Plato and earlier, and deal with speculations as to the existence of an incorporeal soul whose form bears the faculties of intelligence and wisdom. Its

Historically rooted in Platonic philosophy, dualistic influences crept into one of two main early Church interpretations of such works as Augustine's *City of God*.<sup>14</sup> The first is an appropriation of Augustine's work that imports the dualistic, Platonic idea of forms that exist, independent of matter in a noetic heaven, as completely spiritual. In the *Phaedo*, Plato asserts that the forms are universal concepts (or ideas) that make the entire phenomenal world intelligible.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, in order for the intellect to have access to knowledge, the intellect must necessarily be a non-physical, immaterial entity itself. Thus, a dualistic view holds that if the human rational spirit contains Truth, then the material or bodily aspect does not. From an anthropological and theological viewpoint, we observe threads of this first interpretation (the opposition between the immaterial and the material) that have been played out at various levels in Church history in the attitude that the body (matter) is sinful or "fallen" and the spirit (reason) is good.

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principal position is that a person's "intelligence" (a faculty of the mind or soul) can not be identified with, or explained in terms of, his or her physical body. For an expanded account on the influences of Gnosticism and Platonism on Christian thought, see Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "The Origins of Christian Realism," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, vol. 6, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 80-93.

<sup>14</sup> St. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, S.J., et al (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1958). The theologian Charles E. Curran notes this dualistic tendency in one strain of the Church's appropriation of Augustine's *City of God* in his article, "A place for dissent: my argument with Joseph Ratzinger," *Commonweal*, May 6, 2005. In a dualistic view, the "City of God" is analogous to "heaven" and the "City of Man" to the "world." Consequently, Spirit as "good," contrasted with the body as "sinful," follows from this view. See: <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/A+place+for+dissent%3a+my+argument+with+Joseph+Ratzinger.-a0132797203>, accessed August 8, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 1, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1966), 100c-104c.



In the broader horizon of Platonist tendencies in the Church's history a second significant appropriation of Augustine's work is observed.<sup>16</sup> Preoccupied with Arian concerns,<sup>17</sup> Augustine turned to Plato's description of the soul as "*nauta in navi* [which] is suggestive of the subject."<sup>18</sup> This enabled him to advert to the soul, using the psychological category of *mens*, which, in the later work of Aquinas and Lonergan, was ground for an understanding of the soul as subject.<sup>19</sup> In terms of the objects of the human mind in its sensitive and intellectual activity, Augustine considered psychological data. In so doing, Augustine discovered the human subject: "...[w]hen conscious acts are studied by introspection, one discovers not only the acts and their intentional terms but also the intending subject, and there arises the problem of the relation of subject to soul."<sup>20</sup> Prompted, then, by the discovery of his own mind's knowledge of itself, Augustine's turn to Plato provided him with useful psychological categories for theology. These new categories formed the basis by which many theologians in the Christian tradition have reinterpreted such theological issues as nature/grace, Trinity, and Christology (cf. Lonergan's work, *Verbum* and *Grace and Freedom*).

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<sup>16</sup> Lonergan refers to this second appropriation of Augustine in the "Introduction: Subject and Soul" of *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vol. 2, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3-11.

<sup>17</sup> The controversy over Arianism began to rise in the late third century and extended over the greater part of the fourth century. Arius taught that God the Father and the Son did not co-exist eternally, but rather that Jesus was a divine being created by God the Father (and therefore inferior to God). The Arian controversy played a major role in the development of Christology in the fourth century. See *The Christian Theological Reader*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2001), 693.

<sup>18</sup> Loosely translated, this Latin term means "sailor on a ship." The sailor directs the ship as the soul directs the body. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 4.

<sup>19</sup> In contrast, an Aristotelian understanding of the soul as the "inner principle of life" relies on metaphysical explanation: "souls are differentiated by their potencies; potencies are known by their acts; acts are specified by their objects...[and objects are defined in terms of causality]." Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 5.

If Lonergan's work offers a corrective to dualistic interpretations of Augustine,<sup>21</sup> as this thesis contends, then what is the significance of the human body in the process of human knowing? Is the body significantly involved in the dynamic unfolding of intentional-consciousness? This is the belief articulated here, and from this belief it will be argued that Lonergan's work helps to explain how.<sup>22</sup>

To grasp how best to proceed in answering how the body is involved in human knowing, it must first be situated within a further account of how "Mission and the Spirit" develops an interiority analysis. In addition to this account, the works of the theologian Robert Doran and the psychologist Eugene Gendlin will be drawn upon to demonstrate developments in Lonergan's interiority analysis. The series of advances made by Doran and Gendlin in interpreting Lonergan's question, "What in human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?", provide the springboard from which the question concerning the role of the human body or organism finds its momentum.

"Mission and the Spirit" stands out as a clear development in Lonergan's own thought. Along with his intentionality analysis of the operators in intentional human consciousness, Lonergan acknowledged for the first time the presence of a corresponding, separate dimension that he termed the "passionateness of being." Within the "passionateness of being" there exists, he asserted, a "quasi-operator" that

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<sup>21</sup> Here Lonergan stands with Aquinas in appropriating Augustine's notion of the subject in terms of *mens*.

<sup>22</sup> In his work, *Finality, Love, Marriage*, Lonergan talks about four aspects of the "conjoined plurality" of vertical finality—the instrumental, dispositive, material and obediential. The human organism would be understood as the material aspect of vertical finality. See *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Collection*, vol. 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, latest reprint 1993), 17-51.

“underpins,” “accompanies,” and “reaches beyond” intentional consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

However, Lonergan did not undertake the task of identifying the “passionateness of being” in the explanatory terms of human interiority; this remained for others to explore.

Robert Doran, S.J., has identified the “passionateness of being” in categories of interiority. Toward this end, Doran’s scholarly efforts focus on the notion of “passionateness of being” as it relates to intentional consciousness. Endorsed by Lonergan, Doran’s contribution involves transposing the notion of “passionateness of being” into the category of interiorly differentiated consciousness that Doran calls “psychic conversion”; Doran’s efforts are based on the claim that the notion of psychic conversion is implicit in Lonergan’s work “Mission and the Spirit.”<sup>24</sup> Doran describes his contribution in this way: “...Lonergan’s affirmation of a symbolic operator effecting an elemental emergence of image and affect remains tentative, more tentative than his affirmation of a topmost level of total loving commitment.... I wish to be more forthright on the issue: the intellectual or spiritual operators *are* preceded by a symbolic operator, or, better I think, they are *preceded, accompanied and transcended by an aesthetic-*

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<sup>23</sup> Along with “Mission and the Spirit,” another of Lonergan’s later works speaks of a separate dimension that accompanies intentional consciousness. He describes it as a “deeper and more comprehensive principle...a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these.” See “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 175.

<sup>24</sup> While Lonergan clearly acknowledges the psychic dimension (which, in “Mission and the Spirit,” he terms the “passionateness of being”) as a separate dimension that accompanies intentionality, he does not clearly identify “levels” in the psychic dimension. However, Lonergan does begin to venture into such notions by referring to a “quasi-operator” and a “topmost quasi-operator” (and this implies two distinct levels)—terms that Doran uses to later distinguish three separate “levels” in the psyche and their corresponding “operators” (the aesthetic-dramatic operators) as they “underpin,” “accompany,” and “overarch” intentionality. It is on this basis that Doran expands his notion of psychic conversion to include the self-appropriation of all three levels of the psychic dimension in their correspondence to intentionality. See *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 112-116.

*dramatic operator.*”<sup>25</sup> Doran’s contribution is interesting because he has shifted the previous dominance given to the intellect (still evident in Lonergan’s earlier work) to a more integrated understanding of the psyche’s relationship to the human spirit. Not only does this shift offer a re-orientation to depth psychology on the basis of Lonergan’s intentionality analysis, but it also opens theology to an expanded dimension of meaning by providing new categories of interiority. In effect, Doran has implemented a further complexification of the understanding of the upward creative orientation of human spirit and the downward healing movement of God’s grace in human consciousness. (Lonergan names these two movements in relation to one another, “the dialectic of the subject.”)<sup>26</sup>

Doran’s interests have led him into the theological functional specialty of Foundations, where the authenticity of the theologian interpreting history becomes the fertile ground for the mediation of new meaning. The present proposal, while also situated within the functional specialty of Foundations, is not an attempt to create a new category of interiority, but rather will explain the significance of the body’s role in the psychic self-appropriation of the human person. In other words, this work constitutes an effort to develop Doran’s notion of psychic conversion by broadening the field of data for self-appropriation to include the body.

The original curiosity that prompted this thesis was piqued by Doran’s explanation of the first of the aesthetic-dramatic operators, the symbolic operator. His discussion of the symbolic operator focuses on the point at which vertical finality in the universe transitions into human consciousness. First, vertical finality (energy from the

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<sup>25</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 114.

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 242-44.

universe) becomes manifest in the human person in the biological, neurological, and chemical levels. From this very elementary, physiological level, vertical finality further manifests itself in the human person by way of the symbolic operator as images in the psyche, and, in this form, becomes conscious in the human person as dreams and material for conscious intentionality.<sup>27</sup> However, the symbolic operator is hampered in its orientation to a higher integration in conscious intentionality by dramatic bias, that is, by intelligence and imagination conspiring as a distorted censor to exclude necessary but unwanted images. At this point, Doran draws on the work of Eugene Gendlin, a psychologist and philosopher who provides both an expanded understanding of attentiveness at the level of experience as well as a therapeutic technique to circumvent a biased censor.<sup>28</sup>

Gendlin calls this therapeutic technique “focusing.” Focusing invites conscious attention to the “felt experience” in one’s body. By being present to one’s immediate experience of affective complexity within the body in a given moment, a person turns his or her conscious attention away from an outward, “to the world” focus and toward an inward focus on his or her felt experience in the body. By shifting the mind’s focus inward, one becomes attentive to the “bodily” aspect of interiority. This attentiveness provides the mechanism for the conscious apprehension in image of unconscious,

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<sup>27</sup> “I interpret the unconscious to be energy at its physical, chemical, and biological levels, opaque energy, in need of a higher integration by at least the sensitive consciousness of the psyche if it is to come into the light [of consciousness]. ...the unconscious is all energy in the universe save that which becomes present to itself as psychic energy in animal and human consciousness.” See Robert Doran, S.J., *Theological Foundations, vol. 1: Intentionality and Psyche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 289.

<sup>28</sup> Eugene Gendlin, *Focusing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1981); Eugene Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997); Eugene Gendlin, “Meaning Prior to the Separation of the Five Senses,” in *Current Advances in Semantic Theory*, ed. M. Stamenov (Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1992); Eugene Gendlin, *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams* (Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1986).

elemental meaning. (Gendlin calls this “body knowledge.”) Gendlin alerts us to the familiar experience that accompanies this transition to consciousness. For example, many can recall times when puzzlement about a certain question begins to take shape in some as yet unexplained “sense” of the problem. The preliminary movement in the transition from the “sense” of the problem to its resolution begins with the release of images in the psyche. Accompanying this early transition of image to psyche is a physical release of energy that brings with it a sense of certainty—“Yes, that’s it!” Gendlin describes this release of energy as a “felt shift” in the body. When there is a “felt shift,” a person experiences a physically sensed release. The felt shift is not yet an insight, because at this point there are no words to further its meaning. In other words, previously censored images (that are held within the patterns of bodily functioning) can be released from censorship and made conscious by intentional attentiveness to bodily experience. Becoming familiar with one’s symbolic patterns—symbols hold together the myriad connections of images and feelings—is the hallmark of the psychically converted person for Doran. This writer believes that Gendlin has made a valuable contribution by acknowledging that the body has something important to offer our understanding of psychic self-appropriation in psychic conversion. In this way, data concerning the body can further the understanding of the transition from the natural to the supernatural. Apart from aberrations such as psychopathology, the body cannot lie. Its patterns, orientation and the release of energy that accompanies the apprehension of a needed image provide a fuller account of the principle of correspondence and its conscious appropriation in the authentic subject. Yet, the further questions of how it is that the body “knows” (as

Gendlin describes it) and how it holds past judgments within it (Lonergan, *Insight*, Chapter 9) remain.<sup>29</sup>

An investigation into the recent developments in the medical field of neurology can help provide a response to this query. In the last ten years, neurological research has uncovered the remarkable plasticity of the brain. For centuries, the medical field believed that after the age of three, genetic coding dictated one's capacity for brain development. In essence, once initial childhood development was finished, the brain remained forever static and immutable (much like the classicist notion of world process). Recent discoveries have shown that this is not the case. A person's experience plays an important role in determining, to a certain extent, how the brain will develop—what neural pathways will become well established “highways” and what others will remain infrequently used “sideroads.” Neural demand function shapes the development of neural pathways in the brain.

This discovery has implications for the present project. While Gendlin points to the fact that the human organism “knows” all that it has experienced in its innumerable interactions with its environment, he does not go on to offer an explanation of that “body knowledge.” This writer believes that the recent discoveries of neurology, which highlight the impact that experience has on the development of the brain's neural pathways, provide the clue to understanding how “body knowledge” relates to the patterning of neural pathways in the brain. Body knowledge is held in the concrete patterning of human neural pathways designed in part by a person's habitual way of being. At the same time, a change in experience can prompt a change at this very basic

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<sup>29</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 296-303.

neurophysiological level. Indeed, such a correlation connects in further detail to Lonergan's understanding of world process in terms of emergent probability by connecting classical and statistical laws to genetic coding and brain plasticity, respectively. The present project assumes the position that such an investigation will contribute to Lonergan's efforts to answer "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"

In light of the new information concerning the body in the body-psyche-mind correspondence, this author will seek to defend this proposition: A fuller account of psychic self-appropriation requires that we expand our grasp of the relation between body and psyche. The principle of correspondence, which espouses the mutually conditioning nature of higher and lower schemes in the evolutionary process, provides the template for the understanding that self-appropriation of bodily "data" is a necessary component in authentic self-appropriation.

### *The Way of Proceeding*

According to Lonergan's theory of emergent probability, developmental human process involves dynamic relations of the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels. The aim of the thesis is to develop the understanding of the organism in this dynamic process. The first chapter articulates the basic intention of the thesis, namely, to highlight the significance of the human organism, or body, in the body-psyche-mind correspondence of Lonergan's theory. The chapter also presents the method for approaching the thesis question, "How does a developed understanding of the body's participation in an emergent universe contribute to Lonergan's theory of emergent probability?" The methodological approach itself is characteristic of the notion of development portrayed in



Lonergan's theory of emergent probability. It outlines the series of advances made by various scholars to Lonergan's theory, and, in so doing, serves as a concrete example of the theory, for each advance attests to the process of emergent probability through the portrayal of human understanding as it undergoes ever increasing complexifications (differentiations and integrations). The series of advances proceeds as follows: the development in the theory of emergent probability demonstrated by Lonergan himself, beginning with *Insight*, followed by *Method in Theology*, and through to "Mission and the Spirit"; Robert Doran's contribution to the theory of emergent probability through a development of the psychic aspect in the body-psyche-mind correspondence of emergence; Eugene Gendlin's focusing technique that introduces the idea that the body has "knowledge," thereby highlighting the body's significance in the body-psyche-mind correspondence; and medical science's discovery that the brain has "plasticity," providing an explanation of Gendlin's "body knowledge" and furthering the understanding of the body-psyche-mind correspondence in Lonergan's theory of emergent probability.<sup>30</sup> Each step in the series provides further data by which to reinterpret Lonergan's theory. The serial advance in understanding Lonergan's theory of emergent probability proceeds in the manner of a reinterpretation of Lonergan's introductory question in "Mission and the Spirit," "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) and Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Mission and the Spirit," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985).

<sup>31</sup> Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 23.

The second chapter begins by establishing Lonergan's theory of emergent probability as a new worldview, one that marks a shift in the development of the human control of meaning. The earlier classicist worldview that regarded the universe as necessary and static developed its control of meaning through theory, which, in its "universality," could be applied to all cultures. Lonergan's theory of emergent probability, however, presents a worldview that is not static, but dynamic and unfolding. The control of meaning moves beyond theory to incorporate an explanatory account of human interiority. Lonergan's term for this shift to interiority in the control of meaning is "method" or "historical consciousness." Its foundation is the human subject involved in the existential task of knowing, deciding, and loving. Establishing Lonergan's theory of emergent probability in its significance as a shift to historical consciousness provides the foundation from which later chapters discuss how far Lonergan and the scholar devoted to Lonergan's project, Robert Doran, S.J., as well as the work of Eugene Gendlin, have advanced in answering Lonergan's question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"

The second part of Chapter Two follows with a discussion of Lonergan's work concerning his own advances made in answering the question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" Starting with a synthesis of his theory of emergent probability from *Insight*, this chapter explains the development in Lonergan's thought by a comparison of this early work with the later works, *Method in Theology* and "Mission and the Spirit." The methodological series of advances begins, therefore, with an introduction to Lonergan's theory of emergent probability found in *Insight* as foundational to the fuller interpretation of his question in

“Mission and the Spirit” regarding human consciousness and the transition from the natural to the supernatural. In *Insight*, Lonergan acknowledges “two distinct kinds of operators” in human consciousness, the spiritual and the psychic dimensions; in his later works, *Method in Theology* and “Mission and the Spirit,” the spiritual and psychic operators are further distinguished and clarified. The second chapter closes by identifying what in Lonergan’s work has remained open for further development.

The second and third steps in the methodological series of advances of Lonergan’s thought constitute the task of Chapter Three. The second step in the methodological series is an account of how Robert Doran’s work on psychic conversion serves to further clarify Lonergan’s acknowledgment of the “passionateness of being” in “Mission and the Spirit.” The term “passionateness of being” refers to the vertical finality operative in the entire universe. Doran explains that the “passionateness of being” is sensitively experienced by the human person at the level of the psyche. The psyche, therefore, serves as the place where the “passionateness of being” becomes elementally or symbolically conscious. The second step identifies Doran’s contribution to the series of advances in answering Lonergan’s question, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?” Specifically, Doran’s effort serves to transpose Lonergan’s term “passionateness of being” from metaphysical terms to interiority.

The last half of Chapter Three constitutes the third step in the methodological series. It highlights the advances that Doran achieved in his own thought on psychic conversion. His earlier emphasis on the psyche focused on the symbolic operator, that aspect of the psyche that “underpins” intentionality. The symbolic operator acts in the

manner of prompting the upward transition from unconscious neural functioning to conscious images in dreams. Along with identifying the symbolic operator, Doran asserted the importance of appropriating or consciously objectifying its symbolic patterns into consciousness. Through self-appropriation of the particular patterning of his or her dream symbols, a person gains access to the drama of his or her life's story. Doran's work on the symbolic operator expands in later work to include not only those aspects of the psyche that "underpin" intentionality (as does the symbolic operator), but also the two further aspects that "accompany" (the sensitive aspect) and "reach beyond" (the agapic aspect) intentionality. He identifies the three aspects of the psyche as the three-fold aesthetic-dramatic operator.<sup>32</sup> Of particular interest for the purposes of this thesis is his most current development, which underscores the need to appropriate "received meaning," that is, meaning that is pre-consciously "already patterned." At this point, this author proposes a link between "received meaning" and "body knowledge," which is defined later in the explanatory terms of neurophysiological patterning.

The fourth chapter marks the focal point in the evolution of the thesis argument by drawing attention to the "bodily" aspect of the human person. Broken down into four basic parts, this chapter (1) highlights the central concern of the thesis, which has to do with the body's role in the transition from the natural to the supernatural, by introducing Gendlin's notion of "body knowledge" and the technique of focusing on one's "felt sense"; (2) situates the focusing technique within Lonergan's notion of the transcendental precept to "be attentive," meaning that authentic living begins with attention to one's experience; (3) proposes the importance of the bodily "felt shift" as instrumental in the

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<sup>32</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 166.

self-appropriation of psychic data and the consequent freedom from dramatic bias (the bias responsible for repression of needed images and their associated feelings<sup>33</sup>; and (4) grapples with the further question that if the organism or human body has a dynamism of its own—an orientation to “live the felt sense further,” an “implying” (according to Gendlin)—then how can we understand this dynamism in terms of Lonergan’s principle of correspondence and Doran’s dialectic of contraries?<sup>34</sup> The work of Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen will help to complement and develop Gendlin’s proposal about the importance of the body in an integrated body-psyche-mind understanding. In effect, this chapter transposes Gendlin’s work from commonsense categories (everyday language common to a particular culture) to the categories of interiority (basic categories derived from the operations in human consciousness). In view of the fact that Gendlin’s work centers its attention at the level of concrete human experience, this chapter will situate Gendlin’s work in interiority by distinguishing between Lonergan’s portrayal of patterns of

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<sup>33</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight*, 214.

<sup>34</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan introduced the principle of correspondence as a principle involved in the genetic and dialectical process by which meaning advances in history. The two distinct operators in human consciousness, the intentional and the psychic, in their dialectic relation constitute the normative source of meaning in history. Of this dialectical relation, Lonergan states that there exists a “...principle of correspondence between otherwise coincidental manifolds on each lower level and systematizing form on the next higher level. Moreover, these higher integrations on the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator; and if development on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators” (555). Doran turns to the principle of correspondence between the human organism, psyche and spirit as the basis for his work on psychic conversion. He explains that because the psyche occupies the middle ground between the organism and the spirit, “[i]t participates in both, since it is both a higher integration of neural manifolds and the sensorium of self-transcendence through which we *feel* our participation in the intelligibility, truth, and goodness of being as these are reached in our acts of meaning and love. Affective integrity [the result of psychic conversion, that is, the willingness to become conscious of, and familiar with, the drama of one’s symbolic patterning] is an abiding in the creative tension of matter [organism] and spirit.” (Robert Doran, S.J., *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 55. The writer believes that Gendlin’s use of the term “implying,” as the organism’s orientation to “live the felt sense further,” and the need to “focus” to relieve blocks in that orientation concretely relates to Doran’s work on psychic conversion. The presence of body tension and the physical experience of the chaos of unidentified feelings can alert a person to the fact that there has been a loss in the creative tension between organism and spirit. The focusing technique aids in the process of restoring that creative tension by releasing into consciousnesses the pattern of images needed in the higher integration of the person’s dynamic orientation to fulfillment.

experience on the conscious level and the pre-conscious patterning that Doran terms “received meaning.”

The fifth chapter introduces the field of neuroscience as a possible venue for an explanatory account of Gendlin’s term “body knowledge.” Although it begins with an extensive summary of the historical development in that field and the resultant discovery of neuroplasticity in the brain, the chapter’s main intent is not to “teach” neurophysiology as much as it is to establish the link between brain neuroplasticity and intentionality. Of particular importance to this endeavor is highlighting the significance that intention and experience have for changes in the brain. Basic neurophysiology, neural patterning in the brain, can be altered in response to the human intention to achieve some object of desire, whether it is playing the piano, for example, or re-learning a skill lost through an injury. In effect, the role that environmental experience and personal intention play in the brain’s development serves to explain and support Gendlin’s assertion that the body holds within it the totality of its innumerable complex interactions with its environment.

The concluding chapter is an exercise in reinterpreting Lonergan’s question concerning the action of the Divine in human consciousness based on the new data offered by neurophysiological research. It begins with a summary of what neuroplasticity has to offer the question. This sets the stage for introducing the primary question of the chapter: “How does neuroscientific knowledge enhance our inquiry into the transition from the natural to the supernatural that occurs in human consciousness?”

The first step in this task begins with a discussion concerning how neuroscience helps to develop our understanding of human nature in its “upward” vertical finality to the supernatural. Prior to the recent discovery that the human brain can change itself,

mainstream medical science believed that the brain's anatomy was predetermined by genetics and, therefore, was fixed. In other words, scientific and medical knowledge of how the brain functioned previously presented human neurophysiology in terms of the predictability of classical laws.<sup>35</sup> The discovery of brain plasticity introduced the notion that statistical laws are also at work in human neurophysiology. Here we observe a prime example of the modern shift away from classicism, which understood the world solely in terms of classical laws, to historical consciousness, in which both classical and statistical laws together interpret the world. Fundamentally, the discovery of brain plasticity depicts the human body in a much more dynamic relationship to the further aspects of the human as a knower and as an existential subject—the body changes in response to human intention and also alerts the conscious subject to the need for higher integration of unconscious bodily neural functions.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, a reinterpretation of Lonergan's question concerning the “upward” transition from the natural to the supernatural presents the human in his or her neurophysiological aspect at the forefront of the evolutionary process as it enters the realm of human meaning; neural physiological patterning provides intelligible data prior to its higher integration in the psyche as dream symbols. As such, the task of reinterpretation generates a fuller account of the dynamic relationship in the

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<sup>35</sup> Concerning this traditional view, Sharon Begley writes, “Conventional wisdom in neuroscience held that the adult mammalian brain is fixed in two respects: no new neurons are born in it, and the function of the structures that make it up are immutable, so that if genes and development dictate that *this* cluster of neurons will process signals from the eye, and *this* cluster will move the fingers of the right hand, then by god they'll do that and nothing else come hell or high water.” See *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential To Transform Ourselves* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 6.

<sup>36</sup> The new discovery of neuroplasticity increases awareness that manifestations of human self-transcendence are most concretely exhibited in the human body. How else can one explain the beauty of an elderly person, whose years of faithfulness have shaped a character most poignantly experienced in his or her loving, physical presence? Can neuroplasticity aid in a renewed understanding of beauty? As the transcendental of the psyche, beauty draws us into ever-greater appreciations of the ongoing complexifications of its manifestations—even in an aging body.

body-psyche-mind correspondence, and in so doing, furthers our understanding of the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

The second step in reinterpreting Lonergan's question in light of the new data offered by neuroscience involves the "downward" movement of grace in the relation of the natural to the supernatural. The reinterpretation explains the twofold mission of the Son and Spirit as the work of grace operating at this very basic neurophysiological level. Regarding the mission of the Son as "Word" that is "heard," and which then mounts up in successive levels of human consciousness, a reinterpretation presents the notion that the first "hearing" of the Word is the meaning mediated to us by way of the interpersonal relationships and interactions that have shaped the very patterning of our neural pathways. Doran calls this "received meaning." A self-appropriation of meaning at this basic level in the human person (in the "immediacy" of felt experience) provides further data for the authentic appropriation of divine meaning.<sup>37</sup> Regarding the second mission, the downward action of grace in human consciousness, a reinterpretation focuses on the healing and elevating effects of grace in the human body, thereby offering a development in the understanding of Doran's notion of psychic conversion. A particularly interesting development in the study of neuroplasticity makes a connection between the experience of love and massive unlearning, pertinent to Doran's portrayal of psychic conversion. It

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<sup>37</sup> The mediation of divine meaning through the interpersonal relationships, whether genuine or distorted, of the community into which a person is born manifests itself first and foremost in the neurophysiological makeup of the child. Concerning the dominance of community over the person in the reception of divine meaning, that is, meaning that has been appropriated into a person's way of being and living, Doran writes, "The dominance of the dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject means that the relations of the present of the subject to the past are relations not only to the subject's own past but also to the past of his or her community.... And these relations decisively affect the orientation or habitual context within which the reception of data occurs.... That ordinary meaningfulness may be more or less sinful, more or less under the influence of grace. Revelation as God's entrance into the human world of meaning shifts the probabilities in favour of graced ordinary meaningfulness. And that shift in probabilities affects the reception, or better, the receptive potential of subjects in community to the divine meaning intended by God when God enters our world of meaning." Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138-39.



demonstrates that when the human person commits him- or herself in love, the brain undergoes a large-scale reorganization, far more massive than in the normal process of unlearning and relearning.<sup>38</sup> Falling in love with God, or with one's spouse and children, for example, releases hormones that change the brain and allow for new attachments and ways of being (thinking, feeling, valuing) to unfold. In the case of therapeutic intervention, the experience of love appears "to facilitate neuroplastic change by triggering unlearning [of destructive patterns in thinking and feeling] and dissolving existing neuronal networks, so the patient can alter his existing intentions."<sup>39</sup> In this way, neuroplasticity demonstrates that physical healing accompanies psychic conversion. Transformation and conversion occur at every level or aspect of the human being.

The chapter closes by addressing the theological implications of the task undertaken in the previous chapters to reinterpret Lonergan's question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition of the natural to the supernatural?" It begins with the assertion that a broadening of the foundational categories for understanding human transformation in a graced relationship with God recovers the better part of the Christian tradition that does not contain dualism. It provides an account of an expanded explanatory world view that integrates body, psyche, and mind. In addition, it reconnects with Doran's work on self-appropriation in order to demonstrate the importance of attentiveness to the body in its capacity to aid in the process of becoming aware of "the drama of one's story." Not only does this section develop the understanding of the importance of self-appropriation in the authentic subject, but it also gives further support

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<sup>38</sup> Norman Doidge, M.D., *The Brain that Changes Itself* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), 118-19.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

to Doran's account of "received meaning." Elemental meaning (intelligibility that exists prior to its higher integration and differentiation by intelligence) begins in the neural patterning of the human person even before its manifestation in psychic images. The assertion here is that neurophysiological patterning carries the meaning inherited by one's formative and ongoing experiences. This meaning exists prior to and is the condition from which images emerge in dreams and thought processes. In light of this understanding of the meaning inherent in human neurophysiological patterning, it follows that a necessary component of authentic self-appropriation involves attentiveness (aided by Gendlin's focusing technique) in an immediate fashion to this intelligibility. Meaning at this early point in the vertical finality of the human person carries forward a fullness of meaning that intentional consciousness can only grasp incrementally. The chapter closes with ideas for future explorations for research on this topic.

## Chapter Two

### The Development in Lonergan's Understanding of the Human Transition from the Natural to the Supernatural

#### *Introduction*

In search of a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche, and mind in the human person, this chapter begins by providing an overview of the development in Lonergan's thought on emergent probability. Much of this overview relating to the development that occurred between Lonergan's works, *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, has already been accomplished by Robert Doran in his book *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences*.<sup>1</sup> In agreement with Doran's assessment of this earlier developmental stage in Lonergan's work, this chapter draws on Doran for much of its synthesis. While this work, like Doran's, operates within the theological functional specialty that Lonergan termed "Foundations," it is important to note the difference in intentions.<sup>2</sup> The focus of Doran's book presents a response to Lonergan's portrayal of the longer cycle of decline presently operating in the world.<sup>3</sup> Lonergan proposes that the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (California: Scholar Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> The fifth of eight theological functional specialties, Foundations is concerned with objectifying what Lonergan calls human conversion. According to Lonergan, religious, moral and intellectual conversion determines the personal horizon, that is, the knowledge and values of the theologian. Foundations, then, understood as the state of conversion of the theologian, becomes the framework in which doctrines, systematics, and communications will have meaning and effectiveness. It is specifically the foundation for these three remaining specialties. See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 267-268.

<sup>3</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan explains the "longer cycle of decline" as a feature of a distorted dialectic of community. In effect, progress in the course of human history operates "in accord with emergent probability" (252). The longer cycle of decline constitutes the long term effects of general bias on emergent probability. "The longer cycle is characterized by the neglect of ideas to which all groups are rendered indifferent by general bias of common sense" (252).

“transformation of self-hood” provides the needed solution for a reversal of this longer cycle of decline. While in agreement with Lonergan, Doran nonetheless seeks to expand on Lonergan’s understanding of the solution that could culminate in a “world-cultural humanity.”<sup>4</sup> The present chapter adverts to Doran’s interpretation of Lonergan’s understanding of the “transformation of self-hood” in an interiority analysis; however, it also focuses on showing how Lonergan’s development furthers an interpretation of his own question concerning how to understand emergent probability operating under the influence of grace. Lonergan articulated this question in “Mission and the Spirit” as “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?”<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, in his recent work, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, Doran succeeds in highlighting the stage of Lonergan’s development established in his *later* works, one of which is “Mission and the Spirit.” Although Doran’s engagement in *What Is Systematic Theology?* with Lonergan’s later works arises from an expressed concern with providing a ground in an intentionality analysis for those areas of systematic theology that reflect on “the affirmed domain of *permanently elemental meaning*,”<sup>6</sup> once again, the interests

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<sup>4</sup> “I have for several years been convinced of the pertinence of Lonergan’s work for the emergence of a world-cultural humanity. For the central element in that work consists in a differentiation of the cross-cultural constituents of genuine humanity. These elements lie in human interiority, and more precisely in the normative unfolding of that interiority that Lonergan calls ‘basic method.’ But I have also tried to argue that in addition to the dimensions of cognitive, moral, and religious intentionality that Lonergan’s work discloses, there is another dimension of interiority, the sensitive psyche, which must be appropriated.... As related to Mumford’s world-cultural humanity, psychic conversion is an instrument for the differentiation and appropriation of cross-cultural modes of psychic symbolization. It thus complements the disengagement of universally human patterns of questioning found in Lonergan’s intentionality analysis.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences*, ix-x.

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 23-31

<sup>6</sup> “...[f]or Balthasar fidelity to what we are calling the elemental meaning of some of the mysteries of faith will demand that some of the categories employed in systematics be drawn from dramatic and aesthetic

outlined in the present chapter utilize Doran's synthesis of this later stage of Lonergan's work for a different purpose. As with the earlier work, that purpose is to establish how Lonergan's later work demonstrates a development in his understanding of the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

The argument begins by first contextualizing Lonergan's theory of emergent probability in an understanding of its significance as an "epochal shift" in human consciousness. For Lonergan, this "epochal shift" in human consciousness signifies humanity's emergence into a new realm of existence in which meaning is controlled by the ability to become conscious of the operations of one's interiority. As the argument progresses through an examination of Lonergan's development in the understanding of the transition from the natural to the supernatural, its final conclusion illustrates that Lonergan's development constitutes an expansion of the understanding and conscious awareness of the operations and dimensions of human interiority.

### ***The Turn to Interiority: an Epochal Shift in Human Consciousness***

Robert Doran declares that Lonergan's work is "epochal."<sup>7</sup> Such a bold statement requires a context, and it is with the formulation of this context that an overview of the development in Lonergan's work begins. With the word "epochal," Doran joins other modern thinkers in proposing the hypothesis that history demonstrates definitive

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theory. With that insistence I am in agreement, but I am also seeking to ground that insistence in a manner analogous to Lonergan's grounding of metaphysical categories in intentionality analysis. With such a grounding it will be possible to speak *in an explanatory fashion* about those elements that are best left in the realm of elemental meaning." Robert Doran, S.J., *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, xii. Doran directs this statement specifically to Lonergan's eleventh chapter in *Insight* entitled "The Self-Affirmation of the Knower."

breakthroughs in the development of human consciousness.<sup>8</sup> The first of these “axial development[s] of human consciousness” is thought to have occurred in Western culture between the years 800 BCE and 500 CE. During this period, human understanding of reality shifted from “myth to mind.”<sup>9</sup> To grasp the significance of this shift, Lonergan explains how humanity functions within various realms of meaning.

Unlike the natural world that unfolds solely in accord with chemical, physical, biological and psychological laws, human persons are involved in *meaning* as they acquire knowledge, as they work, and as they form social structures, cultures and communities.<sup>10</sup> The commonsense mode of meaning predominates in the human person’s everyday existence as he or she pursues some concrete good related to his or her particular activity. For example, a person might want to acquaint herself with the bus schedule in order to be on time and to avoid lengthy waiting periods. The commonsense mode is the mode of the “visible universe,” in which a person relates everyday interactions with other people and things to herself. A person comes to know this world of common sense by a lifetime of communally acquired, self-correcting learning. The collective, communal meaning developed in this commonsense *mode* of living is what

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<sup>8</sup> Doran refers to Karl Jasper, *The Origin and Goal of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953) and Lewis Mumford, *The Transformation of Man* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956). See Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, footnote 10, 205.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., xi. One such case that witnessed to this emerging breakthrough was Socrates’ search for universal definitions of courage and justice. Socrates’ search represented a move away from practical intelligence, which was dominated by myth and magic, to one in which the human mind and its ability to know itself was discovered. To grasp the significance of this shift, Lonergan relays that mythic consciousness “lacks any clear dividing line between mere ‘representation’ and ‘real’ perception, between wish and fulfillment, between image and thing.” With the discovery of the human mind, humankind entered a new realm of meaning, one that Lonergan terms a move from “commonsense” meaning to “theory.” See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Method in Theology*, 92.

<sup>10</sup> While subject to the same “laws” as the natural world, human reason, will and capacity to love, mean that the human person can also “shape” events and so change the course of history. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 81.

Lonergan calls the “common sense” *realm* of meaning. In the “pre-axial” stage of human existence, 800 BCE to 500 CE, human consciousness operated solely within the realm of commonsense meaning. Human consciousness at this early stage in human development was “undifferentiated,” that is, the procedures of commonsense knowing were used to provide explanations with which to answer, not only the questions of everyday life, but, also to explain, all questions related to human living; consequently “its self-knowledge, its religion are rudimentary,” dominated by myth and magic.<sup>11</sup>

Socrates’ search for a universal understanding of “courage” reveals a growing realization of the limitations of commonsense meaning. He searched for meaning that could be understood as true in all circumstances and for all time, a meaning that common sense could not provide. Socrates’ search for universal meanings marks the shift or axial breakthrough in human consciousness to a new realm of meaning.<sup>12</sup> Lonergan terms this new realm of meaning the realm of theory. Characteristically, the human person operating in the realm of theory shifts from the pursuit of the concrete, particular good needed in an everyday project toward the pursuit of theoretical ideals to categorize knowledge, truth, reality and causality. In other words, the axial breakthrough to a theoretical realm of meaning constituted the “discovery of the human mind.”<sup>13</sup> Lonergan describes this breakthrough as a differentiation of consciousness whereby both the common sense and theoretical realms of meaning operate and can be distinguished from one another. However, the theoretical stage of meaning that followed the first axial shift proved to have limitations, as well.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Lonergan draws on Plato’s early dialogues for this example. Ibid., 82.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 93.

The rise of differentiated consciousness to the new realm of theory opened up a new world whose objects had not previously existed in the commonsense world. Mass and temperature, for instance, were new concepts that became possible by the systematic exigencies in the world of theory. Mass and temperature cannot be seen or touched. “Mass is neither weight nor momentum. A metal object will feel colder than a wooden one beside it, but both will be of the same temperature.”<sup>14</sup> Hence, explanations of temperature and mass required reference to a new realm of meaning in which theory provided the answer. However, just as the realm of theory provided answers that common sense could not, so, too, theoretical consciousness confronted its limits when the need for critical exigencies arose.<sup>15</sup> Theoretical consciousness could explain the truth about certain realities; yet, it could not explain the variations in theories and philosophies, and it could not account for contingency or change.<sup>16</sup> An explanation of this sort required the critical exigencies provided by a further differentiation of consciousness, that of the realm of interiority.<sup>17</sup> Hailed as “epochal,” Lonergan’s work beckons the modern world to the realization and appropriation of this further dimension of meaning.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>15</sup> See, Ibid., 96-97 for a greater appreciation of the role played by modern science and philosophy in the differentiation of human consciousness to the realm of interiority.

<sup>16</sup> “Differentiated consciousness appears when the critical exigence turns attention upon interiority, when self-appropriation is achieved, when the subject relates his different procedures to the several realms, relates the several realms to one another, and consciously shifts from one realm to another by consciously changing his procedures.” Ibid., 84.

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan portrays the types of questions that confounded theory, and so prompted the further differentiation of consciousness to interiority, as follows: “So [humanity] is confronted with the three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it? With these questions one turns from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the appropriation of one’s own interiority, one’s subjectivity, one’s operations, their structure, their norms, their potentialities. Such appropriation, in its technical expression, resembles theory. But in itself it is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but also to the intending subject and his acts...For self-appropriation of itself is a grasp of transcendental method, and that grasp



Three different terms signify what Lonergan accomplished by his contribution to this epochal shift to a new realm of meaning: turn to the subject, historical consciousness and move to interiority. All of these terms mark the transition from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the conscious appropriation of one's interiority. What constitutes the appropriation of one's interiority? A person achieves self-appropriation by the "heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending not merely to objects but also to the intending subject and his acts...one's operations, their structure, their norms, their potentialities."<sup>19</sup> Once again, it is important to note that such a shift or differentiation in consciousness accompanies a new world of meaning, in this case, one in which differences can be explained and critiqued. A person's ability to pay attention to her thinking and feeling processes and to the values involved in her decision-making, to be aware of the various realms of meaning within which she operates in her work and interactions with others, and to be able to consciously shift from one realm of meaning to another means that she has discovered a "basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both."<sup>20</sup> In short, the realm of interiority provides the modern world with what theory could not: a grounding in human intentional consciousness that means philosophy can "cut to the root of philosophic differences and incomprehensions. It has the further, secondary function in distinguishing, relating, grounding the several

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provides one with the tools not only for an analysis of commonsense procedures but also for the differentiation of the sciences and the construction of their methods." Ibid., 83.

<sup>18</sup> See, Ibid., 96-97 for a greater appreciation of the role played by modern science and philosophy in the differentiation of human consciousness to the realm of interiority. These cultural developments provided understandings that precipitated Lonergan's theory of emergent probability and shift to interiority.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 85.

realms of meaning and, no less, in grounding the methods of the sciences and so promoting their unification.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the image of the modern world consciously operating in the realm of interiority bespeaks something epochal.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Insight: Lonergan’s Theory of Emergent Probability***

Though incorporating theoretical meaning, Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability offered a new world view that nevertheless dismantled the classicist world view that had developed in conjunction with the theoretical realm of meaning.<sup>23</sup> Classicism spanned the two-thousand-year period in history in which culture was viewed as normative, that is, as having developed the control of meaning through theory, which, in its “universality,” could be applied to all cultures. A classicist world view, therefore, incorporated a static view of world process and the laws by which it functioned.<sup>24</sup> In this

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>22</sup> Doran notes that “Lonergan found this ground [in human interiority] ...by reaching up to the mind of Aquinas [who explicitly appealed to inner experience] but it is a ground that Aquinas himself did not and could not cultivate with the differentiation that modern developments make possible.... The thematization, technique, method, and foundations here referred to emerge in Lonergan’s writings with a systematic explanatory clarity that allows him to speak of a third stage of meaning.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 42.

<sup>23</sup> Throughout this chapter, the more technical explanations have been relegated to footnotes.

<sup>24</sup> Whereas the classicist static world view looked upon change as accidental, an empirical notion of culture embraces change in the incorporation of historicity. “Historicity means...that human living is informed by meaning, that meanings are the product of intelligence, that human intelligence develops cumulatively over time, and that such cumulative development differs in different histories.” See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 170-71. Hence, the new control of meaning involves the recovery of that “kernel of truth” brought forward in continuity throughout history by successive generations and upon which the basis of a fuller understanding is developed in ever closer approximations to truth. In other words, the new control of meaning recognizes “a new series of ranges of schemes of recurrence in the world process whose immanent intelligibility is an emergent probability and whose unfolding in the realms of meaning is the intelligent intelligibility of human consciousness.” Robert M. Doran, S.J., *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 661. See also “Doctrinal Pluralism” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 70-104.

view, theoretical laws that categorized unchanging regularities offered the full explanation of human biological functions, such as growth and reproduction. An examination of this sort began with the study of the nature of a particular phenomenon, using logical deduction. However, the shift to historical consciousness that began to emerge in the modern world dismantled this static notion. In so doing, its starting point shifted from the study of the nature of the object of a particular phenomenon to that of the study of empirical data. Through empirical observation, both nature and reason are revealed as dynamic. Lonergan notes that the advent of historical consciousness coincided with the development of modern science, whose starting point is empirical data. Modern science reveals that human knowledge and meaning involve a dynamism, one which yields different understandings of truths at different times and places.<sup>25</sup> Yet, the speed of change in modern science and the vast body of knowledge that ensued demanded interdisciplinary integration, some viewpoint or ground that would provide a broader perspective on the human in relation to reality—human origins, interrelatedness, direction and the dynamism of the universe. The modern world needed a new world view.

Lonergan's unique contribution in *Insight* was that of offering such a world view, one that he termed "emergent probability." Emergent probability incorporated both the regularities of classical laws and the probabilities that arise from the dynamic, non-systematic, aspects of world process. Lonergan's theory of emergent probability

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<sup>25</sup> Lonergan's term for this view on knowledge is "proportionate being," the notion that the human knower moves towards knowledge of everything by a verifiable knowledge of some things. "Just as cognitional activity is the becoming known of being, so objective process is the becoming of proportionate being. Indeed, since cognitional activity is itself but a part of this universe, so its heading to being is but the particular instance in which universal striving towards being becomes conscious and intelligent and reasonable." See Lonergan, *Insight*, 470.

expanded on previous notions of world process by providing an explanatory structure that incorporated and integrated notions of randomness and statistical and classical laws.

Previous notions, such as Aristotelian necessary laws and mechanistic determinism, characteristically failed to appreciate both classical and statistical laws. Contingency, random occurrences, the particular, those aspects of the empirical data previously understood to be irrelevant in a classicist world view, have found significance in the modern scientific revolution in which statistical laws have explanatory relevance.

Perhaps the height of this relevance came to the fore in the time of Charles Darwin and his work *The Origin of Species*. His notion of evolution as “chance variation” introduced the study of statistical laws into the mainstream of scientific efforts.<sup>26</sup> Since then, statistical method and its concomitant expression in evolutionary process have assumed a fundamental role in various fields of human study.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lonergan’s engagement with Darwin’s theory of evolution revealed the need for both a correction and a development in Darwin’s notion of “chance variation.” The basis for Lonergan’s correction of Darwin’s “chance variation” lies in their respective conceptions of reality. Like Galileo, a Darwinian view conceived reality in terms of matter, which takes a certain “form” in place and time. A scientific inquiry, in this view, assumes its object to be an imaginable entity moving through an imaginable process in an imaginable space-time framework. Statistical laws applied in this view of reality would conceive forms in terms of observable variations in basic matter.

Lonergan, on the other hand, maintained a philosophical position that conceived reality in terms of intelligibility that abstracts from the particularities of place and time. The inherent difference lies in their respective notion of a “thing” and how that thing emerges in accord with probabilities. Lonergan’s contribution attests to an intelligibility in indeterminacy that had previously not been realized. While forward-looking in his move away from notions of “automatic progress” or the totally determined systems of a classicist world view, Darwin’s conception of reality prevented him from taking that one final step that would lead to a discovery of an intelligibility in indeterminacy. That final step made in Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability offered to the modern world a higher viewpoint that replaced Darwin’s portrayal of emergence in terms of natural selection or as mere chance, and his notion of “survival of the fittest” becomes understood in terms of defensive schemes of recurrence involved in the probability of survival. Ibid., 154-57. See also Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: The Lonergan Website, 1999), 100-101.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Lonergan’s unique contribution has taken place within a cultural context where science and philosophy have already begun to develop the notion of an “emergent” universe. For examples of other authors’ work, both philosophers and scientists, who theorize about this new world view see: Holmes Rolston III, *Philosophy Gone Wild: Environmental Ethics* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989); Harold J. Morowitz, *The Emergence of Everything: How the World Became Complex* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Philip Clayton, *Mind and Emergence: From Quantum to Consciousness* (New York: Oxford

In response to the influence of modern science, Lonergan endeavors in *Insight* to establish a world view called “emergent probability” that affirms *both* classical and statistical laws. In itself, a theory of “emergent probability” provides an outstanding contribution to a modern understanding of world process; yet it is in the further identification of that emergent process in human knowing that Lonergan’s work assumes “epochal” notoriety.<sup>28</sup> Classical and statistical laws outline the two basic ways that humans understand. The notion of emergent probability shifts attention away from external, abstract, static notions of being toward a concern with the intelligibility that is immanent in human experience. Within this gaze, Lonergan prompts the reader to become aware of that intelligibility as the dynamic structure of human inquiring.<sup>29</sup> In an

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University Press, 2004). Lonergan’s “epochal” contribution lies not solely in his identification of this emergent world process in human knowing and deciding but in the further invitation to self-appropriation. By objectifying the patterns of knowing and deciding in human consciousness, self-appropriation provides the foundation upon which to critically engage differences. See “Self-affirmation of the Knower” in *Insight*, 343-366.

<sup>28</sup> Remaining rooted in Thomas Aquinas’ work on human understanding, Lonergan was led through the influences of modern empirical science to develop this contemporary world view in *Insight*.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the overall thrust of Lonergan’s project in *Insight* can be encapsulated in his invitation to consider the immanent intelligibility of a cartwheel (*Insight*, 31). The exercise leads the reader through a reflection on his or her own experience of the cognitive processes involved in coming to the final grasp of an explanatory definition of a circle. First, we observe the emergence of the desire to understand; second, is the hint, suggestion, clue, the beginning of insight; third, the cooperation of imagination with intellectual effort; and finally, the achievement of a patterned set of concepts grasped in an insight.

By their cooperation, by successive adjustments, question and insight, image and concept present a solid front. The answer is a patterned set of concepts. The image strains to approximate to the concepts. The concepts, by added conceptual determinations, can express their differences from the merely approximate image. The pivot between images and concepts is the insight. And *setting the standard* which insight, images, and concepts must meet is the question, the desire to know, that could have kept the process in motion by further queries had its requirements not been satisfied. (*Insight*, 34- 5)

Having introduced us to the cognitive processes involved in grasping the immanent intelligibility of a circle, Lonergan invites the reader to undertake the further step of grasping the immanent intelligibility of the universe of our experience that he formulates into a world view called “emergent probability.” To grasp emergent probability as an explanatory idea means to advert to a structure characterized as generic (non-specific), relatively invariant, and incomplete in its account of the immanent intelligibility and design of the universe of our experience. To reach explanation on this level involves several steps: (1) the concrete synthesis of classical laws into conditioned series of schemes of recurrence, (2) the need to establish that

effort to initiate a differentiation of consciousness, Lonergan invites the reader to distinguish between the content of thought and its basic structure. This basic structure inherent in knowing provides a model for Lonergan's account of emergent probability.

An explanatory account of the world process that Lonergan terms "emergent probability," therefore, correlates the relationship between an understanding of the structure of classical laws, which explain regularities, with an understanding of the structure of statistical laws, which explain probabilities. This understanding of the structure of both classical and statistical laws will provide the basis toward which the goal of grasping world process as dynamic, generic, invariant and incomplete can be reached.

### *Classical and Statistical Laws*

The shift that occurred in modern scientific thought came about through a developed understanding of the basic laws that govern our universe. Laws refer to the regularities operating in nature that scientists have observed for centuries. They are abstractions from concrete instances in human experience. Lonergan's account of abstraction is the process in human knowing by which one can "grasp the essential and disregard the incidental."<sup>30</sup> Abstraction demonstrates the selectivity of intelligence in its drive for an insight, the term that means to understand. Its intent is not descriptive, that

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such schemes, as combinations of events, acquire first a probability of emergence and then a probability of survival through the realization of the conditioned series, and (3) finally to grasp that, in the event that such a series of schemes is realized in accord with probabilities, "then there is available a general principle that promises answers to questions about the reason for numbers and distributions, concentrations and time intervals, selectivity and uncertain stability, development and breakdowns" (Robert Doran, Lecture notes for *Insight* class, RGT 3570Y, 1996, 2-3). Again, the immanent intelligibility of this structure is what is being termed "emergent probability." In fact, Lonergan contends that emergent probability is the immanent intelligibility of all possible events in world process.

<sup>30</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 55.

is, relating patterns in events to our senses, but rather searches for explanatory relations, which relate events to one another. Lonergan observes that abstractions come in the two types: classical and statistical. He notes that both types of abstraction are concerned with the *same* data. It is not the case that some of our experiences can be explained by regular laws of the classical type while other areas are explained by statistical laws. Rather, both are different ways of explaining the same world by attending to different aspects of the data and by asking different kinds of questions. A closer examination of the difference between these two laws is necessary before moving on to their significance in the understanding of a world process called emergent probability.

Classical laws abstract from the data of our experience in such a way as to discover that which is universal and unchanging, that is, a law that applies in every situation “all things being equal.” For instance, the law of gravity comes to mind as a classical law. Its principles work with regularity and are universal across time and space. Classical methods of investigation assume that the particular is not relevant. Rather, relevance lies in unchanging correlations, which are determined over a long series of events in order to discover the common principles governing such events. One recalls that Galileo sought to grasp the nature of gravity by observing similar properties of numerous objects dropped from various heights. Through the scientific process of cataloguing his data and classifying properties common to these many instances, Galileo discovered certain patterns or serial forms. In this way, he was able to determine a correlation of distance and time that explained the invariant relationship over all similar situations. This invariance is the basic assumption of science of the “classical” type, which accounts for the systematic explanations of creation.

The relations between data from which classical laws abstract are grasped as a direct insight. In other words, a direct insight results from the apprehension of systematic relations in the data. The insight rests on the discovery of an intelligible unity in the data that satisfies the intent of a question. However, direct insights need to be understood within the context of Lonergan's intentionality analysis of human knowing. Here the term "intention" depicts the human person in his or her inherent drive to know, a desire or appetite for answers to questions. Lonergan observes that this drive is only satisfied in the occurrence of an answer that fulfills the conditions of the questions. The process of knowing involves several psychological acts that include paying attention to the data, grasping the intelligibility of the relations in the data, and judging the correctness of the understanding. On the level of understanding, Lonergan notes that such acts involve distinguishing the essential from the non-essential. In the process of understanding, the data are scrutinized by intelligence and imagination as it searches for correlations within that data. In this process, other possible answers to the question are rejected as mistaken or irrelevant if they do not qualify in meeting the demands or intention of the question. As such, the act of understanding is intelligence grasping a unity in a set of insights or grasping a certain intelligibility or pattern that unifies the data. Such a grasp means that intelligence has done its job; it has satisfied the criteria of the question by discovering a unifying pattern. A person recognizes this in her experience when she acknowledges that something "makes sense." Knowledge of this type (laws that express a unified set of direct insights) is of "classical laws."

While it has been shown that classical laws abstract from the particularities of place and time in order to verify the law in question, there remain aspects of the data yet



to be examined. These “other aspects” that fall outside the purview of systematic explanation comprise the data treated by statistical science. This second kind of intrinsic intelligibility studies and counts the particularities of place and time left behind by classical method in order to discover a general law. In other words, statistical science apprehends an intrinsic intelligibility in the random factors of data. Its basis is an inverse insight, which grasps that there is no unifying, classical intelligibility available in the data. But it follows with a direct insight into an ideal frequency around which other events are expected to diverge nonsystematically. Statistical laws, therefore, are about the frequencies of events in the long run. Their results demonstrate “a positive tendency, an intelligible order, an effective thrust that is no less explanatory than the rigorous conclusions based on classical laws.”<sup>31</sup>

The statistical law, then, is a law of probabilities. A probability constitutes an ideal frequency that expects exceptions—exceptions that are nonsystematic. So, while classical laws explain the aspects of the world that occur with regularity, statistical science deals with the irregular or the variable aspects of the world. In other words, classical laws determine what would happen if the conditions of the systematic relations were fulfilled, while statistical laws verify how often or with what frequency one could expect those conditions to be fulfilled.<sup>32</sup> Just as classical laws assume “all other things being equal,” conversely, the premise of statistical methods states that all things are not always equal. The latter concerns itself, not with the invariance of certain phenomena, but

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 134.

with the frequency of the occurrence of such phenomena.<sup>33</sup> In short, classical laws explain, for example, the laws of motion by which a coin tossed in the air moves through space, but statistical science deals with how often such a coin will land with heads up. Galileo explained the nature of gravity, but his classical theory could not determine if and how often objects would fall from heights.<sup>34</sup>

By distinguishing the two types of laws at work in empirical science, Lonergan laid the groundwork necessary to perceive the implications of the shift in world view brought about in the twentieth century. Its development introduced an intelligible world

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<sup>33</sup> While classical investigations assume similar outcomes in similar situations, “all things being equal,” statistical investigations recognize that all things are not equal. Thus, the method of inquiry used by statistical investigations concerns itself not with the regularity of classical laws but rather with the frequency of its occurrence. It answers questions, not about the “what” of an event, as in the classical investigation, but about “how often.” It arrives at an answer by counting events of a certain type and calculating probabilities. This further inquiry into statistical relations requires the distinction between “ideal” and “actual” frequencies.” Actual frequencies are the actual number of occurrences of a certain event in a given time period. Ideal frequencies provide the ratio that establishes the mean from which the actual frequencies diverge non-systematically. In this way, we observe that the abstraction done by a statistical inquiry makes available, not a hypothesis, as is the case of the classical inquirer, but, rather, the probabilities that predict the likelihood of a certain event happening. This does not mean, however, that the statistical inquirer is merely concerned with the purely nonsystematic, for it is the systematic relations that set the ideal limits from which the nonsystematic events diverge nonsystematically. See *Insight*, 133. Thus, classical science seeks to determine the “nature” of a certain phenomenon, while statistical science sets out to determine the “state” of a phenomenon. For example, in the first instance, through classical laws astronomers can determine the exact timing of eclipses that occurred in the past and that will occur in the future. However, the “state” of the world’s economy or the daily prediction of the weather constantly changes, and so ongoing statistical study is needed to predict probable outcomes.

<sup>34</sup> By observing, cataloguing and classifying similar properties of numerous objects dropped from various heights, Galileo sought to understand the immanent intelligibility of falling bodies. His discovery involved a methodology that involved a shift away from description of events—from the sensible similarity of things in relation to himself as an observer to that of formulating an explanation of their relations, the similarity of things in relation to one another. By doing this, he was eventually able to determine an equation comprised of explanatory terms and relationships that held invariantly over all similar situations at any time or place. This invariance is what constitutes scientific investigations of the “classical” type and which culminates in systematic explanations or “laws.” The very “nature,” then, of classical types of investigations as abstract leaves unexplained those aspects of a situation that deal with the particular places and times. These “other aspects” constitute the treatment of the data dealt with by statistical science. While Galileo was able to ascertain the universal aspect of classical laws, his world view was nonetheless one of mechanistic determinism because of his inability to abstract the laws of nature from the field of imaginable elements. “[The universality and necessity of the (classical) laws are] attached immediately to imaginable particles moving in an imaginable ether....” *Ibid.*, 153. There follows “...a mechanistic view of the universe. ...[T]he universe implicit in Galilean methodology is an aggregate of imaginable parts, and each is related systematically to all the others.” *Ibid.*, 154.

view that acknowledged the ordering of human experience by the complementary combination of *both* classical and statistical laws. Yet, such terms as “ordering” and “combining” merely hint at the deeper complexity of the unity in relatedness that is the immanent dynamism Lonergan called “emergent probability.”<sup>35</sup>

How does Lonergan explain the deeper complexity of this unity in relatedness between the two kinds of laws that operate in the process of emergent probability?

### *Schemes of Recurrence*

The notion of a scheme of recurrence constitutes the first point to grasp in the consideration of Lonergan’s project involving the two kinds of laws as they operate in the process of emergent probability. Recall that scientific investigations of the classical type

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<sup>35</sup> Lonergan’s significant contribution to modern thought is in the formulation of these “other aspects” or coincidental aggregates that reflect statistical laws as they are complementary in relation to classical laws. Together, classical and statistical laws constitute his world view called “emergent probability.” Concerning their complementarity and their respective types of investigation, Lonergan has this to say:

For classical formulations regard conjugates, which are verified only in events. And statistical formulations regard events, which are defined only by conjugates. ...In other words, classical laws tell what would happen if conditions were fulfilled; statistical laws tell how often conditions are fulfilled; and so the phrase, “other things being equal,” amounts to a vague reference to the statistical residues, which are the province of the complementary statistical laws. (*Insight*, 131)

His discovery marks a significant shift in human understanding of world process—a shift from theoretical to historical consciousness. Both Aristotelian and Galilean theories sought to explain everything according to systematic processes formulated in classical laws. This viewpoint precludes statistical knowing as a valid type of knowing. Indeed, Aristotle recognized contingency and change, but his focus was on the regularity of change, and consequently tended to “explain away” chance as incidental or a mere coincidence. The “Aristotelian” world view, therefore, regarded world process as constituted either by the cause and effect of regularly occurring events or of mere coincidence. (This point is well made in Lonergan’s *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000], 79-82). Its account of “mere coincidence” lay in the insistence that ignorance was the culprit behind its lack of intelligibility; given enough time and research, everything could be explained by systematic patterns and relationships. A world view such as that of Aristotle and Galileo, which holds that all world processes can be explained by classical laws, is termed “classicism.” With the dawn of modern science and the discovery of an empirical indeterminacy in the laws of evolution and physics, statistical science has gained prominence. The incorporation of both types of investigation in understanding world process constitutes Lonergan’s present project in the formulation of his theory of emergent probability. See Lonergan’s discussion of Aristotle in *Insight*, 151-52.

yielded direct insights that grasp an intelligibility in events that repeat themselves or are universal. The repetitive or cyclical nature of these events means that they are self-supportive. An example would be nutrition in the human person. Food is consumed and enters the digestive system; the blood in the vascular system is enriched from the digestive system and carries the nutrients throughout the body, strengthening and storing nutrients in the muscular system. The muscular system, in turn, provides the physical ability for repeated food consumption. This cycle represents merely one of the multiple and complex systems in the human person; nevertheless, it demonstrates the cyclical nature of a self-supporting system—self-supporting, that is, if, “all things being equal,” none of the events in the series breaks down.

Lonergan terms this cyclical series a scheme of recurrence. It occurs when a series of conditions for an event coil around in a circle, such that event “A” fulfills the conditions for the occurrence of event “B,” which in turn fulfills conditions for “C” to occur, which then satisfies the conditions for “A” to recur. A recurrent cycle demonstrates a certain stability. Moreover, Lonergan identifies this stability as determined by defensive mechanisms that can develop in order to offset any intervening event that threatens the cycle. This defensive mechanism manifests as a second cycle designed to eliminate the intruder. Examples of defensive systems would be the body’s immune system or the heart’s ability (prompted by angina) to form new collateral coronary arteries when atherosclerosis develops.

Note that these self-supporting schemes of recurrence have both horizontal and vertical links to other schemes. An organism under scientific investigation is understood not only in the intelligible relations of its internal functioning but also in its external

relationship to its environment. In this way, one situates the nutrition of human persons within a broader ecological system: its horizontal relationship to other schemes of recurrence. The food chain demonstrates this interdependence. However, the broad expanse of these horizontally linked schemes of recurrence also has vertical links to other schemes. These other schemes, in this example, are the physical and chemical schemes beneath an ecological system that support the scheme above it. The health of their functioning provides the conditions that make the flourishing of the ecological system possible. Likewise, there are psychological, economic and social schemes operating above the ecological system. Farmers harvest grains, and the grains are sold on the world market and distributed as food according to various socially and politically organized schemes. It is important to note that a recurring scheme conditions not only the events proper to its sphere but also those that are lower to it. Farmers may decide to forego toxic pesticides in order to maintain healthy soil and water supplies. The point is that each of these schemes has an interdependent and mutually conditioning relationship with each other.

### *Emergence*

Lonergan uses this notion of conditioning as the foundation for his account of the emergence of schemes of recurrence. Schemes of recurrence are conditioned and, therefore, not inevitable. This fact brings to light the importance of statistical laws for an understanding of world process, because it introduces probabilities into the equation. Thus, although the scheme itself is a combination of classical laws that function with regularity, “schemes begin, continue, and cease to function in accord with statistical

probabilities.”<sup>36</sup> The very presence of a higher scheme means that the spatio-temporal conditions from whence it sprung possessed a probability that the higher scheme would emerge. Nevertheless, probabilities are not only concerned with emergence; they also predict the survival of schemes. At any stage of history, then, there are probabilities for the emergence and probabilities for the survival of various schemes of recurrence. The emergence of new schemes depends on a coincidental manifold of underlying events that produce the conditions for such an emergence.<sup>37</sup> Random genetic mutations that yield over time a new species or subspecies exemplify this emergence.

On a further note, Lonergan draws attention to the fact that, in any account of emergent probability, one witnesses an ongoing tension between stability or survival and development. “Schemes with a high probability of survival tend to imprison materials in their own routines. They provide a highly stable basis for later schemes, but they also tend to prevent later schemes from emerging.”<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, new schemes emerge or development takes place when earlier schemes have a low probability of survival. In other words, in the unfolding of the world process of emergent probability, we observe that, at any stage in that process, there are probabilities for the emergence and probabilities for the survival of schemes of recurrence. The first aspect, emergence, is

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>37</sup> The jump in the probability of a nonsystematic divergence of a scheme is the key point in unlocking the meaning of the term “emergence.” Furthermore, an understanding of world process as emergent probability portrays an increasing complexification of schemes of recurrence. Hence, single schemes provide the conditions for a series of schemes, which in turn provide the conditions that increase the possibility that new schemes will emerge. For example, the circulation of water over the earth offers a scheme of recurrence that conditions the possibility for the occurrence of the nitrogen cycle needed for plant life. Without the scheme of the nitrogen cycle producing plant life, there would be no possibility for the occurrence of the digestive system in animal life to occur. Individual schemes, then, form a conditioned recurrent series of schemes. Thanks to Cynthia Crysdale for this example. “Revisioning Natural Law: From the Classicist Paradigm to Emergent Probability,” in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 473.

<sup>38</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 146.

dependent on a coincidental plurality of underlying events that provide the conditions for the possibility that emergence will occur. Random genetic mutations, for instance, have yielded new species.<sup>39</sup> It follows that the survival of schemes of recurrence depends on the ongoing survival of their underlying schemes by which they are conditioned. Their extinction leads to the breakdown of the underlying manifolds. For example, the demise or changes in certain aspects of an ecosystem can lead to the extinction of a species. The heart of Lonergan's explanation of world process thus reveals itself as dynamic in that it involves the unfolding of "the successive realization [of events] in accord with successive schedules of probability of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence."<sup>40</sup>

In short, a summary of Lonergan's challenge to comprehend his theory of "emergent probability" by "grasping the immanent intelligibility of the universe of our experience" demonstrated that a theory of emergent probability offers an explanation of world process that is dynamic, generic, invariant and incomplete. The steps involved in this acknowledgement led the reader through an account of two types of complementary heuristic structures involved in scientific investigations: the classical investigation and the statistical investigation. The first anticipates systematic relations in data and the latter the nonsystematic. In their complementarity is derived not only an understanding of a

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<sup>39</sup> "The result of such a succession of stages of fulfilling conditions and schematic interactions of probably recurring events would be the emergence of a higher order genus of 'things.' And contrary to the anticipations of the determinist or the naïve realist, such a higher order genus of things would be irreducible. For the various evolutionary species can only be explained completely in the terms and relations of their own laws which grasp the intelligibility in the systematically recurring schemes and series of schemes operative in their own physical, chemical or biological sphere. The 'matter' common to all such species would not be conceived as some aggregate of prime particles, but as the concretely intelligible set of recurrence schemes, which can be understood in all instances of their specific life form and which alone suffices to explain their functioning." Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the work of Bernard Lonergan*, 111. On a fuller explanation of the term "thing," see Lonergan, *Insight*, 119-120.

<sup>40</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 149.

structure whereby recurrent series of schemes are realized in accord with schedules of probabilities “but more specifically a general principle by which one can begin to situate an account of the manifold of world events; their numbers and distributions, timing, selectivity, the uncertainty in stabilities, and an explanation for developments and breakdowns.”<sup>41</sup> Lonergan has made a contribution by providing a philosophical basis for understanding the two types of classical and statistical laws in their relation to world process. Furthermore, through the work, *Insight*, Lonergan not only identifies emergent probability as a heuristic structure operating in world processes but also identifies it, in its further complexification, as the dynamism inherent in human cognitive acts of knowing. Having outlined Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability as an introduction to the realm of interiority, the basis is now in place from which to study *Insight* as a moment within Lonergan’s development.

***Emergent Probability as it Enters Human Consciousness: Reality, Objectivity, Proportionate Being***

The “epochal” leap in being, which Doran asserts as the achievement of Lonergan’s eleventh chapter of *Insight*, “The Self-affirmation of the Knower,” brings to the fore not only an understanding of emergent probability as it enters human consciousness but also its further implications in the self-possession of one’s subjectivity as a knower. Doran writes,

The leap in being that occurs in transcendental method [explanatory self-appropriation of interiority] means in part that intelligent, reasonable, responsible emergent probability can come to understand itself, can work out the laws and patterns of its emergent process, and can thus direct itself from a more secure basis of self-knowledge, freedom, and responsibility. As ignorance and neglect of the transcendental imperative give way to

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Doran, Lecture notes for *Insight* class, RGT 3570Y, 1996, 10.



an appropriation of the laws of intelligent emergence, the probability is increased of cutting a path of genuine advance. A new set of conjugate forms in the individual and new patterns of relations in the human community, a higher integration in the being of the subject and a new series of ranges of schemes of recurrence in human knowing and human living, become attainable. In transcendental method, the course of this expansion of consciousness passes through the intelligent, reasonable, and responsible differentiation and integration of the various spontaneities and cultural acquisitions of human consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

Lonergan's basic clarification in the shift to interiority "takes the form of a position of the human subject as subject."<sup>43</sup> His intention was to supply a "ground" or "foundation" in interiorly differentiated consciousness by which to "advance the positions and reverse the counter-positions in modern developments."<sup>44</sup> In *Insight*, this ground is established in cognitional theory with its three basic positions: on the subject as

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<sup>42</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 17. Emergent probability conceives the human person as the focal point in the realization of a set of successively higher order systematic integrations of the schemes of recurrence constituting the four levels of physics, chemistry, biology and zoology. In effect, the emergence of human consciousness onto the scene of world process constitutes that instance, that evolutionary turning point when what is intelligible becomes intelligent. Although like plants and animals in their respective abilities to biologically systematize various aggregates of chemical compounds in response to changing environmental conditions or to involve sensitive appetites in the systematization of lower order, organic materials, the human person emerges as distinct. Characterized by his or her cognitive capacity to effect an even further systematic integration of the outcomes of such sensitive schemes through her acts of insight, judgment and decision, the human person represents a pivotal point in world process.

Within the schema of an emergent world process there arises the possibility and probability that the intelligibility immanent in every scheme and series of schemes of recurrence can become known to a knowing subject intentionally oriented to the probability of emergent world process. In acts of knowing, the knowing subject reveals the higher order, systematic integrations of non-systematic manifolds of images and sense data in accord with probabilities. As with all schemes of recurrence, the higher order system realizes an intelligibility, the possibility of which is immanent in the lower order manifold. And it does so in accord with probabilities. The operations in human intelligence that prompt the grasp of an insight and the affirmation of truth in judgment are the higher integration and differentiation of the dynamism of an emergent world process. Lonergan's term for this relationship between human knowing and world process is isomorphism—in essence, the affirmation that acts of knowing grasp and affirm the intelligibility of world process and in so doing grasp the intelligibility immanent in being. See *Insight*, "Self-affirmation of the Knower," 343-371.

<sup>43</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 387-390. On a further note, in Chapter 14 of *Insight* the term used is not "foundation" but "basis." Lonergan, *Insight*, 410-455.

a knower, on being, and on objectivity.<sup>45</sup> Lonergan's articulation of these positions on knowing, being and objectivity form the basis for his treatment of metaphysics where potency, form and act are correlated with the cognitional operations of experience, understanding and judgment.<sup>46</sup> It is in this articulation of an explicit metaphysics that the invitation to self-possession of one's self as a knowing subject finds its deeper significance. Doran writes that, in *Insight*, "...we are told that explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being."<sup>47</sup> In this early stage of his work, Lonergan identifies the operations by which the human person constitutes the world as the cognitive operations of one's insights and judgments. As such, in *Insight*, the *existential* element inherent in such implementation is compacted into the cognitive operations.<sup>48</sup>

Lonergan establishes his position on the subject as a knower, on being, and on objectivity by first engaging the cognitional theoretic question, "What am I doing when I am knowing?" Then he engages with the epistemological question, "Why is doing that knowing?," and together these two questions form the basis of the metaphysical question, "What do I know when I do that?" The present task involves outlining these three positions on the subject, on being and on objectivity for the purpose of understanding their foundational role in philosophy.

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<sup>45</sup> The three questions from which Lonergan establishes his position on the subject, on being and on objectivity are explicitly cited in the later work, *Method in Theology*. What am I doing when I am knowing?—cognitional theory; Why is doing that knowing?—epistemology; What do I know when I do that?—metaphysics. *Method in Theology*, 25.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapters 11-15 of *Insight*, 343- 511.

<sup>47</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 33.

<sup>48</sup> Doran notes that only in Lonergan's later work does an existential differentiation demonstrate the transformative impact that an explicit metaphysics has on the self-constitution of a person and his or her world. *Ibid.*, 34.

Cognitive theory answers the question, “What am I doing when I am knowing?” The answer involves not only a definition of the cognitive operations at work in one’s knowing but, as well, elucidates in an explanatory fashion the relations that the operations have to one another.<sup>49</sup> One is made aware of the explanatory relations by the reflexive act of self-appropriation whereby one is “provided immediate access to the entire range of data on the subject.”<sup>50</sup> Consciousness, therefore, is the awareness immanent in cognitive acts and the further awareness of one’s self as subject of those acts. Thus, one discovers one’s self as a knower by observing and relating one’s own cognitive processes.

What am I doing when I am knowing? Cognitive theory outlines an interlocking set of operations that can be identified on one of three levels of consciousness. The empirical level is the first level of consciousness whereby one becomes conscious of the data of sense and the data of consciousness.<sup>51</sup> Intelligent

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<sup>49</sup> On the relationship between “description and explanation” in cognitive theory, Doran writes: “...description elucidates the event of insight as satisfying, sudden and unexpected, dependent on inquiry pivoting between the concrete and the abstract, passing into the habitual texture of the mind, combining with other insights, open to systematic formulation. But description yields to explanation when one locates data, percepts, and images as the material concerning which one inquires and into which one has insight, when one further recognizes that concepts, definitions, and formulations are dependent on inquiry and insight, when one proceeds to grasp that formulation in turn gives way to a set of further questions of a different kind concerned with the adequacy of one’s understanding, and when these further questions are acknowledged as entailing the reflective operations of checking, marshalling and weighting the evidence, grasping that the conditions for affirming one’s understanding either are or are not fulfilled, affirming or denying that “this is the case,” or judging that one is not yet ready for such an affirmation or denial.” Ibid., 49. Doran draws from Lonergan’s account of the move from description to explanation in his exposition of human knowing. See also, *Insight*, 332-335.

<sup>50</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 49.

<sup>51</sup> In “Reception and Elemental Meaning: An Expansion of the Notion of Psychic Conversion” in *Toronto Journal of Theology* 20:2 (2004), 133- 57, Doran offers an alternative term for this first level in human consciousness. He suggests the term “reception” instead of “experience,” noting that the human person not only attends to the data of consciousness and sense on this level, but also receives in an experience of immediacy, the meanings and values handed on from above—from one’s community. This expanded notion of the first level is particularly pertinent to the third chapter of this thesis regarding the development of an understanding of how the transition from the natural to the supernatural in human consciousness constitutes a development in meaning.

consciousness is the second level. The acts associated with second-level consciousness involve inquiry, insight, conceiving, defining, and formulating a hypothesis. The third level of consciousness identified in a cognitional theory is rational consciousness. Rational consciousness involves acts of critical reflection, marshalling and weighing evidence, grasping the unconditioned, and affirming or denying. All of the operations identified by cognitional theory are intentional in that they each intend objects specific to their respective levels and, in addition, make the objects psychologically present to the subject.

Not only are the cognitive operations intentional, however, but they are also conscious in that they make the performing knower present to herself, not as an object, but as a subject. Therefore, as the subject moves from inquiry to understanding and finally to judgment, “there is a different and fuller self who emerges.”<sup>52</sup> Yet, one may wonder what prompts this movement from inquiry to understanding and finally to judgment? The dynamism of inquiry that binds the three levels of cognitive operations together and governs their process is the pure, detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know.<sup>53</sup> Thus, having defined and explained the terms and relations of one’s

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<sup>52</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 50.

<sup>53</sup> In the later work, *Method in Theology* Lonergan identifies the transcendental precepts operative at each level within the dynamism of the unrestricted, desire to know. The transcendentals are *a priori*, that is, contained in questions prior to the answers. So questions for intelligence that ask, why and what is it, in respect to the data on the empirical level of consciousness move one toward understanding. The process of understanding engages one’s imagination in producing “hunches,” insights, concepts and hypotheses; the prompting of the questions for intelligence drives the search for the intelligible content of the data. To be “intelligent” in the act of understanding, therefore, demands of the inquirer that he or she be vigorous in the search for an intelligible content by paying attention to all the relevant data pertinent to the question. The answer to the questions for intelligence gives rise to further questions for reflection. Questions for reflection ask: Is it so? This question orients one to determine the truth of the intelligibility of what one had come to understand in the previous set of questions. It is either true or it is not true. Questions for reflection involve the subject in a complex series of marshalling the evidence, weighing it against the evidence in the data—does the judgment satisfy the conditions; does it meet the criteria necessary to verify its truth or are further questions and insights necessary? Once the conditions have been fulfilled, a final

cognitive processes in knowing, and, in addition, having invited the reader to his or her own self-affirmation as a knower, Lonergan establishes the position on the subject.

Doran concludes, “The affirmation that such an account is explanatory of one’s own knowing, that one is oneself an empirical, intelligent, and reasonable conscious unity—the intelligent and reasonable affirmation, ‘I am a knower’—constitutes the basic or foundational position of the subject.”<sup>54</sup>

The position on being and the position on objectivity that are also basic positions immanent in cognitional theory follow upon the position on the subject. Once one discovers one’s self as a knower, that what one reasonably affirms to be true is so, then it follows that one can also acknowledge that the objective of the pure desire to know is “being.” In each judgment there occurs a single increment in the totality of all that could be known through the totality of all true judgments.<sup>55</sup>

Doran observes that, in the position of being, Lonergan identifies being not only as the objective of the pure desire but also as a “notion of being” inherent in the subject’s desire to know. Concerning the notion of being, Doran turns attention to the “exigence of

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“reflective” insight grasps the “virtually unconditioned” and follows with a judgment. See *Method in Theology*, 3-25.

<sup>54</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 50.

<sup>55</sup> Lonergan says, “being may be whatever is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation...[so that] being that is proportionate to human knowing [is] proportionate being [and] may be defined as whatever is to be known by human experience, intelligent grasp, and reasonable affirmation.” *Insight*, 416. In the chapter on ‘Metaphysics as Dialectic,’ Lonergan connects being with meaning. Because of the polymorphic nature of human consciousness, consciousness flows within a complexity of various dynamic patterns of experience that serve as organizing principles. They are based on the variety evident in a person’s “conations, interests, attention, purpose”. Lonergan identifies the biological, aesthetic, intellectual, dramatic (*Insight*, 202-21) and later the practical and mystical patterns of experience (*Insight*, 410). The range of possible interpretations concerning what was meant in any given expression of a judgment corresponds to these various patterns in intentional consciousness. Being is understood, therefore, within the range of possible interpretations. “In the measure that one explores human experience, human insights, human reflections, and human polymorphic consciousness, one becomes capable, when provided with the appropriate data, of approximating to the content and context of the meaning of any given expression.” (*Insight*, 590).

the desire to know that promotes the subject to the true judgments in which being is known.”<sup>56</sup> Lonergan recognizes in the exigence of the desire to know, a heuristic anticipation of what is to be known when one’s question comes to rest only in one’s assent to the unconditioned. It is in this recognition of the heuristic anticipation, which the desire to know is, that Lonergan affirms the desire to know as the notion of being. Doran summarizes Lonergan’s thought on the notion of being in this way.

The notion of being, the intention that underpins and penetrates all cognitional contents and constitutes them as cognitional, the core of all meaning, is the subject as consciously attentive, intelligent, and rational, as pursuing understanding and wanting to get things right, as dissatisfied with bright ideas and insisting on evidence, as careful, persistent, cautious, but not indecisive in his or her intellectual commitments, as on the watch for further questions, and as ready to face them when they arise.<sup>57</sup>

As a corollary to the position on the subject, therefore, the position on being provides the further affirmation that, as a consciously empirical, intelligent and rational subject, one not only anticipates being in one’s desire to know but also “[one has] and indeed [is] a notion of what [one] desire[s], a set of criteria for discerning when [one has] and [has] not reached that objective in any particular instance.”<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the position on objectivity follows upon the two positions on the subject and on being because of its dependence upon the two former positions. In combination with the position on being, the position on objectivity serves to answer the epistemological question concerning the validity of knowledge, “Why is doing that knowing?” Lonergan establishes the principal notion of objectivity within the determinate pattern of three main judgments: a judgment in which I know myself, a

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<sup>56</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

judgment that this or that being exists, and a judgment that I am not this or that being. If all three judgments are correct, then a subject can with confidence affirm that her knowledge of herself or of a being other than herself is correct and transcendent of herself. “There is objectivity if there are distinct beings, some of which both know themselves and know others as others.”<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, in true judgment one attains *absolute* objectivity.<sup>60</sup> Because one’s knowing is a grasp of the virtually unconditioned, it involves the transcendence of one’s subjectivity; that is, the reality that is achieved is independent of the subject. In addition to *absolute* objectivity, there are *normative* and *experiential* aspects to objectivity. *Normative* objectivity belongs to a subject giving “free rein to the pure desire to know.”<sup>61</sup> To give free rein to the pure desire to know simply means that a subject remains faithful to the “proper march of cognitional process,” and in so doing, avoids being “de-railed” by unintelligence and unreasonableness.<sup>62</sup> The *experiential* aspect to objectivity pertains to

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid. An understanding of objectivity hinges on the distinction between immediacy and mediation. The human subject as a knower cannot know herself directly or immediately. She can experience herself directly and immediately (as does an infant), but that is not the same as objectively knowing herself. Only when an experience of herself (feelings, for instance) is mediated by acts of understanding and correct judgment can she say that she knows what these feelings are or what they mean. If she has understood correctly, then the object correctly known, in this example, is her feelings. This example brings to light the basic issue that knowing is more than an immediate experience—or “taking a good look.” It involves recognizing that objective knowing has three transcending and functionally united activities that together make human knowing valid: an empirical, an intelligible and critical component. In this way, the human subject asserts that being is known through correct judgment. This distinction between two types of knowledge pertaining to the world of immediacy and the world mediated by meaning occurred in Lonergan’s chapter on “Meaning” in his later work, *Method in Theology*, 57-100.

<sup>60</sup> “Because the content of the judgment is an absolute, it is withdrawn from relativity to the subject that utters it, the place in which he utters it, the time at which he utters it. Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was a contingent event occurring at a particular place and time. But a true affirmation of that event is an eternal, immutable, definitive validity. For if it is true that he did cross, then no one whatever at any place or time can truly deny that he did. Hence it is in virtue of absolute objectivity that our knowing acquires what has been named its publicity.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 402.

<sup>61</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 53.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

the experience of the flow of empirical consciousness, prior to the activities of intelligent and reasonable consciousness.<sup>63</sup>

Loneragan's explanatory account of cognitive subjectivity, with its position on knowing, being and objectivity, issues forth in an accurate metaphysics. For a metaphysics is derivative; its foundation is the cognitive activity of the human mind. Having answered the previous two basic questions, "What am I doing when I am knowing?" and "Why is doing that knowing?," metaphysics follows with the further question, "What do I know when I do that?" Lonergan's answer to this question involves a further elaboration on the notion of being by the addition, not of the content of being, but, rather, of the further account of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.<sup>64</sup>

In his concern to advance the positions and reverse the counter-positions in modern developments, Lonergan's metaphysics provides the modern world with a "science of consciousness itself."<sup>65</sup> What is the task of such a science? Lonergan forthrightly declares that a science of metaphysics

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<sup>63</sup> On a further note, in chapter nine of *Insight*, "The Notion of Judgment," Lonergan outlines the contextual aspect of judgment. He says that each judgment has a relation to the past, the present and the future. Of particular interest to the arguments of this thesis concerning the body's role in the transition from the natural to the supernatural is Lonergan's comment that "...past judgments remain with us. They form a habitual orientation, present and operative, but only from behind the scenes. They govern the direction of attention, evaluate insights, guide formulations, and influence the acceptance or rejection of new judgments." *Insight*, 302. The idea that past judgments somehow remain with the human person in some form of habitual orientation will be used in dialogue with Eugene Gendlin on "body knowledge" in chapter four of the thesis.

<sup>64</sup> The answer to the question, "What do I know when I do that?," is "being." Accordingly, the question for metaphysics to settle concerns not the content of being but the general nature and goal of knowledge. Its task, therefore, involves specifying the heuristic structure by which being is known. "Metaphysics will progressively fill out the 'notion of being' by the addition, not of content, but of more specific heuristic structures as these are developed in the course of the development of human knowledge. It most likely will never be completed." Robert Doran, lecture notes for *Insight*. Posted on website: <http://www.robertmdoran.com/>, copyright 2003, 85- 86, accessed December 11, 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 60.



does not pretend to know the universe of proportionate being independently of science and common sense; but it can and does take over the results of such distinct efforts, it works them into coherence by reversing their counterpositions, and it knits them into a unity by discerning in them the concrete prolongations of the integral heuristic structure which it is.<sup>66</sup>

Yet, the further question arises: How does one implement a science of metaphysics in one's attempt to "sort out" philosophic and scientific differences? To pursue this course, one must take the further step of grasping the polymorphic nature of human consciousness, for it is here, in an understanding of the various patterns within which consciousness flows, that Lonergan identifies the inherent problem in philosophical differences.<sup>67</sup> Philosophies are many, contradictory, and varying, because the ground of all philosophical utterances is the human mind in its polymorphic reality. The method for discovering the root of philosophical differences, consequently, entails "tracing the utterances of other philosophers (outer word) to what is uttered (insight and judgment issuing into inner word), and discovering whether that inner word is or is not compatible with the activities of grasping it intelligently and affirming it reasonably."<sup>68</sup>

At the heart of the task of implementing a science of metaphysics in one's search to clarify the meaning of differences is the invitation to self-knowledge that Lonergan extends in the early pages of *Insight*. "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments

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<sup>66</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 418.

<sup>67</sup> Doran writes, "That polymorphism is a complex function of several factors: the radical duality of human knowing, the uncritical survival of the first kind of knowing even in relatively cultured consciousness, the various patterns of experience, and the presence and absence of authenticity on the part of the knowing subject. The latter, of course, is the most serious underlying problem." Robert Doran, lecture notes for *Insight*. Posted on website: <http://www.robertmdoran.com/>, copyright 2003, 87, accessed December 11, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

of understanding.”<sup>69</sup> The self-knowledge acquired in “understanding what it is to understand” emerges from the methodical process when “[one’s] conscious operations ...are applied as intentional to [one’s] conscious operations as conscious.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, Lonergan concludes, self-knowledge generates an explicit metaphysics as one grasps and formulates “the integral heuristic structure of [one’s] knowing and its proportionate known.”<sup>71</sup> Self-knowledge, therefore, is explicit metaphysics. As such, self-knowledge provides the critical exigence, the ability of a subject’s mind to “master its own manifold” needed to “determine what utterance is, what is uttered, and the relation between what is said and what is meant.”<sup>72</sup>

The long and arduous journey of *Insight* to formulate a ground in the interiority of the knowing subject concludes with an invitation to self-knowledge—the self-knowledge that one acquires through the objectification and self-appropriation of one’s conscious operations. In sum, self-appropriation includes those aspects delineated by Lonergan as the ground of interiority: the ability to consciously discriminate between the various patterns of experience and realms of meaning; to identify and follow the demands of the unrestricted desire to know as it heads towards being; and to acknowledge objectivity in the affirmation of one’s judgments. Such a reflexive act constitutes a basic method that Lonergan calls transcendental method.<sup>73</sup> In *Insight*, what becomes conscious is the

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<sup>69</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 22.

<sup>70</sup> This methodical process by which one becomes conscious or appropriates one’s own cognitive processes is what Lonergan calls “transcendental method” and constitutes the “leap in being” accorded to Lonergan by Doran. Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 60.

<sup>71</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 560.

<sup>72</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 61.

<sup>73</sup> Because the objectification is of the subject in her conscious intentional operations and states, Lonergan determines the foundation of interiority to be an explanatory pattern, “an original normative pattern of

structuring operator of all human knowledge. Rendering the operations of human knowledge known through self-appropriation provides the subject with a set of foundations for knowledge that, in effect, permits a new series of ranges of schemes of recurrence in human cognitive praxis to occur. The leap in being that occurs in transcendental method, according to Doran,

means in part that intelligent, reasonable, responsible emergent probability can come to understand itself, can work out the laws and patterns of its emergent process, and can thus direct itself from a more secure basis of self-knowledge, freedom, and responsibility.<sup>74</sup>

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recurrent and related operations that yield cumulative and progressive results.” Ibid., 19. Therefore, transcendental method arises from this normative and cumulative pattern in human interiority. The cognitional analysis that transcendental method provides forms the foundation or basis for theology to critique the history of its affirmations.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 17. Lonergan differentiates responsible consciousness in his later work, *Method in Theology*.

***Insight: How Lonergan Contributes to Answering the Question, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?”***

Doran’s synthesis of Lonergan’s early work, *Insight* (published in 1957), highlights the crucial significance of the basic positions on knowing, the real, and objectivity. Together, the three positions provide an explanatory differentiation of consciousness that reveals the terms and relations obtained in human interiority. The leap in being, however, occurs in the eleventh chapter, “The Self-Affirmation of the Knower,” wherein the invitation to self-appropriation is extended. To affirm that “one is a knower” constitutes an immanent law, a basis whose refutation would performatively involve one in a self-contradiction.<sup>75</sup> From this account of Lonergan’s early work there arises the further question: To what extent does Lonergan’s accomplishment in *Insight* contribute to answering the question, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?” The answer follows in three parts: Lonergan’s disengagement of the cognitional operations in human consciousness; the focus from “below upward” in the transition from the natural to the supernatural; and the implicit indication of his future development that resides in the principle of correspondence and the law of genuineness.

First, at this early juncture in Lonergan’s thought, *Insight* introduces the disengagement of the cognitional operations in human consciousness in the transition from the natural to the supernatural. The disengagement involves his transition from epistemology to metaphysics. In doing so, *Insight* marks the establishment of a ground in an explanatory self-appropriation of human interiority of the subject as a knower. This

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<sup>75</sup> “Nor in the last resort can one reach a deeper foundation than that pragmatic engagement.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 356.

self-affirmation of the notion of being that the subject as a knower is constitutes an explicit metaphysics. In *Insight*, Lonergan asserts that “explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being.”<sup>76</sup> The self-affirming, knowing subject in *Insight* who is engaged in the praxis of “stating positions and reversing counter-positions” of philosophy, science and common sense, thus implements an *integral* heuristic structure by those decisions and actions that follow upon correct judgments. The dialectical insights involved in the “stating of positions and reversing of counter-positions” press for coherence between one’s performance and concepts. Reversals occur on the basis of what is incoherent with the basic positions on knowing, being, and objectivity. At this early stage of Lonergan’s work, the operations identified in the implementation of proportionate being are compacted into the cognitional operations of conception and judgment. The existential component involved in decision and action, while implicit, has not yet been differentiated.

Secondly, *Insight*’s differentiation of cognitive self-transcendence in the transition from the natural to supernatural focuses on the movement in human consciousness “from below upward.” Here transcendental method recognizes that human self-transcendence, as the higher integration of an emergent universe, proceeds from a manifold of conscious and sensible data “that remain purely coincidental events from the standpoint of the physical, chemical, biological, and psychological sciences.”<sup>77</sup> Yet, the higher integration

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<sup>76</sup> Doran notes that “By the time this definition of metaphysics is introduced, we already know what proportionate being is, what a heuristic structure is, what an integral heuristic structure would be, and what operations are included under the rubric of conceiving and affirming. But only with the later development do we begin to know in differentiated fashion what it is to *implement* a knowledge that one has affirmed to be true.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 33.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

of a person's concrete being involves principles of development, laws and relations.

Loneragan summarizes the seven principles of development in this way.

[A] development may be defined as a flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, the principle of emergence, outlined at the beginning of the chapter, entails "otherwise coincidental manifolds of lower conjugate acts [that] invite the higher integration effected by higher conjugate forms."<sup>79</sup> For example, development occurring within the "unity-identity-whole" of a human person emerges as a higher viewpoint in the intellectual order, or as new habits in the moral order, or finally in the realization of previously repressed feelings in the psychic order. The "unity-identity-whole" that constitutes the concrete being of the human person develops through a succession of higher integrations on three levels: the organic, the psychic and the intellectual.

Between the levels of the organic, psychic and intellectual, there exists a principle of correspondence. The principle of correspondence relates the otherwise coincidental manifolds of the organism to the higher integration on the psychic level, and the otherwise coincidental manifolds of the psychic level to the higher integrations on the intellectual level. Because each level is a dynamic system, it is not only an integrator but also an operator.<sup>80</sup> Harmonious development, therefore, requires a correspondence

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<sup>78</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 479.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

<sup>80</sup> In intellectual development, for example, the conceptual construct or form given to the underlying manifold of sensible data and imaginative representations through insights constitutes the higher system as an integrator. The emergence of further questions effects the transition of the higher system into an operator.

between their respective operators.<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, if the intellectual operator is the detached and disinterested desire to know, oriented in a relation of finality to the known unknown, then the psychic operator must demonstrate a corresponding orientation to “some cosmic dimension, in some intimation of unplumbed depths, that accrued to man’s feelings, emotions, sentiments.”<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, human development functions according to the laws of “limitation and transcendence” and the law of “genuineness.”<sup>83</sup> The law of limitation and transcendence is a law of tension. It acknowledges that development of the human person occurs within the tense unity of the person as she is at the present moment towards the person as she is yet to become. Lonergan says, “Now the tension that is inherent in the finality of all proportionate being becomes in man a conscious tension.”<sup>84</sup> The law of genuineness is the admission of that tension into consciousness. By the conscious apprehension of oneself, both as a subject “functioning more or less successfully in a flexible circle of ranges of schemes of recurrence” and as a “subject as a higher system on the move,” one acknowledges the tension between human limitation and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 555.

<sup>82</sup> In terms of the relation of finality to the “known unknown,” Lonergan argues, “For we have equated being with the objective of the pure desire to know, with what is to be known through the totality of intelligent and reasonable answers. But in fact our questions out-number our answers, so that we know of an unknown through our unanswered question.” Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 497-503.

<sup>84</sup> Lonergan goes on to give the following example. “Present perceptiveness is to be enlarged, and the enlargement is not perceptible to present perceptiveness. Present desires and fears have to be transmuted, and the transmutation is not desirable to present desire but fearful to present fear. Moreover, as has been noted, the organism reaches its highest differentiation under the psychic integration of the animal, and the psyche reaches its highest differentiation under the intellectual integration in man. Because psychic development is so much more extensive and intricate in man than in other animals, it is involved in a more prolonged tension, and it is open to more acute and diversified crises.” Ibid., 497-98.

transcendence.<sup>85</sup> A genuine person lives and develops within the integrity of the taut tension between limitation and transcendence. Lonergan states that,

to fail in genuineness is not to escape but only to displace the tension between limitation and transcendence. Such a displacement is the root of the dialectical phenomena of scotosis in the individual, of the bias of common sense, of basic philosophical differences, and of their prolongation in natural and human science, in morals and religion, in educational theory and history.<sup>86</sup>

To summarize, *Insight's* contribution to the answer concerning what, in human consciousness, the transition is from the natural to the supernatural recognizes the creative, intentional, upward movement of the cognitive operations in the self-transcending person. Although Lonergan acknowledges the organism and psyche as corresponding aspects of the knowing subject in this transition, and although he identifies genuineness as consciously apprehending the taut relation between human limitation

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 497-503.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 503. The understanding of bias as sin is discussed at length in *Insight*, 244-58. It is important to note both its personal and social aspects. Bias can be “inherited” through the web of one’s social arrangement, restricting one’s range or effective freedom—the Christian tradition calls this “original sin.” Four types of bias infect and impede the process of growth and thus result in decline: (1) *Dramatic bias*—here Lonergan terms it “the bias of the neurotic”—operates at the level of elementary passions causing one to evade needed insights. Irrational fears inhibit one’s engagement with the drama of living. Its introversion interferes with the process by which one can accumulate and test one’s insights through the interaction with others. (2) *Individual bias*—which manifests itself as egoism—narrows the field of a person’s interest to that which confines it to insights that serve his or her own advantage. (3) *Group bias* is individual bias in its form as group collaboration. Since exploitation for the sake of personal advantage is its motivation, groups infected by this bias fail to envision a greater good, and impede progress by clinging to power. (4) *General bias* rests in the illusion that commonsense knowledge can answer questions and solve the problems that only theory can address. Commonsense knowledge is typified by being descriptive. Description relates objects to us. Its aim concerns the need to establish and maintain ourselves in our environments. Typically, common sense relies on the dramatic pattern of experience. Lonergan identifies several different patterns of experience or orientations in human attentiveness based on particular aptitudes and interests. The data of experience are filtered and selected based on how we pay attention to it. The two particular orientations that distinguish general bias concern the dramatic pattern and the intellectual pattern. In the dramatic pattern, the view is to passing value judgments or to expressing feelings to others. As descriptive, it merely presents data, bringing it to the threshold of understanding. The intellectual pattern of experience, on the other hand, leaps forward from description to explanation, by engaging in the task of understanding. Here the aim of explanation is to relate things to one another, to seek an internal intelligibility or unity of relations (scheme of recurrence). General bias insists on dealing with problems through commonsense knowing when resolution calls for theory; theoretical resolution results from the efforts of the intellectual pattern of experience in understanding.



(which may constitute the organic and psychic aspects of the person) and transcendence (the intentional aspect), their involvement as “integrators” and “operators” has not yet been specified.<sup>87</sup>

***Method in Theology: Lonergan Develops the Dimensions of Interiority – Values and the Role of the Supernatural***

Lonergan’s differentiation of the intentional operations in the dimension of interiority expands in his later work, *Method in Theology* (published in 1972), to include the further levels of moral and religious consciousness, thus bringing further clarity to the existential orientation of the human person. According to Doran, the key to interpreting this development in Lonergan’s work “is to be found in Lonergan’s own differentiating advance in the assembly of a position on the subject.”<sup>88</sup> The foundational subjectivity that in *Insight* was exclusively constituted by intelligence and rationality, in *Method*, is accorded further intentional operations that are not objectified by cognitional theory. The empirical, intelligent and rational levels that constitute the subject as a knower are expanded to include a fourth, moral level and the further transcendent dimension of God’s love.

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<sup>87</sup> Lonergan does acknowledge the psyche and the notion of a distorted censor in dialogue with Freud in chapter 6 of *Insight*, and he also does refer to the organism or physical aspect of the human person in the principle of correspondence, but they have not been differentiated and identified in their respective roles in the transition from the natural to the supernatural. On Lonergan’s dialogue with Freud, see *Ibid.*, 196-227. Doran concludes: “An exegesis of the pages on the definition of metaphysics in *Insight* will reveal that Lonergan’s later expansion of the basic position on the subject is already present there, but in an inchoate and more compact form. It is collapsed into the position on knowing, but it is straining to burst the bonds of this intellectualist stricture. *Insight* covertly admits into its formulation of foundational subjectivity intentional operations that are not accounted for, thematized, objectified in the articulation of cognitive subjectivity’s foundational adequacy, but that are properly credited only in Lonergan’s later position on foundational subjectivity.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 43.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* In effect, the development that occurs from *Insight* to *Method in Theology* constitutes the sublation of a cognitional analysis by an intentionality analysis as Lonergan seeks to advance his account of the normative order of interiority in the self-appropriating subject.

In *Insight*, Lonergan's treatment of metaphysics followed sequentially upon the positions on knowing, the real, and objectivity. *Method's* account of metaphysics, however, expands to include not only cognitive but also existential praxis. In terms of an explicit metaphysics that *implements* the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being, *Method* achieves an account of the operations involved in *implementing* and of "the objective correlative [the human good] in the ontological order that is isomorphic with these operations."<sup>89</sup>

The present task involves delineating Lonergan's account of the operations and objectives of existential subjectivity. Several steps take place in this undertaking. The first step highlights the way that Lonergan expands the notion of existential consciousness as the notion of value. This new account of value makes it possible to speak of the *operations* of implementing. The role of feelings at this juncture gives a previously neglected prominence to the affective aspect in human self-transcendence. The second step outlines how Lonergan formulated the structure of the human good. According to Lonergan, the human good, as the objective of the notion of value, grounds the existential perspective on history. The reflective technique of self-appropriation at this level would, therefore, involve a community in accounting for the cumulative results of its ongoing choices. Notions of sin, moral impotence, conversion and the differentiation of the realm of religious love further clarify and extend Lonergan's account of the ground of existential consciousness. An interpretation of this development will conclude, based on a discussion of how *Method's* advance contributes to answering

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 79.

the question: What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?

As *Insight's* articulation of cognitional consciousness began from answering the questions, "What am I doing when I am knowing?," "Why is doing that knowing?," and "What do I know when I do that?," so *Method's* articulation of existential consciousness follows with the further question, "What ought I to *do* when I know that?" Recall that the answer to *Insight's* question was "I implement the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being by reorienting contemporary common sense and by reorienting and integrating contemporary scientific knowledge through the development of positions and the reversal of counter-positions."<sup>90</sup> Now, with *Method's* disengagement of the ethical dimension,

[t]he position on the subject is no longer limited to the self-affirmation of the knower; the position on being is differentiated from the position on the good; for we can approve of what is not and disapprove of what is; and the position on objectivity includes the account of existential self-transcendence, of affective detachment, of universal willingness, of moral, religious, and Christian authenticity.<sup>91</sup>

Concomitant with *Method's* existential differentiation, there begins to emerge an account of human authenticity and its role in human history.<sup>92</sup> Doran highlights the impact of this development for the present, third-stage consciousness.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> The distinctiveness of the human person in her capacity to know intelligibility immanent in world process, in *Method*, has an additional element. That further element rests in the existential realm, that is, in the human capacity to make a choice about what one is going to "do" about what one knows. In this way, the human person is not only "conditioned" by her world but is also a "conditioner" of her world (for good or for ill). Kenneth Melchin, a noteworthy Lonergan scholar and ethicist says it well: "The isomorphism between the structure of world process and the structure of knowing gives rise to the possibility of subjects coming to understand, not only something which has already occurred, but also the fulfilling conditions for the occurrence of something new. ...[H]umans no longer need to wait for the appropriate convergence of conditions for an event to occur. Rather we can come to know what conditions

This differentiation gives an account of the moments of conscious experience in which, beyond and subsuming one's knowledge of human and non-human reality, one discovers oneself inevitably confronted with the task of discriminating what is truly worthwhile from what is only apparently good, and even inescapably bound at certain moments to the pursuit of a fundamental option upon which the significance and value of one's own life and actions depend. Evaluation, deliberation, decision, and conscious fidelity to decision are already familiar operations or states of which one is the subject. They deal not so much with the knowing of being as with the making of being. In and through such operations, one constitutes oneself as good or evil. In moments of existential self-discovery one finds that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself. And it is precisely because of such moments that "individuals become alienated from community, that communities split into factions, that cultures flower and decline, that historical causality exerts its sway."<sup>93</sup>

What prompts the activities of existential consciousness in the making of a person, and ultimately, in the making of history? As the transcendental notion of the intelligible prompts intelligent consciousness, and as the transcendental notion of the true and the real prompts rational consciousness, so the transcendental notion of value prompts existential consciousness.<sup>94</sup> Doran prefaces his synthesis of the notion of value by acknowledging its complexity, "for existential consciousness [which is the notion of

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need fulfilling and we can coordinate and implement a range of motor skills from our own repertoire...to bring these conditions into being." Kenneth Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan*, 112-13. Through all such acts, the human person constitutes her self and her world. She implements her discoveries into projects by which she is better able to care for and love others. In effect, inherent in such acts is the realization of new being in the evolutionary process whereby humans shape history.

<sup>93</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 45-46.

<sup>94</sup> As previously noted, the transcendental notions constitute the unrestricted desire to know of the human spirit. Lonergan clarifies further by stating that "the transcendentals are contained in questions prior to answers. They are the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge. They are *a priori* because they go beyond what we know to seek what we do not know. They are unrestricted because answers are never complete and so only give rise to still further questions. They are comprehensive because they intend the unknown whole or totality of which our answers reveal only part. So intelligence takes us beyond experiencing to ask what and why and how and what for. Reasonableness takes us beyond the answers of intelligence to ask whether the answers are true and whether what they mean really is so. Responsibility goes beyond fact and desire and possibility to discern between what truly is good and what only apparently is good. ...[T]here are prior transcendental notions that constitute the very dynamism of our conscious intending, prompting us from mere experiencing towards understanding, from mere understanding towards truth and reality, from factual knowledge to responsible action." *Method in Theology*, 11-12.

value] is intentionally correlative to the concrete historical process that is the human good.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, this process itself has both a transcendent-noetic and a soteriological significance.”<sup>96</sup>

At the heart of this further complexification in the realm of interiority is an understanding of the human person as the originator of value in the making of history. Historical process, for that reason, hinges on the authenticity of the self-transcending person. As in cognitional process, the criterion of authenticity in existential performance resides in the *self-transcendence* of the intending subject. To the extent that one is effectively free from the distortions and restrictions of egoistic, group, or general bias, one achieves existential self-transcendence.<sup>97</sup> As effectively free, one’s response to the prompting of one’s intentional spirit has not been reduced to the narrow interests of egoistic concerns for oneself or one’s group or to the dictates of commonsense interests. Rather, as effectively free, one experiences existential self-transcendence, such that “one’s response is to values, to the effective promotion of that concrete historical process that is the human good.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> “[T]he transcendental notion of the good [our raising questions for deliberation] so invites, harries us, that we could rest only in an encounter with a goodness completely beyond its powers of criticism. . . . They affirm or deny that some *x* is truly or only apparently good. Or they compare distinct instances of the truly good to affirm or deny that one is better or more important, or more urgent than the other.” Ibid., 36.

<sup>96</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 64.

<sup>97</sup> Such freedom is the fruit of God’s grace. Lonergan explains a twofold aspect to personal freedom: essential freedom and effective freedom. “The difference between essential and effective freedom is the difference between a dynamic structure and its operational range. Man is free essentially inasmuch as possible courses of action are grasped by practical insight, motivated by reflection, and executed by decision. But man is free effectively to a greater or less extent inasmuch as this dynamic structure is open to grasping, motivating, and executing a broad or a narrow range of otherwise possible courses of action. Thus, one may be essentially but not effectively free to give up smoking.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 643.

<sup>98</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 64.

Yet, at the same time, the structuring of one's response to values proceeds in accord with the complex structure of the human good such that existential self-transcendence emerges in degrees associated with a scale of values: vital values, social values, cultural values, personal values and religious values.<sup>99</sup> As emergence is a matter of the mutual conditioning of higher and lower schemes, so it is that the "higher values condition the realization of lower values, while the realization of lower values conditions the possibility of the differentiation of the ascending scale of values."<sup>100</sup> As a result, the awesome task set before the existential subject is at once both individual and social.

Concerning the relation of the individual to the social, Lonergan further delineates the structure of the human good. The complex structure of the human good provides an explanatory account of the concrete, cumulative process of history resulting from the developing human apprehension of the scale of values and human choices that may or may not be "good." This further delineation, therefore, brings to new awareness what it means for the existential subject to implement the integral, heuristic structure of proportionate being. As the objective of existential consciousness (or the notion of value), the human good is concretely present in every particular society. Its threefold

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<sup>99</sup> To arrive at a judgment of value, one must first apprehend value. Specifically, the apprehension of value is given in feelings, and the feelings associated with value are an intentional response, not so much to the satisfaction of sensitive appetites, but, rather, to an encounter with the value of someone or something that leads to moral self-transcendence. So it is that such a response can be recognized in the "stirring of our being...[when one] greets either the ontic value of a person or the qualitative value of beauty, of understanding, of truth, of noble deeds, of virtuous acts, of great achievements." Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 38.

<sup>100</sup> For example, Doran writes: "From below upwards, then, there are the vital values of health and strength, grace and vigor without whose functioning there cannot be differentiated a response to the social values, the good of order, that condition the vital values of a human community. The differentiation of the problem of order frees existential consciousness to inquire into cultural values; the meanings and orientations that inform human living are discovered and expressed, validated and criticized, corrected, developed, and improved. [In terms of personal values] [t]here arises the possibility of the disengagement of the question of authenticity, of the self-transcending subject who originates value in himself and in his milieu. And from the pursuit of personal value as an end in itself there is differentiated...the intention of religious values as a differentiated realm." *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 64-65.

differentiation constitutes the threefold ends of human action that correlate with experience, understanding and judgment: the particular good, the good of order and terminal values. Doran's synthesis highlights the interrelation of the notion of value to its tripartite objective in the human good.

Existential consciousness is a notion of value. According to the normative scale of values that flows from the equation of authenticity with self-transcendence, value is only partially constituted by the particular goods that satisfy spontaneous desires and needs and by the good of order or social good that ensures for a given group the regular recurrence of particular goods. The notion of value enables these dimensions of the good to be related organically to other, and higher, conditioning dimensions in the areas of religious, personal, and cultural objectives.<sup>101</sup>

Through the articulation of existential consciousness that is explanatory of the course of human affairs in history, Lonergan has further differentiated the interpretive, "upper blade" of the explicit metaphysical, heuristic structure of proportionate being.<sup>102</sup> Lonergan details the elements that are at work in existential consciousness as it heads toward its objective in the human good: existential consciousness intends the good in questions for deliberation, aspires to it in feelings, knows it in authentic judgments of value, and actualizes the good through decisions executed responsibly. Only in *Method in Theology* "does the positive contribution of differentiated affectivity to world-constitutive agency begin to emerge in its own right."<sup>103</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan had bypassed human feelings and identified the good, in the rational order, with being. In *Method in Theology*, however, Lonergan disengages the notion of the good from the

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 44. Doran refers to Lonergan's image of the scissor-like function of the "upper blade" of heuristics in its interpretative relation as it is brought to bear on the "lower blade" of the operations and states of the human person. See *Method in Theology*, 292-293.

<sup>103</sup> *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 67.

notion of being, and “instead of bypassing human feelings, the account of the good...begins with them.”<sup>104</sup>

As distinguished from non-intentional, “passional motivations” and the fear of death, there are intentional feelings that Lonergan acknowledges to be a constituent feature of the subject’s desire to know and to decide. Intentional feeling “gives intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowledge and deciding would be paper thin.”<sup>105</sup> Intentional operations and intentional feelings are inseparable. The twofold objects of intentional feelings constitute either what is satisfying and agreeable, or what is worthwhile.<sup>106</sup> For this reason, the criterion for differentiating between the good and mere satisfaction is located by Lonergan in the degree of self-transcendence to which one is carried beyond oneself by intentional feelings. Thus, the objectivity previously acknowledged in a judgment of fact as that which is achieved through the self-transcendence of the knowing subject is, in like manner, achieved in the judgment of value.<sup>107</sup>

It is this normative objectivity that conditions the structure of the scale of values: the vital, the social, the cultural, the personal and the religious values. Accordingly, the

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 31.

<sup>106</sup> Lonergan says: “In general, response to value both carries us towards self-transcendence and selects an object for the sake of whom or which we transcend ourselves. In contrast, response to the agreeable or disagreeable is ambiguous. What is agreeable may very well be what also is a true good. But it also happens that what is a true good may be disagreeable.” Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Doran comments further: “Judgments of value—the affirmation or denial that some objective is truly good or better than another—have the same structure as judgments of fact. In both, the criterion of knowledge lies in the self-transcendence of the knowing subject in search of the virtually unconditioned. In both, the term is independent of the subject. In both, the course of one’s movement to judgment is a process promoted by inquiry from apprehension through insight to the point where there are no further relevant questions for a self-transcending subject. Finally, in both, the movement toward becoming a good judge is a self-correcting process of learning.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 77.



scale of values constitutes an objective order that establishes the concrete process by which an existential subject realizes the human good. The objectivity, therefore, is constituted by the varying degrees of self-transcendence achieved by the subject in her response to the different values.<sup>108</sup>

Concurrently, then, Lonergan's differentiation of the fourth level of human existential consciousness brings the notion of the authenticity of the subject to centre stage. When the human person opts for self-transcendence, when she has, as Lonergan expresses it, "the universal willingness" to cooperate with the normative exigencies of inquiry and decision, she contributes to the dialectical process of progress or decline in the making of human history. Through the reflexive act of self-appropriation, such a person is equipped with a principle of criticism that relentlessly goes to work on

any finite scheme of recurrence, with a notion of value that raises the insistent question, Is it worth while? Is it really good or only apparently good? Can we devise a more human order? Only a subject alienated from the normative order of inquiry will find truly good a social order constituted by the neglect of the notion of value in favor of a pragmatic conspiracy of order and spontaneous desire.<sup>109</sup>

In such instances that the human person chooses self-transcendence, she originates value in herself and in her community. Having transcended the calculus of

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<sup>108</sup> "...[P]hysical and psychological health and strength, grace and vigor, constitute a level of vital value. These can be acquired, maintained, and restored only by self-discipline.... The vital values of a community of people, however, are contingent upon a good of order, a social system that demands contributions on the part of the subject that go beyond procuring one's own vital values. Thus, social values call for a more self-transcending response than do vital values. But since a good social order is constituted by genuine meanings, the cultural values which offer meaning and purpose to living and acting rank higher than social values, and their pursuit calls the subject beyond a practical, common-sense concern with the social order to the discovery, expression, validation, criticism, and correction of the meanings and values that constitute a given social order. The cultural pursuit of meaning and purpose, moreover, is objective only to the extent that the subjects engaged in it are themselves intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, and so the cultivation of authenticity in oneself and in others ranks yet higher, as a response to personal value. Finally, sustained authenticity in human living is impossible without growth in a loving relationship with the source of all meaning and value, without the vertical self-transcendence of the openness of one's intentionality to the divine, and without the discovery of a response in grace to the pure question that one is." Ibid., 71-72.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 103.

pleasures and pains, she chooses the long-range view over short-term practicality for the sake of what is better, because it honours the thrust of liberty to religious, personal, and cultural values in the promotion of the human good. Each such choice contributes incrementally to the “realization of genuine terminal values, to the establishment of a good of order that is truly good and of instances of the particular good that are really worth while.”<sup>110</sup> In such instances, she has opted for moral self-transcendence.

Yet, because of moral impotence, such sustained moral self-transcendence exists only as the fruit of conversion.<sup>111</sup> History reveals the carnage of mistaken human effort and the distortion rendered by bias and sin. In recognition of this fragile human state, St. Paul laments: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”<sup>112</sup> Clearly, human history demonstrates the need for a solution to the problem of evil. For Lonergan, “it is at this point that immanent development must give way to religion. So, too, if we are to understand the higher integration, philosophy must give way to an explicitly theological point of view.”<sup>113</sup> The solution, therefore, is a divine one. Until one discovers and introduces into living the higher integration of new patterns or schemes of recurrence besides one’s own intelligence, reasonableness and willingness, one remains morally impotent.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>111</sup> Paraphrasing Lonergan, Doran writes that moral impotence is the gap between “one’s actual effective freedom and that which one would possess if one had the necessary preparatory insights and if one were endowed with a universal antecedent willingness to follow the exigencies of the full and normative order of inquiry...the refusal of self-transcendence that is rooted in unwillingness becomes ‘basic sin,’ and the cumulative decline that this refusal generates both in oneself and in the social sphere becomes ‘moral evil.’” Ibid., 114, 116.

<sup>112</sup> Romans 7: 19. *Holy Bible: The New Revised Standard Version* (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1989), 157.

<sup>113</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 116.

In *Method*, Lonergan speaks of the divine solution to the problem of evil in terms of an “experience of being in love in an unrestricted fashion that is the proper fulfillment of the capacity for self-transcendence revealed in our unrestricted questioning.”<sup>114</sup> It is not the product of human knowledge and choice, but rather, the experience is “given”; by it, one is “grasped,” and as such, it is an experience of gift.<sup>115</sup> The knowledge born of this experience of being in love is faith.<sup>116</sup> In addition to human apprehension of vital, social, cultural, and personal values, faith constitutes the apprehension of transcendent or religious value. Lonergan calls this experience *religious conversion*.<sup>117</sup>

For the existential subject, the apprehension of transcendent value occurs on the fourth level of consciousness.<sup>118</sup> Here, religious experience “dismantles and abolishes

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>115</sup> In other words, the experience is not something that the human person can produce by her own efforts; it is something that she receives; it is something to which human persons have an obediential potency. For Christians, it is the gift of God’s love flooding our hearts (Rom. 5:5); this gift is called sanctifying grace.

<sup>116</sup> Because the gift of unrestricted being in love is an *a priori* condition of human knowledge, it can be affirmed that it is an experience that is transcultural and universal—offered to all. Its apprehension is manifest more or less authentically in the many religions and cultures of humankind. The interpretation given to this experience by various religious traditions is called “belief.” This distinction clarifies religious experience as faith and its interpretation as belief. See Lonergan, “Faith and Beliefs,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 30-47.

<sup>117</sup> “Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern. It is another-worldly falling in love. It is total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations. But it is a surrender...a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is revealed in retrospect as an under-tow of existential consciousness, as a fated acceptance of a vocation to holiness.” Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

<sup>118</sup> In response to this experience, there follows a desire to surrender and to commit “without conditions, qualification, reservations...not as an act but as a dynamic state that is prior to and the principle of subsequent acts.” *Method in Theology*, 240. Awareness of this experience occurs on the fourth level, where one is established in a new horizon, a horizon that constitutes the fulfillment of one’s vertical finality or self-transcendence in the embrace of love. It is a state of being in which a permanent transformation takes place, that is, an “I” and “thou” become a “we.” In effect, one’s identity is transformed, so that one “attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both.” Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 32-33. Such a state does not change the distortions effected by sin right away, but, instead, provides human persons with a new viewpoint or ground out of which graced insights and a renewed willingness can emerge. In this way, Lonergan conceives the three conversions as related to one another in terms of sublation.

the horizon in which our knowing and choosing went on and it sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will transvalue our values [*moral conversion*] and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing [*intellectual conversion*].”<sup>119</sup> The fruit of conversion elevates existential consciousness to an authentic base of willingness in absolute transcendence. From this new base emerge new criteria by which to deliberate, judge, and decide.<sup>120</sup> “The criterion of what is good shifts away from the particular good or the good of order to the terminal values that are good precisely because they are consistent with the order of the direction in the movement of life [self-transcendence].”<sup>121</sup> This higher integration in the being of the subject by the love of God constitutes the existential foundation of the concrete historical process of the human good. As such, Lonergan

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<sup>119</sup> *Method in Theology*, 106. Regarding intellectual and moral conversion, Lonergan states that *intellectual conversion* involves a fundamental shift or radical clarification concerning reality, objectivity and human knowing. The consequent clarity may involve the ability to distinguish between what Lonergan calls “the world of immediacy” and the “world mediated by meaning.” The former is the world of the infant and, as constituted by his or her senses, associates reality with what can be “looked at,” “seen, touched, tasted, smelt, felt” (Ibid., 238). The world mediated by meaning, on the other hand, is the world known through the common reflection and judgments of a community. It involves a self-appropriation that in essence is knowing exactly what one is doing when one is knowing; that knowing is not just “looking at” something, but involves the compound of experience, understanding and judgment. Further to this is the acknowledgement that the content of these operations is knowledge of being or reality. In effect, intellectual conversion becomes the basis of critique, the self-appropriation by which one is able to analyze her own thought processes. *Moral conversion* relates to the fourth level of consciousness concerned with decision. Conversion involving decision-making enables moral integrity, that is, the ability to choose autonomously and responsibly. It “changes the criterion of one’s decisions and choices from satisfactions to values when satisfaction and value conflict” (Ibid., 240). Moral conversion engages one in an existential moment, in the realization that the decision that one is about to make shapes the course not only of one’s own life but also the lives of others. Ultimately, moral conversion involves the lifelong struggle to discern the good based on the will of God acting in one’s knowing, in one’s affectivity and in one’s own willing.

<sup>120</sup> In an earlier paper, Lonergan talks about the new base from which human transformation occurs in terms of meaning. “This whole structure of the human good is based on nature, on man’s needs and abilities, his capacity for development, his native freedom. But the development is constituted on the formal level, one might say, by meaning.... What is revelation? It is a new meaning added into human life. By bringing a new meaning into this process of the human good, you transform something that is formally constitutive of that human good.” “The Human Good, Meaning, and Differentiations of Consciousness” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Early Works on Theological Method 1*, vol. 22, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 40-41.

<sup>121</sup> Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 104.

establishes the converted, authentic subject as the originator of value in the making of human history.

Loneragan's disengagement of the terms and relations given in the structure of existential subjectivity and one's responsibility for the making of one's self, of the human world, and of the shaping of history for good or ill, outlines the heuristic structure of such an explanatory account. The self-appropriation of this differentiation of the triadic dialectic of history—progress-decline-redemption—constitutes what Lonergan now terms an intentionality analysis.<sup>122</sup> Thus, Lonergan has expanded the foundations of critical and normative human science, explicit metaphysics, to include the self-appropriation of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness.<sup>123</sup> In doing so, Lonergan has further delineated the operations occurring as the more or less authentic subject *implements* the integral, heuristic structure of proportionate being. Lonergan asserts, "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity."<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Regarding this transition from a cognitional analysis in *Insight* to an intentionality analysis in *Method*, Doran states: "One is initiated into interiorly differentiated consciousness by Lonergan's cognitional analysis, and especially by the 'self-affirmation of the knower' that is the topic of the eleventh chapter of *Insight*. Lonergan later extends self-appropriation beyond cognitional analysis into a generalized intentionality analysis that sublates cognitional analysis into a self-appropriation of the existential subject concerned with the constitution of the human world as a good or evil place in which to live and with the concomitant constitution of oneself as an originating value or disvalue." *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 111.

<sup>123</sup> "The foundational positions emerge only from objectification of the full range of the dialectic process that grants to its existential dimension a position of primacy over the cognitional derivatives." Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 82-83

<sup>124</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 292.

***Method in Theology: How Lonergan Contributes to Answering the Question,  
“What in terms of human consciousness is the transition  
from the natural to the supernatural?”***

Doran’s synthesis of Lonergan’s second-stage work, *Method in Theology*, highlights the development of the position on the subject. According to Doran, in this stage Lonergan distinguishes, in a fashion not present in *Insight*, intentional feelings, moral self-transcendence, a scale of values, judgments of value, decision, and conversion. By reason of this development, a new and more differentiated ground emerges in an explanatory self-appropriation of human interiority.<sup>125</sup> Differentiations of the operations involved in *implementing* what one knows bring to light the human subject as an existential agent in the making of history. Beyond the first three levels that constitute one’s knowing, Lonergan’s differentiation of existential consciousness discriminates a fourth level in human consciousness. As distinguished from and subsuming the underlying cognitional operations of one’s knowing, fourth-level, existential consciousness involves those operations in which one discovers oneself confronted with the task of discerning what is truly worthwhile from what is only apparently good. Those operations include evaluation, deliberation, decision and conscious fidelity to one’s decision in action. As such, Lonergan emphasizes the existential orientation of the subject as one whose decisions concern good and evil, and, in this sense, constitute the human person and the world as authentic or inauthentic. Consequently, existential agency as more or less authentic hinges on the need for redemption.

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<sup>125</sup> Doran writes: “The opening of existential differentiation is liberating for a consciousness that has followed Lonergan along the path of self-appropriation. One is provided with a heuristic structure much better fitted to elements of one’s being with which one became *empirically* familiar in a heightened manner even under the compactness of the previous heuristic structure.” *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 48.

In addition, in *Method*, Lonergan has outlined an explanation of the existential differentiation in terms of the further religious differentiation that speaks of the love of God and the need for conversion. Doran summarizes this development. Religious, moral, and intellectual conversion occurs

when the transcendent exigence of human consciousness is met by the saving response of otherworldly love, when the criterion of one's decisions shifts from satisfactions, with all their ambiguities, to genuine values despite the sacrifices entailed in realizing them, and when one replaces the cognitive myth that knowing is like taking a good look with the self-affirmation of consciousness that at once is empirical, intelligent, and rational.<sup>126</sup>

In light of this exposition of Lonergan's second-stage of development, the task of an interpretation advances an understanding of how Lonergan's accomplishment in *Method* contributes to answering the question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" The answer follows in three parts: Lonergan achieves a new and more differentiated ground in an explanatory self-appropriation of human interiority that constitutes a development of explicit metaphysics; the focus from "below upward" in the transition from the natural to the supernatural highlights redemptive love; and despite the prominence given to intentional feelings, the psychic aspect of the principle of correspondence in human development remains undifferentiated as an "operator."

First, the achievement of a new and more differentiated ground in an explanatory self-appropriation of human interiority differentiates the "upper blade" of the heuristic structure of proportionate being. As Doran writes, "Metaphysics will progressively fill out the 'notion of being' by the addition, not of content, but of more specific heuristic structures as these are developed in the course of the development of human knowledge.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 21.

It most likely will never be completed.”<sup>127</sup> The differentiation of a fourth-level, existential consciousness contributes new terms and relations for the “upper blade” by which to interpret the “lower blade” of empirical data.<sup>128</sup> This release from the compactness of Lonergan’s earlier account of the structuring operations in his position on knowing, being, and objectivity, provides both a correction from the distortion of “over compactness” and further precision and clarity in one’s account of what one is doing when one is a subject.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the self-knowledge obtained by bringing the expanded “upper blade” of intentional consciousness to bear upon the “lower blade” operations as conscious effects an objectification of an expanded account of the subject. The critical exigence in an intentionality analysis that such an objectification provides both sublates and elevates the earlier cognitional analysis. In terms of the need for critical exigence in the third-stage realm of interiority, Lonergan’s earlier concern was to provide a cognitional analysis by which to advance positions and reverse counter-positions. In *Method*, with the development of the terms and relations that an intentionality analysis provides, that concern becomes a critique of authenticity and

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<sup>127</sup> Robert Doran, lecture notes for *Insight*. Posted on website: <http://www.robertmdoran.com/>, copyright 2003, 85-86. See footnote 62, accessed January 2, 2010.

<sup>128</sup> Lonergan uses the scissor-like movement to illustrate the inter-relationship between the categories of intentional consciousness with data. See: Heuristic method, *Insight*, 337-338. See also, *Method*, 293.

<sup>129</sup> Doran says, for example, “If the heuristic structure is more compact than the data of consciousness whose intelligibility is to be framed on the basis of that structure, the theory that one develops will be constrained, for the heuristic structure and the unfolding account of the empirical data will necessarily be isomorphic. The upper blade of heuristics must be precisely marked in such a way that its structural arrangement is fitted to the object under investigation.” Doran, *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*, 44.



inauthenticity. The position on the subject, therefore, includes an expanded account of the dialectic of the subject as the originator of value in the making of history.<sup>130</sup>

Secondly, *Method* maintains *Insight*'s previous focus in the "from below upward" dynamism of intentional conscious in the transition from the natural to the supernatural. In both, "[t]he starting point is not facts but data. Development is a gradual accumulation of insights that complement, qualify, and correct one another. Formulation sets the development within its cultural context. Marshalling and weighing the evidence reveals judgments to be possible, probable, and at times certain."<sup>131</sup> *Method* further distinguishes the openness of the human spirit to the notion of the good in intentional consciousness as that which one knows in judgments of value. Should a person be authentic, then the good that she does contributes to the process by which humankind develops. In expanding the account of intentional consciousness, *Method* develops the understanding of what in human consciousness constitutes the "below-upward" transition from the natural to the supernatural. While maintaining this focus, nevertheless, *Method* highlights God's love. In order to express what God does in "the transition from the natural to the supernatural," Lonergan reverses the normal priority given to knowledge over love by speaking of being in love as a state completely independent of any knowledge of the beloved. As such, human awareness of God comes not through arguments or choices but rather through the gift of God's love.

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<sup>130</sup> For an enlightening discussion on how Lonergan's advance on the notions of good and value enters into the functional specialty of dialectics see: Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., "An Exploration of Lonergan's New Notion of Value" in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*. ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 51-70.

<sup>131</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Insight Revisited," in *A Second Collection*. ed. William F.J. Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J. Tyrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 278. In effect, this paper serves as a type of intellectual biography wherein Lonergan reflects on the development in his own thinking, particularly between *Insight* and *Method*.

Finally, in *Method* there arises a distinct notion of the good. In *Method*, the good that *Insight* correlated to the intelligent and reasonable is further distinguished in intentional consciousness in questions for deliberation: Is this worthwhile? Is it truly good or only apparently good? Doran notes that “the emergence of a distinct notion of the good involves a relocation of the constitutive function of the psyche in the structured process of conscious subjectivity.”<sup>132</sup> He identifies this “relocation” of the psyche in terms of the shift in understanding of what constitutes the higher integration of human feelings. In *Insight*, “[t]he psyche reaches the wealth and fullness of its apprehensions and responses under the higher integration of human intelligence.”<sup>133</sup> But in *Method*, the prominence given to intentional feelings in their response to the good situates the psyche, “not under the higher integration of human intelligence, but in the free and responsible decision of authentic existential subject.”<sup>134</sup> Thus, the psychic aspect of the human person gains prominence and paves the way for what later becomes known as the psychic “dimension.”

***“Mission and the Spirit,” Later Writings (post-Method): Emergence of a Fifth and Sixth Level of Consciousness***

Lonergan’s thought on emergent probability—from *Insight* (1957), with its focus on the position of knowing, through to *Method* (1972), with its discussion on feelings, moral self-transcendence, scale of value, judgments of value, decision, and conversion—

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<sup>132</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., “Subject, Psyche, and Theology’s Foundations,” in *Journal of Religion*, 57 (1977), 268. Here Doran references Lonergan for his definition of the psyche. The psyche is “a sequence of increasingly differentiated and integrated sets of capacities for perceptiveness, for aggressive or affective response, for memory, for imaginative projects, and for skillfully and economically executed performance.” Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 726.

<sup>134</sup> Doran, “Subject, Psyche, and Theology’s Foundations,” 270.

demonstrates a development that Doran describes as a shift in emphasis.<sup>135</sup> *Method* begins the movement toward an ever-increasing emphasis on the gift of God's love as experienced in human consciousness. In the post-*Method* stage of Lonergan's later development (publications that span the decade from about 1972 to 1982), God's gift of love becomes identified with a fifth level of consciousness.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, in this later stage, Lonergan conspicuously highlights the downward movement of God's love in human consciousness over the movement from below upwards; the healing aspect of love takes precedence over the creative aspect of understanding.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, further to the identification of a fifth level, Doran emphasizes that, in this later stage, Lonergan begins to allude to a "sixth" level, a level prior to consciousness where a "quasi-operator" prompts the entry of symbols into human consciousness.<sup>138</sup> These two, later-stage

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<sup>135</sup> Notes from course RGT 5572 HS "Lonergan's Late Writings," January 5, 2006, 1. By the statement "shift in emphasis," I believe Doran holds that further developments in Lonergan's thought arose from what was previously implicit in his earlier work rather than from corrections or additions.

<sup>136</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Philosophy of God and Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 38. This thesis will strongly argue for a particular position that supports the notion of an uppermost fifth level and even further the notion of a sixth level that begins prior to consciousness.

<sup>137</sup> "Mission and the Spirit" demonstrates this "from above downward" emphasis through the delineation of the redemptive movement of grace in its healing aspect in terms of conversion. However, a paper of the same vintage, "Healing and Creating in History," explicitly addresses this emphasis on healing. See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 100-109.

<sup>138</sup> "After reading some of my earliest material on psychic conversion, where I speak of a symbolic operator effecting the entry of neural process into consciousness in the dream, he [Lonergan] began to speak of a quasi-operator at this level, but without identifying the dream and other similar experiences as a distinct 'level' of consciousness." Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 112. For example, Lonergan writes, "We must now advert to the fact that this structure may prove open at both ends. The intellectual operator that promotes our operations from the level of experience to the level of understanding may well be preceded by a symbolic operator that coordinates neural potentialities and needs with higher goals through its control over the emergence of images and affects. Again, beyond the moral operator...there is a further realm of interpersonal relations and total commitment in which human beings tend to find the immanent goal of their being and, with it, their fullest joy and deepest peace. So from an intentionality analysis distinguishing four levels one moves to an analysis that distinguishes six levels." "Philosophy and Religious Phenomenon," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 400.

developments— the acknowledgment of a fifth and sixth level in human consciousness along with the acknowledgement of the reciprocal movements within human consciousness of a creative movement from below upward and a therapeutic movement from above downwards— constitute the third instance of the extension of Lonergan’s basic method. “Mission and the Spirit” typifies these later characteristics.<sup>139</sup> For that reason, “Mission and the Spirit” provides the context for delineating the final post-*Method* development of Lonergan’s thought. An exposition of this final-stage development follows, concluding with an analysis that highlights the effects of this later work on Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability.

Characterized by its evolutionary view of the universe, Lonergan’s question in “Mission and the Spirit” asks, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?”<sup>140</sup> That same question was first posed approximately three decades earlier in “Finality, Love, Marriage.”<sup>141</sup> From this source,

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*The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields, *De constitutione Christi ontologica et psychologica*, 4th ed., (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964), in vol. 7, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 167. Lonergan’s discussion of levels of consciousness differs from elsewhere. In his seventh point, Lonergan suggests that dreaming is a form of consciousness. “*Seventh*, consciousness can be distinguished as being that of someone dreaming or awake....” Lonergan gives further support to the notion of dreaming consciousness in his eighth point by suggesting that there are degrees of consciousness. “*Eighth*, according to one’s attention level, consciousness can have various degrees of clarity and distinctness.”

<sup>139</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 23-31.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>141</sup> Lonergan’s answer to the question at this much earlier stage foreshadows the expanded response developed in *Insight* and further differentiated in “Mission and the Spirit.” His earlier answer to the question states that “To make [the answer] specific one has to set the complex nature of love in the empty category of vertical finality; one has to study the ascent of love from the level of nature to the level of beatific vision.” Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Finality, Love, Marriage,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Collection*, vol. 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, latest reprint 1993), 29.

the same question here grounds the thesis question in the search to trace the development that has occurred in an evolutionary understanding of the ascent of nature to the divine.

The first step in tracing the later-stage development of Lonergan's thought proceeds with an account that demonstrates the priority given to God's love over the creative movement of intentionality. The account outlines Lonergan's abbreviated review in "Mission and the Spirit" of his previous achievements detailing the creative movement from below upward in human consciousness and the reciprocal, healing movement from above downward. The priority of God's love comes to the fore with the discussion concerning the notion that the creative movement depends upon the healing aspect for its fulfillment—the need for redemption. The second step in tracing the later-stage development highlights Lonergan's recognition in "Mission and the Spirit" of the possibility of a fifth and sixth level in human consciousness. This latter step proves to be the "springboard" from which, in the following chapter, Doran furthers Lonergan's account of human interiority.

In "Mission and the Spirit," Lonergan situates the created order's relation to God within an abbreviated outline of *Insight's* theory of emergent probability. He explains the relation of the natural world to God in terms of finality. There is the *absolute* finality to God that is both the ground and goal of every instance of the good. *Horizontal* finality describes the finality of things in nature to their proportionate end, that is, to the end that results from what the thing is. *Vertical* finality is the relation of that thing to an end higher than its proportionate end. In an evolutionary view, the notion of a "participative" type of *vertical* finality adds to the previous classicist notion of an "instrumental" type of vertical finality. In the older classicist view, "lower order" beings function in an

instrumental manner as merely serving (being used up by) the “higher order.”<sup>142</sup>

However, an evolutionary view, which adds the participative type, accounts for the sublimation of the lower to higher orders through a process of integration and differentiation.<sup>143</sup>

The relationship of finality of the lower levels to the higher establishes both the cause and the end of finality, and so leads to the consideration of the supernatural. In terms of the cause, Lonergan looks to the inherent design in an emergent world process. Such a design implies a planner. Although humans have the capacity to participate in conditioning their world, still, human consciousness is merely a step in the whole emergent process. This fact presupposes a cause, a plan by which the lowest entity had its beginning and from which higher assemblies emerged. Emergent world process also points to an end. Any higher order in a hierarchy of being is beyond the proportion of a lower order, and, in that relative sense, is supernatural to them. However, in a consideration of the infinite, one acknowledges that the infinite is beyond the proportion

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<sup>142</sup> In an evolutionary world view, the hierarchical succession of ends or entities reached in the emerging world process does so in accordance with the sublation and integration of the lower by the higher; the higher level, therefore, acts as an integrator. In addition, the lower entities are not merely “used up” or instrumental in the emergence of the higher entities and so no longer exist, but, rather, are brought up into the “new being” and functioning of the higher—the lower participates in and is transformed by the higher entity. Yet, while the higher levels act as integrators of the lower in the process of sublation, the lower levels themselves possess an inherent dynamism that acts as an operator prompting the higher integration of successive levels. Thus, Lonergan illustrates the interdependence and mutually supporting factors involved in the emergence of new and successive assemblies.

<sup>143</sup> “[S]ubatomic particles somehow enter into the elements of the periodic table; chemical elements enter into chemical compounds; compounds into cells, cells in myriad combinations and configurations into the constitution of plant and animal life,” and so on through to the higher differentiations of human consciousness and culture (Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 24). In chapter 15 of *Insight*, Lonergan refers to finality in terms of “the direction immanent in the dynamism...[of an] ever fuller realization of being” (477). The realization of being is an ever fuller actuation of the totality of potency and possibility. The point emphasized is that finality is a dynamism that “carries proportionate being ever beyond actual limitation” (476). It rests on the principle of potency and possibility, which is the inherent tendency of the directed dynamism to transcend limitation. Herein arises the notion of “limitation and transcendence” as a “tension of opposites” inherent in the dynamism of development. In the following chapter, Doran terms this tension of opposites a “dialectic of contraries.”

of the finite, and so is absolutely supernatural. It follows that the realm of the divine is beyond the proportion of any created reality. God is absolutely supernatural to the created order.

At this juncture, Lonergan draws attention to an important element in the relation of the natural to the supernatural. He says that, despite the fact that the divine exists beyond the proportion of any creature, humanity is “not merely subordinate to God but [as having a vertical finality to God] somehow enters into the divine life and participates in it.”<sup>144</sup> In the much earlier work, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” Lonergan spoke of that aspect of vertical finality by which humanity “somehow enters into divine life” as the obediential aspect of vertical finality.<sup>145</sup> Humans are an obediential potency to receive the self-communication of God that Christian’s call grace. The human person cannot actuate this potency herself, but God can actuate it. This self-communication of God in the Christian tradition is understood as three-fold: In Christ, the Word became flesh (hypostatic union); through Christ, human persons become temples of the Spirit and adoptive sons and daughters of the Father (sanctifying grace); in a final consummation, the human person knows the Father as he or she is known by the Father (beatific vision).<sup>146</sup> Notably, Lonergan has portrayed the gratuitousness of God. Human participation in divine life is pure gift. However, the concern here for Lonergan is not with this absolute end as the divine self-communication, but, rather, with the human

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<sup>144</sup> Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 26.

<sup>145</sup> Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” 17-51.

<sup>146</sup> Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 32. Note that all of these actualizations of obediential potency are relational. This will be important in the next chapter in the argument we present for the topmost operator. The state of grace, the topmost quasi-operator, is mutual self-mediation.

person's vertical and evolutionary finality to it. Accordingly, Lonergan relates vertical finality in the universe to the upward dynamism occurring in human consciousness. As previously illustrated in *Insight* and *Method*, the evolutionary perspective that explains the relation of the natural world to God in terms of finality provides a view of the human person in terms of an intentionality analysis. Vertical finality in the human person is the self-transcendence achieved through the intentional operations dynamically related in their self-assembling pattern. Earlier work posits that this dynamism rests on operators that promote activity from one level to the next: questions for intelligence, questions for reflections, and questions for deliberation. These three operators yield four levels of operations. "Each lower level is an instance of vertical finality, and that finality is already realized as the higher levels function [from experience to understanding to judgment and to decision]. The lower level, accordingly, prepares for the higher and is sublated by it."<sup>147</sup> Indeed, echoes of Lonergan's earlier account of the creative, upward movement of intentional human consciousness appear in an abbreviated form in "Mission and the Spirit."

Yet, at this point, Lonergan introduces something new in his account of the creative, upward movement of intentional consciousness, something that in "Mission and the Spirit" he calls the "passionateness of being." He writes:

The disinterestedness of morality is fully compatible with the passionateness of being. For that passionateness of being has a dimension of its own: it underpins and accompanies and reaches beyond the subject as experientially, intelligently, rationally, morally conscious.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.



While *Insight* had portrayed the psyche (or what he now terms the “passionateness of being”) as the undifferentiated aspect of the unconscious, here in “Mission and the Spirit,” Lonergan for the first time expands his understanding of the psyche by ascribing to it a tripartite dimension of its own. The threefold psyche or “passionateness of being” has a dimension of its own that not only precedes intentionality but also penetrates and goes beyond intentional operations. Furthermore, though not characterized as intentionality as such, the “passionateness of being” nevertheless prompts something; it promotes activity from one level to the next.<sup>149</sup> Descriptive of this prompting, Lonergan assigns the terms “quasi-operator” and “topmost quasi-operator” to two aspects of the passionateness of being. The identification of the over-arching, topmost quasi-operator and the underpinning quasi-operator thus point to an additional fifth and sixth level in human consciousness, respectively.

The first aspect of the passionateness of being, the “sixth level,” is the “quasi-operator” that “underpins” conscious intentionality. What exactly does the quasi-operator prompt? At the level of the transition from the neural to the psychic, the quasi-operator acts in a manner corresponding to the exigencies of vertical finality: it provides a commentary on the status of the self-actualizing subject through dream symbols, it shapes the images released to conscious intentionality for insights, and, “for the Jungians it

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<sup>149</sup> The writer has used the term, “prompt” in reference to the activity of those aspects of the passionateness of being that Lonergan calls the quasi-operator and topmost quasi-operator. Using the term “prompt” consolidates into one term the multiple descriptions given by Lonergan. He describes the activity of the quasi-operator in this way: “It *ushers* into consciousness not only the demands of unconscious vitality but also the exigencies of vertical finality” (Ibid.). Concerning the activity of the top-most quasi-operator Lonergan says, “There it is the topmost quasi-operator that by intersubjectivity *prepares*, by solidarity *entices*, by falling in love *establishes* us as members of community” [Italics are mine] (Ibid., 30). Note that the verbs “prepare,” “entice,” and “establish” that identify the intersubjective activity of the topmost operator can be related to the notion of the operator as mutual self-mediation. This will be further developed in the next chapter.

manifests its archetypes through symbols to preside over the genesis of the ego... [so as to] guide the individuation process from the ego to the self.”<sup>150</sup> The second aspect of the passionateness of being accompanies conscious, intentional operations. “There it is the mass and momentum of our lives, the color and tone and power of feeling....”<sup>151</sup> Finally, the topmost quasi-operator, or “fifth level,” overarches conscious intentionality, prompting the human subject to establish herself within the bonds of love in communion with God and others. At this level of solidarity wrought through the experience of love for God and one’s fellow human being, new probabilities yield to a new creation. “Within each individual vertical finality heads for self-transcendence. In an aggregate of self-transcending individuals there is the significant coincidental manifold in which can emerge a new creation.”<sup>152</sup> In sum, Lonergan expands an understanding of the upward, creative vector of vertical finality that constitutes human nature with the acknowledgement of the “passionateness of being” as a distinct dimension. As a separate dimension it possesses a dynamism that “underpins” (quasi-operator), “accompanies” (feelings), and “overarches” (topmost quasi-operator) intentional operations. Delineating the tripartite aspect of the passionateness of being serves to identify the topmost quasi-operator as a fifth level and the quasi-operator as a sixth level. In this way, Lonergan concludes his discussion concerning the depiction of an evolutionary understanding of

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 29-30. While we may only be attentive to the functioning of the symbolic level in the dream state, nevertheless, this level continues to exist in waking consciousness. Recall the evolutionary notion of sublimation illustrated in footnotes 138 and 139. It notes that, in an evolutionary view, there is added the participative type of vertical finality, which accounts for the sublimation of the lower to higher orders through a process of integration and differentiation. The symbolic processes of the dream state, therefore, reach further integration and differentiation in the drama of human living. Dream analysis may help one to be attentive to this process. Nevertheless, many people can recall an experience in which dreams carried messages needed for the tasks of waking consciousness.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

the upward, dynamic, creative aspect, of human intentionality— what is possible to human nature— by expanding the realm of interiority to include the dimension of the passionateness of being.

However, the whole point of the question, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?,” comes to the fore as Lonergan addresses the issue of the human need for redemption. Hence, Lonergan’s paper, “Mission and the Spirit,” concludes with a discussion of the supernatural. The problem of sin and bias mar the creative orientation of the unfolding of nature.<sup>153</sup> Human redemption lies not in what is possible to nature, but, rather, within the realm of the supernatural, of God’s grace. How does redemption come? Translating this into terms of human consciousness, Lonergan portrays the self- communication of God’s love as a new order that can heal and elevate human consciousness. He writes that the new order of redemption emerges in a complementary fashion through the visible mission of the Son and the invisible mission of the Spirit. The visible mission of the Son or Word creates a new reality through the self-transcendence that occurs as the Word that is preached and heard mounts up through the successive levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding (the creative aspect).<sup>154</sup> The invisible mission of the Spirit, on the other

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<sup>153</sup> Lonergan describes the sorrowful state of human sin and bias: “There is opened a gap between the essential freedom all men have and the effective freedom that in fact they exercise. Impotent in his situation and impotent in his soul, man needs and may seek redemption, deliverance, salvation” (Ibid., 31).

<sup>154</sup> In the visible mission of the Son is presented: “(1) the absolutely supernatural object, for he is God; (2) the object for us, for he is man; (3) for us as to be redeemed, for he dies to rise again. As visible, he is the sacrament of man’s encounter with God. As dying and rising, he shows the way to the new creation. As himself God, already he is Emmanuel, God with us” (Ibid., 32). It is noted that this interpretation of the absolutely supernatural object is the Christian interpretation of God’s revelation in Christ. Nevertheless, the meaning of this belief as lived out in a community can become constitutive in the lives of those who hold a different belief or who consider themselves agnostic or atheists. (For example, the writer knows many agnostics whom she experiences as good people, living out of a set of meanings and values that could be characterized as Christian.) Therefore, in the writer’s understanding, progress or the creative aspect is not necessarily dependent upon a culture’s commonly held belief system, but rather on the mutual respect

hand, descends as the gift of God's love, healing the distortions in the intentional process. The term used for this healing activity is conversion: religious, moral, and intellectual.<sup>155</sup> In this way, the twofold mission of Son and Spirit transforms, heals, and elevates an evolving world, and, in so doing, ushers in a new creation. For "[w]ithout the visible mission of the Word, the gift of the Spirit is a being-in-love without a proper object; it remains simply an orientation to mystery that awaits its interpretation. Without the invisible mission of the Spirit, the Word enters into his own, but his own receive him not."<sup>156</sup> Lonergan concludes, "So the self-communication of the Son and the Spirit proceeds through history by a communication that at once is cognitive, constitutive and redemptive."<sup>157</sup>

***"Mission and the Spirit": How Lonergan Contributes to Answering the Question,  
"What in terms of human consciousness is the transition  
from the natural to the supernatural?"***

Two later-stage developments—the acknowledgment of a fifth and sixth level in human consciousness along with the acknowledgement of the reciprocal movements within human consciousness of a creative movement from below upward and a therapeutic movement from above downwards—have been shown to characterize the

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and care that allows dialogue and unity within diversity. (The ability to discern the meaning of the different kinds of differences comes to light in the next chapter in the discussion on how meaning develops within community.)

<sup>155</sup> Ibid. Two further points: First, Lonergan notes that the healing aspect of grace works in a downward movement through human consciousness, healing bias and distortion in our knowing, deciding and loving. The healing aspect "frees" the impediments in the spirit of inquiry so that one may receive the needed insights involved in one's self-transcendence in knowing and deciding; in this way it elevates a person into a new horizon. In the next chapter, psychic conversion will be added to the discussion as Doran develops Lonergan's notion of the "passionateness of being."

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

third instance of the extension of Lonergan's basic method. The explicit mention and delineation of a separate dimension in human consciousness, the "passionateness of being," or psychic aspect, provided the tri-fold distinctions of levels or quasi-operators that point to the possibility of a fifth and sixth level in human consciousness. This developed understanding of psyche as constituting a second set of operators acting in human consciousness that "underpin," "accompany," and "overarch" human consciousness paves the way to consider anew the position of the subject as the normative source of meaning in history.

In addition, Lonergan's emphasis on the healing aspect further clarifies that, in the relation of the natural to the supernatural, the condition of human creative development rests upon the gift of both the Word and the Spirit of love in their reciprocal movements in human consciousness.

### ***What Lonergan Leaves Open for Further Development***

Beginning with *Insight* and moving through *Method* and "Mission and the Spirit," a distinctive shift is observable in Lonergan's development, demonstrating a move away from the priority of the intellect (*Insight*) toward the acknowledgment of the role of feelings in the apprehension of values (*Method*) and finally to the acknowledgment of the psyche as a separate dimension ("Mission and the Spirit"). In terms of the principle of correspondence that maintains a unifying tension inherent in the body-psyche-mind connection, the shift demonstrates an increasing development in the understanding of the relation between the psyche and mind.

"Mission and the Spirit" implicitly points to a twofold normative source of meaning in history: intentionality, as well as a "deeper and more comprehensive

principle” that unfolds before consciousness, accompanies and overarches intentionality. Accordingly, the avenue that leads one to authenticity involves for persons in community the further task of appropriating this “other dimension.” With the acknowledgement of a separate dimension that is sensitively experienced in the psyche, Lonergan leaves open the task of transposing this second dimension into the terms of interiority for the further purpose of self-appropriation. However, by acknowledging the “passionateness of being” as a separate dimension with an inherent dynamism, Lonergan has laid the groundwork for further development. The purpose of the following chapter is to show how Robert Doran takes up the challenge of this development.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Development in Robert Doran's Understanding of the Human Transition from the Natural to the Supernatural**

#### ***Introduction***

As in the previous chapter, this chapter serves to advance the search for a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche, and mind in the human person. Concerning this search, the previous chapter demonstrated Lonergan's effort to explain human consciousness in terms of an evolutionary world view. It highlighted the development in Lonergan's thought as one that demonstrated a shift in emphasis. His earlier work focused on the "mind" aspect of the body, psyche, and mind constituents. Lonergan explained "mind" or cognitive process in terms of an intentionality analysis of the three successive levels of operations in human consciousness, each manifested by questions that promote one level to the next. The term "sublation" named the relation between successive levels in the sense that the lower level participates in and is drawn up into the functioning of the higher level. Lonergan's earlier work emphasized the cognitive operations in human consciousness where questions for intelligence were sublated by questions for reflection. In later work, Lonergan distinguished a further fourth level prompted by questions for deliberation that, as inclusive of value judgment, intend the good. In like manner, questions for deliberation sublate the previous three levels that make up the cognitive process. By distinguishing a fourth level that sublates sense and conation, thought and feeling, Lonergan ended the purely cognitive focus of his earlier evolutionary portrayal of human consciousness. In effect, this latter development brought to light the priority of the

existential subject whose authentic knowing coincides with a decision to live under the guidance of the norms immanent and operative on the four levels of consciousness.

The previous chapter concluded the discussion on the development in Lonergan's thought by noting the significance of Lonergan's latest work on an intentionality analysis. His latest work acknowledged the possibility that the structure of human consciousness, the four levels of experience, understanding, judging and decision "may prove open at both ends."<sup>1</sup> By this acknowledgment, Lonergan opened the door to a discussion concerning a distinct dimension separate from intentionality. Along with an aspect that accompanies intentionality, the separate dimension that Lonergan termed the "passionateness of being" constitutes two further levels, a fifth and a sixth level, that both "overarch" and "underpin" intentionality, respectively. Ascribing the terms "quasi-operator," which "underpins intentionality, and "topmost quasi-operator," which overarches intentionality to these two further levels, Lonergan maintained that this distinct dimension, called the "passionateness of being," participates in the vertical finality of human self-transcendence. The "passionateness of being" participates in the vertical finality of human self-transcendence by way of immanent norms. The immanent norms prompt activity prior to human consciousness as well as move human consciousness toward connection with a dimension beyond itself.

Two significant points emerge with this latest development. First, by identifying a separate dimension, Lonergan has expanded the understanding of the normative source of meaning in history. The normative source is twofold. It consists not only in the

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17. ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 400.



operators of conscious intentionality—questions for intelligence, questions for reflection and questions for deliberation—but also in the operators associated with the “passionateness of being.”<sup>2</sup> The need for clarification and appropriation of this separate dimension in its relation to intentionality emerges as an integral component for the authentic implementation of proportionate being. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of human existential agency points to the consequent human need for redemption. Through the identification of an “upper-most quasi-operator” or fifth level in the distinct dimension that Lonergan called the “passionateness of being,” Lonergan has furthered an understanding of the redemptive process. The “uppermost quasi-operator” connects the human person symbolically to a “known unknown” in an experience of unrestricted love.<sup>3</sup> Redemption, in an evolutionary view, comes through the graced healing and elevation of human consciousness as it is sublated by, brought up into, and participates in the higher functioning of divine reality. Secondly, in terms of the search for a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche, and mind in the human person, this late development highlighted the relation

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<sup>2</sup> “These [operators of conscious intentionality] are what would usually be considered Lonergan’s normative source of meaning. But in “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” these several principles of integrity and authenticity are ‘but aspects of a deeper and more comprehensive principle,’ and it is this deeper and more comprehensive principle that is the normative source: ‘a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these,’ in ‘being-in-love.’” Robert Doran, S.J., *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> The work of Gilles Mongeau, S.J., has helped me to further understand the “upper-most quasi-operator” as one of mutual self-mediation or shared presence. He draws on Lonergan’s *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) to identify mutual self-mediation as “a state or situation of grace that refers to many subjects taken together and constitutes a divine-human interpersonal situation: ‘in accordance with this state the divine persons and the just are in one another as those who are known are in those who know them and those who are loved are in those who love them. This state, of course, exists more in acts and is better known in acts, yet it does not cease to exist solely because of a temporary cessation of the acts.’” See Gilles Mongeau, “The State of Grace and the Law of the Cross: Further Insights into Lonergan from René Girard” (unpublished manuscript, 2011), 5.

between the mind and psyche as well as emphasized that the integrity of the relations between them is brought about by the “graced healing and elevating” sublation of divine reality.

The present, third chapter constitutes a further set of steps in the methodological series of advances made in the evolutionary understanding of the relation of the natural to the supernatural. It begins with an account of how Robert Doran’s work on psychic conversion serves to further clarify Lonergan’s acknowledgment of the “passionateness of being” in “Mission and the Spirit.” The term “passionateness of being” refers to the vertical finality operative in the entire universe. Doran explains that the “passionateness of being” is sensitively experienced by the human person at the level of the psyche.<sup>4</sup> The psyche, thus, serves as the place where the “passionateness of being” becomes elementally or symbolically conscious. For Doran, the inclusion of the “neglected psyche” in Lonergan’s intentionality analysis is a necessary complement in the third stage of meaning. He writes, “Otherwise we will be subject to a subtle form of alienation that, by its relative neglect of one constitutive dimension of interiority, would, however unobtrusively, gradually distort our movement into the third stage of meaning.”<sup>5</sup>

Chapter Three highlights the advance that Doran achieves in his own thought on the psyche as it pertains to an expansion of the dimension of interiority. Doran’s earlier

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<sup>4</sup> Doran defines the psyche in these terms: “There is a set of data to be understood by depth psychology. It lies in the sensitive flow of consciousness itself, the polyphony or, as the case may be, the cacophony, of our sensations, memories, images, emotions, conations, associations, bodily movements, and spontaneous intersubjective responses, and of the symbolic integrations of these that occur in, indeed are, our dreams. These data constitute the sensitively experienced movement of life, the pulsing flow of life, the psychic representation of an underlying manifold of neural functions that reach a higher organization in sensitive consciousness. We will call this set of data the psyche.” *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, 2001), 46.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (California: Scholar Press, 1981), 94.

emphasis on the psyche focuses on what he terms the “symbolic operator,” that aspect of the psyche that “underpins” intentionality. The symbolic operator acts in the manner of prompting the upward transition from unconscious neural functioning to conscious images in dreams. Along with identifying the symbolic operator, Doran asserts the importance of appropriating or consciously objectifying its symbolic patterns into consciousness.

But there are factors at work, especially in our age, that seem to indicate that self-appropriation, in addition to self-transcendence, is becoming ever more necessary if one wishes to choose responsibly, to judge reasonably, to inquire intelligently, or just if one wishes to know what God wants and does not want...[and finally to become familiar with]...the feeling about the objects of all of these operations.<sup>6</sup>

Through self-appropriation of the particular patterning of his or her dream symbols, a person gains access to the drama of his or her life’s story. The recognition that authenticity entails the self-appropriation of this further dimension constitutes a graced shift in one’s horizon of being that Doran calls “psychic conversion.” The synthesis of Doran’s early work not only provides the point of reference from which to articulate the advance in his thought but also grounds the later discussion in Chapter Four on the relation of the unconscious neural aspect or body to the psyche in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Doran’s work on the symbolic operator expands, in later work, to include not only those aspects of the psyche that “underpin” intentionality (as does the symbolic operator) but also the two further aspects that “accompany” (the sensitive aspect) and “reach beyond” (the agapic or intersubjective aspect) intentionality. He identifies the three

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., “Jungian Psychology and Christian Spirituality: I,” *Review for Religious* 38, no. 4 (1979), 505, 509.

aspects of the psyche as the threefold aesthetic-dramatic operator.<sup>7</sup> This later development not only adds further clarity to the psychic dimension but, as well, provides an expanded ground for the self-appropriation that constitutes psychic conversion.

Doran's most current development, which underscores the need to appropriate "received meaning," that is, meaning that is pre-consciously "already patterned," provides material most pertinent to this thesis. This latest development in Doran's work sets the stage for the task presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Four proposes a link between "received meaning" and "body knowledge," which in Chapter Five is characterized in the explanatory terms of neurophysiological patterning. Chapter Three concludes with an account of how Doran's work furthers the interpretation of Lonergan's question in "Mission and the Spirit," "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"

***Robert Doran's Early Work on Psychic Conversion: Clarifying Lonergan's Acknowledgment of the "Passionateness of Being"***

The task of portraying an account of Doran's early work on the psychic dimension involves two steps. The first concerns how Doran establishes the relationship of the term "passionateness of being" with Lonergan's intentionality analysis. This section outlines Doran's account of transposing the metaphysical term "passionateness of being" into the categories of interiority. The second contains a synthesis of Doran's explanation of the psyche as it underpins intentionality. This section considers the function of the psyche as a symbolic operator as it acts in human consciousness.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 166.

*Grounding the “Passionateness of Being” in an Intentionality Analysis*

Lonergan’s work provides the ground for Doran’s argument for the inclusion of the “neglected psyche” in Lonergan’s intentionality analysis. Doran claims that the impetus for reinterpreting the psychic dimension into the categorical terms of interiority arose from two main sources in Lonergan’s work.<sup>8</sup> The first occurs in *Insight*, where Lonergan discusses the genetic and dialectical sequences by which to understand the evolutionary advance to new stages of meaning. He speaks of the evolutionary advance in terms of a principle of correspondence that must exist between the two distinct sets of operators, the intentional and the psychic.

[M]an’s concrete being involves (1) a succession of levels of higher integration, and (2) a principle of correspondence between otherwise coincidental manifolds on each lower level and systematizing forms on the next higher level. Moreover, these higher integrations on the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator and if developments on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators....[O]n the intellectual level the operator is concretely the detached and disinterested desire to know. It is this desire, not in contemplation of the already known, but headed towards further knowledge, orientated into the known unknown. The principle of dynamic correspondence calls for a harmonious orientation on the psychic level, and from the nature of the case such an orientation would have to consist in some cosmic dimension in some intimation of unplumbed depths, that accrued to man’s feelings, emotions, sentiments.<sup>9</sup>

Doran draws on Lonergan’s account, highlighting that Lonergan has already explained that there exists a harmonious, dynamic correspondence between the two distinct dimensions of psyche and intellect. Notably, Lonergan explains the relations between each of the dimensions as that which involves operators and integrators—each

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555.

level prompting the movement to a higher integration on a further level.<sup>10</sup> The integrity of the dynamic relationship between the two dimensions of psyche and intellect occupies Doran's interest in this early stage.

The second source that grounds Doran's work occurs in several of Lonergan's late works. In "Philosophy and Religious Phenomenon," Lonergan makes a number of statements in which he identifies a level before and beyond human consciousness. In addition, these statements reflect the earlier understanding from *Insight* concerning the orientation and interrelation between levels, that is, in terms of the principle of correspondence, by way of operators and integrators. He writes that the basic structure of intentional consciousness is "open at both ends" and that the intellectual operator "may well be preceded by a symbolic operator," and again, that "...the possibility of a symbolic operator...[is] headed to its own and to higher ends...to a topmost level of interpersonal relations and total commitments, a level that can be specifically religious...."<sup>11</sup> So, too, "Mission and the Spirit" describes a separate dimension called the "passionateness of being." Along with that aspect of the separate dimension that "accompanies" intentionality, "Mission and the Spirit" acknowledges two further aspects, the "quasi-operator" and a "topmost quasi-operator."<sup>12</sup> Finally, in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," Lonergan reiterates a portrayal of the relations between the two separate dimensions. He writes of a "tidal movement that begins before consciousness,

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<sup>10</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 110.

<sup>11</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, S.J., "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 400-401.

<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 29-30.

unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these.”<sup>13</sup>

Having grounded his work in Lonergan’s, Doran turns to the task of establishing the term “passionateness of being” within the categories of interiority. Doran writes that Lonergan’s expression “passionateness of being” is a

...metaphysical [term] and so derived, rather than drawn directly from intentional consciousness itself, and so basic. [The term “passionateness of being” refers] to the operator “in the general case,” this is, “the upwardly directed dynamism of proportionate being that we [call] finality.” The grounding of [this term] in intentionality analysis is rendered possible by the fact that the basic structure of conscious intentionality is “open at both ends.”<sup>14</sup>

According to Lonergan, the transposition of metaphysical terms to the categories of interiority is made possible because of the relationship of a knowing subject to the known objects—metaphysical terms that name objects are derived in that they are known through human cognitional operations, and, therefore, are correlative to states.<sup>15</sup>

However, a methodical philosophy shifts the priority of a metaphysics of objects to a theory of intentional operations. He writes, “[F]or every [valid metaphysical] term and relation there will exist a corresponding element in intentional consciousness.”<sup>16</sup> Doran’s efforts, therefore, involve establishing the term “passionateness of being” as constituting three operators in human consciousness that can subsequently be identified in an intentionality analysis. Doran begins this task in his early work by identifying the symbolic aspect of the psyche or “passionateness of being” as an operator.

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<sup>13</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 175.

<sup>14</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 214.

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 343.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

### *The Symbolic Operator*

Doran's early work focuses on that aspect of the "passionateness of being" that "underpins" intentionality—the symbolic operator. As an operator, it promotes something.<sup>17</sup> What is that "something" that is being prompted at this level that Lonergan describes as underpinning intentional operations? In "Mission and the Spirit," Lonergan holds that world process continues its upwardly directed dynamism in the vertical finality of human consciousness. In the consideration of the function of a symbolic operator in the human psyche, a pressing question arises: What exactly is the point of convergence between the unconscious energy of pre-human cosmic process and the intelligent intelligibility of human subjectivity? According to Doran's interpretation of Carl Jung's theory of individuation, which concerns the meaning of symbols in human consciousness, the point of contact is psychic energy.

I interpret the unconscious to be energy at its physical, chemical, and biological levels, opaque energy, in need of a higher integration by at least the sensitive consciousness of the psyche if it is to come into the light [of consciousness]. ...The unconscious is all energy that is not present to itself. In principle, at least, the unconscious is all energy in the universe save that which becomes present to itself as psychic energy in animal and human consciousness. Proximately, it is neural-physiological process in the human organism. Remotely, it is the world.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lonergan held that at any stage of development, a higher system acts as both an integrator and an operator of its underlying lower manifold. "...[T]he higher system as an operator effects the transition from one set of forms, laws, schemes, to another set. ...Still, what is the operator? ...[I]t is the upwardly directed dynamism of proportionate being that we have named finality." *Insight*, 490. Therefore, the symbolic operator can be understood as the higher system that prompts psychic energy's emergence into the elemental symbols of the dream.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 289. The unconscious neural-physiological processes in the human organism or body occupy the level that this thesis attempts to articulate as a distinct level for self-appropriation. As a distinct level, the body's operator prompts the fertilization and gestation process where the "potential of the universe to become" takes on human form. As integrator, the neural-physiological makeup of the human body seeks higher integration in imaginable form in the psyche. In making this claim, the thesis will distinguish between matter and body as the self-presence to the "felt experience" of neural-physiological processes.



Energy begins its transition into consciousness when it becomes psychic energy, and from there, psychic energy's full entrance into human consciousness emerges in the elemental symbolism of dreams. In the dream, the potential of the universe begins its actualization in human subjectivity. "The universe can become love in human consciousness, and its entrance into this capacity, its expression of this finality, occurs in the dream."<sup>19</sup> How the human subject interprets and acts on his or her dreams conditions this potency, this potential for the universe to "become." "The universe is at the mercy...of the human subject.... [She] can reject [dreams] as insignificant. ...[Or she] can live the dream forward intelligently, truthfully, deliberately, erotically, agapically. Then the universe is promoted to a higher integration, to a fuller being."<sup>20</sup>

A physiological account of this transition phase will be brought to light in the following chapter. For present purposes, the particular focus of this section restricts the discussion to one main point, that is, how the symbol functions as an operator at this point of transition. The symbol,<sup>21</sup> as psychic expression, holds in tension the unity that exists at the point of contact between the potential held in the unconscious energy of the cosmos and the projects intended by human intelligence—it is the "place of the conscious meeting of past and future, origin and destiny, limitation and finality."<sup>22</sup> Here, matter and spirit commingle; here in the rich texture of the symbol the "future beckons the having

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 291

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan defines a symbol as a "...real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling" (64). "...[I]t has the power of recognizing and expressing what logical discourse abhors: the existence of internal tensions, incompatibilities, conflicts, struggles, destructions....[As such] it meets a need...for internal communication (66)." "...It is through symbol that mind and body, mind and heart, heart and body communicate. In that communication symbols have their proper meaning. It is an elemental meaning..." (67).

<sup>22</sup> Doran, *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 293.

been into presence, thus constituting the present.”<sup>23</sup> The present is the subject’s temporal existence, and that existence in time rests on the tense unity between project and possibility, limitation and transcendence. Its tense unity functions as the seed of human endeavor, for the dream symbol not only creates this unity but, indeed, also evokes it, and, in the event of its absence in human living, calls one back to it. In effect, the dream symbol acts as a defensive scheme of recurrence, safeguarding its own authenticity. By holding in tense unity the ground of human existence, it provides the condition that enables self-transcendence in the human person.<sup>24</sup>

According to Jung, the concrete spontaneity of images anticipates wholeness.<sup>25</sup> As constitutive of this spontaneity, Jung identified two types of elemental psychic symbols: *personal* and *archetypal*. In addition to these two types of symbols, Doran has added a third, the *anagogic* symbol. Their differences and inter-relatedness facilitate the human journey to wholeness. Doran explains individuation or wholeness by distinguishing between the ego or differentiated consciousness and the totality of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan talked about four aspects of the “conjoined plurality” of vertical finality—the instrumental, dispositive, material and obediential. The psyche’s expression in symbols can be understood as creating the conditions for the possibility of the higher synthesis in intentional consciousness and, therefore, serves as the dispositive aspect of vertical finality. See “Finality, Love, Marriage,” 22.

<sup>25</sup> Images of wholeness include quaternity or mandala symbols whose significance rests in their portrayal of unity and totality. As such, the notion of wholeness confronts the human subjects through these images in an a priori fashion—they provide the data that helps to orient the conscious subject toward the fullness of being. See, *Intentionality and Psyche*, 146. The goal of wholeness is obtained through a process that Carl Jung called “individuation.” In short, the individuation process is the task of the psyche, the project by which archetypal symbols preside over the development of the ego and the later midlife transition from the ego to the self. See Doran, “Jungian Psychology and Christian Spirituality: II,” *Review for Religious*, 38, no. 5 (1979), 742-752. On a further note, Doran identifies an important qualifier to Jung’s notion of the achievement of wholeness. For Jung, wholeness is achieved in the realm of interiority—through ongoing self-appropriation. Doran, however, asserts that the goal of individuation is transcendent, not imminent; it needs to “be reinterpreted as the conversion of the human psyche to a participation in the universal willingness that alone expresses the natural finality of subjectivity.” *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 167. “[W]holeness is a function of the realm of transcendence, not of that of interiority. It is a gift of God’s grace.” Ibid., 69.

subject, which Jung called the “self.” The ego constitutes the conscious aspect of the self, whereas the totality of the self includes, along with the ego, the “twilight of what is conscious but not objectified, and the strictly unconscious energy of neural-physiological process.”<sup>26</sup> In essence, the movement of neural-physiological energy into consciousness through the dream means that a portion of the strictly unconscious dimension of the self has emerged into—and, therefore, becomes—the conscious self.

The first type of symbol, the *personal* type, contributes to this process of differentiation by offering images representative of those elements that have either been repressed or that have yet to enter consciousness. They act as a basic commentary on the waking life of a subject, and, in that way, they provide potential data for insights that reveal the status of one’s journey. *Archetypal* symbols, on the other hand, are universal and in general represent the themes of personal development and decline. Specifically, the energy from which these symbols emerge into the dream is what constitutes embodiment or nature, that which earlier was described as the energy from the cosmic unconscious. As such, they manifest images drawn from the cyclical character of nature. Their meaning is transcultural, for they communicate, refer to, and evoke human drama, “especially as it displays the story of a conflict between desire and reality.”<sup>27</sup> Finally, the third type, *anagogic* symbols, hold the unique status of being “no longer parts of a whole...but the containers of the whole of human action, the symbolic correlatives of a religiously transformed universal viewpoint, symbols that seem to be...(rather than show), the shaping word of the universe and of history.”<sup>28</sup> In this sense, they are not strictly the

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<sup>26</sup> Doran, *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 162.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

agents directing us toward wholeness; rather, they connect the human psyche to the “known unknown.” *Anagogic* symbols express mystery, and, in so doing, “they unlock the transforming dynamism of human sensitivity and ‘bring it into harmony with the vast but impalpable pressure of the pure desire, of hope, and of self-sacrificing charity.’”<sup>29</sup>

Dream symbols, as a result, offer an intelligible text, a drama whose elemental meaning requires understanding and reasonable judgment before its full meaning can be grasped. In this way, dream symbols function as operators by prompting and promoting internal communication concerning this drama or story of individuation, just as questions for intelligence, reflection and deliberation are operators promoting successive levels of intentional consciousness. What is the ground theme of every human drama that symbols communicate? It is the “emergence of the authentic existential subject as free and responsible constitutive agent of the human world. This theme is the basic a priori of human consciousness, the intention of intelligibility, truth and value.”<sup>30</sup> The psyche’s spontaneous production of symbols that prompt, evoke, and recall this theme provides the criteria for Doran’s consideration of it as an operator. Although, in “Mission and the Spirit,” Lonergan made tentative assertions of the symbolic level as a “quasi-operator” and of the “passionateness of being” underpinning consciousness, Doran’s work has more clearly distinguished the preconscious aspect as a distinct “level” whose symbolic process is an operator.<sup>31</sup> As will be shown following the discussion on the next stage in

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 166-7.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 82. Authenticity pertains to the principle of correspondence, the understanding that higher integrations occur within the taut balance of limitation and transcendence, matter and spirit or psyche and intentionality.

<sup>31</sup> It is the intention of this thesis to further distinguish the level that “underpins” as the “body” in its relation to the psyche.

the development of Doran's work, the significance of this distinction rests in the fruit given in self-appropriation that he calls psychic conversion.

***Doran's Later Work: Psychic Conversion  
and the Threefold Aesthetic-dramatic Operator***

Doran's work on the symbolic operator expands, in later work, to include those aspects of the psyche that not only "underpin" intentionality (as does the symbolic operator) but also the two further aspects that "accompany" (the sensitive aspect) and "reach beyond" (the agapic or intersubjective aspect) intentionality. He identifies the three aspects of the psyche as the threefold aesthetic-dramatic operator. He writes,

Even...Lonergan's affirmation of a symbolic operator effecting an elemental emergence of image and affect remains tentative, more tentative than his affirmation of a topmost level of total and loving commitment. Obviously I wish to be more forthright on the issue: the intellectual or spiritual operators *are* preceded by a symbolic operator, or, better I think, they are *preceded accompanied, and transcended by an aesthetic-dramatic operator*.<sup>32</sup>

The following section reviews Doran's development of an understanding of the psyche as a tripartite operator. Having already discussed the symbolic operator, this section begins with Doran's portrayal of the *affective* operator, and follows with an outline of the third operator of the psyche, the *agapic* or *intersubjective* aspect. Doran's contribution on the notion of psychic conversion concludes this section.

*The Affective Operator*

The *affective* operator constitutes the second level of the tri-fold aesthetic-dramatic operator. Lonergan describes it in "Mission and the Spirit" as that aspect of the "passionateness of being" that "accompanies" the subject's conscious and intentional operations. At this conscious level of emergence, the psyche, as affective operator, is the

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<sup>32</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology*, 114.

“mass and momentum of our lives, the color and tone and power of feelings.”<sup>33</sup> The *affective* level of the psyche accompanies intentional operations as the feeling tone of the exercise of these operations, and makes them a dramatic event. The psyche’s proportionate or horizontal finality is toward “inner and outer sensation as a higher integration of underlying neural manifolds.”<sup>34</sup> But its vertical finality orients it toward a higher integration in intentionality, “a finality to be the inner and outer sensation of a person who understands, who reaches being through correct understanding, who promotes the human good through authentic decisions, who is in love.”<sup>35</sup> The psyche, therefore, acts as an operator on this conscious level through its finality to intentionality.<sup>36</sup>

Yet, Doran’s work draws a further distinction concerning the relationship of intentionality and psyche on the conscious level. Just as the symbolic operator on the preconscious level expresses the tension of a unity between the potential of unconscious energy and the project intended by human intelligence—of limitation and transcendence—so, too, Doran identifies here on the conscious level a second “unity in tension.” In short, there exists a twofold unity in tension in human consciousness. Both represent what Doran calls a “*dialectic of contraries*”: one is between consciousness and

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<sup>33</sup> Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 30.

<sup>34</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 47.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Because of the interrelationship between psyche and intentionality, authenticity is understood as the fruit of self-transcendence of both the intentional operations, as well as of the feelings that are constitutive of those operations. Our feelings shift in accordance with the operations of inquiry. The quality of our affective life, therefore, has a profound influence on the performance of the operations of inquiry. They participate in the authenticity or inauthenticity of inquiry’s directedness. It is a relationship, Lonergan observed, in which the movement of intentionality is the “higher integration” of psychic process. Therefore, the quality of our affective life profoundly influences the orientation of the higher integration of psyche by intentionality. Ibid., 64-92.

the unconscious, and the second, is within consciousness itself, between the psyche and intentionality.<sup>37</sup> Concerning the latter, as integral, the dialectic between psyche and intentionality would give rise to sustained self-transcendence. “A true healing of the psyche would dissolve the affective wounds that block sustained self-transcendence; it would give the freedom required to engage in the constitution of a human world; but it would also render the psyche the medium of the embodiment of intentionality in the constitution of the person.”<sup>38</sup>

### *The Intersubjective Operator*

The third level of the aesthetic-dramatic operator is the *intersubjective*. The *intersubjective* or *agapic operator* prompts human desire beyond awareness and concern for one’s self toward relationships of love with community and God.<sup>39</sup> Lonergan refers to this dimension as that part of the “passionateness of being” that “overarches”

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<sup>37</sup> Doran’s development of Lonergan’s notion of dialectic can be found in his work *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, Chapter 3, “The Notion of Dialectic,” 64-92. Doran explains his development of the notion of dialectic as follows: “...*Insight* is interpreted correctly only if there is acknowledged a tension of opposites that is to be preserved in creative equilibrium and another tension of opposites whose only authentic resolution is through choice of one pole and rejection of the other. The tension that is to be preserved I call a dialectic of contraries, whereas the tension to be resolved by choice between the alternatives I call a dialectic of contradictories.” Ibid., 68.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 62. Doran provides a further description of the elements involved in the “taut balance” of the dialectic of contraries between psyche and intentionality. “As the psyche is oriented to participation in the life of the intentional spirit, so intentionality is oriented to embodiment through the mass and momentum of feeling. Patterns of experience are either the distorted and alienated, or the integral and creative, embodiment of the human spirit. To the extent that our psychic sensitivity is victimized by oppression, the embodiment of the spirit is confined to an animal habitat, fastened on survival, intent on the satisfaction of its own deprivation of the *humanum* [the deepest desire of the human spirit for dramatic artistry]. To the extent that the psyche is released from oppressive patterns, the embodiment of the spirit is released into a human world, and indeed ultimately into the universe of being.” Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> An understanding of the relationality of the intersubjective operator was given further clarity through a conversation with Gilles Mongeau, S.J. Not only is the human person prompted “from below upward” to the higher integration of relationships of love, but inversely, there is the downward, graced movement “from above” of community and God, which constitutes relations that are one of mutual self-mediation. This thesis will show in the following chapters that mutual self-mediation not only exists within the horizon of a person’s knowing, willing and loving but, in addition, the mutually mediating influence also extends to one’s neural-physiological patterning. On the theme of mutual self-mediation see Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-64*, vol. 6, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 160-178.

conscious intentionality: “[T]here it is the topmost quasi-operator that by intersubjectivity prepares, by solidarity entices, by falling in love establishes us as members of community.”<sup>40</sup> Anagogic symbols play an important function at this topmost level. Recall that the psyche’s role in the intentional quest for intelligibility, truth and goodness, constitutes participation in a quest that Lonergan calls “the search for direction in the movement of life.” It is a restless quest, one that, in the last analysis, represents the quest for God.<sup>41</sup> St. Augustine’s famous words come to mind. “[F]or you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”<sup>42</sup>

While the operations of intentional consciousness direct this natural search for God, it is the sensitive psyche that provides the anagogic context, the “dynamic images that partly are symbols and partly are signs,” by which the “whole process of going beyond is sensed, felt and lived.”<sup>43</sup> In short, anagogic symbols express and apprehend the human connection to “mystery” in a way that intentionality can only know by increments.

While the symbol gives rise to thought, its deepest meaning is never adequately expressed in all its dimensions through any conceptual articulation. Rather, the symbol continues to nourish thought and reflection with ever new and fuller significations.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 30.

<sup>41</sup> Quoting Lonergan, Doran supports the notion that the ultimate goal of the human desire to know is knowledge and love of God: “Implicit in human inquiry is a natural desire to know God by his essence; implicit in human judgment about contingent things there is the formal unconditioned that is God; implicit in human choice of values is the absolute good that is God.” *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 285.

<sup>42</sup> St. Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1960), 43.

<sup>43</sup> See Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 285.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.



In this way, the psyche as operator at the “topmost level” prompts intentionality in its search for fulfillment—a search that leads one beyond oneself into friendships, to the desire for unity or solidarity in concern for others and, in so doing, to the receptivity and surrender to the graced gift of love in concern for God.<sup>45</sup>

### *Psychic Conversion*

Doran’s notion of psychic conversion both develops and aligns itself with Lonergan’s invitation for self-appropriation. Lonergan has shown that the fruits of such an achievement are given in an interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness. Doran furthers this invitation to include the self-appropriation of those dimensions that are considered psychic, the dimension that Lonergan referred to as the “passionateness of being”—the “aesthetic and dramatic dimensions of human living, and its underlying neural base.”<sup>46</sup> As distinct from the operators of intelligent, rational and moral consciousness, the psychic dimension (along with the workings of its threefold aesthetic and dramatic operator) is what is released into the possibility of self-appropriation by psychic conversion. Doran has shown that the psychic dimension can be appropriated by specifying a set of aesthetic-dramatic operators that mediate between the two dimensions of intentionality and psyche

as these operators promote something that underpins, accompanies, and reaches beyond intentional operations. The set of aesthetic-dramatic operators consists of (1) symbolic operators that effect the transition from the neural to the psychic, (2) the affective operators that consist in the feelings that permeate all intentional operations and (3) the intersubjective operators that found community.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Recall that the state of being in love is a state of being in which a permanent transformation takes place; that is, an “I” and “thou” become a “we.” This is the intersubjectivity to which we are prompted at the topmost level. In effect, one’s identity is transformed, so that one “attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both.” Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 32-33.

<sup>46</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 164.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

Psychic conversion has to do with the harmonious orientation between the operators of intentionality and psyche described above, an integrity that rests on what Lonergan termed the principle of correspondence.<sup>48</sup> Doran develops the understanding of the principle of correspondence through his articulation of the twofold dialectic of contraries in the human subject, between the organism and psyche and, within consciousness itself, between intentionality and psyche. It is by the principle of correspondence that the twofold dialectics exist in their proper “unity in tension.” Bias and sin distort this correspondence, thereby skewing the tension toward either too much limitation or too much transcendence. Psychic conversion directly affects this dynamic correspondence.

Specifically, psychic conversion aids in healing the dynamic correspondence between the organism and psyche through “a transformation of the psychic component of what Freud calls ‘the censor’ from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person’s development.”<sup>49</sup> The censor functions as a filter for the data that is needed for insights. It is exercised by the dramatic pattern as it operates in the preconscious collaboration of intelligence and imagination.<sup>50</sup> The censor’s task involves supplying to consciousness the needed materials—the images and their accompanying affects—for insights. When the dramatically patterned orientation of consciousness exercises a constructive censorship over unconscious neural demands [thereby holding in tension the radical

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<sup>48</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555.

<sup>49</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 59.

<sup>50</sup> Doran refers to *Insight* to explain the function of the dramatic pattern in human knowing. “Sensitive experience, the first or empirical level of consciousness, is patterned in different ways, depending on the interests, concerns, and objectives of the subject. There are biological, aesthetic, intellectual, practical, mystical, dramatic patterns of experience. The dramatic pattern is the pattern in which we live the greater part of our lives, the pattern in which we relate to others on the dramatic stage of life, with the ulterior concern of making of our lives, our relations with others, our world, a work of art.” Ibid., 71.

dialectic between unconscious neural processes and psychic integration] the purely coincidental neural processes achieve higher integration by being sublated by conscious psychic representation.<sup>51</sup> When infected by bias, the censor is repressive, blocking the emergence of needed images.<sup>52</sup>

Repression acts as follows. Feelings become disassociated from the repressed images and attached to other incongruent images.<sup>53</sup> One's feelings of fear or anxiety regarding the experience of the loss of a loved one, for instance, may become attached to a totally incongruent image so that, instead of facing the fear of one's own death, one begins to fear air travel. Repression acts initially as a form of psychic defense against the feelings associated with a trauma; however, long-term repression produces scotosis or blind spots in a person's horizon of being. During sleep, the censor relaxes, and, in doing so, allows the repressed images to become active in one's dreams. Thus, in its role of facilitating the "tense unity" of the dialectic in the subject between the unconscious and

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<sup>51</sup> Doran explains the resulting development: "One develops, and does so along a line of progress, to the extent that the opposed principles of neural demands and dramatically patterned existential intentionality are working harmoniously with one another, from the same base, along the same line, toward the same objective. The development cumulatively modifies the opposed principles themselves, so that the underlying neural manifold becomes an ever more pliable support and instrument of artistic world constitution and concomitant self-constitution, and the censorship becomes character, habit, virtue." Ibid., 72-72.

<sup>52</sup> The significance of bias in human knowing, willing and loving is rooted here on the preconscious level. "The bias of the inauthentic collaboration [of intelligence and imagination in selecting images for conscious insights, judgment and decision] is an always individual blending of the dramatic bias that overwhelms consciousness by elementary passion, the egoistic bias that excludes materials that would challenge one's own narrowly conceived advantage, the group bias that collapses the human good into what is expedient for one's own group...and general bias that despises the detachment of theoretical insight. The authentic [person] on the other hand, [with a constructive censor] is open to receiving into consciousness the images that are needed for the insightful, truthful, and responsible construction of a work of dramatic art [in his or her life]." Doran, *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 375.

<sup>53</sup> Lonergan points out that feelings and symbols have an inter-dependent relationship. "A symbol is a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling." *Insight*, 64. To distinguish the symbol from the image is to understand this relationship with affect, for the symbol is an "affect-laden" image. The image provides a form for feelings and resonates with feelings, thus giving an avenue for their expression.

the psyche, the symbolic operator functions as evoking the “tense unity,” and in the case of repression, calling one back to it. The interpretation of dreams, therefore, provides the seeds for psychic conversion.<sup>54</sup>

While the basic meaning of psychic conversion presented by Doran has to do with the censorship that affects the transition from the neural to the psychic, the integrity of the censor extends throughout the four levels of intentional consciousness. In other words, an integral censorship (the dialectic between unconscious neural process and psychic representation) facilitates the further integral, harmonious relationship between psyche and intentionality.<sup>55</sup>

Doran argues that the retrieval of images through psychotherapy or dream analysis in essence involves “extending the relations of sublation that Lonergan shows to obtain among the various levels of waking consciousness, so as to include dreaming consciousness in the analysis of intentionality.”<sup>56</sup> Although in “Mission and the Spirit” Lonergan did speak of the symbolic operator as a “quasi-operator,” he did not take the further step to include its function in an intentionality analysis. In the following quote concerning his explanation of an intentionality analysis, note the absence of a reference to the psychic dimension.

[Intentionality analysis] rests on operators that promote activity from one level to the next... Such operators are questions for intelligence... Such also

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<sup>54</sup> Doran suggests that psychotherapy is often helpful in this analysis since one’s own interpretative abilities are skewed by bias. *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 168.

<sup>55</sup> Doran writes: “The dialectic of conscious orientation and the unconscious is the *causa essendi* [essential cause] if you want, of the dialectic of psyche and the spirit; but the dialectic of psyche and spirit is the *causa cognoscendi* [the basis of our knowing], the cause of our being able to know the dialectic of consciousness and the unconscious. The dialectic of psyche and spirit is first for us, prior *quoad nos*, while the dialectic of consciousness and the unconscious is first in itself, prior *quoad se*.” *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 70.

<sup>56</sup> Doran, *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 374.

are questions for reflections... Such thirdly are questions for deliberation... Three types of operator yield four levels of operation.<sup>57</sup>

Doran's work on psychic conversion expands Lonergan's intentionality analysis, thus providing the further step needed in the self-objectification of the human subject.<sup>58</sup> The integration of the psychic dimension as an aesthetic-dramatic operator in the intentionality analysis of the human spirit constitutes an acknowledgment that the first level of consciousness is the dream—that "the finality of the dream, then, is harmonious with that of the normative order of inquiry: authentic cognitive and existential praxis."<sup>59</sup>

While it has just been noted that Lonergan did not take a firm stand in "Mission and the Spirit" on the dreaming state as a level in human consciousness, elsewhere in *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, Lonergan does appear to be more explicit on the matter. He states: "[C]onsciousness can be distinguished as being that of someone dreaming or awake... [A]ccording to one's attention level, consciousness can have various degrees of clarity and distinctiveness."<sup>60</sup> It follows that Doran's work on psychic conversion both draws on and develops Lonergan's more tentative forays into the area of the psychic dimension.

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<sup>57</sup> Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 28.

<sup>58</sup> In the discussion of the move to the third stage of meaning, interiorly differentiated consciousness was described as the movement that occurs through an objectification of the data of consciousness. Alternatively, it was described as the subject's presence to his or herself in all the operations that constitute his or herself as the subject. Of these operations, there were identified two interlocking modalities that constitute the totality of the data of consciousness: a cognitive modality and a dramatic modality. Lonergan's account of cognitional analysis as the objectification of one's cognitional operations constitutes the mediation of the first set of the data of consciousness. Psychic conversion adds to the data of consciousness by an objectification that mediates the affective or dramatic aspect in its relation to the cognitive modality. When the data of consciousness is brought to conscious intentionality, one is able to understand and judge the data of consciousness such that one can identify one's own bias or inauthenticity. This self-appropriation is the key to authenticity and, hence, to one's self-transcendence.

<sup>59</sup> Doran, *Intentionality and Psyche*, 375.

<sup>60</sup> Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, vol. 7, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Michael G. Shields, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 167.

In essence, therefore, psychic conversion is the release of the internal communication that occurs through the habit of interpreting and negotiating the elemental symbols of one's dreams.<sup>61</sup> By it, one becomes familiar with one's own symbolic processes, so that one becomes adept at identifying feelings, distinguishing and relating feelings to one another, understanding how one's feelings are related to one's images and symbols and consequently to one's questions and insights. Such self-appropriation involves one in a discovery of one's own self—the drama of one's own story. By it, one is led to understand oneself, to acquire self-knowledge and, consequently, to attain a critical self-judgment of one's own authenticity or inauthenticity.

Moreover, by specifying a set of aesthetic and dramatic operators, Doran has provided an expanded base for psychic self-appropriation.

While the core intelligibility of psychic conversion has to do with the censorship that regulates the transition from the neural to the psychic, its effects extend through and beyond the four levels of intentional consciousness. It enables the internal communication that makes possible the identification of the feelings that accompany one's intentional operations and it involves as well an appropriation of the intersubjectivity, solidarity, and love that affect the topmost level.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> The release is effected by the downward movement of grace. The "created habits" or supernatural operators introduced into human consciousness by grace affect both dimensions of consciousness (spirit and psyche). First, psychic conversion brings about the correspondence of the operators occurring on the conscious levels of spirit and psyche "when all those operators have acquiesced as obediential potency to the reception of a set of habits created as free gift and have allowed those habits to become operative throughout living." Secondly, under the influence of religious conversion, "psychic conversion enables the acquiescence of the sensitive operator of psychic development to be obediential potency for the penetration of grace to the sensitive and primordially intersubjective levels of consciousness. With that acquiescence, there are released requisite and appropriate images that are laden with affect oriented to God. There is released precisely the *mystery* that is at once symbol of an ever inexhaustible and uncomprehended absolute intelligence and love... [P]sychic conversion is not so much this penetration [of God's action to the level of our sensitivity and spontaneous intersubjectivity and even physiology] but a release, perhaps effected ultimately by the penetration of grace, that enables a sensitive and organic appropriation of the other effects of grace." Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 119-120.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 115-16.

In this way, Doran portrays psychic conversion as an essential component in the ongoing self-transcendence of the authentic human subject.

What is the significance of the addition of this further dimension to an understanding of the human person as a source of meaning in an emergent world view? Recall that the satisfactory negotiation of the dialectic of contraries between the psyche and intentionality involves self-appropriating the tension that exists between limitation and transcendence. Psychic conversion involves consciously affirming the need to admit this tension into consciousness.<sup>63</sup> As such, Doran asserts that the dialectic of contraries constitutes the normative source of a subject's authenticity, the fidelity to which implies progress. Moreover, on the basis of this distinction concerning the correspondence of the operators of the two areas of conscious human development, intentionality and psyche, Doran enriches Lonergan's heuristic structure of history. In effect, the integral dialectic of the subject understood in Doran's terminology as the dialectic of contraries—intentionality and psyche together—constitutes the total and dialectical source of meaning in history.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Recall that Lonergan called the conscious appropriation of one's limitation and ability to transcend those limitations the "law of genuineness."

<sup>64</sup> Lonergan's notion of the immanent principle at work in the dialectic of history was situated in the principle of the human spirit raising and answering questions and the violation of that principle by bias. With the inclusion of the psychic dimension, Doran, using Lonergan's own words, provides an expanded basis to assert that the deeper and more comprehensive principle is the "tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these, in being-in-love." This tidal movement, this deeper and more comprehensive principle, is now what Doran considers the normative source of meaning in human history. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 158.

***Doran's Latest Development: Expanding the Normative Source of Meaning in History***

In recent work, Doran's previous focus on the subject as the normative source of meaning in history shifts to consider the role that community plays in constituting meaning. Doran draws attention to the fact that, in the world mediated by meaning, there is an inverse relationship between community and the subject; that is, there is a relative dominance that a community of meaning holds over the subject. Referencing Lonergan's work regarding the relative primacy of the dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject, Doran explains

It is the community that sets the stage for the subject's dramatic pattern of experience. "In this relationship the dialectic of community holds the dominant position, for it gives rise to the situations that stimulate neural demands, and it molds the orientation of intelligence that preconsciously exercises the censorship" over what will be allowed into consciousness.<sup>65</sup>

Significantly, the dominance of the meanings and values of the community into which a person is born decisively affects his or her reception of data. Even prior to a person's own critical reflection, she has received an "already patterned" set of materials that constitute the meaning and values of her community.<sup>66</sup> Lonergan termed the "already patterned" meaning, received prior to a person's ability to critically reflect, the reception of the "ordinary meaningfulness" that has been historically constituted by one's community.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., "Reception and Elemental Meaning: An Expansion of the Notion of Psychic Conversion," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (2004), 135. To the understanding of the dominance of a dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject, Doran also adds the further relative dominance of the dialectic of culture.

<sup>66</sup> The following chapters will explain this "already patterned" set of materials in terms of the effect of community on a person's neural-physiological makeup.

<sup>67</sup> The context within which Lonergan coined the phrase "original meaningfulness" occurs in his discussion concerning how any new judgment is made within a "habitual context of insights and other judgments.... [P]ast judgments remain with us. They form a habitual orientation, present and operative but only from behind the scenes." *Insight*, 302. Doran explains this habitual orientation further. "The dominance of the



As dominant, the reception of meaning and values from a community proceeds “from above” in a downward movement through human consciousness.

The movement “from above” introduces an empirical element into the other levels of consciousness, which function now not first of all as elevations of data of sense and consciousness to intelligibility, truth, and value, but as a *form of mediated immediacy* [italics are mine] that receives empirically the intelligibility, truth, and value of communally sedimented meaning.<sup>68</sup>

This “mediated immediacy” of an already patterned set of data identifies for Doran the need to expand Lonergan’s account of empirical consciousness—the data of sense and the data of consciousness. An expansion would include not only those data that are received “from below,” (“the spontaneous, immediate data of sense and consciousness... those data [,which] along with the symbolic and dramatic-aesthetic operators, [include] feelings,”), but would also include data received “from above” (those meanings and values that are “...an ‘already given intelligibility’” that functions effectively and constitutively in the community).<sup>69</sup> Doran calls the reception of the meanings and values of one’s community a reception “from above.”<sup>70</sup>

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dialectic of community over that of the subject means that the relations of the present of the subject to the past are relations not only to the subject’s own past but also to the past of his or her community or network of communities. And these relations decisively affect the orientation or habitual context within which the reception of data occurs. These relations decisively affect what for any given subject in whatever milieu constitutes ordinary meaningfulness.” Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138-39.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 125. Doran’s term “mediated immediacy” refers to Lonergan’s distinction among the various functions of meaning. Besides the infant’s world of immediate experience and the adult’s larger world mediated by meaning there is the “mediation of immediacy by meaning when one objectifies cognitional process in transcendental method and when one discovers identifies, accepts one’s submerged feelings in psychotherapy.” *Method in Theology*, 77. As a *form of mediated immediacy*, Doran points to the fact that the meaning objectified in the case of “original meaningfulness” comes not from one’s own cognitional and psychic processes but rather from a person’s unconscious apprehension of the cognitional and psychic process from the community into which he or she was born.

<sup>69</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 131.

<sup>70</sup> Because these received meanings and values “from above” precede the intelligent inquiry of the subject, his or her further insights and conceptualizations (or original meaningfulness), and his or her understandings and judgments of fact and value, Doran considers these data in the same vein that Lonergan speaks of a “mediated immediacy” and the notion of elemental meaning. “There are presentations [free

Furthermore, such an expansion would provide additional data for an interiority analysis and the accompanying psychic self-appropriation that Doran calls “psychic conversion.” In other words, included in the tripartite aspect of the psychic dimension that is “from below” is the further data—received meaning “from above.” The received intelligibility “from above” are the meanings and values that are the historical product of the “original meaningfulness of the insights, judgments and decisions of those who have preceded us, or of their biases, their failures to be intelligent, reasonable and responsible or of some combination of intelligence and bias.”<sup>71</sup> The self-appropriation that involves this full set of data would facilitate the healing of what Doran calls a “psychic rift.”<sup>72</sup> A psychic rift or alienation from the stream of empirical consciousness occurs not only “from below,” the product of dramatic bias; Doran contends that it is also caused by an alienation from the “already given, temporally and historically conditioned facticity that is mediated by meaning, from above.”<sup>73</sup> Psychic self-appropriation of the data “from below,” as well as “from above,” would facilitate the healing of this psychic rift. It would mean a “habitual being-at-home with” the received data mediated by meaning, such that the link is re-established between the mediated immediacy of this data with the inquiring and critical spirit. The healing that would result from a critical appropriation of such data is fundamentally likened to what Doran refers to in Heidegger’s terms as “the

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images and utterances] that occur empirically to the conscious subject that are already infused with intelligence and rationality and, we may add, with ethical overtones. These occur, [to an empirical consciousness] that receives meaningful data before these data provide a basis for one’s own inquiry and reflection [the source of original meaningfulness] and so ... may be called ‘empirical.’” Ibid., 128.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

forgetfulness of Being.”<sup>74</sup> It is here, in the discussion of the conversion required to critique and heal what is received from history, that one needs to also acknowledge human responsibility in creating history. And it is precisely at this level, Doran states, “of the already given intelligibility of received data, that God’s entrance into the world of human meaning takes place.”<sup>75</sup>

Here, in Doran’s articulation of “original meaningfulness” as an expansion of an understanding of empirical consciousness, there is discovered the pivot point from which proceeds a new understanding of Lonergan’s question in “Mission and the Spirit.” Included among the received meanings and values of one’s community and culture is divine meaning. Divine meaning (the created realities that theology speaks of in its special categories as the gifts of charity, hope and love) is constitutive of all aspects of society, both secular and religious. As received meaning, God’s entrance into the world of human meaning occurs on the level of elemental meaning “of the already given intelligibility of received data...effecting transformations through the cognitive, constitutive, communicative and effective function of God’s own ...original meaningfulness, and ultimately of God’s incarnate meaning.”<sup>76</sup> God’s revelation to humanity, therefore, is a revelation of meaning, and the meaning that it carries is a created reality.<sup>77</sup> ““The Word of God is God’s entering into the world of human meaning.’ And the Word of God in this context may be ‘taken as the word of the Bible,

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> In this sense, Doran indicates that God’s revelation as meaning consists in the four functions previously noted: cognitive, constitutive, communicative and effective. Ibid., 136.

or the word of tradition, or the incarnate Word that is the incarnate meaning of the Son of God.”<sup>78</sup>

In “Mission and the Spirit,” Lonergan’s expressed intent was to explain this transition of divine meaning—“of the natural to the supernatural”—in terms of human consciousness. He spoke of that transition in the twofold missions of the Word and Spirit: the mission of the Word is received and “mounts up the successive levels of experiencing, understanding, judging and deliberating...[and the mission of the Spirit] descends from the gift of God’s love through religious conversion to moral, and through religious and moral to intellectual conversion.”<sup>79</sup> The understanding of reception as being “doubly constitutive” (that is, as under the influence of the dominance of the dialectic of community and culture over the dialectic of the subject) contributes to a development in the understanding of the complex influence of bias on the reception of the two missions. The significance of the role that psychic conversion plays in this transition now comes to the fore.

Just as common meaning is constitutive of a community, so, too, divergent meanings can divide a community. And if the divergent meanings arise from “the presence and absence of intellectual, moral and religious conversion,” then the radical dialectical opposition that ensues divides a community into radically opposed groups.<sup>80</sup> The cumulative product of the actions informed by radically divergent meanings is then

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Although the understanding of divine revelation in terms of “meaning” is not explicit in Lonergan’s “Mission and the Spirit,” nevertheless, it is implicit in the sense that he refers to some of the functions of meaning in his discussion of the processions of the two missions of the Son and Spirit in history. “So the self-communication of the Son and the Spirit proceeds through history by a communication that at once is cognitive, constitutive, and redemptive.” “Mission and the Spirit,” 32.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 357.

manifest in a situation that reflects varying degrees of the higher differentiations (progress) or “incoherent fragments” (decline) of meaning. The state of the community, therefore, decidedly affects its receptivity to the revelation of God’s meaning into the world of human meaning.

How does divine meaning heal the distortions operating in the community? Just as the complex distortions of bias have individual as well as social implications, so, too, God’s redemption becomes manifest not only individually but also socially. Here Doran draws on Lonergan’s work in *De Deo trino: Pars systematica* where Lonergan distinguishes between the habit of grace and the state of grace. It is the state of grace that Lonergan explicitly identifies as an intersubjective or social reality, one that includes the divine persons of the Trinity.<sup>81</sup>

[T]he state or situation of grace refers to many different subjects together. Thus to constitute the state of grace there are required (1) the Father who loves, (2) the Son because of whom the Father loves, (3) the Holy Spirit in whom the Father loves and gives gifts, and (4) the just, who because of the Son are loved by the Father in the Holy Spirit, who consequently are endowed with sanctifying grace, whence flow the virtues and gifts, and who are thereby just and upright and open to receiving and eliciting acts that are directed toward eternal life.<sup>82</sup>

The “just,” understood in the plural, signifies the community, and by implication further signifies the “state” of divine subjects in relationship with a community of human subjects. Lonergan’s moving words express its significance. “[B]y reason of this state the divine persons and the just are within one another as those who are known are within those who know them and those who are loved are within those who love them.”<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>81</sup> Gilles Mongeau’s work on mutual self-mediation helps to further clarify the interrelationship of divine and human meaning at this level of the intersubjective operator in human consciousness. See Gilles Mongeau, S.J., “The State of Grace and the Law of the Cross: Further Insights into Lonergan from René Girard,” unpublished work (2011).

<sup>82</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

possibility of redemption is thus conceived as the reception of the original meaningfulness of divine meaning into the fabric of the ordinary meaningfulness of community. In this way, the Reign of God emerges into the world of human meaning, providing the conditions of possibility for the ongoing healing and creative processes that incrementally become constitutive of a community's meaning. In line with an emergent world view, Doran portrays the healing and elevating activity of divine meaning or revelation

as God's entrance into the human world of meaning [such that divine meaning] shifts the probabilities in favour of graced ordinary meaningfulness. And that shift in probabilities affects the reception, or better, the receptive potential, of subjects in community to the divine meaning intended by God when God enters our world of meaning.<sup>84</sup>

Through the graced intervention of psychic conversion, a community of persons is enabled to discover the harmonious relationship between their religious experience and "the rest of [their] symbolic system."<sup>85</sup> Psychic conversion creates *defensive schemes* of recurrence that increase the possibility not only for the reception of divine meaning but also, indeed, for its survival in a community of meaning.<sup>86</sup> Defensive schemes emerge in the process of self-appropriation that accompanies psychic conversion. For how can one tell whether the convictions that one has been taught to live by or the appropriation of

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 142. In his articulation of the need to expand psychic self-appropriation to include the data "from above," Doran recalls Lonergan's description of a normal human being. "[W]e become normal human beings only by mastering vast systems of symbols and adapting our muscles, our nerves, our cerebral cortex, to respond to them accurately and precisely." Psychic self-appropriation releases into consciousness the needed images and symbols needed for such mastery. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> In the terminology of an emergent world view, Doran considers the function of psychic conversion in relation to religious, moral and intellectual conversion to be that of a defensive circle. "The latter variety of psychic conversion is, then, as reoriented depth psychology, an aid to religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness, and a defensive circle (I:118) around religious, moral, and intellectual conversion." *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 142.

religion by one's community is authentic? The answer, Doran has shown, "is found in the self-transcendence that is the criterion of authenticity or genuineness, as self-transcendence that...can be submitted to self-appropriation. The operations that constitute original meaningfulness, then, alone are able to pass judgment on the truth of the ordinary meaningfulness of present horizons."<sup>87</sup>

Through self-appropriation one discovers the key that unlocks the stream of empirical consciousness from "below" in the transformation of the censor from a repressive to a constructive function, as well as from "above" in the healing of the "psychic rift" that re-establishes our link with authentic historically constituted meaning. Such self-appropriation involves one in a discovery of one's own self—the drama of one's own story. By it, one is led to *understand* oneself, to acquire self-knowledge and, consequently, to attain a critical self-judgment of one's own authenticity or inauthenticity. But even more importantly, by it one is connected with the drama of God's story in human history. In fact, through self-appropriation, a person is led to assume the responsibility that accompanies the "state of grace," a responsibility that is realized in the willingness to participate in correcting not only one's own inauthenticity but also the major inauthenticity of the ordinary meaningfulness received in one's tradition. Ultimately, by the authentic exercise of one's own original meaningfulness "that is the sole source and guarantee of such healing and creating in history," one participates in the willing of the emergent probability of divine meaning that is the immanent intelligibility of the Reign of God.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 142.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

***Doran's Contribution to Answering Lonergan's Question Regarding the Transition from the Natural to the Supernatural in Human Consciousness***

Chapter Three has engaged in a discussion concerning how an expansion of the categories of interiority provided by Robert Doran's notion of psychic conversion contributes to Lonergan's intention in "Mission and the Spirit" to answer the question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" The addition of the notion of psychic conversion in Doran's work offers three distinct but related contributions.

The first is that, by identifying additional levels in the psyche and their corresponding operators, Doran has expanded the basis for an interiority analysis. This means that both cognitional (the data of sense and the data of consciousness, which include received meanings and values) as well as psychic operations can be objectified in an intentionality analysis providing further material for conscious self-appropriation. Furthermore, psychic self-appropriation provides a dispositive aspect for the authentic sublation of the intellectual, moral and religious conversions and differentiations. By its dispositive aspect, the addition of psychic conversion creates defensive schemes of recurrence that increase the probability of self-transcendence in the finality by which nature gives way to spirit. Through Doran's work on psychic conversion, he has advanced the search for a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche and mind in the human person. His work integrates Lonergan's contributions, and further differentiates an understanding of the psyche's role in the body-psyche-mind constituents of the human person in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.



The second contribution to Lonergan's question is that the addition of psychic conversion brings to light the significance of the "passionateness of being" in the emergent probability of graced creation. It has been shown that psychic self-appropriation significantly determines one's capacity to receive meaning "from above," that is, the original meaning of the divine as constitutive in the ordinary meaning of one's community. Psychic conversion heightens awareness of human individual and collective responsibility to attend to his or her own authenticity and to the authentic appropriation of the meanings and values by which his or her own horizon of being has been constituted.

Finally, a dialectic of history understood in terms of an evolutionary development of meaning in a world process contributes to one's understanding of one's being in the world. The understanding that humans are not only constituted or shaped by the meanings and values into which they were born but are also, in turn, originators of meaning identifies an invariant ground for authentic development itself. It is upon this ground that the distorting effects manifest in decline can be corrected and reversed. The significance of the understanding of redemption as the emergence of divine meaning in the world is enormous. A heuristic structure that explains the emergent probability of meaning in world process sets the ranges of possibility for our future actions. Ultimately, its meaning is the meaning of the eschatological coming of the Reign of God. The capacity to love the universe with the love given to us by God, by which we love all else, is a willing of the emergent probability that is the immanent intelligibility of the universal order that is the Reign of God.

### *What Doran Leaves Open*

Through his articulation of the need to heal a distorted censor in the search for genuine and artful living, Doran draws attention to the importance of psychological therapeutic techniques as a means to that healing. In addition, Doran's later work on "received meaning" points to the fact that some of the distortion in human knowing, valuing and loving has been somehow given prior to the point in human development when a person can consciously decide for his or her self. What remains open for further articulation is an understanding of how this prior meaning is apprehended in a person, as well as an understanding of how God's healing grace operates at this level prior to consciousness. In short, what remains open for further development concerns an explanation of the inherent dynamism of the human organism or the body. In the search for a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche and mind in the human person, the further development would emphasize the body in the human transition from the natural to the supernatural.

In seeking this further development, the project of this thesis serves as an attempt to answer the controversial question regarding how to understand the bottom-most level, the body's relation to the psyche, in the upwardly directed dynamism from nature to the supernatural. This thesis is an attempt to ground this issue by engaging in an extensive look at the neural-physiological process that provides the condition for the higher integration in dreaming or conscious imaging.

## Chapter Four

### Eugene Gendlin as the Pivot Point

#### *Introduction*

The last two chapters have served as “stepping stones” in the search to advance a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche and mind in the human person. Lonergan’s principle of correspondence, which recognizes the mutually conditioning nature of higher and lower schemes in the evolutionary process, provided the basis by which to understand the relations between the body, psyche and mind. Robert Doran furthered an understanding of the relations by articulating a twofold dialectic of contraries that obtains, in the first, between intentionality (mind) and psyche and, in the second, between consciousness (intentionality along with the corresponding conscious, imaginal/feeling aspect of the psyche) and the organism (body).

Concerning the first in the methodological series of “stepping stones,” Lonergan’s intentionality analysis of interiority focused on the four levels of consciousness and their accompanying operations associated with the “mind” in the knowing and deciding human person. The second in the series involved Doran’s expansion of Lonergan’s intentionality analysis to include the psychic dimension. Doran argued that the retrieval of images through psychotherapy or dream analysis in essence involves “extending the relations of sublation that Lonergan shows to obtain among the various levels of waking consciousness, so as to include dreaming consciousness in the analysis of intentionality.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Doran, S.J., *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995), 374.

The purpose of this chapter is to further Doran's argument by proposing, through the study of an intentional body-awareness technique called "focusing," that the retrieval of images involves extending the relations of sublation to include not only waking consciousness and dreaming consciousness but also "body knowledge" in an analysis of intentionality. In short, this chapter constitutes a further expansion—a development in the understanding of the aspect of the principle of correspondence that highlights the relation between the unconscious, organic aspect or body and the psyche.<sup>2</sup> By expanding the present grasp of the relation between body and psyche, this chapter will contribute to a further differentiation in the understanding of what in human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

This shift in focus, to that point in the vertical finality of the universe where the unconscious becomes human, distinguishes the body as a level with corresponding operations in the evolutionary portrayal of human consciousness. In effect, this contribution serves to articulate more clearly the dialectic of contraries that exists between consciousness and the organism—that conscious images arise not only in response to the demand to know but also by way of the upwardly directed dynamism, the vertical finality, of one's neural-physiology. From this viewpoint, the implementation of proportionate being by the existential subject involves the decision to live under the guidance of the norms immanent and operative not only on the four levels of waking

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<sup>2</sup> This thesis aligns with Doran's definition of the unconscious as all that is "undifferentiated" in the human person. Drawing on Lonergan's definition, Doran states that

I interpret the unconscious to be energy at its physical, chemical, and biological levels, opaque energy, in need of a higher integration by at least the sensitive consciousness of the psyche if it is to come into the light [of consciousness]. ... The unconscious is all energy that is not present to itself. In principle, at least, the unconscious is all energy in the universe save that which becomes present to itself as psychic energy in animal and human consciousness.

Proximately, it is neural-physiological process in the human organism. Remotely, it is the world. Robert Doran, S.J., *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1: *Intentionality and Psyche*, 289.

The proximate aspect of the unconscious, the body, constitutes the main focus of the present discussion.

consciousness but also of the unconscious. In other words, authenticity involves the awareness that within neural-physiological patterning there is an intelligibility seeking higher integration. The once static or mechanistic portrayal of the human body as merely “matter” gives way to an understanding of the body as dynamic, operating under the norms of both classical and statistical laws. The methodological progression made by the previous chapters now proceeds under the guidance of the further question: How are we to understand the significance of the human body in the transition from the natural to the supernatural?

This fourth chapter is the pivot point in the thesis’ argument. Broken down into four basic parts, this chapter presents a case for the inclusion of the body in an interiority analysis. The first part establishes the root of the argument in Lonergan’s work. In addition to the principle of correspondence, Lonergan’s comment in Chapter Nine of *Insight*—that “...past judgments remain with us”<sup>3</sup>—provides the basis to begin the exploration of Gendlin’s notion of “body knowledge”<sup>4</sup> and the technique of focusing on one’s “felt sense.”<sup>5</sup> In effect, the task of situating the body in an interiority analysis involves transposing Gendlin’s work from commonsense categories to categories of interiority. Rooting the argument in Lonergan’s work begins the process of transposition.

The second part of the chapter introduces Gendlin’s work. Arguing in a descriptive manner, Gendlin asserts that the body has an orientation to “live the felt sense

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<sup>3</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 302

<sup>4</sup> Eugene Gendlin, *Focusing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), ix.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

further,” an “implying.”<sup>6</sup> Gendlin’s work brings to light the importance of acknowledging that there exists an intelligibility or knowledge in the body.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, Gendlin recognizes that this intelligibility holds within it an inherent dynamism that is forever seeking a higher form in conscious images. By focusing on the body’s “felt experience” during any given experience, a person may facilitate this transition to higher integration. Two points come to light through Gendlin’s portrayal of “body knowledge.” First, that the body is not a static system but rather a dynamic one, and secondly, that there exists an intelligibility in the body.

Furthering the task of transposition, the third part presents Gendlin’s work as a needed development for an understanding of the bottom-most level, the body’s relation to the psyche, in the upwardly directed dynamism from nature to the supernatural. In view of the fact that Gendlin’s work operates at the level of experience, this section will situate Gendlin’s work in interiority by examining the correlations between Gendlin’s articulations of “body knowledge” with the pre-conscious patterning that Doran terms “received meaning.”

Finally, the fourth part of the chapter locates the focusing technique within the transcendental precept to “be attentive.” This section looks at the conditions for the higher integration in dreaming or conscious imaging. It proposes the importance of the bodily “felt shift” as instrumental in the self-appropriation of psychic data and the consequent freedom from dramatic bias; this phase “fills out” Doran’s understanding of

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<sup>6</sup> Eugene Gendlin, “Meaning Prior to the Separation of the Five Senses,” in *Current Advances in Semantic Theory*, ed. M. Stamenov (Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1992), 3.  
[http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol\\_2111.html](http://www.focusing.org/gendlin/docs/gol_2111.html), accessed February 3, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Neuroscience will be used in the following chapter as a way to *explain* “body knowledge.”

psychic conversion. This final section completes the transposition from Gendlin's descriptive, commonsense language to Lonergan's explanatory categories of interiority.

The chapter closes by showing how Gendlin's work on the body has contributed to answering Lonergan's question: What in human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural? These closing remarks also identify what yet remains open to further investigation, thus providing the springboard for the final task ahead in Chapter Five.

***Gendlin's Descriptive Categories on Body Knowledge Transposed to the Explanatory Categories of Interiority***

*Including the Body in an Intentionality Analysis: The Basis in Lonergan's Insight*

The human person is an *embodied* knower and an existential subject. In *Insight*, Lonergan refers to the embodied aspect of the human person as his or her being is involved in the self-transcending dynamic unfolding of the human desire to know. Recall Lonergan's assertion that the unfolding involves a principle of correspondence by which "higher integrations of the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator; and if its developments on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators."<sup>8</sup> Two points from this quote give rise to the present discussion concerning the body. Firstly, the notion that the human organism is not a static system but rather a dynamic one

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<sup>8</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555.

seeking higher integration in the psyche<sup>9</sup> indicates that, along with the spirit and psyche in their orientation to God, the body “emerges” within the bounds of both classical and statistical laws.<sup>10</sup> The second point applicable to the present discussion has to do with Lonergan’s acknowledgment that, as a level, the body is both an operator and an integrator.<sup>11</sup> As an operator, its dynamism seeks ever-higher integration of its neural-physiological process—from the chemical, to the biological and further to the neurological schemes of recurrence.<sup>12</sup> As an integrator, the body manifests a higher form of energy from the universe.<sup>13</sup> This latter acknowledgement provides the basis necessary to identify the dialectical relations of the body to the other aspects of the human person in an interiority analysis.

Providing a further basis for the present discussion is a comment that Lonergan makes in Chapter Nine of *Insight*. He writes that “...past judgments remain with us. They form a habitual orientation, present and operative, but only from behind the scenes.

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<sup>9</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan refers to the body’s dynamism in the following passage: “Not only have nerves their physical and chemical basis but also they contain dynamic patterns that can be restored to an easy equilibrium only through the offices of psychic representations and interplay” (218).

<sup>10</sup> Gendlin uses the term “implying” to describe this notion of the body emerging. The following chapter will develop this notion by drawing on the science of neuroplasticity in the brain.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Robert Doran, S.J., telephone interview by author, September 20, 2011. Concerning this point, Dr. Doran indicated that the body most likely has many levels with many corresponding operators, each studied by their respective fields of science.

<sup>12</sup> The sciences of biology, chemistry and neurology study these various levels in the body. The task undertaken in this thesis does not involve arguing for or against the scientific findings of the various fields.

<sup>13</sup> The basis for this statement rests on Doran’s account of the unconscious. “In principle, at least, the unconscious is all energy in the universe save that which becomes present to itself as psychic energy in animal and human consciousness. Proximately, it is neural-physiological process in the human organism. Remotely, it is the world.” Doran, *Intentionality and Psyche*, 289. As a distinct level, the body’s operator prompts the fertilization and gestation process where the “potential of the universe to become” takes on human form. As integrator, the neural-physiological makeup of the human body seeks higher integration in imaginable form in the psyche.



They govern the direction of attention, evaluate insights, guide formulations, and influence the acceptance or rejection of new judgments.”<sup>14</sup> The idea that past judgments somehow remain with the human person in some form of habitual orientation will be used in dialogue with Eugene Gendlin on “body knowledge.” However, the explanation concerning exactly how “past judgments remain with us” will require the further insights offered in the following chapter.

### *Gendlin’s Description of Body Knowledge*

As a psychologist, Eugene Gendlin offers a unique approach to an understanding of the body. As a philosopher, he appears to be struggling within the confines of theoretical meaning in search, but not yet aware, of the categories of interiority needed to explain his therapeutic experience of the body.<sup>15</sup> The approach taken in this section toward the goal of transposing Gendlin’s descriptive categories into the explanatory categories of interiority does not involve an engagement with his philosophical arguments. Rather, the task at hand entails drawing on his therapeutic insights on the human body for the purpose of further differentiating Lonergan’s categories of interiority.

Through his observations as a therapist, Gendlin first became aware of the body’s role in healing psychic disturbances or blocks. Joined by colleagues in their quest to understand why, after years of psychotherapy, so many people remained “stuck,”

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<sup>14</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 302.

<sup>15</sup> In *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), Gendlin engages in philosophical dialogue with several modern philosophers, Wittgenstein, Dilthey, and Heidegger, to name a few, in an attempt to move from notions of “universal concepts” in an understanding of truth toward a “reversal of the usual philosophical order...[that] [r]ather than giving some cognitive system priority and reading into experience, our philosophy recognizes... ‘emergent qualities’... that every word has a newly precise emergent meaning in its situation.” *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xviii. It appears that Gendlin’s philosophical argument represents an attempt to move from a philosophy concerned with the object to one that turns to the embodied, knowing, deciding and loving subject, or in other words, from the theoretical realm of meaning to that of interiority.

unhealed from their psychological ailment, Gendlin relays the following research findings. He writes,

We found that [successful therapy] is not the [result of] the therapist's technique. Nor does the difference lie in what the patients talk about. The difference is in *how* they talk. And that is only an outward sign of the real difference: *what the successful patients do inside themselves*.<sup>16</sup>

The heart of Gendlin's work lies in attempting to articulate "what the successful patients do inside themselves." Resolving repressed images, Gendlin determines, must come from the unconscious or body itself, and not by way of the intellect concerned with theoretical analysis. He observed that one needs only to pay attention, to focus on the felt sense<sup>17</sup> in the body during any given situation.<sup>18</sup> As one gently probes the felt sense with questions, much like teasing out threads from a knot in one's sewing, the body responds. The body's response comes in steps as though in dialogue with the questioning person. The further questions, in kind, reflect the new information given by the body. Step by step, in this fashion, the once unclear bodily sense gives way to an ever-increasing clarity in the felt sense, finally culminating in the release of an image into consciousness. A concomitant release of energy accompanies this final step. Gendlin calls this moment of energy release a "felt shift." It is this "felt shift" that verifies the viability of the process.

Such steps can not be designed deliberately. They are not imposed on

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<sup>16</sup> Gendlin, *Focusing*, 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> "A felt sense is not a mental experience but a physical one. A bodily awareness of a situation or person or event. An internal aura that encompasses everything you feel and know about the given subject at a given time—encompasses it and communicates it to you all at once rather than detail by detail.... A felt sense doesn't come to you in the form of thoughts or words or other separate units, but as a single (though often puzzling and very complex) bodily feeling." *Sic* Ibid., 32.

<sup>18</sup> "Many people can get in touch with their feelings—but then what? They have 'gut feelings' all right, but the feelings don't change. Focusing is the next development after getting in touch with feelings. It concerns a different kind of inward attention to what is at first sensed *unclearly*. Then it comes into focus and, through the specific internal movements...changes in a bodily way." Ibid., 8.

someone.... The steps came from [the] body.... In these steps the patient's body newly phrases the language. The steps are not already there.... They come in the on-going *interaction* with the therapist [or oneself]. Each step is *implied* by the body.... [L]iving body's imply their own continuation.<sup>19</sup>

Gendlin's work offers two main insights into an understanding of the human body. Countering static notions of the body, Gendlin asserts that the body is inherently dynamic, ever seeking higher forms—the body *implies* its continuation. Secondly, within this dynamism there is an intelligibility, a meaning that is more than the human person can know rationally. In view of the fact that both points are interrelated, they will not be discussed sequentially, but explored together in a manner that develops an understanding of their interrelations.

Gendlin states his position on these two insights by first refuting Freud's view that "the body (the id) consists of 'unorganized, chaotic drives' without discharge channels. Only externally imposed forms enable the bodily energies to interact in the environment. He [Freud] assumes that the body has no behavioral order of its own."<sup>20</sup>

On the contrary, Gendlin contends that

there is meaning before and also beyond language. Living bodies *imply* (they mean) their further environmental interactions. With a broad bodily process (including its muscles, nerves, gland, and circulation) the body *implies* its continuation, and thereby also the objects, things, words, involved in this next step.<sup>21</sup>

Insisting, furthermore, that the body possesses meaning prior to a person's ability to think and reason, Gendlin argues,

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<sup>19</sup> Eugene Gendlin, "Meaning Prior to the Separation of the Five Senses," 7-9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

I begin by rejecting a certain assumption: It is currently assumed that human behavior is organized only by externally imposed forms or patterns....We seem to miss the point that our social training has already formed us by the time we ask and think.<sup>22</sup>

What is this prior meaning or intelligibility “before and beyond language,” this knowledge that Gendlin contends that the body possesses? According to Gendlin, the “felt sense” of any given situation (for example, the “felt sense” that comes upon meeting a dear friend) constitutes the entire, myriad encounters stored over the years that “come to you all at once, as a single great aura sensed in your body.”<sup>23</sup> In short, the body operates in an ongoing interaction with its environment, and, as such, acts as the “warehouse,” the storage facility that houses all human experience.<sup>24</sup>

The body is a biological computer, generating these enormous collections of data and delivering them to you instantaneously when you call them up or when they are called up by some external event. Your thinking isn’t capable of holding all those items of knowledge, nor of delivering them with such speed.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, the stored material exists not merely as random bits of data but rather as an intelligibility, a patterned meaning that is oriented toward, or *implies*, a higher form of meaning in conscious image and knowing. Given its possession of intelligible meaning

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>23</sup> “The sense of ‘all about your friend’ comes to you in ...a huge file of data: what [your friend] looks like, how he speaks, how you and he first met, what you need from him, what he said yesterday, and what you said in return. The amount of information is staggering—yet somehow, when you think of [your friend], all the relevant facts and feelings come to you at once.” *Focusing*, 34.

<sup>24</sup> The argument presented in the following chapter offers the explanation that human experience is stored in the very manner that it shapes the nervous system.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. A good example of this may be observed on the occasions when a person finds herself in danger. The awareness of danger comes first from the body’s response to the situation. It is the “hair raising,” adrenaline rush, vague gut sense of discomfort that alerts consciousness to the presence of danger. The body has already interpreted the present situation based on the meaning internalized from its prior experiences (and from other instinctual reflexes). Whether or not the situation truly is dangerous requires the further interpretation of conscious thought.

from prior interactions with its environment, the body guides human behaviour. By way of its “bodily sense” of a situation, the body provides the necessary data needed to interpret a new situation.<sup>26</sup>

We do not speak to ourselves about each facet of a situation—if we did, we could not handle any situation at all. To do any simple thing, we must “know” what led up to the situation, what we are trying to bring about or avoid, who the people present are, how to walk, sit, speak, and countless other facets. We can think only very few of these explicitly. All the rest are “known” in a rich, holistic feeling of the whole context, which we can have only in a bodily concrete way.<sup>27</sup>

As a complex interactional system, Gendlin argues, the body can no longer be thought of merely in terms of “what [its] physiology formulates.”<sup>28</sup> Its intelligibility not only guides conscious living but also seeks higher integration, both in the release of images to consciousness and by producing the “story” of its complex daily interaction every night in one’s dreams. This dynamism, this orientation of the body’s intelligibility to seek higher forms or to *imply* its continuation in the human person constitutes what Gendlin argues is “body knowledge.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to clarify that the process of interpreting a new situation does not occur in the body, but rather in the higher functioning of conscious thought. However, the meaning of the new, reinterpreted situation is retained as a “felt experience” in the body.

<sup>27</sup> Eugene Gendlin, “Imagery is More Powerful with Focusing: Theory and Practice,” in *Imagery—Its Many Dimensions and Applications*, ed. Joseph E. Shorr, Gail E. Sobel, Pennee Robin, and Jack A. Conella (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1980), 1. It is the manner in which meaning is stored from the body’s previous interactions and thus made available to guide further interactions that appears to find synchrony with Lonergan’s statement that somehow past judgments remain with us.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, an occupational therapist and dancer, has developed a holistic approach to healing called Body-Mind Centering (BMC). BMC “involves identifying, articulating, differentiating, and integrating the various tissues within the body, discovering the qualities they contribute to one’s movement, how they have evolved in one’s developmental process, and the role they play in the expression of mind. The finer this alignment, the more efficiently we can function to accomplish our intentions.” *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* (Massachusetts: Contact Editions, 1993), 1. Bainbridge’s work aids in supporting Gendlin’s task concerning an articulation of an evolutionary understanding of the body. Her healing approach to the body uniquely identifies both the evolutionary and the human developmental processes in the body. “Underlying the forms of our expression through the body

*Situating Gendlin's Work in Interiority: Body Knowledge and Received Meaning*

Gendlin's notion of "body knowledge" provides a further descriptive context to Doran's articulation of the dynamics that are operative within intentional consciousness "from above," the "sedimented communal meanings and values" or the elemental, received meanings that emerge into consciousness "already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively."<sup>30</sup> At the same time, Doran's work on "received meaning" aids in the task of situating Gendlin's understanding of the body within the categories of interiority. Recalling Lonergan's point regarding the relative dominance of the community over the subject,<sup>31</sup> Doran has further clarified how the dominance of community over the subject points to an understanding of "received meaning."<sup>32</sup>

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systems is the process of our movement development both ontogenetic (human infant development) and phylogenetic (the evolutionary progression through the animal kingdom)." Ibid., 4. Each stage and system holds within it a certain pattern. If an injury occurs at a certain stage in one's development, Bainbridge asserts, the body's healing entails a "re-patterning" in order to incorporate the missed stage, thus releasing the body from its compensating function. "Development is not a linear process but occurs in overlapping waves with each stage containing elements of all the others. Because each previous stage underlies and supports each successive stage, any skipping, interrupting, or failing to complete a stage of development can lead to alignments/movement problems, imbalances within the body systems, and problems in perception, sequencing, organization, memory, and creativity.... Aligning inner cellular awareness and movement with outer awareness and movement through space within the context of the developmental process can facilitate the evolution of our consciousness and alleviate body-mind problems at their root level." Ibid., 5. "By returning to these basic patterns, we can repattern our responses and establish more efficient nervous pathways to support our movement." Ibid., 16. As we are more able to experience our consciousness at the cellular and tissue level, we are better able to understand ourselves." Ibid., 5.

<sup>30</sup> See Doran in dialogue with Lonergan on the topic of received meaning in *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 126.

<sup>31</sup> Doran adds the further dominance of one's culture, as well. See Ibid., 137.

<sup>32</sup> While Gendlin does not offer a definition of his descriptive account of "meaning," an explanation of the term will nevertheless support the present discussion. Doran notes that in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan stresses that the four functions of meaning—cognitive, constitutive, communicative and effective—have ontological aspects. "As cognitive, acts of meaning intend what is real. As constitutive, meaning 'constitutes part of the reality of the one that means': one's horizon, one's assimilative powers, one's knowledge, one's values, one's character.' As communicative, meaning 'induces in the hearer some share in the cognitive, constitutive, or effective meaning of the speaker.' And as effective, meaning 'persuades or commands others or it directs [our] control over nature.'" For Doran, received meaning functions

This relative dominance means that the horizon of the subject in his or her world, a horizon constituted by meaning, along with the world that is correlative to that horizon, are, prior to critical reflection on the part of the subject, largely a function of...“being thrown into existence in the world at this particular time and with these particular people, with their own horizons similarly determined for them by historical dialectics over which at the outset they have no control.” All of this “gives rise to the situation that stimulates neural demands, and it molds the orientation of intelligence that preconsciously exercises the censorship,” so that the very reception of data that are also invested with meaning is itself constitutive of the subject’s horizon.<sup>33</sup>

Doran’s work on “received meaning” introduces a further empirical element into the empirical level of consciousness. Along with data of sense and consciousness received “from below,” one must also be attentive to the already patterned set of meanings and values received “from above.” Along with the data of sense and consciousness, received meanings also operate at the empirical level of human consciousness, and can be objectified in a moment of conscious attentiveness. “In each case there is an immediacy about the reception that qualifies it as ‘empirical consciousness,’ but in the second case [received meaning ‘from above’] empirical consciousness is also intelligent, judgmental, evaluative.”<sup>34</sup>

With this understanding of the reception of meaning “from above,” Doran proposes that Lonergan’s statement that “past judgments somehow remain with us” can be viewed in a new light. The past judgments that somehow remain with a person concern not only one’s own judgments but also encompass the judgments and values of the community into which one was born. This relationship of the present to the past

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effectively and constitutively, prior to one’s ability to participate in the cognitive function of meaning. Ibid., 136.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 125-26.

connects to Lonergan's term "ordinary meaningfulness," while the relations within the present and those of the present to the future concern the cognitive and evaluative processes of one's own "original meaningfulness."<sup>35</sup>

While Gendlin has not specifically distinguished between the two types of ordinary and original meaningfulness in his work, he has alluded to both respectively in his assertions, "[O]ur social training has already formed us by the time we ask and think,"<sup>36</sup> and "[T]he body *implies* its continuation, and thereby also the objects, things, words, involved in this next step."<sup>37</sup> In addition, Gendlin's emphasizes the importance of acknowledging that the meaning of both is held within the body that continually seeks higher forms of consciousness. This emphasis serves to highlight Doran's insistence that this level of meaning needs to be brought into the light of conscious awareness. At the same time, Doran's work on received meaning has provided Gendlin's therapeutic descriptive categories the necessary grounding in interiority, thereby serving a needed explanatory function.

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<sup>35</sup> "The dominance of the dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject means that the relations of the present of the subject to the past are relations not only to the subject's own past but also to the past of his or her community or network of communities. And these relations decisively affect the orientation or habitual context within which the reception of data occurs. These relations decisively affect what for any given subject in whatever milieu constitutes ordinary meaningfulness. That ordinary meaningfulness may be more or less sinful, more or less under the influence of grace." Ibid., 138-9. "And the received intelligibility that I am suggesting is also the historical product of the original meaningfulness of the insights, judgments, and decisions of others who have preceded us, or of their biases, their failures to be intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, or of some combination of intelligence and bias." Ibid., 130.

<sup>36</sup> Eugene Gendlin, "Meaning Prior to the Separation of the Five Senses," 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 9.



*The Transcendental Precept to Be Attentive: Focusing Fills Out Doran's Understanding of Psychic Self-Appropriation*

Introducing Gendlin's insights into a developed understanding of Doran's notion of psychic conversion involves but a small step. Doran has already brought the organic aspect of the person into his discussion of interiorly differentiated consciousness and the further need for psychic self-appropriation.

One is initiated into interiorly differentiated consciousness by Lonergan's cognitional analysis, and especially by the "self-affirmation of the knower" .... Lonergan later extends self-appropriation beyond cognitional analysis into a generalized intentionality analysis that sublates cognitional analysis into a self-appropriation of the existential subject concerned with the constitution of the human world as a good or evil place in which to live and with the concomitant constitution of oneself as an originating value or disvalue. But I have argued that the process can and must be further extended to include the self-appropriation of those dimensions of consciousness that are properly psychic: in effect, an appropriation (1) of the first, empirical level of consciousness (the psyche) that consists in the sensitive flow of sensations, memories, images, conations, emotions, associations, spontaneous inter-subjective responses, bodily movements, and received meanings and values, and..., (2) *of the potential openness of intentional consciousness to an underpinning transition from the neural to the organic to the psychic.*<sup>38</sup>

Thus far, the task undertaken in this chapter has been one of attempting to ground the notion of a "potential openness of intentional consciousness to an underpinning transition from the neural to the organic to the psychic" by transposing Gendlin's descriptive categories of the body into the categories of interiority. Having argued that Doran's work on received meaning has provided Gendlin's therapeutic descriptive categories on the body the necessary grounding in interiority, the further step at this juncture articulates the manner in which the self-appropriation of the interiorly

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<sup>38</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 111. Italics added. "I have addressed dramatic bias and scotosis, and acknowledged the need to extend this discussion to the organic." Ibid., 139.

differentiated terms and relations at the level of the organism might be brought to consciousness. In short, this further step provides a development in the understanding of Doran's notion of psychic conversion.

Gendlin's observations on the body derived from a therapeutic concern. For that reason, his notion of focusing addresses distortions in the relationship between the organism and the psyche. In order to fulfill the task of developing an understanding of psychic conversion, the approach taken in this section will, in like manner, emphasize the distortions in the relations between the body and the psyche—how the body or the organic aspect of the human person is involved in scotosis or dramatic bias.<sup>39</sup> From this perspective that explains the need for healing at the organic level, Gendlin's focusing technique will provide a means to discuss self-appropriation at this level. The basic premise from which this discussion proceeds is that scotosis affects the organism. The distorted effects of scotosis on the organism can be objectified in the immediacy of a felt sense or experience through focusing. Focusing acts as a means for the unconscious organism to circumvent the repressive censor responsible for the scotosis. Viewed in light of this premise, an expanded understanding of psychic conversion involves acknowledging the need to be attentive to the organic level of one's being, to the felt sense in a given situation. Before introducing this further step, a brief summary concerning what Doran has said on the topic of psychic conversion provides the basis for the present discussion.

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<sup>39</sup> Unlike group, individual and general biases, which involve an ever increasing element of "personal default on the part of the spirit, for which the individual is somehow to be held accountable...[d]ramatic bias...is a function of an affective disturbance resulting primarily from the victimization of our psyches by others in a way that was originally beyond our control." Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 234. Due to its effects prior to consciousness, dramatic bias occupies the concerns of the present discussion.

At the heart of Doran's insight that espouses the self-appropriation of the psychic dimensions rests the issue of what Lonergan identified as the "repressive censor."<sup>40</sup> The censor acts as the gateway between consciousness and the unconscious. It is the necessary component in the selection and arrangement of psychic material necessary to meet the demands of intentional consciousness.<sup>41</sup> Such censorship is exercised by the collaboration of dramatically patterned intentional consciousness with one's imagination.<sup>42</sup> The issue of a repressive censor highlights the problem that, even prior to a person's conscious awareness, images are disconnected from their appropriate affective component. In other words, a repressive censor distorts the psychic material that emerges into consciousness, rendering conscious operations equally distorted.<sup>43</sup> Lonergan calls

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<sup>40</sup> "Psychic conversion is a transformation of the censorship exercised with respect to the entire field of what is received in empirical consciousness. The censorship is exercised by dramatically patterned intentional consciousness, by the collaboration of one's habitual accumulation of insights, judgments, and moral spontaneities with one's imagination, by one's 'mentality' or mindset; psychic conversion is a transformation of that censorship from a repressive to a constructive exercise as one engages in the delicate artistry of producing 'the first and only edition' of oneself." Ibid., 111.

<sup>41</sup> "Primarily, the censorship is constructive; it selects and arranges materials that emerge into consciousness in a perspective that gives rise to an insight; this positive activity has by implication a negative aspect, for other materials are left behind, and other perspectives are not brought to light; still, this negative aspect of positive activity does not introduce any arrangement or perspective into the unconscious demand functions of neural patterns and processes." Lonergan, *Insight*, 216.

<sup>42</sup> In *Insight*, Lonergan discusses several patterns of experience that serve the demands of intentional consciousness. Each pattern "selects and arranges" the psychic material in accord with the particular intended outcome. "For the stream of sensitive experience is a chameleon; and as its pattern can be biological or artistic, so too it can become the automatic instrument...of the spirit of inquiry" (209). However, it is the dramatic pattern of experience that operates in ordinary human living. While operating from a concern with the practicalities of "getting things done" in everyday living, nevertheless, the dramatic pattern serves to invest practical outcomes with an artistic flair. "The fair, the beautiful, the admirable is embodied by man in his own body and actions before it is given a still freer realization in painting and sculpture, in music and poetry" (211). "Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence, the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity" (212).

<sup>43</sup> "In contrast, the aberration of the censorship is primarily repressive; its positive activity is to prevent the emergence into consciousness of perspectives that would give rise to un-wanted insights; it introduces, so to speak, the exclusion of arrangements into the field of the unconscious; it dictates the manner in which neural demand functions are not to be met; and the negative aspect of its positive activity is the admission to consciousness of any materials in any other arrangement or perspective." Ibid., 216

this aberration in the knowing process a “scotosis” and the consequential blind spot a “scotoma.”<sup>44</sup> Doran identifies the further resultant disconnect between the two dimensions of psyche and intentional consciousness as a “psychic rift.”<sup>45</sup> The goal of psychic conversion, therefore, is to heal this psychic rift by transforming what was once repressive to a constructive censor.<sup>46</sup>

...[I]n addition to the foundational conversions that Lonergan speaks of as intellectual, moral, and religious, there is a fourth dimension of conversion, one that establishes or re-establishes a link that should never have been broken, the link between the intentional operations of understanding, judgment, and decision, and the tidal movement that begins before consciousness, emerges into consciousness in the form of dream images and affects, continues to permeate intentional operations in the form of feelings, and reaches beyond these operations and states in the interpersonal relations and commitments that constitute families, communities, and religions.<sup>47</sup>

This review of Doran’s notion of psychic conversion lays the groundwork for the present task that entails offering a developed understanding of psychic conversion. The task unfolds in three progressive stages. The first stage identifies the complex relations between the organism and the psyche. It distinguishes the integral relations underlying

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<sup>44</sup> “Nor has such a bias merely some single and isolated effect. To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it, and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint. To lack that fuller view results in behaviour that generates misunderstanding both in ourselves and in others.” Ibid., 214-215.

<sup>45</sup> Doran identifies the psychic rift not only within one’s own original meaningfulness but also within one’s connection to the past, with the ordinary meaningfulness from within one’s own cultural history. “And by that expression, ‘psychic rift,’ I meant not only dramatic bias, from ‘below,’ but also something very much like what Heidegger perhaps is naming when he speaks of the forgetfulness of Being, at least if he means the forgetfulness of an already given, temporally and historically conditioned facticity that is mediated by meaning, from above.” Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 140.

<sup>46</sup> “Transposed into the terminology of *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, intentional operations, with understanding at their center, and the sensitive psyche are two distinct but inseparable dimensions of the self-presence that Lonergan calls consciousness. In either case – and in whichever language one wants to use – psychic conversion is the discovery of the link between these two dimensions, the establishment of the interior communication between them, to use the language Lonergan himself employed in *Method in Theology* when speaking of symbols.” Doran, “Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion,” 8. See [www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com) under “Lectures” and “Scholarly Works/Books.” This lecture was delivered on December 10, 2011, at the Thomas More Institute, Montreal, Quebec.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 9.

the body's role in the evolutionary process of vertical finality. It will be shown that the dramatic pattern plays a key role in the integral relations between the body and the psyche. In addition, Doran's notion of received meaning will be depicted as constituting a developed understanding of the dramatic pattern, and, in so doing, will further distinguish the integral relations between the body and psyche. Thus, the first stage that identifies the integral relations prepares for the further work in the second stage that shows how the body is involved in the distorted relations between the body-psyche-mind that Lonergan calls "scotosis." Finally, the third stage completes the task of developing an understanding of psychic conversion by explaining how focusing functions in addition to dream analysis in the self-appropriation of psychic material.<sup>48</sup>

The discussion begins by identifying the complexities involved in the relations between the organism and the conscious/imaginal aspect of the psyche. As the principle of correspondence has established, this relation involves the mutually conditioning nature of higher and lower schemes of recurrence—"a principle of correspondence between otherwise coincidental manifolds on each lower level and systematizing forms on the next higher level."<sup>49</sup> Doran's term "dialectic of contraries" provides the further understanding that a relation of correspondence between the organism and the

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<sup>48</sup> Dream analysis constitutes one of the main methods that Doran offers for the self-appropriation of psychic material, thus re-establishing the link between feelings and their appropriate image and, furthermore, re-establishing the link between the psyche and intentionality. His assertion rests on Lonergan's portrayal of how the symbol operates in human consciousness. "A symbol is an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.' If symbols evoke or are evoked by feelings, and if values are apprehended in feelings, then feelings may be understood as linking symbols and values. And if that is the case, then what I was beginning to call psychic self-appropriation, the appropriation of one's life of feeling, particularly as that becomes manifest in the elemental symbols of one's dreams and similar psychological deliverances, might be expected to be relevant to one's existential stance as a moral subject, as one having to do with values and disvalues; that is to say, it might be expected to play a role in what is known as moral and religious discernment." Ibid., 10.

<sup>49</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555.

conscious/imaginal aspect of psyche at this level involves a “unity in tension.” Doran has shown that the “unity in tension” or the harmonious interplay between these two levels is determined by the relative “health” of one’s censor—in other words, that the censorship is constructive rather than repressive.

In addition to this “unity in tension” that exists between the levels, the principle of correspondence also established that the upwardly directed vertical finality of human development occurs *within* the bounds of the “unity in tension” held between the successive levels.

Moreover, these higher integrations of the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator; and if developments on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators.<sup>50</sup>

In an earlier section of *Insight*, Lonergan discusses the dynamism of this dialectic operative within both the subject and the community as “a concrete unfolding of linked but opposed principles of change.”<sup>51</sup> What are the two “linked but opposed principles of change” being held in a “unity in tension” at the level of the organism and conscious aspect of the psyche?

The first of these is what Lonergan calls “neural demand functions.”<sup>52</sup> Neural demand functions signify the inherent dynamism operating within the neural processes of the human organism. In effect, this dynamism represents the vertical finality of the organism oriented to seek higher integration in the psychic, imaginal representation of its neural processes. “The demand functions of neural patterns and processes constitute the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 213.

exigence of the organism for its conscious complement; and to violate that exigence is to invite the anguish of abnormality.”<sup>53</sup> To exemplify neural processes, Lonergan points to the five human senses and their complex relationship with bodily movements, drives or instincts, interests and particular intention or purpose. He indicates that “a sensation” never occurs as an isolated event, but, rather, has a bodily basis subject to the organizing control of human “concern.”<sup>54</sup> “Besides the systematic links between sense and sense organs, there is, immanent in experience, a factor variously named conation, interest, attention, purpose.”<sup>55</sup> For example, patterns of change in the optic nerve and cerebrum comprise the patterned neural process whose term is the act of seeing. In coming to term in the act of seeing, however, the neural demands function in combination with the intent on seeing a particular object. This “concern” or intent of seeing has a bodily basis. Body movements are required in order to fulfill the intent of seeing a particular object, such as the movement of the head in order to direct one’s gaze or shift one’s focus.<sup>56</sup> Yet, such demands are subordinated to and conditioned by the manner in which the demands for psychic representation are met, that is, in the particular pattern of experience functioning in its selection and arrangement.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the point to note concerning this first pole in the “unity in tension” is that there exists a vertical finality or basic spontaneity in

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 205. The organizing control of human concern will later be related to the function of the human spirit in censorship. Human concern determines the particular pattern of experience used in the selecting and arrangement of the stream of consciousness.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> “What is true of sight is also true of the other senses.” Ibid., 213

<sup>57</sup> Gerard Walmsley outlines the complex manner in which the various patterns of experience interrelate. For example, one pattern of experience can operate as the higher functioning of another, as in the dramatic pattern over the biological, or can interrelate in a manner that represents the shifting concern of the subject, as in the artist, concerned with expressing his or her aesthetic experience, it moves from the aesthetic pattern to the intellectual pattern. Gerard Walmsley, *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism: The Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

the neural processes that constitutes an openness and orientation to seek the higher forms of psychic representation.<sup>58</sup>

The second principle of change held within a “unity in tension” is the exercise of the censorship over neural demands. In the exercise of censorship, the dramatic pattern plays a key role, for it is dramatically patterned intentional consciousness along with imagination that constitutes the functioning of the censor. Doran notes the role of the dramatic pattern in the censorship.

The censorship...operates under the dominance of a particular orientation of the dramatic pattern of experience, that is, of the sequence of sensation, memories, images, emotions, bodily movements, and intersubjective responses organized by the intelligent and responsible project of dramatic artistry. That sequence is undistorted to the extent that experiencing can occur for its own sake not under the dominance of technicized practicality, shortsighted common sense [general bias], group identification, individual advantage [group or individual bias], or overwhelming affect [dramatic bias]. ...The orientation of the dramatic pattern itself is the key to dramatic artistry. For it is owing to that orientation that the materials emerge into consciousness already patterned in a certain way, already charged with emotions, already set in a determinate direction.<sup>59</sup>

Several points made by Doran in the above quote concerning the dramatic pattern are pertinent to the present argument. First, the dominance of the dramatic pattern signifies

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<sup>58</sup> Kenneth Melchin has given further emphasis to the relentlessness of the “demand” or spontaneous aspect of the neural manifold. He writes, “[B]ecause the complete neural manifold presents an exigence for an appropriate integration, intelligence will be driven back to the data, back to further questions as long as satisfactory answers are not found and settled upon.” *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan*, 179.

<sup>59</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 183. Doran further explains how the four biases—general, group, individual and dramatic bias—operate within their respective constitutive elements in the censor. “In the case of general bias, the root lies in intelligence itself; to a greater or lesser extent, the other biases are a function also of psychic underdevelopment, of a distortion in the psychic component of the censorship. General bias is a constitutive property of unconverted human intelligence.... But we need also to understand more fully the ways in which the censorship can be promotive of decline, not so much because intelligence does not want insight, as because the sensitive psyche blocks or resists it. These ways correspond to what Lonergan calls, group, individual, and especially dramatic bias. In each case, but for different reasons and in varying degrees, the psyche’s aesthetic liberation from the neural undertow that would permit it to collaborate with intelligence in admitting into consciousness images for insight is impaired” (181-82).



that the task of human dramatic artistry predominates in one's everyday functioning. In the midst of the practicalities involved in getting things done Lonergan writes

...[The human person's] first work of art is his [or her] own living.... [T]he biological impulses of hunger for eating and of sex for mating...cannot be ignored, and yet in [the human person] it can be transformed.... Such artistry is dramatic. Already in the prior collaboration of imagination and intelligence, the dramatic pattern is operative, outlining how we might behave before others and charging the outline with an artistic transformation of a more elementary aggressivity and affectivity. Ordinary living is not ordinary drama. It is not learning a role and developing in oneself the feelings appropriate to its performance.<sup>60</sup>

The key role that the dramatic pattern plays in censorship, therefore, is correlative with the predominant concern for dealing with ordinary human living as a whole.<sup>61</sup>

Secondly, the dramatic pattern functions prior to conscious reflection or deliberation. Its orientation shapes the manner in which psychic materials emerge into consciousness, "for the materials that emerge in consciousness are already patterned, and the pattern is already charged emotionally and conatively."<sup>62</sup> The twofold importance of the dramatic pattern in censorship, therefore, lies both in the predominance of its functioning in one's everyday living as well as in the fact that its patterning occurs prior to consciousness. Needless to say, its orientation is vital to the flourishing of dramatic

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<sup>60</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 210-12.

<sup>61</sup> Walmsley's articulation of the term "concern" helps to clarify how the spirit or intellect functions in determining the type of pattern used in censorship. "It is important to keep in mind that the concern is a concern of the spirit in relation to the psyche. Hence there will be various dimensions of the concern that may be distinguished. The aesthetic pattern, for example, is concerned both with sensible delight and with the freedom to explore sensitivity outside of the constraints of practical need or biological necessity. Similarly, the intellectual pattern is concerned with what is 'given' in consciousness and sensitivity and also with intelligibility and also with truth. Each pattern reflects the order of spirit as well as the disposition of the psyche." *Lonergan on Philosophic Pluralism: The Polymorphism of Consciousness as the Key to Philosophy*, (see n. 6), 101.

<sup>62</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 212.

artistry in human living. What, then, are the conditions that affect the development and orientation of the dramatic pattern in its vital function within dramatic artistry?

To observe the conditions that shape the orientation of one's dramatic pattern, Lonergan contends, one must look to the dominant role that the community holds. He writes, "In this relationship [between the community and the subject] the dialectic of the community holds the dominant position, for it gives rise to the situations that stimulate neural demands, and it molds the orientation of [dramatically patterned] intelligence that preconsciously exercises the censorship."<sup>63</sup> Lonergan is clear that, because the dramatic subject is always "in the presence of others," "who are also actors in the primordial drama," human dramatic development is always "inspired by example and emulation, confirmed by admiration and approval, sustained by respect and affection."<sup>64</sup> The principle point is that the dramatic actor is molded by the drama in his or her own environment, or is socialized into habitual ways of behaving in a manner that is pre-reflective. From this pre-reflective functioning of the dramatic pattern, the human person achieves an ability to anticipate possible ways of behaving, and these ways of behaving are already invested not only with feelings but also with meaning, the meaning and values that constitute the drama itself.<sup>65</sup> It is this understanding of how a community of meaning occupies a dominant role in the shaping of one's dramatic pattern that leads to the position taken here, that is, that Doran's notion of received meaning furthers an understanding of Lonergan's portrayal of the dramatic pattern.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>65</sup> In essence, the development or orientation of a person's dramatic pattern is conditioned by the relative authenticity of the environment into which he or she was born—the dominance of technicized practicality, shortsighted common sense [general bias], group identification, individual advantage [group or individual bias], or overwhelming affect [dramatic bias].

Lonergan's portrayal of the dominant influence that a community holds over the subject directs the way to a further understanding of the dramatic pattern that includes Doran's notion of received meaning. The "concerns" of one's community that "set the stage" for the habitual stimulus that gives rise to the patterning of one's own neural processes mean that the judgments and values of one's community are immanent in the dramatic situations that shape one's own dramatic pattern.<sup>66</sup> The concerns of one's community represent the horizon of meaning within which one lives. That "higher level of influence" or horizon of meaning conditions the manner in which one's own dramatic pattern was "molded by the drama." Therefore, the set of communal meanings and values or the concerns of a community that constitute the "higher influence" are formative of one's own dramatic pattern, and, as preconscious in its influence, they are present as constitutive meaning in the stream of consciousness.<sup>67</sup> Doran's understanding of received meaning accounts for this "higher influence" over the person. His notion of received meaning articulates a further understanding of the dramatic pattern, one that has shaped the orientation of intelligence in its collaboration with imagination in such a way that the pattern that emerges into consciousness is not only "already patterned emotionally and conatively" but also infused with the prior meanings and values from one's community.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> For example, a child raised in a family of talented musicians may develop an "ear" for music, an interest in music and perhaps some aptitude for "making" music in a way that a child raised in a home of different talents would not.

<sup>67</sup> "The dialectic of community thus enjoys a certain dominance over the development of the subject, setting the conditions that stimulate our vital spontaneities, and even molding the orientation of our intelligence as the latter, with the help of a similarly molded imagination, negotiates the spontaneities so stimulated." Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 179-80.

<sup>68</sup> "The dramatically patterned orientation of intelligences becomes habitual over time, and to this extent the censorship is said to operate 'preconsciously.'" Ibid., 180.

Developing an understanding of the dramatic pattern to include received meaning completes the task outlined in the initial stage of this section, which involved identifying the complex relations between the organism and the psyche. On the one pole of the “unity in tension” in the human person are the vital spontaneities of neural processes, “sensations, memories, images, emotions, conations” and received meanings and values, and, on the other pole of the “unity in tension,” is the censorship, functioning as the collaboration of dramatically patterned intelligence with imagination in the control and selection of the neural demands. The upward, dynamic vertical finality of human development occurs within the taut balance of these two poles.<sup>69</sup>

Delineating the two poles of the “unity in tension” in terms of neural demand functions and censorship provides an explanatory basis for the second stage in the process of developing an understanding of psychic conversion. The two principles of change, the spontaneous drive to psychic integration by neural demands and the exigence of the neural manifold for appropriate integration by the censor, operate not only in harmony but also in opposition. Now, in this second stage, the task involves exploring how the body is involved in the dialectical distortions between these two ordering principles manifest in what Lonergan calls dramatic bias.<sup>70</sup> Dramatic bias is a distortion

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<sup>69</sup> Melchin portrays the development that occurs within the taut balance of these two principles of change. “[T]he dialectical interaction between the ordering principle of psychic act and the exigencies of neural processes for appropriate order...drives the subject towards further questions, and further experience when insights fail to satisfy the demands of a question, towards images, music and art when the operative values of a culture cease to nourish, and towards getting in touch with the subject’s own feelings when projects, routines, and relations of life become mechanical and unreal.” *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan*, 179-80.

<sup>70</sup> “[T]he dramatic bias described above was dialectical. The contents and affects emerging into consciousness provide the requisite aggregate of events of a determinate kind; these events originate from two principles, namely, neural demand functions and the exercise of the constructive or repressive censorship; the two principles are linked as patterned and patterning; they are opposed inasmuch as the censorship not only constructs but also represses, and again inasmuch as a misguided censorship results in neglected neural demands forcing their way into consciousness; finally, change is cumulative, for the

in the constructive activity of the censorship.<sup>71</sup> As constructive, the censorship meets the demands of the neural processes for appropriate psychic integration in a manner that would give rise to an insight. The negative aspect of this positive, constructive activity is one of leaving behind the psychic materials not required for the insight. Lonergan notes that this negative activity by the constructive censorship “does *not* introduce any arrangement or perspective into the unconscious demand functions of neural patterns and processes.”<sup>72</sup> In contrast, however, dramatic bias constitutes an aberration of the censorship that is repressive. As repressive, the positive activity of the censorship is to “prevent the emergence into consciousness of perspectives that would give rise to unwanted insights.”<sup>73</sup> Unlike the negative activity of a constructive censorship that leaves behind irrelevant psychic material, this repressive activity of a distorted censorship

*introduces*, so to speak, the exclusion of arrangements into the field of the unconscious; it dictates the manner in which neural demand functions are not to be met; and the negative aspect of its positive activity is the admission to consciousness of any materials in any other arrangement or perspective.<sup>74</sup>

It is this habitual *introduction* of repressing arrangements into the unconscious that sheds light on how dramatic bias affects the relationship between the organism and the psyche. Indeed, by examining the effects of dramatic bias on the organism specifically, the

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orientation of the censorship at any time and the neural demands to be met both depend on the past history of the stream of consciousness.” Lonergan, *Insight*, 242-43.

<sup>71</sup> Dramatic bias holds a more prominent influence over the psychic dimension than do general and egoistic biases. On this subject Doran explains, “Dramatic bias...functions as a dimension of an already established dialectic of the subject. It is a function of an affective disturbance resulting primarily from the victimization of our psyches by others in a way that was originally beyond our control.” *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 234.

<sup>72</sup> Italics mine. Lonergan, *Insight*, 216.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. “Insights are unwanted, not because they confirm our current viewpoints and behavior, but because they lead to their correction and revision.” Ibid., 217.

<sup>74</sup> Italics mine. Ibid.

foundation will be laid to argue that focusing represents a needed complement to the present understanding of psychic conversion.

The question regarding the effects of a repressive censor on the relationship between the psyche and the organism now specifically turns to the organism. Lonergan and Doran have already established the effect of a repressive censor on the psychic aspect. They note that the positive activity of a repressive censor is to permit the emergence into consciousness of any arrangement other than the one needed for an insight.<sup>75</sup> The concern now, however, is to articulate the effect that a repressing censor has on the human organism. What happens to the energy from the universe at the entry point of the human organism when there is a repressing censor at work?<sup>76</sup> Lonergan asserts that to “violate [the exigence of the organism for its conscious complement]...is to invite the anguish of abnormality.”<sup>77</sup> Clearly, the anguish of abnormality representative of the distorted relations between the organism and the psyche must manifest itself not only on the psychic level but also on the organic level, as well. Long-term, habitual repression *introduces* an arrangement into one’s neural demand functions that inhibits the performance of the dramatic artistry of the human person. Lonergan writes,

Apprehension and affect are for operations, but as one would expect,

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<sup>75</sup> In the extreme, the repression of neural processes will operate as a force or principle that warps the rest of a person’s life of experience, insights, judgments and decisions causing blind spots or scotomas. Dramatic bias ultimately manifests itself as a principle of social and historical decline, operating in opposition to the drive of vertical finality. Lonergan, *Insight*, 214-22.

<sup>76</sup> While the term “energy” may not be a commonly used category in the Lonergan community, nevertheless, the position here represents agreement with that of Doran, who interprets psychic energy “on the basis of Lonergan’s understanding of genera and species and of the emergent probability of universal process.” *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, (see n.11), 686.

<sup>77</sup> *Insight*, 214.

the complex consequences of the scotosis tend to defeat the efforts of the dramatic actor to offer a smooth performance. ...[T]he division of conscious living between the two patterns of the ego and persona can hamper attention to the higher-level controls and allow the sentiments of the ego or shadow to slip into the performance of the persona.... In a systematization of Jung's terminology, the conscious ego is matched with an inverse nonconscious shadow, and the conscious persona is matched with an inverse nonconscious anima.<sup>78</sup>

In other words, the repressing arrangements that are introduced into one's neural demand functions by a repressive censor have long-term and complex results. Lonergan's quote suggests that the scotosis or repressing arrangements participate in the covert activity associated with what, in Jungian terminology, constitutes the nonconscious shadow and nonconscious anima.<sup>79</sup> These repressing arrangements, which Jung terms negative complexes,<sup>80</sup> inhabit the shadowland of the human organism.<sup>81</sup> Over time as the scotosis becomes more deeply entrenched into one's habitual way of being, a point is reached where the neural demands are so loaded with inhibitions that affects become disassociated from their congruent objects. At this point, the stream of consciousness is no longer capable of functioning in its role of providing psychic representation and conscious integration for the neural demands. Then the "anguish of abnormality" of the distorted neural demands "assert themselves in waking consciousness

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 217

<sup>79</sup> On a further note, the shadow includes not only repressed psychic material but also aspects of the human person that are under-developed.

<sup>80</sup> Doran draws on Jung for the notion of psychic energy as "bound up" in a negative complex. "[Healing] would be a matter of freeing the psychic energy bound up in what Jung called negative complexes, so that it is free to cooperate rather than interfere with the operations of meaning and love through which direction is found in the movement of life." *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 53.

<sup>81</sup> Doran notes that Jung depicts all psychic energy as being distributed into complexes. Not all are negative. "Some of these, formed by the development of habits, support and aid...the creative vector in consciousness, while other [negative complexes] interfere with, subvert, block, derail this quest." Ibid., 229.

through inadequacies, compulsions, pains, and anxieties of the psychoneuroses.”<sup>82</sup> Yet, the point being made here is that the “anguish of abnormality” of the distorted neural demands is also manifest in a “felt sense” in the body. In short, the effects of a repressing censor will, over time, become manifest on both “poles” in the relations between the psyche and the organism.<sup>83</sup>

The body, as integrator of energy from the universe and operator of its higher integration in psychic material, manifests the distortion of this integral relationship both on the psychic level, as “arrangements other than that which is needed for an insight,” as well as on the organic level, as the “felt experience” concomitant with the introduction of excluding arrangements into the unconscious or body. Clearly, attention must be paid to such bodily manifestations of distortion that inhibit the unfolding of the creative finality of the human person. The development of an understanding of psychic conversion, therefore, would need to include the data of consciousness related to the organism along with that of the psyche.

Finally, to conclude the task of developing an understanding of psychic conversion, this third section establishes that focusing, in addition to dream analysis, is required in the conscious and intentional act of appropriating psychic material. This stage begins by providing empirical data to support Gendlin’s claim that a “felt shift,” experienced as the release of energy facilitated by the focusing technique, verifies the

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<sup>82</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 221.

<sup>83</sup> The manner in which “repressive arrangements” are introduced into the unconscious organism over time becomes a habit. In the following chapter, this “habit” will be discussed in terms of neurophysiology. Doran details the effects of the repressive arrangements as psychic disturbances. “Our psychic energy can be blocked, fixed in inflexible patterns, driven by compulsions, plagued by obsessions, weighed down by general anxiety or specific fears, resistant to insight, true judgment and responsible action.... The person must detour through the disturbing set of complexes and release the inhibiting energy that is blocking the flourishing unfolding of creative operations.” Ibid.



integrity of the concomitant images released into consciousness and, subsequently, verifies the integrity of the body-psyche relation.<sup>84</sup> It establishes how focusing functions in addition to dream analysis in the self-appropriation of psychic material.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, in arriving at a position that acknowledges focusing as a needed complement to psychic self-appropriation, there is also established a broadened understanding of the transcendental that prompts “attentiveness” at the level of experience. Authenticity requires attentiveness, not only to empirical consciousness and dreaming consciousness, but also to bodily consciousness. The discussion begins by engaging the question, “What is a felt shift, and what empirical evidence provides it with an intelligible ground?” Grasping this intelligibility makes explicit what Gendlin means by his description of a “felt shift.” This grounding sets the stage for arguing the need to incorporate such body data in an understanding of the psychic self-appropriation attributed to psychic conversion.

What is a felt shift? Recall that Gendlin describes the body, not in static terms, but rather in terms of a dynamic process, constantly engaged in interactions with its environment.<sup>86</sup> The body’s “felt sense” of any given situation refers to the meaning held

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<sup>84</sup> The following chapter provides the further empirical data necessary to ground Gendlin’s work by drawing on neuroscience to explain “body knowledge.” In view of the present task involved in expanding an understanding of psychic conversion, the empirical data offered in this section will be restricted to explicitly supporting Gendlin’s notion of the “felt shift.”

<sup>85</sup> In the opinion of the writer, the focusing technique offers an “intentional” component that other “body work” techniques do not. The “body scan,” for example, introduced by Jon Kabat-Zinn appears to be a meditative practice that aids in calming obsessive thought processes. As such, it may provide the necessary condition for the release of the natural spontaneity of the body in the upwardly directed finality of human self-transcendence. However, it does not appear to facilitate the release of repressed psychic material in the conscious and intentional way that the focusing technique operates. For more on the body scan technique see Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1990), 75-93.

<sup>86</sup> In the process of transposing Gendlin’s descriptive categories of the body to that of interiority, the dynamism of the body implying its continuation was further understood in terms of vertical finality operative in an evolutionary understanding of the human person.

within the body from past interactions.<sup>87</sup> Since the body's meaning also seeks or implies its continuation in the higher form of images, once one has focused on the "felt sense" of the body's meaning, one discovers a new awareness as images begin to spontaneously form in one's consciousness.<sup>88</sup> A "felt shift," experienced as a bodily release of energy, accompanies the release of an image into consciousness. Thus begins the further "higher" process of engaging the intellect to name and interpret the images. Focusing, then, provides access to the vast measure of elemental meaning held within the body that intelligence can only know in increments.<sup>89</sup>

It must be noted that the body's "felt sense" and, to a certain extent, the practice of focusing, as articulated by Gendlin, are common, everyday human experiences.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> As was discussed earlier in the chapter when relating body knowledge to Doran's notion of received meaning, the past interactions constitute not only one's own interactions but also constitute the meaning received from the past interactions of one's community.

<sup>88</sup> Gendlin distinguishes a "felt sense" from emotions such as anger, fear or joy, indicating that, at the level of the "felt sense" in the body, such emotions are yet undefined. Rather, on the body level, emotions are held within a complex unity of "a single system [that] encompasses body, feeling situation, and action." A felt sense encompasses this internal complexity and as such is experienced in its complexity. Gendlin, "Imagery is More Powerful with Focusing: Theory and Practice," 1.

<sup>89</sup> While intelligence can only know proportionate to the data provided, as discussed, intelligence also suffers from scotoma or "blind spots" due to the effects of a repressive censor. Focusing circumvents such distortions caused by bias.

<sup>90</sup> The technique of focusing, in effect, exaggerates the normal practice that occurs when searching out an answer to a problem. The exaggeration or intentionality of the technique serves to overcome the effects of repression in the body. The technique operates as follows in a therapeutic setting. "Sometimes we think of Focusing in steps. The therapist invites the client to get a felt sense of the whole thing. ...[The therapist] listens to the person's experience rather than to [his or her] ideas about the person [so as to] protect the emergent process.... [T]he client [waits attentively for the felt sense to form].... Getting a felt sense and letting it unfold requires an inner attitude of friendliness, waiting, listening, and tolerating not yet knowing what will come. ...[The client] **asks** (inner questions are directed into the felt sense), **symbolizes** (lets words/images emerge from it), **resonates** (checks to see if there is a response in the body to the words) and **receives** (makes welcoming, non-judgmental room inside for what has come). There are a series of small **felt shifts** and beginning **small steps** of change." Marion N. Hendricks, "Focusing-Oriented/Experiential Psychotherapy," in *Humanistic Psychotherapies: Handbook of Research and Practice*, ed. David Cain and Julius Seeman (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001), 15, 19. View online at: [www.focusing.org/research\\_basis.html](http://www.focusing.org/research_basis.html), accessed June 18, 2012.

Implicit in his articulation is the invitation to discover the process within oneself, especially observable when engaged in a creative pursuit. First, one may observe a bodily sense of a situation, problem or artistic endeavor without as yet having any words, body movements or symbols with which to give it expression. At such an unclear edge, as one intentionally seeks an answer, one may experience a shift in the felt sense of the situation. This might be the experience of a dancer waiting for images to portray the next steps in her choreography, or a poet searching for the right word to express artistic meaning, or a mathematician pursuing an implicit sense of the answer to a problem. In each case, one could readily observe a bodily “felt shift” or release of energy accompanying the “eureka” moment of new insight that follows upon the release of a needed image into consciousness. One may also observe that there is a quality of resonance that one’s body has with the new image as though the body says, “Yes, that is right!” It is this bodily shift or release of energy that provides the assurance that one’s insight is correct: “That’s it!” When repression inhibits this spontaneous dynamism within the body, Gendlin’s focusing technique proposes an intentional method of facilitating the release of the “repressing arrangements” that have blocked certain images and affects from arising into consciousness. Yet, can it be shown empirically that the body’s indication of “that’s it” is, indeed, correct? What empirical evidence grounds Gendlin’s notion of the viability of the “felt shift”?

An initial foray into the material that properly belongs to the next chapter will help to provide an initial grasp of what Gendlin means by the “felt shift” and how this “body experience” can be explained scientifically. Norman S. Don, Ph.D., a biophysicist,

carried out a study that examined the EEG correlates associated with the “felt shift.”<sup>91</sup> His intention was to demonstrate that the “simultaneous presence of alpha and three to five per second theta waves,”<sup>92</sup> known to be the pattern associated with the “awareness and attention” involved in learning, can also be demonstrated as characteristic of the felt shift, recognized by “the suddenness with which it emerges and the obviousness of the transition of affect and cognitive content.”<sup>93</sup> His observations from the study showed an EEG pattern in the subjects using the focusing technique that was similar to the patterns known to exist in the “self-correcting” process of learning.<sup>94</sup> Don then looked farther afield to the studies of neuroscience and quantum physics in order to analyze his observations.

Drawing on a model proposed by W. T. Powers,<sup>95</sup> Don explained the “felt shift” as the “reorganization” by the organism that occurs as a result of a “sensed intrinsic error” by the central nervous system.<sup>96</sup>

The central nervous system is modeled as a hierarchy of such feedback controlled loops. Level one deals with the control of musculoskeletal

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<sup>91</sup> Norman Don, “The Transformation of Conscious Experience and its EEG Correlates,” *Journal of Altered States of Consciousness* 3, no. 2 (1977-78): 147-168. Don’s research gives us a foretaste of what will be dealt with in more depth in the following chapter.

<sup>92</sup> “While alpha is experienced as a relaxed, inner attentive state, theta is a deeper state of consciousness during which the structure of mental experience tends to become more fluid. Thus in high theta states a person may experience full color eidetic-like imagery, often with great psychological significance to him.” *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>94</sup> In this study, the term “self-correcting,” as related to the learning process, was drawn from the prior work of Norbert Wiener and Ross Ashby. See N. Wiener, *Cybernetics* (New York: Wiley, 1948); N. Wiener, *Nonlinear Problems in Random Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1958); and W.R. Ashby, *Design for a Brain*, (New York: Wiley, 1952). Norman Don, “The Transformation of Conscious Experience and its EEG Correlates,” 161.

<sup>95</sup> W. T. Powers, *Behavior: The Control of Perception* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973). Power’s theory provided a model by which to understand behaviour within living organisms.

<sup>96</sup> Norman Don, “The Transformation of Conscious Experience and its EEG Correlates,” 161.

intensity through the spinal reflex loops. Succeeding levels control higher functions: sensations, configuration...patterned “logical” processes.... This hierarchy of feedback controlled functions controls its own lower levels of the hierarchy by establishing “reference levels” or signals at which they are to operate.... [E]ach intrinsic quality [in the hierarchy] has a genetically preferred state.... When there is a difference between the biologically determined intrinsic reference signal and the sensed intrinsic state of the organism an intrinsic error signal is issued to the behavioural, learned hierarchy which undergoes perceptual/behavioural reorganization until the intrinsic error signal is reduced to zero. This is how learning is posited to occur. Thus, sensed intrinsic error drives reorganization. And that is how the reorganization of conscious experience occurs.<sup>97</sup>

Don concluded that Gendlin’s term “felt sense” can be understood as one’s sense of intrinsic error in the body, and that focusing drives the process of reorganization; the resultant, *newly reorganized state coincides with the experience of the “felt shift.”*<sup>98</sup>

In a further analysis of his findings, Don also drew parallels between quantum processes and the experienced energy release that accompanies the “felt shift.” In this aspect of his analysis, Don relied on the work of the physicist, David Bohm,<sup>99</sup> who found correlates between quantum processes and conscious processes.

The physiological basis for this possible quantum underpinning of conscious processes may be due, as suggested by Niels Bohr, another physicist, to the minute amounts of energy involved in conscious processes...

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. Italics mine. The ability of the body to maintain the integrity of hierarchy of “controlled loops” by indicating an “intrinsic error” in the system appears to be a detailed representation of the relations that Lonergan holds in the principle of correspondence.

<sup>98</sup> “Thus it may be that the process of attention and reorganization that occurs during Focusing and especially during the felt shift, involves the deep experiential absorption in the object of attention. This leads to a stabilization of neuronal activity and the consequent slowing and synchronization of the EEG during these moments of complete absorption. In the case of Focusing, complete absorption would involve enhanced experiencing of intrinsic error, i.e., the felt sense.... The brain rhythms we have found during reorganization may be directly related to a well-known property of feedback controlled hierarchies.” Ibid., 163.

<sup>99</sup> Don footnotes the following work by Bohm. David Bohm, *Quantum Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1958). Ibid., 164.

[in which is witnessed] the release of neurotransmitters from the synaptic vesicles as being gated by quantum mechanical tunneling effects.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, Don noted that the reorganization that occurs during the focussing process “may well be related to biophysical quantum transitions...[where] the system characteristically changes from one energy level to another.”<sup>101</sup> In a sentence that bears striking resemblance to Lonergan’s theory of emergent probability, Don identified this change in energy state as a reorganization that, in effect, constitutes a transformation.

During the energy transitions, however, the position of the system undergoing transition is potentially more precisely definable than before the jump occurred .... [T]hus we are led to an exceptionally fluid and dynamic concept of the nature of matter, a concept in which a given object can always escape any well-defined system of categories that may be appropriate under a given set of conditions and that, according to classical lines of reasoning, would permanently limit its behavior in a definite way.<sup>102</sup>

Don concluded his study by affirming that focusing and the accompanying “felt shift” can be explained scientifically in terms of the reorganization of biophysical and conscious processes prompted by the body’s “felt sense” of “intrinsic error.” Moreover, the reorganization occurs as a vertical shift constituting a transformation in the person. “Ultimately, the universe is a potentiality and the transformations we have been concerned with involve a calling forth of various of these potentialities. The transformation, then, is not merely a reorganization, but at a deeper level is a re-creation.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Don footnotes the following work by Bohr. Niels Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature* (New York: Macmillan, 1934). Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 165-66.

Don's study offers empirical data to support Gendlin's therapeutic findings,<sup>104</sup> and in doing so, serves to provide theoretical evidence that explains Gendlin's claim that the body's "felt shift" verifies the accuracy of the images released into consciousness.<sup>105</sup> By drawing on the theories of Powers and Bohm, Don has provided scientific explanations for Gendlin's therapeutic findings concerning the body. Don has shown that the body has an internal "thermometer," as it were, designed to regulate the integrity of its internal and external relations. The "repressing arrangements" introduced by dramatic bias into the neural demand functions, by Don's account, would be an "intrinsic error." It is one's immediate experience of this "intrinsic error" that explains what Gendlin means by a "felt sense." Furthermore, the portrayal of the human organism as inherently oriented to "reorganize" on higher "energy states" dictated by the prompting of its sense

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<sup>104</sup> In addition, Marion N. Hendricks, Ph.D., Director of The Focusing Institute, supports Gendlin's findings in a paper that summarizes an extensive research study aimed at providing a way to measure or verify the success rate associated with the therapeutic outcomes of focusing. In order to verify the outcomes, the results of focusing in therapy were related to an "Experiencing Level Scale (EXP)." "We review eighty-nine studies in relation to three research questions: (1) Does Experiencing Level correlate with psychotherapy outcome? (2) Does Focusing correlate with outcome? (3) Can we teach low experiencing clients to Focus? The following are strong, repeated findings: (1) Clients who process in a High Experiencing manner or focus do better in therapy according to client, therapist and objective outcome measures. (2) Clients and therapists judge sessions in which focusing takes place as more successful. (3) Successful short term therapy clients focus in every session. (4) Some clients focus immediately in therapy; Others require training. (4) Clients who process in a Low Experiencing manner can be taught to focus and increase in Experienceing manner, either in therapy or in a separate training. (5) Therapist responses deepen or flatten client Experiencing. Therapists who focus effectively help their clients do so. (6) Successful training in focusing is best maintained by those clients who are the strongest focusers during training." "Focusing-Oriented/Experiential Psychotherapy" in *Humanistic Psychotherapies: Handbook of Research and Practice*, 1-44.

<sup>105</sup> In other words, focusing does circumvent the distorted censor as Gendlin's therapeutic research claims to be the case. Consequently, the images released are those that previously had been inhibited by the repressing arrangements introduced into the neural demands by the repressive activity of the distorted censor. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish the body's verification of the image from the conscious operation of judgment, which verifies the unconditioned. Doran calls the freeing up of an image the "letting-be of data." "The 'letting-be' of data and insight is part of the very process of verification that leads to the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. Nonetheless, that letting-be must yield to the unconditioned before the truth that occurs formally only in judgment is attained." Doran, "Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion," 17-18.

of “intrinsic error” explains what Gendlin contends happens when a person focuses on his or her “felt sense”—that focusing facilitates the body’s natural orientation to “imply its continuation” forward to imaginal form. By drawing on Bohm’s theory of quantum physics, Don explained the experience of an energy release that accompanies the body’s “felt shift” as the release of energy that accompanies the changes from one energy level to another. This finding empirically grounds Gendlin’s claim that the energy release associated with the “felt shift” serves as the body’s way of verifying the integrity of the relations between the body and the psyche, and, consequently, verifying the correctness of its corresponding imaginal form.

Several relevant points come to light in this empirical grounding of Gendlin’s work. First, the body has an internal mechanism for maintaining the integrity of its internal and external relations. This point justifies Gendlin’s claim that focusing serves as a means to facilitate the body’s natural orientation to “imply its continuation” forward to imaginal form. Don’s study, which depicted EEG correlates during focusing, illustrated how focusing facilitates this regulation. The alpha waves on the EEG during focusing showed that focusing induces an “inner attentive” state of consciousness that further deepens into a high theta state during which a person is more prone to experience “eidetic-like imagery.” Thus, through focusing a person can gain access to images previously blocked from consciousness by a repressive censor. Second, the body’s ability to alert one to an “intrinsic error” in its relations calls for a responsible stewardship that involves being “attentive” to the “felt experience” of that “intrinsic error.”<sup>106</sup> And finally, since self-transcendence provides the criteria for authenticity, a

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<sup>106</sup> Don did not specify the nature of the “felt experience” on which the candidates were focusing. It was not clear whether or not the focusing candidates were attempting to facilitate a learning process or to



“felt shift” and its imaginal counterpart are verifiable to the extent that they lead one forward in that transformative process. The recognition of the body’s ability to facilitate self-transcendence calls for a broadened understanding of psychic conversion.

In light of these conclusions, a broadened understanding of psychic conversion would include the appropriation of “body data.” This claim will be developed in a step-by-step manner. First, Doran has shown that the restoration of the integral dialectic in the relation between intentionality (along with the corresponding conscious, imaginal/feeling aspect of the psyche) and the organism (body) requires the downward movement “from above,” in human consciousness, of God’s healing grace. Following upon religious, moral and intellectual conversion, psychic conversion constitutes an initial coming to awareness of the distortion in one’s symbolic processes due to a repressive censor, an awareness that is accompanied by the willingness to involve oneself in the therapeutic process necessary to correct such distortion.<sup>107</sup> Fundamentally, the graced healing of psychic distortions from one’s own processes, along with the “psychic rift” created from the distortions in the history of one’s community, means freeing up

...images so charged with affects that they succeed both in guiding and in propelling action. Again, besides the image that is a sign of intelligible and rational contents and the image that is a psychic force, there is the image that symbolizes man’s orientation into the known unknown; ...man’s sensitivity

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resolve a psychic disturbance caused by a repressive censor. “Intrinsic error” in this context, therefore, may be associated with the internal tension created by both situations.

<sup>107</sup> “As the gift of God’s love begins to permeate human consciousness, it affects first the fourth, existential level of consciousness...as it is manifest in the primordial apprehension of values.... But once one is open to the value of compassionate but responsible negotiation of one’s own darkness one is free to acknowledge the truth about oneself, and open to the value of correct insight. The healing vector has begun to affect the third and second levels of conscious performance in the dramatic pattern of experience.... Once one desires the truth about oneself and does so effectively, so that one is open to the insights that are required if the truth is to emerge, the repressive censorship vis-à-vis neural demands begins to be transformed into a constructive censorship.... The conversion of the psychic components of a repressive censorship into constructive functioning constitutes the first and basic instance of what I have called psychic conversion.” Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 248-251.

needs symbols that unlock its transforming dynamism and bring it into harmony with the vast but impalpable pressures of the pure desire, of hope, and of self-sacrificing charity.<sup>108</sup>

In other words, psychic conversion heals the correspondence between the body, psyche and spirit in such a way that there is effected a harmonious relationship between the dynamism of one's sensitive psyche with "a spirit that has acquiesced as obediential potency to the created grace that makes of one's living a conscious partnership with God."<sup>109</sup>

Second, by including received meaning in an understanding of the data needed to be made available for psychic self-appropriation, Doran has shown that becoming conscious of the dynamic images that tell the story of one's partnership with God also involves relating these dynamic images to the images that constitute the meaning of God's partnership in the history of one's community. Objectification or self-appropriation of one's particular symbolic pattern as related to that of one's community allows this data to be brought to the conscious light of a self-correcting process by the spirit of inquiry. For Doran, Jungian dream analysis offers a means to circumvent a distorted censor, thus gaining access to one's symbolic pattern and, furthermore, to the data required in the search for genuine and artful living in partnership with God.<sup>110</sup>

Third, Gendlin has shown that attentiveness to the body's "felt sense" through focusing serves to provide concrete "bodily corroboration" or verification of dream

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<sup>108</sup> Doran quotes Lonergan on this point. *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 121.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> "Psychic self-appropriation is a matter of gaining the capacity to articulate this story [of how one is] correctly and to guide it responsibly. It frequently involves a reversal of a cumulative misinterpretation of experience. Everyone tells his or her own story, but not all can tell it as it is. I hazard that the most effective techniques yet developed for disengaging the story of felt meaning are the Jungian procedures of dream interpretation and active imagination and an associated process developed by Ira Progoff known as 'twilight imaging.'" Doran, *Subject and Psyche* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 127.

analysis (or of any given situation), increasing the probability of achieving self-transcendence.<sup>111</sup> His work highlights that scotosis has an effect on the body that can be both “felt,” in an immediate sense, and released from repressive censorship through focusing. By transposing Gendlin’s descriptive categories of the body into the categories of interiority, Gendlin’s “body knowledge” can be associated with Doran’s “received meaning.” “Received meanings and values” have been appropriated through the inherited manner in which a person’s dramatically patterned intentional consciousness, along with his or her imagination, either meets neural demands or fails to meet them by the introduction of repressive arrangements. Scotosis, as well as authentic meaning, therefore, has an inherited quality, “ordinary meaningfulness.” In addition to “ordinary meaningfulness,” there is also the meaning appropriated bodily by one’s own experiences, “original meaningfulness.” Both “ordinary” and “original” meaning constitute the realm of the unconscious available to consciousness appropriation as a “felt sense.” This understanding of “body knowledge” in terms of “ordinary” and “original” meaning underscores the importance of including “body data” in an understanding of psychic conversion.

Two conclusions follow from broadening an understanding of psychic conversion. First, Gendlin’s work highlights that the body apprehends meaning, both “ordinary meaningfulness” or “received meaning” and “original meaningfulness,” prior to consciousness. Doran has located divine meaning among the “received meanings and values,” and, as such, God’s entrance into the world of human meaning occurs, first and

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<sup>111</sup> Gendlin’s book *Let Your Body Interpret Your Dreams* (Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1986) illustrates how focusing can be used to verify dream interpretation. By drawing on the body’s ability to respond to imaginal suggestions through a “felt shift,” a person can, in effect, bypass the biases associated with conscious interpretation.

foremost, on the level of the body.<sup>112</sup> In essence, broadening an understanding of psychic conversion opens an avenue to the further appreciation of how God's healing grace operates at this organic level prior to consciousness.<sup>113</sup> Secondly, this understanding of the body as the harbinger of both "ordinary" and "original" meaning calls for attentiveness to the body's empirical data. Doran's assertion that "received meanings and values" need to be among the empirical data brought to psychic self-appropriation paves the way for the further assertion that, in order to make this possible, one must be willing to "be attentive" to the "felt sense" of "received meaning," along with "ordinary meaning," in one's body.

Concerning the first point, the position taken here constitutes an explanation of Doran's claim that God's entrance into the world of human meaning occurs on the level of elemental meaning, of the received meanings and values from one's community, both secular and religious, "of the already given intelligibility of received data...effecting transformations through the cognitive, constitutive, communicative and effective function

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<sup>112</sup> "Received meanings and values," according to Doran, operate in an "above downward" movement in human consciousness. This "above downward" movement follows from the dominance of the dialectic of the community over the subject. Doran depicts the above downward movement of God's grace in the following manner. Referring to Lonergan's *De Deo trino: Pars systematic*, where the state of grace is distinguished from the habit of grace, Doran suggests that the intersubjective reality of the divine-human interpersonal situation extends to include social relations. "The state of grace as an intersubjective, [and] indeed a social reality...is not simply a situation affecting four subjects: three of them divine and one human. Rather, the Latin term that is here translated 'the just,' namely, 'iusti,' is plural. It may be interpreted as signifying a community of subjects, so that when Lonergan writes that 'by reason of this state the divine persons and the just are in one another as those who are known are in those who know them and those who are loved are in those who love them,' we may read him as referring to a community of the divine subjects with a community of human subjects." It will be further argued in the following chapter that how the divine are *in* those who love them must be apprehended not only symbolically but neurophysically, as well. *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138.

<sup>113</sup> In John 9: 2, the disciples ask Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The question presupposes a cultural understanding that the connections of a person to his or her community's history relates past sins to present physical ailments. The healing that Jesus gives, therefore, is not only of the present physical consequence of the sin but also of the past sin itself. Such scriptural passages depict a culture that seems to have had an understanding of the body-psyche-mind connection to which our present culture seeks to return, albeit in a manner that manifests the developments of the age.

of God's own ...original meaningfulness, and ultimately of God's incarnate meaning."<sup>114</sup>

Doran depicts the healing effects of God's love at this elemental level of meaning as a matter of "self-taste." He writes that, through psychic conversion, one becomes familiar with the practice of adverting to one's "self-taste" as a way to determine the effects of God's grace on one's dispositional immediacy,

...on the way one finds oneself, on the disposition or mood or self-taste that accompanies all our intentional operations, that is, on that element of interiority that my talk of psychic conversion attempts to highlight. I was affirming that this self-taste is changed by the reception of God's love.<sup>115</sup>

An understanding of the body's participation in the reception of meaning would bring to light the need to include the body's "felt sense" in the "self-taste" of one's dispositional immediacy. As the process of psychic conversion removes the psychically victimized person from the "animal extroversion and blind impulse of a fearful and disordered sensitive psyche,"<sup>116</sup> so, too, does that increasing freedom become manifest bodily in spontaneous expression.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 136. Recall that Doran's articulation of "received meaning" explains how the dominance of the community shapes a person's horizon of meaning prior to that person's ability to critically reflect. He writes that a person's community, for better or for worse, "'gives rise to the situations that stimulate neural demands, and it molds the orientation of intelligence that preconsciously exercises the censorship,' so that the very reception of data that are also invested with meaning is itself constitutive of the subject's horizon. And it is precisely at this level, I think, that God's entrance into the world of human meaning takes place." Ibid., 137.

<sup>115</sup> Doran, "Two Ways of Being Conscious: The Notion of Psychic Conversion," 15. Doran distinguishes the experience of harmony that accompanies the "freeing up" of images and affects from a repressive censor from feelings of happiness or peace. Feelings of happiness or peace may be fleeting, whereas inner harmony constitutes a state of being.

<sup>116</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 250.

<sup>117</sup> Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, a dance therapist and promoter of "Body-Mind Centering," suggests that the body manifests its healing by becoming more spontaneous and by discovering new patterns in its processes; in other words, it manifests healing in the spontaneity of its freed expression from the inhibitions introduced by a repressive censor. This freedom can easily be recognized in creative dance, especially in the spontaneity and grace of movement. *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering* (Massachusetts: Contact Editions, 1993), 13.

Secondly, in an emergent world view, the possibility of redemption is conceived as the reception of the original meaningfulness of divine meaning into the fabric of the ordinary meaningfulness of community. The Reign of God thus emerges into the world of human meaning by shifting the conditions that make possible the ongoing healing and creative processes, which incrementally become constitutive of a community's meaning. Self-transcending human persons, who cooperate with religious, moral, intellectual and psychic conversion, and who are authentically engaged in the transcendentals that prompt them to "be attentive," to "be intelligent," to "be responsible" and to "be in-love," constitute the graced conditions that shift the probabilities in favour of the reception of divine ordinary meaning.<sup>118</sup> Doran emphasizes the role that psychic conversion plays in the graced process, whereby the new conditions created by the various conversions increase the probability that divine meaning will become constitutive in a community of meaning. He contends that, through the graced intervention of psychic conversion, a community of persons is enabled to discover the harmonious relationship between their religious experience and the "rest of [their] symbolic system."<sup>119</sup> Drawing on Lonergan concerning the manner in which symbols operate in the human person, Doran quotes

"[W]e become normal human beings only by mastering vast systems of symbols and adapting our muscles, our nerves, our cerebral cortex, to respond to them accurately and precisely." Psychic self-appropriation releases into consciousness the needed images and symbols needed for such mastery.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Doran had portrayed the healing and elevating activity of divine meaning or revelation as God's entrance into the human world of meaning [such that divine meaning] "shifts the probabilities in favour of graced ordinary meaningfulness. And that shift in probabilities affects the reception, or better, the receptive potential, of subjects in community to the divine meaning intended by God when God enters our world of meaning." *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 142

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen believes that a person can also become aware of the patterned relations between the various systems in the body in their relation to the conscious processes of feelings and intellect. "Development does not occur in a linear progression but as overlapping waves with each pattern being integrate and modified by the emergence of new patterns. Eventually all patterns are contained in each of the others...Problems are manifested when certain patterns predominate at the expense of

Psychic conversion aids in this mastery by helping a person to become conscious of the symbolic, patterned relations between one's own religious experience and the rest of one's symbolic system. In addition, mastery of one's symbolic system also includes becoming conscious of how one's own relates to the symbolic system of religious beliefs and convictions inherited from one's community. The objectification of these relations allows one to bring this data to the critique of one's intelligent operations so that one is enabled to judge whether or not one and one's community has correctly appropriated the truth of one's faith tradition. This practice of the ongoing self-appropriation of these patterned relations in one's symbolic system creates *defensive schemes* of recurrence that, according to Doran, increase the possibility not only for the reception of divine meaning but also for its survival in a community of meaning.<sup>121</sup> In this way, Doran has shown that psychic conversion is instrumental not only in helping to create the conditions for the self-correcting process needed to authentically receive divine meaning but also, through ongoing self-appropriation, in ensuring the survival of that divine meaning in a community.

If the reception of meaning is inherited through one's symbolic systems as well as through "body knowledge," it now becomes clear that further data is available on the unconscious level that can aid in the process of shifting the conditions of possibility for

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others...As integrated reflexes are combined with others, our movement becomes more complex, more creative options are available, and the clarity of our attention and intention is more fully manifested." *Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-Mind Centering*, 156.

<sup>121</sup> In the terminology of an emergent world-view, Doran considers the function of psychic conversion in relation to religious, moral and intellectual conversion to be that of a defensive circle. "The latter variety of psychic conversion is, then, as reoriented depth psychology, an aid to religiously and interiorly differentiated consciousness, and a defensive circle (I:118) around religious, moral, and intellectual conversion." *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, 142.

both the reception and the survival of divine meaning in one's community. That data is the data apprehended in the "felt sense" of one's body. It has been shown that the body's "felt shift" operates as a means to verify the integrity of the image released into consciousness. Incorporating the data of the "felt sense" as a means to apprehend both "received meaning" and the meaning associated with one's own original meaningfulness constitutes an expansion of an understanding of empirical consciousness. Included in this expanded understanding of empirical consciousness is the further understanding that the transcendental that prompts "attentiveness" at this level prompts attentiveness not only to the data of waking consciousness and dreaming consciousness but also to "body knowledge." An expanded understanding of psychic conversion, therefore, acknowledges that God's graced entry into human affairs begins on the organic level.

A broadened understanding of psychic conversion holds that the transformation of the person involves the penetration of grace "from above downward" in human consciousness—from conscious operations to sensitive operations through to the physiological level—healing the effects of scotosis on the neural demand functions. Furthermore, including "body data" among the data of consciousness means that the genuine person, participating in the transcendental prompting her to "be attentive," learns to acknowledge the importance of alluding to her body's "felt sense" in a given situation. Through the body's ability in the "felt shift" to verify its imaginal correlate, including "body data," in psychic self-appropriation serves to further establish *defensive schemes* of recurrence that increase the possibility of self-transcendence. In doing so, a developed understanding of psychic conversion that includes the self-appropriation of "body data"



increases the likelihood not only for the reception of divine meaning but also for its survival in a community of meaning.

***Gendlin's Contribution to Answering the Question, "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"***

The intent of Chapter Four was to engage in a discussion regarding the significance of the body in answering the question that Lonergan posed in "Mission and the Spirit," "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" Eugene Gendlin's insights into the body were transposed into the categories of interiority. Through Gendlin's contribution and the further task of transposing categories, three points have been brought to light that develop an understanding of how the body participates in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

The first point is that, by identifying the body as a level with corresponding operations in the evolutionary unfolding of human consciousness, Gendlin's work has brought greater insight into the body-psyche-mind relations anticipated by the principle of correspondence, and, in doing so, it has expanded the basis for an interiority analysis. This means that, along with the operations of cognition (which include the data of sense and the data of consciousness along with received meanings and values) and those of the psyche, the operations of the body can be objectified in an intentionality analysis, providing further material for conscious self-appropriation. In effect, this contribution serves to further differentiate the dialectic of contraries that exists between consciousness and the organism. It demonstrates that, in the mutually conditioning relations that exist within a dialectic of contraries between consciousness and the organism, conscious

images arise not only in response to the demand to know but also by way of the upwardly directed dynamism, the vertical finality of the organism. From this viewpoint, the implementation of proportionate being by the existential subject involves the decision to live under the guidance of the norms immanent and operative on the levels of waking consciousness and dreaming consciousness as well as on the level of the unconscious. In other words, authenticity involves the awareness that, within the organism, there is an intelligibility or “body knowledge” seeking higher integration. Attending to the “felt sense” frees the body from repressive arrangements introduced by a repressive censor that would inhibit the vertical finality operating in the body. The once static or mechanistic portrayal of the human body as merely “matter” gives way to an understanding of the body as dynamic, operating under the norms of both classical and statistical laws in the graced transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Secondly, this developed understanding of the body’s role in the vertical finality of the human person further grounds Doran’s insistence that psychic self-appropriation, in effect, creates defensive schemes of recurrence that increase the probability of self-transcendence in the converting human subject. By including the body’s ability to verify its imaginal correlate in a “felt shift,” one receives further assurance that one has accessed one’s symbolic patterns or “story” as it is—that is, “as it is” removed from the distortions of a repressive censor. This further grounding participates in the defensive circle surrounding religious, moral and intellectual conversion, thereby increasing the probability of self-transcendence in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Finally, the connection of Doran’s notion of received meaning with “body knowledge” and the formation of one’s dramatic pattern brings to light the significance of

appropriating the elemental meaning held within the body as one attends to the task of authentically appropriating the divine original meaning constitutive of the ordinary meaning of one's community. Psychic conversion that includes the appropriation of "body data" heightens an awareness of both the individual and collective responsibility required in the authentic appropriation of the meanings and values by which one's own horizon of being has been constituted. In a dialectic of history that provides a heuristic, explanatory structure in terms of an evolutionary development of meaning, the addition of the elemental meaning referred to as "body data" identifies a further aspect to the invariant ground for authentic development itself. In addition to unlocking the stream of empirical consciousness from "below" in the transformation of the censor from a repressive to a constructive function, psychic self-appropriation that includes "body data" also contributes to healing the "psychic rift" "from above" by re-establishing our link with authentic, historically constituted meaning. It is upon this ground that the human person, who understands himself both as being constituted by his community's meanings and values as well as being an originator of meaning, discovers that the distorting effects manifest in decline can be corrected and reversed.

### ***What Gendlin Leaves Open***

While Gendlin points to the fact that the human organism “knows” all that it has experienced in its innumerable interactions with its environment, he does not go on to offer an explanation of that “body knowledge.” Furthermore, even as Gendlin has overcome a static notion of the body by introducing the notion of the body’s dynamism as “implying” its continuation in a higher imaginal form, this descriptive notion of the body as emerging still requires further explanatory categories. Don’s study, specifically designed to examine Gendlin’s claims, has served to provide needed empirical grounding for Gendlin’s work. His study points the way for the further explanations made possible by current science. The more recent discoveries of neurology, which highlight the impact that experience has on development of the brain’s neural pathways, provide the clue to understanding how “body knowledge” and the “body’s implying” can be correlated to the patterning of neural pathways in the brain. Body knowledge is held in the concrete patterning of human neural pathways designed in part by a person’s habitual way of being. At the same time, a change in experience can prompt a change at this very basic neurophysiological level. Indeed, such a correlation connects in further detail to Lonergan’s understanding of world process in terms of emergent probability by connecting classical and statistical laws to genetic coding and brain plasticity, respectively. The present project assumes the position that such an investigation will contribute to Lonergan’s own efforts to answer, “What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?”

## Chapter Five

### Brain Neuroplasticity Explains “Body Knowledge”

#### *Introduction*

Chapter Five initiates the final step needed to complete the task of advancing a philosophical anthropology that accounts for the interrelated constituents of body, psyche and mind in the human person. Chapter Four served to move forward an understanding of the body-psyche aspect by articulating more clearly the dialectic of contraries that exists between consciousness and the organism—that conscious images arise not only in response to the demand to know but also by way of the upwardly directed dynamism, the vertical finality in one’s body. In Chapter Four, much of that task of advancing a philosophical anthropology was accomplished by situating the “body” within the categories of interiority. To complete this undertaking, Gendlin’s claims about “body knowledge” and the body’s inherent dynamism must be grounded in the explanatory categories of neuroscience. This chapter explores the notion of vertical finality in terms of one’s neurophysiology.

In the previous chapter, Don’s study provided an empirical grounding of Gendlin’s work; nevertheless, as was noted, what remained open was the further explanation that current science makes possible. By drawing on the recent discoveries of the brain’s plasticity offered by neuroscience, this chapter provides that further explanation. The introduction of the science of neuroplasticity not only grounds Gendlin’s work on “body knowledge” by explaining the body’s intelligibility, but it also furthers the project at hand. It definitively shifts the once static or mechanistic portrayal of the human body as merely “matter” to an understanding of the body as dynamic,

operating under the norms of both classical and statistical laws. Neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to change its neural pathways in response to a person's intention to learn, explains how statistical laws operate in conjunction with the classical laws associated with genetic coding in the human body.<sup>1</sup> This will enable the task of exploring more deeply and further advancing the understanding of the human, graced transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Chapter Five is divided into two sections. The first section addresses the need to verify neuroplasticity as an accepted science. It begins, therefore, by outlining how the notion of brain plasticity has become a present-day, accepted science. Several key figures stand out in the history of the development of this science. Each of their contributions will bring to light some important aspect of the growth in understanding how the brain changes and what motivates its change. In order to verify neuroplasticity as an accepted science, an analysis of its development will demonstrate that its growth exhibits the features associated with progress.

The second section grounds Gendlin's notion of "body knowledge" in the explanatory categories of the science of neuroplasticity. This explanatory grounding of "body knowledge" has provided the stepping stone by which the task undertaken in Chapter Four can be completed. That task involved broadening the understanding of human interiority in the relations between the organism and consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> It is beyond the scope of this chapter to argue definitively for or against particular scientific findings regarding the neuroplasticity of the brain. Rather, this chapter works from the position that neuroplasticity is an accepted finding—albeit one that is being continually clarified—in the field of neurology. The ideas put forward in this chapter explore the theological significance of such findings.

## *Is the Science of Neuroplasticity an Accepted Science?*

### *Historical Developments in Neurophysiology of the Brain: Shift from Static and Immutable Brain to Brain Plasticity*

Until only the last few decades, around the 1970s, the accepted understanding across the field of neuroscience was that the human nervous system was fixed. Once a person reached adulthood, it was thought, the brain's function and neuronal capacity remained unchangeable. In view of the fact that it is only recently that neuroplasticity has become established as a fact of mainstream science, it is most surprising to discover that the idea of the brain's ability to change appeared in much earlier times.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1762, in his book *On Education*, the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed that human experience affected the "organization of the brain." To enhance learning and mental abilities, Rousseau advised, one must "exercise" the brain as one would one's muscles.<sup>3</sup> Even more surprising is the fact that the term, "plasticity," in association with brain function, was first coined in a phrase by the American "father of experimental psychology," William James, as early as 1890. He wrote that "organic matter, especially nervous tissue, seems endowed with a very extraordinary degree of plasticity."<sup>4</sup> His insight, however, came "before its time," because medicine had not yet developed to the point of having a dedicated field of neuroscience in which to engage such speculations.

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<sup>2</sup> "Neuro is for 'neuron,' the nerve cells in our brains and nervous systems. Plastic is for 'changeable, malleable, modifiable.'" Norman Doidge, M.D., *The Brain that Changes Itself* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), xv.

<sup>3</sup> A contemporary of Rousseau's, Charles Bonnet (1720-1793), in collaboration with an Italian scientist, Michele Vincenzo Malacarne (1744-1816), tested Rousseau's idea that "neural tissue might respond to exercise as do muscles" by comparing the brains of birds that had received intense training from birth to those that had received no training. Malacarne discovered that those that received intense training had much larger brains, thus validating Rousseau's claim. Ibid., 314-315.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 5.

Needless to say, his vision was ignored.<sup>5</sup> Much more influential was the work of the Spanish neuroanatomist, Santiago Ramon y Cajal, who won the Nobel Prize in the area of medicine in 1906. In 1913, as he neared the conclusion of his treatise on the nervous system, he declared, “In the adult centers the nerve paths are something fixed, ended and immutable.” His assessment of the brain’s structure and organization as static remained the prevailing view in medicine for almost a century.<sup>6</sup>

The theory that the brain could *not* change was supported by three factors: the mechanistic world view that prevailed in the time of modern science, influencing the idea of a brain that was like a machine, “hardwired” with permanently connected circuits, each designed to perform a specific function; the widely-held experience that very little recovery was made following brain-damage; and the fact that technology had not yet advanced to allow scientists to observe the microscopic activity of the living brain.<sup>7</sup> However, as technology developed, as therapy began to demonstrate the possibility of some measure of recovery in brain-damaged patients and as “brilliant scientists, at the frontiers of brain science...in the late 1960s or early 1970s, made a series of unexpected discoveries[,]” the theoretical foundations upon which the conventional wisdom of a fixed brain had stood began to crumble.<sup>8</sup>

That is not to say that there was a sudden, wholesale acceptance of the idea of a brain that changes; the journey was both long and complicated. “As late as 1999,

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<sup>5</sup> His insights went nowhere in the immediate sense; however, they were not lost. They laid the groundwork for what would be verified a century later.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, xiv.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



neurologists writing in the prestigious journal *Science* admitted, ‘We are still taught that the fully mature brain lacks the intrinsic mechanisms needed to replenish neurons and reestablish neuronal networks after acute injury or in response to the insidious loss of neurons seen in neurodegenerative diseases.’”<sup>9</sup> While recognizing that the brain does undergo some changes throughout adult life—new synapses (the connection points between neurons) were acknowledged to form in the process of learning and it was agreed that existing neuronal connections were strengthened in association with memory—nevertheless, these changes were seen to be minimal, constituting no real, significant change in the brain. In sum, as late as the year 2000, “wholesale changes, such as expanding a region that is in charge of a particular function or altering the wiring that connects one region to another, were deemed impossible.”<sup>10</sup> The basic layout or “map” of the adult brain, its structure and function, as depicted in anatomy text books, was thought to be incapable of changing in any significant way: the visual cortex in the back of the brain was wired to receive visual stimulus and to convert that stimulus into sight; the somatosensory cortex that curves over top of the brain was responsible for tactile sensations; the motor cortex was “sectioned off” according to the needs of each muscle, and the auditory cortex was granted a section of neural “real estate” to deal with auditory sense experience.<sup>11</sup> Such was the basic design of the fixed and immutable

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<sup>9</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7. Brain maps “were first made vivid in human beings by the neurosurgeon Dr. Wilder Penfield at the Montreal Neurological Institute in the 1930s. For Penfield, ‘mapping’ a patient’s brain meant finding where in the brain different parts of the body were represented and their activities processed.... Penfield spent years mapping the sensory and motor parts of the brain, while performing brain surgery on cancer and epilepsy patients, who could be conscious during the operation, because there are no pain receptors in the brain. Both the sensory and motor maps are part of the cerebral cortex which lies on the brain’s surface and so is easily accessible with a probe. Penfield discovered that when he touched a patient’s sensory brain

brain.<sup>12</sup> At the heart of the long-held dogma of the brain's immutability lay the fear that even the slightest change in such a complex and delicately interconnected "machine" would put the viable functioning of the brain at risk. Subtler still was the fear that if the brain could change, then so could one's very personality.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, as discovery after discovery in the latter twentieth century began to reveal, the dogma of a fixed brain was wrong. Contrary to Ramon y Cajal and the vast majority of neuroscientists who followed him, the brain did indeed show a stunning ability to be rewired.<sup>14</sup> The brain could change. In fact, in adulthood it retains much of the plasticity known to exist in the earlier, developing years, "including the power to repair damaged regions, to grow new neurons, to rezone regions that performed one task and have them assume a new task, to change the circuitry that weaves neurons into the networks that

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map with an electric probe, it triggered sensations that the patient felt in his body." Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> "According to the dogma that had taken hold by the 1950s, the brain establishes virtually all of its connections in fundamental systems such as the visual cortex, auditory cortex and somatosensory cortex in the first years of life. Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 31.

<sup>13</sup> At a meeting with the Dalai Lama in 2004, "[n]euroscientist Fred Gage...put the objections to the idea of a changing brain this way: 'If the brain was changeable, then we would change. And if the brain made wrong changes, then we would change incorrectly. It was easier to believe there were no changes. That way, the individual would remain pretty much fixed.'" Ibid., 7.

<sup>14</sup> Doidge explains the process of rewiring in the following manner. A neuron (composed of *dendrites* or "treelike branches that receive input from other neurons," the *cell body*, "which sustains the life of the cell and contain[s] its DNA" and the *axon*, "the living cable of varying lengths...that carry electrical impulses at very high speeds...toward the dendrites of neighbouring neurons") is capable of receiving two types of signals: ones that excite it and ones that inhibit it. When a neuron receives sufficient excitatory signals, it will fire off a signal of its own. It is less likely to fire when it receives enough inhibitory signals. Once the electrical impulse reaches the end of the axon, a chemical messenger, called a neurotransmitter, is released into the microscopic space or synapse between the axon and the dendrites of the neighbouring neuron. "The chemical messenger floats over to the dendrite of the adjacent neuron, exciting or inhibiting it. When we say that neurons 'rewire' themselves, we mean that alterations occur at the synapse, strengthening and increasing, or weakening and decreasing, the number of connections between the neurons." Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 53-54.

allow us to remember, feel, suffer, think, imagine, and dream.”<sup>15</sup> Several giants stand out in the long and complicated journey that brought about the development of the notion of brain plasticity: Michael Merzenich (expansion of brain cortices), Helen Neville (functional change in cortices), Rusty Gage (brain neurogenesis), Philip Shaver (attachment theory) and Walter J. Freeman (love and unlearning).<sup>16</sup> Each researcher will be discussed in turn, with highlights of his and her particular contribution toward the development of the science of neuroplasticity.<sup>17</sup>

Described as “the world’s leading researcher on brain plasticity,” Michael Merzenich pioneered the way forward toward a new understanding of the brain for more than the last three decades.<sup>18</sup> Drawing on the work of the earlier researchers, Sherrington and Franz, Lashley, and Hebb, whose innovative work had met with an untimely dismissal from dogmatists, Merzenich set out to provide further evidence that “the brain is the child of experience, undergoing physical changes in response to the life its owner

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<sup>15</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> The concept of neuroplasticity or brain plasticity refers to the brain’s ability to change or reorganize itself in response to experience. Given the current importance of neuroplasticity, it might be assumed that a well-defined understanding of it existed and that, as a consequence, a basic and universal framework was in place to direct current and future research. According to Christopher Shaw, however, this is not the case. He believes that while many neuroscientists use the word neuroplasticity as a universal term, it means different things to different researchers in different subfields. In short, Shaw believes that a mutually agreed upon framework to date does not exist. Christopher Shaw, *Toward a Theory of Neuroplasticity*, ed. Jill McEachern (London, England: Psychology Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> The task here does not involve relaying the whole story concerning how neuroplasticity came to be an accepted area of science. Rather, the following section will draw on the findings of particular researchers that highlight key points in that developmental process. For a more complete description see: Sharon Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves* and Norman Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*.

<sup>18</sup> “Merzenich did not set out to understand how the brain changes. He only stumbled on the realization that the brain could reorganize its maps. And though he was not the first scientist to demonstrate neuroplasticity, it was through experiments he conducted early in his career that mainstream neuroscientists came to accept the plasticity of the brain.” Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 48.

leads.”<sup>19</sup> Joined by several of his colleagues, Merzenich decided to see if it was possible to construct a feeling map of the somatosensory cortex in the same way that the motor cortex had been mapped.<sup>20</sup> Once a map had been established, it would be relatively easy, Merzenich hoped, to demonstrate what changes in the brain might result from changes in what the experimental animal felt.<sup>21</sup> By micromapping each hand map before and after cutting the medial nerve in one hand of a group of monkeys, Merzenich and his colleagues made an astonishing discovery. When an area of the brain was deprived of sensory input, something akin to a “black hole” in the brain was the expected result.

Instead, after several months of medial nerve deprivation, the region of the

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<sup>19</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 31. By the middle of the twentieth century, these earlier researchers had accumulated a compelling body of evidence that Merzenich decided could no longer be ignored. Charles Sherrington (1912) and Ivory Franz (1915) found that “movement maps” (a map of the motor cortex in which each part is labeled in association to the part of the body it controls) were not “set in stone.” Rather, they were as unique as a fingerprint and dependent upon one’s habits and skills. Their studies on experimental animals failed to rule out the possibility that the explanation of variations in motor cortex was inborn rather than due to repeated, habitual movements. Lashley (1923) ruled out the alternate possible explanation by studying the brains of monkeys that picked up a new habit during the course of the experiment. Lashley’s conclusion that “muscles that move more have larger clusters of neurons in the motor cortex devoted to them” set in motion Hebb’s (1949) desire to explain how that happens. Hebb showed that “when neurons fire simultaneously, their synaptic connections become stronger, raising the chance that the firing of one will trigger the firing of the other.... Neurons that fire together wire together.” Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Merzenich’s work on mapping was made possible by the discovery of a new technique called micromapping, which used pin-shaped microelectrodes. Former larger electrodes (like the ones used by Penfield) could observe bursts of activity of thousands of neurons firing at once. However, “[m]icroelectrodes are so small and sensitive that they can be inserted inside or beside a single neuron and can detect when an *individual* neuron fires off its electrical signal to other neurons. The neuron’s signal passes from the microelectrode to an amplifier and then to an oscilloscope screen, where it appears as a sharp spike.... This momentous invention allowed neuroscientists to decode the communication of neurons, of which the adult human brain has approximately 100 billion.... With microelectrodes, scientists could ‘listen in on’ one or several neurons at a time as they communicated with one another.” Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 50.

<sup>21</sup> “Merzenich’s work was affected by a crucial discovery made by David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel in their work with kittens. The experiment involved sewing one eye shut and recording the cortical brain maps. Hubel and Wiesel saw that the portion of the kitten’s brain associated with the shut eye was not idle, as expected. Instead, it processed visual information from the open eye. It was “... as though the brain didn’t want to waste any ‘cortical real estate’ and had found a way to rewire itself.” Merzenich, however, felt that the real challenge was to prove that the brain of adults retained some of this same plasticity here demonstrated in the young. [www.wikidoc.org/index.php/Neuroplasticity](http://www.wikidoc.org/index.php/Neuroplasticity), accessed April 12, 2013

somatosensory cortex originally responsible for processing signals from the severed nerve now processed signals “from the pinkie side of the palm and the back of the fingers.”<sup>22</sup> When the neural demands from the one part of the hand ceased, the somatosensory cortex had simply begun to process signals from another part of the hand. The researchers’ jubilation at having provided such convincing evidence to support the idea of brain plasticity was short-lived. Fellow neuroscientists were not convinced. They criticized the study for only showing that the brain might change in response to a rare and extreme condition, such as severing a nerve. It didn’t prove that the adult brain could change in response to everyday habits and experiences. This criticism only served to make Merzenich more determined to provide convincing evidence of the adult brain’s plasticity.

Merzenich’s persistence, his conviction that the brain was dynamic rather than static, and his hunch that this dynamism was driven by behaviour, all coalesced to motivate a series of ground-breaking studies that finally began to make ever so small shifts in the dogma about a static brain. Pressed to demonstrate that the brain changes in response to everyday experience, in 1990 Merzenich and behavioural psychologist William Jenkins developed an experiment in which changes in the somatosensory cortex of monkeys were mapped prior to, and at varying points in the development of a new skill that involved touching a spinning disk.<sup>23</sup> They discovered that the brain changed in

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<sup>22</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> “In one basic experiment [Merzenich and Jenkins]...trained [monkeys] to touch a spinning disk with its fingertip, with just the right amount of pressure for ten seconds to get a banana-pellet reward. This required the monkey to pay close attention, learning to touch the disk very lightly and judge time accurately. After thousands of trials, Merzenich and Jenkins remapped the monkey’s brain.” Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 66.

two significant ways in response to the motivation to learn. At first, during the initial training period, the somatosensory cortex responsible for processing signals from the fingertip (the one that touched the spinning disk) increased fourfold. This result countered the criticism that changes in the somatosensory cortex might only happen in response to a trauma rather than everyday behaviour. However, as the training progressed, the second thing that they noticed was that “individual neurons within the map became more efficient, and eventually fewer neurons were required to perform the task.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, with repeated practice, neurons ceased to use up more cortical real estate and, instead, became more efficient, processing the signal with increasing speed.<sup>25</sup> It seemed but a small step to conclude, once and for all, that “[t]he somatosensory cortex, which feels touches on the skin, and the motor cortex, which moves muscles, changes as a result of experience. The brain is sculpted by life and retains the imprints of the experiences an animal has and the behaviors it has carried out.”<sup>26</sup> Surely, this conclusion would satisfy the critiques. But not so; dogmas die hard. The changes to the somatosensory cortex were too small to be acknowledged as more than an error in measurement. Even a further study, which succeeded in proving

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>25</sup> “Each neuron in a brain map for the sense of touch has a “receptive field,” a segment on the skin’s surface that ‘reports’ to it. As the monkeys were trained to feel the disk, the receptive fields of individual neurons got smaller, firing only when small parts of the fingertip touched the disk. Thus, despite the fact that the size of the brain map increased, each neuron in the map became responsible for a smaller part of the skin surface, allowing the animal to have finer touch discrimination.... [N]ot only did its neurons fire faster, but because they were faster their signals were clearer. Faster neurons were more likely to fire in sync with each other...wiring together more and forming groups of neurons that gave off clearer and more powerful signals.... This is a crucial point, because a powerful signal has a greater impact on the brain. Overall, the map became more precise.” Ibid., 67-68

<sup>26</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 37.

extensive rearrangement of the somatosensory cortex, failed to satisfy skeptics.<sup>27</sup> Despite these small inroads into developing the notion of neuroplasticity, it would be years before the whole idea of neuroplasticity captured the imagination of neuroscientists.

Through her work with the blind, Helen Neville succeeded in addressing the issue of whether the cortices of the brain could not only expand, as Merzenich had shown, but could also change their function.<sup>28</sup> Previous studies supporting the “hardwired brain” had found that “blind people do not hear better, in the sense of perceiving softer sounds, than sighted people do. Nor do deaf people see better than hearing people do, as measured by their ability to detect minimal contrasts, perceive the direction of motion of a barely moving object, or see in dimmer light.”<sup>29</sup> Helen Neville puzzled over these findings. The results stood in stark contrast to the experience of the blind and deaf who reported heightened sensitivity in the surviving senses. Could earlier scientists have been measuring the “wrong thing?” Prompted by this inverse insight, Neville conducted a series of studies designed to search out “what visual functions the auditory cortex of deaf people performs.”<sup>30</sup> In tandem with the increasing advances in technological

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<sup>27</sup> The study referred to here was called the “Silver Spring Monkey” experiment. It was met with great controversy by animal-rights activists. Nevertheless, the final result written up in the journal *Science* in June of 1991, which demonstrated “massive cortical reorganization, received one final criticism. ‘Wasn’t the brain map still the same? Weren’t the zones for the motor, somatosensory, visual and auditory cortex still located in their same, respective places in the brain?’ By the mid-1990s the limits of neuroplasticity remained unclear.” Ibid., 44.

<sup>28</sup> Helen Neville, from the University of Oregon, stood out from among other research scientists through her work with the blind and deaf. She discovered that the functioning of the visual and auditory cortices were not as “hardwired” as originally thought; their function could be completely overturned depending on the life that someone leads. Ibid., 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 81 The term “inverse insight” is one that Lonergan used to indicate the kind of insight that comes when one realizes that there is no direct insight available. This does not mean that no act of understanding at all has taken place. Rather, the intelligibility grasped in an inverse insight is that an anticipated intelligibility does not exist. The questions and presuppositions that prompted the anticipated act of understanding were faulty; it was the wrong question. An inverse insight typically prompts the search for a

developments such as PET (positron-emission tomography) scans and fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging), Neville's studies showed increasing evidence that, in fact, the areas of brain specialization originally mapped out in the various cortexes are *not* anatomically determined.

An early study, which consisted in measuring the strength of the brain's response to stimulus by means of electrodes glued to the scalp, showed that something was different in how the deaf *saw*, particularly in their peripheral vision, compared to people with normal hearing.<sup>31</sup> Along with the difference in the strength of the response to the stimulus, a further surprise appeared. Unlike the hearing volunteers, whose electrodes indicated an expected response to the visual stimulus over the visual cortex, the response in the deaf volunteers differed in a significant way. In the deaf, the electrodes positioned over the *auditory* cortex registered the response to the *visual* stimulus. It appeared as though the auditory cortex, devoid of stimulus from the ears, began to pick up signals from the retina. Aided by emerging technological advances, further studies succeeded in "pinning down" "what visual functions the auditory cortex of deaf people performs."<sup>32</sup>

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new question, which is what Helen Neville undertook in her research. For further reading on inverse insight see Lonergan, *Insight*, 43- 50. "But while direct insight meets the spontaneous effort of intelligence to understand, inverse insight responds to a more subtle and critical attitude that distinguishes different degrees or levels or kinds of intelligibility. While direct insight grasps the point, or sees the solution or comes to know the reason, inverse insight apprehends that in some fashion the point is that there is no point....; it is to find fault not with answers but with questions." Ibid., 44.

<sup>31</sup> In this early study, Neville used a "simple flash of light, over to the side so her volunteers—some with normal hearing and some who had been deaf since birth or early childhood—could see it only with their peripheral vision.... The evoked potential—roughly, how many neurons fired in response to the flash—in the brains of the deaf was two or three times larger than in people with normal hearing." Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 81.



Around the year 2000, with the help of MRI, Neville documented, within a millimeter or so, where exactly deaf people process visual signals. She discovered a compensatory function happening in the brains of deaf people. “The brain’s *auditory* regions can be recruited to process at least two aspects of *vision*—peripheral vision and the perception of motion.”<sup>33</sup> This discovery was exciting on two levels. First, this was some of the first evidence challenging the long-held notion that brain maps, the various cortices, are anatomically determined according to the dictates of DNA. Rather, the regions of the brain are actually plastic, able to be recruited for different functions.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, those functions served the needs or intention of the person. In the case of the deaf, the heightened ability to detect motion in their peripheral vision acted as a means to alert the person to danger that they couldn’t hear, such as a car coming upon the person from the side. In other words, the discovery highlighted that attention to experience or the intention behind certain behaviours plays a role in determining the outcome of the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 84. “The brain registers signals from the center of the visual field and from the periphery along different neuronal highways.... When light falls on the edge of the retina...the signal zips down to the primary visual cortex in the back of the brain and then up to the parietal cortex just above the ears, which plays an important role in integrating information from various senses. This peripheral-vision highway also carries information about motion and location and is colloquially known as the ‘where’ pathway. But when light falls on the center of the retina, it travels from the primary visual cortex along a different highway, toward a clump of neurons at the front of the brain called the anterior inferior temporal cortex (some of whose neurons are so specialized they respond only to faces). This central-vision highway carries information about color and form and is known as the ‘what’ pathway. Since deaf people had better peripheral vision, Neville realized that the ‘where’ pathway might actually benefit from deafness.” Ibid., 81-82.

<sup>34</sup> In her work with dyslexic children, Neville noted that there are “two sides to neuroplasticity. Systems and structures that display the greatest plasticity are those under the weakest genetic control and most subject to the whims of experience and the environment. That can be beneficial [as seen with the auditory cortex aiding the peripheral vision of the deaf].... But it is also a risky way to make a brain. ‘The same systems that display the greatest plasticity and are enhanced in the deaf are more vulnerable in development and will display the greatest deficits in developmental disorders such as dyslexia....’ ...[P]lasticity and vulnerability go hand in hand....” Ibid., 102-03.

plastic change.<sup>35</sup> By the year 2006, Neville and her colleagues had succeeded in showing conclusively “that when the brain is deprived of one sense, the cortex undergoes radical reorganization.”<sup>36</sup>

As mounting evidence for a neuroplastic brain gained exponential proportions, the twenty-first century dawned with mainstream neuroscientists beginning to shift their long-held position on the static brain. One of the scientists working on the frontiers of neuroplasticity was Fred Gage.<sup>37</sup> His dogma-shattering discoveries suggested that “the possibilities for neuroplasticity are greater than initially suspected: the brain may not be limited to working with existing neurons, fitting them together in new networks. It might, in addition, add fresh neurons to the mix.”<sup>38</sup> Gage’s proof of *neurogenesis*, the brain’s ability to give birth to new neurons from neural stem cells, left behind the age-old notion that, at birth, the human brain is endowed with all the neurons it is ever going to

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<sup>35</sup> A study reported by Pascual-Leone in 1993 showed that the extra-stimulation felt in the Braille-reading fingers of the blind (to which the person pays attention) “causes an expansion of the region of the somatosensory cortex devoted to processing that input.” This finding supported Neville’s understanding that it is intentional behaviours (unlike automatic actions) that bring about the dramatic changes in the brain. Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>36</sup> By working with volunteers whose ages ranged from birth to adulthood, Neville was able to offer the following explanation for her findings on the brain’s ability to reorganize. “[T]he best explanation for the ability of the visual cortex to hear and feel, and the auditory cortex to see, is that, at birth, the brain is shot through with redundant connections. ....[I]n the young brain, supposedly specialized regions have not really decided what they want to be when they grow up and are full of redundant connections. Sure, neurons connect the retina to the visual cortex and the ear to the auditory cortex. But some wayward neurons from the retina also meander into the auditory cortex, and some from the ear reach the visual cortex.... Usually, the pathways from ears to visual cortex and from eyes to auditory cortex remain sparsely traveled if traveled at all, like back roads. In people with normal vision and hearing, superhighways carry signals from the eyes to the visual cortex and the ears to the auditory cortex just fine, swamping any activity along the back roads of the brain. As a result, the wayward connections fall away soon after birth, when the brain figures out where signals are supposed to go. But in the absence of normal sensory input...the pre-existing but little-used connections become unmasked and start carrying traffic.... In every case, it is a young brain that has shown this remarkable neuroplasticity.... [But as later studies showed,]...even a brain that has been around the block a few times can adapt to change and to experiences.... It is not just the young brain that is plastic.” Ibid. 108-09.

<sup>37</sup> Fred Gage is a scientist from the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California. Ibid., 10.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 69.

have.<sup>39</sup> This finding not only overturned generations of conventional understandings in neuroscience, but it also raised the possibility that human beings have more control over their own brain capacity than was ever thought possible. But how exactly does neurogenesis strengthen brain capacity?

To find out if and how neurogenesis can strengthen mental capacity, Gage and his team tested the brains of aging mice raised in enriched environments.<sup>40</sup> In a post-mortem examination of the mice's brain tissue, Gage's team discovered two key points:

"...voluntary exercise increases the *number* of neural stem cells that divide and give rise to new neurons in the hippocampus...[b]ut if the animal lives in an enriched environment, many fewer of the new cells die."<sup>41</sup> In other words, physical activity combined with mastering a new skill work together in a complementary fashion: the first to produce new

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<sup>39</sup> "Neuronal stem cells...can continue to divide, producing exact replicas of themselves, and they can go on doing this endlessly without any signs of aging. For this reason stem cells are often described as the eternally young, baby cells of the brain. This rejuvenating process is called 'neurogenesis,' and it goes on until the day that we die [as Gage was to prove]." Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 250. Gage et al. found an ingenious way to obtain the "data" that they needed to prove neurogenesis. The method for detecting the birth of neurons involved injecting a person with BrdU (bromodeoxyuridine), a substance that gets absorbed into neurons only at the time they are "birthed." These marked, "newly hatched" neurons light up under sophisticated microscopy. Gage et al. were able to identify a "ready-made" group of people who had already been injected with BrdU. Terminally-ill cancer patients received BrdU as a means to identify the rate of growth of new cancer cells. Ironically, BrdU also detects the birth of new brain cells. Thus, through their generous consent, upon their death Gage et al. learned that "living neurons form in us until the very end of our lives." Ibid., 251.

<sup>40</sup> An enriched environment means providing situations that encourage the mastery of new skills as opposed to that of a well-known environment in which one is required to replay already-mastered skills. Ibid., 252.

<sup>41</sup> Emphasis added. Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 66. "Though the discovery of neuronal stem cells was momentous, it is only one of the ways the aging brain can rejuvenate and improve itself. Paradoxically, sometimes losing neurons can improve the brain function, as happens in the massive "pruning back" that occurs during adolescence when synaptic connections and neurons that have not been extensively used die off.... Keeping unused neurons supplied with blood, oxygen, and energy is wasteful, and getting rid of them keeps the brain more focussed and efficient.... That we still have some neurogenesis in old age is not to deny that our brains, like our other organs, gradually decline. But even in the midst of this deterioration, the brain undergoes massive plastic reorganization, possibly to adjust to the brain's losses.... [A]s we age, we tend to perform cognitive activities in different lobes of the brain from those we use when we are young." Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 253.

neurons and the second to increase the rate of their survival.<sup>42</sup> Conversely, forced exercise and tasks done in an automatic fashion do not strengthen mental capacity.<sup>43</sup> Clearly, a person's desire to learn something coupled with the attention he or she pays to the task of learning serves to effect changes in the brain.<sup>44</sup>

In sum, at this point in the story of the historical development of the science of neuroplasticity, scientists had succeeded in identifying several defining characteristics associated with brain plasticity. First, neuroplasticity is much more than just the new synaptic connections between neurons that underlie memory formation in the learning process. Neuroplasticity goes well beyond those continuous synaptic changes, which, early critics were quick to point out, had little effect on the layout of the "brain maps." Rather, neuroplasticity produces wholesale changes in the brain: the cortices of the brain can expand (Merzenich), change their function (Neville) and give birth to new neurons

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<sup>42</sup> "But we think that it is environmental enrichment that supports the survival of these [new neurons]. Usually, 50 percent of the new cells reaching the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus die. But if the animal lives in an enriched environment, many fewer of the new cells die. Environmental enrichment doesn't seem to affect cell proliferation and the generation of new neurons, but it can affect the rate and the number of cells that survive and integrate into the circuitry." Ibid., 66.

<sup>43</sup> "It seems like the effects of running on neurogenesis and on learning are dependent on volition. It has to be a voluntary act. It's not just the physical activity itself.... [Conversely]...inundating a brain with stress hormones is a good way to kill neurons and rip apart synapses. But voluntary exercise is marked not only by the absence of stress. It is also characterized by the presence of brain rhythms called theta waves. These waves, which have a frequency of six to twelve cycles per second, are also present when you pay close attention to something but not when you eat or drink or are otherwise on automatic pilot." Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 68.

<sup>44</sup> At the 2004 annual meeting of the Society of Neuroscience, Brian Christie from the University of British Columbia announced findings that indicated that "individual neurons in the [voluntary] wheel-running mice 'are dramatically different' from those in more sedentary mice in two important ways. For one thing, they have more dendrites, the little bushy projections through which a neuron receives signals from other neurons. Dendrites are the very parts of a neuron that tend to deteriorate with age.... [T]he better connected a brain is, the better it is, period, enabling the mind it runs to connect new facts with old, to retrieve memories, and even to see links among seemingly disparate facts, the foundation for creativity." Ibid., 69. Interestingly, Gage wondered if new neurons in the hippocampus of the adult human brain served another function besides learning. A significantly shrunken dentate gyrus of the hippocampus was discovered in people suffering from depression—that is, the inability to recognize novelty associated with depression may be linked with a reduction in neurogenesis. Ibid., 70.

(Gage). Undergirding all of these changes in the brain is the desire or intention to learn. “Neuroplasticity occurs only when the mind is in a particular mental state, one marked by attention and focus...paying attention to the input that causes [change].”<sup>45</sup>

This key point that the “mind matters” gave way to one further, startlingly novel question: if physical states give rise to mental states,<sup>46</sup> is the reverse also true? Can thought processes affect the body, as in the context of healing? Or more specifically, is the “downward” influence from the mental to the physical possible—could the signals capable of changing the brain arrive not only from the outer world of the senses but also from the mind itself?<sup>47</sup> The final two scientists, Walter J. Freeman and Philip Shaver, stand out as “giants” at this point in the historical development of neuroscience for demonstrating that, indeed, such a downward influence is not only possible, but that its reach extends further downward than ever believed possible, affecting one’s very DNA.

Earlier incidental findings of neuroplastic changes brought about by the mind left their impact and made possible a later receptivity to the idea that a person’s focused attention to thoughts or imagination alone can physically alter the brain.<sup>48</sup> University of

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 130. Recalling footnote 43, the increase in theta waves in the brain associated with this attentiveness was also shown in the previous chapter to be evident during “focusing.” The significance of this connection will be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>46</sup> For example, the physical state of electrical impulses coursing through the visual cortex gives rise to the mental state of seeing. “There is a recognition...that the sense organs are the basis of physical sensations and the means by which these outside sensations are transformed into the mental [states of cognition and emotion].” Ibid., 132.

<sup>47</sup> The further question of whether the reverse was true implies that “mental states affect the very neurons and circuits that give rise to them.” Ibid., 133.

<sup>48</sup> “In the mid-1990s, Pascual-Leone conducted an experiment that, in retrospect, seems like a bridge between the discovery that outside stimuli can alter the brain and the more recent work showing that self-generated stimuli—thoughts and meditation—can, too.” Ibid., 151. Two groups of piano players were asked to learn a five-finger exercise on the keyboard over the course of a week. One group played on the keyboard while the other was asked to “play the simple piece in their heads, imagining how they would move their fingers to generate the notes on the score. Result: The region of the motor cortex that controls

California's Philip Shaver, a leader in the area of attachment theory, began to draw attention to the power of the mind to change the brain.<sup>49</sup> Study after study had convinced Shaver that a direct correlation could be drawn between how compassionately a person behaved and his or her level of emotional security.<sup>50</sup> Shaver wondered if this correlation was "cut in stone" or if there was any hope for healing.<sup>51</sup> Two factors convinced Shaver

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the piano-playing fingers expanded in the brains of volunteers who merely imagined playing the piece just as it did in the brains of those who actually played it. Mental rehearsal activated the same motor circuits as actual rehearsal." Ibid., 151-152.

<sup>49</sup> Attachment theory was created by a British psychiatrist by the name of John Bowlby in the mid-twentieth century in an attempt to explore the early childhood roots of adult chronic unhappiness, anxiety, anger and delinquency. "[Attachment theory] focuses on the sense of emotional security or insecurity a child develops in the first years of life. Simply put, some children come to feel that the person who takes care of them is a reliable source of safety and comfort; other children find that this person is either an unpredictable harbor who is sometimes there to comfort them and sometimes missing in action, or is outright rejecting." Ibid., 186. According to attachment theory, there are three types of attachment styles, that is, the way that people form relationships: *secure*, *avoidant* and *anxious*. "A person's attachment style can be measured reliably with questions that probe beliefs and expectations, as well as relationship history[Adult Attachment Interview].... If the person describes positive relationships with her parents...she probably has a *secure* attachment style.... [A]n emotionally *secure* person tends to agree that 'I find it relatively easy to get close to others,' 'I'm comfortable depending on others,' and 'I don't often worry about being abandoned or about somebody being too close.' ...If, on the other hand, the person answers questions in a way that seems dismissive of the importance of close relationships or else idealizes them, he likely has an *avoidant* style. He agrees with statements such as these: 'I try to avoid getting too close to my partner,' 'I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down,' and 'I seldom turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.' 'I'm uncomfortable being close to others...to trust them...to allow myself to depend on them.' ...If someone is entangled in conflicted feelings about her parents and has trouble keeping anger and anxiety out of her recollections of childhood and—especially—the times she sought comfort from her parents, she is likely emotionally *anxious*. She agrees with statements such as these: 'I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner,' 'I often worry about being abandoned,' and 'I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.' ... 'I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me,' and 'I want to get very close to my partner and this sometimes scares people away.' ...*Secure* attachments characterize a bare majority of young adult Americans.... This *avoidant* style characterizes about 25 percent of American college students and adults.... [And] about 20 percent of young adult Americans have an *anxious* style of attachment." Ibid., 191- 92, italics mine.

<sup>50</sup> "People who feel emotionally secure...are more sensitive to the suffering of others, Shaver found—not only better able to perceive when someone is in distress but also more willing to respond to that suffering. In contrast, people who lack that sense of a safe harbor, of having someone to whom they can turn, are less inclined to feel empathy and compassion." Ibid., 185. He also saw that securely attached people were less likely to cause suffering. "The inner reserves on which a securely attached person can draw in times of stress make it less necessary to rely on neurotic means of coping, such as irrationally lashing out at others or succumbing to self-delusion or defensiveness." Ibid., 189.

<sup>51</sup> "A person's sense of attachment security or insecurity is rooted in childhood experiences and in a mental representation of past experience, such as how a caregiver responded to her long-ago fears and emotional needs. Indeed, the sense of attachment is so reflexive that it must be tightly wired in the brain. Can

that there was hope: Merzenich, Neville and Gage had previously shown that brain circuits organized in certain ways can “be tweaked”; studies had already hinted that “the power of the mind” was capable of rewiring brain circuits.<sup>52</sup> If insecurity led to a reduced capacity for compassion, then would enhancing a person’s security “foster compassion and [a] willingness to help others, rather than ignore others’ needs and exacerbate their suffering?”<sup>53</sup> Further to this question, Shaver expressed concern for the social and political implications of his findings.

Social psychologists had long held that viewing one’s own group (for example, white-male-Canadian, or female-lesbian-urbanite, or black-male-teenager) as superior was a universal human trait. Shaver disagreed. He associated this “defense mechanism” only with those who were anxious or avoidant in their attachments.<sup>54</sup> Securely attached people don’t need to enhance their sense of value by elevating their own “status” at the expense of others.

[T]hose who have a secure sense of attachment...can maintain a sense of [their] own value by tapping into deep memories of being loved and valued [and thus] should have less need to fear and disparage members of other

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anything alter those representations, which, like every other representation in the brain, take the physical form of neuronal circuits? Does even this system retain neuroplasticity? Are we stuck with the way we were, or might it be possible, through either mental training or experimental context, to change?” Ibid., 194-195.

<sup>52</sup> See fn 48.

<sup>53</sup> Shaver suspected that “[i]n a world burdened by international, interethnic, and interpersonal conflict,...[if] people could feel safer and less threatened, they would have more psychological resources to devote to noticing other people’s suffering and doing something to alleviate it.... [I]f you enhance attachment security...can you foster compassion and altruism?” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 185.

<sup>54</sup> “[I]ndividuals who are anxious or avoidant tend to maintain a sense of their own worth by emphasizing real or imagined ways in which their demographic group...is superior.... A related tendency...is to reject anything that challenges the validity of [his or her] beliefs—and instead to protect and defend what [he or she] believe[s] even when confronted with evidence that it is wrong. The result is cognitive rigidity and a deep need to deny that one holds erroneous beliefs or has done something stupid or wrong.” Ibid., 195.

groups or to maintain a sense of self-worth by tearing down others. The result should be greater tolerance.<sup>55</sup>

By enhancing a person's capacity to see others as equal to oneself in value, one also makes possible true altruistic empathy.<sup>56</sup> Surely, Shaver concluded, bringing about greater altruistic empathy by "tweaking" the brain pathways that encode a person's sense of attachment would help make a better world for humankind.<sup>57</sup>

Through a technique called "priming," Shaver induced volunteers either consciously or subliminally "to access mental circuits associated with security."<sup>58</sup> All of the volunteers were then asked to answer a questionnaire designed to assess their level of empathy toward members in a group that they would consider an "out-group."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> True altruistic empathy distinguishes between "acting because you truly wish to relieve the suffering of another being, for that being's sake, and acting because his suffering causes you distress that you want to stop.... [I]n true compassion, you don't want to escape [from the suffering of others].... It's that [altruistic people] feel it is unacceptable, it is intolerable, to let the suffering be." Ibid., 196.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 196-197.

<sup>58</sup> "In the case of subliminal priming, the person is briefly exposed to words associated with emotional security, such as *closeness, love, hug, and, support*.... [When] the security prime was conscious, not subliminal... volunteers were asked to visualize themselves 'in a problematic situation that you cannot solve on your own, and to imagine that you are surrounded by people who are sensitive and responsive to your distress, want to help you only because they love you, and set aside other activities in order to assist you.'" Ibid., 200-201. See publication of study in: M. Mikulincer, P.R. Shaver, O. Gillath, and R.A. Nitzberg, "Attachment, Caregiving, and Altruism: Boosting Attachment Security Increases Compassion and Helping," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 89 (Nov. 2005), 817-839.

<sup>59</sup> Shaver's study was based on social psychology's conventional wisdom that the bias of "out" and "in" groups serves a "self-protection function: group membership is an important source of self-esteem, and the 'my-people-are-better' reflex helps individuals maintain self-esteem. 'Once the concept of "us" is formed,' said Shaver, 'people may maintain self-esteem by searching for intergroup difference that favors their group'.... But recall that secure attachment is correlated with tolerance and the lack of such bias and an ability to maintain high self-esteem without defensively tearing down others.... [A]ctivating a sense of attachment security [through priming may]... soften negative attitudes to members of out-groups at least temporarily." Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 199.



Comparison with a control group (comprised of both securely and insecurely attached subjects who had been exposed to “neutral” primes) showed a remarkable difference.<sup>60</sup>

Those who were characterized as having attachment anxiety [and who had received “neutral priming”] were less willing to interact [with the out-group].... But among participants who imagined receiving emotional comfort and support, there was an equal willingness to interact with [the in-group] [as] with the [out-group].... By giving people a feeling of attachment security, the researchers were able to reduce negative reactions to members of an out-group.<sup>61</sup>

Shaver concluded, ““Having a sense of being loved and surrounded by supporting others seems to allow people to open themselves to alternative worldviews and be more accepting of people who do not belong to their own group.””<sup>62</sup> In other words, the imagination has the power to trigger the temporary activation of attachment security to chronically insecure people. “It has something to do with love.”<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the fact that attachment patterns can temporarily change suggests that there must be plasticity in the underlying brain circuits that responds to the downward influence of imagination or the “mind.” Just as stimulation from the outward world of the senses can change the brain, Shaver had shown that the “downward” influence from the mind can change the brain, as well. Yet, further questions remained: Was permanent healing possible? Could the regular practice of “love-priming,” or some alternative practice, actually change the brain, creating pathways of secure attachment where before there were none?<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Neutral primes are words or imagined events that are “unrelated to attachment but that had a positive connotation (*happiness, luck, or success*).” Ibid., 200.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 201-202.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>63</sup> This quote was taken from a conversation that Shaver had with the Dalai Lama. Ibid., 202.

<sup>64</sup> This question was on the mind of neuroscientist Michael Meaney from McGill University in Montreal. Engaged in the nurture/nature debate of the 1990s, Meaney’s work showed that the effects of one’s environment not only alter neuronal pathways in the brain but furthermore promote lasting effects on one’s

Walter J. Freeman, a professor of neuroscience at Berkeley, delved into the issue of how love affects brain plasticity. Based on a “number of compelling biological facts,” Freeman argued that an experience of love, as in “falling-in-love,” precipitates a “massive plastic brain reorganization” or unlearning.<sup>65</sup> The neuromodulator, oxytocin, makes this massive change possible.<sup>66</sup> He observed this effect at two stages in human life: romantic falling-in-love and when one’s child is born. When a person commits to love, Freeman noticed, “the brain neuromodulator oxytocin is released, allowing existing neuronal connections to melt away so that changes on a large scale can follow.”<sup>67</sup> This

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DNA. “...[T]he experiences we have [nurture] and the environment in which we live acts back on nature in the form of an organism’s genes.” Ibid., 163. Meaney discovered that the key to understanding an offspring’s ability to bond with others lay in the connection between maternal care and its effects on the production of glucocorticoid receptors in the hippocampus of the offspring. Glucocorticoid receptors act as a “stress thermostat” in the manner of a negative-feedback loop. When a flood of glucocorticoids (stress hormones) are produced in response to a threat, the glucocorticoid receptors act as a “molecular docking station for glucocorticoid.” Ibid., 165. Once inside the “embrace” of the receptor, glucocorticoid “triggers a cascade of biochemical reactions, which add up to the flight-or-fight response.” Ibid., 166. The more receptors, the quicker the stress hormones are processed. Conversely, fewer receptors results in the continual production of more stress hormones in an attempt to get at least some of them processed by the few receptors. Thus, the more receptors one has, the quicker the stress response dies down once the threat has passed. The fewer the number of receptors, the longer it takes for the stress hormones to be processed, and thus, for the stress response to die down. Meaney observed a correlation between maternal attention and the number of glucocorticoid receptors present in the offspring. Attentive mothers produced offspring that had an abundance of glucocorticoid receptors, and thus were calm and secure compared to the neurotic, stressed-out offspring of the inattentive mothers. “[T]he lack of maternal attention translated into fewer glucocorticoid receptors in the hippocampus and a souped-up physiological reaction to stressful events.” Ibid., 170. Astonishingly, Meaney observed that the quality of maternal care can affect the gene that produces the receptors. “A mother’s [attention] causes an increase in a molecule, called a transcription factor, that turns up production of the glucocorticoid receptors in the hippocampus.” Ibid., 172. In other words, genes are not our destiny. “Genes can be silent, or they can be very active....” “What determines the activity of the gene is the environment. And that’s what is modified by parental care: the chemical environment in which the gene functions.... [M]aternal care alters the activity of the gene in the brains of their offspring. And that influences the way their children respond to stress.” “...This plasticity doesn’t involve connections between neurons. The modifications occur at the level of the gene itself.... That means we can talk about creating an environment that will affect the DNA.” Ibid., 172-173.

<sup>65</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 118.

<sup>66</sup> “Neuromodulators are different from neurotransmitters. While neurotransmitters are released in the synapses to excite or inhibit neurons, neuromodulators enhance or diminish the *overall* effectiveness of the synaptic connections and bring about enduring change.” Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> “Oxytocin is sometimes called the commitment neuromodulator because it reinforces bonding in mammals. It is released when lovers connect and make love...and when couples parent and nurture their children. In women oxytocin is released during labor and breast-feeding. In male mammals a closely

melting down of existing neuronal connections that underlie present attachments happens so that new attachments can be formed.<sup>68</sup> It makes possible the massive unlearning necessary for the relearning of new patterns needed to bond in the new relationship.

What nature provides, in a neuromodulator like oxytocin, is the ability for two brains in love to go through a period of heightened plasticity, allowing them to mold to each other and shape each other's intentions and perceptions.<sup>69</sup>

Freeman's understanding of unlearning in love helps to explain the healing process in those who suffer from attachment disorders and other types of mental disorders.

Several current therapeutic practices show evidence that Freeman's and Shaver's work has made inroads in present day culture. Norman Doidge, M.D., notes that Freeman's work helps to explain the healing effects of the "positive transference feelings" between patient and therapists documented by analysts since the time of Freud.<sup>70</sup> In neuroscientific terms, the positive therapeutic bond "appears to facilitate neuroplastic change by triggering unlearning [of negative patterns established through

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related neuromodulator called vasopressin is released when they become fathers.... [O]xytocin appears also to attach children to parents." Ibid., 119.

<sup>68</sup> In 2005, Seth Pollack of the University of Wisconsin presented his findings on the levels of oxytocin and vasopressin found in the orphaned, severely neglected Romanian children who had been adopted by Americans. Many of the children had been diagnosed with attachment disorders. Drawing on Meaney's work that correlated the quality of maternal care with the level of stress hormone in the brain, Pollack sought to demonstrate that the "level of stress hormones...affects how well receptors bind oxytocin and vasopressin." Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 179. Levels of oxytocin and vasopressin (the social bonding hormones) rise in response to social interactions and parental sensory stimulation such as "cuddling." Even after being cuddled by their adopted parents, oxytocin and vasopressin in the Romanian orphans were much lower than seen in the levels of children who had secure parental attachments. Pollack showed that the high levels of stress hormones arising from parental neglect affect the social binding stress hormones, oxytocin and vasopressin, and hence can explain attachment disorders. Ibid., 180.

<sup>69</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 120.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 233.

trauma, for example] and dissolving existing neuronal networks, so the patient can alter his existing intentions.”<sup>71</sup>

Richard J. Davidson, a professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin, turned to Buddhist meditation in his search to study how intensive, long-term mental training changes the brain. Would the temporary effects that Shaver saw with “love-priming” become more permanent with mental training, in particular with the mental training associated with Buddhist compassion meditation?<sup>72</sup> Davidson’s specific interest in Buddhist meditation followed from his observation that compassion meditation generated “a state in which love and compassion permeate the whole mind...in the sense that it does not focus on particular objects.”<sup>73</sup> Published in the 2004 scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Davidson’s first-of-its-kind study showed remarkable findings that brought to light the importance of compassion meditation on human well-being.<sup>74</sup>

The study involved comparing the electroencephalograms (EEGs) of “eight accomplished Tibetan Buddhist meditators” with “ten nonmeditating Wisconsin undergraduates who got a crash course and a week’s worth of practice in compassion

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. “Recent brain scans done before and after psychotherapy show both that the brain plastically reorganizes itself in treatment and that the more successful the treatment the greater the change.” Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Davidson was aware that some studies on mental training had already been done. Brain activation patterns had already been shown to “change as a result of therapy—specifically, as a result of cognitive-behavior therapy and mindfulness meditation, in which people learn to think differently about their thoughts. Jeffrey Schwartz showed that to be the case with patients beset by obsessive-compulsive disorder; Zindel Segal and Helen Mayberg showed it with patients suffering from depression.” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 221. Davidson’s goal, however, was not merely to observe if the effect of mental training was the absence of mental illness, but rather the “enduring presence of robust mental and emotional health.” Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 234.

meditation.”<sup>75</sup> The results of both groups showed an increase in gamma waves during meditation.<sup>76</sup> The gamma signal in the control group showed a slight increase even after just a minimal amount of meditation training. As might be expected, compared to the control group’s, the gamma waves of the Buddhist meditators rose to high or very high levels. The strength of the monks’ gamma signals demonstrated “the power of mental training to produce a heightened brain state associated with perception, problem solving, and consciousness.”<sup>77</sup> Yet, an even more fascinating result was the difference in the level of gamma waves while the groups were not meditating. During the resting period alternating between compassion meditations, the monks showed a large increase in gamma signals compared to the control group, where no increase was seen.<sup>78</sup> This result provided Davidson with the evidence that “the effects of mental training...[are] not ...an in-the-moment brain state but ...[rather are] an enduring brain trait.”<sup>79</sup> In other words, a direct, linear correlation could be seen between the number of hours of meditation training with the greatest brain changes. Furthermore, the “compassion” part of the meditation held a key to understanding the changes that occurred.

Having shown that enduring changes in the brain were possible through compassion meditation, Davidson went on to further ascertain just what the changes

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> “Brain waves of [gamma] frequency, scientists believe, reflect the activation and recruitment of neural resources and, generally, mental effort. They are also a signature of neuronal activity that knits together far-flung brain circuits—consciousness, in a sense. They appear when the brain brings together different sensory features of an object, such as look, feel, sound, and other attributes that lead the brain to its *aha!* moment.” Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

entailed. He observed the greatest changes in the regions of the brain linked to empathy and maternal love.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly, greater activity was also seen in a curious set of cortical networks connecting regions that seemed to have little in common. Those regions linked together tactile sensation, cognitive function and emotion in a manner that neuroscientists associate with times when either the person is in pain, when someone else is in pain or during an emotional experience.<sup>81</sup> Also very interesting was the observation that some areas of the brain had *reduced* activity—the regions that “keep track of what is ‘self’ and what is ‘other.’”<sup>82</sup> From this combined data, Davidson concluded that long-term compassion meditation creates a state in which the meditator views others with the same compassion he views himself.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, this enduring state of compassion was seen to be linked with a readiness to act, to come to the aid of another in distress. In short, Davidson’s study showed that the “positive state,” in which “compassion is mediated by brain regions that generate maternal love, empathy, and a desire to help others,” is a state that can be achieved through mental training.<sup>84</sup>

Davidson’s study suggests that compassion meditation facilitates a transformation of the meditator’s emotions by “damping down” activity in regions from which the more fear-based, “negative” emotions arise and, at the same time, by “dialing up” activity in

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> ““The activation of this network was stronger in the adepts than in the nonmeditators, which supports the idea that our experience of another person’s suffering is mediated by the brain regions that are involved in our own experience of pain.” “...[T]heir brains showed increased activity in regions responsible for planned movements, as if the monk’s brains were itching to go to the aid of those in distress.” Ibid., 238.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

the brain regions associated with maternal love and compassion towards others.<sup>85</sup> In neuroplastic terms, Davidson noted such changes in the brain as “strengthening connections from the thoughtful prefrontal lobes to the fear- and anxiety-generating amygdale, shifting activity in the prefrontal cortex from the discontented right side to the eudaemonic left side.”<sup>86</sup> Davidson’s results confirm what Shaver and Freeman had proposed: that permanent changes or healing can occur through mental training; that, indeed, the “mind” can effect the same plastic change as that seen occurring through the senses; those mental practices “have something to do with love” or compassion; and finally, the transformation or healing that occurs in the person through love or compassion constitutes a shift from the “negative emotions” and consequent insecure behaviours associated with attachment disorders to an enhanced ability to become more compassionate or more securely attached to others in a way that facilitates true altruistic relations.

### *Analysis of Historical Development: Progress or Decline*

To summarize, by drawing on the key turning points in the story of how neuroplasticity came to be an accepted area of science, the features of an authentic developmental process have been exhibited. In chronological order, these features are as

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<sup>85</sup> Davidson notes that Buddhist philosophy identifies negative emotions as jealousy, hatred, anger, greed, and envy. These same emotions, along with pride, lust, gluttony and sloth, constitute what the Roman Catholic tradition identifies as the seven deadly sins or capital vices. According to the Roman Catholic tradition, it is not that the emotions, in themselves, are sinful; rather, the emotions as vices (“Vice is a practice or a behavior or habit generally considered immoral, depraved, or degrading in the associated society”—<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice>, accessed May 2, 2013) are viewed as habitual ways of being that can interfere with the life of grace. The writer has interpreted Davidson’s depiction of “negative emotions” through the interpretive lens of the Roman Catholic tradition. Ibid., 241. “Science has long held that emotional regulation and emotional response are static abilities that don’t much change once you reach adulthood. But our findings clearly indicate that meditation can change the function of the brain in an enduring way.” Ibid., 238.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 241.

follows. By 1913, Cajal's model of the "immutable" brain failed to explain everything. Data at this stage had been subject to interpretation by classical laws only. Accordingly, the "unexplained" was understood as merely empirical residue. The desire to identify an intelligibility in the "unexplained" empirical residue by medical science sets in motion the shift toward a new realm of meaning that includes both classical laws and statistical laws. By the middle of the twentieth century, 1912-1949, the early researchers Sherrington and Franz, Lashley, and Hebb had accumulated a compelling body of evidence showing that the brain is dynamic, continually changing itself in response to new experience. This mounting evidence clearly identified the need for a new model for understanding the brain. Merzenich decided that this mounting, compelling body of evidence from earlier researchers could no longer be ignored. His decision to "move against the tide" of traditional understandings of the brain depicts an integrity characteristic of a person cooperating with the dictates of his own consciousness to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. Integrity was once again portrayed by Merzenich in his willingness to respond to dogmatist criticisms by participating in a self-correcting process in his search for a new understanding of the brain. Merzenich, Gage, Neville, Shaver, Freeman and Davidson began to use statistical laws to explain empirical residue; new technologies, such as the MRI that Neville used, and the microelectrodes that helped Merzenich in his research, constitute some of the conditions that made possible the new understanding of the brain by providing "more data" for interpretation. Consequently, scholarly understanding of the brain began to shift in the late 1970s to 1980s. Helen Neville's inverse insight—that previous researchers had been "looking at the wrong thing"—helped to promote development by opening up a whole new set of



questions. The story highlights the developmental process by depicting how the conditions of possibility in the earlier discoveries set up new schemes of recurrences or “left their traces,” making possible the later receptivity to the concept of neuroplasticity. The final date of the later receptivity, according to published literature, appears to be the early twenty-first century. Indeed, the final receptivity of neuroplasticity as an accepted science is further validated by the features of authenticity or progress exhibited in the story of its development.

As a result of identifying neuroscience in terms of the features of authentic development, the basic data that has emerged from this story on the brain’s plasticity is as follows. Previously thought to be characteristic only of the brains in young children, neuroplasticity addresses the brain’s capacity to make new neuronal connections well into old age. Neuroplastic change refers to more than just the new synaptic connections that underlie memory formation. Rather, neuroplasticity has been shown to exhibit three significant features of wholesale change in the brain: the cortices of the brain can expand, change their function, and give birth to new neurons (neurogenesis).

Prompting all of these changes in the brain is the intention to learn along with the associated focused attention to the experience of learning. In fact, intention is so important to the strength of the neuronal networks that its lack translates into the weakening of those particular synaptic connections. Neuroplastic changes, therefore, are understood as both the strengthening of neuronal connections as well as the “undoing” or weakening of connections. Both aspects contribute to the process of therapeutic interventions. Traumatic experiences or aberrant thought processes (as in obsessive

compulsive disorder or depression) can be unlearned (or not paid attention to) in order to promote healthier connections.

Furthermore, it is not only one's own intentions but also the intentions (or lack thereof) of maternal and paternal caregivers that can fundamentally shape neuronal pathways. Attachment styles, whether secure, anxious or avoidant, are established well before the age of reason when a child can make decisions for herself. The types of stimulation, physical touch and activities (in short, the child's environment) are early experiences that give shape to a child's neurophysiology, not through his or her intentions, but rather through the intention of other caregivers.<sup>87</sup>

On a final note, neuroplastic changes occur by way of two different avenues in the human person. The first comes through human attention to the data produced by sensory stimulation. This first avenue constitutes a ground-up movement, from the nerve-endings of fingers, hair follicles on the skin, and frequency vibrations in the ear canal along the various neural pathways, through to the respective cortices of the brain. The neuronal shaping received through caregivers, mentioned above, also comes by way of the ground-up movement. The second avenue, through which plastic changes in the brain occur, comes by way of a downward movement through the person. It is the avenue through which the mind, the imagination or experiences of love or compassion, act as a means to alter neural networks. For example, piano practice undertaken through one's imagination proves to effect changes in the brain similar to those seen from the actual

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<sup>87</sup> See fn 64. The intention of nurturing figures, or caregivers, refers to the level of their capacity and/or willingness to express care to their child.

physical activity.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the downward movement contributing to plastic change has also been shown to contribute to changes associated with healing. Experience of love or compassion, either through the recollection of an experience, compassion meditation or falling-in-love, all prompt the “unlearning” of certain, existing neuronal networks in order to re-learn networks that strengthen the relation or secure attachment to the beloved.

***Gendlin’s Body Knowledge: The Explanatory Relevance  
of the Science of Brain Plasticity***

Bringing a neuroscientific explanation to the notion of “body knowledge” involves addressing Gendlin’s claims: that the body holds “knowledge” as the myriad of its innumerable experiences in a way that the intellect can only know in increments; that this knowledge “implies its continuation;” and that, in part, prior knowledge has been “given” or “received.” Concerning how the body holds “knowledge,” neuroplasticity offers the following explanation.<sup>89</sup> The science of neuroplasticity grounds Gendlin’s work on “body knowledge” by both verifying and explaining the notion of a body somehow having intelligibility, to use Lonergan’s term. In fact, what neuroplasticity has shown is that the body’s intelligibility is as unique to each person as his or her

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<sup>88</sup> “Pascual-Leone taught two groups of people, who had never studied piano, a sequence of notes, showing them which fingers to move.... Then members of one group, the ‘mental practice’ group, sat in front of an electric piano keyboard, two hours a day, for five days, and *imagined* both playing the sequence and hearing it played. A second ‘physical practice’ group actually played the music two hours a day for five days.... Remarkably [brain mapping before, during and after the experiment showed that] mental practice alone produced the same physical changes in the motor system as actually playing the piece.” Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 201.

<sup>89</sup> “It is important to understand that the nervous system is divided into two parts. The first part is the central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord), which is the command-and-control center of the system; it was thought to lack plasticity. The second part is the peripheral nervous system, which brings messages from the sense receptors to the spinal cord and brain and carries messages from the brain and spinal cord to the muscles and glands. The peripheral nervous system was long known to be plastic; if you cut a nerve in your hand, it can ‘regenerate’ or heal itself.” Ibid., 53.

fingerprint. The shaping of one's neurophysiology requires a person's attention to his or her experience. "Without attention, information that our senses take in—what we see, hear, feel, smell, and taste—literally does not register in the mind. It may not be stored even briefly in memory."<sup>90</sup> The basic discovery is that neurons compete. The attention given to searching out one's child within a crowd of children at the play park, for example, determines the strength of the electrical signal received by the visual cortex from the retina. "Paying attention physically damps down activity in neurons other than those involved in focusing on the target of your attention."<sup>91</sup> Attention, therefore, manifests itself in physical form by stimulating the activity of certain neurons while damping down the activity of others.

Each neuron has three parts. The *dendrites* lead into the *cell body*, which sustains the life of the cell and contains its DNA. Finally the *axon* is a living cable of varying lengths (from microscopic lengths in the brain, to some that can run down to the legs and reach up to six feet long). Axons are often compared to wires because they carry electrical impulses at very high speeds (from 2 to 200 miles per hour) toward the dendrites of neighboring neurons. A neuron can receive two kinds of signals: those that excite it and those that inhibit it. If a neuron receives enough *excitatory* signals from other neurons, it will fire off its own signal. When it receives enough *inhibitory* signals, it becomes less likely to fire. Axons don't quite touch the neighboring dendrites. They are separated by a microscopic space called a *synapse*. Once an electrical signal gets to the end of the axon, it triggers the release of a chemical messenger, called a neurotransmitter, into the synapse. The chemical messenger floats over to the dendrite of the adjacent neuron, exciting or inhibiting it. When we say that neurons "rewire" themselves, we mean that alterations occur at the synapse, strengthening and increasing, or weakening and decreasing, the number of connections between the neurons.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 157.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 53-54.

Repeated stimulation not only strengthens the synaptic connections between neurons designated to fulfill that task, but it causes an expansion of the region of the cortex devoted to processing that input.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, such stimulation causes the recruitment of unused cortical real estate in cases where one sense is compensating for the loss of another. When specialized regions of the brain had been established, the once superfluous neuronal connections between cortices in the brain, seen in the very young, were thought to no longer exist in adults.<sup>94</sup> Neuroplasticity reveals that, on the contrary, remnant neuronal connections between cortices continue to exist well into adulthood, and can be recruited with repeated practice to begin carrying neuronal signals. More permanent changes occur as the remnant neurons grow, develop denser synaptic connections and sprout more dendrite connections to other neurons. “Denser synapses and more dendritic branches add up to [stronger] and more complicated brain circuits.”<sup>95</sup> As a result, in the blind, for example, the “visual” cortex learns to hear, and in the deaf the “auditory” cortex learns to see.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> “There is an endless war of nerves going on inside each of our brains. If we stop exercising our mental skills, we do not just forget them: the brain map space for those skills is turned over to the skills we practice instead. ...Competitive plasticity also explains why our bad habits are so difficult to break or ‘unlearn.’ ...[W]hen we learn a bad habit, it takes over a brain map, and each time we repeat it, it claims more control of that map and prevents the use of that space for ‘good’ habits. That is why ‘un-learning’ is often harder than learning, and why early child-hood education is so important—it’s best to get it right early, before the ‘bad habit’ gets a competitive advantage.” Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>94</sup> Notably, the capacity for neuroplasticity does, in fact, diminish with age. The important discovery is that it does not completely disappear. “‘There is some neuroplastic ability at any age. You don’t lose it ‘til you die.’” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves*, 93.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>96</sup> “‘Which sensory inputs [the unused cortex] becomes sensitive to seems to be activity dependent.’” Ibid., 99. Of note, the activity to which the unused cortex responds can involve those tasks formerly designated to a “higher” function of the brain, such as language. For example, it was observed that the visual cortex of the blind learning Braille not only responded to auditory stimulus but, in addition, “is recruited to be part of

One of the most striking findings in neuroplasticity was the discovery of the brain's ability to give birth to new neurons, *neurogenesis*. Once again, “paying attention” played an important role. A stimulating environment—having something to pay attention to, or learn—“lead[s] to a striking increase in new neurons.”<sup>97</sup> The new neurons are “more excitable than the [older]...neurons and easily form new synapses, too, forging connections with existing neurons that become the basis for new circuitry.”<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, the new neurons that arise from neural stem cells in the hippocampus at that point are able to metamorphose into any kind of cell in the brain. What determines their function? All the new neurons gather in the dentate gyrus, where they multiply and are somehow encoded with information arriving from the senses.<sup>99</sup> It appears that the dentate gyrus sorts the massive influx of sensory perception by somehow encoding it and cataloging it with existing information. Once sorted, the hippocampus is thought to process the encoded neurons in such a way that they can be sent to the respective cortices. Scientists believe that the newly arriving neurons replace old or damaged neurons by being brought up into the existing circuitry.<sup>100</sup> The designated function of the newly arriving neurons appears to be related to where they are most needed, and that need arises from that to which a person “pays attention.” Furthermore, scientists

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the network involved in a high-level cognitive function, processing speech and remembering words.” Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>97</sup> “Mice...living in an enriched, stimulating environment had three times the number of new brain cells in the dentate gyrus of the hippocampus [where neural stem cells are born].” Ibid., 58.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 66. Conversely, “inundating a brain with stress hormones is a good way to kill neurons and rip apart synapses.” Ibid., 68.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

observed that the desire to engage in some physical activity within the stimulating environment enhances both the production of new neurons as well as their survival.<sup>101</sup>

Clearly, the dictates of a person's needs, desires, interests and aptitudes as expressed in attention to learning, along with the further physical activity involved in that learning, prompt neuroplastic changes in the brain. Neuroplastic changes are not "random," therefore, but are nature's way of equipping

...the human brain, endowing it with the flexibility to adapt to the environment it encounters, the experiences it has, the damages it suffers, the demands its owner makes of it. The brain is neither immutable nor static but is instead continuously remodeled by the lives we lead.<sup>102</sup>

In other words, genes set up the basic structure of the brain, but neuroplasticity provides the brain with the ability to respond to the needs and intentions of each person. Much like the distinctiveness of a fingerprint, no two brains have the same neural patterning. It is this unique character of the neural patterning, formed in response to human intention, that explains Gendlin's "body knowledge."

In terms of Gendlin's assertion that prior knowledge has been "given," the explanatory categories of neuroplasticity provide the following broadened understanding. Firstly, the discussion concerning attachment styles demonstrates the brain-shaping

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<sup>101</sup> Scientists discovered that volitional activity affects the "health" (and thus the survival) of the neurons in two significant ways. "For one thing, they have more dendrites, the little bushy projections through which a neuron receives signals from other neurons. Dendrites are the very parts of a neuron that tend to deteriorate with age. It has become a truism that the better connected a brain is, the better it is, period, enabling the mind it runs to connect new facts with old, to retrieve memories, and even to see links among seemingly disparate facts, the foundation for creativity. Not only are there more dendrites...but each of these bushes has significantly more spines on it. 'Each of these spines represents a site at which neuronal communication can occur.... In effect, we are showing that there are structural reasons for the enhanced learning and memory capacities we...have observed [with volitional] exercise.'" Ibid., 69.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 130.

influence of one's childhood environment. A direct correlation was shown to exist between the level of maternal affection and the number of stress-hormone-processing, glucocorticoid receptors present in the children. Attentive mothers produced calm and secure offspring due to an abundance of glucocorticoid receptors compared to the insecure, "stressed-out" offspring of the inattentive mothers. This manner by which the neurophysiological basis of "attachment style" is determined and by which children "receive" or are "given" a particular style of relating to the world accounts for one example of Gendlin's assertion that prior knowledge is received. A second example emphasizes the dominant influence that culture plays in the reception of prior knowledge.

To a large degree, culture can determine what a person can and cannot perceive. A famous European psychologist of the mid-twentieth century, Jean Piaget, claimed "that perceiving and reasoning unfold in development in the same way for all human beings, and that these processes are universal."<sup>103</sup> Neuroplasticity shows that Jean Piaget's observation is *not* universally true. Different cultures influence the development of perceptual learning. Through several experiments designed to compare perception between peoples from the East and the West, R.E. Nisbett confirmed the long-held observation that "Easteners perceive holistically, viewing objects as they are related to each other or in context [right brain processing], whereas Westerners perceive them in isolation [left brain, analytical processing]."<sup>104</sup> Further studies showed that when people

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<sup>103</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 301. "...[S]cholars, travelers, and anthropologists had long observed that the peoples of the East (those Asian peoples influenced by Chinese traditions) and those of the West (the heirs to the traditions of the ancient Greeks) perceive in different ways, but scientists assumed these differences were based on different *interpretations* of what was seen, not on microscopic differences in their perceptual equipment and structures." Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 302.



moved to a different culture they learned to perceive in a new way.<sup>105</sup> In short, immersion in a particular cultural pattern of perceiving shapes the neural networks responsible for sensing and perceiving. These “higher” level functions or patterns of perceiving “affect how neuroplastic change in the ‘lower,’ sensory parts of the brain develops.”<sup>106</sup> In other words, one can inherit or receive from one’s culture the patterned style by which one selects and organizes the data in the process of perceiving. Furthermore, the reception of this inherited pattern comes by way of one’s neurophysiological patterning and not through one’s genetics. This explanation of the cultural influence on perception brings to light the understanding that the prior knowledge a person receives is already patterned in a manner influenced by his or her culture. Furthermore, this explanation also brings heightened understanding to Doran’s notion of received meaning as understood in relation to the formation of one’s dramatic pattern.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, Gendlin’s reference to the body implying the continuation of its knowledge—meaning, the body’s natural spontaneity to express, in image form, the “knowledge” held within the body—can be explained by the very dynamism within human neurophysiology established by the science of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 303. “Culture can influence the development of perceptual learning because perception is not (as many assume) a passive, “bottom up” process that begins when energy in the outside world strikes the sense receptors, then passes signals to the “higher” perceptual centers in the brain. The perceiving brain is active and always adjusting itself.... Indeed, the stationary eye is virtually incapable of perceiving a complex object. Both our sensory *and* our motor cortices are always involved in perceiving.” Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Recall that, in Chapter Four, Gendlin’s “prior knowledge” was correlated with Doran’s “received meaning.” Further to this, the argument showed that “received meaning” constituted a development in Lonergan’s portrayal of the dramatic pattern. Along with imagination, the dramatic pattern functions in the censor in a manner that patterns unconscious material prior to its emergence into conscious, imaginal form. Neuroplasticity has explained the reception of this inherited pattern in the way that perception and attachment styles constitute culturally-shaped, neurophysiological patterning.

has dismantled the notion of a static brain functioning solely by the dictates of one's genetic makeup. While genes set up the basic structure of the brain, the brain's ability to adapt to its environment through human intention sets in place the understanding of an elemental intelligibility within neural patterning. Neuroplasticity has shown that this elemental intelligibility, or "body knowledge," manifests in higher form as learned skills, behaviours, attachment styles and knowledge. In other words, neuroplasticity explains Gendlin's term, "the body implying the continuation of its knowledge," by bringing to light the spontaneity that exists between the body and human intention.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has explored the notion of vertical finality at the level of the body by drawing on the explanatory categories of the science of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity has provided a needed grounding for the insights that Gendlin's work on the body (furthered by the transposition of his descriptive categories into the categories of interiority) has made available for a theological anthropology. As an area of science that has emerged in little over a decade prior to this present discussion, neuroplasticity was verified as an authentic development. The following, concluding chapter, completes the project intended by this thesis. Chapter Six will highlight how the categories of neuroplasticity have brought a new development in the understanding of the body's participation in the graced transition from the natural to the supernatural. It will use neuroplastic terms to explain how grace operates in the body in both its upward and downward movements in human consciousness.

## Chapter Six

### **Neuroplasticity's Contribution to Answering the Question, "What in human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"**

#### *Introduction*

In the search to advance an understanding of the significance of the body in a theological anthropology, this thesis has undertaken to fulfill that project by reinterpreting the body aspect of the body-psyche-mind correspondence of Lonergan's theory of emergent probability. The methodological approach mirrored the developmental process of emergent probability. The chapters progressed by way of the series of developments in Lonergan's thought on theological anthropology, from Lonergan, to Doran, through to Gendlin, with a further grounding in the science of neuroplasticity. Each of the developments portrayed emergent probability as the higher integrations and further differentiations in the understanding of Lonergan's thought on the human person in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

The preceding chapter developed the understanding of the relations between the organism and consciousness by grounding Gendlin's assertion of "body knowledge" in the explanatory categories of neuroplasticity. This closing chapter will first recapture in summary the contributions of Lonergan, Doran and Gendlin before offering a final reinterpretation of Lonergan's question—"What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?"—in light of the new data offered by neuroplasticity.

***Recapturing the Contributions of Lonergan, Doran and Gendlin***

Concerning a recapturing of this search, Chapter Two provided a summary of Lonergan's effort to explain human consciousness in terms of an evolutionary world view. It showed that the development in Lonergan's thought constituted a shift in emphasis. His earlier work focused on the "mind" aspect of the body, psyche, and mind constituents. Lonergan explained "mind" or cognitive process in terms of a cognitional analysis of the three successive levels of operations in human consciousness, each manifested by questions that promote one level to the next. The term "sublation" named the relation between successive levels. The lower level participates in and is drawn up into the functioning of the higher level. In terms of the cognitive operations in human consciousness, questions for intelligence are sublated by questions for reflection. In later work, Lonergan distinguished a fourth level prompted by questions for deliberation that, as inclusive of value judgment, intend the good. Likewise, questions for deliberation sublate the previous three levels of the cognitive process. By distinguishing a fourth level that sublates sense and conation, thought and feeling, Lonergan ended the purely cognitive focus of his earlier evolutionary portrayal of human consciousness. This later development brought to light the priority of the existential subject whose authentic knowing coincides with a decision to live under the guidance of the norms immanent and operative on the four levels of consciousness.

Chapter Two concluded with an account of Lonergan's latest work. In his latest work, Lonergan began to shift his focus toward the psychic aspects in the body-psyche-mind constituents of the human person. Lonergan acknowledged the possibility that the structure of human consciousness—the four levels of experience, understanding, judging

and decision—“may prove open at both ends.”<sup>1</sup> By this acknowledgment, Lonergan opened the door to a discussion concerning a distinct dimension separate from intentionality (a discussion which was later taken up by Doran). The separate dimension that Lonergan termed the “passionateness of being” constitutes the feeling level that accompanies intentionality, along with two further levels that both “overarch” and “underpin” intentionality, respectively. Lonergan explained that the “passionateness of being” participates in the vertical finality of human self-transcendence by way of immanent norms, which prompt activity prior to human consciousness as well as move human consciousness toward connection with a dimension beyond itself.

Chapter Three illustrates the advance that Doran achieved in his own thought on the psyche. Doran’s interest concerned the further differentiation of the aspect of human consciousness that Lonergan termed the “passionateness of being.” Doran’s early work focused on what he termed the “symbolic operator,” that aspect of the psyche that “underpins” intentionality. The symbolic operator prompts the upward transition from unconscious neural functioning to conscious images in dreams. Doran stressed that human authenticity entails acknowledging the need to self-appropriate this further dimension. He calls this additional self-appropriation “psychic conversion.”

In Doran’s later work, the focus on the symbolic operator expands to include the two further aspects of the psyche that “accompany” (the sensitive aspect) and “reach beyond” (the agapic or intersubjective aspect) intentionality. He identified the three aspects of the psyche as the threefold aesthetic-dramatic operator.<sup>2</sup> This later

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 400.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 166.

development not only added further clarity to the psychic dimension but, as well, provided an expanded ground in interiority for the self-appropriation that constitutes psychic conversion.

Doran's most current development underscores the need to appropriate "received meaning," that is, meaning that is pre-consciously "already patterned." Through his work, Doran has integrated Lonergan's contributions, and has further differentiated an understanding of the psyche's role in the body-psyche-mind constituents of the human person in the transition from the natural to the supernatural. By doing so, Doran has expanded the basis for an interiority analysis. This means that both cognitional (the data of sense and the data of consciousness, which include received meanings and values) as well as psychic operations can be objectified in an intentionality analysis providing further material for conscious self-appropriation.

Chapter Four introduced the work of Eugene Gendlin on "body knowledge." In doing so, the body aspect of the body-psyche-mind constituents of the human person was brought into the discussion regarding the question that Lonergan posed in "Mission and the Spirit": "What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" After transposing "body knowledge" into the categories of interiority, three points concerning Gendlin's contribution to an understanding of how the body participates in the transition from the natural to the supernatural were made.

Firstly, by identifying the body as a level with corresponding operations in the evolutionary unfolding of human consciousness, Gendlin's work has brought greater insight into the body-psyche-mind relations anticipated by the principle of correspondence, and, in doing so, has expanded the basis for an interiority analysis. This

contribution further differentiates the dialectic of contraries that exists between consciousness and the organism. It shows that, in the mutually conditioning relations that exist within a dialectic of contraries, between consciousness and the organism, conscious images arise, not only in response to the demand to know but also by way of the upwardly directed dynamism, the vertical finality of the organism.

Secondly, this developed understanding of the body's role in the vertical finality of the human person supports Doran's assertion that psychic self-appropriation creates defensive schemes of recurrence, thereby increasing the probability of self-transcendence in the converting human subject. By including the body's ability to verify its imaginal correlate in a "felt shift," one receives further assurance that one has accessed one's symbolic patterns or "story" as it is—that is, "as it is" removed from the distortions of a repressive censor. This further grounding participates in the defensive circle surrounding religious, moral and intellectual conversion. Accordingly, one participates with grace in increasing the probability of self-transcendence in the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Thirdly, by connecting Doran's notion of received meaning with "body knowledge" and with the formation of one's dramatic pattern, the significance of appropriating that elemental meaning held within the body was brought to light.<sup>3</sup> An understanding of psychic conversion, which includes the appropriation of "body data," alerts a community to both the individual and the collective responsibility required in the authentic appropriation of the meanings and values by which one's own horizon of being

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<sup>3</sup> By appropriating the already-patterned, elemental meaning of "received meaning," one attends to the task of authentically appropriating the divine original meaning constitutive of the ordinary meaning of one's community.

has been constituted. In a dialectic of history that provides a heuristic, explanatory structure in terms of an evolutionary development of meaning, the addition of the elemental meaning referred to as “body data” identifies a further aspect to the invariant ground for authentic development itself. In addition to unlocking the stream of empirical consciousness from “below,” in the transformation of the censor from a repressive to a constructive function, psychic self-appropriation that includes “body data” also contributes to healing the “psychic rift” “from above.” By the self-appropriation of “body data,” one re-establishes the link with authentic, historically constituted meaning. Furthermore, by expanding the ground for self-appropriation, the human person who understands himself both as being constituted by his community’s meanings and values, as well as being an originator of meaning, discovers that the distorting effects manifest in decline can be corrected and reversed.

***The Body: A Developed Understanding of its “Upward” Movement – The Transition from Nature to Supernature***

In recapturing the methodological series of developments in Lonergan’s thought concerning the transition from the natural to the supernatural, note that development occurred in line with a shift in focus on the various aspects of the body-psyche-mind of the human person. Lonergan’s early focus on the “mind” shifted in later work to the “psyche.” Doran’s focus on developing an understanding of the psyche also touched on the body and the importance of focusing. Gendlin’s focus on the body received needed grounding in the science of neuroplasticity. The final task now turns to drawing out the implications of this developed understanding of the body for a philosophical anthropology. That task will be accomplished by bringing the new data offered by



neuroplasticity to a reinterpretation of Lonergan's question on the transition from the natural to the supernatural. The first step in this task begins with a discussion concerning how neuroscience helps to develop our understanding of human nature in its "upward" vertical finality to the supernatural. The second step in reinterpreting Lonergan's question in light of the new data offered by neuroscience involves the "downward" movement of grace in the relation of the natural to the supernatural. The reinterpretation explains the twofold mission of the Son and Spirit as the work of grace operating at this very basic neurophysiological level.

A reinterpretation of Lonergan's question concerning the "upward" transition from the natural to the supernatural presents the human in his or her neurophysiological aspect at the forefront of the evolutionary process as it enters the realm of human meaning. Therefore, the task of reinterpretation generates a fuller account of the dynamic relationship in the body-psyche-mind correspondence, and, in so doing, furthers our understanding of the transition from the natural to the supernatural.

Robert Doran's articulation of the dynamic relationship of the body to the psychic and mind aspects, in terms of a dialectic of contraries, provided the basis by which the work of Chapter Three was to examine how both a constructive and distorted censor affect the body's relation to the psyche and mind. Concerning a distorted censor, the body was shown to "hold" the repressive arrangements introduced into the unconsciousness as arrangements other than that which is needed for an insight. Neuroscience explains how the body "holds" these repressive arrangements in terms of

the neurophysiological processes associated with trauma or stress.<sup>4</sup> The types of memories repressed by early childhood trauma, for example, are of the procedural types.<sup>5</sup> The neurons encoding the memory of a childhood trauma, such as the loss of a significant caregiver, become wired together in this early stage of development. Throughout the child's lifetime, other events that may be loosely associated with that early loss are often also repressed in order to block access to the original trauma. It is the pattern inherent in this particular neurological encoding of a traumatic memory that constitutes the manner in which a repressive arrangement is held in the body. In addition, neuroscience also explained how the stress response related to trauma remains throughout adulthood as a patterned style of attachment to others. In both cases, the results of these early childhood experiences can be linked to neurophysiological patterns in the body.

A constructive censor facilitates the authentic evolutionary unfolding of the person in his or her vertical finality to God. Lonergan's portrayal of the graced evolutionary unfolding of the self-transcending human person functioned on the basis of both classical and statistical laws.<sup>6</sup> How does neuroplasticity aid in this portrayal of the bodily aspect of this unfolding on the basis of both classical and statistical laws?

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<sup>4</sup> The explanation offered here is not exhaustive, but merely an attempt to draw attention to some recent discoveries in neuroscience.

<sup>5</sup> "Procedural memory functions when we learn a procedure or group of automatic actions, occurring outside our focused attention, in which words are generally not required. Our nonverbal interactions with people and many of our emotional memories are part of our procedural memory system.... 'During the first 2-3 years of life...the infant relies primarily on its procedural memory systems.' Procedural memories are generally unconscious." Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 228.

<sup>6</sup> Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 24-25.

Recall Lonergan's use of the term, "scheme of recurrence," in his discussion of the vertical finality of the human person (and of the world).<sup>7</sup> Schemes of recurrence refer to "assemblies of interdependent and mutually supporting factors."<sup>8</sup> Each assembly constitutes an environment that functions on the basis of classical laws and would continue to function until a disruption of its interdependent and mutually supporting factors occurred, the result of either an internal deterioration or an external interference. Each element in the cumulative sequence of interdependent and mutually supporting factors has its probability of emergence and its probability of survival. Statistical laws come into play as the schedules of probabilities of elements "link the emergence of successive assemblies of interdependent and mutually supporting factors."<sup>9</sup> In this way, the understanding of vertical finality as operating in accord with both classical and statistical laws depicts how the lower schemes of recurrence, as subordinate, are brought up and incorporated into the functioning of the higher schemes of recurrence. Lonergan calls this process "sublation."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "It remains that a word be said on total development in man. Organic, psychic, and intellectual development are not three independent processes. They are interlocked, with the intellectual providing a higher integration of the psychic and the psychic providing a higher integration of the organic. Each level involves its own laws, its flexible circle of schemes of recurrence, its interlocked set of conjugate forms. Each set of forms stands in an emergent correspondence to otherwise coincidental manifolds on the lower levels." Lonergan, *Insight*, 447.

<sup>8</sup> "First, then, at any stage one is an individual, existing unity differentiated by physical, chemical, organic, psychic, and intellectual conjugates. The last three exhibit respective flexible circles of ranges of schemes of recurrence exhibited in one's spontaneous and effective behavior, bodily movements, dealings with persons and things, the content of one's speech and writing.... Secondly, man develops. Whatever he is at present, he was not always so, and generally speaking he need not remain so. The flexible circles of ranges of schemes of recurrence shift and expand, for neural, psychic, and intellectual conjugates pertain to systems on the move. The functioning of the higher integration involves changes in the underlying manifold, and the changing manifold evokes a modified higher integration." *Ibid.*, 495.

<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 25.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 479.

The plastic brain functions in accord with the evolutionary process of sublation. Prior to the recent discovery that the human brain can change itself, mainstream medical science believed that the brain's anatomy was predetermined by one's DNA and, therefore, was unchangeable. In other words, scientific and medical knowledge of how the brain functioned previously presented human neurophysiology in terms of the predictability of classical laws.<sup>11</sup> Schemes of recurrence of interdependent and mutually supporting factors operate in accord with classical laws. The basic structure of the brain, (the brain map), set in place according to the dictates of DNA, operates in accordance with classical laws as schemes of recurrence. The discovery of brain plasticity introduces the notion that statistical laws are also at work in human neurophysiology.<sup>12</sup> With this discovery, the understanding of a static and immutable brain has been dismantled.

The new understanding of the brain as plastic incorporates statistical laws. The most important finding uncovered by neuroscientists in the discovery of neuroplasticity is that neurons compete. That competition—which neural pathways develop stronger pathways than other neural pathways—operates in accord with human intention. Statistical laws, the probabilities associated with the emergence and survival of a new scheme of recurrence (the mutually conditioning and supporting factors involved in the linking of different neuronal groups and modules in new ways), function when a person

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<sup>11</sup> “Conventional wisdom in neuroscience held that the adult mammalian brain is fixed in two respects: no new neurons are born in it, and the function of the structures that make it up are immutable, so that if genes and development dictate that *this* cluster of neurons will process signals from the eye, and *this* cluster will move the fingers of the right hand, then by god they'll do that and nothing else come hell or high water.” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential To Transform Ourselves*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> This shift in the understanding of the brain serves as a prime example of the modern shift away from classicism, which understood the world solely in terms of classical laws, to historical consciousness in which both classical and statistical laws together interpret the world.

pays attention to, and desires to, learn a new skill or habit.<sup>13</sup> The desire to learn a new skill, through practice, increases the statistical probability of its emergence or development; repeated, disciplined practice of the skill increases the probabilities of its survival in the form of a habit; habits manifest neurophysiologically as well-established neural pathways.<sup>14</sup>

The sublation process can be identified in this example of learning, as follows.

When two modules are linked in a new way in a cultural activity—as when reading links visual and auditory modules as never before—the modules for both functions are changed by the interaction, creating a new whole, greater than the sum of the parts. “...But as these parts connect with each other in larger and larger aggregates, their functions tend to become integrated, yielding new functions that depend on such higher order integrations.”<sup>15</sup>

An evolutionary portrayal of the body’s participation in the “upward” movement in the transition from the natural to the supernatural depicts a process of sublation in which lower schemes of brain function can literally become wired together to form new wholes.<sup>16</sup> This process is particularly evident culturally in the civilizing of humanity’s

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<sup>13</sup> Environmental factors, such as the necessary financial funds, or access to needed resources, and the cooperation of others also constitute the conditions of possibility.

<sup>14</sup> As previously noted, neuroscience has also shown that genes have exhibited features of plasticity. “When we learn, we alter which genes in our neurons are ‘expressed,’ or turned on. Our genes have two functions. The first, the ‘template function,’ allows our genes to replicate, making copies of themselves that are passed from generation to generation. The template function is beyond our control. The second is the ‘transcription function.’ Each cell in our body contains all our genes, but not all those genes are turned on, or expressed. When a gene is turned on, it makes a new protein that alters the structure and function of the cell. This is called the transcriptions function because when the gene is turned on, information about how to make these proteins is ‘transcribed’ or read from the individual gene. This transcription function is influenced by what we do and think. ... [W]hen we learn our minds also affect which genes in our neurons are transcribed. Thus we can shape our genes, which in turn shape our brain’s microscopic anatomy.” Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 220-21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>16</sup> An illustration of what Lonergan calls “defensive schemes” might be how new modules combine to function in a compensatory way in response to the injury or loss of one of one’s senses. Those modules or recurring schemes conditioned by the strongest defensive schemes would be under the strongest genetic control, and therefore the most difficult to change. The reverse is also true. In her work with dyslexic

more basic instincts for survival, sex and security into the “higher” forms of community, marriage and politics, respectively.

Lonergan’s principle of correspondence has provided the template for the discussion on the series of developments in an understanding of the relations of the body to the psyche and the mind in the process of higher integration or sublation.

Neuroplasticity furthers the development in an understanding of these relations. Recall that he wrote,

higher integrations of the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels are not static but dynamic systems; they are systems on the move; the higher integration is not only an integrator but also an operator; and if its developments on different levels are not to conflict, there has to be a correspondence between their respective operators.<sup>17</sup>

Neuroplasticity contributes to the understanding of two points made in this quote. The first has to do with Lonergan’s acknowledgment that, as a level, the body is both an operator and an integrator. As an operator, its dynamism promotes activity to ever-higher levels of its neural-physiological process—from the chemical, to the biological and further to the neurological schemes of recurrence. As an integrator, the body manifests a higher form of energy from the universe.<sup>18</sup> The basis for the discovery of neuroplasticity

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children, Neville noted that there are “two sides to neuroplasticity. Systems and structures that display the greatest plasticity are those under the weakest genetic control and most subject to the whims of experience and the environment. That can be beneficial [as seen with the auditory cortex aiding the peripheral vision of the deaf].... But it is also a risky way to make a brain. The same systems that display the greatest plasticity and are enhanced in the deaf are more vulnerable in development and will display the greatest deficits in developmental disorders such as dyslexia....” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential To Transform Ourselves*, 102-03.

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 555.

<sup>18</sup> Recall Doran’s account of the unconscious. “In principle, at least, the unconscious is all energy in the universe save that which becomes present to itself as psychic energy in animal and human consciousness. Proximately, it is neural-physiological process in the human organism. Remotely, it is the world.” Robert Doran, *Theological Foundations*, vol. 1, *Intentionality and Psyche*, 289. As a distinct level, the body’s operator prompts the fertilization and gestation process where the “potential of the universe to become”

was founded on the observation that there exists a basic spontaneity within the neural pathways of the brain and within neurogenesis. Newly born neurons are easily prompted to become encoded into whatever function is most in demand; unused cortices quickly respond to different types of sensory stimulus; and neural pathways can become more or less dense depending on use. The fact that neurons can be recruited to participate in different functions and structures of the brain—that they are not “hard-wired” to a genetically determined function or structure—illustrates how the level of the organism functions as both an integrator and an operator. As with Doran’s identification of a “symbolic operator” that undergirds consciousness, the identification of a “body operator” must be distinguished from the conscious operators. Conscious operators are questions for intelligence, questions for reflections and questions for deliberation.<sup>19</sup> The point here is to distinguish the fact that there are unconscious operators at work in the human person. Unconscious operators promote activity from one level to the next; however, they are not prompted by questions. The *a priori* anticipation appears to be the basic dynamism of life—“the potential of the universe to become,” or the emergent probability of the universe as it takes on human form.

Secondly, the principle of correspondence identifies the human organism, not as a static system, but rather as a dynamic one seeking higher integration in the psyche and in the intellect.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the phrase, the “correspondence between their respective

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takes on human form. As integrator, the neural-physiological make up of the human body seeks higher integration in imaginable form in the psyche.

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 28-29.

<sup>20</sup> In several places in *Insight*, Lonergan refers to the body’s dynamic, mutually conditioning relationship to the psyche and intellect: “Not only have nerves their physical and chemical basis but also they contain dynamic patterns that can be restored to an easy equilibrium only through the offices of psychic representations and interplay” (218). “But the unconscious neural basis is an upwardly directed dynamism

operators,” depicts the mutually conditioning nature of the relations between the higher and lower forms. Neuroplasticity demonstrates the mutually conditioning relationship between the psyche and neural processes through discoveries not only about how neural processes seek higher representation in dream images but also about how the higher form of dreams affects the lower form of neuronal “health.” During a series of therapeutic interventions, corresponding serial dream interpretations provide symbolic evidence of the brain in the process of plastic change as “neural networks must unlearn certain associations...and change existing synaptic connections [that represent the trauma] to make way for new learning.”<sup>21</sup> In this way, a change in the higher form of dream symbols expresses changes in the lower form of neural networks. The higher form of dreams, however, also conditions the lower, neural forms. A correlation has been drawn between the amount of rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep (the stage where most dreaming occurs) and the occurrence of plastic change in the brain. “REM sleep seems necessary for neurons to grow normally.”<sup>22</sup>

In short, neuroplasticity has contributed to an understanding of the body-psyche-mind relations in the human person, in its “upward” movement, by bringing to light the following points. The neural-physiological process is not static, but is instead dynamic, operating within the bounds of both classical and statistical laws. The body, therefore, “emerges” in the form of neuroplastic changes; elemental meaning exists in bodily form as both genetically and intentionally determined neural patterning. This elemental, body

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seeking fuller realization, first, on the proximate sensitive level, and secondly, beyond its limitations, on higher artistic, dramatic, philosophic, cultural, and religious levels” (482).

<sup>21</sup> Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 238.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 239. Kittens deprived of REM sleep had smaller than normal neurons in their visual cortex. Ibid.



meaning exists prior to that which exists symbolically in the psyche as dreams.<sup>23</sup> While neuroplasticity does not “prove” Gendlin’s claim that one can experience the immediacy of this intelligibility as a “felt sense,” nevertheless, neuroplasticity does support Gendlin’s claim that there is an intelligibility or “knowledge” in the body, and that it has an inherent dynamism toward seeking higher forms. Finally, neuroplasticity has provided explanatory grounding for the purpose of this thesis—that, as a distinct level, the elemental meaning held within the unconscious neurophysiological aspect of the human person, or body, is available for self-appropriation. As such, the basis for an intentionality analysis has been expanded.

***The Body: A Developed Understanding of the Graced, “Downward” Movement – Its Transition from Nature to Supernature***

The second step in reinterpreting Lonergan’s question in light of the new data offered by neuroscience involves the “downward” movement of grace in the relation of the natural to the supernatural. The reinterpretation explains the twofold mission of the Son and Spirit as the work of grace operating at this very basic neurophysiological level.

Neuroplastic evidence portrays the first “hearing” of the mission of the Son as “Word” (which mounts upward in human consciousness) as the pre-patterning or shaping of one’s neurophysiology that occurs in one’s early years through interpersonal relationships and interactions. Doran calls this “received meaning.” A parallel was also

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<sup>23</sup> Elemental meaning resides in the distinct patterning of each person’s brain as characteristic of his or her interests, desires and life experiences. “In response to the actions and experiences of its owner, a brain forges stronger connections in circuits that underlie one behavior or thought and weakens the connections in others. Most of this happens because of what we do and what we experience of the outside world. In this sense, the very structure of our brain—the relative size of different regions, the strength of connections between one area and another—reflects the lives we have led. Like sand on a beach, the brain bears the footprints of the decisions we have made, the skills we have learned, the actions we have taken.... [T]he brain can [also] change as a result of the thoughts we have thought.” Begley, *Train Your Mind Change Your Brain: How a New Science Reveals Our Extraordinary Potential To Transform Ourselves*, 8-9.

drawn between “received meaning” and the dramatic pattern. In collaboration with imagination, the dramatic pattern’s role in the censor functions as organizing unconscious material in a manner that is already pre-patterned. Doran claims that “received meaning” constitutes the “ordinary meaningfulness” of community, which “may be more or less sinful, more or less under the influence of grace.”<sup>24</sup> Neuroplastic evidence explains “received meaning,” as it is more or less sinful or under the influence of grace, by demonstrating that the familial, social and cultural environments can shape the attachment styles of the next generation and even alter the chemistry of their genes.

Regarding the second mission, the downward action of grace in human consciousness, a reinterpretation focuses on the healing and elevating effects of grace in the human body. It was noted that one of the particularly interesting developments in neuroplasticity was the observation that the experience of love facilitates massive unlearning or the dissolving of certain neuronal networks. When a person commits himself in love, the brain undergoes a large-scale reorganization, far more massive than in the normal process of unlearning and relearning.<sup>25</sup> At such times, “the brain neuromodulator oxytocin is released, allowing existing neuronal connections to melt away so that changes on a large scale can follow.”<sup>26</sup> In this way, when a person falls in love with God, or with one’s spouse and children, the release of oxytocin “melts down

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<sup>24</sup> “The dominance of the dialectic of community over the dialectic of the subject means that the relations of the present of the subject to the past are relations not only to the subject’s own past but also to the past of his or her community or network of communities. And these relations decisively affect the orientation or habitual context within which the reception of data occurs. . . . That ordinary meaningfulness may be more or less sinful, more or less under the influence of grace.” Robert Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138-39.

<sup>25</sup> Norman Doidge, M.D., *The Brain that Changes Itself*, 118-19.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. “Neuromodulators are different from neurotransmitters. While neurotransmitters are released in the synapses to excite or inhibit neurons, neuromodulators enhance or diminish the *overall* effectiveness of the synaptic connections and bring about enduring change.” Ibid., 118.

existing neuronal connections that underlie existing attachments, so new attachments can be formed.... [I]t makes it possible for them to learn new patterns [related to the ways of being of the beloved—thinking, feeling, valuing and loving].”<sup>27</sup> This neurophysiological finding gives new meaning to the understanding of the mutual-self-mediation that occurs within the state of grace.

Concerning the state of grace, recall that Lonergan describes the “just” as signifying the community, and by implication, further signifies the “state” of divine subjects in relationship with a community of human subjects. Lonergan wrote, “[B]y reason of this state the divine persons and the just are within one another as those who are known are within those who know them and those who are loved are within those who love them.”<sup>28</sup> Neuroplasticity reveals that the way in which divine persons and the just are within one another constitutes a shared horizon of knowledge, values and love, first made possible by a massive brain restructuring. Lovers, therefore, not only share knowledge, value and love but also the neural patterns upon which the shared horizon of being has been established.

Conceiving the possibility of redemption as the reception of the original meaningfulness of divine meaning into the fabric of the ordinary meaningfulness of community now entails including an understanding of that reception in terms of neuroplastic changes. Divine love triggers the massive unlearning of destructive patterns in thinking, feeling and loving (biases and sin), and dissolves those existing neuronal networks so that, in forming the new attachment with God or with those from whom

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>28</sup> Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, 138.

Divine love has been mediated, the person is enabled to relearn new habits or a new way of being. In this way, the neurophysiological changes in the brain associated with healing and learning a new way of being represent the emergence of the Reign of God into the world of human meaning. These changes at the neurophysiological level provide some of the conditions of possibility for the ongoing healing and creative processes that incrementally become constitutive of a community's meaning.<sup>29</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Fundamentally, the discovery of brain plasticity depicts the human body in a much more dynamic relationship to the further aspects of the human as a knower and as an existential subject. It was shown that human intention provides the stimulus for changes in the brain. At the same time, neuroplasticity also portrays a basic spontaneity within neural processes—a demand for higher integration—that constitutes a neuron's inherent plasticity. These acknowledgements have provided the basis for an understanding of the dialectical relations of the body to the other aspects of the human person in an interiority analysis. Furthermore, by situating the body within an interiority analysis, further data has been provided for the authentic appropriation of Divine meaning.

As an originator of meaning in the creative unfolding of the Reign of God, this further data on the body sets in place a broadened understanding of authentic agency in the world. Under the influence of grace, human persons are responsible not only for the

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<sup>29</sup> Using terms associated with an emergent world view, recall that Doran portrayed the healing and elevating activity of divine meaning in the following manner. "God's entrance into the human world of meaning shifts the probabilities in favour of graced ordinary meaningfulness. And that shift in probabilities affects the reception, or better, the receptive potential, of subjects in community to the divine meaning intended by God when God enters our world of meaning." *Ibid.*, 139.

self-appropriation that would help them to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and loving, but also for the self-appropriation that would help them to change their brain. From this viewpoint, the implementation of proportionate being by the existential subject involves the decision to live under the guidance of the norms immanent and operative on the levels of waking consciousness and dreaming consciousness, as well as on the level of the unconscious. In other words, authenticity involves the awareness that, within the organism, there is an intelligibility or “body knowledge” seeking higher integration. Attending to the “felt sense” frees the body from repressive arrangements introduced by a repressive censor that would inhibit the vertical finality operating in the body. In short, transformation and conversion occur at every level or aspect of the human being. The once static or mechanistic portrayal of the human body as merely “matter” gives way to an understanding of the body as dynamic, operating under the norms of both classical and statistical laws in the graced transition from the natural to the supernatural.

This developed understanding of the body in a theological anthropology has opened several avenues for further inquiry. An understanding of grace operating at the neurophysiological level offers a way to better understand cosmic Christology. This Christology depicts Christ, the “first-born in all creation” (Colossians 1: 15-18), as already part of the physical creation itself and as integral to the creative process.<sup>30</sup> Neurophysiology could help to discuss the redemptive “Christ-like re-patterning” that occurs in a cosmic Christology. This work may also help to bring a new understanding of how grace is at work in the sacraments. For instance, the experience of God’s forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation would be instrumental in the “undoing” of

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<sup>30</sup> “[T]he divine omnipresence translates itself within our universe by the network of the organizing forces of the total Christ.” Pierre de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 101.

the neuronal networks that underlie sinful, destructive habits. Furthermore, the sacrament would also increase the probability of God's grace establishing new neuronal networks that would support a more "Christ-like" way of being. It is hoped that the understanding offered in this work might serve to both support and to develop that part of the Church's tradition that conveys the body in the positive light of Divine likeness, and so help to heal a humanity encumbered in their progress by the inauthentic collaboration with bias.

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