

LONERGAN WORKSHOP

Language of the Heart:
LonerGAN, Images and Feelings



volume 11

edited by
Fred Lawrence

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DEDICATION

We dedicate this year's journal to two of the Lonergan Workshop's oldest and best friends, who died this past year: Timothy P. Fallon, SJ, and Joseph Y. Beaulieu, priest of New Hampshire.

Tim Fallon was a constant supporter of the Workshop from the very beginning, a presence both benign and normative, whenever his health permitted him to attend; and mentor of some of the Workshop's finest speakers. Gratefully, I refer you to the tribute to Tim written by one of those students, Tom McPartland, for *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12/2 (Fall 1994). It seems especially fitting that we dedicate this issue to Tim in a year in which the thought of Eric Voegelin is being featured at the Workshop, since Paul Caringella, Voegelin's assistant, tells us that, typically, Tim was also a friend and supporter of Voegelin studies.

Joe Beaulieu got started in Lonergan studies by attending Fr Lonergan's classes at Boston College in the 1970s, and he never missed a summer, fall, or spring Workshop. So many of us have been the beneficiaries of Joe as that 'center of benevolence and beneficence' which Lonergan and Aquinas attribute to friendship. One of these, Fr Bill Babineau, once asked Joe what was the main thing he learned from Lonergan and Joe responded that Fr Lonergan helped him to speak with confidence and clarity about the human good. How typical of this good man. We are pleased to include the eulogy for Joe by our colleague, Ernie Fortin.

As a result of his weekly visits to Boston College during the school year, his participation in the annual Lonergan workshops, and his attendance at various other events of a like nature, he gradually emerged as the center of a widening circle of students who looked to him as a kind of guru, unofficial spiritual director, counselor at large, and universal provider. More than anyone else, perhaps, Joe was the glue that held the group together. Without him, I doubt whether that group would ever have achieved the cohesiveness for which it became famous.

As befits a Catholic priest, Joe's heart was even more capacious than his mind. No matter where he was, he never missed an opportunity to help others or failed to recognize intuitively those who most needed that help. His first love was his own parish, for whose welfare he felt personally responsible. Joe was first and foremost a 'curate,' as parish priests were called in the old days. I, for one, regret that the term has since been discarded (not necessarily for the noblest reasons) in favor of the bland and bureaucratic 'associate pastor.' 'Curate' is derived from the Latin *curare*, 'to care for' or 'attend carefully to' someone or something, a definition that fits Joe to a tee. Indeed, one could detect in him a touch of the 'depression priest,' by whom I mean the kind of priest who came to maturity during the great depression and was compelled to pay far more attention than would otherwise have been necessary to the material needs of his charges.

Joe himself was too young to have personally experienced the full force of the depression — the worst was over by the time he came along — but sixty years later he still professed a deep-seated admiration for a pastor he had known as a lad in his home town of Berlin, New Hampshire, a man of legendary ingenuity and resourcefulness who kept thinking up new ways of alleviating the sufferings of his people — establishing cooperatives, launching housing projects, setting up charitable agencies, and the like. Unlike Joe, the man had little time and even less taste for books, which were not at the top of the contemporary agenda anyway; but his charity knew no bounds. Joe spoke of him with genuine relish and appears to have been deeply marked by his apostolic zeal. Times had changed, however, and one had to be sensitive to a less perceptible but more dangerous kind of impoverishment, namely, the spiritual impoverishment of our own age.

This became Joe's personal concern, and it is with such a concern in mind that he undertook his informal course of studies at BC.

How much he benefited from these studies, we shall never know. He must have been getting something out of them, for otherwise he would have given them up long before failing health forced him to do so. Of one thing we can be absolutely certain: Joe's life exhibited a wholeness that stands in sharp contrast to the divisions and inner tensions that are rapidly becoming the hallmark of the present generation. He must have had his problems like everyone else, but if so, he kept them well hidden. I have never detected in him the slightest conflict between his duties as a priest and the inclinations of his generous heart. As if by miracle, he appeared whole immune to the alienations that so often pull us in opposite directions and tear us apart. This is just another way of saying that Joe was a happy man and that he remained so even in the midst of the intense sufferings of his last years. The joy that suffused his soul had a deeper source, Christ himself, the master to whose service he had unreservedly dedicated his life. Joe left this world without any regrets, at peace with God, with himself, and with the rest of the world. On his death bed, he was still more worried about his parishioners and about us than he was about himself.

Ernest L Fortin, AA

EDITORIAL NOTE

Language of the Heart: Lonergan, Images & Feelings is the theme of the 21st annual Lonergan Workshop whose papers make up the bulk of this volume.

Glenn 'Chip' Hughes returns to the Workshop as a lecturer for the second time. With the appearance of *Mystery and Myth in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri 1993) under his belt, Chip turns his unique blend of philosophic acumen and literary sensitivity to the issue of art in relation to Lonergan's notion of cosmopolis. His consideration is enriched by everything from insights of Voegelin to an interpretation of a poem by Ezra Pound — not exactly common currency for Lonergan studies.

In his lectures at two different Workshops, Paul Kidder has presented what is in part the fruit of his long association with Joseph Flanagan, SJ, in teaching about painting in Boston College's Perspectives Program, "Modernism in the Arts." As he went on to teach at Regis College in Denver and at Seattle University, Paul expanded his meditative exegesis on the art of painting to articulate in the light of generalized empirical method how the appreciation of visual art transforms human living. These essays represent the clearest, most profound and helpful writing on art I have ever read.

Richard Liddy has recently published *Transforming Light. Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press 1993), a book that reflects not his doctoral dissertation but a much more mature stage in his appropriation of Lonergan's thought. The theme of his paper for this volume however does revisit the subject matter of his dissertation on the work of Susanne K. Langer, a philosopher whose writings exerted a profound influence on Lonergan's approach to aesthetics. Those familiar with Lonergan know how he likes to assimilate what he learns from other thinkers into his own *Problematik*. This procedure opens up a fascinating possibility of going back to the authors from whom Lonergan learned in order to understand what Lonergan borrowed in its original terms rather than in his terms, and thus to apprehend just how and why Lonergan modified others' ideas in making them his own. This is an aim of Dick's paper on symbolism in Langer and Lonergan.

Sebastian Moore is *maestro di loro chi sano* when it comes to therapeutic deconstruction and reconstruction in the realm of the imaginal. His paper is a piece from the overall *therapeia* he has been carrying on for decades in relation to the pathologies disseminated under ecclesiastical regimes dominated by the inauthenticity of what Lonergan has called ‘congealed minds.’ A key instance of such pathology involves the way a mistaken imaginative exegesis of a doctrine like original sin can blind generations of believers to the literary truth of biblical texts. To read Sebastian’s article is to become engaged in such a therapeutic process of imaginal recovery.

John Ranieri has completed a dissertation (soon to be published) on the thought of Eric Voegelin. Like Lonergan, Voegelin can be a fairly recondite thinker when it comes to pinning down the exact meaning of his terse set of terms and relations. John’s paper is a model for its penetration of Voegelin’s somewhat dense articulation of the role of symbols in relation to differentiated consciousness, and for its lucid yet critical interpretation.

The meaning and existence of a ‘fifth level’ in Lonergan’s account of human consciousness has been the subject of intense and controversial scrutiny of late, especially in recent issues of *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*. Pierre Robert has for many years been writing in French on this topic as well as in the area of ‘spirituality’ generally, and he has published an important interview with Lonergan on these themes in *Lonergan Workshop 10*. He has a rather large number of pithy observations to make about the meaning and existence of a fifth, grace-based level of human consciousness in this article.

After Philip Rule’s paper last year demonstrating how both Coleridge and Newman wrestled with issues regarding Christianity *vis-a-vis* modernity and presaged solutions reached perhaps more adequately by Lonergan in his post-*Method* stage of development, it was only appropriate that he use his erudition in the English Romantics to cast light on the ‘language of the heart’ that was their mother lode. This paper devoted chiefly to William Wordsworth does not disappoint.

For the Workshop dedicated to the 30th anniversary of *Insight* we asked Hamish F.G. Swanston to read that book for the first time. Hamish’s lecture on that occasion was a marvelous fulfillment of the Latin tag Lonergan loved to cite and which has been rendered

elegantly by David Knowles: “We modify to suit our capacity everything we receive.” Now Hamish performs the same service for *Method in Theology* by bringing it into surprising conjunction with the likes of St Alphonsus Liguori and his fabled recommender, Giambattista Vico, whose intriguing phrase *una scienza nuova* had been used by Lonergan in a book review to intimate the scope of what would become *Method*. Certain aspects of Lonergan’s writing that are off-putting to many of his readers come into focus in Hamish’s paper. I do not believe Hamish always succeeds in ‘making the best’ of them, yet some of the reasons why Lonergan’s writings irritate people need to be confronted by Lonergan’s students. Hamish appreciates Lonergan from the standpoint of his own formidable *modus recipiendi*, and the novel contexts in which he situates Lonergan’s intent afford a subtle and refreshing access to his thought which is always in danger of being flattened out into a Procrustean template by his well-meaning disciples.

Colleen Webster’s doctoral dissertation, written under Matthew Lamb’s direction, reappropriated Frederick E. Crowe’s prolongation of Lonergan’s pioneering research on *verbum* and the first trinitarian procession in Aquinas into the field of *amor* and the second trinitarian procession from the intellect into the will in his famous “Complacency and Concern ...” articles in *Theological Studies*. She brings what she learned in that exercise to bear on the ‘language of the heart’ in the course of a reflection on a *crise de conscience* experienced at the college where she teaches.

As always sincere thanks to Anne O’Donnell for her work in word-processing, reformatting, and correcting the articles in this volume.

Fred Lawrence
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IMAGES, ART, AND COSMOPOLIS

Glenn Hughes

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DIOGENES LAERTIUS' *LIVES of Eminent Philosophers*, composed in the 3rd century AD, allows us to trace the origins of the notion of cosmopolis back to the eccentric philosopher known as Diogenes the Cynic, a younger contemporary of Plato. Diogenes, we read in the *Lives*, was a native of Sinope in Asia Minor, whence he had come in exile to Athens; but "asked where he came from, he said, I am a citizen of the world' (*kosmopolites*)."¹ Tradition has it that thereafter the concept of the *kosmopolites* was taken up and developed by the Stoic philosophers, as part of their argument that beyond all local laws there are universal standards of justice and reason to which each human being owes principal allegiance. Tradition is not always trustworthy, of course. We aren't certain that Diogenes actually called himself a *kosmopolites*, and it is not beyond question that the Stoics used the term. In the extant literature, it makes its first appearance in the *De Opificio Mundi* of Philo, a contemporary of Christ.²

But let us assume that Diogenes the Cynic did refer to himself as a citizen of the world. The sentiment expressed would have been primarily anti-nationalist; that is, in contrast to the typical Greek male of his time, Diogenes would have been pointedly refusing to identify himself in terms of allegiance to his place of birth or to political or group affiliations. This implies, though, that his first loyalty is to

¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Volume II, translated by R. D. Hicks, The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925) 65.

² Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. 4: *The Ecumenic Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974) 30. In *De Opificio Mundi* ("On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses") Philo writes: "[Moses gives] an account of the creation of the world, implying that the world is in harmony with the Law, and the Law with the world, and that the man who observes the law is constituted thereby a loyal citizen of the world (*kosmopolitou*), regulating his doings by the purpose and will of Nature, in accordance with which the entire world itself is also administered." Philo, *Works* vol. I, trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *The Loeb Classical Library* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1949) 7.

something else. And what is this something else? The *kosmopolites* is a citizen of the *world* (*kosmos*) *community* (*polis*): of cosmopolis.

But what *is* cosmopolis? What is “world community”? How is it constituted? When we imagine Diogenes saying, “I am a citizen of the world,” we don’t immediately dismiss the notion, reasoning that, until the world has been organized into a single, huge political institution, no one can be a “citizen of the world.” We understand that a person can be a *kosmopolites* because of the quality of his allegiance and orientation to fellow humans. And if a cosmopolitan exists without all humanity being gathered under one political structure, then *cosmopolis* must be something other than a political structure.

We can begin, therefore, to answer the question, what is cosmopolis? in the same manner that Lonergan does, by stating what it is not: it is not a political institution, or any army or police force that enforces or imposes adherence to the laws of any political institution.³ Extending this observation, we can see that world community is also not just a matter of economic powers and relations. However tightly knit at a global level of interdependence, the production, supply, and distribution of goods and services for producers and consumers are not what create the reality of cosmopolis. And finally, it is not a reality at the level of technology. People may be linked together through use of the same technologies, through increased speed of transportation and communication, through sharing a global information network or through the electronic proximity of virtual reality, but none of this forms a “world community.” A community is not created simply by humans being in proximity, geographically or electronically, nor again through everyone being exposed to the same data. As Lonergan writes, community is realized only through “an achievement of common meaning”: not just experience of common data, but the common understanding of that data, common judgment about the truth and reality of what is understood, and — especially — common commitment to worthwhile action arising from common judgments of value.⁴ Any community, then, entails something more than just communication links; and *world* community brings us to still another set of

³ For Lonergan’s discussion of cosmopolis, see Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978) 238-242.

⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 79.

requirements.⁵ In fact, it brings us to a different order of being than the finite, and to a different set of concerns than the practical.

Technology, economy and polity are creations of practical intelligence. Their aim is the securing of instrumental ends: the tools and the organized cooperation of individuals in institutions that together serve practical needs and desires. Their complexity and their influence are an extraordinary testimony to the scope and ingenuity of human reason, and their presence is central to the realization of the human good, but they are nevertheless for all that not the ultimate focus of human concern.⁶ When Diogenes declared, "I am a citizen of the world," he was expressing his recognition of and his allegiance to something higher than politics, and therefore to something higher in the scale of human values than the practical organization of society. What is higher than practicality?

However beneficial the fruits of practical intelligence, the deepest desires of a human being are not to live with absolute efficiency, and with every practical problem solved. Rather, those deepest desires focus on living a life that is meaningful and dignified. People don't live in order to develop technologies, economies, and politics; but they work hard at developing and improving these in order that their lives may be more rich, more full, more complete. As Lonergan emphasizes, the overriding concern of people is, in the end, with the dramatic meaning of their lives with others, with the "delight and suffering, laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, aspiration and frustration, achievement and failure, wit and humor that stand not within practicality but above it."⁷ Above practicality, then, there is the comprehensive artistry of one's performance in the drama of living, where the goal is not just to satisfy needs and desires, but to do so admirably, appealingly,

⁵ Albert Borgmann argues that vastly extended communication links may actually inhibit the achievement of community. For Borgmann, community arises in part from experience of the 'commanding presence' of others. But communication links diminish the presence of others to images we can call up or make vanish at will. So while the idea of advanced communications systems suggests that, by "having our hyperintelligent eyes and ears everywhere, we can attain world citizenship of unequalled scope and subtlety," actually the possibility of community is undermined precisely through the world's losing "its force and resistance." Albert Borgmann, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 105-106.

⁶ On practical intelligence, see *Insight* 207-214, 225-242; on social institutions as elements of the human good, see *Method in Theology* 47-50.

⁷ *Insight* 236.

beautifully, with a sense of dramatic accomplishment. "Man is an artist. His practicality is part of his pursuit of dignified living."⁸

We make the same point by saying that we feel our lives to be successful when our practical aims and accomplishments contribute to the realization of certain meanings and values. These meanings and values, which give us our sense of direction in life, are summed up in the word 'culture.' Lonergan's definition of culture is precisely this: "the set of meanings and values that informs a way of living."⁹ Culture makes sense of living, it reveals what our physical survival and our interactions with others and our practical devices are for, it answers our questions about what to live for and how. It enlightens us as to what a good performance in the drama of living entails.

For a sample of everyday culture in the contemporary United States, it's easy to turn to television, since its programs and especially its advertisements reflect so glaringly and so relentlessly the cultural habits and norms of our society. The advertisers in particular need to have a fine sensitivity for everyday culture if they are to successfully exploit our quest for dignity by manipulating us into buying commodities that promise to make our lives worthwhile, beautiful and complete. For example, there is a television commercial which you may have seen — at any rate, you know the type — that shows a daughter visiting home from college, who finds herself sharing an early morning cup of coffee with her mother, and we witness their touching rediscovery of the goodness of life, of family, of love, and of course of the coffee that symbolizes all this: Folger's coffee. They lean together in the kitchen in the early morning light in their bathrobes, and what is it that gives their lives richness? Is it the technology of the coffeepot? Is it the economic system that brought these particular goods to the kitchen? Is it the political laws that keep rat feces out of the coffee and require warning stickers on the coffeepot about its proper use? No. All of these serve a higher end, which is living a life of emotional richness and dramatic completeness; and in our everyday culture, the ritual of drinking coffee together is widely considered part of a life well lived, if not a sacramental bond of community, in this case mediating the love between mother and daughter. The manufacturers of Folger's coffee and their advertisement company know this well, which is why they

⁸ *Insight* 212.

⁹ *Method in Theology* xi.

have constructed their commercial as a tiny heart-warming story. Their product will sell better if we associate Folger's coffee with deeply meaningful existence.

Beyond the everyday level of culture is its reflexive level, the cultural superstructure, which consists of the elements of culture that objectify, reflect upon, explain, and evaluate not only everyday culture but politics, economy, technology, human spontaneity, and the conditions under which all these arise. The natural and human sciences, philosophy, theology, history, literary criticism, and art criticism are all parts of this cultural superstructure, and they in turn have their impact on social and cultural life, shaping practical possibilities, hopes, ambitions, and convictions about what constitutes the right way to live — an impact that, we would do well to remember, is not always beneficial.¹⁰

Comprehensively, then, culture embraces and guides practicality, as it explains our world to us and expresses what is significant, appropriate, and valuable in our living.¹¹ And it is only at the cultural level that the phenomenon of world community, of cosmopolis, can begin to be realized. World community comes about when human beings recognize and dedicate themselves to meanings and values that pertain to the fulfillment of human beings as such — human beings universally. To rise above personal, family, group, class, and national interests and give one's first allegiance to that which dignifies every person, to those discoveries, reasoned arguments, ideas, and aspirations that would enrich everyone's lives, is to create cosmopolis. Cosmopolis, therefore, is not a material thing or an aggregate of things. It is not any kind of political set-up. It is, as Lonergan states, a "longstanding, nonpolitical, *cultural fact*" which "transcends the frontiers of states and the epochs

¹⁰ On the two levels of culture, see Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," in *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974) 101-103; and Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) ch. 11. With regard to dangers arising from the influence of reflexive culture, Lonergan warns of "the disastrous possibility of a conflict between human living as it can be lived and human living as a cultural superstructure dictates it should be lived" ("Absence of God," 103).

¹¹ "Over and above mere living and operating, men have to find a meaning and value in their living and operating. It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, improve such meaning and value." *Method in Theology* 32.

of history.”¹² It is founded upon a specific quality of orientation and allegiance to fellow human beings, one that has risen above immediate historical conditions and local cultural views to a disinterested concern with human fulfillment. Thus Lonergan describes it as “a dimension of consciousness, a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities.”¹³

When Lonergan writes that cosmopolis “transcends the frontiers of state and the epochs of history,” he is not being rhetorical. He means that world community is a function of human participation in a dimension of reality that transcends space and time. One cannot concern oneself with human fulfillment as such unless one conceives of all human beings as united in a single story, where each life takes its meaning in part from its involvement with all of humankind. But the notion of universal humankind only makes sense if environmental, biological, psychological and social circumstances — that is, the conditions of human existence that are intrinsically conditioned by space and time — are not completely determinative for human identity. There is universal humankind only if we are all united in a mystery beyond space and time. As Eric Voegelin has argued, the symbol ‘universal humanity’ can only have originated in experiences of participation in transcendent reality.¹⁴

Symbols that express insights into transcendent reality are easily misunderstood, and the most common mistake is to misinterpret them as referring to some type of entity or place with imaginable contours or characteristics. As Voegelin puts it, we tend to hypostatize the realities attested to by symbols of transcendence. This certainly holds true for the symbol of world community. It is all too easy to forget the dimension of transcendence in conjuring an image of cosmopolis, and to imagine universal brotherhood and sisterhood in exclusively social, political, economic and technological terms. More dangerously, when confusion about symbols of transcendence reaches the point where transcendent reality is proclaimed to be an illusion, we find influential thinkers who eliminate on principle the spiritual elements from the

¹² Bernard Lonergan, “The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World,” in *Collection* vol. 4 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 109 (italics added).

¹³ *Insight* 241.

¹⁴ See *The Ecumenic Age*, “Chapter 7: Universal Humanity,” especially 304-305.

human drama, reducing it to a strictly immanent course of events. The human good envisioned by culture now becomes identified solely with what is finite in human living, a finite reality increasingly subject to human control. So the mistaken view takes root that the realization of world community is a function not at all of participation in transcendence, but only and completely of humanly created institutions. Thus we arrive at modern visions of political utopia, as well as theories that justify the absolute authority of the State.

Images of political utopia are tremendously appealing to many people, and it is not difficult to understand why. They are symbols of the fulfillment of a united humanity, of an ultimate and redeeming oneness with others, and as such they answer one of our most profound emotional needs, which is to orient ourselves in the search for proper direction in life through glimpsing a meaningful outcome to the human story. It remains, though, that all such utopian symbolism distorts the truth of universal humanity when it reduces it to purely immanent proportions; and this distortion is genuinely dangerous, since the energy inspired by the half-hidden truth can become transformed into a political absolutism readily harnessed by leaders long on self-confidence and grandiose plans for humanity but short on wisdom and scruples. The twentieth century has shown us the consequences of government based on the passionate conviction that world community, spearheaded by national community, can be created and sustained through political, economic, and technological means: in the name of liberation, a massive curtailing of liberty; an imposing of conformity through tactics of intimidation that extend to mass murder; and a thoroughgoing degradation of culture.

Culture is inevitably degraded in states run by governments working to build secular utopias, because all articulation of meanings and values that pertains to or derives from the recognition of transcendent reality must be suppressed, since it gives the lie to the attempt to reduce the meaning of living to a series of practical problems and their definitive solutions. The critical function of culture — its responsibility to evaluate, to approve and disapprove, acclaim and denounce, the fashionable outlooks and ideas and the prevalent institutions in a society — must be straitjacketed into loyalty to specific political goals. The famous attempt by the Soviet Union to restrict art to the style known as Socialist Realism exemplifies such a constraint of culture, under the assumption that full dramatic artistry in human living is

identical with the establishment and enforcement of a specific economic and political situation.

These facts help to explain why Lonergan's discussion of cosmopolis dwells on its being something other than a political institution or achievement. Cosmopolis is "not a super-state," "not an organization," "not a police force," "not a court that administers a legal code," not "an unrealized political ideal."¹⁵ The genuine cosmopolis is a cultural community, a community "above all politics," that in fact has as one of its primary responsibilities the effective criticism of attempts to exalt the political and the practical to a position of supreme importance in human affairs.¹⁶ Without such critique, in the form of science, philosophy, theology, literature and art, journalism, history, and the other forms of cultural analysis and communication, the reach of political power, influenced invariably by group interests as well as by a general bias against complexity, long-term solutions, and questions of ultimate meaning, can too easily grow too great.¹⁷ What is necessary to prevent this, Lonergan writes, "is a cosmopolis that is neither class nor state, that stands above all their claims, that cuts them down to size, that is founded on the native detachment and disinterestedness of every intelligence, that commands man's first allegiance, that implements itself primarily through that allegiance, that is too universal to be bribed, too impalpable to be forced, too effective to be ignored."¹⁸

Now if cosmopolis is to command our first allegiance, there must be available in the culture images conducive to our discovery of universal humanity and our commitment to universal human fulfillment, images as compelling as those of political utopias but without their built-in distortion. Without such images, we are incapable of sustained commitment to actions that disinterestedly promote universal human dignity, because such commitment depends upon regular apprehension of the value of such actions, that apprehension of values is initiated by feelings, and feelings are aroused by images.¹⁹ We are moved, impressed, delighted, awed, inspired by images of universal dignity, truth and justice, self-sacrificing charity, and so on. Without such

¹⁵ *Insight* 238-241; "The Role of a Catholic University," 109.

¹⁶ "The Role of a Catholic University" 109, *Insight* 239.

¹⁷ On Lonergan's notion of general bias, and its correction as a function of cosmopolis, see *Insight* 225-242.

¹⁸ *Insight* 238.

¹⁹ *Method in Theology* 37-38, 64-67.

images there are not the responsive feelings that reveal these specific values; without that revelation of values, there cannot be the shared judgments of value that create the community of shared commitments that is the basis of world community, of cosmopolis.²⁰

But where do the images that truly promote cosmopolis come from? From many sources, but I think that here the role of the artist merits particular attention. Poets, novelists, painters, sculptors, composers and songwriters, filmmakers, photographers, and other artists have a peculiar responsibility to culture, in that artistic images have a unique power to inspire and compel, a power Lonergan often acknowledged, as in his 1959 Cincinnati lectures on philosophy of education when he reminded his audience of the wisdom in the saying, "Let me write a nation's songs, and I care not who writes her laws."²¹ Let us focus momentarily on the question of what it is that gives art its power.

First, art derives its power from the fact that its language is made up of symbols, of images rich in multiple meanings and the power to call up feelings. The symbols of art are suggestive, not final; they are allusively concrete, not dry and precise through abstraction; they are emotionally charged and not intellectually detached. In other words, art speaks the language of the normal dramatic artistry of everyday living, where we feel and think and decide and act in the mode of what Lonergan calls 'symbolic consciousness.'²² Symbolic consciousness is consciousness that allows words and other signs their spontaneous complement of image-associations and feeling-associations, and that is tolerant of multiplicity of meaning. Such is the consciousness of our everyday lives, full of feeling and apprehension, rich with the sense of free possibilities that belong to us "as actors in the primordial drama

²⁰ Lonergan is emphatic about the role that images play in the realization of values. The psyche has constant need of what he calls 'dynamic images' to call forth the feelings that are the 'mass and momentum and power' of daily living, and which enable insights and judgments and decisions to "flow spontaneously into deeds no less than words." *Insight*, 547-548; *Method in Theology* 65. The poet and literary critic Robert Hass makes the same point when he states that "we all live our lives in the light of primary acts of imagination, images or sets of images that get us up and move us about our days." Robert Hass, "Images," in *Twentieth Century Pleasures: Prose on Poetry* (New York: The Ecco Press, 1984) 303.

²¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education* vol. 10 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 221.

²² *Topics* 220-221.

that the theatre only imitates.”²³ By contrast, scientific or critically reflective consciousness seeks a language whose terms approach an ideally univocal, or at least carefully restricted, meaning, in the service of a dispassionate account of things. But everyday consciousness uncritically employs a language full of emotion-laden images in the service of *dramatic* meaningfulness, a language meant to be evocative and at times ambiguous, an essentially symbolic language. Of course the symbolic language of everyday living is not identical to the symbolic language of art. The latter is set apart by, first, its exploitation of the suggestive and communicative power of both non-verbal and verbal media through the formal refinement of their languages; second, the creation within those media of internal patterns and overall compositions whose unities reflect unities within human living; and third, its extraordinary heightening or condensation of meaning by means of those patterns and compositions. Nevertheless, its symbolic language links art directly to the orientation and concerns of everyday living.

Next, and equally important, art is an exploration of the possible uses of human freedom, and as such it speaks directly to our concern with the quality of our performances in the drama of living. Art explores what Lonergan calls “potentialities for human living” through its presentations of images carefully selected and crafted to awaken wonder and emotion and to shake us out of both instrumental concerns and routine habits of perception.²⁴ Its intended effect is to transport us beyond the ‘ready-made world’ of practicality and domesticated culture in order to renew our sense of life’s possibilities, to show us new ways to imagine and interpret ourselves, to quicken and explore our deepest longings and apprehensions, and in doing all these, to reveal the mystery present at the heart of all things.²⁵ Thus art brings us face to face with our open-endedness, our status as creatures engaged in self-making; we feel the strange majesty of freedom, and

²³ *Insight* 188.

²⁴ *Topics* 222.

²⁵ On the revelatory function of art, Lonergan writes that it is serving its highest function when it “draws attention to the fact that the splendor of the world is a cipher, a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is present ... [J]ust as the pure desire to know heads on to the beatific vision, so too the break from the ready-made world heads on to God.” *Topics* 222, 224-225.

rediscover the beauty of the world, but only through simultaneously rediscovering that we can squander our capacity to be responsive to it, have squandered it, and must try to amend our dullness and live more beautiful and dignified lives.

These purposes set art in natural tension with the prevailing social structure, in that it is precisely that structure with its established practical and cultural institutions, its entrenched attitudes and unquestioned assumptions, that art invites us to consider afresh from the perspective of a free exploration of human possibilities and values. Art exerts what Denis Donoghue calls "interrogative pressure" on the status quo: implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, it questions the way things are and the way things are done.²⁶

This explains why art is feared. Artists are the natural enemies of those who wish above all to preserve the status quo, or who do not want a political regime, an economic system, or a moral or religious doctrine to be questioned. The freedom of art is above all such loyalties, and in fact to serve its true function must call those loyalties into question. It is intrinsically antagonistic, as Donoghue states, "not to reality but to any and every official knowledge of it," an antagonism that is appropriate "whether the official determination of society is bourgeois liberal, Marxist, aristocratic or Fascist."²⁷ An understandable fear of art leads time and again, of course, to political efforts to suppress, dictate or co-opt the work of artists, that is, to redirect the loyalty of the artist away from the free exploration of human possibility and into the service of the regime. "It is not surprising," writes Albert Camus, "that artists and intellectuals should have been the first victims of modern tyrannies, whether of the Right or of the Left. Tyrants know there is in the work of art an emancipatory force."²⁸ When the Bolsheviks finally cracked down on the extraordinary flourishing of Soviet experimental art in the early post-revolution years, when Mao Tse Tung's regime of the mid-1950's performed its sudden and brutal about-face after briefly "letting a hundred flowers bloom" in artistic and intellectual life, they knew what they were doing. They knew that art not subject to political control was dangerous to them,

²⁶ Denis Donoghue, *The Arts Without Mystery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983) 27-28.

²⁷ *The Arts Without Mystery* 56.

²⁸ Albert Camus, "Create Dangerously," in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961) 269.

since beauty, as Camus states, "cannot serve any party," but always sanctions the quest for greater liberty and dignity and condemns the effort to squeeze human meaning into practical programs and plans.²⁹

Simply in performing its elementary function, then, art makes vividly and immediately clear that the aims of polity, economy and technology do not exhaust the meaning of human living. Implicitly, every true work of art is a critique of practicalism: it reminds us, not dispassionately and discursively but with the emotional power and pre-discursive immediacy of symbols, that the human drama is not reducible to practical ends. Given this fact, it is not surprising that artists have at times chosen as the explicit subject matter of their work the limitations of practical aims and practical achievements in answering the deepest human needs. In contemporary art we come across explicit critiques of this kind across the spectrum of media, reflecting different degrees of concern: from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, with its gentle ridicule of the tyrannies of modern technology and of market demands for ever-increasing productivity; to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with its warning vision of a humanity enslaved to absolute political predictability; to Shostakovich's evocation of the appalling rise of Soviet totalitarianism in his *Seventh Symphony*. These are works of art that not only themselves liberate us from the world of utilitarian concerns, but take for subject matter the need for that liberation and, more particularly, the degradation involved in consciousness being trapped, by accident or design, in a world bounded by practical or political goals.

Another brief and accessible example of such artistic critique is a poem written toward the end of his life by the great Irish poet, W. B. Yeats. The poem is a short lyric written in the ominous year of 1938, that at first glance seems little more than a casual jibe, but whose title and epigram reveal it to have deeper importance to the poet. The title is "Politics," and the epigram is a statement made by Thomas Mann as he witnessed Hitler and Europe heading for war: "*In our time the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms.*" Yeats's reply is this:

How can I, that girl standing there,
My attention fix
On Roman or on Russian

²⁹ "Create Dangerously" 267.

Or on Spanish politics?
Yet here's a travelled man that knows
What he talks about,
And there's a politician
That has read and thought,
And maybe what they say is true
Of war and war's alarms,
But O that I were young again
And held her in my arms!³⁰

On a basic level the poem reads as a lyric confession of momentary feeling, in which the poet admits that, just now, the allure of physical beauty and romantic love mean more to him than all the political good in the world. The poem reminds us of similar moments in our own experience; and through its unembarrassed directness, the poet indirectly absolves us of any self-aimed charges of 'inhumanity' over such momentary feelings.

But there is more going on. Yeats' inclusion of the epigram alerts us to the fact that, to Mann's general statement about human destiny, his poem is a counter-statement. The poem denies that, at any time, "the destiny of man presents its meaning" only "in political terms," and the denial or counter-statement takes the form of a symbol: a concrete occurrence of the poet being unable to focus on politics because of his spontaneous attraction to a beautiful girl. To admonish the poet for selfishness, romantic self-indulgence, moral immaturity, or (given the reference in the poem to advanced years) an undignified lapse into nostalgia for the passionate transports of adolescence, would be to mistake his symbol for mere factual report, or, even worse, for a moral declaration. (The bourgeois reads the poem and exclaims, "How dare the poet assert that a fleeting romantic passion is more important than political justice!"). The poet's being distracted by beauty symbolizes all human longing for a life made brilliant and immortal through love, a life fulfilled through the realization of that happiness of which *eros* is the universal promise. The momentary distraction of the poet symbolizes the impossibility of political concerns ever finally holding the attention of our most searching desires, and thus the impossibility of their constituting the meaning of 'the destiny of man.'

³⁰ William Butler Yeats, *Selected Poems and Two Plays* ed. M. L. Rosenthal (New York: Collier Books, 1966) 186.

Any art contributes toward the realization of cosmopolis when it promotes reflection on the shortsightedness of merely practical, merely group, or merely national interests; it does so as well when it encourages our identification with others in the human drama not because they are our kin or belong to any specific nation, class, or race, but just because they are human. And then there are works of art that give us images that specifically focus attention on our common humanity and pointedly awaken the feelings that would sustain giving cosmopolis our first allegiance. One thinks of the Depression photographs of Walker Evans, of Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. For a very early example of such art, we might return to the Greek world of Diogenes, specifically to the Athens of an earlier generation, that of Aeschylus. Soon after the Persian Wars from which the Greeks miraculously emerged victorious, with his native city still in ruins from the conflict, Aeschylus in his drama *The Persians* presented the defeat of the enemy in terms of a tragic fall from their own greatness, brought on by the pride of the Persian rulers. This willingness to explore and sympathize with the humanity of the enemy is an example, as Voegelin says, of "the sense for the dramatic unity of mankind."³¹ It is a somewhat early example of that sense, though, and not a pure and unqualified articulation of it, reflecting the fact that — Diogenes and Plato and the Stoics notwithstanding — insight into the essential unity and spiritual equality of all human beings never reached complete and radical differentiation in classical Greek culture.³² In the Western world, it was the Judeo-Christian experiences that brought this insight to full clarity; and so quite naturally we find some of the most profound and effective Western art inspiring an allegiance to universal humanity to

³¹ Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* vol. 2: *The World of the Polis* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974) 332-333.

³² The incompleteness of that differentiation is reflected in a passage in Book 5 of Plato's *Republic* (466e-471c), where Socrates is urging Glaucon and his fellow discussants to agree that a well-ruled polis, at war with another Greek city, should not treat it in the same way as it properly treats a barbarian enemy — that is, it shouldn't strip the corpses of defeated warriors, ravage the lands, raze the houses, and enslave the civilian population. In Plato's time, Voegelin notes, "the idea of personal membership in a community of the spirit ... was still in its infancy; it had just begun to express itself, in the fourth century, in the form of philosophical schools." Eric Voegelin, *Order and History* vol. 3: *Plato and Aristotle* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) 118.

be that devoted to the symbolic communication of basic elements of the Christian story.

It is not surprising, of course, that religious insights into universal personal dignity and the common divine ground of our joy and suffering should be the source for artistic images that invite the realization of cosmopolis; but we must remember that the images of art are concrete, local, specific, and that the universalist meanings are contained in these. It is, for example, the artistic representation of this man, Jesus, healing the sick or suffering on the cross, that invites us to recognize our common humanity in and through him. Likewise, the local and concrete in many other contexts provide the symbolic material for cosmopolitan enlightenment. Images derived from experiences of personal happiness or misfortune, from family life, or loyalty to one's group or nation can do so, providing they are crafted to evoke awareness of and responsibility to human fulfillment as such. This is an important point: devotion to the local is not intrinsically antagonistic to loyalty to world community. On the contrary, only *through* commitment to the concrete and the local can one participate in cosmopolis. To take an example from popular art, when Woody Guthrie wrote "This Land is Your Land," he was of course writing about the vastness and beauty of this country and every citizen's right to enjoy its gifts, but not just that. The song is about human rights and human dignity as well as about the United States. The chorus's last line, "This land was made for you and me," doesn't mean: "and it wasn't made for the French." It means, most importantly, that everyone's homeland belongs as much to him or her as to every other inhabitant, because all human beings — each of whom lives concretely in some nation — are ultimately brothers and sisters. Art that promotes cosmopolis valorizes the specific and the local while revealing through it our involvement in and our proper allegiance to world community.

The availability and efficacy of such art varies from culture to culture, of course. For different reasons and in different ways, the potentially most liberating art can become a diminished and marginal power. The best art can be politically repressed and much of the rest forced into ideological molds, producing a state-controlled art of homogenized propaganda. Or, the concerns and modes of expression of the strongest artists can get out of touch with popular culture and comprehension, so that their work speaks only to other artists in self-conscious contempt of the broader community, while in response,

popular resentment grows against a high art that flaunts its alienation and inaccessibility. Or, the power of the finest art can be poisoned through its control by and marriage to commercial interests — just at present, we might consider the absurdly inflated prices of the international art market, not to mention such inanities as Van Gogh neckties and Verdi soundtracks to advertisements for laxatives.³³ Or, a massive technology-driven entertainment industry can channel taste toward the immediately exciting and superficial, producing a popular culture of sensational, sense-drenching images that leaves no room for, and undermines the willingness to engage in the self-discipline required for, refinement of aesthetic response. In all of these cases, cosmopolis itself suffers from the loss of invigorating artistic visions that would help guide a culture toward a proper sense of its historical place and responsibility.

Which brings us to the question, where does our own culture stand with respect to the availability and efficacy of artistic images conducive to the building of cosmopolis?

One of the most artistically ambitious filmmakers of the last few decades, Werner Herzog, has expressed his view of the matter with typical intensity: “The simple truth is that there aren’t many images around now. ... You practically have to start digging for them like an archaeologist to try to find something in this damaged landscape.” Herzog is aghast at what he calls the “lack of decent images” in the culture, warning that “we urgently need images to accord with the state of our civilization, and with our innermost souls.”³⁴ These remarks point, I think, to a genuine problem: the artistic images that would serve cosmopolis, inviting us to realize our common ground in transcendence and our higher historical responsibility, are not easily

³³ Robert Hughes has described how the huge prices that art can now command has infected our relationship to works of art: “The art-market boom has been an unmitigated disaster for the public life of art. It has distorted the ground of people’s reaction to painting and sculpture. Thirty or even twenty years ago anyone, amateur or expert, could spend an hour or two in a museum without wondering what this Tiepolo, this Rembrandt, this de Kooning might cost at auction. Thanks to the unrelenting propaganda of the art market this is no longer quite the case, and the imagery of money has been so crudely riveted onto the face of museum-quality art by events outside the museum that its unhappy confusion between price and value may never be resolved.” Robert Hughes, *Nothing If Not Critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artists* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990) 20-21.

³⁴ Quoted in Wim Wenders, *The Logic of Images: Essays and Conversations* trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1992) 64.

found or felt in our culture, are not efficacious in many lives. Let me suggest briefly two reasons for this.

First, our daily lives are ever more inundated by the exciting images produced by technological gadgetry meant to entertain, and of course to encourage, the purchase of every kind of commodity. We are bombarded by images pouring from televisions at home, in restaurants, bars, laundromats and airports, from radios at home and in our cars, from our VCR's, CD players and boomboxes, from sound systems in the mall, in restaurants, in lobbies, in waiting rooms and elevators, from advertisements on billboards and towering signposts and walls and buses promoting the blockbuster movies that everyone is talking about, and from the flashing, screeching and pounding computer games ever more prevalent in commercial establishments and public waiting areas. The list could go on. And the principal defining characteristics of all these images are their triviality and dispensability: few of them mean anything beyond the stimulation of a few moments. They constitute, as the filmmaker Wim Wenders has said, "an invasion of and inflation of meaningless images" that numb the capacity for reflection on artistic images of any high order, artistic images that in their stilled concentration of references and purposes require us to slow down and focus and reflect, images that demand and reward sustained attention and contemplation.³⁵

Though it is nothing new to say so, the most destructive element in this onslaught has been television, about which the art critic Robert Hughes has remarked:

In 1989 the average American spent nearly half of his or her conscious life watching television. Two generations of Americans ... have now grown up in front of the TV set, their consciousness permeated by its shuttle of bright images, their attention span shrunken by its manipulative speed.

The power of television goes beyond anything the fine arts have ever wanted or achieved. Nothing like this Niagara of visual gabble had even been imagined a hundred years ago. American network television drains the world of meaning; it makes reality seem dull, slow and avoidable. It tends to abort the imagination by leaving kids nothing to imagine: every hero and demon is there, raucously explicit, precut — a world of stereotypes, too authoritative for imagination to develop or

³⁵ *The Logic of Images* 22.

change. ... It is stupidly compelling, in a way that painting and sculpture, even in their worst moments of propaganda or sentimentality, are not.³⁶

In other words, the drama of living is to a large extent taking its cues about its own meaning from the content of television and the act of watching television, contributing to what Wenders describes as “the rule of empty images over the country called ‘America.’”³⁷ The artistic images that might evoke transcendence and sustain a commitment to universal fulfillment tend to get uprooted and swept along in the flood of dazzling distractions.

A second obstacle to the efficacy of such art has to do not with the technologization and commodification of the search for meaning, but with the impact of some currently influential ideas about community, dignity and power. A prevailing rejection of transcendent meaning among the intelligentsia has made widely popular the notion — though it has been around since the time of Socrates — that human community is ultimately no more than a power-sharing arrangement among individuals or factions. In other words, there is no transcendent ground uniting human beings; community is fundamentally a mutual accommodation among participants in their respective struggles for dignified living. This view has been supplemented by a correlative, and more genuinely modern, notion that all products of intellectual and cultural achievement, including works of art, are to be considered primarily as creations that serve the interests of personal or group power. Now there are indeed valuable insights to which these notions point, but as blanket notions they are reductive and oppressive, and distort the spiritual aims of the drama of living. To the extent that they shape one’s response to works of art, the efficacy of symbols of transcendence and universal humanity are subverted by a supercilious reduction of their meaning to expressions of will to power. If we must remain suspiciously on guard against Picasso’s *Guernica*, against Mozart’s *Requiem*, against *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, lest by forgetting the self-serving interests and limitations of their authors and societies

³⁶ *Nothing If Not Critical* 14.

³⁷ Wim Wenders, *Emotion Pictures: Reflections on the Cinema* trans. Sean White-side in association with Michael Hofmann (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1989) 143.

we fall into ideological traps, then such works will not illuminate our hearts or our lives.

World community is a cultural fact, founded on transcendence, and art is one of its sustaining elements. The artistic images that serve cosmopolis can still inspire and convert us, even amidst the racket of modern life and in spite of reductionist political and educational doctrines that, as Lonergan says, "have done not a little to make human life unlivable."³⁸ Perhaps in our time, though, we have a greater responsibility than did earlier generations to create the occasions, the silent clearings of attention and openness, where such images can reveal what they have to reveal.

³⁸ *Topics* 232.

STILL LIFE AND LANDSCAPE: THE SACRED IN SECULAR ATTIRE

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I HAD THE opportunity on two recent occasions to explore the art of hand lithography. Under the tutelage of my colleague in fine arts, Marvin Herard, I produced two prints, one a scene of cut flowers lying on cloth and one a landscape with birches viewed across a slender river. Still life and landscape of this sort are the subjects of the beginning student; they are simple, controllable, conventional, and the resulting works may rightly be called 'studies.'

In hand lithography one works directly upon the smoothed face of a slab of limestone, drawing with ink or grease pencil, or painting, splattering, or otherwise marking the surface, which is then treated with chemicals, inked, and the stone run through a press. I concentrated on the remarkable range of tonalities that one can achieve with the grease pencil, a task which required hours of hatchwork — contemplative hours, I might add — which, whatever the value of their result, were significant for the intimate relationship they produced between myself and this primitive, chthonic thing, the stone.

Working slowly thus, I found more than enough time to reflect at length on compositional features of the work, to indulge in strolling reveries occasioned by the images appearing under my hand, to conjure up for the work, not a single artistic and symbolic intention, but many. It occurred to me that if such depth and breadth of reflection was available to a casual, amateur, and clumsy artist such as myself, how much more meaning might have gone into the works of the inconceivably more patient, more schooled, and more inspired efforts of the master painters. How much meaning, I felt prompted to ask, might one be missing when one absorbs in glance a work such as a still life of Cézanne, which took a hundred hours to produce? How much meaning might one encounter if one approached the work of art not as a product packaged with a distinct catalogue of intentions for the consumption of a viewer, but more as the artist might experience it, as an incomplete foray along an unending meditative path of

engagement with the realities and the mysteries of manifold being? What if we assume for the moment, as Paul Klee unhesitatingly asserted, that painters are philosophers, and we join their struggle with *die Sache*, their struggle to make sense of things, to achieve whatever truth art can grant them?

In the hands of a master a still life is much more than a 'study.' Marcel Proust regarded the still life paintings of Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin, for example, as a means of reviving senses that have become dull to the beauty and mystery of ordinary things:

If, when looking at Chardin, you can say to yourself, "This is intimate, this is comfortable, this is as living as a kitchen," then, when you are walking around a kitchen, you will say to yourself, "This is special, this is great, this is as beautiful as a Chardin." Chardin may have been merely a man who enjoyed his dining-room, among the fruits and glasses, but he was also a man with a sharper awareness, whose pleasure was so intense that it overflowed into smooth strokes, eternal colors. You, too, will be a Chardin, not so great, perhaps, but great to the extent that you love him, identify yourself with him, become like him, a person for whom metal and stoneware are living and to whom fruit speaks.¹

Chardin's still lifes show careful measure and balance. A porcelain pitcher, a few glasses, and a small collection of fruits are transformed by Chardin's sharper awareness into something of importance, something confident, serious, containing everything that art should contain and doing everything that art should do. A common, almost random arrangement of things becomes a scene that remains fresh and living for centuries.

Chardin may have merely been a man who enjoyed his dining room. There exist any number of art history texts that would accept this thesis. The story of the emergence of still life as an art form in Dutch and French art is often told as a story of secularization and the rise of individualism. Max Friedländer, for example, tells of the earliest origins of still life in the practice of representing saints holding objects that customarily communicate their identity. Since painters received the bulk of their commissions from churches, one could paint

¹ Daniel Halpern, ed. *Writers on Artists* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988) 102-103.

nothing that was not overtly and obviously a religious scene or symbol. But in the course of the sixteenth century art gradually established independence of the church. As a middle class emerged with sufficient wealth to create a market not only for dinnerware and fine serving dishes but for art, the painters of the day gained a degree of independence from the commission; they could paint what they wished and put it on the open market; they could paint, if they wished, nothing more than the accouterments of their own middle class homes. A love of the ordinary emerged, on this telling of things, almost in defiance of the religious establishment; the ordinary is loved *purely* in its ordinari-ness, its materiality; and the artist is great for making the ordinary beautiful in its very humility and domesticity.²

There is, I think, much truth in this interpretation. No doubt, Chardin did love his dining room. But must all love of objects be profane love? Could we not see in the painter's deeper reverence of flowers and herrings and fruits an elevation of these things to a symbolic level? On this question a claim by Thomas Aquinas, voiced in quite a different context, is particularly helpful.

Any truth can be manifested in two ways: by things or by words. Words signify things and one thing can signify another. The Creator of things, however, can not only signify anything by words, but can also make one thing signify another. That is why the Scriptures contain a twofold truth. One lies in the things meant by the words used — that is the literal sense. The other in the way things become figures of other things, and in this consists the spiritual sense.³

For Aquinas, it is wrong to say that the multiplicity of meanings in scriptural imagery constitutes equivocation, for equivocation is a weakness of words, whereas scripture communicates unambiguously the excellence of multivalence in *things*. E.H. Gombrich, commenting on this passage, attributes to St. Thomas the conviction

² Max J. Friedländer, *Landscape, Portrait, Still Life: Their Origin and Development* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963) 277-280.

³ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones quodlibetales* VII, 14; E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon Press, 1972) 13-14. The different context is a scriptural context; Umberto Eco has cautioned, in *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), against the broad application of Thomas' insight that I pursue here.

that the human intellect can never exhaust the meaning or meanings inherent in the language of the Divine. Each such symbol exhibits what may be called a plenitude of meanings which meditation and study can never reveal more than partially.⁴

In this spirit could we not say that the most perfectly painted plum or goblet is captured in the ontological multiplicity that weaves the thing in multiple ways into the larger cosmic fabric? The painter of such a painting would go far beyond *using* the object as a symbol and would instead communicate his or her authentic struggle to encounter the object *itself* as a symbol.

Such an experience is not always easy for the modern mind to come by, or, in some cases, for the modern mind even to conceive or recognize. But to mythological consciousness it is, or was, of course, second nature, and authors such as Mircea Eliade, who immerse themselves in the study of mythological traditions, conceive this sense of the word 'symbol' with acute clarity. Indeed, Eliade is so instructive on the matter as to be worth quoting at length.

It is ... necessary not to lose sight of one characteristic which is specific to a symbol: its *multivalence*, which is to say the multiplicity of meanings which it expresses simultaneously. This is why it is sometimes so difficult to explain a symbol, to exhaust its significations; it refers to a plurality of contexts and it is valuable on a number of levels. If we retain only one of its significations, in declaring it the only 'fundamental' or 'first' or 'original' signification, we risk not grasping the true message of the symbol. Whatever a symbol tries to show us, it is precisely the unity between the different levels of the real, and to us, this unity is rationally accessible with difficulty. The interpretations of symbols by the reductive method, that is to say the reduction of all possible significations to only one proclaimed 'fundamental,' appears erroneous to us. The cognitive function of the symbol is precisely to disclose to us a perspective from whence things [that] appear different and very distinct activities are revealed as equivalent and united. The Sanskrit term, *linga* (literally, phallus), so important in Hinduism, connected with the term *langula* (plough), derives from an Austro-Asiatic root, *lak*, designating both a spade and the male generative organ. Woman is compared to the soil, the phallus to the spade, and the

⁴ Gombrich, *Symbolic Images* 14.

generative act to agrarian labor. But as the spade is called phallus and sowing is homologous to the sexual act, it does not follow that the 'primitive' farmer is ignorant of the specific function of his labor and the immediate concrete value of his tool. Symbolism *adds* a new value to an object or to an action without however disturbing their own proper and immediate values. In applying itself to an object or an action, symbolism renders it 'open.' Symbolic thought makes the immediate reality 'shine,' but without diminishing or devaluing it.⁵

If anyone needs to be convinced of the existence of a symbolic aspect to still-life painting, let them look to the *vanitas*, a particular form of still life that symbolizes its meaning with an obviousness that is almost maudlin. A table in a particular *Vanitas* by Jan de Gheyn⁶ is piled with a strange assortment of fruits, papers, musical instruments, all shouting from the canvas, "Life is vanity!" For as life unfurls like the peel of the lemon it delivers bitter fruit, and even that must wither; flowers bloom for a moment and then die; music fills the air with magnificence only to float away like all that is precious, like life, or like the bubbles that hover over the table, blown by a black youth couched in the background. In another *Vanitas* by de Gheyn (from the year 1603) a death's head sits on a shelf; to one side, a flower blooms in a vase; to the other, an identical vase holds a withered stem; above the head a large bubble inexplicably hovers: *homo bulla*.

Still life, then, can be not only symbolic but obviously, even garishly, so. This very excess of the *vanitas*, I would say, is instructive; it tells us something about symbolic measure. Because symbols succeed best by compounding meanings, because ambiguity is of their essence, symbols that are codified by artists into univocal messages become something less than symbols; they become visual concepts. More importantly, the overdetermination of meaning on the part of the artist risks eclipsing the *mystery* of symbolic things and the difficulty of reading the text of the world. The most effective still lifes have all of the reverence of an altar; the artist does not preach but makes humble sacrifice.

⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts*, ed. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 5-6.

⁶ Reproduced in Edward Lucie-Smith, *Symbolist Art* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972).

Many of the Dutch 'pronk' still lifes of the seventeenth century (named 'pronk' for their quality of displaying sumptuous possessions) aspire to such purity. The works of Pieter Claesz and Willem Claesz Heda, for example, do not set forth obvious messages, but represent an ordinary breakfast, or snack, laid out simply, with a seeming carelessness in some cases, as if the artist had meant nothing more than to eat and drink it but had accidentally painted it instead. Upon a draped tablecloth a plate of herring lies beside a partially peeled lemon, a roll, a stem of grapes, or perhaps a small dish of ham. Glasses of wine or beer stand on the table with solid, stately postures. The rendering of the scenes emphasizes tonalities; color variations are reduced and everything is cast in a subdued, often golden light. By the magic of this monochromism, disparate objects are unified; they participate equally in a single mode of light.

Are we to read this painting symbolically? Are we to interpret the fish as symbol of Christ? Are we to see in the unfurling peel of the lemon an image of the passing of time and the unfolding of life, which, as it opens out, brings both savor and bitterness? I would answer that we are and are not to interpret in this fashion. I hold with the view of Sam Segal, that the symbols of the *vanitas* tradition are always latent in 'pronk' still life, always available for those who wish to discern them, but that the objects are no less their ordinary selves for bearing such symbolic connotations; the lemon is no less a lemon, no less a simple fruit that livens up the flavor of a bit of herring nicely.⁷

The still lifes of Willem Kalf move beyond the monochromatic style. His colors are brilliant where a shaft of light falls upon selected fruits, while the background and general mood remains subdued. Kalf continues a compositional direction towards the vertical that Heda had initiated. The viewer's eye level meets the taller vessels at midpoint, looking up to their rims. This adds almost a sense of monumentality to the ornate goblets which lift their glowing spirits up as in a toast or an offering.

In describing these works I am trying to identify symbolic meanings by making associations. "Associationism is dead," wrote Arthur Koestler, "but association remains one of the fundamental facts

⁷ Sam Segal, *A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands, 1600-1700* (The Hague: SDU Publishers, 1988) 20-21, 128.

of mental life.”⁸ While it is today naive to hold that all human thought works *via* a concatenation of simple associations, it is nonetheless undeniable that association does structure, to some degree, every dimension of human consciousness and unconsciousness. There is no such thing as raw feeling; feelings attach to associations and receive their most spontaneous triggers from associations. Images are affect-laden and affects are image-laden. Likewise, there is no such thing as pure perception, but every sense datum is interpreted, in part by means of associations. Associations operate as ‘hidden persuaders’ (to use one of Koestler’s terms); the codes by which we might be interpreting the immediate in a given instance are likely to be so habitual, or developed so early in life that the experience feels like, seems like, pure immediacy and pure emotion. To raise these associations to consciousness, to articulate the web of channels through which the forces of mind and heart are flowing together at a particular aesthetic moment may add nothing to aesthetic experience in terms of strength of feeling, but it *can* serve as a means of approaching the symbolic depth of the experience.

Long before Sigmund Freud or James Joyce called our attention to the omnipresence of sexual associations, artists were aware of the subterranean power of sexual associations, and this is evidenced in many still lifes. If a pear or a jug suggests a womb, if the crease in a red plum vaguely recalls labia, if a bunch of grapes dangles like male genitalia, one should not marvel at the coincidence or shove it from one’s mind as inappropriate. Into the visual sensuality of food and drink the painter often compresses the recollection of all sorts of human fascinations and delights. The sexual symbolism evokes a powerful tradition wherein similitudes were taken more seriously (and often too seriously), where an anatomically suggestive fruit, for example, might be prescribed as a cure for impotence. Moreover the symbolism reminds us that our ways are also nature’s ways, that we too are things with stems and seeds, dedicated to blossoming and the bearing of fruit. Once again *compression* is the key: the herring, suggesting a phallus by its shape, becomes no less a symbol of Christ and no less a tasty snack. By means of compression a painting expressing eroticism may simultaneously create commentary on it; a

⁸ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (London and New York: Penguin Arkana, 1964) 642.

particularly erotic still life of 1653 by Jan Davidsz de Heem, for example, portrays with rich colors and wet, gleaming surfaces a veritable heap of delectables, with grapes bulging off the table's edge and oysters dripping and sliding off their platter. But above the table a single butterfly hovers, a creature epitomizing evanescent beauty (hence *vanitas*), and connoting also, by virtue of its 'death' and rebirth out of the cocoon, the resurrection.

The still lifes of Chardin, which I mentioned earlier, came later in time and signal the full appropriation of Dutch styles by French painters. Compared to the pieces that I have described by Heda and Kalf, Chardin's canvases seek a further degree of simplicity and plainness. They portray objects of a somewhat lower class and highlight less the decorative qualities of the objects than the light that splashes off of them, molds them, and brings them to life. Details are in some cases almost impressionistically rendered. Some of Chardin's still lifes add a narrative dimension, spilling over into genre painting. "The Buffet" of 1728, for example, takes a long view of an abundantly laid table so as to show the floor, where a dog stands, staring insistently at the forbidden feast. Anne Hollander calls this sort of composition 'cinematic'; one perceives it as a frozen moment in a story. More traditional forms of historical narrative painting attempted to *show* as much of the story as possible whereas the new, 'cinematic' convention picks a moment that will strongly *imply* its before and after. A motion picture, then, is built up out of such 'stills,' or 'shots,' each tied to the next by implications, creating the impression of narrative continuity.⁹

If such examples demonstrate how still life shades into genre painting, other examples manifest the power of still life imagery and technique over genre. Vermeer, one could almost say, painted everything as if it were a still life; his portrait style carves the subject's face out of light with such care that the transitory moment, the fleeting expression, the incidental glitter of a piece of jewelry, are eternally fixed in their very evanescence. The picture is full of life, but silent and still. Chardin was capable of the same thing. Roger Lipsey has made much of Chardin's piece entitled "Blowing Bubbles," which depicts an ordinary young man leaning out a window and blowing a large soap bubble while in the background a child's face, half-observed

⁹ Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

by the windowsill, displays an expression of interest. The painting stretches to the limit the idea of a fleeting moment statically fixed in art. The painting, says Lipsey,

is lovely in itself and yet larger than a mere report. The scene directs the receptive viewer to a broader vision, in which he or she can experience the evanescence of life and happiness without bitterness, as simple fact.

Chardin's gentle masterpiece is akin to many Chinese and Japanese paintings that transfigure the commonplace. The flash of insight requires no temple, no dogma to sanctify it.¹⁰

The moment in a shaft of sunlight (to name it with T.S. Eliot's phrase) we share equally with this scene and with the fruits and vessels of still life.

It should not surprise anyone that nineteenth century still life painting reflects a heightened historical consciousness. A growing historical sensibility, after all, characterized nearly every field of human endeavor in that age. Painters in the nineteenth century displayed this sensibility above all through their appropriation of the historicity of artistic conventions. In one's own nation in one's own day, the painting styles of the dominant school may seem to command the kind of authority reserved for eternal verities; but over the course of history, and across national borders, one can observe continual shifts in what is thought beautiful or aesthetically effective, shifts which at times seem to obey no master other than circumstance or whimsy. When the Pre-Raphaelites adopted the palate of another age or the impressionists copied the compositions of the Japanese Ukiyo-e tradition these painters asserted the power of their artistic creativity over convention. So far from earning one's artistic credentials by adopting set conventions, one could define oneself as artist by defining a new set of conventions. Thus Monet, Cézanne, and Gauguin paint so differently from one another as to essentially constitute schools unto themselves.

The new attitude towards convention in the nineteenth century brought new intentions to still-life painting. Still life was by now a subject with a long history, some would say an old and tired history: so

¹⁰ Roger Lipsey, *An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art* (Boston and Shaftesbury: Shambala, 1989) 13.

accustomed was the eye to still life that one could no longer experience the freshness of its subjects; they threatened to fall back into their usual functionality, their mute, unresponsive everydayness. The task of the painter, then, was to paint the conventional unconventionally, to see better by seeing differently. Monet's impressionism, for example, gives us a new world, a floating, pellucid world, buoyed by light, where dense material things dissolve astoundingly into colorful, shimmering atmospheres. Its vision is filled, as well, with the conventions of Japanese wood block prints, the floating world of the Ukiyo-e tradition. The Japanese connection serves no less to inform the spiritual ambitions of impressionism: to be fully present to the immediate world, to experience fully yet without bitterness the fleetingness of all things, to speak honestly the true language of paints and brushes, the language of saturated pigments and color harmonies — to minimize, therefore, or eschew altogether the illusion-making powers of muted color, chiaroscuro, and heavy layers of varnish.

Paul Cézanne, a consummate still life and landscape painter, was very much in league with most of these impressionist intentions. In his mature work he never diverged from the impressionist mission to experience objects in their immediacy; he never felt the temptation to paint themes of history or fantasy, or to use academic techniques to create the illusion of depth or an air of mystery; he painted the world's frank engagement of the senses. Yet he wanted the world, too, in all of its solidity, weightiness, and profundity; he stubbornly demanded the full subjective experience of objectivity. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in a famous essay, emphasizes the paradox of Cézanne:

He was pursuing reality without giving up the sensuous surface, with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature, without following the contours, with no outline to enclose the color, with no perspectival or pictorial arrangement ... he wanted to depict matter as it takes on form, the birth of order through spontaneous organization.¹¹

For the sake of that dynamic spontaneity, objects in Cézanne's paintings undergo striking rearrangement and distortion; the artist manipulates dimensionality just as one might manipulate tone; he

¹¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964) 12-13.

struggles to capture, not merely the being of things in space, but also the complex being of space and time themselves.

Is such painting symbolic? Certainly not according to the conventions of Renaissance art or the nineteenth century symbolist movement. Yet just as with the Dutch 'pronk' still life, these images of the ordinary point beyond themselves. They do not merely show us a world; they put us *into* our world, but strangely; they do not merely express love of nature, but call to mind the uncanniness of things and nagging oddity of our insertion among them. Merleau-Ponty calls attention to the discomfort that Cézanne paintings can occasion: "if one looks at the work of other painters after seeing Cézanne's paintings, one feels somehow relaxed."¹² If these works can thus disturb us with their most typical of subjects, it is because in the smallest and plainest of things Cézanne evokes persistent existential enigmas.

Is such painting symbolic? "All reality is also at the same time symbolic."¹³ Earlier I developed this idea in connection with Thomas Aquinas, but now I am quoting Vincent van Gogh. While one can trace influences on Van Gogh's art through all of the sources that I have mentioned — Dutch still life, Chardin, Impressionism, and Japanese art — Van Gogh also brings a unique passion to the modern painter's thirst for the ordinary. With a special intensity Van Gogh insists that we see the ordinary in a state of unadorned poverty. To be present to nature is to know how peasants live and to witness nature as they witness it, without the intervention of bourgeois trappings. Since intimacy with nature is intimacy with God's creation, Van Gogh explicitly understood his stylistic aspirations as religious and his painting as a Christian mission. In Van Gogh, then, there is an inspired simplicity of vision, an asceticism, a deliberate crudeness in technique, which the artist embraces for the sake of spiritual purity, purity we feel in the power of his compositions and the vibrancy of his colors. And while we are not wrong to classify Van Gogh's style as highly idiosyncratic, expressive, even expressionistic, still we love his work just as much because we can sense his intense devotion to his subjects, his self-effacing dedication to the model, to the higher truth of color, to the reality by which God makes meaning.

¹² Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense* 16.

¹³ Cliff Edwards, *Van Gogh and God: A Creative Spiritual Quest* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989) 124.

My own still life, my first lithograph, was, as I said, merely a student's study — a few cut flowers lying on cloth. For the most part I was merely trying to draw them, to struggle with the frustrating limitations of my eye and hand. Yet I too indulged certain inevitable symbolic propensities, the cry that things make to be meaningful. I created high contrasts, seeking a strong sense of dark and light, and a depth of field contrasted by certain flat, unmodulated outlines. I wanted the light to be somewhat subdued, the sense of bright spring flowers in winter light. The flowers were blooming, but cut, therefore dying, blooming in death. At a certain point one cut stem fell across another in a kind of saltire, or St. Andrew's cross — an arrangement which certainly *could* have happened by coincidence. A neighbor visiting at my house one day pointed to these stems and asked, "Is this symbolism intentional?" "Oh no," I thought, "I've been too obvious after all!"

My second lithograph was a landscape. It was again a study in the kinds of contrasts of light and dark that work well with lithography. A stand of birch trees across the river from my brother-in-law's cabin had captured my eye because of the contrast of the white tree trunks against a dark evergreen background. I composed a scene with bright objects near the bottom: bright rocks and foliage on the river bank, light reflecting off the water. And I similarly drew the tree leaves with little shading. Then I set the trunks of the trees against a heavily worked dark background. I sought to communicate a kind of enclosed space supported by these tree trunks as if by columns. I looked to the compositions of Cézanne to see how one can create structure and tension within this sort of enclosed space.

The obstacles encountered in creating landscape art are in many ways identical to those of still life but are in some ways opposite. Still life encounters nature within the domestic microcosmos, whereas landscape painting must face the difficult task of finding a human place within the great natural macrocosmos. The history of landscape art is one wherein the trees and hills that had been used in the background came forward, ultimately to assert themselves as the primary subjects of the work. In so doing, what had been tamed and caged recovered some of its wild habits. Surely art critics are correct to see the rise of landscape painting in Western culture as the result of a growing love of nature. But nature is also challenging; an unsettled world is unsettling. More often than not we experience nature as chaotic, indifferent,

subhuman and dumb, and fecund to the point of reckless, incomprehensible wastefulness. This dual aspect of nature, its magnificently beautiful aspect combined with its overwhelming, disturbing aspect is what was once denoted by the now-retired notion of 'the sublime.' Landscape painting seeks the meaningfulness of the sublime, portraying nature in that certain light, in that certain hour, in that certain arrangement of parts wherein an architectonic discloses itself as a pattern into which human intentions and aspirations can somehow fit, and can, by thus accommodating themselves, achieve a higher or grander significance. At the same time, to befriend nature in this manner, to connect it with the human, is to enlarge the sense of nature's scope, for nature participates more fully thereby in uniquely human forms of transcendence.

This humanization of the natural landscape is achieved by any number of means in the history of art: by idealizing nature, as, for example, in the work of Claude Lorrain, where warm evening light blends together natural and architectural forms, and human figures, recalling an idyllic past, move comfortably in the glow of dusk; or by choosing a domesticated landscape, as in Constable's "Wivenhoe Park," around which Gombrich built his thesis, in *Art and Illusion* (1961), that all nature painting is highly interpretive; or by carefully setting the stage for the viewer to share a moment of peace and solitude with trees and sky, as is the case in so many canvases by George Inness.

Elements of landscape are as symbolic as they are real. Earth and sky do not merely exist as our external horizon; they hold meaning for us. Even in our post-mythological age, earth continues to suggest to us the apeirontic depth from which and unto which, darkly, life emerges and recedes. Sky continues to call us to an infinite beyond, continues to draw our hopeful gaze and our reach. Earth and sky are unimaginably unmanageable; we are lost in them — and yet they guide us: we find our way by starlight or the path of the rising sun; we orient ourselves by the shape of the horizon. Between earth and sky, against the horizon, trees are our companions and our doubles. They take the business of existing between Earth and sky seriously, go about it more systematically than we do, setting roots deep into the dark ground, reaching higher up, dedicating themselves to stability and living a simple but long life. We count on trees to hold the sky up for us, to shelter us, and to teach us constancy.

Paths give us a way through earth, sky, and forest. The road is a path; water can be a path. Because every path is a journey, every path is a story and an allegory of life. Because paths are traveled again and again, they are histories and the confluence of cultures. Rocks may be obstacles in the path, boundaries to be gotten past — or climbed, whereupon they become conquered territory and perches, granting vistas, providing vision. Rocks conquered and set upon one another make architecture, which layers landscape with human history, gathers landscape together, and symbolizes.¹⁴

My second lithograph attempts, however successfully or unsuccessfully, to partake of the power of rock, water, tree, and sky. I imagined my composition as a metaxy, with trees, our doubles, rising from earth and stone (as the lithographic print comes from stone), nourished by light above but also, in a way, supporting it. In that role, I wished that these trees would stand out luminously and would somehow inspire. All of this occurred to me in reveries as I labored, above all, simply to draw the scene. Openly I desired only to be a good student and a good observer, but at the same time secretly (and who could resist?) I wished to know something of the symbolic vision of one such as Van Gogh, for whom, as Cliff Edwards puts it:

Symbolism ... was not a clever code created by artists, but a dynamic *given* from a deeper or higher source which opened itself to that artist who lived in love and simplicity, persisting in daily labor with nature ...

And, quoting from Van Gogh's letter (number 228):

I see that nature has told me something, has spoken to me, and that I have put it down in shorthand. In my shorthand there may be words that cannot be deciphered, there may be mistakes or gaps; but there is something of what wood or beach or figure has told me in it, and it is not the tame or conventional language derived from a studied manner or a system rather than from nature itself.¹⁵

¹⁴ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling: On the Way to Figurative Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1985).

¹⁵ Edwards, *Van Gogh and God* 127.

PAINTING AS SPIRITUAL: THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TASKS

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IN 1910 A great visionary painter, Wassily Kandinsky, produced a short treatise entitled, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art, and Painting in Particular*,¹ in which he claimed that in order to be fully appreciated art must be understood as disclosive of the life of the human spirit. He complained that the superficiality of the aesthetic movements of his day and the materialism inherited from the nineteenth century had closed off the traditional paths to aesthetic spirituality, and he argued that a wholly new form, a completely contemporary kind of spiritual disclosiveness was the mission of the modern artist. He also attempted to develop a vocabulary and an approach to painting that would explain and support his larger artistic mission in the context of that medium.

Kandinsky's essay is not the most systematic, or even coherent, of aesthetic treatises, but its vision and its urgency infected a whole generation of artists and its mission was a central element in the movement we call 'modernism.' In recent interpretations of modernism, however, while much has been made of the demand for utterly contemporary style and complete originality, the spiritual impetus behind these demands has been much ignored, so much so that modern painting has been confused with the very materialism and superficial aesthetics that Kandinsky abhorred.

Roger Lipsey has claimed that the spiritual mission of modernism has become for us a hidden dimension that must be recovered, and he himself has undertaken to do so thoroughly and, I would say, brilliantly, in his book, *An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art*.² What distinguishes Lipsey's undertaking is that he

¹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977).

² Roger Lipsey, *An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art* (Boston and Shaftsbury: Shambala, 1989).

insists upon more than art history or art criticism. He genuinely aligns himself with the overlooked spiritual vision, describing his purpose as one of renewal, and he understands profoundly that spiritual symbolism is confined to no particular set of artistic conventions, that a radical shift in conventions can be, and often is, a means of deepening and revitalizing symbolic significance.

This point regarding the nature of conventions and symbolic meaning is one of the many insights one can learn from Joseph Flanagan, and it was through working with him that I came to discover the vast extent to which art can be mined for insights into the most basic of existential questions. My program in the present paper, then, is associated with Lipsey's work, but is inspired directly by Flanagan and shaped also by the study of continental philosophy and the concerns of a college teacher. I wish, first of all, to describe some of the philosophical support that is available for the project of renewing our sensitivity to aesthetic spirituality. Secondly I wish to share some of my own efforts at helping students develop what Lipsey calls 'eyes for art': senses that are simultaneously attuned to the vivacity of the material here and now, and to the larger meaning and mysterious whole to which the here and now belong, and from which they draw life.³

1. THE AESTHETICIZATION OF ART

The phenomenon that we are calling the aestheticization of truth and value has a long philosophical lineage in the skeptical and nominalist traditions, and a more proximate progenitor in Nietzsche. Those who embrace it celebrate the seemingly obvious powers of the creative imagination and productive will over the more doubtful and disputed powers of understanding and judgment. Those who reject it lament the hastiness with which it abandons the project of an understanding of understanding; they question the belief that aesthetic motivations can adequately replace epistemic truth, moral conviction, and religious faith; and they fear that all the seriousness and depth of human existence will be drained out for the sake of merely pleasurable curiosity and play.

³ Lipsey, *An Art of Our Own* 16-19.

Such a fear as this has been dramatized in several of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works. Johannes the Seducer, for instance, who dominates the first volume of *Either/Or*, is an example (and a parody) of a man for whom all of life is a matter of maximizing the most refined and purified of aesthetic pleasures, and whose philosophical orientation weighs all truth and value on a single, univocal, all-inclusive scale of values ranging only from the terribly interesting to the intolerably dull.⁴

In using the term 'aestheticization' in our discussion of the phenomenon we betray a debt to Kierkegaard's own articulation of the matter. Kierkegaard, through his fictional authors, identified distinct spheres of human concern and human life — 'the aesthetic,' 'the ethical,' 'the religious' — among which every person must make a fundamental, existential choice.⁵ I would like to suggest that in this articulation there is something historically naive. For the problem at hand is not so much 'the aesthetic' or art as such, but the emergence and domination of one particular kind of aesthetic. This aesthetic can and should be examined and criticized not only in its application to truth and value, but simply as an aesthetic.

One sees how Kierkegaard's thinking is confined to the aesthetics of his time by noticing that he never dwells on the ancient and medieval assumption that the chief function of art is a *disclosure* of the true and the good that *edifies*. One might recall that in Plato's *Republic* instruction in the arts is a central element in the education of the guardians of the ideal *polis* (see Books 2 and 3). But of course this instructional role is hampered by the propensities of art toward ambiguity, purely sensuous charm, and outright fiction. In the context of the *Republic* these propensities appear as defects.

There is an understandable reaction to this aesthetic of edification, a reaction insisting that when you drive out the sensuousness, the ambiguity, and the rich suggestiveness of art, then you drive out the art. Coupled with this conviction is the insistence that any subordination of art to pragmatic or instructional purposes requires precisely this sort of compromise of its essence. Such an insistence is

⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*. vol. One, trans. David Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).

⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and The Sickness Unto Death* trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954); Søren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Schocken Books, 1967).

voiced in the slogan, *'l'art pour l'art,'* art for art's sake. The phrase also names a movement, a version of the reaction which is one of the more familiar to us, which was in full flower in Kandinsky's time, and which, in a radical fashion, emphasized the necessary uselessness of art.

But for Kandinsky, to liberate art from all purpose is to impoverish it spiritually, to reduce its function to empty diversion, and he describes the result in the most disparaging of terms:

With cold eyes and indifferent mind the spectators regard the work. Connoisseurs admire the "skill" (as one admires a tight-rope walker), enjoy the "quality of painting" (as one enjoys a pastry). But hungry souls go hungry away.

The vulgar herd stroll through the rooms, saying "nice" or "splendid." Those who could speak have said nothing; those who could hear have heard nothing. This condition is called "art for art's sake." This neglect of inner meanings, which is the life of the colors, this vain squandering of artistic power is called "art for art's sake."⁶

2. ART AS DISCLOSIVE

In our own day an aesthetics of art as disclosive has, in various ways, received renewed philosophical support, and I would like to speak in a very selective way of some of the key philosophical ideas behind this support. But it might be well to mention first the poet Rilke, for the philosophers in question are quick to acknowledge his inspiration and are wont to cite his poem, "Archaic Torso of Apollo." In the translation by Robert Bly,⁷ it reads:

We have no idea what his fantastic head
was like, where the eyeballs were slowly swelling. But
his body now is glowing like a gas lamp,
whose inner eyes, only turned down a little,
hold their flame, shine. If there wasn't light, the curve
of the breast wouldn't blind you, and in the swerve

⁶ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual* 3.

⁷ Robert Bly, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke* trans. and ed. Robert Bly (New York: Harper and Row, 1981) 147.

of the thighs a smile wouldn't keep on going
toward the place where the seeds are.
If there weren't light, this stone would look cut off
where it drops clearly from the shoulders,
its skin wouldn't gleam like the fur of a wild animal,
and the body wouldn't send out light from every edge
as a star does ... for there is no place at all
that isn't looking at you. You must change your life.

The poem's final lines somehow contain both the calm of a logical deduction and the thunderousness of a battle cry. The poem does not only assert, but convinces our feelings that the torso is there to address us — not merely to please or delight, but to call us into truth. But what sort of truth? "You must change your life." But how? And to what purpose? Here is the other excellence of the poem; it captures perfectly how the demands of the work of art are real, are urgent, but are also indeterminate, unspecified, even unconceptualized.

There is for us, then, the possibility of thinking of art as disclosive, as did the ancients, but disclosive in a manner that works *via* the very kinds of ambiguities and indeterminacies that the *l'art pour l'art* theorists deem necessary if art is to retain its autonomy and its essence. We may speak of the truth of the work, but must understand this kind of truth as differing from the fruits of factual, theoretical, or commonsense judgments. Art discloses not particular facts, but real possibilities; not factual events and objects, but embodiments of the ultimates within which and according to which all events and objects must come to be. It does not aspire to univocity and clarity in the manner of propositional truth, but embodies its ultimates in the ambiguity of metaphor, and compounds or compresses a great plenitude, a multiplicity of meanings into single images, single symbols, and single works.

Heidegger is one example of a philosopher who accepted wholeheartedly such a notion of artistic truth. For Heidegger, it is no defect that art compounds meanings, asserts fictions, and defies propositional formulation. It is no defect, for the univocal utterances of other fields such as science and philosophy are, for Heidegger, born of a metaphysical horizon which, so far from allowing us to ask the Being question in the most profound and fruitful way possible, actually dulls our powers of penetration into that question and obscures the true manner

in which we are engaged by Being.⁸ Art provides Heidegger with an alternative to traditional philosophical language and hence a way to move out of the horizon deemed unsatisfactory. Thus in his analysis of a poem by Georg Trakl, Heidegger uses an undifferentiated, almost mythological language to capture the way in which the poem can be seen to gather a world that unfolds between 'earth' and 'sky,' that moves among 'mortals' and awaits the 'immortals.' The function of the poem is to embody the gathering of this fourfold.⁹ Clearly Heidegger is not doing aesthetics, not using philosophy to explain art, but rather he is exploring art as a disclosure that moves beyond what philosophy has so far achieved.

The origin of the work of art, Heidegger said, is art.¹⁰ This statement is gnomic, but at least it is clear in denying the Romantic aesthetics that sees the *artist* as the sole originator, that sees the artist as a creator *ex nihilo*. Gadamer has clarified and expanded Heidegger's notion of art as the origin of art by saying that artistic meaning is born out of a hermeneutic playing that transcends both artist and audience, in which both artist and viewer are caught up.¹¹ In learning how to discover artistic meaning I have followed Gadamer's suggestion of focusing less on the person of the artist and more on the play of possibilities that engages all three: artist, viewer, and work. Many of the qualities of a work of art are manipulated rather than invented by the artist. The qualities associated with different colors exemplify this. Red is a warm color, blue is a cool one; the artist does not invent such qualities or the associations that give rise to them; the artist plays with these as given potentialities just as the viewer does.

There are more subtle and interesting examples. The case of the Archaic Torso provides one. In such works one witnesses the successes of the artist at creating meaningful gestures in a stone imitation of the human form. But the artist has created neither the qualities of the stone nor the gestures that are recognizably human. Moreover (and

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings* ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) 202ff.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) 184-210.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Basic Writings* 17, 78.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* second revised edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1990) 101ff.

this is another phenomenon remarkably captured by Rilke's poem), the power of the torso over the viewer has not been destroyed, but even has, in a peculiar way, been emphasized and enhanced by something in which the artist had no hand: the dismemberment and decapitation that nature and time have worked upon it. Indeed this natural effect carries such power that modern sculptors have intentionally imitated these very ravages of time. Copious examples may be found in works of Rodin, Maillol, and Brancusi.

Certainly Michelangelo understood that artistic play transcends the artist when he described the work of the sculptor as the liberation of the figure that sleeps within the stone. There exists a whole series of his works that illustrate his point and mine perfectly because they are unfinished. These unfinished pieces for us tell a story altogether different from those of his finished works. In the unfinished pieces we can see an artistic creativity that is really midwifery, the artist birthing figures out of the wordless and motionless underworld of stone into the light of consciousness and human life. It is not Michelangelo alone who gives us this experience, but also something beyond him, something to do with the fact that the artist has here been unable fully to hide his art.¹²

From Heidegger and Gadamer I shall turn now to a thinker more intimately known to participants of the Lonergan Workshop. Important contributions to the recovery of the disclosiveness and spirituality of art have been made by Joseph Flanagan, under the influence of many thinkers, but especially that of Lonergan, who was not an aesthetician, but whose work has been made eminently relevant to aesthetics through Flanagan's elaboration of it.

For one who has studied Lonergan as much as Flanagan has, art can only be disclosive if it contributes to the enormously demanding existential project of self-appropriation. Let me, therefore, describe briefly the relevant aspects of that project. At the moment when one raises an existential question such as "What am I?" there are always already underway a variety of processes and systems through which the inter-involvement of subject and world takes place. Such processes and systems are physical, chemical, biological, sensitive, intelligent, historical, spiritual, and so on. They occur ongoingly and in accord

¹² Michelangelo, *Fourth Captive from the Boboli Gardens: "The Awakening Giant."* Florence, Accademia. Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

with statistical probabilities through ordered sets of schemes of recurrence. Part of this inter-involvement, this mediation of being, is the functioning of a sensory-motor system, a psyche.

Appropriating the psyche is, first of all, a matter of becoming conscious of the way the psyche moves and is moved; or in Lonergan's more technical terms, applying all of the human operations as conscious to the sensitive operations as intentional, and as combined with other kinds of intentional operations.¹³ It is, secondly, a matter of expanding one's capacity for wonder at the eruption of consciousness into being, at the event of being becoming conscious in the human. An unrestricted wonder of this sort follows its inquiry to the point where the whole of the issue is enveloped in mystery, so that openness to being becomes openness to the transcendent ground of being.

Scientific inquiry provides one way of attempting to understand the psyche. With the goal of explanation, science investigates both the sets of schemes that order the activity of the psyche at various levels and the sets of schemes that set the environmental conditions under which the psyche operates. Art is of course different. Where science seeks to understand the psyche, art seeks to move it. Science yields factual and theoretical judgments; art compounds meanings in all of their plenitude and multiplicity. Such differences are taken by many to mean that art and science cannot be part of a single project. But if one is thinking with Lonergan, they *must* be part of the single project of self-appropriation, for that project is, as it were, the only game in town.

Moreover, scientific insights can provide all sorts of clues for thinking about what art is and does. One thing that one notices rather quickly in Flanagan's discussions of art is that he makes heavy use of the language of function and variable. He uses the term, 'function,' where one used to say 'universal,' thereby bringing into aesthetics the conceptual breakthrough by which modern science went beyond Aristotelian categories. He speaks of cultural subjectivity in terms of matrices, topologies, typologies, centerings and decenterings. He describes the possibility of psychic conversion through art as the possibility of realizing that one can fix the variables that set the conditions under which one's psyche operates rather than being fixed by

¹³ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd; and New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 14-16.

them. He advocates psychic self-appropriation, which, beyond realizing that possibility, engages in the task of learning how to fix such variables.

People who prefer a more radical separation between science and art tend to think that the imagination is operating much more freely in art than in factual inquiry, that the factual concerns of science hem the imagination in; Flanagan, therefore would be improperly mixing categories in explaining creative imagination with terms proper to factual investigation. But one who has Flanagan's familiarity with both Lonergan and the history of science cannot accept that the imagination is naturally freer than theoretical intelligence. The story of scientific breakthrough is frequently one where, in Flanagan's terms, the breakthrough cannot come until the imagination ceases to set the conditions under which a given problem is formulated and possible solutions are conceived. So far from being hemmed in by factual inquiry, the imagination is often unequal to its demands.

But if the imagination is capable of such restrictiveness, how *does* one explain the freedom that art has over against science? The answer is that artistic transcendence of the factual is not simply a matter of imagination, but rather employs intelligence and intelligibility in a manner both analogous to and coextensive with the intelligence and intelligibility encountered in the theoretical realm, but with different purposes and yielding the kind of aesthetic truth that I have outlined above. When there is in art a breakthrough such as Kandinsky's almost single-handed invention of abstract art, it is not simply due to imagination, but is the result of *insights* into how images may be fixed so as to move, in meaningful ways, the psyche and the spirit.

3. MEANING IN PAINTING

The traditional way to examine how art compounds multiplicities of meaning is to do so in terms of 'symbolism,' for a symbol always points beyond itself and brings varieties of meanings into itself. A symbol, moreover, compounds meanings indicative of different ontological types; a stone cross, for example, is an inorganic object possessing aesthetic qualities proper to stone, but of course it also carries a variety of meanings pertaining to the human and divine ontological realms. By such compounding of types of meaning, symbols

can foster in the psyche a kind of ontological sensitivity and flexibility, and ability to see, for example, the divine in the inorganic, or the human in the vegetative, or the divine in the human, and so forth. One could perhaps chart the possibilities among which this symbolic flexibility moves according to a table worked out by Eric Voegelin.¹⁴ The terms on the vertical axis name levels of the hierarchy of being in which human life participates; the horizontal axis identifies conditions under which experience and symbolization at all levels occurs. A version of Lonergan's table of the human good could provide a more complicated schema of the same sort.

VOEGELIN'S CHART

	HISTORY	PERSON	SOCIETY
DIVINE NOUS			
PSYCHE — NOETIC			
PSYCHE — PASSIONS			
ANIMAL NATURE			
VEGETATIVE NATURE			
INORGANIC NATURE			
APEIRON — DEPTH			

If we can say that symbols live when they generate symbolic flexibility, we must say that they die when they become mere illustrations of concepts, when the analysis of an image terminates in the utterance of a concept that it renders sensuous: 'life,' 'death,' 'truth,' 'hope,' and so on. Symbols are not meant to serve concepts in this manner; this is not true mastery of their meaning. But unfortunately, much of the early training students receive in art criticism is training in precisely this task, so that in college we have many students who can identify the conceptual correlates of symbols, but who, by their very proficiency in solving such interpretative puzzles, find nothing very moving in the symbols. A college teacher who would like symbols both to live for students and to be a means of existential discovery and development is therefore put in the position of having to undo some of what has been done in terms of art education.

Symbols in painting may reside primarily in the objects represented or in the manner of the painting. In the history of painting one

¹⁴ Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis* trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978) 114.

notices a trend from preference for the former to preference for the latter. If, for instance, a Medieval or Renaissance painter wanted to infuse a painting with a presence of the Holy Spirit, he might introduce a dove or an angel into the scene; a modern painter with the same intent would be more likely instead to stick with mundane objects, but to bring to them certain qualities of light and dark that would bring out an inner spirituality, or to paint no objects at all, but merely the qualities of color and light that would be appropriate. The abstract inventions of Kandinsky, Klee, and Malevitch had Christian and Eastern spirituality behind them. But there are plenty of earlier examples. Van Gogh, for example, had positively evangelical intentions as a colorist.¹⁵

The painting of objects is typically analyzed under the category of 'representation'; the manner of the painting is analyzed in terms of 'color,' 'line,' 'tone,' 'texture,' and the like. All of these categories are highly technical, and tend to draw the analysis in a purely technical direction that can obscure and even kill the symbolism. Let me propose, then, some alternative terms. The painting of objects, I would suggest, forms the 'narrative dimension' of a painting; the manner of the painting forms what I shall call the 'morphological dimension,' These terms I shall now explain.

However helpful the notion of representation may be in the proper contexts, it has at least two unhelpful aspects. First is that it focuses on the relationship between the imitation and the objects imitated rather than on what the objects are doing, which is where the real meaning lies. Secondly, it encourages one to think that a good painting is good because it renders the perceived qualities of objects in an especially convincing manner. Certainly one should praise the technical virtuosity of an artist who can accomplish such tasks; but if the *essential* artistic task is one of convincing representation in two-dimensional form, then surely the snapshots I take with my point-and-shoot camera should hang in the Louvre, for they look just like the people I photographed.

The alternative I propose to the language of representation is the notion of a narrative dimension to painting. Artistry in rendering

¹⁵ George Heard Hamilton, *Painting and Sculpture in Europe 1880-1940* (New York: Penguin Books, 1967) 97; Meyer Schapiro, *Van Gogh* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co, 1980) 11-13.

objects is a matter of capturing a moment in a story in such a way as to suggest the full sweep of the story. A portrait reveals a character at a moment in a life, a life whose character and significance is condensed in the moment of the portrait; a still life does the same through the presentation of objects that are part of a world and a way of life; a landscape gives us a stage setting that implies drama, romance, or comedy. The composition of the scene, the organization of objects within the frame, is a crucial element in the creation of the narrative dimension of a painting. One must compose the scene in such a way as to bring out the most suggestive aspects of one's subject.¹⁶ Highly narrative forms of painting invite the use of techniques of literary and theatrical criticism, and this is to be encouraged.

When I speak of the 'morphological dimension' of painting I introduce a term which I would like to have a very particular meaning, a term which will subsume or sublimate all talk of color, line, texture, and so on, under a notion that is less differentiated technically but more fruitful symbolically. To think in morphological terms is to think constantly with the assumption that every pictorial mark, stroke, texture, or spot of color is a kind of pictograph brimming over with suggestiveness. It is to take pictorial elements such as lines, planes of color, lights and darks, and to see in them suggestions of forces, directionalities, biological growth forms, human gestures, and the like.

Abstract painting aspires to a purity of morphological meaning through an elimination or minimalization of the narrative element. Kandinsky set himself a novel challenge in attempting to heighten the spiritual quality of his work while stylistically divorcing himself from the heavily narrative conventions in which traditionally spiritual art worked. Kandinsky's spirituality therefore lacks the articulateness and definiteness of traditional religious painting; one might say that it mirrors, in this way, modernity's own groping efforts to give a new voice to the life of the spirit. But if these paintings resist verbal formulation, it is not for having nothing to say. On the contrary, it is because there is too great a wealth of meaning suggested in each morphological element to be captured in any simple utterance.

Morphological meaning can and should be objectified, but one cannot simply read it off of the canvas; one must go at it in a round-about fashion. I have latched onto the process of generating multiple

¹⁶ Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1989).

imaginative associations as a means of recognizing and coming to appreciate morphological meaning. To illustrate my thinking, when we are presented with a vivid instance of the color orange, we feel its warmth almost immediately. But how does warmth, a notion proper to the sense of touch, attach to a purely visual experience? Clearly by an associative process in which the warmth of fire, of sunshine, of heated metals is communicated by the color common to these things. The associations occur unnoticed, the work of twilight consciousness. They may compound with associations of other types, such as that of the orange fruit or the color of a New England autumn. Without one's even noticing it, an image may become a complex of varieties of associations, each affectively charged in its own way. This is its morphic function.

Objectifying morphological meaning requires that one deliberately indulge and bring to awareness the associative process. One does so by asking, What does this make me think of? What does this remind me of? No single association may be allowed to satisfy, but must rather be followed by the question, What else comes to mind? The process has some kinship to the psychoanalytic technique of free association, but its intent is not psychoanalytic and its procedure is less 'free' than Freud's technique, for it attempts to let the process be controlled by the descriptive qualities of the work of art. Once associations are articulated, one interrogates each for its significance. Some will be entirely idiosyncratic, but most will uncover unsuspected depths to the work and to its personal address to us. What had at first repulsed may now intrigue; where one had been anxious to move on, now one may be captivated, mesmerized by the work and its allegiance to the mysteries that engulf it.

Though morphic qualities suggest multiple varieties of meaning, still it is useful to recognize a preponderance of one kind of meaning in particular images and to range the varieties of meaning within an articulated universe of symbolic orders. To this end one could modify Voegelin's table and indicate the various morphological possibilities as follows:

	HISTORICAL aspect of morphological association	PERSONAL aspect of morphological association	SOCIETAL aspect of morphological association
Hieromorphisms			
Anthropomorphisms			
Theriomorphisms			
Phytomorphisms			
Physiomorphisms			
Apeiromorphisms			

As is true of Voegelin's original table, the purpose in laying out a systematic scheme is not to offer possibilities for the pigeon-holing of aesthetic experience, but the opposite: to show the relatedness of perspectives and the dynamic of the whole in such a way as to suggest both the means of escape from narrow interpretations and the possibility of comprehensiveness and flexibility in one's movement through the symbolic cosmos.

Because abstract art seeks a purely suggestive symbolism, it *requires* morphological association and also offers an excellent means of practicing it. The abstraction that occurs, for example, in Kandinsky's *Lines of Marks*¹⁷ is obviously inspired by the formal conventions of Egyptian hieroglyphs. But Kandinsky's images are formalized a step further: more so than in the Egyptian images, we cannot quite make out what the various painterly marks on the lines represent, cannot quite determine whether they are plants or animals, people or artifacts, and so on. But just as the earliest archeologists in Egypt were mistaken in regarding hieroglyphs as merely decorative, so too we would be mistaken were we to see in Kandinsky's painting a simple exercise in design. As in the ancient images, so here too there is a story, but the story is told suggestively instead of linguistically; it is, in my proposed terminology, a morphological rather than a glyphic communication. We 'read' Kandinsky's images by multiplying associa-

¹⁷ Wassily Kandinsky, *Lines of Marks*. Basel, Kunstmuseum. Scala/Art Resource, New York.

tions. If the lines of marks suggest to us an obscure record of a people's history, we should notice the variety of ways one could construe the beginning and end of that history, and the variety of contents to the tale that the images suggest, such as speaking, journeying, building, grouping together, worshipping. If we see in the picture roads and fences, figures standing or dancing, lumbering beasts and wisps of smoke, then we have done well, but we should also look again and see in those same images mountains and planets, altars and crucifixes, plains and cities, boats with oarsmen or with billowing sails. If we see a story of humans and beasts, this is good, but we should look again and see a tale of gods and their creations, if we see a story of the distant past, we should look further until we see also *our* story.

Figurative paintings require both narrative and morphological association, and it is well to pursue the two types by playing them off against one another in a dialectical fashion. Perhaps at this point I could rest my theoretical case and illustrate this process with an extended example that combines, in this way, both varieties of association.

Jan Vermeer's painting, "The Lacemaker,"¹⁸ is a work dating from around 1665. It is an oil on canvas that measures nine and one-half inches by eight and one-quarter inches — hence a miniscule work next to the many large canvases with which it shares space in the Louvre. It pictures a young woman against an undecorated wall, bent over her sewing, surrounded by her tools and by objects made of fabric. Light streams in, apparently from an open window to her left, but we are prevented by the limit of the frame from turning toward the source of the light, as we are prevented from exploring the rest of the room. We are focused only upon her; she is placed simply and solidly in the center of the canvas.

If we cannot see beyond this one figure and this one light-splashed wall, still our curiosity carries us speculatively beyond the frame. What sort of window receives this light? What kind of landscape does that light nourish? Where is this room? Who dwells here? We can imagine a variety of stories. Perhaps there are other rooms where others engage in *their* pursuits. Perhaps there are parents, or a husband. The labor of the young woman is perhaps duty, perhaps diversion, certainly a loving labor, but love of what or whom?

¹⁸ Jan Vermeer, *The Lacemaker*. Paris, Louvre. Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

Whatever the activities of the house, whatever the sounds and voices that fill the house, surely their sound is muffled, for the scene that we observe is a quiet scene. The hands move delicately and without sound, the breath is hushed with concentration, and the light falls with such gentle modulation as to quiet all. The lacemaker, we might imagine, is about to speak, but she is only forever *about* to speak, and so forever the stillness governs.

Her body closes in, closes down on her work, and thereby closes her off from us. This is her gesture; gesture is morphological. Closed off from her direct gaze, we become observers rather than participants. If our presence is known, it is too well known to interrupt the work. Since her eyes do not demand ours, our eyes wander, and look for some other point of access to her person. Perhaps in the hands, where we could share her concern; perhaps in her hair, where so much care has been spent. But there is something that always eludes us; we see neither her work nor her expression directly, and we cannot fully read them. For all we can tell, her expression may be one of total absorption in the task at hand, or it could be that of a mind wandering far away. Or perhaps it is the peculiar combination of these two that is also so much the essence of prayer: the concentration of the ritual moment that is simultaneously a wandering venture into the divine atmosphere.

The clothing and figure are painted in subtly modulated warm colors. We feel, then, the warmth of the body mingling with the warmth of the light. But below all of this there flows a deep, invitingly cool blue, a blue that is unconfined to a single fabric but rather fills the skirt, the tablecloth, and the pillow. It is a blue which, for all of its allure, retains its own kind of elusiveness, deep beyond all telling like a wilderness lake. Out of the pillow spill strands of thread, some white, others a brilliant red. They *are* clearly threads, but painted in a manner that retains some of the liquid qualities of the paint. An association with blood therefore inevitably courses beneath our literal reading of these objects as threads, and into a scene of unperturbed quiet enters the suggestion of something wildly vibrant and possibly even violent. This suggestion of life force is echoed also in the spots of red that color the leaf-patterns of the tablecloth. If the red is blood, then the white is water, as the blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of Christ.

The light that fills the painting is the ordinary light of day, but the manner of its diffusion throughout the scene has extraordinary effects. The wall, in this light, glows with such luster that it is really no mere wall but a creature of the light, and recalls the gilded backgrounds of icons, backgrounds designed to give the painting an entirely spiritual, entirely transcendent setting. The figure here as well is a creature of the light, sculpted and subtly gilded by it. The light performs many movements at once, washing across the scene, carving out solid forms, dancing in small points upon the tops and corners of objects. By the light we are opened to the scene of the woman at work; by the light she is opened to her work.

Her work is the task of weaving. Her weaving binds threads together into complex and delicate patterns of lace. The care of the maker embraces the fabric, but the fabric embraces the maker, for she wears lace. The painting, too, is a product of making. The painter weaves his colors into the fabric of the canvas and the delicate image of the lacemaker emerges. His skill and his presence embrace the work and, to announce the fact, he impresses his name on the weave of the canvas: Vermeer. But he too is embraced, for the finished painting is as much for his illumination as ours.

The act of making, of creating, opens the world to greater possibility. To open possibility, we close in, we concentrate our concern; but in closing in, we celebrate the larger act of opening that has created in us the gift of consciousness. In making, we bring to light, but we bring to light because we are brought, because the light opens us to bringing to light. It is the ordinary light of day, but a light that originates beyond our canvas, outside of our frame.

We are woven into the fabric of being, complex and delicate like lace, lit for a moment by the light of day. In Vermeer we can admire our fragile and evanescent moment of being as it participates in the larger and more original truths. And properly appreciated, the painting heightens not only our admiration, but our very own participation.

WHAT BERNARD LONERGAN LEARNED FROM SUSANNE K. LANGER

Richard M. Liddy

WHEN I WAS asked to re-visit the subject of my doctoral dissertation about Susanne K. Langer, finished almost twenty-five years ago, I did not think that I would realize something new about myself — and about Bernard Lonergan. For I wrote my dissertation on during a time when I was simultaneously wrestling with Lonergan's thought. I was a young priest in Rome and the Second Vatican Council had just ended unleashing a great deal of change and turmoil in the Catholic Church. I was studying philosophy: chiefly, Bernard Lonergan's philosophy on the one hand and, on the other hand, the work of Susanne K. Langer.

In *Insight* Lonergan had recommended Langer's *Feeling and Form* on artistic and symbolic meaning and in subsequent writings had continued to recommend that work. But in the middle-1960's, as I worked on my thesis, Langer published another major work entitled *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*.¹ And when I figured out what Langer was saying in that latter work, I experienced a big shock. That work, the three volumes of which occupied the last years of Langer's life, turned out to be a reductionist and materialist account of human mentality. Ultimately, it reduced all human mentality to feeling and feeling it reduced to electro-chemical events.²

The conflict that work set up in me became quite clear: who was right? Langer or Lonergan? And more importantly, what were the facts? It was quite an existential issue for me. Obviously, I came down on Lonergan's side of that issue (but not without some soul — and mind — searching); and that is expressed in my dissertation.

¹ Susanne Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*. vol. I (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967). Volume II and Volume III published in 1972 and 1982 respectively. Abridged edition of three volumes, 1988.

² See Richard M. Liddy, *Art and Feeling: An Analysis and Critique of the Philosophy of Art of Susanne K. Langer* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1970); also, review of Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, vol I, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 10, n.3 (1970) 481-484.

But the point that comes home to me revisiting my thesis many years later is not so much about myself, but about Lonergan. The reason I got involved in Langer's writings in the first place was that Bernard Lonergan had discovered something very positive in her writings, particularly in her major work on art, *Feeling and Form*. It was that work that he invariably recommended when he spoke of artistic meaning. And the point that has come home to me as I look back now is how often, in dealing with Langer and other writers, Lonergan accentuated the positive.

Insight was a major effort to 'develop positions' and 'reverse counter-positions.' What he did so often thereafter, as he read the existentialists and other contemporary writers, was the latter: to set whatever was right and true in an author within his basic positions regarding knowledge, objectivity and reality; and to let whatever did not fit within that context to fall by the wayside.

And that is what Lonergan did with Langer's *Feeling and Form*. He repeatedly asserted that he had learned a lot from it; and that is the subject of this paper: what Lonergan learned from Susanne K. Langer.

According to Fred Crowe, Lonergan had not read Langer by the time he finished *Insight* in 1953.³ Before the final publication of the book in 1956, however, he had added two references to *Feeling and Form*, one a footnote to the section on the aesthetic pattern of experience regarding her analysis of musical insight; and a second note to the section on myth and allegory on the sensible character of the initial meanings of words.⁴

Yet after the publication of *Insight*, he gave particular attention to studying *Feeling and Form*, specifically in preparation for his lectures on education at Xavier University in Cincinnati in 1959. In March of that year he wrote to Fred Crowe:

On education course: plan to integrate stuff on existentialists with theory of Art in S. K. Langer (*Feeling and Form*), follower

³ See Frederick E. Crowe, *Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 50. See also the editorial note in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 791: "Langer's work was confirmatory for him of what he had already written."

⁴ *Insight* 208, 567.

of Cassirer; eke out with *Insight*, for intellectualist, scientific side; throw in a bit of theology.⁵

Now somewhere Lonergan quotes C.S. Lewis to the effect that a good book is constituted by a good reader — and it seems to me that's what happened between Lonergan's serious reading of *Feeling and Form* in 1959, his translation of what he learned into his famous 'notebook' and the giving of the lectures at Cincinnati, now published in the *Collected Works* as *Topics in Education*. In these lectures are found the most extensive treatment of art in Lonergan's corpus, a whole chapter of 24 pages, the high point of a trajectory that goes from his 2 pages in *Insight* to the 3 pages in *Method in Theology*.⁶

That Lonergan considered *Feeling and Form* to be a very good book is quite evident from his positive references to it and from what was evidently his conviction that he owed his definition of art to her. As he writes in *Method in Theology*:

Here I borrow from Suzanne [sic] Langer's *Feeling and Form* where art is defined as the objectification of a purely experiential pattern and each term in this definition is carefully explained.⁷

And yet the interesting thing about this statement of Lonergan's and others like it is that this definition of art is nowhere to be found in

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 10, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) xii-xiii.

⁶ See "Time and Meaning," a lecture given to the academic community of Regis College, Toronto, September 16, 1962; published in *Bernard Lonergan: 3 Lectures* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1975) 36-37, 50-51. References to Langer are scattered throughout Lonergan's various courses and institutes on method.

Among other places see unpublished lecture at Thomas More Institute, "The Analogy of Meaning," September 25, 1963, where he also refers to "a book published two or three years ago by Rene Huighe, *Art and the Soul, L'Art et L'Ame*, profusely illustrated and studying the meaning in pictorial art."

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 61. In his lectures on education he says: "I propose to reflect on a definition of art that I thought was helpful. It was worked out by Susanne Langer in her book, *Feeling and Form*. She conceives art as an objectification of a purely experiential pattern. If we consider the words one by one, we will have some apprehension of what art is, and through art an apprehension of concrete living." *Topics in Education*, 211. In his 1962 lecture on "Time and Meaning" he says that he is following Susanne Langer's *Feeling and Form*, "which I found very illuminating on the nature of art." (*3 Lectures*, 36).

Langer's *Feeling and Form*! Langer indeed has a number of definitions of art, such as: "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling;" "Art is the creation of forms expressive of human feeling;" or "Art is the creation of perceptible forms expressive of human feeling."⁸ And yet none of these are the definition of art that Lonergan continually attributes to Langer.

Which only goes to show, I believe, the creative transformation that the work of Langer — and other writers as well — went through, when Lonergan focussed on them. I have no doubt that Lonergan's definition of art is clearer and leaner than Langer's, because it is rooted in his own explanatory understanding of human interiority.

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 of understanding.⁹

It was because Lonergan understood understanding that he was able to integrate into his own understanding the genuine insights of such diverse thinkers as Jean Piaget, Ludwig Binswanger, Gilbert Durand, Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Jung, Eliade and Voegelin, and so on — and in this particular case, Susanne K. Langer. In the writings of each of these authors, Lonergan was able to grasp what was of value, what was capable of development, on the one hand, and what was perhaps not so helpful, not capable of development on the other.

In the case of Langer's *Feeling and Form* Lonergan was able to highlight and enrich his own understanding of art from the basic ideas and many illustrations, often from the writings and sayings of artists themselves, found in Langer's work. At the same time he, of course, had no interest in the empiricist and reductionist leanings that I found scattered in Langer's early writings and highlighted in her later, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*.

Let me add a word about the differing contexts of Lonergan's writings on art and his references to *Feeling and Form*. In the first

⁸ *Feeling and Form* 40; 60; Susanne K. Langer, *Problems of Art* (New York: Scribner, 1953) 63; other definitions can be found in my doctoral dissertation, Richard M. Liddy, *Art and Feeling* 31-32.

⁹ *Insight*, 22 (xxviii); our first reference is to the collected work edition, the second to the prior editions.

place, there is *Insight*. In that magisterial text the focus is on insight into insight; and his major examples are from science and mathematics, "the fields of intellectual endeavor in which the greatest care is devoted to exactitude and, in fact, the greatest exactitude is attained."¹⁰ In that context, art is treated in the chapter on common sense as subject within the section on the aesthetic pattern of consciousness: the pattern that focusses of the joy of conscious living itself. As consciousness is free and can float in various directions determined by one's interest, one's care, so it can float in a direction guided by a care just to enjoy human experiencing for its own sake.

One is led to acknowledge that experience can occur for the sake of experiencing, that it can slip beyond the confines of serious-minded biological purpose, and that this liberation is a spontaneous, self-justifying joy.¹¹

With respect to this field of aesthetic experience, the artist discovers "ever novel forms that unify and relate contents and acts of aesthetic experience." Such insight into aesthetic patterns find expression, not in concepts, but in the work of art itself.

The artist establishes his insights, not by proof or verification, but by skillfully embodying them in colors and shapes, in sounds and movements, in the unfolding situations and actions of fiction. To the spontaneous joy of conscious living, there is added the spontaneous joy of free intellectual creation.¹²

After another two paragraphs on the symbolic or mysterious dimension of artistic creation, Lonergan quickly moves on to other patterns of experience, particularly the intellectual pattern of experience. But after having written *Insight*, where the goal is insight into insight, Lonergan gradually entered into a more existentialist and phenomenological context; he began to link what he had done on the intellectual side of things to the insights of various other writers into other areas of concrete human living.

Thus, in his 1959 lectures on education he sought to link his own insight into insight with what Piaget had learned about growing development in the human person, what Binswanger had learned

¹⁰ *Insight* 14 (xx).

¹¹ *Insight* 207-208 (184).

¹² *Insight* 208 (185).

about the dreams of night and the dreams of morning, and what Langer had learned about insight in the various forms of art. As he describes the aim of his lecture on art in these 1962 lectures:

Neither mathematics nor natural science nor philosophy nor psychology is the same as life. I propose to seek an apprehension of concrete living in its concrete potentialities, through art today, and through history tomorrow.

He then speaks of all differentiation of consciousness as simply a withdrawal for a return.

It is withdrawal from total activity, total actuation, for the sake of a fuller actuation when one returns. What one returns to is the concrete functioning of the whole. In that concrete functioning there is an organic interrelation and interdependence of the parts of the subject with respect to the whole, and of the individual subject with respect to the historically changing group. Art mirrors that organic functioning of sense and feeling, of intellect not as abstract formulation but as concrete insight, of judgment that is not just judgment, but that is moving into decision, free choice, responsible action.¹³

Lonergan, as always, is thinking of the good as the conscious developing subject; the subject with his concerns that defines the various horizons of his world. It is in this context that Lonergan read Langer's *Feeling and Form* and translated what he read there into his own thought and vocabulary.

In what follows in our paper we will stick closely to the text of *Feeling and Form*, chiefly because that is the text that Lonergan refers to when he speaks of artistic and symbolic meaning and this is the text he is thinking of when he said "I think Susanne Langer has a wonderful analysis of artistic creation."¹⁴

Our method will be more that of an interpreter than that of a systematic presenter. Lonergan more than adequately, I believe, did the latter.

¹³ *Topics in Education* 209.

¹⁴ *A Second Collection* 224.

SUSANNE K. LANGER

Philosophy in a New Key (1941)

Susanne Knauth Langer was born on the upper west side of Manhattan in 1895 to German immigrant parents. Her father, a lawyer, played the cello and the piano, and as a child Susanne learned to play both instruments. Her future writings on art, therefore, are from the point of view of someone who loved to play and to listen to music.¹⁵ In 1920 she obtained her bachelor's degree from Radcliffe College; in 1924 a masters in philosophy from Harvard; and in 1926 a doctorate from Harvard in 1926, writing her dissertation on the topic: "A Logical Analysis of Meaning."

Because of the times, her early philosophical work took place in the context of Anglo-American logical philosophy. This is obvious in her early works, *The Practice of Philosophy*, of 1930, and her *Introduction to Symbolic Logic* of 1937. She was particularly influenced by Bertrand Russell, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* and her own mentor at Harvard, Henry M. Sheffer. It was Sheffer, she says, who interested her in the 'unlogicized' areas of mental life and in the relationship between the complicated symbols of mathematical logic and, on the other hand, other areas of human symbolization, such as ordinary and literary language, myth, ritual and art.¹⁶ The conventional positivist wisdom of the day tended to relegate all these areas to the non-scientific and therefore non-intellectual, 'emotional,' dimension of the human person.

Consequently, in 1941, contrary to such positivist views, Langer in her very popular *Philosophy in a New Key*, vindicated the properly intellectual character of the non-discursive 'presentational' symbols of myth, ritual and art. Under the influence of the neo-Kantian, Ernst Cassirer, Langer pointed to the highly 'formal' character of these non-scientific expressions. Art, for example, is not just the symptomatic expression of the artist's immediate emotion aimed at the stimulation of immediate emotion in the percipient; it involves a stylized 'formal'

¹⁵ See Langer's obituary in the *New York Times*, July 19, 1985, 12.

¹⁶ Langer, *Problems of Art* 125. Also, Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: New American Library, 1948) 78-82.

quality, an element of 'psychic distance' that constitutes it as properly human.

Cassirer had emphasized this formal, symbolic, quality in art and other 'symbolic forms.' Such forms are distinguished from merely 'passive images' in that they are not just given, but are created by the human mind itself. Hence, an historic and analytic study of these various symbolic forms — language, myth, religion, art — can provide a 'phenomenology of human culture,' the human person's ongoing discovery of himself.¹⁷

Langer calls these non-scientific symbols 'presentational' because their materials are the ordinary presentations of eye and ear, of sense and imagination.¹⁸ They are the sensitive or imaginative forms, the *Gestalten*, of art, the gestures of ritual and the imaginative picture-stories of fairytale and myth. These include not just the elements of sense and visual imagination, but materials of aural, kinaesthetic and literary imagination as well.

To these sensitive or imaginative elements meaning or import accrues. Although, in this writer's opinion, Langer never successfully determined the meaning of meaning, nevertheless she was insistent on the human and 'meaningful' character of these presentational symbols.¹⁹ For unlike mere signals which are rooted in biological reflexes and are symptomatic of immediate emotional conditions, symbols are, as she puts it, vehicles of conception.²⁰ They are highly 'charged' with human formulated significance. In *Philosophy in a New Key* Langer analyzes art, especially music, as symbolizing the complexity of human feeling; ritual as symbolizing the human person's permanent attitude or orientation among the terrifying forces of nature and society; and myth as the serious envisioning of the fundamental concepts of life.

The key term in the transition of Langer's interest from the symbolism of logic to these other presentational symbols was the term 'form,' the basis, according to the early Wittgenstein, of the symbolic character of language. In the *Tractatus*, for example, he uses an image that Lonergan also would invoke:

¹⁷ On Cassirer's influence on Langer, see *Art and Feeling* 20-24.

¹⁸ Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* 83-86.

¹⁹ In *Feeling and Form* Langer makes a distinction between the meaning of literal discursive symbolism and the 'import' of art. See 31-32.

²⁰ Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* 61-70.

There is a general rule by means of which the musician can obtain the symphony from the score, and which makes it possible to derive the symphony from the groove on the gramophone record, and using the first rule, to derive the score again. That is what constitutes the inner similarity between these things which seem to be constructed in such entirely different ways.²¹

But unlike Wittgenstein, Susanne Langer was unable to abstain from questions of psychology. In seeking an explanation for the possibility of non-linguistic symbolism, she turned to the school that seemed most to emphasize 'form,' that is the Gestalt psychologists of Wertheimer, Köhler and Koffka. These emphasized the fact that concrete sense experience is itself a process of perceiving total forms. Where previous experimental psychology assumed individual isolated impressions which by a process of association coalesce to form a totality, the *Gestalt* psychologists emphasized the primacy of form, 'the whole,' over individual impressions in perception. As Langer wrote in *Philosophy in a New Key*:

Unless the Gestalt-psychologists are right in their belief that *Gestaltung* is of the very nature of perception, I do not know how the hiatus between perception and conception, sense-organ and mind-organ, chaotic stimulus and logical response, is ever to be closed and welded. A mind that works primarily with meanings must have organs that supply it primarily with forms.²²

In *Topics in Education* Lonergan takes up this theme of the formative aspect of human perception. As the human person moves from the disordered and chaotic 'dreams of night' to the 'dreams of morning,' the selective character of human perception becomes more pronounced.

The difference between the dream of morning and the dream of night that is under the influence of digestive functions and organic disturbances is that there is more pattern to the dream of morning. Consciousness is a selecting, an organizing. And being awake is more organized than the dream of morning. Patterning is essential to consciousness. If one hears a tune or a

²¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 4.0141, 39. Lonergan refers to this example in *Topics in Education* 211.

²² Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* 84.

melody, one can repeat it; but if one hears a series of street noises, one cannot reproduce them. The pattern in the tune or melody makes it more perceptible, something that consciousness can pick out and be conscious of, so to speak. Similarly, verse makes words memorable. One can remember "Thirty days has September, April, June, and November," because there is a jingle in it, a pattern to it.²³

Lonergan's point — and Langer's — is that artistic meaning is found only in the symphony: that is, in the concrete pattern of the musical sounds. There may also be an external relationship, for example, between a representative painting and the object represented; but that relationship as such does not constitute the work as artistic. Freudian psychologists and others who delight in 'explaining' art in terms of the subconscious motivations of the artist in representing certain objects fail to grasp the specifically aesthetic level of concrete experiential pattern. As Langer puts it:

Interest in represented objects and interest in the visual or verbal structures that depict them are always getting hopelessly entangled. Yet I believe artistic meaning belongs to the sensuous construct as such; this alone is beautiful, and contains all that contributes to its beauty.²⁴

Feeling and Form (1953)

Langer's classic work on art, *Feeling and Form*, published in 1953, is a development of the theory she began in *Philosophy in a New Key*. Here her approach is much less genetic and historical, in terms of the origins of art, and more analytical in terms of the concrete and operative elements in artistic consciousness.

The unifying term between the two works is, of course, form: that is, a pattern, a concrete set of internal relations between, for example, the colors and qualities of a picture, the proportionate importance of events in a drama, the ratios of musical motion.²⁵ Langer uses many terms to designate the precise character of this concrete unified whole that is the work of art. In the following sections we will consider it as

²³ *Topics in Education* 212.

²⁴ Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* 178.

²⁵ Langer, *Feeling and Form* 18.

'the aesthetic illusion,' as 'vital form,' (that is, articulated according to the forms of feeling); and finally, as 'commanding form' (that is, under the control of free human creativity.) We will also add sections on the creative process and on the principles of artistic and symbolic imagination.

1. *The Aesthetic Illusion*

In *Feeling and Form* Langer develops her conviction that the meaning or 'import' of art belongs to 'the sensible construct as such,' the pure perceptible form. She does this by speaking of the aesthetic world as the realm of 'illusion,' and less frequently, 'appearance' or 'semblance.'

By characterizing the aesthetic as illusion Langer does not intend to contrast the realm of art with that of reality as such, but only to contrast it with the realm of *practical* reality.²⁶ Accordingly, aesthetic illusion implies, first of all, the *liberation* of perception from servitude to the realm of practical interests, and secondly, the concentration of attention on that world which, from the viewpoint of practical interest, is a world of illusion, of 'mere appearances.' That new world is a world in which perception is its own end and finds its own line of development.

Langer notes the common sense conviction that the aesthetic and artistic always have the character of strangeness, otherness.²⁷ Since 'one's world' is determined by one's interest, attention, care, this 'otherness' implies a shift of attention away from the ready-made world of normal living: in Coleridge's terms, "the world of selfish solicitude and anxious interest."²⁸ It implies a shift of attention from the world of practically interesting 'things' to the world of 'appearances as such.' The world of appearances, of shapes, sounds, colors, and so on, is always a possible object of interest; for even so non-sensuous a thing as a fact *appears* this way to one person and that way to another.²⁹

Nevertheless, we are usually not interested in the world of appearances. Appearances are valued only as indications of the 'things'

²⁶ Langer, *Feeling and Form* 22. The use of the term "reality" with its metaphysical overtones is studiously avoided by Langer.

²⁷ Langer, *Feeling and Form* 45, 50. See *Topics in Education*, 216.

²⁸ Liddy, *Problems of Art* 32.

²⁹ Langer, *Feeling and Form* 29.

in question. Entering a room in normal daylight, we notice its contents, a red sofa, for instance; but we tend not to notice the gradations of red or even the appearance of other colors caused by the way the light strikes the sofa at that particular moment.³⁰ Langer illustrates our customary obliviousness to appearances with the following quote from Roger Fry:

The needs of our actual life are so imperative that the sense of vision becomes highly specialized in their service. With an admirable economy we see only so much as is needful for our purposes; but this is in fact very little, just enough to recognize and identify each object or person; that done, they go into our mental catalogue and are no more really seen. In actual life the normal person really only reads the labels as it were on the objects around him and troubles no further. Almost all the things which are useful in any way put on more or less this cap of invisibility.³¹

Nor, according to Langer, is this freedom from practicality maintained by considering the aesthetic the realm of 'make believe.'

The function of artistic illusion is not 'make-believe,' as many philosophers and psychologists assume, but the very opposite, disengagement from belief — the contemplation of sensory qualities without their usual meanings, of "Here's that chair," "That's my telephone," etc. The knowledge that what is before us has no practical significance in the world is what enables us to give attention to its appearances as such.³²

Not only is the aesthetic experience a liberation from the cares of practicality, it is also a liberation from intellectual constraints.

The free exercise of artistic intuition often depends on clearing the mind of intellectual prejudices and false conceptions that

³⁰ Liddy, *Problems of Art* 27.

³¹ Quoted from Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, in *Philosophy in a New Key*, 238. Lonergan usually illustrates this characteristic of art through his standard example of waiting for a stop light: "The significance of art is a liberation from all the mechanizations of sensibility. The red and green are signals that let you take your foot off the brake and put it on the accelerator. There's the routinization of sensibility — the ready-made man and the ready made world, with set reactions responding to stimuli — and art liberates sensitivity, allows it to flow in its own channel and with its own resonance." *A Second Collection* 224.

³² *Feeling and Form* 30.

inhibit people's natural responsiveness. If for instance a reader of poetry believes that he does not 'understand' a poem unless he can paraphrase it in prose, and then the poet's true or false opinions are what makes the poem good or bad, he will read it as a piece of discourse, and his perception of poetic form and poetic feeling are likely to be frustrated ... Similarly, if academic training has caused us to think of pictures primarily as examples of schools, periods, of the classes that Croce decries ... we are prone to think about the picture, gathering quickly all available data for intellectual judgments and so close out and clutter the paths of intuitive response.³³

Langer often expresses the liberating character of the aesthetic and artistic by speaking of the essentially 'abstract' character of the aesthetic illusion; and by this she means its separation from every other world, particularly the world of practical interest.

All forms of art, then, are abstracted forms; their content is only a semblance, a pure appearance, whose function is to make them, too, more apparent — more freely and wholly apparent than they could be if they were exemplified in a context of real circumstance and anxious interest. It is in this elementary sense that all art is abstract. Its very substance, quality without practical significance, is an abstraction from material existence ... This fundamental abstractness belongs just as forcibly to the most illustrative mural and most realistic plays, provided they are good after their kind, as to the deliberate abstractions that are remote representations or entirely non-representational designs.³⁴

As this abstraction, or separation, from other worlds takes place, a 'new world' emerges. Langer's most frequent illustration is from pictorial art. The "image created by the painter on the canvas does not take its place as a new 'thing' beside the other things in the studio."³⁵ The painter has added nothing to the paints and the canvas. And yet, through his disposition of the paints on the canvas the created image begins to emerge, and this image seems to abrogate the very existence of the canvas and the paint. With the emergence of the artistic semblance these concrete materials become difficult to perceive in their

³³ *Feeling and Form* 397.

³⁴ *Feeling and Form* 50-51.

³⁵ See *Problems of Art* (New York: Scribners, 1957) 28.

own right. Perception is liberated from the world of practical materials — of canvas and paint.³⁶

Consequently, when Langer speaks of illusion as the very 'stuff' of art, the 'new dimension' in which the artistic form is presented, she means not only the liberation of perception from servitude to practical interests, but also the entry of perception into its own world of pure sensation, pure imagination, pure perception. This is the result of the liberation of perception from all other interests and other worlds; and this is what is implied by saying that aesthetic meaning belongs to the sensuous construct *as such*, the *pure* perceptible form, *sheer* visions or images, and that appearances are appreciated for their own sake and not as indications of the 'things' in question. All such expressions in Langer's writings imply that the very being of aesthetic and artistic forms is *to be perceived*. As she puts it, "They exist only for the sense or imagination that perceives them."³⁷

The perceptible character of an aesthetic form is its entire being. Thus, with regard to pictorial art,

The surest way to abstract the element of sensory appearance from the fabric of actual life and its complex interests, is to create a sheer vision, a datum that is nothing but appearance and is indeed avowedly an object only for sight ... That is the purpose of illusion in art: it effects at once the abstraction of the visual form and causes one to see it as such.³⁸

Now one of the fundamental convictions of Lonergan's epistemology is a conviction first formulated by Aristotle: that knowledge is primarily by identity between the knowing and the known. Only secondarily, with the differentiation of consciousness does there arise the clear distinction between subject and object. As Aristotle put it, sense in act is the sensible in act, and intellect in act is the intelligible in act. Lonergan speaks of this initial stage as the stage of elemental meaning, prior to the clear distinction of a meaning and a meant. Such is the meaning of the work of art as described by Langer. As Lonergan puts it:

³⁶ See *Problems of Art* 127: "One does not see a picture as a piece of spotted canvas, any more than one sees a screen with shadows on it in a movie."

³⁷ *Feeling and Form* 50; See 48.

³⁸ *Problems of Art* 31-32.

Some people will say that art is an illusion, others that art reveals a fuller profounder reality. But the artistic experience itself does not involve a discussion of the issue. What we can say is that it is opening a new horizon, it is presenting something that is other, different, novel, strange, new, remote, intimate — all the adjectives that are employed when one attempts to communicate the artistic experience.³⁹

According to Langer, each of the art forms have their own primary illusion: that is, they exist in their own realm of liberated perception.⁴⁰ The orientation of a particular area of perception, away from other worlds, particularly the world of practical activity, introduces it into a world of its own, its own 'virtual' realm of illusion.⁴¹

For example, in the plastic arts vision enters into a realm of 'virtual space,' liberated from its normal practical orientation within common sense space.⁴² Common sense space is gradually constructed by the collaboration of the various senses, sight, hearing, touch, and so on, supplemented by "memory, recorded measurements, beliefs about the constitutions of things," and so forth.⁴³ The plastic arts, on the other hand, are constituted by an orientation into a realm that is purely visual, and in which all the constitutive elements are purely visual.

Pigments and canvas are not in the pictorial space; they are in the space of the room, as they were before, though we no longer find them there by sight without great effort of attention. For touch they are still there. But for touch there is no pictorial space. The picture, in short, is an apparition. It is there for our eyes but not for our hands, nor does its visible space, however, great, have any normal acoustical properties for our ears. The apparently solid volumes in it do not meet our commonsense

³⁹ *Topics in Education* 216.

⁴⁰ See *Philosophical Sketches* (New York: New American Library, 1964) 76: "I say 'perceptible' rather than 'sensuous' forms because some works of art are given to imagination rather than to the outward senses. A novel, for instance, usually is read silently with the eye, but is not made for vision, as a painting is; and though sound plays a vital part in poetry, words even in poetry are not essentially sonorous structures like music. Dance requires to be seen, but its appeal is to deeper centers of sensation. The difference between dance and mobile sculpture makes this immediately apparent. But all works of art are purely perceptible forms."

⁴¹ See *Feeling and Form* 49-50.

⁴² See *Feeling and Form* 69ff.

⁴³ *Feeling and Form* 73.

criteria for the existence of objects; they exist for vision alone. The whole picture is a piece of purely visual space.⁴⁴

Painting creates a realm Langer calls 'virtual scene.' Sculpture and architecture are other modes of virtual space creating the illusions of volume in space and the arrangement of space. She speaks of sculpture as creating the illusion of kinetic volume and architecture as creating the illusion of 'ethnic domain,' a 'world' that is the counterpart of the 'self' whose semblance of kinetic volume is created in sculpture.⁴⁵

The inter-related shapes and volumes of a picture or a piece of sculpture define an autonomous realm of space, which is purely visual. Within this space forms are constructed and ordered so as to arrive at a complete 'shaping' of a given visual field; it is 'infinitely plastic,' whether in two or three dimensions. Lines, which in common sense space indicate a relationship among 'things' — fore-shortening — in art serve only to mediate between the several layers of design in a complex visual space. In his lecture on education Lonergan refers to the following quote from Adolf Hildebrand, found in Langer:

Let us imagine total space as a body of water in which we may sink certain vessels, and thus be able to define individual volumes of water without, however, destroying the idea of a continuous mass of water enveloping all.⁴⁶

Music, on the other hand, creates an entirely different illusion which Langer calls 'virtual time,' totally different from the abstract clock time by which we measure our lives. Music is created for the sense of hearing alone and consists in movements, tensions, resolu-

⁴⁴ *Problems of Art*, 28. Because it depends on a completely different, 'liberated,' orientation of consciousness, the virtual space of the visual arts cannot even be said to be 'divided' from 'actual' common sense space, but is entirely self-contained and independent. See *Feeling and Form* 72ff.

⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that in *Topics in Education* Lonergan supplements Langer's analysis of sculpture with reference to Merleau-Ponty's work on the constitution of ourselves as a certain feeling space; and her analysis of architecture with reference to Heidegger on architecture as objectified space. See *Topics in Education*, 225-226.

⁴⁶ *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture* (New York: 1932) 53-55; quoted in *Feeling and Form* 75; commented on by Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, 223-224.

tions and even 'rests' that create a virtual world into which the musician helps us enter.

Dance creates the primary illusion of 'virtual powers,' that is the visual expression of 'wills' in conflict and resolution.

In watching a dance, you do not see what is physically before you — people running around or twisting their bodies; what you see is a display of interacting forces, by which the dance seems to be lifted, driven, drawn, closed, or attenuated. The physical realities are given ... but in the dance they disappear; the more perfect the dance, the less we see its actualities. What we see, hear and feel are the virtual realities, the moving forces of the dance, the apparent centers of power and their emanations, their conflicts and resolutions, life and decline, their rhythmic life.⁴⁷

Literature creates an illusion of virtual life, of memory as in lyric poetry, myth, legend or the novel. The drama introduces a person into the experience of the impending future, tragic or comic as the case may be. And the film extracts us from the present world and introduces us into another created present world — a quasi dream-world experience into which we too can enter.

2. Forms of Feeling

According to Langer, these purely perceptible forms are expressive of human feeling. They not only involve the exclusion of other practical and intellectual cares, but they also involve a release into their own line of development, determined by a retinue of affects and feeling. This accounts for the peculiar 'logic' of artistic patterns, with their own proper rhythm of tensions and resolutions, their increasing variation and complexity within a unity. This is why artists speak of works in organic terms, noting the 'life' in the patterns of a particular painting, while another kind of work is said to be 'lifeless' or to contain 'dead-spots.'

In *Feeling and Form* Langer takes the case of pure design as a touchstone for her explanation of this 'vital' character of art. She notes that all over the world in such unrelated cultural products as Chinese embroideries, Mexican pots, Negro body decorations, and English

⁴⁷ *Problems of Art* 5-6.

printers' flowers, one finds an astonishing similarity in basic decorative forms and designs. The vital character of these forms — lines and zigzags, circles and scrolls, balanced and repeated — can easily be seen by comparing them with strictly geometrical forms.⁴⁸ These latter, all defined and expressed with geometrical exactitude, invariably seem 'empty,' 'dead,' 'unfelt.' Pure design, on the other hand, with no representative intent, gives the semblance of 'movement,' 'growth,' 'life,' 'feeling.'

Langer roots this life of purely perceptible forms in what Albert Barnes called our "general need of perceiving freely and agreeably ... the need of employing our faculties in a manner congenial to us."⁴⁹ In *Feeling and Form* she notes that this congeniality finds an "instinctive basis in the principles of perception." Previously, in *Philosophy in a New Key*, she noted that in music we deal with "free forms following inherent psychological laws of rightness."⁵⁰ These psychological laws and principles determine a certain inevitability in aesthetic form, making it 'necessary' or 'inviolable.' They are the foundations from whence springs the 'decorum' or 'fitness' of decoration, for example. Langer's general term for these principles of free perception is "the forms of feeling."

In Langer's earlier aesthetic writings there is an implied dichotomy between the forms of perception, 'purely perceptible forms,' and 'the forms of feeling.' But her later writings tend to erase that trend and emphasize the close connection between the two elements in such a way that the proper character and development of purely perceptible forms is intimately rooted in the forms of feeling. The beginning of this emphasis can be found in *Feeling and Form* where she says of the aesthetic object that "It gives us forms of imagination and forms of feeling inseparably."⁵¹

In emphasizing the 'organic' character of aesthetic form, Langer notes, for example, the rhythmic character of works of art: the consummation of one event is simultaneously the preparation for another, creating the setting up of new tensions by the resolution of former ones. Thus, in our paradigm case:

⁴⁸ *Feeling and Form* 61ff.

⁴⁹ Albert Barnes, *The Art in Painting* (New York, 1928) 29; quoted in *Feeling and Form* 61.

⁵⁰ *Philosophy in a New Key* 203.

⁵¹ *Feeling and Form* 397.

Decoration may be highly diversified or it may be very simple; but it always has what geometric form, for instance, a specimen illustration in Euclid, does not have — motion and rest, rhythmic unity, wholeness. Instead of mathematical form, the design has — or rather, it *is* — ‘living’ form, though it need not represent anything living, not even vines or periwinkles.⁵²

The effect of this ‘life’ within each of the primary illusions is to make the perceptible forms *more perceptible*.

The immediate effect of good decoration is to make the surface, somehow, more visible; a beautiful border on textile not only emphasizes the edge but enhances the plain folds, and a regular all-over pattern, if it is good, unifies rather than diversifies the surface. In any case, even the most elementary design serves to concentrate and hold one’s vision to the expanse it adorns.⁵³

3. *Created Forms*

We have been speaking about what Lonergan would call Langer’s descriptions of aesthetic forms as purely experiential patterns. But, according to Langer, art includes, besides this purely experiential element, the further element of its objectification, what we call ‘works of art.’ This connects with her early recognition of the intellectual character of the various presentational symbols. For artistic creation involves, not just feeling-influenced experience, but the idealization of experience, the grasp of what is important from this perspective as important, and its expression or objectification in a work of art. Such objectification is a properly human and necessary element in art; for prior to this the aesthetic patterns are not fully and humanly known — not even to the artist himself.⁵⁴

Objective expression is necessary for the artist to ‘hold,’ to ‘fix,’ to ‘contemplate,’ to ‘understand,’ the forms of his free aesthetic experience and feeling.⁵⁵ The artist’s aim is to recreate in the concrete work of art a pattern isomorphic with his own idealized free aesthetic experience.

⁵² *Feeling and Form* 63.

⁵³ *Feeling and Form* 88-89.

⁵⁴ *Feeling and Form* 389.

⁵⁵ *Philosophical Sketches* 80; *Problems of Art* 24-25; 68; 94-95.

There is, therefore, in art an intellectual component that makes it comparable to another uniquely human objectification, that is, language. Art, in fact, belongs to the same category as language. The appreciation of a work of art involves a mental shift as definite and radical as the change from hearing the sound of squeaking or buzzing to hearing speech, when suddenly in the midst of 'insignificant' surrounding noises a single word is grasped. The whole character of our hearing is transformed, the medley of physical sounds disappears, the ear receives language, perhaps indistinct by reason of interfering noises, but struggling through them like a living thing.⁵⁶

The work of art effects the same sort of reorientation. Just as sounds become words by reason of their 'meaning,' so colors on a canvas become a painting because of its artistic significance or 'import.' This import permeates the whole structure of the work and separates it from the host of surrounding 'insignificant' objects.⁵⁷

Consequently, the 'otherness' of the artistic is due not only to its aesthetic character whereby experience, liberated from other patterns, lives its own life; but also to the fact that it has been 'created' by human intelligence and invites human intellectual apprehension. Langer is quite clear in asserting that art involves not only the level of perception and experience, but also the level of insight, understanding, contemplation. "The aim of art is *insight*, understanding the essential life of feeling."⁵⁸ "The artistic symbol, *qua* artistic, negotiates insight, not reference."⁵⁹

Analyses of art very frequently fail to take into account this intellectual character. On the contrary, they consider art chiefly in terms of immediate experience and/or, most frequently, immediate emotion. It is in opposition to this trend, characterized occasionally as 'empiricist,' 'positivist,' 'behaviorist,' that much of Langer's early work was written; the insufficiency of this tendency is in fact the major emphasis in the chapters on art in *Philosophy in New Key* and in *Feeling and Form*.

The history of art has been the history of artists' efforts to attain ever more integrated, disciplined, and articulated forms. Sheer

⁵⁶ *Feeling and Form* 84.

⁵⁷ *Feeling and Form* 52.

⁵⁸ *Problems of Art* 92; See *Philosophy in a New Key* 188.

⁵⁹ *Feeling and Form* 22.

emotional self-expression requires no such effort and is in fact an obstacle to artistic creativity.

An artist working on a tragedy need not be in personal despair or violent upheaval; nobody, indeed, could work in such a state of mind. His mind would be occupied with the causes of his emotional upset. Self-expression does not require composition and lucidity; a screaming baby gives his feeling far more release than any musician, but we don't go into a concert hall to hear a baby scream; in fact, if that baby is brought in we are likely to go out. We don't want self-expression.⁶⁰

Nor does the appreciation of art consist in the achievement of some rarefied 'aesthetic attitude' or 'aesthetic emotion' in the percipient. It is neither sheer catharsis or incitement.⁶¹ Langer contends that most art critics tend to discount both these 'subjective' elements and treat the emotive aspect of a work of art as something as 'objective' as the physical form or pattern itself. The 'mood' of a painting is taken as given with the painting, totally penetrating it along with its sensuous qualities. People in the closest contact with art can appreciate this feeling without themselves cultivating an emotional 'aesthetic attitude.' A quick glance at a page can tell them whether or not a poem is successful, 'expressive' even though "the light of one bare bulb makes the room horrid, the neighbors are boiling cabbage, and our shoes are wet."⁶²

According to Langer, this degradation to 'mere human sympathy' is what Edward Bullough would call a loss of 'psychical distance.' Bullough describes the character of this relation in the following way:

Distance ... is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends. But ... distance does not imply an impersonal, purely intellectually interested relation. On the contrary, it describes a *personal* relation, often highly emotionally colored, but of a *peculiar character*. Its peculiarity lies in that the per-

⁶⁰ *Problems of Art* 25. Lonergan says: "Art is not autobiography; it is not going to confession or telling one's tale to a psychiatrist. It is grasping what is or seems significant, of moment, of concern, of import to man in the experience." *Topics in Education* 218.

⁶¹ *Feeling and Form* 33ff.

⁶² *Feeling and Form* 211.

sonal character of the relation has been, so to speak, filtered. It has been cleared of the practical, concrete nature of its appeal.⁶³

Such artistic distance is such that the artist need not have directly experienced himself the feeling he represents in his art.

It may be through the manipulation of his created elements that he discovers new possibilities of feeling, strange moods, perhaps greater concentrations of passion than his own temperament could ever produce, or than his fortunes have yet called forth.⁶⁴

In handling his own creation, composing a symbol of human emotion, he learns from the perceptible reality before him possibilities of subjective experience that he has not known in his personal life.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, this artistic distance is not to such an extent that it bears no relation at all to the artist's experience.

But to say that he does not render his own emotions would be simply silly. All knowledge goes back to experience; we cannot know anything that bears no relation to our experience. Only, that relation may be more complex than the theory of direct personal expression assumes.⁶⁶

Art involves, then, the intellectual creation of an affect-laden image free from immediate emotion. As Langer puts it:

There are usually a few philosophical critics...who realize that the feeling in a work of art is something the artist conceived as he created the symbolic form to present it, rather than something he was undergoing and involuntarily venting in an artistic process. There is Wordsworth who finds that poetry is not a symptom of emotional stress, but an image of it — "emotion recollected in tranquillity;" there is a Riemann who recognizes that music resembles feeling, and is its objective symbol rather than its physiological effect; a Mozart who knows from experi-

⁶³ Edward Bullough, "'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and as an Aesthetic Principle," *British Journal of Psychology* V (1912) 91; quoted in *Philosophy in a New Key* 189-190.

⁶⁴ *Feeling and Form* 374.

⁶⁵ *Feeling and Form* 390.

⁶⁶ *Feeling and Form* 390.

ence that emotional disturbance merely interferes with artistic conception.⁶⁷

The choice of the term 'artistic conception' is perhaps not a happy one, for it suggests expression in concepts and that is a characteristic of literal, not artistic, meaning; and Langer herself in her later work agreed with Kant's analysis of art as non-conceptual.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, her point is that artistic imagination is freely directed by, under the control of, impregnated with, the intellectual character of artistic insight.

In *Feeling and Form* Langer uses musical creation to give a description of the creative process, based on an intellectual grasp of the fundamental aesthetic form.⁶⁹ First of all, this grasp is rooted in artistic genius, which Langer clearly distinguishes from talent. The latter is the basic ability to handle the sensuous materials, something closely linked with bodily feeling, muscular control, and so on. Artistic genius, on the other hand, is not just a higher degree of talent; it is the power to grasp — or as she puts it, to 'conceive' — the 'commanding form,' the matrix of the work-to-be, its general structure, the proportions and degrees of elaboration among the qualities of a picture, the events of a drama, the ratios of musical motion, and so on.⁷⁰ Langer speaks of artistic genius with respect to artistic creativity; and such creativity certainly has an influence on the prior selectivity of artistic perception.

Prior to artistic conception or 'insight,' artistic genius, it would seem, anticipates this activity. This is why the artist first contemplates his materials to see what feeling they might express. For different materials mediate different areas of aesthetic experience.⁷¹ This anticipation is not proper just to the artist; it characterizes any lover of art.

⁶⁷ *Feeling and Form* 152.

⁶⁸ *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* 218.

⁶⁹ *Feeling and Form* 120ff.

⁷⁰ *Feeling and Form* 407-409.

⁷¹ See *Feeling and Form* 85: "One cannot always do the same things with diverse materials. The translucency of glass allows the making and use of special color elements that paint on a wooden ground could never create; therefore glass painting and wood painting set the artist different problems and suggest different ideas to be brought to expression."

The outstanding instance of what one might call 'intuitive anticipation' is the excitement that seizes a real lover of drama as the curtain goes up.⁷²

It would seem that this *a priori* intellectual orientation toward the grasp of aesthetic form constitutes a certain artistic heuristic structure. Furthermore, since there are various primary illusions, various areas of aesthetic experience to be unified by artistic insight, it would seem that in each of these areas there are corresponding artistic heuristic structures. This seems to be the ultimate interpretation of Langer's various primary illusions. This seems to be why *de facto* we have the various art forms that we do.

A great part of Langer's work can be seen as a clarification of the nature of these structures, these various art forms. In each area experience seeks liberation. If, for example, one's anticipation is practically oriented with regard to pictorial art, or purely literally oriented with regard to poetry, one will necessarily be led to misconceive and misapprehend this particular art.

With regard to music Langer notes the same frustrating influence of alien intellectual apprehensions.

The listener, untroubled by self-consciousness and an intellectual inferiority complex, should hear what is created to be heard. I think the greater part of a modern audience listening to contemporary music tend to listen so much for new harmonies and odd rhythms and for new tone-mixtures that they never conceive the illusion of time made audible, and of its great movement and subordinate play of tensions, naively and musically at all.⁷³

Genuine artistic anticipation, this *a priori* ability for free artistic creativity, unencumbered with false psychological or theoretical anticipations, can deepen and develop. Thus, practice in sustaining musical attention results in 'a special intelligence of the ear' capable of grasping the 'logical connectedness' and progression of tonal sequences.⁷⁴ This ability makes it possible to follow with easy attention extended or involved musical compositions. Langer contrasts this ability with mere *passive hearing*, equated with inattention.

⁷² *Feeling and Form* 398.

⁷³ *Problems of Art* 41.

⁷⁴ *Feeling and Form* 146-147; See 135ff.

The radio of course, offers all the means of learning to listen, but it also harbors a danger — the danger of learning not to listen; and this greater perhaps, than its advantage. People learn to read and study with music — sometimes beautiful and powerful music — going on in the background. As they cultivate inattention, or divided attention, music as such becomes more and more a mere psychological stimulant or sedative. In this way they cultivate *passive hearing*, which is the very contradiction of listening.⁷⁵

This growth in artistic attention in the various areas of aesthetic perception is the primary pre-requisite for the exercise of artistic genius.

Thus, *listening* is the primary musical activity. The musician listens to his own idea before he plays, before he writes.⁷⁶

4. *The Creative Process*

Artistic imagination exercises itself in the free creation of aesthetic forms. This is why artists are said to 'contemplate' the aesthetic materials or medium. By the use of their free imagination they search out 'the feeling it contains,' the aesthetic forms this particular material can possibly express. For different materials are said to have different feelings.⁷⁷

A competent painter, accepting a commission for a portrait, a mural, or any other 'kind' of work, simply trusts that, contemplating the powers of the medium, he will have a sudden insight into the feeling it can express; and working with it, he will pursue and learn and present that feeling. What he is likely to say, however, is that if he thinks about the commissioned subject long enough, he will know 'what to do with it.'⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Feeling and Form* 147-148.

⁷⁶ *Feeling and Form* 147-148. The first step in artistic creation, then, is attention to the artistic materials for the 'feeling' they can express. The grasp of this new possibility of aesthetic experience often comes as a sudden 'flash' or 'click.' See *Feeling and Form* 123.

⁷⁷ *Feeling and Form* 85.

⁷⁸ *Feeling and Form* 389-390.

It is obvious then that it is in the artist's free imagination that the materials are 'transformed' into artistic forms. Because the artist can imagine the sensuous materials according to his aesthetic anticipation, he is said to perceive the materials selectively. It is imagined aesthetic perception, guided by artistic creativity, that Langer is speaking of when she says that the primitive portrays practical objects according to "the selective, interpretative power of his intelligent eye."⁷⁹ Similarly, Cezanne claimed that he was faithfully representing 'Nature,' but it is obvious from his writings that he is speaking of nature transformed by his creative imagination.

In Cezanne's reflections, that always center on the absolute authority of Nature, the relation of the artist to his model reveals itself unconsciously and simply: for the transformation of natural objects into pictorial elements took place in his seeing, in the act of looking, not the act of painting. Therefore, recording what he saw, he earnestly believed that he painted exactly what 'was there.'⁸⁰

It is with reference to imaginative 'inward hearing' that the intellectual grasp of musical form takes place. That the imaginative 'inward hearing' of the composer is grounded in this grasp of musical form is clear from Langer's writings.

Inward hearing is the work of the mind that begins with conception of form and ends with their complete presentation [that is, "the structural elements, the harmonic tensions and their resolutions"] in imagined sense experience.⁸¹

This grasp of artistic form impregnates and determines the quality of the composer's 'inward hearing.' It is supported by all sorts of symbolic devices: the guidance of printed scores, the specific though minute muscular responses of breath and vocal chords that constitute subvocal singing, perhaps individual tonal memories and other references to experience.⁸²

The first stage in artistic creation, therefore, is entirely immanent, the sudden recognition of the total artistic form in imagined

⁷⁹ *Philosophy in a New Key* 213.

⁸⁰ *Feeling and Form* 67.

⁸¹ *Feeling and Form* 137.

⁸² *Feeling and Form* 137.

experience. From that moment on the artist's mind is no longer free to wander irresponsibly. It is under the tutelage of the 'commanding form.'

In some sense the 'commanding form' is 'impersonal,' but as such it is not restrictive but enriching; for in the recognition of this matrix lies all the tendencies of the work.⁸³ Every option in the development of the composition is seen in terms of this whole.

The significance of this grasp of 'commanding form' in 'inward hearing' can be seen more precisely in the distinction between artistic composition and *performance*. For both are governed throughout by the demands of the commanding form.

Performance is the completion of a musical work, a logical continuation of the composition, carrying the creation through from thought to physical expression. Obviously, then, the thought must be entirely grasped, if it is to be carried on. Composition and performance are not neatly separable at the stage marked by the finishing of the score: for both spring from the commanding form and are governed throughout by its demands and enticements.⁸⁴

But the inward hearing of the composer under the aegis of this form stops short of just that determinateness of quality and duration that characterizes actual sensation.

This final imagination of tone itself, as something completely decided by the whole to which it belongs, requires a special symbolic support, a highly articulate bodily gesture: overtly, this gesture is the act of producing the tone, the performer's expression of it; physiologically, it is the *feeling* for the tone in the muscles set to produce it.⁸⁵

Actual performance, though guided by the same commanding form grasped by the composer in inward hearing, is a new creative act; for it demands a decision as to precisely what every tone will 'sound like.'

If he is not the composer, then the commanding form is given to him; a variable but usually considerable amount of detail in the

⁸³ *Feeling and Form* 121ff.

⁸⁴ *Feeling and Form* 138.

⁸⁵ *Feeling and Form* 137-138.

development of the form is given; but the final decision of *what every tone sounds like* rests with him. For at a definite, critical point in the course of musical creation a new feeling sets in, that reinforces the tonal imagination and at the same time is subject to it.⁸⁶

Langer notes that artistic performance can be very close to symptomatic and emotional 'self-expression.' But, she points out, as long as personal feeling is concentrated on and subordinated to the commanding form of the piece, the latter is the very nerve and 'drive' of the artist's work.⁸⁷ It is similar to the public speaker intent primarily on his meaning, not mode of expression: '*rem tene, verba sequuntur.*' If, on the other hand, the performer lets his own need for some emotional catharsis make the performance simply his 'outlet,' the work will lack intensity because its expressive form will be inarticulate and blurred. Art begins only when a formal factor is recognized as the framework within which the chance attributes of immediate emotion can occur. Similarly, the speaker becomes 'oratorical' when lack of attention to meaning results in misplaced emphasis.

The primacy of artistic insight is evident. This insight impregnates the artist's or performer's imaginative envisioning of his work — even the 'muscular imagination' of its performance. An artist's hands, supplemented by his familiar instrument, become intuitively responsive to his understanding of the commanding form. No one could possibly figure out, or learn by rote, the exact proper distance on the fingerboard for every possible interval; but conceive the interval clearly and finger will find it precisely.⁸⁸

Similarly, the perfection of the dance depends upon the conception of a 'body-feeling' in which no movement is automatic, but every voluntary muscle, even to the fingertips and eyelids, cooperates in the expression of the rhythm prefigured in the first intentional act.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Feeling and Form* 139.

⁸⁷ *Feeling and Form* 142ff.

⁸⁸ *Feeling and Form* 144-145.

⁸⁹ *Feeling and Form* 202-203.

5. The 'Laws' of Imagination

The distinction between literal and artistic meaning comes to the fore in treating of the literary arts. For here the materials are words and language that tend, in people like Langer and ourselves, toward literal meaning. But such literal meaning characterized by the discursive form of language, by distinctions of A from non-A, cannot grasp the complex life of feeling, or as Langer puts it, the "essential dialectic of feeling."⁹⁰

In addition, unlike language, which is a *symbolism*, a system of conventional symbols, a work of art is a single, indivisible symbol.⁹¹ The appreciation of a work of art always begins with a single intuition of its total import, and increases by contemplation as the expressive articulation of the artistic form becomes apparent. Language, on the other hand — discourse — involves the "passage from one intuition, or act of understanding, to another."⁹² Finally, the import of a work of art cannot really be paraphrased in discourse. Even an art such as poetry, which evidently involves assertions with literal meaning, defies literal translation.⁹³ For even though the material of poetry is discursive, its significance, or 'vital import,' is not. That import is expressed by the poem as a totality and cannot be grasped by a literal paraphrase. All art *as such* is untranslatable. Langer notes that poetry 'translated' into other languages may reveal new possibilities for its skeletal literal ideas and rhetorical devices, but the product is a new poem.

By speaking of feeling as the import of art Langer means the whole of feeling-influenced life, including the life of thought. The distinction between feeling-influenced consciousness and differentiated discursive thought can best be seen in her writings on poetry. For here she explicates what she calls the 'laws' of each form of consciousness. The distinction between the two forms becomes clear because in poetry the very materials of the art are expressions of literal consciousness.

For Langer all poetic art, including literature, drama and the film, creates the illusion of 'virtual life.' Since its materials are words and statements, the temptation is to ask: "What is the author trying to

⁹⁰ See Susanne Langer, "Abstraction in Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XXII (Summer, 1964) 389.

⁹¹ *Feeling and Form* 369.

⁹² *Problems of Art* 68.

⁹³ See *Problems of Art* 140ff.

tell us?" instead of "What has he created?" The product of poetic art, 'poesis,' is the appearance of 'experiences,' the semblance of events lived and felt. These events are unified into a simplified whole in which they are much more fully perceived and evaluated than the events of a person's actual history.⁹⁴

But just as painting, sculpture, and architecture are different modes of virtual space, literature, drama, and the film are distinct modes of 'poesis.' In literature the primary illusion of virtual, entirely experienced, 'life,' is in the mode typified by memory. Actual experience is usually ragged and unaccentuated, a welter of sights, sounds and feelings.⁹⁵ It is only half perceived. Memory, however, functions by selecting and sifting these experiences and giving them a closed distinguishable form and character.

Lyric poetry, for example, brings out the highly perceptible character of these virtual events. The smallest event, the occurrence of a thought or feeling, is presented in such a way that its emotional value is immediately apparent.⁹⁶ The poetic aspect of the event is given directly in the telling: it is as terrible or as wonderful as it 'sounds.'⁹⁷ The poet creates events in a psychological mode rather than as a piece of 'objective' history. It is the mode of 'naive experience' in which action and feeling, sensory value and moral value, are still undivorced.⁹⁸

In a highly original chapter Langer presents the laws and 'logic' of imagination which guide literary production.⁹⁹ The cardinal princi-

⁹⁴ *Feeling and Form* 212ff.

⁹⁵ *Feeling and Form* 262-263.

⁹⁶ *Feeling and Form* 268.

⁹⁷ *Feeling and Form* 214. See Lonergan, *Topics in Education* 228-229. "We speak of people calling a spade a spade. Shakespeare remarks that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But it is also true that one can say something, and someone else will remark, 'It sounds so horrible (or dreadful, or wonderful) when you put it that way.' There is a way of putting things that can be horrible or wonderful. Making a spade a spade may be all very well, but it may be very horrible. Why is that so? Why can there be ways of saying things that are wonderful and horrible, when words are just tools for conveying meaning? The fact is that words have not only their proper meanings, but also a resonance in our consciousness. They have a retinue of associations, and the associations may be visual, vocal, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, affective or evocative of attitudes, tendencies, and evaluations. This resonance of words pertains to the very genesis, structure and molding of our consciousness through childhood and the whole process of our education. It pertains to the dynamic situation in consciousness that the words provoke.

⁹⁸ *Feeling and Form* 216-217.

⁹⁹ *Feeling and Form* 236ff.

ple of imagination is what Freud called *Darstellbarkeit*.¹⁰⁰ It refers to the fact that every product of imagination comes to the percipient as a qualitatively direct datum. The emotional import of the datum is perceived as directly and immediately as the datum itself. This is what is referred to when a poetic presentation, even of a speculative thought, is said to have an 'emotional quality.'

This principle is responsible for many 'illogical' poetic and mythical usages of language.¹⁰¹ Instead of the principle of the excluded middle characteristic of logical thought, poetry often contains what Freud called 'over-determination.' Thus, instead of 'either A or B,' poetry combines opposites: both love and hate.

In literature there is strictly speaking no negative. The words, 'no,' 'not,' and so on, create by contrast what they deny: and this creation is an integral part of the literary illusion. Langer refers to Swinburne's "The Garden of Proserpine," in which almost every line is a denial:

Then star nor sun shall waken
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal;
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

Everything that is denied is thereby created and forms the background for the final two verses.¹⁰²

Another characteristic of literary and mythical imagination is the tendency for variations on the same theme. Instead of the proof required by logical thinking, mere reiteration is often sufficient to create the semblance of reasoning. (As Lewis Carroll's Bellman says, "If I say it three times it's true.")

Instead of the logical development of one theme, the literary imagination often simultaneously develops many themes. This is Freud's principle of condensation, and its effect is to heighten the

¹⁰⁰ *Feeling and Form* 241.

¹⁰¹ *Feeling and Form* 242.

¹⁰² *Feeling and Form* 243.

'emotional quality' of the created image and to make one aware of the complexities of feeling.¹⁰³ Langer quotes Shakespeare:

And Pity, like a naked newborn babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's Cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye
That tears shall drown the wind.

The literal sense of phrases indicating "that tears shall drown the wind" and that a newborn babe and a mounted guard of cherubim will *blow a deed* in people's eyes is negligible. And yet, the poet has created an exciting figure, the created image of complex feelings.

These are some of the principles of literary imagination. The poet creates a total illusion of human experience according to these principles, an experience which thereby becomes emotionally transparent. In lyric poetry the experience is minimal, "the occurrence of a living thought, the sweep of emotion, the intense experience of a mood."¹⁰⁴

The difference between lyric poetry and other literary products is not radical. It is the frequency and importance of certain practices, such as metrical versification, speech in the first person, intense imagery, and so on, that makes lyric poetry a special type of 'poesis.'

Other types of literature exploit more powerful techniques of creating the illusion of life in the mode of memory — especially the element of narrative. The 'story-interest' in the folk ballad and the medieval 'romance' becomes so powerful that the hypnotic powers of rhythmic speech are no longer necessary to maintain the artistic illusion.¹⁰⁵ But the difference between poetry and prose fiction is primarily technical, that is, in the materials employed — not in the illusion created. Both use proper techniques to create the semblance of life fully felt. While the medieval 'romance' took as its motif the social world in which individuals participated according to their status, the modern novel takes as its pervasive theme the evaluation and hazards of individual personality. Yet, the novel is still the experience of created life and not sociological or psychological theory. Langer notes that it is the particular 'slant' in which events are recounted — whether in the medieval romance or in the modern novel — that constitutes the

¹⁰³ *Feeling and Form* 244.

¹⁰⁴ *Feeling and Form* 259.

¹⁰⁵ *Feeling and Form* 286.

'poetic transformation' which transcends the particular materials of character study, psychological insight, and so on.¹⁰⁶ In the same way speculative and moral beliefs, all assertion of facts, *as used in literature*, are not debatable. Their literary value depends entirely on their use to create the semblance of life — its seriousness and difficulty, the sense of strain and progress.¹⁰⁷

A word on drama. Though literature and drama are both poetic, creating the illusion of virtual history, drama is not strictly literature. For it does not create virtual events that compose a 'Past,' but rather immediate visible responses of human beings oriented toward a virtual 'Future.' Certainly, the theater creates a seemingly perpetual present moment; but as Langer points out, it is only a present filled with its own future that is really dramatic. In actual life the impending future is often only vaguely felt; we recognize a distinct situation only when it has reached, or nearly reached, a crisis.¹⁰⁸ But in the theater we see the whole set-up of human relationships and conflicting interests long before any abnormal event has occurred that would, in actual life, have brought it into focus. This illusion of a visible future is created in every play; it is the primary illusion of 'poesis' in the mode peculiar to drama. While the literary mode is the mode of Memory, the dramatic is the mode of Destiny.

Finally, a word on art criticism. Any attempt of criticism to convey 'the meaning' of a work of art, even of literature, is by that very fact an exercise in literal, not aesthetic, symbolism. This is the sense of Langer's reservation of the term 'meaning' to literal symbolism, while she speaks of the 'import' of art.¹⁰⁹

Artistic expressiveness, unlike literal meaning, cannot be demonstrated. It cannot be pointed out, as the presence of this or that color contrast, balance of shapes, and so on, may be pointed out. For either it is grasped directly and as a whole by one act of aesthetic perception, or it is not grasped at all. "No one can show, let alone prove to us, that a certain vision of human feeling ... is embodied in the piece."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ *Feeling and Form* 293.

¹⁰⁷ *Feeling and Form* 219ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Feeling and Form* 308.

¹⁰⁹ *Feeling and Form* 31-32.

¹¹⁰ *Problems of Art* 60.

This does not mean, however, that works of art cannot be criticized. Appreciation of the total artistic illusion comes first; but the recognition of how that illusion was made is a product of analysis reached by discursive reasoning.¹¹¹ The critical judgment of art is guided by the virtual result, the symbolic illusion the artist has created. Particular materials or techniques are neither good nor bad, strong nor weak, but must be judged entirely in terms of the artistic result. That is why criticism can never arrive at criteria of artistic excellence, that is, expressiveness. There can be no rule for artistic success. Langer remarks that although it is possible to show the causes of failure in poetry, it is not always possible to explain how a poem has succeeded.

Langer agrees with R. G. Collingwood that candor is the standard between good and bad art. Bad art results from the interference of extraneous emotion with the imagination and expression of feeling; and art thus corrupted at its source, is not true to what candid expression would be.¹¹²

CONCLUSION

What then did Bernard Lonergan learn from Susanne K. Langer?

First of all, in *Feeling and Form* Langer provided Lonergan with the materials concerning the meaning of art that facilitated his own definition of art as the objectification of a purely experiential pattern.

Secondly, even though Lonergan in *Insight* had written of the aesthetic pattern as the liberation of experience from "the confines of serious-minded biological purpose," Lonergan learned much more from Langer about the concrete details of this process of liberation, as it takes place in the particular art forms. In each of these aesthetic areas there is a liberation of 'the ready-made subject' from his or her 'ready-made world.' As he noted at the end of his analysis of art in *Method in Theology*,

Again, let me stress that I am not attempting to be exhaustive.
For an application of the above analysis to different art forms in

¹¹¹ *Feeling and Form* 406.

¹¹² *Feeling and Form* 380-381. She refers to R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938) 219; 282.

drawing and painting, statuary and architecture, music and dance, epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry, the reader must go to S. K. Langer, *Feeling and Form*. The point I am concerned to make is that there exist quite distinct carriers or embodiments of meaning.¹¹³

Thirdly, even though in *Insight* he had written of art as providing “the spontaneous joy of free intellectual creation,” from *Feeling and Form* Lonergan learned a great deal more about the concrete process of artistic creation and appreciation. In particular, in *Insight* he footnoted Langer’s analysis of musical creation, the grasp of the commanding form and its articulation in a symphony, a song, and so on. Writing of artistically differentiated consciousness in *Method in Theology*, he says:

Its higher attainment is creating; it invents commanding forms; works out their implications; conceives and produces their embodiment.¹¹⁴

In words almost out of Langer herself, Lonergan writes:

The process of objectifying involves *psychic distance*. Where the elemental meaning is just experiencing, its expression involves detachment, distinction, separation from experience. While the smile or frown expresses intersubjectively the feeling as it is felt, artistic composition recollects emotion in tranquillity. It is a matter of insight into the elemental meaning, a grasp of the commanding form that has to be expanded, worked out, developed, and the subsequent process of working out, adjusting, correcting, completing the initial insight. There results an idealization of the original experiential pattern. Art is not autobiography. It is not telling one’s tale to the psychiatrist. It is grasping what is or seems significant, of moment, concern, import, to man. It is truer than experience, leaner, more effective, more to the point. It is the central moment with its proper implications, and they unfold without the distortions, interferences, accidental intrusions of the original pattern.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ *Method in Theology* 64.

¹¹⁴ *Method in Theology* 273.

¹¹⁵ *Method in Theology* 64.

Another theme that appears in Lonergan's writings on art after reading *Feeling and Form* is the theme of the organic character of the feelings associated with the artistic image.

So verse makes information memorable. Decoration makes a surface visible. Patterns achieve, perhaps, a special perceptibility by drawing on organic analogies. The movement is from root through trunk to branches, leaves and flowers. It is repeated with varying variations. Complexity mounts and the multiplicity is organized into a whole.¹¹⁶

In summary, Langer provided for Lonergan a wealth of material, both from her own experience and understanding and from the testimony of other artists and philosophers of art on aesthetic experience and artistic creation.

Finally, we can conclude by noting what Langer might have learned from Lonergan. First of all, she might have learned a more accurate and explanatory account of human interiority that would have set her fine work on art into a wider context.

For example, because of what became evident in her later writings, an inadequate insight into insight, Langer fails, it seems to me, to note the intentional character of human feelings. Not only do our human feelings reflect their organic depths, but they also involve awarenesses of human values: vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious. Consequently, Lonergan can write of our purely experiential, aesthetic, patterns:

To them accrue their retinue of associations, affects, emotions, incipient tendencies. To them also there accrues the experiencing subject with his capacity for wonder, for awe and fascination, with his openness to adventure, daring, goodness, majesty.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Method in Theology* 61. Again, *Method in Theology* 62: "The required purity of the existential pattern aims not at impoverishment but at enrichment. It curtails what is alien to let experiencing find its full complement of feeling. It lets experiencing fall into its own proper patterns and take its own line of expansion, development, organization, fulfilment. So experiencing becomes rhythmic, one movement necessitating another and the other in turn necessitating the first. Tensions are built up to be resolved; variations multiply and grow in complexity yet remain within an organic unity that eventually rounds itself off."

¹¹⁷ *Method in Theology* 62.

This is what in *Insight* Lonergan called the operator on the level of our sensitive being: corresponding to the notion of being on the intellectual level. There is, then, in Lonergan there is a wider significance to the theme of art as liberation. For the question can be asked: liberation for what? In *A Second Collection* he speaks of it as the liberation of the ordinary person's ordinary experience into the known unknown, the realm of mystery.

There's imagination as art, which is the subject, doing — in a global fashion — what the philosopher and the religious person and so on do in a more special fashion. It's moving into the known unknown in a very concrete, felt, way.¹¹⁸

Elsewhere he says:

It is a withdrawal from practical living to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world. Just as the mathematician explores the possibilities of what physics can be, so the artist explores possibilities of what life, ordinary life, can be.¹¹⁹

Finally, in *Topics in Education* Lonergan sets art within its ultimate significance, without which, he says, art can become just play or aestheticism. He refers to Socrates' indictment in Athens for saying that the moon was just earth and the clouds just water.

Art, whether by an illusion or a fiction or a contrivance, presents the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the 'plus' that is in things and that drops out when you say that the moon is just earth and the clouds are just water. It draws attention to the fact that the splendor of the world is a cipher, a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is *present*.¹²⁰

He refers to Saint Augustine:

St. Augustine says in his *Confessions* that he sought in the stars, and it was not in the stars; in the sun and the moon, and it was not in the sun and the moon; in the earth, the trees, the shrubs, the mountains, the valleys, and it was none of these. Art can be the viewing this world and looking for the something

¹¹⁸ *A Second Collection* 224.

¹¹⁹ *Topics in Education* 217.

¹²⁰ *Topics in Education* 222.

more that this world reveals, and reveals, so to speak, in silent speech, reveals by a presence that cannot be defined or got hold of.¹²¹

It seems to me that in Susanne K. Langer's *Feeling and Form* Bernard Lonergan grasped in a fuller way what the experience of art could mean.

¹²¹ *Topics in Education* 222. See *Method in Theology* 272, on how joining artistic consciousness to religious sensibility heightens religious expression. "It makes rituals solemn, liturgies stately, music celestial, hymns moving, oratory effective, teaching enobling."

IN WATER AND IN BLOOD

Sebastian Moore

Downside Abbey, England

CONCENTRATION

Without elimination, both a new world
And the old made explicit, understood
In the completion of its partial ecstasy,
The resolution of its partial horror.
Yet the enchainment of past and future
Woven in the weakness of the changing body
Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
Which flesh cannot endure.

T. S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

THE UNIVERSAL PERCEPTION of death as a second womb, attested to by humankind's great myths, whose absence from our culture is fatal to it, is promoted from its status as intuition, aspiration, hunch, to the status of divinely attested fact: a historical man whose death at our hands is birth to our healing, the firstborn of the dead, to whom we are assimilated by a sacramental system of baptism and nurturing. Since the whole meaning and purpose of this sacramental system is to transform our *sense* of death as second womb into divine faith, it follows that if our sense of death as new birth is not touched, awakened by sacramental worship, this worship is failing of its purpose.

What this paper is about is the experience of dissolution as renewal that is had in contemplative prayer, which is not so much a *kind* of prayer practiced by 'contemplatives,' as the essential simplicity of all prayer, prayer as opposed to talking prayer. It is sadly true that the authors who have spelt out this simplicity have been men and women of a certain temperament, introverted, intuitive — an Augustine, a Bernard, a Teresa — so that there is an urgent need for the contemplative simplicity of prayer, whereby we participate meaningfully in the liturgy, spelt out also by people of extroversion and action — a Dorothy Day, a Thomas Merton. This is only another way of

saying that Christian faith needs to be hatched from a Neo-Platonist cocoon to be itself, God's action in women and men for the transformation of a world grown languid and indeed mortally sick.

St. John of the Cross gives a description of the birth of contemplative prayer in a person that is unique in its clarity. There is a breakdown of the way of praying that has worked hitherto. Abbot Chapman speaks of saying the Our Father very slowly and carefully, and finding the words meaningless. They remain quite meaningful when one is studying them, they only empty of sense when one tries to pray them. This causes much disquiet, even panic. I have lost my faith, or at least slackened off in its practice. Even today, I am unlikely to meet with a director who does not confirm me in this interpretation. That is John's first 'sign.' The second sign is a peculiar tone to the anxiety at this prayer failure. It is not self-centered as anxiety usually is. It seems to have direction, though whither I do not know. St. John speaks of 'anxious love.' The third sign is really an extension of this: a new kind of desire, new in that I do not know what I desire; except times of solitude, though what to do during those times I have no idea.

I can now root my own stumbling on contemplative prayer in a personal archeology, telling you in effect what this paper is all about. After years of sterile head-breaking 'mental prayer' as a monk, it came to me, one evening in early September 1944, to be honest. So I told God he bored me and that I felt like packing-in the whole silly business. Nothing happened at the time, but half-an-hour later, walking outside, I knew that I had been completely changed and would give him anything he wanted. I was in love. I am telling you this because what *then* happened exactly exemplifies my idea of a 'resumption' of what I shall be calling first ecstasy. When I went back into the church and knelt down, layer after layer of me seemed to expose itself, and at each exposure I said, "that too, take that too!" I was being stripped down to a first awareness of undifferentiated trust.

Now this experience, so absolutely crucial in the life of a person, calls for an explanation as radical as the experience is felt to be. I suggest the following. It is the intrusion into our adult world of the simple undifferentiated awareness in which our life starts, of being held, helpless, and trusting; of being in love. Our first experience of being *is* in love, and Tillich, in *The Courage to Be*, observes that this early, even perhaps intra-uterine experience is our first lesson in religious trust, the mother playing for the undifferentiated consciousness the

role played for the differentiated by an all-encompassing, embracing God. The beginning of contemplative prayer is the experienced call to "become as a little child."

The beginning of an immediate knowing of God in prayer recalls, and resumes, the undifferentiatedness of this early being-held and trusting. The surprisingly objectless character of the desire felt reflects an *Eros* previous to all caution. I simply *am* desire, as originally I simply *was* ecstasy. And that now there is desire not possession, now anxiety not contentment, serves only to show that this invasion of undifferentiatedness is happening in a context not designed to accommodate it. "*L'enfant abdique de son extase*," as Mallarme says. The birth of contemplative praying is a gracious opportunity to revoke this abdication. Merton speaks of an afternoon in the woods "drugged with prayer and happiness."

But the idea of a grace-initiated return to the womb has much wider support than it receives from the contemplative awakening. The notion of rebirth is universal. It is a universally recognized positive preview of our dying. It is *how* we learn to find meaning in death. The Dalai Lama, addressing a large crowd of Londoners some years ago, said, "the trouble with you westerners is that you have no second womb." I quoted this the other night at supper with a dear friend who is an insurance broker (he was paying!) and he said, "This means nothing to me or to any of my clients." Fortunately "*l'esprit de l'escalier*" withheld from me the smart rejoinder, "That was Nicodemus's problem!" But the Dalai Lama is surely spot-on here. One could hardly think of a more far-reaching social criticism. In fact I might suddenly reach the end of my paper by asking — very rhetorically, I fear — what kind of a second womb do we find in the Church of our day or in her liturgy.

Rebirth, in other words, is a fact of consciousness that contains the very meaning of consciousness. For consciousness, as it becomes heightened, finds its end in its beginning, as Eliot knew. In the birth of immediate prayer, a person comes to this pivotal moment where the simple being-in-trust of the beginning reaffirms itself in the midst of present complexity, "in the middle of the way," and looks with serenity toward the unknown end.

Rebirth as a fact of consciousness is a strong issue in monastic circles, to which I returned in 1992. When I joined the novitiate at Downside in 1938, there was a storm going on, in *The Tablet* and other

English Catholic teacups, over the recent posthumous publication of Abbot Chapman's spiritual letters. Chapman was pointing to a state, widespread among monks and nuns he found, of being unable to mean anything in saying the Our Father, and needing to be quiet and let things happen, and leading English Jesuits were trying to get the book put on the Index. Especially provoking was Chapman's reference to being attentive "to nothing in particular (which is God of course)." The issue was rebirth as a fact of consciousness. The Jesuits certainly believed in rebirth as a mystery of faith, but not as an existential moment, an experienced dissolution of the consciousness into which we have grown up. An American monk told me of a Cistercian giving their annual retreat, who spoke of this dissolution and bewilderment out of which comes a change of mind and life. The Abbot stopped the retreat there and then, and devoted several weekly conferences to denouncing this doctrine which he found to be so destructive of liturgical prayer. To anticipate again, I shall reach the conclusion that this experienced dissolution/resolution, far from being destructive of the liturgy, is what the liturgy is translating into social fact.

This notion of the birth of contemplative prayer as actualizing our first ecstasy can now become a powerful explanatory idea, rooting prayer deep in the archeology of the person, because today we are seeing a dramatic awakening *to* our first ecstasy. The work of Frank Lake, a prophet in England before his time and England's, stressed the importance of what he called 'glory,' the first experience of ecstasy-in-trust, the first sense of a friendly universe. English analyst Alan Jakes finds that men's attitude to women is governed by this first sense of trust, any defect in whose first instilling makes woman appear untrustworthy as lover. I myself have come to a big revision of my personal archeology, with which I have in the past made you all too familiar. Having for most of my self-analytic life seen myself as over-mothered, I now realize that I am hugely under-mothered, a condition that I share with most men of my nation, class, and time. This is not inconsistent with my earlier understanding. It merely inserts an earlier chapter in the story. The under-mothered child finds him or herself subsequently harking back to a never-had closeness, in an orbital relationship to the mother. And surely this is the force of Alice Miller's work.

In my case, however, the birth of contemplative prayer was not the recovery of original trust, but the discovery of its absence. This

explains what W. H. Auden is talking about when, introducing Dag Hamarskjold, he says that there seem to be two sorts of mystic: those whose mysticism builds on and transforms an original abundance — George MacDonald for instance — and those in whom the mystical is healing an original woundedness. St. John of the Cross is surely of the latter kind. For years I have known that the leitmotif of my life is panic. I now understand this panic as flowing out of the original lack in the ecstasy of trust, and that what happened in the nave at Downside on that September evening fifty years ago, was that the unknown power in whom we live found a way to still my all-conditioning panic.

Such is the vastness and subtlety of the infinite's sublation of our life-pattern, that it can address every variety of response to 'our first world,' ranging from the sheer maternal luxury of Laurie Lee's memoir, *Cider with Rosie*, to an original 'panic and emptiness.' But you get two very different sorts of mystic, and room for much mutual misunderstanding. One recalls, perhaps, Hopkins's love-hate relationship with the poetry of Walt Whitman.

Another whole area of this sublation is the world explored by Denis de Rougemont in *Passion and Society in Western Europe*. Using the story of Tristan and Iseult as his paradigm, to be called simply 'le mythe,' he says that the function of the myth is to address "*le fait, presque inavouable, que la passion est liee a la mort,*" the nearly unavowable fact that passion is wedded to death. Sexual passion is, obviously and for most of us, the way in which first ecstasy is recovered. This return to the undifferentiated state is a movement toward the final swallowing-up of death — *la petite mort* — a fact which de Rougement finds 'nearly unavowable' and therefore requiring the ambiguity of myth to mediate it. Sublated by grace, this recovered first ecstasy is not the enslavement so emphasized in the Tristan story but, on the contrary, the birth of real freedom, the being in love with God.

So it really does begin to look as though we are now within sight of an idea of divine sublation of the human that is comprehensive in its scope. A testing question is beginning to emerge that is at once psychological and religious, which indicates a convergence of religion and science. The question is: How do I feel about life, about people, about the universe, about the past, about the future, about God in fact? How, originally, *am* I in this world? Is it, as Fred Lawrence is always asking, a friendly universe?

Now with the notion of our original ecstasy of trust, and its reappearance in adult life as the call to rebirth, firmly in place, we have the anthropological context in which *Jesus* is to be understood. Anthropology is potential Christology, and a good anthropology makes possible a more adequate Christology. In *Jesus*, knowing the ground of our being as 'loving birthing parent' and calling us to a seemingly impossible total simple trust in the mysterious power behind all the shocks that flesh is heir to, that broods silently over Auschwitz, we recognize in its perfection the resumption of the infant ecstasy-in-trust in the complex context of the adult psyche. The *Abba* of *Jesus* is the original enveloping mother-love transposed into a psychic surround that normally finds it impossible, only readmitting it under grace in the birth of contemplative prayer, which is still an event confined to the subject in whom it occurs. In *Jesus*, in that consciousness which challenges all but the shallower scholars, a living by and in and to the ground of being as simple as the infant's living in the mother-love suggests something more than the awakening of an individual, suggests rather a revolution in consciousness into which all will be summoned.

What precisely this suggestion is, and how it works, becomes plain in the resurrection, when the consciousness of *Jesus* will indeed become a shared consciousness, the Holy Spirit. Suffice it to say at this stage that the continuous theological tradition that sees the consciousness of *Jesus-as-viator* as unique in its immediacy to the end, is concerned to see in *Jesus* the individual that is destined to be shared. For Thomas, this was the belief that *Jesus* had the beatific vision. The consciousness of *Jesus* is not transmitted mainly through teaching, but through being lived into the crucifixion and our forgiveness by the risen victim. The casket of alabaster has to be broken for the fragrance of its contents to fill the room. Only if this is clear do we adequately account for the crucifixion. The murder of *Jesus* is provoked by our seeing in him, *as* the opposite of our institutionalized resistance to rebirth, the life with God as parent. This life-in-ecstasy is presented to us not just as the way *he* is, as any mystic presents it, but as the way he challenges us to be, as a new way of being human to which our way of being human is opposed.

The process whereby this new way of being becomes ours is essentially conflictual. And here is the pivot of what I have to say. Our resistance to the rebirth I have been speaking of has to have its full

implication, which is hatred and would-be destruction of a true self so at odds with our whole way of living, *acted out* in the slaying of Jesus who, raised from the dead, envelopes us in a forgiveness that *is* the coming-to-be of the Christ-self in us, the flooding of our hearts with his Holy Spirit, to quote Lonergan's most-cited scriptural text. The contemplative moment of rebirth was, in Jesus, the whole life of the man, that we destroy out of our unfreedom only to be enveloped by it as a fulness that forgives.

The contemplative moment is meant, intended, to be socialized, because it stands between the trustfulness of birth and the dissolution of death. It is our whole life become explicitly conscious and revealing of its direction. Otto Ranke says that we are born beyond psychology and die beyond psychology: the contemplative moment shows this quality of birth and death. It is a birth that is death, a death that is birth. It has through grace this privileged interchangeability. Thus the contemplative moment comes into its own as social fact, and this happens because in Jesus it is enfleshed, done to death, consummated and diffused, celebrated.

At the risk of being repetitious in the attempt to secure the right focus, let me rehearse the matter in another way. The contemplative moment stands between the trustfulness of birth and the dissolution of death. It is the awakening of the inner child, who upholds the validity of trust in a world that is hazardous in the extreme and in that sense untrustworthy. Able to live in this tension between trust and an untrustworthy world, it knows freedom in its essence, which is freedom in what appears to deny it. The denial of freedom is implied both in the helplessness of birth and the dissolution of death, the latter only confirming the former. Thus the contemplative moment, free in an unfree world, is an understanding of death as other than the unfree world understands it, as simple wipeout. For the essence of contemplation is freedom *in* dissolution, intention *in* unmeaning, life *in* death.

The contemplative moment is fully realized in Jesus, the child in him wholly alive and enjoining on all the becoming as little children, absolutely trusting in a Father whose silence before the horrors we face daunts even the faithful. He is thus the focus of the world's denial of the contemplative moment, the world's essential victim. And as freedom shows its essence where it is denied, so this victim, in defiance of the essential unfreedom of victimhood, is free. *This* freedom is freedom

in essence, freedom only to love. In this love the victim embraces us his killers, awaking in us the true self, the self awakened in the contemplative moment. In the interaction with Jesus killed and risen, the true self that lived among us, lives *as us*. His liturgy is the contemplative moment shared. And thus liturgical renewal will consist in allowing to be most clear and eloquent the death of the Lord at our hands, its hopefulness ("until he come"), our shared resistance to being reborn, the risenness and forgiveness of the victim, his consequent intimacy to us as our true self expressed in the extravagant form of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. What liturgy is all about is being drawn out of ourselves into our true being which is his mystery of freedom in dissolution. In the liturgy we celebrate, we 'party,' "no longer having to live for ourselves but for him who for us died and rose from the dead."

For "having to live for ourselves" is what we first feel ourselves freed from in discovering a second womb, the huge transcending alternative to an unavoidable selfishness. This is the beginning in us of "that freedom with which Christ has made us free."

This freedom is the basis of liturgical renewal. The Holy Liturgy is the dramatizing of the event which converts rebirth from an individual to a social reality, or brings about the sociality implicit in rebirth, namely the killing of Jesus our true self who, risen from the dead, envelopes us in forgiveness of ourselves and of each other and becomes in very truth our true self. The nerve of the liturgy is this transformation of the victimage whereby we institutionalize our unfree living at each other's expense, by the victim's forgiveness, as the whole work of Rene Girard has shown. The shedding of blood as the climax of the conflict between our true and our counterfeit self, a conflict resolved in resurrection, is what makes of the liturgy a shared contemplative experience. Perhaps what really blocks the communication of the Holy Liturgy is our difficulty in seeing our unfree lifestyle, its publicity serving private ends, in bloodshed. If we could clear *that* psychic passage, the radiant forgiveness of the blood shed would overwhelm us and turn us into contemplatives, people who live not by training but by a vision. To this end, we might devise a preparatory exercise, in which we would be brought to realize our actual connivance, by the way we live, in the murder of our humanity. Perhaps even some extracts from Wilhelm Reich's book on sexual repression, *The Murder of Christ*. In Milwaukee, years ago now, the Franciscan church of St. Benedict the

Moor was on the verge of closing as no one came to Mass. They started a meal program, committed to provide a free hot meal every night of the year, and the liturgy soon became the vibrant affair it has been ever since.

While we are thinking about this 'first step' into celebration, I should like to share with you an insight I got from my friend Andrew Wimmer, who points out that the injunction at the beginning of the liturgy to call to mind our sins sends us all into our private worlds, whereas it is meant to bring us together. The role of the penitential service at Mass has been misunderstood, or simply not understood. Its function is to let us become conscious of ourselves *together* as sinners, so that we can be party to the great sin of 'crucifying the Lord of glory,' that huge act of self-destruction that lies at the heart of an unfree world. Let us hear that word 'glory,' in that Pauline phrase, with Frank Lake's image of glory in mind, so that we come to understand more and more that it is our abundance, our glory, our boundless hope, our hunger for ecstasy, that we crucify and have returned to us by the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

What on earth happens when we 'call to mind our sins'? A private and very token little grovel. The injunction to 'call to mind our sins,' which properly is calling us out, drives us further in to our solipsistic interior. How do we reverse this direction? How do we become sinners? How do we join the crowd that Jesus feeds? Even traditional confession is more public than this silent grovel — it is after all telling someone else about something you've done or not done. What the invitation to 'call to mind our sins' does, in effect, is to accentuate our sense of isolation, which is precisely what inhibits us as worshippers. I don't have any suggestions for making the invitation have the opposite effect. But surely the first stage in any serious liturgical renewal is to become thoroughly conscious of just how dead our liturgical nerve really is. It does, however, respond to active love, as those people in Milwaukee discovered. Is it possible to relax together from the pretense that so much of our living seems to demand of us? People in the various forms of 'addicts anonymous' discover just this, as the condition of survival. Sinners Anonymous? No, that doesn't get it, for 'anonymous' is predicated of the private hell most of us are in to some extent. It doesn't go with 'sinners,' because 'sinner' refers to the private hell made public and recognized in other people, a thoroughly healthy and encouraging state of affairs. Perhaps we haven't really discovered

what it is in ourselves that needs the Victim's forgiveness. We still have to graduate beyond the need for therapy to the need for forgiveness. Perhaps we are unforgivable in that sense. Something more like 'Quiet Desperation Sufferers Anonymous'? Anything to suggest a shared confession that is a *relief and release*, and prepares for the otherwise missed abundance of Eucharist.

For me the abundance of Eucharist evokes the story of my life. My life, understood as poised between a less than abundant beginning and a for this reason dreaded end, is the grammar I bring to the Mass. It has long been understood, at least in monastic circles, that participation in the liturgy is a shared contemplative act. But this so easily gets understood in a Platonic way, 'the mystery' becoming an archetype floating on clouds of incense, in which people imagine that they are participating. This presence of a Platonic shell provides an alibi from facing ourselves and each other and the murder in our society whose forgiveness by Christ is the ground of contemplation. I do hope we shall be able to cut through some of the Platonism that stultifies our liturgy today.

In fact the greatest damage done by our now long-in-the-tooth monastic Platonism is precisely that it enables us to celebrate the liturgy as private persons. We come as private persons. We participate as private persons. We leave as private persons. Liturgical reform, as we have known it so far, takes us out of ourselves only into community superficially understood. But the community into which the liturgy draws us is both more personal and more universal than is attempted by conventional liturgical reform. Christ draws us together in the shared event, the bread and wine of our common life transformed into the flesh and blood of our risen victim. The true liberation from isolation through the liturgy is the transformation of the contemplative moment into social reality: which is precisely what the life, death and rising of Jesus achieves and the liturgy celebrates.

The birth of contemplative prayer, the contemplative pause in a life running from non-differentiation to dissolution, has been interpreted by Neo-Platonism, so that the utter conviction of contemplative prayer has come to reinforce the totalist claim of this philosophy. It was surely this seduction of the spirit that powered the opposition to Aquinas's opening to Aristotle, represented by Bonaventure. A way I like to discomfit both the right and the left these days is to say that Ratzinger, a Bonaventuran, is upholding the worst mistake of Vatican

II, which was to turn aside from Aquinas and his essential and still outstanding program of opening to the natural world the soul that Augustine has opened to God. The contemplative moment has yet to be seen as the threshold of a new humanity, a new community, a new liturgy, that proclaims the death of the Lord until he come. Until the contemplative moment is experienced as a shared event, as liturgy, it is prone to foster in people a regression into their own world. It is well to remember that all the standard meditation techniques have grown up in a religious culture, which they look to as a controlling principle.

To understand the liturgy as the socializing of the contemplative moment described by St. John of the Cross, is to point to the essential failure in Christian tradition: the tendency of the spiritual life and the sacramental life to go down separate channels. In my monastic tradition, what bears the greatest responsibility for this split is a Neo-Platonic interpretation of the contemplative moment that is so seemingly complete and satisfying that it leaves no radical opening to the saving victim whose Spirit is the source of all spirituality. Neo-Platonism is eternally correct in its assertion of a direct awareness of God. But precisely because it is correct in this, it is dangerously prone to a spiritual hubris or inflation, thinking that *because* one is aware of God in this way at first hand one understands creation in all its mystery. Typically one says that the world is a 'mere' copy of an idea in the mind of God, to which one has direct access. For the Christian, Aristotle is the indispensable corrective to this hubris. I love the story of the medieval monk who, having learned that it was not of the nature of oil to freeze, oil being essentially unguent — many scriptural quotes being offered — put a jar of oil outside his cell window on a frosty night and, on telling the Abbot that it had frozen, was disciplined for this impiety. The crass mistake, of course, is to use Aristotle to say we do *not* have a direct awareness of God. This is the way our official theology took after Aquinas. His Aristotelian *corrective* to a Neo-Platonism he never abandoned became the *alternative* and 'correct' philosophy.

When Rahner said that the Christian of the future would have to be a mystic to stay Christian, he presumably was not saying that Christian faith would in future be confined to INFPs! A Christian mystic is simply one for whom Christ on the cross is perceptibly changing his or her life. There's an awful lot of confusion over this business of being contemplative. Abbot Chapman profoundly disagreed with the

Dominicans, who held that contemplation was a special grace of God, with the implication that the contemplative is holier than the non-contemplative. Chapman opposed this elitism with a robust appeal to a commonsense understanding of contemplation as a natural propensity, more pronounced in some than in others. What he did not realize was on what firm ground he stood. The Dominicans, to a man, inherited the misunderstanding of the Aristotle-Aquinas theory of knowledge according to which the process of knowing was an unconscious mechanism like a sausage machine converting sense data, via phantasms, into abstract concepts. Thus understood, the only kind of knowledge proper and natural to the human being is of “the quiddity of the material thing.” So any direct apprehension of God had to be a gratuitous exemption of the chosen soul from this treadmill of quiddities. But once the notion of insight into the image is understood as what we all *experience* when we come to understand, then the light of agent intellect, with the desire that it awakes and fulfills, is no longer just a theory but ultimate meaning present to the mind — in a way that is verifiable in consciousness, unlike the Neo-Platonist hypothesis of the presence of the inborn idea. If the mind, instead of being an unconscious mechanism that ingests sense data and produces concepts, is present to itself in all its operations, then this self-presence is a passive openness to the God who can actuate it. The light of agent intellect is at once most mysterious and most familiar, so that Eckhart can say that in contemplative prayer God takes the place of agent intellect (Sermon 3 in Walshe). *Then* there will be room for all sorts of ways in which this presence can be recognized, only one of them the introspective way. There will be a mysticism of perception, of *aesthesis* — Picasso, Brancusi, Mozart, Eliot — a mysticism of understanding, a mysticism of judgment, a mysticism of decision and action, a mysticism of love.

Until we get this one right, and stop opposing what Aquinas so resolutely held together — which surely is what Lonergan is all about — we shall not be able to understand the liturgy as mediating Christ’s socialization of the contemplative moment. This healing of the Christian mind is of course inseparable from the opening to contemplative prayer. God is an acquaintance whose cultivation makes one a bit less of a bore. It seems to me these days, faced with all the tensions and contradictions that are tearing the Church, that Catholic doctrine, in its *‘grandes lignes,’* is simply contemplative prayer spelled out as the

life of a new humanity. For 'Catholic doctrine' read 'the Holy Liturgy,' and this is what my paper has been trying to say.

Who is this neither one thing nor the other
Neither the bully nor the bullied one
Midpoint of hurting, powerless with silence
For you my nothing in particular
As for the midpoint of all who offend me.
My heart must hurt more as you change it with
Your own, and bring about the Incarnation
Whose only flesh is mine and of us all
One not in archetype but charity,
Billions of points of rest and light and love
Contagion of neither one thing nor the other
Quiver of peace through all of us at war
Still hurts as first I feel it centering
To hold me on this cross of light and silence.

APPENDIX

In my paper, I cite Laurie Lee's memoir, *Cider with Rosie*. Here is his description of his early relationship with his mother.

I was still young enough then to be sleeping with my Mother, which to me seemed life's whole purpose. We slept together in the first-floor bedroom on a flock-filled mattress in a bed of brass rods and curtains. Alone, at that time, of all the family, I was her chosen dream companion, chosen from all for her extra love; my right, so it seemed to me.

So in the ample night and the thickness of her hair I consumed my fattened sleep, drowsed and nuzzling to her warmth of flesh, blessed by her bed and safety. From the width of the house and the separation of the day, we two then lay joined alone. That darkness to me was like the fruit of aloes, heavy and ripe to the touch. It was a darkness of bliss and simple languor, when all edges seemed rounded, apt and fitting; and the presence for whom one had moaned and hungered was found not to have fled after all.

My Mother, freed from her noisy day, would sleep like a happy child, humped in her nightdress, breathing innocently, and making soft drinking sounds in the pillow. In her flights of dream she held me close, like a parachute to her back; or rolled and enclosed me with her great tired body so that I was snug as a mouse in a hayrick.

They were deep and jealous, those wordless nights, as we curled and muttered together, like a secret I held through the waking day which set me above all others. It was for me alone that the night came down, for me the prince of her darkness, when only I would know the huge helplessness of her sleep, her dead face and her blind bare arms. At dawn, when she rose and stumbled back to the kitchen, even then I was not wholly deserted, but rolled into the valley her sleep had left, lay deep in its smell of lavender, deep on my face to sleep again in the nest she had made my own.

The sharing of her bed at the three-year-old time I expected to last for ever. I had never known, or could not recall, any night spent away from her. But I was growing fast; I was no longer the baby; brother Tony lay in wait in his cot. When I heard the first whispers of moving me to the boys' room, I simply couldn't believe it. Surely my Mother would never agree? How could she face night without me?

My sisters began by soothing and flattering; they said, "you're a grown big man. "You'll be sleeping with Harold and Jack," they said. "Now what d'you think of that?" What was I supposed to think? — to me it seemed outrageous. I affected a brainstorm and won a few extra nights, my last nights in that down bed. Then the girls changed their tune: "It'll only be for a bit. You can come back to Mum later on." I didn't quite believe them, but Mother was silent, so I gave up the struggle and went.

I was never recalled to my Mother's bed again. It was my first betrayal, my first dose of aging hardness, my first lesson in the gentle, merciless rejection of women. Nothing more was said, and I accepted it. I grew a little tougher, a little colder, and turned my attention more towards the outside world, which by now was emerging visibly through the mist.

QUESTION AND IMAGINATION: ERIC VOEGELIN'S APPROACH

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AS A GRADUATE student at Boston College, I enrolled in a course taught by Fred Lawrence entitled "God in the Modern Context." In retrospect it appears that the course syllabus was organized around the principle that we discuss the work of various thinkers who represented, in varying degrees, what Lonergan would call counterpositions; moving gradually, with each successive thinker, closer to the position as exemplified in Lonergan's own writings. As one might expect in Fred's classes, Lonergan always wins! The last philosopher we considered before delving into Lonergan's thought was someone I had never heard of before — a certain Eric Voegelin. The essay by Voegelin that we read was a piece called "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme: A Meditation."¹ I can't say that I understood the article very well, but I was fascinated and attracted by this author who, within the space of fifty pages pulled together and illuminated what was going on in such disparate figures as Plato, Nietzsche, Shakespeare, Aristotle, Thomas More, Marx, Parmenides, Hegel, and Baudelaire, to name a few. What was attractive was not merely Voegelin's erudition and scope, but his ability to get 'behind' the words of the writers he discussed to the underlying experiences that evoked their literary and philosophical creations.

In this essay what I wish to do is to focus on Voegelin's approach to these matters of consciousness, experience, and symbolization. In order to do so, it will be necessary to place these aspects of his thought within the context of his work as a whole. For this reason, the essay will begin with a consideration of Voegelin's understanding of reality and participation. From this perspective the analysis can be expanded to incorporate his notions of consciousness and experience, two notions

¹ Eric Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme: A Meditation," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 12, *Published Essays 1966-1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 315-375.

which Voegelin invests with a meaning that, in many ways, is peculiarly his own. Having thus laid the groundwork, we can then proceed to a discussion of imagination and the distortions to which it is susceptible. The section which follows deals with what Voegelin considers to be the "paradox of consciousness." This will lead to a consideration of some of the internal tensions that arise from Voegelin's account of consciousness, experience, and symbolization. Here Lonergan's thought will come into play, not in the sense of an explicit comparison between him and Voegelin, but as the guiding principle in my criticism of Voegelin's position.

REALITY AND PARTICIPATION

Voegelin's conception of cognition and imagination will best be understood in relation to his notions of participation, reality and consciousness. In the introduction to *Israel and Revelation*, Voegelin writes: "God and man, world and society form a primordial community of being. The great stream of being, in which he flows while it flows through him, is the same to which belongs everything else that drifts into his perspective."² Human beings in every age have been aware of themselves as engaged in an ongoing drama of existence which they did not originate and which will continue when they are gone. Human beings do not choose to participate in this drama; they simply find themselves already 'within.' Participation is not a matter of choice; it is simply given, without the human being knowing the how or the why. Nor is participation merely a dimension of existence; for Voegelin, participation, as experienced by human beings, *is* existence.³ In participation humans are aware of living within an encompassing whole, even when that whole is not made the specific object of investigation. As human, we find ourselves in the midst of a reality about which we can and do wonder, but which we can never fully know.

An implicit awareness of reality as a whole is always present as a background to human experiences of participation. Participation is

² Eric Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, in *Order and History*, vol. 1 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956) 3.

³ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 1.

correlative with the reality in which it shares; the area covered by the term 'reality' comes into view through participation:

Reality (a) is not a thing that man confronts but the encompassing reality in which he himself is real as he participates; real (b) are the "things" that can be distinguished in the encompassing reality — the gods, men, and so on; real (c) is also the participation of things in each other within the encompassing reality.⁴

There exists no readily available term with which to speak of the encompassing whole which embraces the partners in the community of being; in his later work Voegelin will simply refer to it as the 'It-reality.'⁵ As all participation is perspectival, it effectively limits the human experience and knowledge of reality. The reason for this is that there is no vantage point apart from the reality of participation from which we can apprehend reality as we would objects in the external world.⁶ We are always already 'in.' The reality that encompasses us stimulates our questioning but is never completely grasped by it; as our questions unfold, the horizon recedes before us.

What characterizes the human experience of participation and distinguishes it from that of inanimate objects and from other sentient beings is our tendency to raise questions about our place in reality. Nor do these questions spring from a merely intellectual curiosity concerning the world in which we find ourselves. The questions emerge in response to a deeply felt experience of the precariousness of our place in the cosmos:

The reality experienced by the philosophers as specifically human is man's existence in a state of unrest. Man is not a self-created, autonomous being carrying the origin and meaning of his existence within himself. He is not a divine *causa sui*; from the experience of his life in precarious existence within the limits of birth and death there rather rises the wondering question about the ultimate ground, the *aitia* or *prote arche*, of all reality and specifically his own. The question is inherent in the experience from which it rises; the *zoon noun echon* that experiences

⁴ Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978) 63.

⁵ Eric Voegelin, *In Search of Order*, in *Order and History*, vol. 5 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 16.

⁶ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 1.

itself as a living being is at the same time conscious of the questionable character attaching to this status. Man, when he experiences himself as existent, discovers his specific humanity as that of the questioner for the where-from and the where-to, for the ground and the sense of his.⁷

To be human, then, is to exist in a state of questioning unrest. This state of unrest is experienced as a tension; a tension in relation to the source and the ultimate goal of our existence. This tension finds expression not only in the unfolding of pure wonder, but also in faith, hope, and love.⁸ In all of its variants, Voegelin understands this experience as a tension toward the ground; a ground that both draws and moves us:

The questioning unrest carries the assuaging answer within itself inasmuch as man is moved to his search of the ground by the divine ground of which he is in search. The ground is not a spatially distant thing but a divine presence that becomes manifest in the experience of unrest and the desire to know.⁹

To be emphasized here is the fact that the ground is not a something external to the questioner, but is inherent to the experience of questioning. It is the referent and the source of our questions even when it is not fully known. Indeed, Voegelin would argue that the ground:

Is an ontological hypothesis without which the experienced reality of the ontic nexus in human existence remains incomprehensible, but it is nowhere a datum in human existence rather it is always strictly transcendence that we can approach only through meditation.¹⁰

The ground can be neither directly known nor given in intuition; yet it can be deduced from our experience of participation and from our acquaintance with other beings. To speak of the ground is to become aware of that dimension of the encompassing whole which is specified by the questions "Why is there something rather than nothing?" and

⁷ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 92-93.

⁸ *Conversations with Eric Voegelin*, ed. Eric O'Connor (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1980) 8-10.

⁹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 95.

¹⁰ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 32.

“Why is that something as it is?”¹¹ The ground is implicit in all our questioning; both as the disturbing unrest present in our seeking and in our experience of ourselves as being drawn beyond ourselves:

Without the kinesis of being attracted from above there would be no desire to know about the ground; without the desire, no questioning in confusion; without questioning in confusion, no consciousness of ignorance. There would be no existential unrest moving toward the quest of the ground unless the unrest was already man’s knowledge of his existence from a ground that he is not himself.¹²

In *The Ecumenic Age* (which may be considered the beginning of Voegelin’s ‘late’ writings), Voegelin sought to thematize this tension toward the ground through the symbol of ‘The Question’.¹³ By The Question, Voegelin would seem to have in mind the primordial sense of wonder concerning our existence which is operative in all societies at all times. The Question is not to be identified with any particular question; as Voegelin understands it, The Question is always actually the question concerning the ground of existence.¹⁴ The Question intends the ground, and as such it is:

Not a question concerning this or that object in the external world, but a structure inherent to the experience of reality ... There is no answer to The Question other than the Mystery as it becomes luminous in acts of questioning.¹⁵

It is The Question that moves human beings to reflect upon their existence, to ask why there is something rather than nothing, to contemplate their own lasting and passing, and to respond to the drawing of the divine ground. It is the underlying dynamism of wonder, the pure desire to know and to orient ourselves authentically within reality which underlies and animates every particular question and investigation. The Question is also present in the tension of love, of faith, and of hope as we respond to the appeal of the ground.

¹¹ *Conversations with Eric Voegelin* 2.

¹² Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 97.

¹³ Eric Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, in *Order and History*, vol. 4 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974) 316-335.

¹⁴ Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age* 319-320.

¹⁵ Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age* 317, 330.

Through these intentional responses we are oriented toward the Mystery that is reality in its fullness. Here I would add that while Voegelin is not explicit on this point, it would seem that his notion of The Question connotes more than what Lonergan would understand as intentionality as operative on the first three levels of consciousness, and would include Lonergan's notion of intentionality as moving beyond judgments of fact to judgments of value ultimately rooted in the state of being in love. As mentioned earlier, our questioning arises from a participation that is experienced not with the detachment of the scientist, but with profound feelings in which we are conscious of both the precariousness of our place in reality and the loving appeal of that reality to which we may choose to respond in kind. The tension toward the ground articulated as 'The Question' is not only the pure, disinterested desire to know, but is given also in those feelings by which "we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning."¹⁶

In any given age The Question may be more or less reflectively conscious of itself as operative; but whatever the level of reflective consciousness in a given society, this dynamic and fundamental orientation toward the true and the good is always present, whether expressing itself in terms of myth, science, religious experience, or philosophy. The Question, then, is not to be understood as operative only when it has been explicitly formulated; it is as present in the earliest cosmological myths as it is in Aristotle's development of systematic terms and relations. The Question is never exhausted; it possesses an inherent dynamism that never rests with any particular answer or set of answers. Under the pressure of The Question human beings are moved to challenge the adequacy of previously accepted symbols, aware that every new symbolization or theory is itself open to further development.

Yet even though we may never fully understand reality as a whole, our "ultimate, essential ignorance is not complete ignorance".¹⁷ In conscientiously allowing The Question to unfold we gain greater insight into the reality in which we find ourselves. It is not a question of human beings adding or giving structure to a previously amorphous

¹⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 31.

¹⁷ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 2.

reality; rather the ever present structure of reality emerges more clearly in consciousness as we attempt to orient ourselves by raising and answering questions about our place and role within the whole. We do not question reality in order to acquire 'information'; instead, we are engaged in a process of understanding reality so that we might know the best way to live. There is a sense in which Voegelin's entire project hinges on this insight: to live the good life is to live intelligently; and to be intelligent is to be attuned to reality toward which we are oriented by our wonder and love.¹⁸ Faithfulness to The Question is the key to human authenticity.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND EXPERIENCE

If until now our discussion has focused on participation and the *reality* that is illuminated therein, to speak of 'consciousness' is to articulate the human perspective by which we are aware ourselves as participating *in* reality. This awareness that constitutes human participation is understood by Voegelin as 'consciousness.' In other words, there is participation only because we are aware of ourselves as participating. Consciousness does not merely accompany participation; it is participation.¹⁹ The structure of reality becomes an object of meditation because there is a 'place' (an unavoidable spatial metaphor) within reality where reflection arises. Consciousness is the 'site' of participation and the 'sensorium of human participation.'²⁰ As such it is the source of that questioning unrest that illuminates the reality of which it is a part. Before one can speak of a conscious subject and its relationship to an object, there is the prior reality of which consciousness and that of which it is conscious are but dimensions. Antecedent to the language of subject and object is the immediate undifferentiated

¹⁸ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 3-4; Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age* 73-74.

¹⁹ Eric Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order," *The Beginning and Beyond: Papers from the Gadamer and Voegelin Conferences*, Supplementary Issue of *Loneragan Workshop Journal* 4, ed. Fred Lawrence (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984) 35-36; Ellis Sandoz, *The Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981) 179.

²⁰ Eric Voegelin, "Immortality: Experience and Symbol," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* 12 90.

experience which becomes luminous to itself at the 'place' which we name 'consciousness.' In Voegelin's words, "A reality, called man, relates itself, within an encompassing reality, through the reality of participation — called consciousness — to the terms of participation as reality."²¹ Consciousness is inseparable from the reality that it illumines. There is no consciousness that 'looks at' reality because there is no Archimedean point from which to look.

It would be a mistake, though, to move from the inseparability of consciousness and reality in the originating or 'pure' experience to the conclusion that reality is somehow constituted by consciousness. Voegelin insists that such is not the case. Consciousness illuminates only that area of reality in which it occurs; "processes transcending consciousness are not experienceable from within."²² Reality may be unlimited in scope, but consciousness is not. Far from being constituted by consciousness, the reverse is true — consciousness arises only within the reality which it illumines. Voegelin employs the term 'psyche' in an attempt to capture both the limited nature and the openness to the unfathomable depth that characterizes consciousness. 'Psyche' is a heuristic term expressing the fact that while the area enlightened by consciousness is limited, consciousness simultaneously points toward the reality that lies beyond its borders, that is, the 'known unknown.' Consciousness can plumb the depth without ever being able to encompass it:

We experience psyche as consciousness that can descend into the depth of its own reality, and the depth of the psyche as reality that can rise to consciousness, but we do not experience a content of the depth other than the content that has entered consciousness.²³

That which moves consciousness in its exploration of reality is its own questioning unrest. Consciousness is dynamic. The border between consciousness and the encompassing whole is not a wall, but rather a site of wonder and questioning. The depth, the ground that eludes the grasp of consciousness also serves to attract and move

²¹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 163.

²² Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 21.

²³ Eric Voegelin, "Equivalence of Experience and Symbolization in History," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* 126.

consciousness by the very fact of its unknowability. Humans exist in tension toward the ground; a tension experienced as a drawing from the divine pole and as a seeking questioning from the perspective of mortals.²⁴

Having identified consciousness as the site and sensorium of participation, we can now better appreciate what Voegelin means by 'experience;' for 'experience' is inseparable from reality and consciousness. For Voegelin, experience is to be located in neither subject nor object but in the immediacy embracing both. To raise questions as to whether one's images, concepts, or thoughts correspond correctly to their objects is to already fragment the pure experience into a hypostatized subject and object. This point is crucial in understanding Voegelin. He definitely viewed his philosophy as being empirically grounded in experience; but experience was not to be conceived in a crude or naively empirical fashion that would limit its meaning to an intentionalist account in which either sense objects or thought objects stood apart from a conscious subject. As we shall see, Voegelin does acknowledge the role of intentionality in knowing. It is, however, a strictly subordinate role. This is because experience has to do with the mysterious point of intersection and tension where consciousness and reality meet, not with either of the poles constituted by and grounded in that tension.²⁵ Experience, then, is not a newly discovered area to be added to the foregoing account; it is but another perspective on what it means to say that human beings participate in reality. If the discussion of reality emphasized the whole that is illumined, and the discussion of consciousness that by which it is illumined, the notion of experience makes clear that reality and consciousness are inseparable and that any analysis must begin at the place of their contact.

It was from his study of Plato and Aristotle that Voegelin came to appreciate both the 'in-between' character of our experience and its importance in understanding the tension toward the divine ground that is constitutive of humanity. From Plato, in particular, Voegelin came to understand that experience is essentially 'metaleptic;' an overlapping of divine appeal and human questing. It is the simultaneous

²⁴ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 92-95, 149.

²⁵ Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) 72-73.

presence of divine and human reality.²⁶ It belongs not to the stream of individual consciousness, but in the “In-Between of the divine and the human.”²⁷ Experience, then, is constituted by the consciousness of participation in the ‘in-between.’ The term ‘In-between’ or ‘*metaxy*’ is borrowed from Plato, and occupies a prominent place in Voegelin’s thought. Human existence is always existence in the *metaxy*; experience is always ‘in-between.’

Man experiences himself as tending beyond his human imperfection toward the perfection of the divine ground that moves him. The spiritual man, the *daimonios aner*, as he moved in his quest for the ground, moves somewhere between knowledge and ignorance (*metaxy sophias kai amathias*). “The whole realm of the spiritual (*daimonion*) is halfway indeed between (*metaxy*) god and man” (*Symposium* 202a). Thus the in-between — the *metaxy* — is not an empty space between the poles of the tension but the “realm of the spiritual;” it is the reality of “man’s converse with the gods” (202-203), the mutual participation (*methexis, metalepsis*) of human in divine, and divine in human, reality.²⁸

Every human society bears testimony to its preoccupation with existence in the *metaxy* through the language of “life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time and timelessness; between order and disorder, truth and untruth; between *amor Dei* and *amor sui*.”²⁹ It is in coming to understand and live within this tension that humans give shape to history, society, and polity.

THE PARADOX OF CONSCIOUSNESS

If experience is essentially metaleptic, and consciousness the site of this experience, the question then arises as to the status of individual human consciousness within reality. Consistent with his analysis of consciousness and experience, Voegelin prefers not to speak of human

²⁶ Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* 73.

²⁷ Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* 73.

²⁸ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 103.

²⁹ Voegelin, “Equivalence of Experience” 119.

consciousness as an individual 'I' or as an intentionally oriented subject, although, as we shall see, he admits that there is a dimension to human existence where such language is justified. In fact, in an early essay he explicitly calls into question whether there is any 'I' given in consciousness at all:

There seems, then, to be no need to look for the constitution of a flow of consciousness. Furthermore it seems to me that there is no I that would be the agent of the constitution. It is doubtful whether consciousness has the form of the I, or whether the I is not rather a phenomenon in consciousness ... The "I" seems to me to be no given at all but rather a highly complex symbol for certain perspectives in consciousness".³⁰

Voegelin's concern here would seem to be to preserve his insights into consciousness as constituted by metaleptic participation in reality, rather than to have consciousness be understood as somehow constructed by an individual constituting agent — there is no 'I' that precedes and assembles consciousness. What is given are experiences of participation; not a 'self' that somehow structures the 'flow' of consciousness. For Voegelin, the human is to be primarily understood as that place within the community of being where reality becomes luminous to itself in consciousness. He writes:

There is no such thing as a "man" who participates in "being" as if it were an enterprise that he could as well leave alone; there is, rather, a "something," a part of being, capable of experiencing itself as such, and furthermore capable of using language and calling this experiencing consciousness by the name of "man."³¹

When such an interpretation is applied consistently it can lead to some rather peculiar constructions; for example, the reference to the Greek philosopher as "the part of reality that goes by the name of Plato!"³²

A number of questions arise that the preceding discussion has done little to clarify. Are 'human being' and 'human consciousness' the same? Is human consciousness simply an emanation of a single, universal consciousness manifesting itself in individuals in the manner of a Fichtean Ego? Earlier in this essay it was affirmed that human

³⁰ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 19.

³¹ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 2.

³² Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" 343.

existence is participation. Later it was stated that participation is consciousness. Are we then to conclude that human existence is to be equated with consciousness? Voegelin must have been aware that his terminology could be misinterpreted, so he sought to clarify what he meant:

Human consciousness is not a free-floating something but always the concrete consciousness of concrete persons. The consciousness of the existential tension toward the ground, therefore, while constituting the specific human nature that distinguishes man from other beings, is not the whole of his nature, for consciousness is always concretely founded on man's bodily existence, through which he belongs to all levels of being, from the anorganic to the animalic ... Any construction of history as the unfolding of *the* consciousness — whether it be a consciousness of humanity, God's consciousness, history's consciousness, or an absolute mind — is incompatible with the discrete reality of consciousness³³

While human *nature* is characterized by conscious tension toward the ground, humans also share in other levels of being with their bodies. Human consciousness, while the most essential dimension, is not the totality of human existence. As human, consciousness is individual; it is always located in a body.

To be human, then, is to partake of both consciousness and concrete, bodily existence. Voegelin's final formulation of the relationship between reality and consciousness reflects this distinction and its paradoxical nature. Because consciousness is located in a body, "reality assumes the position of an object intended." As a result, "reality acquires a metaphorical touch of external thingness," "an aura of externality." "Everything of which one has consciousness, this 'something' is co-experienced as an 'outside' of this corporeal existence."³⁴ Understood in this fashion, consciousness has the structure of intentionality, while the corresponding reality is conceived of as being present in the mode of 'thing-reality' or 'thingness,' in which 'object' has connotations of 'external thingness' and of being 'outside' one's corporeal localization.³⁵

³³ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 180, 201.

³⁴ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 49; Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 15.

³⁵ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 15.

Intentionality for Voegelin is, at least in this regard, analogous to the sense perception of objects outside ourselves. This being the case, it is important to bear in mind that the structure of consciousness as intentional, while modelled on the perception of sensible objects, is not limited to the perception of such objects. What Voegelin means is that when we speak of consciousness as 'being conscious of something,' 'being aware of something,' 'thinking of something,' and so on, we recognize the fact that whatever "enters the area of consciousness has to assume the 'form of an object' even if it is not an object."³⁶ Because of the intentional structure of consciousness, even the 'non-objective' areas of reality, for example, God, movements of the psyche, and so on, are recast in 'objective' form where 'object' has connotations of something accessible to a type of mental 'look':

The intentional character of consciousness has the result of objectifying whatever is the object of consciousness, even if the object is no "object," as in the case of God. In my study of political reality I have distinguished this characteristic as *Gegenstandsfoermlichkeit* of consciousness.³⁷

The reference here is to "What Is Political Reality?" in *Anamnesis*. The particular passage in question has been translated by Gerhardt Niemeyer as: "The first meaning of 'object' is given by the reality of consciousness and its need to express itself through objects."³⁸ What I take Voegelin to mean here is that consciousness has an innate tendency to render as an 'object' whatever it is that enters its 'field,' where 'object' connotes that which is external to the subject.

The reason for this tendency of consciousness to render such non-objective phenomena in objective form can be attributed to our embodied condition:

While they (the phenomena pertaining to the non-objective area of participation) do not belong to the things of the spatio-temporal world, they are related to that world because they are experienced by men in spatio-temporal existence. The peculiar "objective" quality of the phenomena ... stems from the fact that

³⁶ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* 192.

³⁷ Joseph McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas in Voegelin's Analysis," *Philosophical Studies* 31 (Dublin, 1986) 293.

³⁸ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 179.

consciousness is not *intellectus unus*, i.e., not a single cosmic, divine, or human consciousness, but the discrete consciousness of concrete men.³⁹

The result of the application of intentionality to non-objective reality is that the "objectifying intention of consciousness is therefore always in conflict with the consciousness of non-objects."⁴⁰ The dilemma of intentional consciousness then, would seem to be that a reality such as God, which can never be an object, that is, something with an aura of externality, tends to be rendered that way due to the embodied and spatially located character of human consciousness.

Voegelin, however, recognizes another mode of consciousness which he calls 'luminosity.'⁴¹ Consciousness as luminous arises from the fact that both bodily located consciousness and the 'things' of which it is conscious belong to a larger reality, the encompassing 'It-reality.' To speak of the 'It-reality' is to advert to the reality "in which consciousness occurs as an event of participation between partners in the community of being." In such an experience:

Reality moves from the position of an intended object to that of a subject, while the consciousness of the human subject intending objects moves to the position of a predicative event in the subject "reality" as it becomes luminous for its truth.⁴²

The encompassing whole, of which consciousness in the mode of intentionality forms but a part, is illuminated from within by consciousness in the mode of luminosity. *Intentional* consciousness is always a 'consciousness of something'; with consciousness as *luminous* the emphasis is clearly on consciousness as that 'place' in which reality becomes aware of its own structure and movement. It is existence in the *metaxy* and not any particular 'thing' that enters consciousness in the mode of luminosity. Consequently Voegelin maintains that it is legitimate to speak of the 'It-reality' as a 'subject' of consciousness; "The subject of this luminosity, in which this occurrence 'conscious-

³⁹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 179.

⁴⁰ McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas" 293; Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 48.

⁴¹ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 49; Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 15-18.

⁴² Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 15.

ness,' happens predicatively, is not the human 'I', but the 'It-reality.'⁴³

The 'paradox of consciousness' has to do with the fact that consciousness is both intentional and luminous. Consciousness belongs both to the human person in his/her corporeality and to the reality that comprehends the bodily located human being as a partner in the community of being.⁴⁴ Because the structure of consciousness is so paradoxical, there always exists the possibility that some may attempt to resolve the paradox by reifying consciousness. To avoid this, Voegelin makes it clear that his analysis refers to 'modes' of consciousness. Intentionality and luminosity should not and cannot be separated from one another as if they were distinct faculties. Nor can we attribute a separate supra-individual consciousness to the 'It-reality' which then somehow communicates with the bodily situated consciousness of individual human beings. Consciousness is always bound to the human perspective within the community of being (which is the only perspective we have). As such it is always simultaneously located both bodily and within the *metaxy*. One way of addressing this ambiguity is to distinguish between consciousness as site and as sensorium:

As far as consciousness is the site of participation, its reality partakes of both the divine and the human without being wholly the one or the other; as far as it is the sensorium of participation, it is definitely man's own, located in his body in spatio-temporal existence. Consciousness, thus, is both the time pole of the tension (sensorium) and the whole tension including its pole of the timeless (site). Our participation in the divine remains bound to the perspective of man.⁴⁵

Despite the admittedly paradoxical character of the complex which comprises reality and consciousness, it is possible to summarize concisely the results of Voegelin's analysis. We can speak of consciousness as possessing an intentional and a luminous mode. Correlative to these modes there is reality with its corresponding structure as thing-reality and It-reality. Consciousness as subject intends reality; as object it is itself part of a comprehending reality. In similar fashion, reality as intended has the character of an object, while as the reality

⁴³ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 49; Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 15-16.

⁴⁴ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 16, 38.

⁴⁵ Voegelin, "Immortality: Experience and Symbol" 90.

of the divine/human *metaxy* "it is the subject of which consciousness is to be predicated."⁴⁶

IMAGINATION AND SYMBOL

To the notions of reality, consciousness, and experience must now be added the notions of imagination and symbol, if we are to understand how it is that human beings move from experience to the communication of that experience. In order to do so we begin with a brief account of language; for "words and their meanings are just as much a part of the reality to which they refer as the being things are partners in the comprehending reality."⁴⁷ Indeed, "language participates in the paradox of a quest that lets reality become luminous for its truth by pursuing truth as a thing intended."⁴⁸ As one might expect, language shares in the paradox of the relationship between reality and consciousness. Just as there is no vantage point beyond reality from which an observer can gaze upon its structure, there is no language existing independently, ready to be applied to the structures of reality and consciousness.

The structure of language mirrors the intentional/luminous structure of consciousness from which it emerges. For Voegelin expressions deriving from the intentional aspect of consciousness are 'concepts,' while those emerging from consciousness as luminous are described as 'symbols.'⁴⁹ As intentional, consciousness tends to render experience in terms of objects, as 'things' which may then be expressed as concepts. While this mode of conceptualization is characteristic of and has its proper role within the natural sciences which deal with external reality, Voegelin also acknowledges a role for concepts within philosophy. For example, both Plato and Aristotle were aware of the need to develop a set of linguistic terms and relations with which to complement the truths expressed by way of the symbolic discourse of myth, fully aware that such language merely explicated and could never

⁴⁶ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 16.

⁴⁷ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 17.

⁴⁸ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 17.

⁴⁹ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 50; Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 17-18.

replace the mythic symbolism.⁵⁰ However, as mentioned above, there is always the danger that intentional consciousness will render as an object, that which can never be an object. This fact is, I believe, the source of Voegelin's deep ambivalence toward doctrine of any kind, since doctrinal language, as conceptual, can easily become opaque to the engendering experience from which it arose.

As might be expected given his emphasis on luminosity, Voegelin's discussion of language concentrates on symbols rather than concepts. Humans not only participate in reality; they express their experience of participation through symbols. Symbols are "the language phenomena engendered by the process of participatory experience."⁵¹ Symbols emerge from experience, which means that they have their source neither in the intentional consciousness of the human subject nor in the consciousness of the encompassing reality, but in the *metaxy* in which both overlap. The symbol participates in both human and divine reality; hence the symbol in some sense makes present the divine reality it symbolizes.⁵² The symbol does not 'correspond' to something 'discovered' in the *metaxy*; human beings don't participate in reality and then decide to 'create some symbols' in order to give expression to their experience. The process of participation itself gives rise to symbols as reality becomes increasingly luminous as to its own structure and movement. Understood in this fashion, a symbol is neither a "human conventional sign signifying a reality outside consciousness" nor is it "a word of God conveniently transmitted in the language that the recipient can understand." The truth conveyed by the symbol is evocative rather than informative; the truth it reveals is nothing other than the process of reality becoming luminous to itself. Symbols achieve their fullest meaning and effectiveness when "the movement they evoke in the recipient consciousness is intense and articulate enough to form the existence of its human bearer and to draw him, in his turn, into the loving quest of truth."⁵³ To be moved by the symbol is to be engaged with one's heart as well as one's mind; it is to be drawn into the quest for truth, not as an

⁵⁰ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 17-18; Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 157-158.

⁵¹ Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* 74.

⁵² Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* 74.

⁵³ Eric Voegelin, "On Debate and Existence," *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* 12 344.

intellectual avocation, but as “the love of being through the love of divine Being as the source of its order.”⁵⁴ Unlike Lonergan, Voegelin does not specify symbols in terms of their correspondence to the affective dimension of human experience,⁵⁵ but it is difficult to read Voegelin’s account of symbols as existentially formative and as drawing us into the ‘loving quest of truth’ without concluding that the transformation of which he speaks affects us at the deepest level of our feelings.

According to Voegelin, the capacity to move from experience to symbol is the function of imagination.⁵⁶ In experience, men and women are aware of themselves as existing in the *metaxy* of divine-human movements and countermovements. Responding to the appeal of reality experienced in the *metaxy*, they find themselves engaged in a quest in which they seek to understand the truth of reality and to articulate that truth by means of symbols. Imagination is the means by which such experience is rendered in communicable form. Voegelin insists that imagination is not primarily a ‘faculty’ enabling people to create symbols, but a dimension of consciousness characterized by the same paradox that governs consciousness as both intentional and luminous. Because of this, imagination reveals the same tensions. The question can be put in the following fashion: In creating symbols by means of imagination, are we expressing our experience of reality as a ‘something,’ or is the experience articulated as an event within the comprehending reality? And if imagination is not a human faculty to create symbols, would we not have to say “that the existence of a way from metaleptic experience to symbolization reveals reality as internally imaginative and, inasmuch as the symbols are meant to be ‘true,’ as internally cognitive, so that the comprehending reality, rather than man, would become the subject endowed with imagination?”⁵⁷

In answer to these questions, Voegelin maintained that neither perspective could be affirmed to the exclusion of the other; to do so would be to ignore the paradox. As he conceived the issue:

⁵⁴ Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* xiv.

⁵⁵ *Method in Theology* 64-67; Bernard Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” *Bernard Lonergan: 3 Lectures* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers/75, 1975) 33-36.

⁵⁶ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 37.

⁵⁷ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 38.

Imagination, as a structure in the process of reality that moves toward its truth, belongs both to human consciousness in its bodily location and to the reality that comprehends bodily located man as a partner in the community of being. There is no truth symbolized without man's imaginative power to find the symbols that will express his response to the appeal of reality; but there is no truth to be symbolized without the comprehending It-reality in which such structures as man with his participatory consciousness, experiences of appeal and response, language and imagination occur. Through the imaginative power of man the It-reality moves imaginatively toward its truth.⁵⁸

Few passages in Voegelin's writings draw out so clearly the integral nature of metaleptic consciousness and his conviction that consciousness is always both site and sensorium in relation to the process of reality becoming luminous. Without human beings to give symbolic expression to the structure and movement of reality, reality would not become reflectively luminous; but without the comprehending reality of which humans are but a part, there would be no experience of participation to become reflective in consciousness.

While imagination is necessary in order to create symbols of truth, Voegelin is quite clear that, in itself, the power of imagination is neutral inasmuch as it is quite capable of producing twisted and distorted images of reality as well.⁵⁹ The source of the problem is to be found in the freedom of consciousness:

Consciousness has a dimension of freedom in the design of images of reality in which are found such disparate phenomena as mythopoeic freedom, artistic creation, gnostic and alchemistic speculation, the private world view of the liberal citizens, and the constructions of ideological systems. From the knowing anxiety of ignorance, through the desiring knowledge and knowing questioning, man can advance to the optimum consciousness of his existential tension toward the ground ... He is, however, free either to enter this quest with but little interest, or to be content with partial success, or to accept falsehood as truth, or

⁵⁸ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 38.

⁵⁹ Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" 327.

to refuse the quest and even resist it, without ceasing to be participating man and as such to have consciousness.⁶⁰

While there is a normativity to be had in following one's questions faithfully, the questioning unrest that marks a truly human response toward the ground can be blocked, ignored, led astray, or rejected. Opportunities for attunement can be and often are missed. Humans may choose not to follow the direction of their questions in response to the appeal of reality. If this occurs, the distortion in the unfolding of the question may have equally unfortunate effects on imagination.

According to Voegelin, there are several reasons why imagination may go awry, some of which spring from the very capacity of questioning consciousness to transcend itself and to devise more adequate symbols by which to reflect reality. The very power to create images of reality may be mistaken for the ability to create or alter the structure of reality imaginatively:

By virtue of his imaginative responsiveness man is a creative partner in the movement of reality toward truth; and this creatively formative force is exposed to deformative perversion, if the creative partner imagines himself to be the sole creator of truth. The imaginative expansion of participatory into sole power makes possible the dream of gaining ultimate power over reality through the power of creating its image. The distance inherent in the metaleptic tension can be obscured by letting the reality that reveals itself in imaginative truth imaginatively dissolve into a truth that reveals reality. We are touching the potential of deformation that has been discerned, ever since antiquity, as a human vice under such symbols as *hybris*, *pleonexia*, *alazoneia tou biou*, *superbia vitae*, pride of life, *libido dominandi* and will to power ... Every thinker who is engaged in the quest for truth resists a received symbolism he considers insufficient to express truly the reality of his responsive experience. In order to aim at a truer truth he has to out-imagine the symbols hitherto imagined; and in the assertion of his imaginative power he can forget that he is out-imagining symbols of truth, but not the process of reality in which he moves as a partner.⁶¹

Here we have the case in which consciousness finds in earlier symbolizations inadequate attempts at articulating the truth of real-

⁶⁰ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 168.

⁶¹ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 39.

ity. While this may be a quite legitimate and necessary development, the thinker in whom the differentiation occurs must scrupulously avoid the temptation to assume that his ability to better symbolize the structure and movement of reality means that he possesses the power to alter that structure or to escape the tension of existence.⁶² The symbol created may indeed be so apt, that its role as a manifestation of reality may be replaced by the understanding that it is the sole access to or revealer of reality. The very success and power of a symbol may lead its creator to believe that imagination does not merely illuminate reality, but that imagination is, to some degree, able to create or transfigure reality. He or she may well forget that what has changed is the *symbolization* of reality and not its structure. Again, what makes this temptation so insidious is that it emerges from the quest for truth, within the normative unfolding of questioning unrest as it illuminates reality. Those who succumb to this 'imaginative oblivion' are, to a large extent the victims of their own creative and insightful imaginations; their tragedy consists in their failure to realize that imagination *serves* the mystery of reality becoming luminous to itself, it does not create or direct it.

Another related danger having to do with imagination is that a symbol, once articulated, may become dissociated from the engendering experience from which it emerged. Voegelin is aware that this may often be the result of some quite understandable concerns on the part of the symbolizer. A genuine symbol emerging at the point of differentiation may be mistaken for a final truth to be preserved forever. In that case it may be formulated as a metaphysical or theological dogma. Under stressful and threatening historical conditions bearers of insights into the truth of order may seek to preserve those insights from destruction by means of a canon of scripture or through the creation of the terms and relations for a propositional metaphysics.⁶³ While Voegelin acknowledges that the particular times and circumstances may well call for such a step, he also believed that such an action, however well-intentioned, may, in the long run, turn out to be counterproductive:

⁶² Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 40-41; Voegelin, "Wisdom and The Magic of the Extreme" 317-318.

⁶³ Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age* 43-58.

When doctrinal truth becomes socially dominant, even the knowledge of the processes by which doctrine derives from the original account, and the original account from the engendering experience, may be lost. The symbols may altogether cease to be translucent for reality. They will, then, be misunderstood as propositions referring to things in the manner of propositions concerning objects of sense perception; and since the case does not fit the model, they will provoke the reaction of skepticism on the gamut from a Pyrrhonian suspense of judgment, to vulgarian agnosticism, and further on to the smart idiot questions of "How do you know?" and "How can you prove it?" that every college teacher knows from his classroom ... When the reality of truth has declined to the traditionalist belief in symbols, the scene is set for the appearance of unbelief and reasoned objection to belief. For belief, when losing contact with truth experienced, not only provokes objection but even gives aid to the enemy by creating the doctrinaire environment in which objection can become socially effective.⁶⁴

The development of doctrinal truth, which may very well represent an appropriate attempt at preserving a genuine insight into the truth of reality, is always in danger of being misconstrued as a series of true propositions that somehow exist 'out there' independently of the engendering experience. Given the tendency of intentional consciousness to 'objectify' what, in reality, is not objectifiable (according to Voegelin's understanding of objectivity), the philosopher and theologian must be especially wary in regarding any metaphysical or doctrinal formulation as a final truth, and they must also insure that the link between symbol and experience is not lost. Should they fail to do this, the symbols will almost certainly become opaque in relation to reality. If this occurs, the 'truth' of the symbol will be called into question, because its connection to the authenticating experience has been severed. In such a climate, one symbol may be considered as good as any other, and doubt may be cast on the very possibility of attaining truth. Symbols thus disengaged from their experiences may then be used and manipulated in the service of human aggression, dominance, and lust for power under the guise of religious, ethnic, or national fervor.

In the ensuing 'dogmatomachy,' as Voegelin refers to the situation, one doctrinal orthodoxy battles against another. The outcome of

⁶⁴ Voegelin, "Immortality: Experience and Symbol" 54,66.

these controversies may be wars of religion, scepticism, the privatization of belief, and the discrediting of the search for the truth of existence. What follows is an ideological rebellion in which all orthodoxies are rejected. In one sense, Voegelin views the criticism of socially oppressive orthodoxies by the ideologists as a move toward authenticity; societies dominated by doctrine need to be transformed and to recapture the experiences that gave rise to their venerable symbols.⁶⁵ The problem with the ideologists, however, is that in rejecting the prevailing orthodoxies they also reject the experiences of reality from which these traditions grew. In this regard, they are distinctly modern.⁶⁶ The conflicts that marred the development of earlier symbolizations were most often due to overinflated claims to have adequately articulated the mysterious process and structure of reality. Concerning the existence of such a reality, however, there was generally little doubt. The advent of modernity, however, is characterized by the prevalence of a closure against reality itself and a prohibition of any questions that would challenge the deformed consciousness of the dreamer.⁶⁷

Another important catalyst in the deformation of imagination may be traced to the questioner's dissatisfaction with present reality. Moved by the reality to which he responds in wonder and love, the questioner may find jarring the discrepancy between reality experienced in luminosity and the reality of the society to which he belongs. When the truth of reality has differentiated, and in particular when the divine Beyond reveals itself, the tension of living in a society and in a world in which this order is not adequately realized can become difficult to bear. It is difficult to live within the tension of existence, and one option may be to overcome or transcend that tension. The contrast between newly revealed truth and the imperfection of human life with its disease, hunger, labor, and injustice can lead to a profound disaffection with and even rebellion against the order of existence.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 188; Eric Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality," *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, vol. 28 *What is History? and Other Late Unpublished Writings*, ed. Thomas Hollweck and Paul Caringella (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 153.

⁶⁶ Voegelin, "Immortality: Experience and Symbol" 55.

⁶⁷ Voegelin, "On Debate and Existence" 37-39.

⁶⁸ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 36-37.

This refusal to acknowledge the structure of reality and the desire to escape the tension imaginatively result in an 'eclipse' of reality. While it is within our power to either obscure our participation in reality or allow it to be brought to the clarity of consciousness, we have no choice as to whether or not we participate. We may rebel against existence in the *metaxy*, but even in rebellion we remain within the tension of existence. Voegelin describes the consequences of this eclipse of reality:

There is no other reality than that of which we have experience. When a person refuses to live in existential tension toward the ground, or if he rebels against the ground, refusing to participate in reality and in this way to experience his own reality as man, it is not the "world" that is thereby changed but rather he who loses contact with reality and in his own person suffers a loss of reality. Since that does not make him cease to be a man, and since his consciousness continues to function within the form of reality, he will generate *ersatz* images of reality in order to obtain order and direction for his existence and action in the world. He then lives in a "second reality," as this phenomenon is called, since Musil's *Man without Qualities*.⁶⁹

We have then a situation in which consciousness acts in such a way as to block one's knowledge of participation. At the same time, this obscuring of the consciousness of reality abolishes neither consciousness nor reality. The 'form' of consciousness remains despite the loss of 'content,' that is, the loss of reality. Imagination will continue to bring forth images and symbols as a means of orienting the person within the world. But since contact with the structure of reality has been lost due to the refusal to apperceive, the images generated will not correspond to the truth of order. Under such conditions human existence becomes a matter of meanings and actions structured in accordance with the 'second realities' thus generated in opposition to the 'first reality' of 'common experience,' that is, existence in tension toward the ground.⁷⁰ The way is now clear for those utopias, and 'dream worlds' that are the products of minds which can insist on the possibility of realizing perfection on earth because they refuse to acknowledge the

⁶⁹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 170.

⁷⁰ Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality" 114.

tension of existence and the limitations it imposes on human possibility.⁷¹

What Voegelin would emphasize in his account of imagination gone awry is how the symbols of both the dreamer and the philosopher have a common origin in the unfolding of the quest for truth; "In the depth of the quest, formative truth and deformative untruth are more closely related than the language of 'truth' and 'resistance' would suggest."⁷² The philosopher is very much pained by the disparity between the world as it is and transcendent reality as experienced. "The philosopher," according to Voegelin, "dreams as much as the activist, if not more so." Likewise, "Regarding the tension between dream and reality, the activist's consciousness does not differ from the philosopher's."⁷³ They diverge, however, in their reaction to this tension. The philosopher seeks attunement; she seeks to live within the tension and realizes that the dream cannot be forced upon a recalcitrant reality. For the philosopher, imagination serves to create symbols that evoke and highlight the tension; she is always aware that imagination and symbol are at the service of experience in the *metaxy*, and she realizes that while one may better symbolize the experience of reality, one can never alter the structure of reality through the manipulation of symbols. By contrast, the activist and dreamer cannot bear the tension of existence; he confuses his power to create symbols with the power to transfigure the structure of reality. "He must imagine himself to be a magician," who by means of his symbols can bring about a change in the very structure of reality.⁷⁴

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

The possibility of an 'imaginative oblivion' in which symbols are separated from experience and imagination believes itself to possess the power to manipulate reality gives rise some disturbing questions.

⁷¹ Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968) 53, 88-92; Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" 316-323; Voegelin, "The Eclipse of Reality" 51.

⁷² Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 37.

⁷³ Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" 323.

⁷⁴ Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme" 324.

The problem stems from the fact that in criticizing the reification of experience and symbols, how can the philosopher avoid having his own language succumb to the same temptation? Voegelin was well aware of the dilemma and was conscious of the fact that in attempting to articulate experience, he might be open to a similar charge. In his 'meditative exegesis' of experience was he simply generating concepts, or was he working with genuine symbols, translucent for reality? As a philosopher he had no choice but to employ human language in his analysis; but can a language saturated with concepts deriving from the fact that humans are embodied creatures ever be adequate to describe existence in the *metaxy*? What is the status of the terms 'It-reality,' 'thing-reality,' 'intentionality,' and 'luminosity?' Have we simply generated more concepts or are they indeed symbols? In raising such questions we come to that dimension of consciousness which Voegelin labels 'reflective distance.'

This essay began with a discussion of the fact that people are aware of themselves as participating in a reality greater than themselves. That awareness, that experience of participation, is constituted by consciousness as intentional and as luminous. Yet there is a further dimension to consciousness that has to do with the fact that consciousness is reflexively present to itself. This reflective distance is present in consciousness before any explicit acts of conceptualization or meditative exegesis. In other words, not only is consciousness paradoxically structured, but it can become aware of itself as such.⁷⁵ This is precisely what Voegelin has tried to make clear through his own work. In answer, then, to the question as to whether such reflection is a matter of intentional consciousness or of consciousness in the mode of luminosity he gave the following reply:

I would say that we are doing neither the one nor the other; but we are reflecting on the complex of consciousness. We are having to do with a reflective attitude which emerges whenever one has to speak about such things ... In reflective distance the entire problem of luminosity and intentionality is now transposed into a language of reflection, in which this problem is spoken about as if there were a reality independent of reflection. Naturally, we could not talk about it if reflection were not

⁷⁵ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 40-44.

already present as a component of consciousness, for only so can one differentiate it.⁷⁶

By means of intentionality and luminosity, which together form a 'complex' of consciousness, we participate in reality. In reflective distance, consciousness is directed toward the complex itself; the complex is, as it were, 'bracketed' for purposes of reflection. The reflective 'I' is kept separate from the participatory self.⁷⁷ Where reflective and participatory consciousness are identified, and this distance is lost, consciousness can come to be understood as itself constitutive of reality. Of course, this is precisely what occurs in the case of imaginative oblivion. As a structure in consciousness, reflective distance can never be abolished; but a thinker may 'forget' a particular dimension of the structure of consciousness. Someone might, for example, forget "his role as a partner in being, and with this role the metalectic character of his quest"; the result being that "he can deform the remembered assertive power of imagination in his quest imaginatively into the sole power of truth."⁷⁸ When that occurs, the symbols that emerge from imagination can become confused with the existence of participatory consciousness in the *metaxy*, resulting in a loss of openness to the ground and its replacement by the imaginative constructions of the particular thinker.

Voegelin recognizes that even when reflective distance has been taken into account it is still difficult to avoid speaking of intentionality and luminosity as if they were objects, and equally difficult to refrain from discussing the complex of consciousness "as if there were a reality independent of reflection." It would seem as if the intentional structure of consciousness is inescapable. Given Voegelin's understanding of intentionality and objectivity this can present a problem for him as he practices the method of meditative exegesis. Correctly, I believe, Voegelin wishes to avoid the danger of allowing experience to become hypostatized or reified. The reduction of the originating experiences to propositional truth is, for Voegelin, no merely academic issue; propositional truth is too easily manipulated in the service of competing ideologies which are not content to remain within the academy, but

⁷⁶ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 51.

⁷⁷ Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 50.

⁷⁸ Voegelin, *In Search of Order* 41.

erupt violently into the political realm.⁷⁹ At the same time, while we can appreciate Voegelin's concerns, what are we to make of his own claims concerning the structure of reality and consciousness? Voegelin is certainly not hesitant in making judgments concerning the proper way in which to speak about reality, even if such judgments are meant to inculcate a spirit of humility in those making ontological/epistemological claims and to affirm the essentially mysterious nature of the encompassing whole. What he is led to do is to remind his readers over and over again that while his language may seem to denote intentional objects, he is in no way referring to objects in the mode of thing-reality. As noted earlier, Voegelin accepts this situation as the inevitable result of the paradox that consciousness is both luminous and intentional. Some of his most sympathetic critics, though, have raised the question as to whether this paradox might not be somewhat lessened if the structure of consciousness were to be interpreted in another way.⁸⁰

Some have suggested that a broader view of intentionality, similar to that developed by Lonergan, is what is needed in Voegelin's account. A revision in the understanding of intentionality would of course entail a corresponding revision in the notion of objectivity. Recall that for Voegelin, intentional consciousness, due to its location in a body, is modeled on a subject/object paradigm in which the subject is an 'inside' while objects are 'outside.' Intentional knowing becomes a matter of 'taking a look,' which is then contrasted with knowing as luminous participation. If intentional knowing means taking a look, objects become the things looked at, 'already out there' in the world. It comes as no surprise then, that Voegelin finds the intentional model inadequate in speaking of God and the soul, because these realities are not encountered in the same fashion as objects in the external world.

It is at this point that the need for a richer understanding of intentionality becomes apparent. I would suggest, however, that while Voegelin tends to speak of intentionality in terms of a subject/object split, there is to be found within his work a broader notion of intentionality. This dimension of his thought is, I believe, never fully

⁷⁹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 183-199.

⁸⁰ Fred Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin of the Philosophical Knowledge of Order,'" *The Beginning and Beyond* 59-64; McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas" 291-297.

developed, because of his continued use of language in which intentional consciousness is likened to a mental looking in which objects are somehow 'out there' to be seen. Yet the resources for a more nuanced view of intentionality are certainly to be found in Voegelin's writings. In particular, the symbol of 'The Question' is a rich source for a notion of intentionality that is not to be understood by analogy to sight.

It seems evident that in Voegelin's account of The Question we have a notion of intentionality that has nothing in common with ocular vision. It is The Question that moves us to understand, that refuses to allow us to be satisfied with partial answers, that challenges us to authenticity by pressing us to bring our lives into conformity with the truth of reality apprehended in consciousness. It is nothing less than the radical intending identified by Lonergan as that which moves us from ignorance to knowledge, from knowledge to responsible behavior, and which has its fulfillment in the state of being in love with God. With this symbol, he articulates what Lonergan refers to as the transcendental notions. For Voegelin it is through the dynamic unfolding of The Question that we come to know the true, the real and the good, and it is by this same dynamism that we respond in love to the drawing of the divine love. Lonergan may differentiate the transcendental notions in terms of levels of consciousness, but Voegelin would be in complete agreement that these notions are the "unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit."⁸¹ It is by means of this radical intending that we are related to reality; an intending that has to do with the unfolding of wonder, not with 'taking a look.' The questioning unrest, the faith, hope and love which intend the ground do not come up for inspection, they are not there to be 'seen'; rather, they are manifestations of The Question inherent to the experience of reality. My point here is that with the symbol of The Question and its various expressions, for example, seeking, wondering, questioning, as well as *cognitiones fidei, amoris, et spei*, Voegelin has provided his readers with an account of intentionality which does not render the subject and object in terms of inner and outer, and which does not reduce objects to external 'things.' Surely Voegelin believes that by our questions we do indeed 'intend' the divine ground, not as an external object, but as the Mystery to which we are all oriented as wonderers.

⁸¹ *Method in Theology* 13.

What this indicates is that there can be found in Voegelin's work, an idea of intentionality/objectivity in which 'object' is not to be conceived in terms of externality, but rather as a heuristic notion referring to that which is intended by questioning. For certainly Voegelin speaks of reality, the divine ground, God, and the Beyond as the ultimate sources and referents of The Question; as mysteries, which while never exhausted by our questions, are, nevertheless specified, by means of our questions, as the transcendent pole within reality. He would insist, for example, that the divine ground comes to be known in the very process of questioning, and that it must never be conceived as being in any sense spatially distant from the questioner.⁸² Intentionality, then, need not be understood as implying a subject/object split, in which 'object' has connotations of externality. The tension in Voegelin's thinking on these matters is that while performatively he operates with a notion of object that is similar to Lonergan's conception (as that which is intended by questioning); in his writings he seems never really breaks with the idea of 'object' as somehow 'out there' external to the subject.

We are left then with a peculiar situation in regard to Voegelin's ideas concerning intentionality. On one hand, there is Voegelin's explicit account of intentionality as oriented toward objects having an aura of externality. But there is also present in his thought (perhaps less explicitly but in many ways more profoundly), a notion of intentionality emerging from the thematization of The Question as that which intends reality. Voegelin had, I believe, a tendency to recognize only the former as intentionality; and as a result he finds himself confronted with the paradox that the "objectifying intention of consciousness is always in conflict with the consciousness of non-objects."⁸³ It would seem, though, as if there is, implicit in Voegelin's thought, a way in which to discuss 'consciousness of non-objects' in terms of intentionality more broadly understood. The problem for his interpreters becomes one of trying to understand the reason for his aversion to speaking about the human orientation toward mystery as 'intentionality,' and his rejection of the term 'object' when applied to transcendent realities.

⁸² Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 95.

⁸³ McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas" 293.

The following suggestion may offer a possible explanation. Might it not be the case that while Voegelin recognizes that intentionality as he understands it is not applicable to the meditative exegesis of experience, he has also assumed that the 'subject/object split' model of intentionality is correct? While rejecting the positivist claim that knowing is only valid when modelled on the method of the natural sciences, has he not tacitly accepted the positivist account of what it is that constitutes knowing in the natural sciences? Has he not presupposed, at least at some level, that knowing things in the external world is a confrontation like perception or looking?⁸⁴ In doing so, Voegelin tends to argue as follows: 1) Intentionality is modeled on the experience of objects in the external world; 2) However, existence in the *metaxy* is not describable in terms of the experience of objects in the external world; 3) Thus, existence in the *metaxy* cannot be approached from the perspective of intentionality. As a result of this narrow understanding of intentionality, consciousness as intentional is contrasted with consciousness as luminous, and it is knowing as luminosity that comes to the fore as the preferred way of rendering the experience of participation.

As a way of avoiding this predicament might we not conceive of intentionality in a manner other than looking? Must all intentional acts be imagined as being analogous to sense perception? One possible path out of this impasse is, as suggested earlier, to specify intentionality in terms of the questioning unrest that is integral to conscious participation in the *metaxy*.⁸⁵ To do so would obviate the paradox of consciousness in which the "objectifying intention of consciousness is always in conflict with the consciousness of non-objects."⁸⁶ When wonder replaces the analogy of sense perception as the core of intentionality, the danger of knowing being misconstrued in terms of a subject/object confrontation is significantly lessened, because our potential for wonder and for raising questions ranges far beyond the confines of sensible experience. Indeed the intention of our questioning is unrestricted. Likewise, the correlative notion of 'object' is transformed from an 'already out there' to whatever is intended in questioning. Of course this would include all finite objects previously

⁸⁴ McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas" 295.

⁸⁵ Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin'" 59-64.

⁸⁶ McCarroll, "Some Growth Areas" 293.

construed as being merely 'external' to the subject, but it is equally important to note that in this regard transcendent being can also be considered an object, since it is always possible to ask questions concerning the divine ground of existence.⁸⁷

The luminous dimension of consciousness could also be interpreted from the perspective of questioning.⁸⁸ Here the emphasis would fall on the mysterious primordially of wonder rather than on its unfolding in particular intentional acts of raising and answering questions. Humans are aware of themselves as sites of wonder, with horizons limited only by the range of their questions. As Voegelin has noted, the divine ground is not only the goal of our questioning but is its source as well.⁸⁹ Consciousness as luminous is another way of accounting for the fact that before we ask any particular questions we are oriented by and in wonder, a wonder that is boundless. It is, in Lonerganian terms, openness as fact, the pure, unrestricted desire to know.⁹⁰ And in language that Voegelin would find even more congenial, Lonergan speaks approvingly of Coreth's position that:

Questioning not only is about being, but is itself being, being in its *Gelichteheit*, being in its openness to being, being that is realizing itself through inquiry to knowing that, through knowing, it may come to loving.⁹¹

Luminosity, understood in such a fashion, is certainly not alien to either the spirit or the letter of Voegelin's thought. At the same time, it avoids the unnecessary contrast between consciousness as luminous and consciousness as intentional.

The tension between luminosity and intentionality is mirrored in the distinction Voegelin makes between symbolization and conceptualization. This can become problematic, as I believe it does for Voegelin, when a philosopher seeks to develop a systematic framework

⁸⁷ Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Knowledge of God" *A Second Collection* ed. William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 117-130.

⁸⁸ Lawrence, "On 'The Meditative Origin'" 61-62.

⁸⁹ Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 97.

⁹⁰ Bernard Lonergan, "Openness and Religious Experience," *Collection*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 4, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 186.

⁹¹ Bernard Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection* 192.

by which to analyze experience. The fact that Voegelin has indeed sought to conceptualize a set of terms and relations in order to determine whether or not symbols faithfully reflect the tension of existence makes his overall attitude toward conceptualization and doctrine somewhat perplexing. For we find in his work a tendency to equate conceptualization and systematization with the hypostatization of experience. Conceptualization tends to be identified with consciousness in the mode of intentionality, in contrast to symbolization, which is associated with consciousness as luminous. Yet certainly Voegelin does not remain on the level of experience and symbol in his own work; rather he moves toward 'a new science of politics' and a theory of consciousness. It can scarcely be doubted that Voegelin was himself involved in developing a systematic set of terms and relations with an aim toward mediating between experiences of transcendence and society. One might even go so far as to say that what 'broke' the original plan of his *Order and History* was the realization that from within the events that constitute history there emerged certain intelligible patterns or 'configurations' of meaning which could be elucidated and then employed as criteria by which to evaluate other symbolizations of order. The results of this process can be found in the fifth volume of *Order and History*, where the 'case study' approach is for the most part abandoned in favor of a presentation of the essential structures of reality and consciousness.

If Voegelin was himself engaged in the recovery and development of a systematic language with which to identify both authenticity and aberration, then it makes his suspicion of doctrinal formulations somewhat troublesome. Of course he would claim that he does indeed see a role for doctrine as a preserver of important insights into the structure of reality, and that his criticism is directed at doctrines that have become separated from their engendering experiences. I believe also that most contemporary theologians would probably share his concerns in this regard. But while Voegelin may acknowledge the important role that doctrine can play in preserving the truth gained through differentiation, one often gets a sense from his writings that the positive role played by the emergence of doctrine is always overshadowed by the inherent danger of reification in such an

enterprise.⁹² As soon as one begins to move from experiences expressed symbolically, toward a doctrinal or systematic rendering of those experiences, one has somehow already 'lost' the originating experience. In this regard might it not once again be the case that, in associating doctrine with concepts correlative to intentional consciousness, Voegelin tends to understand doctrinal truth as a kind of mental 'object' with connotations of 'thingness' and externality; and since experience can never be adequately articulated in this fashion, that any attempt at conceptualization will inevitably fail to do justice to the reality of experience?

In his own defense, Voegelin would remind his critics that his 'theory' was an exegesis of the originating experiences in which *he* preserved the 'reflective distance' necessary to avoid the doctrinalization and hypostatization of experience. Others, he would argue, have not been as vigilant, and Voegelin is never shy in pointing out and judging their defects in light of the criteria emerging in his own work. But in doing so, does he not open himself to the same charge as that which he levels against the originators of 'scripture,' 'doctrinal theology,' and 'propositional metaphysics?' My sense is that in reacting against the excesses of a theology and/or a metaphysics which *had* at times become disconnected from the engendering experiences, Voegelin has perhaps gone too far in the opposite direction, at least in his criticism of others. Certainly this was Lonergan's view, who thought Voegelin's criticism of doctrine to be exaggerated and to have gone "well beyond a repudiation of a doctrinaire *carabinier*."⁹³ I would agree, but would also add that in his own work Voegelin has shown that it is quite possible to speak about transcendence without doing violence to mystery. It is regrettable that he was unable to recognize this process at work in himself as well as in some of those he too quickly labels as doctrinalizers.

This hesitancy in acknowledging a positive role for doctrines can create difficulties when one seeks to translate experience in terms of social life. For how does one mediate between experience in the *metaxy* and the pragmatic situation of one's society? What is the relationship

⁹² Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age* 36-58; Voegelin, *Anamnesis* 185-199; Voegelin, "The Meditative Origin" 46-48.

⁹³ Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 195, 201.

between the order of pragmatic existence and the order of consciousness? The strength of Voegelin's analysis lies in his ability to trace symbols of participation back to their origin in the engendering experience. But how does one make the corresponding movement from the experiences of transcendence to pragmatic existence? How is the truth discovered to be translated in social form?

One possible means of mediation would be to engage in an attempt to clarify and arrive at a systematic understanding of such transcendent experiences. Of course this must not be taken to mean that one seeks to abolish mystery or put an end to the wonder that is our ultimate orientation. What it does mean is moving from *experiences* of participation in which the truth of order is apprehended to an *understanding* of those experiences that could be formulated in terms of a philosophy which could then ground a theory of society and social change. Such a philosophy would consist of a set of terms and relations which do not seek to exhaust transcendent mystery or reduce it to merely economic or social phenomena, but which would mediate between experiences of transcendence and the social reality in which these experiences occur. The importance of such a philosophy would be to provide a basis for a social theory in which one could speak of social reality within a context in which questions of transcendent reality are integrated and not excluded from consideration. In other words, what is required is a social/political philosophy that acknowledges the tension toward the divine ground that is constitutive of humanity and which can serve to mediate between these experiences in the *metaxy* and the societies in which they occur. Theoretization thus understood could serve as a bridge between experiences of transcendence and their transformative influence in social life. In themselves, experiences remain just that — experiences. There is a need for reflection upon those experiences so that the tension of existence might be better understood and thus provide criteria by which to distinguish between those accounts of human existence that reflect attunement and those which are the product of derailment. And isn't this precisely what Voegelin himself is engaged in doing? Is not his work an extended effort to move 'beyond' experience; not in the sense of transcending experience, but rather as providing an understanding and theory of experience by which to judge the authenticity of both individual and social order?

For without the mediating role of understanding, and, I would contend, without some type of conceptual framework it is difficult to move from such experiences to a social life reflective of those experiences. The great strength of symbols is that they function at an evocative, pre-conceptual level, engaging our feelings in profound ways. In this regard they are tremendously important to any social order, a fact constantly emphasized throughout Voegelin's work. But their very lack of precision calls forth the complementary strengths of a conceptualization and systematization which seek to understand and articulate symbolically expressed experience, with an eye toward recognizing the difference between attunement and derailment, and the goal of mediating between experiences, symbols, and concrete social life. Performatively, Voegelin does this; but his cognitional stance contributes to his tendency to view conceptualization and doctrine with deep suspicion. Any attempt to enunciate doctrines or principles that would perform a mediating function between transcendent experience and social realization would be viewed with wariness as a potential cause for derailment. If one were to attempt to translate the truth of order discovered in the luminosity of consciousness into social form with the aid of a conceptual and systematic set of terms and relations, one would likely be cautioned by Voegelin that in doing so one was heading down the path toward hypostatization. In principle, I think that Voegelin would understand philosophy in a manner similar to Lonergan's conception of theology, as mediating between a cultural matrix and the role of religion in the matrix,⁹⁴ although Voegelin would probably prefer to speak of experience rather than religion. However, in terms of Lonergan's functional specialities, Voegelin would perhaps be strongest in the areas of dialectic and foundations, while at the same time neglecting doctrines, and to a lesser extent, systematics. What one finds in Voegelin's work is an absence of mediating steps between dialectic/foundations and communications. As I have hinted here, the existence of such a gap is not inconsequential, for without a way of moving between experience and its social/cultural embodiment one may experience both frustration and difficulty when seeking to translate a vision of truth, so movingly captured in symbols, into a political, social, economic order that reflects that truth.

⁹⁴ *Method in Theology* xi.

CONCLUSION

Obviously these critical reflections are not meant to be exhaustive nor are they meant to call into question the tremendous strengths of Voegelin's approach. His refusal to reify the divine and human poles of existence, his focus on the originating experiences that give rise to the symbols which inform human existence, and his insistence that philosophy be always attentive to such experiences represent an important attempt to reclaim and reinvigorate philosophy as a genuine love of wisdom. In particular, I would emphasize that while there may be aspects of Voegelin's cognitional stance that are problematic, it is important to realize just how insightful Voegelin is when discussing the questioning unrest and responsive love by which we are oriented to the divine ground. Certainly he is correct in pointing out the differences between knowing a thing in the world of sense and knowing transcendent reality; certainly the reduction of God to a 'thing' is a trivialization and reification of an ultimately mysterious reality.

When reading Voegelin and Lonergan one may be tempted to allow differences in style and emphasis to obscure the more fundamental areas of concord between them. Indeed, Lonergan, while critical of Voegelin's attitude toward doctrine, was for the most part, inclined to point out the important ways in which he and Voegelin were in agreement concerning the "self-transcending dynamism of truly human living".⁹⁵ Both men believed that there was a normativity to the unfolding of wonder; what Lonergan described in carefully distinguished fashion as the transcendental notions, Voegelin spoke of with characteristic compactness as 'The Question.' In neither case was this simply an intellectual exercise; human authenticity was inseparable from faithfulness to the dynamic movement of one's own consciousness in its orientation toward transcendence.

In this regard, it can be said that, for Voegelin and Lonergan, philosophy was a practical discipline; not in the common sense understanding of practicality as defined by Lonergan, but as having for its main concern the fundamental orientation of human beings. While Lonergan sought to ground human authenticity in the self-appropriation of one's normative intentional consciousness, Voegelin attempted to do the same thing through a meditative exegesis of symbols, with an

⁹⁵ "Theology and Praxis" 195.

aim toward a recovery of those experiences of transcendence that are constitutive of humanity. Lonergan recognized that he and Voegelin shared a common understanding of practicality, when, having just criticized Voegelin for his attitude toward doctrine, he adds:

What I do believe to be important on the present occasion is to insist how right I consider Voegelin to be in what he does say. For what he does say is foundational. It is the kind of knowledge by which people live their lives.⁹⁶

It is the recovery and expression of this 'knowledge by which people live their lives' that occupied both men. Both understood their work as having direct implications for human living, and with both it is clear that they approached their respective projects with an eye toward transforming society and undoing decline. But they were both wise enough to understand that if a significant change in human living was to come about, it had to be grounded in a transformation of human subjects at the most fundamental level.

Throughout Voegelin's work and especially in the later writings of Lonergan we discover also a deep appreciation of love as the fulfillment of one's conscious intentionality. In the thought of both men we find the notion that it is in responding to the unlimited love which draws us and floods our hearts that we reach the goal of our self-transcendence. Here again Voegelin does not carefully distinguish between the levels of unfolding consciousness as does Lonergan; love blends with faith, hope and *ratio* in Voegelin's approach in a way that is foreign to Lonergan's thought. Yet both philosophers would maintain that being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the source and end of authentic human living. For Voegelin, to live in loving openness to the divine ground is what constitutes us as human; while for Lonergan, to be in love with God was to make that love the principle of one's living. The two men are very much in agreement then, that the type of knowing which stems from love is normative; indeed it is human knowing brought to its highest stage of development.

It seems then, that at the deepest level, Lonergan and Voegelin were very much of one mind. In the later writings of both thinkers one can detect similar movements at work. Voegelin designates a number of his later writings as 'meditations,' and reading these marvelous

⁹⁶ "Theology and Praxis" 195.

cross-cultural, trans-historical reflections is to be drawn into an experience where prayer and philosophy merge. And the Lonergan of *Method in Theology* and beyond is a man who realizes that the 'way up' so brilliantly described in so many of his writings, must be complemented and ultimately transformed from above.⁹⁷ The following quotations reveal much about the agreement of these two men when it came to matters of the greatest importance. The first is taken from an interview given by Lonergan. When asked whether one should critically ground religion, he replied:

I put the question the other night. A person was demanding that I critically ground this religion and he was talking to Professor So and So and I went up to him and said 'Would you require Professor So and So to critically ground the love he has for his wife and children?' Being in love is a fact, and it's what you are, it's existential. And your living flows from it. It's the first principle, as long as it lasts.⁹⁸

Voegelin exhibited a similar reaction when asked how one could prove that openness to transcendence is characteristic of human beings:

It has nothing to do with proof. Either the openness is a reality and then you can't prove it — you can't prove reality; you can only point to it — or it isn't. Well it is. We know — we have documents of the experiences, they are in existence: the dialogues of Plato, the meditations of St. Augustine on time and space, or the thornbush episode in *Exodus*. Here are the documents of openness towards transcendence. You can't have more. There's nothing you can prove or disprove.⁹⁹

The language may be different, but the concern is the same. If asked to explain why, I can only suggest that this is how it is with those who have fallen in love with God.

⁹⁷ Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection* 106.

⁹⁸ Bernard Lonergan, "An Interview With Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," *A Second Collection* 229.

⁹⁹ *Conversations with Eric Voegelin* 23-24.

THE SPIRITUAL SUBJECT

Pierre Robert

THE QUESTION POSED in this paper regards the spiritual life and spirituality. How shall we think of the spiritual life and its place in reflection on the subject? How are we to do this in Lonergan's categories and perspectives?¹

In reflecting on the subject it is indeed possible to remain on the levels of the knowing and of the existential subject; but one can finally reach the level of what we might call the 'spiritual subject.' This religious dimension also needs to be integrated if we hope to achieve a complete image of the subject in Christian terms.

Having said this, we must immediately note that the Christian spiritual dimension does not belong to the order of 'nature'; it does not even belong to the structure of the subject, as do the well-known four levels of consciousness: experience, understanding, judgment, and decision. Rather, the spiritual dimension is there because it has been set up or established; otherwise, it is lacking. Since this condition first has to be fulfilled, it may happen that reflection that only turns back on the subject may not engage a spiritual subject at all.

If the spiritual life is first a gift, it is also something that has to be achieved — often laboriously. Only later can one come back and discover its proper place in the complete human subject. But even if the spiritual life does not belong to the order of nature, it assumes that order and adapts itself to that order in an astonishing way. This is the topic of this reflection.

¹ To clarify these distinctions: 'spiritual life' refers primarily to experience; 'spirituality' refers to a spiritual school or family, such as the Franciscan, Dominican, or Jesuit school, or again to the branch of theology that has to do with these matters. On these questions, see Walter Principe, "Toward Defining Spirituality," *Sciences religieuses* 12, no. 1 (1983): 127-41; Carla Mae Streeter, "Aquinas, Lonergan, and the Split Soul," *Theology Digest* 32, no. 4 (1985): 327-40.

I also distinguish between categories and perspective. The term 'categories' refers to the conceptual framework (such as the levels of consciousness, conversions, differentiations, etc.), and the term 'perspective' refers to orientation or approach (such as the reflective approach of the subject).

In thinking about the spiritual life in Lonergan's categories, we do not want to put words in Lonergan's mouth. In his writings we find plenty of material upon which to base a discussion of the spiritual life: his notions of the fifth level of consciousness, of religious conversion, of religious experience, of discerning 'pulls and counterpulls,' and so on; but we can try to conceive of the spiritual life in his categories, and extend his thought, going beyond a strict interpretation of his thought as such.

Our aim then is to 'consider the spiritual life in Lonergan's categories and perspective.' The important thing is that by reflecting on the subject, we may hope to gain a more complete account of the subject, and to describe the spiritual life in terms of the subject.

How then may we more precisely define the expression 'spiritual subject'? Before treating this question let us first look at our point of departure in Lonergan's thought.

1. ANOTHER QUESTION

1.1 Reflections

We know that according to Lonergan a new level of consciousness emerges when a new type of question appears. In the face of experience, questions for understanding arise (What is that? How does that come about?) that stimulate a search that will end in the discovery of an intelligible account. But does this explanation hold water? Is it true? This second type of truth-question gives rise to reflection aimed at a judgment. Once verification has occurred, one makes a pronouncement, one acknowledges something real. This is the goal of the cognitive process. But the processes of consciousness do not stop here, because now a new kind of question emerges: What shall I do? Is it worth the trouble? These value-questions call for evaluation and decision, and they aim at action.

But is there a level of questioning beyond that?

Lonergan, in an interview I had with him, stated: "And finally, the question 'Who is going to save us?' We are in a terrible mess: we cannot save ourselves. This last [question] is not the same as the

others: it requires the experience of the world and of oneself.”² Now, this question brings about the opening to a ‘savior,’ to a transcendent solution. The world is not self-sufficient; we are led to seek salvation beyond it. This opening is to a new relationship with God, and to entry into a supernatural universe, in which the love of God is “poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). As is evident, Lonergan’s line of reasoning leads him to the very threshold of the ‘supernatural’ universe. Clearly we need to go into this more deeply, but before doing so, let us finish setting forth a hypothesis that will enable a more precise inquiry into Lonergan’s texts.

The question posed at this point is the following: having been led to the threshold of the divine realm is there something after that? This question comes to us very concretely: after a long journey, one comes to faith by conversion. Does the journey end at that point? Certainly not. Coming to faith is the end of a search, but it is also the starting point of a long quest now to be conducted in faith — a quest whose goal is to encounter and become intimate with the God who has been discovered and accepted. Conversion is both the end of a search and a new beginning — the beginning of a new and long journey. Is it possible to think through this journey? Doing so means reflecting on the Christian’s spiritual life. A long journey can lead to faith, but once one has come to faith there is a long journey ‘in’ faith. This is what is meant by ‘the spiritual life’ in the strict sense.

Lonergan, then, introduces us to the ultimate question: who will save us? But is there a way to think through the subsequent process? This may be done in Lonergan’s terms if there is a new question. Is there a new question? We can think it through.

Once one has entered the world of faith one asks God quite spontaneously: what do you expect of me? what is your will for me? what is my calling? what is your plan for my life? And this question is based on the profound, though often implicit, conviction that since God created us, God knows us better than we know ourselves, God possesses the secret of our being, the key to our very selves. This is the precisely spiritual question: what is God’s will, God’s will for me, for

² See Pierre Robert, “Théologie et vie spirituelle: Rencontre avec Bernard Lonergan,” *Science et Esprit* 38, no. 3 (1986): 340. The English translation here quoted appeared as “Theology and Spiritual Life: Encounter with Bernard Lonergan,” in *Lonergan Workshop: The Legacy of Lonergan*, vol. 10, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Boston College, 1994), 333-343 (this quotation appears on p. 342).

my life, or, more immediately, for the particular circumstance that I face at the moment? We will have to reflect on the particular status of this question and on its religious dimension in connection with other questions, but for the moment it is enough to note that it exists.

Obviously for those who have completed the journey it makes possible, it exists: what does God expect of me? Or better: what do you want me to do? For we must not for a moment neglect to emphasize the personal character of this question: it is a question about ourselves, about our calling. And it is a question addressed to (a divine) someone, a question about someone's plan for me.

Obviously this question does not arise for everyone, so we must concede that it is not structural in the manner of the formally dynamic structure of knowing explicated by Lonergan. He himself noted that the question, Who will save us? presupposes a certain life experience. *A fortiori*, the question we are talking about now presupposes the religious encounter — but it is also raised by the encounter itself. Nevertheless we cannot call it peripheral, because it has to do integrally with the meaning of our existence, the realization of our being.

The question, "What is your will?" is central in the spirituality traditions. A few examples will suffice. Everyone knows Charles de Foucauld. After his conversion he had a long search for his calling. This admirable statement is found in his notebooks:

There is still this question, What do you want me to do? Ten years after you brought me back into the fold, converted me, and especially for the last eight years, this question has so often returned to my lips.³

This quest for God's intention seems to be at the heart of his search. Again, of the many spiritual writers, we may mention Alphonsus Liguori. In a text on Christian perfection, he explains that perfection consists in the love of God; then he adds that "the perfection of divine love consists in being conformed to the will of God."⁴ Loving God

³ Meditation at Rome in December 1896. We may add here this excerpt from a meditation on the prayer of surrender: "My Father, I abandon myself to you; do with me what you will. Whatever you make of me, I thank you. I am ready for anything, I accept everything, provided that your will be done in me, in all your creatures; I desire nothing else, my God." See Denise and Robert Barrat, "Charles de Foucauld et la fraternité" *Maîtres spirituels* no. 15 (Paris: Seuil, 1958), 120.

⁴ *Pratique de la perfection chrétienne, mise à la portée des fidèles de toute condition*, according to St. Alphonsus Liguori (Tournai: Casterman, 1902), 1-4.

consists in seeking to fulfill God's will. Similarly, is not the whole point of the 'Spiritual Exercises' of St. Ignatius the making of a choice? And what are we to choose? God's plan for our life.⁵

Let us recall then that the wish, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is a request addressed to the Father. In the last analysis every request made of the Father is subordinated to this condition: "Thy will be done." We are driven back to this most basic petition in moments of extreme crisis, as was Jesus at the moment of his agony, consenting to the will of the Father. Did he not say, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me" (John 4:34)?

All of the above are instances of a new question posed from within the life of faith, after one has first come to faith. And this question is the driving force of the spiritual life, the key to continued progress in the spiritual world. This question lets one advance from stage to stage, for it is a matter of always entering further, always consenting more fully to the divine plan.

But a question implies a process; questions set processes in motion. So what is the process set in motion by this question? This is what we must now explore. But first let us complete this first section by taking a closer look at the 'ultimate question' in the writings of Lonergan.

1.2 In the Writings of Lonergan

This more precise analysis occurs in the writings of the last period of Lonergan's career after *Method in Theology*.⁶

Before going further, let us recall how the question comes up in *MT* itself. In this work, the ultimate question is the question of God. After analyzing the good (chap. 2) and meaning (chap. 3), Lonergan is led to consider religion (chap. 4) and sets out to show that, far from being a stranger to it, "the question of God ... lies within man's horizon." (103) This is Lonergan's basic problematic. He goes on to show that the very dynamism of self-transcendence opens people to the

⁵ On this topic there is a very fine article by Frederick E. Crowe: "Dialectic and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises," *Science et Esprit* 30, no. 2 (1978): 111-27; reprinted in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: CUA Press, 1989), 235-51. We shall return to this.

⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972).

pouring out of the love of God in their hearts and to the fulfillment of that love.

To see how his thought continued along these lines, we may look first at *Philosophy of God, and Theology*.⁷ There Lonergan presents the different types of questions, concluding: "Finally, there is the religious question: we are suffering from an unconditioned, unrestricted love: with whom are we in love?"⁸

This formulation differs from that in the interview cited above, and is meant to show how the question of God is rooted in religious love, or rather that the question does not precede the love. But this formulation also differs from one that appears a bit further on: "It finally is religious when we ask whether there is anyone for us to love with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength."⁹ The intention is still to show how the question of God is rooted in, rather than precedes, religious love, but there is a subtle change of tone. The formulation, "With whom are we in love?" seems more cognitive, while the formulation, "Is there a basis for this unrestricted love?" — that is, does it deserve to be accepted and lived — seems more existential and related to the question Who will save us?

In *Philosophy of God, and Theology* the 'ultimate question' on God is preceded by religious love: "You would not have sought me if you had not found me," Lonergan affirms, following Pascal.

Later on, in "Mission and the Spirit,"¹⁰ the context turns out to be the dynamism that leads toward transcendence. This upward dynamism is effected by operators that take a person from one level to another. These operators which alone are *a priori* are questions. Questions for understanding lead beyond the merely given to seek an explanation; questions for reflection will verify whether a hypothesis is true; questions for deliberation aim at knowing whether a certain line of conduct is really good, if it is applicable, if it is worth the trouble.

But once again, what lies beyond this? First, I think, there is an awareness of a need for redemption: "Impotent in his situation and impotent in his soul, man needs and may seek redemption,

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973).

⁸ *Philosophy of God, and Theology* 54.

⁹ *Philosophy of God, and Theology* 55.

¹⁰ Bernard Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist, 1985) 23-34.

deliverance, salvation.”¹¹ This is the rationale for entering into the supernatural universe. One is led by a dynamism (“the passionateness of being”) that acts as a quasi-operator at the limit of intentional inquiry. But at this limit ambiguities arise as to the success of this ascent. And these ambiguities concerning human growth manifest the need for redemption.

On this analysis, Lonergan’s perspective once again shows how the line of self-transcendence leads to the point at which one enters the religious universe. Thus one is brought to the threshold, but he does not speak of a further question on a possible further level. And yet beyond this point Lonergan gives us a valuable insight. Besides the way of ascent there is the way of descent in which the gift of God’s love is reflected on the moral and intellectual levels. But this casts light on our topic.

The question, What is your will? is real. It is truly an ‘operator’ of spiritual life. But whence does it arise? Sense experience gives rise to the question, What is there? A verified intelligibility leads one to ask, Is this good? We can then suppose that the question, What do you want? arises from love given from on high. However much this question arises from circumstances one faces in life, asking this kind of question arises on a basic level from religious love. It is love received deep in one’s consciousness that brings pressure to bear and leads one to say to God, What do you want of me? Fundamentally, this question arises from love. In this questioning of God that arises from love, to ask oneself about God’s plan presupposes that a relationship with God has already been established. The question comes after one has come to faith, after one’s entry into the supernatural world, and it plays the role of ‘operator’ along the journey.

We might add “Christology Today.”¹² In the course of a review of the different ways of approaching Christ, Lonergan is led to the point where the message of the gospel finally turns out to be a religious question. The message, he says, is ‘simple,’ ‘radical,’ and ‘intensely personal.’ It is: “Follow *me*.”¹³ The message leads to encounter. And then the question is existential, it is religious: What will you do? Will you come and follow me? “Follow me!” And this question is intensely per-

¹¹ “Mission and the Spirit” 31.

¹² “Christology Today,” in *A Third Collection* 74-99.

¹³ “Christology Today” 84.

sonal, because it is a matter of following the one who says 'me,' and of following him to the end.¹⁴ This text highlights the personal dimension: the relationship is established with someone, and by someone. We might add: it is sometimes worded, "You, follow me!"

But note once again that this allows us to pinpoint the question, What do you want? Once someone has said Yes, once one has responded and set out on the way, the question arises: Now that I have set out toward you, set out with you, what do you want of me? What do you want me to do?

So much for various aspects of the 'ultimate question' in Lonergan. There are three questions that lead finally to a threshold of salvation, which, once it is stepped over, involves one with the love of God. But this stepping over, which is a conversion, is a new departure. So we must think about the path, and many elements in Lonergan's thought help us do so.

2. A DIFFERENT PROCESS

1.1 Discernment

Our goal, let us remember, is to think the spiritual life in Lonergan's categories, to elaborate a reflection on spiritual theology in these terms.

If there is a new question, there will be a distinct process. The question, What is it? starts inquiry; the question, Is it so? initiates reflection; the question, What shall I do? begins deliberation. Then what process does the question, What is your will, entail? This is a matter of what in spirituality is traditionally called 'discernment.'

We will begin with a few remarks about discernment before trying to locate it in Lonergan's categories. In the life of faith, discernment is a way of discovering God's will, design, or intention in particular circumstances. The *Dictionnaire de la vie spirituelle* presents it in the following fashion:

The necessity of spiritual discernment is rooted in the experience of the life of faith linked together with Christ, the church,

¹⁴ "Christology Today" 84.

and the world. The complexity of the situations in which the Christian is called to live in order to implement God's design for self and for others makes necessary the careful examination of the motivations that govern his choices. God calls one by one each person or group of persons who are brought together in his name. The object of a particular calling fits into the context of the overall calling of the whole people that he has chosen for himself. What is good for one person is not good for another; what is better for one is not always better for another. Hence the question: how can one recognize God's signs in a given situation and when faced with certain choices?¹⁵

Discernment refers to the process of recognizing God's calling for a life or for particular circumstances. It is a way of recognizing God's signs in a given situation.

But, fundamentally, why a discernment? With respect to discovering God's intentions, one may refer on a first level to his design in creation and in the commandments that he gives; one may refer to the gospel brought by Jesus Christ, to the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, the example given by Jesus himself; one may also look to the church insofar as it pursues and represents Christ's work. In any case, this treatment remains rather general. It gives a general framework, a horizon within which to locate oneself, a program to implement. But it does not give more precisely God's intention for an individual's life, an intention that would be located within this more general program. We are called to follow Christ, but what will be the more precise configuration of this life? What is the calling of an individual? Is he called to be a member of an order, a priest, a lay person, a married person, someone engaged in a particular profession? Is he called to a particular community? And to what type of vocation: pastoral, intellectual, charitable work, monastic solitude?¹⁶

¹⁵ A. Baruffo, "Discernment," in *Dictionnaire de la vie spirituelle* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 271-79. The quotation is from p. 271. For a quick overview of discernment, one may also consult Joseph de Guibert, "Leçon 25: Le Discernement des esprits," in *Leçons de théologie spirituelle*, vol. 1 (the only volume published — Toulouse: R.A.M., 1955), 302-12; idem, "Discernement des esprits," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 3 (1957), col. 1222-91; K. V. Truhlar, "Discernment of Spirits," in *Sacramentum mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl Rahner, vol. 2 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 89-91.

¹⁶ In "Dialectic and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises," Fred Crowe recognizes an essentially similar distinction although from a different perspective:

Besides the calling of each individual, there are stages on life's way. The spiritual life is a long and difficult journey, in which there are turns to take, leaps to make, in order to get further. Where does this leave the individual? What must he do now? God, who guides each one, has an intention, even if it is veiled, and there will be signs. One will be able to understand — all the while seeking guidance, if there is opportunity ... Even so, the presence of Spirit is surely manifested not only in strategic moments but also in the course of the daily routine: what to say to a certain person in a particular circumstance, whether to speak or be silent ... So one must identify more precisely the various individual callings within the general calling of the gospel. But the Spirit was given to the church and to its members to guide them into all truth along the way. The Spirit was sent at Pentecost so that the church would get underway in its mission. The Spirit is given to each individual for the fulfillment of his or her calling. But it is a question of recognizing the Spirit as far as possible. And so there is discernment.

It is important to remember that discernment remains within faith. Faith itself is received in mystery, it remains veiled; in the realm

This is rather a wrestling of the soul with God in the particular choice of a state of life. Ignatius clearly hopes that the choice will be made in accordance with the way of Christ presented in the Two Standards. But clearly also the election is utterly individual, not general or communicable, not a matter of public discourse. We are in the area of my own freedom and much more of the sovereign freedom of God, and there is just no way either to push God around or to learn from public sources what his particular will is for me. Ignatius therefore develops his elaborate set of variables ... to try in a score of ways to tune into the message God is transmitting to me along private lines of communications. Above all, there are rules for the discernment of spirits; they are *my* spirits, the movements of *my* soul; they are not someone else's, not even the director's; they are not some general *Zeitgeist*. They are individual. The Spirit breathes where he wills when he wills, with what message he wills. One may emerge from the *Exercises* with a decision to be a hermit, to join an apostolic order, to enter politics — in every case the call lies in the mysterious depths of God's particular will for the person, even though the decision be to join others with a similar call.

It is clear then that my paper has to study directly only the moment of dialectic involved in encountering the way of Christ along with others in a general invitation, and not the moment involved in wrestling with the divine angel in the here and now of a personal decision (244-245). In his own way Crowe makes a distinction between a more general perspective and a mysterious application to each individual.

of faith everything is not clear and obvious. 'Faith' is one thing; 'seeing clearly' is another. *A fortiori*, with regard to life in the world of faith, it will not be possible to achieve — regarding one's calling, for example — a kind of perfect clarity that would make it no longer necessary to believe, to make a leap, into God. One remains in the order of faith. Thus it is sometimes important to move forward as well as possible without being too anxious, so long as one's intention is right, because God's will is not going to be perfectly perspicuous. God gives guidance on the way but does not lay out the whole plan in one stroke. Rather, God's plan unfolds progressively as we follow along.

Discernment, then, is a particular process of the intentional consciousness. And it is an acquired consciousness: there is such a thing as apprenticeship in discernment. Why? Fundamentally, because the will of God is revealed to those who seek it; it calls for progressive familiarization with a certain way of doing things — more particularly, with the reading of signs.¹⁷

But we cannot enter into an elaborate analysis of discernment and of its criteria (talents or aptitudes, life circumstances, the opinion of a spiritual director, agreement with the gospel, feelings of consolation, encouragement, or distress). Let us now attempt to locate it in Lonergan's categories.

2.2 Discernment in Lonergan's Categories

Is it possible to think through discernment in Lonergan's categories? Lonergan did not leave us many reflections on the topic, but we can take up his perspective.

In fact, without making a complete investigation we can point to two types of reflection in Lonergan. Sometimes he repeats traditional

¹⁷ The discernment of spirits is a way of recognizing God's will in particular circumstances; but we should be careful not to systematize unduly. There is a certain way, but more generally there is the Bible, the gospel, the church, the Christian program. And the choice of a calling is not necessarily the object of discernment in the strict sense. Moreover, there are several schools of spirituality, and not all of them understand discernment in the same way, at least in the strict sense.

Perhaps we can distinguish on the one hand discernment in the more general sense of a choice whose objective is the will of God in particular circumstances, and on the other hand discernment of spirits in the strict sense of evaluating 'movements' in order finally to identify this will.

or familiar thoughts, as in the interview¹⁸ or in *Caring about Meaning*¹⁹ where his allusions show his knowledge of the usual take on the question. Elsewhere he engages in more personal reflection.

These more personal reflections occur especially in the later articles in *A Third Collection*. The essay "Theology and Praxis" will serve as an example.²⁰ Taking up for his own use an analysis by Eric Voegelin, Lonergan speaks of positive and negative attractions ('pulls and counterpulls'). This is found in Plato, but also in the gospel. Existence is symbolically understood as a field of pulls and counterpulls. The pulls draw one toward the Divine, while the counterpulls draw one away toward pleasure and excess. Pulls are found again in the context of the gospel: "When the Son of Man is raised, he will draw all people to himself" (John 12:32); "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44).

How does Lonergan reintegrate these reflections from his own perspective? First of all, he considers that this type of knowledge belongs to the order of foundations and locates it precisely in the context of spiritual theology:

It is the kind of knowledge by which people live their lives. It is the kind of knowledge that scientists and scholars, philosophers and theologians, presuppose when they perform their specialized tasks ... It is the kind of knowledge thematized by ascetical and mystical writers when they speak of the discernment of spirits and set forth rules for distinguishing between pull and counterpull, between being drawn by the Father to be drawn by the Son and, on the other hand, the myriad other attractions that distract the human spirit.²¹

There is no better definition of the knowledge in question, which is a knowledge on the order of foundations, which is existential, and prior to the various specializations.

¹⁸ "Two rules to advance in spiritual life: in periods of desolation, do not change anything [i.e., do not change your decisions]; in periods of consolation, follow the Spirit" ("Theology and Spiritual Life: Encounter with Bernard Lonergan," 336).

¹⁹ *Caring about Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, and Cathleen Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1982), for example, p. 23.

²⁰ Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection* 184-201; my exposition summarizes 189-96.

²¹ "Theology and Praxis" 195.

Secondly, Lonergan reintegrates it in his own way in theological method. We know that in method, the tasks of 'Dialectic' and 'Foundations' concern the more existential dimensions, such as horizons and conversions. Now he establishes a link between theology and spiritual life: Dialectic is to theology what pulls are to spiritual life; likewise, Foundations are to theology what discernment is to spiritual life. Thus it is that theology, which presupposes a familiarity with spiritual life, is a praxis.²²

Having recalled the elements of Lonergan's thought on discernment, we may attempt by extension to think through the process itself in his terms.

Let us begin by describing it. In the presence of a possible choice, the question arises: What is the will of God? What is his plan, his expectation, in this case? This question sets in motion a process: the believer ponders, prays, seeks to recognize inspirations, signs, seeks guidance if there is the opportunity; in sum, he or she discerns so as to identify the divine plan. Having recognized a call from God, he makes a decision for that call and acts accordingly.

To analyze this in Lonergan's categories we are not exactly dealing with the fifth level, because that term designates the basic state of being-in-love with God, a deep-set orientation that carries consciousness along with it.

But curiously enough we find here again the fundamental structure of knowledge: experience, understanding, judgment. So there is experience — that is, events, life circumstances — from which arises the questions, What are we to do? What are we to do according to God, in faithfulness to God? What does God expect? And then there are signs, inspirations, 'emotions' (consolations, desolations), pulls or counterpulls. So one is called to discern, to recognize the positive indications, to sort things out in such a way as to choose the line of conduct that is in accord with God, the one that is inspired by God. That is to say, there are three levels: experience, inspirations (pulls), discernment. Isn't the fundamental structure of knowledge found also

²² "Now *Dialectic* stands to theology, as pull and counterpull stands to the spiritual life. And *Foundations* stands to theology as discernment stands to the spiritual life where it sorts out pull and counterpull and does not permit counterpull to distort the pull or pull to let some of its dignity and worth on to counterpull. So we arrive at a conception of theology as basically a praxis" ("Theology and Praxis" 196).

in this realm, with pulls giving rise to suggestions or possibly relevant insights and discernment occurring as a sorting out or judgment.

But the way of proceeding is not just cognitional: discernment is located rather on the level of action, of conduct.²³ But if conduct is the goal, the process of the fourth level, that of decision, is also involved. The question, What shall I do according to God? entails discernment between possible courses of action. Discernment then occurs as a process of 'deliberation' with a view to 'evaluation,' which calls for 'decision,' which requires 'action.' Discernment is also understood in such a way that the fourth level is engaged on the spiritual plane, because the question of what to do according to God is a particular form of the question for deliberation.²⁴

The fourth level is thus reduplicated, but is it a matter of a particular way of acting? Or is it in function of a completely new, fifth level — if not a sixth? How are we to understand what we are investigating and to integrate it within the general framework of Lonergan's thought on the conscious subject? This is the topic of the next section.

Having described a process that follows from this determinate sort of questioning, we need to look at the end of that process. As we have said, discernment performs a sorting out, but there remains something to add. Lonergan, taking up Voegelin's thought, emphasizes: "He acknowledges pulls and counterpulls. To follow the former puts an end to questioning. To opt for the latter leaves questions unanswered and conscience ill at ease."²⁵ Following the pull toward the divine means an end to questioning. The search for discernment is a questioning that is ended by pursuit of the pull. Following the counterpull leaves one unsatisfied.

²³ Although there is in fact also discernment of spiritual intuitions, that is, of illumination given, which belongs to the order of thought. So two types of inspiration exist: on the order of thought, and on the level of action.

²⁴ Note that the fourth level (in its relationship with the others) is, in a sense, a systematization. The fundamental structure is found again on the level of action. One begins by asking what to do and imagining possible lines of conduct. Then one asks, Is it good? Is it worth the trouble? Is it possible? That is, first comes a hypothesis, then evaluation; there are, as it were, two levels where the question, What shall I do? is equivalent to a What-is? question, and the question, Is there something to do? is equivalent to an Is-it? question. This is how the fundamental structure is reduplicated. Nevertheless, everything has to do with action now, not thought, and this is why we can consider it as located on the fourth level.

²⁵ "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," in *A Third Collection* 219. The same idea occurs in "Theology and Praxis" 190.

2.3 Fitting into the Framework of Lonergan's Thought

In generalized empirical method, the first task is to take note; after that, one integrates. In beginning with the data of consciousness — here, spiritual data — first one recognizes what happens (rather than short-circuiting into a system); second one takes a position.

As we know, religious being-in-love is a fundamental state of consciousness; the love of God that resides in the heart is a dynamic state, a state that goes beyond the first four levels, assumes them, and reorients them. That is why it is considered an accomplishment of the fourth level, or even of a fifth level. Concerning this level, Lonergan says that it is fundamental and ultimate, since it gives to the desire of consciousness a basic fulfillment. But consciousness as brought to a fulfillment has undergone a conversion, and possesses a basis that may be broadened and deepened and heightened and enriched but not superseded.²⁶ In other words, in his thought there is no room for further levels because, according to his own statements, this one is unsurpassable. For the sake of rigor, one may imagine a greater differentiation, but if one wishes to be faithful to Lonergan's thought, the fifth level would always remain the last. But how then are we to conceive what has just been described?

Let us recall first of all that the first three levels are the basis of the intellectual dimension and of the conversion that reorients it; and the fourth level is the basis of the moral dimension and of the conversion that reorients it. It follows that the fifth level, which is established by a religious conversion, is the basis of the religious dimension. Here is what happens when, as, Lonergan says, the basic state is reflected in the other levels: religious conversion brings about a meaning that makes sense of all other meanings; it transvalues all other values. Thus religious conversion influences the intellectual and moral dimensions and provides a basis for them. When he describes religious conversion,²⁷ however, Lonergan adds that its function is not confined to providing a basis for the other dimensions; it has its own specificity, its own special density. The religious dimension has a

²⁶ *Method in Theology* 107.

²⁷ *Method in Theology* ch. 10, note 2.

specific character as fullness, joy, peace, transcendent beatitude, a call to holiness.²⁸

So what we are describing is not just the influence of the religious dimension on the other realms, but the establishment of a specific dimension, a specific way of functioning. Religious conversion sets one on a journey toward the God who has been discovered, and this entails a new way of functioning on the other levels. So, for example, the level of decision is heightened to become the level of decision in God and according to God. Again, the specifically religious character is to be found on all the levels. Not only are decisions made according to God and the spiritual universe, but there are new reasons, new convictions. Similarly, on the intellectual level the new contents, the doctrines of the faith, prompt new understandings worked out as theology, and even a spiritual understanding or illumination is given.²⁹ Indeed, memory is no longer just the memory of things done before conversion but the memory of God's mighty acts on one's behalf, which each individual retains for meditation in his or her heart; so too, imagination can cooperate to represent spiritual things; it is purified so that it can respond to divine touches. Hence the language of spiritual faculties on the part of some authors. As a result the life of faith, or of grace, not only influences the other prior levels to reorient them, but creates on these levels a functioning that is suited to its own use. And these levels, while retaining their integrity, are taken up anew, transformed, heightened, oriented toward specifically religious objectives.

A valuable support for this idea that the fifth level influences the others, not only to reorient them, but to create in each one a specifically Christian and spiritual mode of functioning, comes to us here from Thomistic theology: the supernatural inscribes itself in nature but respects nature. Thus the life of grace residing in the essence of the soul (which is a *habitus entitativus*, that is, is infused rather than given or acquired, and changes our very being, heightens it) influences the faculties as faith illumines understanding, and hope and love inform the will, giving them a supernatural way of working.

²⁸ *Method in Theology* 242.

²⁹ And perhaps we may even speak of a kind of spiritual instinct, an instinct of faith that allows one to recognize, to 'feel' (instinctively), what agrees with faith and what moves away from it.

All this is presented sketchily, in a way that needs to be filled in further. But even so this presentation allows us to add a critical facet to the life of faith and the spiritual life. The formally dynamic structure of knowing and choosing is transformed for distinctive purposes by a 'new life.'

3. THE SPIRITUAL SUBJECT

The preceding analyses make it possible for us to specify the meaning of the expression, 'spiritual subject.' To locate the spiritual subject, let us begin with Lonergan's understanding of the 'existential subject.'

There is the level of decision. Now our decisions can bear on various objects, but one can come to understand that these decisions also rebound upon us in such a way that they make us into who we are. Then the subject discovers that he has it within himself to decide what he is and will be. This is the existential moment. The subject takes his own existence in hand in order to orient himself by his own knowledge and choice, so as no longer simply to drift.³⁰

The existential subject appears when decisions bear upon oneself and one's own orientation. If the very dynamism of growth proceeds in the direction of always becoming more of a subject, that is, an 'author,' the existential subject — the subject taking charge of itself — is the subject in its fullness.

How shall we understand the spiritual subject? It is the subject called to take charge of his or her life by setting out to follow Christ, by establishing a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Setting out to follow Christ means abandoning his or her former ways of doing things and escaping from a life of mere drifting. In fact, spiritual subjects take their life in their own hands in order to place it in the hands of God. And the very fact of setting out to follow Christ, of answering his call, makes them take charge of it, causes them to conduct themselves

³⁰ See Bernard Lonergan "Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 222-231. One might consult on this topic my article, "De l'analyse du sujet connaissant a la reprise des dimensions existentielle et religieuse chez Bernard Lonergan," *Science et esprit* 44, no. 2 (1992), 131 ff.

rather than be led about by their interests, urges, or environment. Far from being a kind of resignation, this is a surpassing.

The spiritual life can also be described in Trinitarian fashion: it is seeking God, following Christ, responding to the call of the Spirit and coming under the Spirit's influence. Following Christ amounts to seeking after the meaning in God of our own life, and a progressive entering into God's plan for ourselves. Believers do not renounce self-actualization; on the contrary, they seek to actualize themselves by placing their trust in God and actualizing God's plan for them. Far from being a type of flight, it is a surpassing, an entering into a higher plan. Obviously this is an affirmation by faith.

But if this is the case, the spiritual subjects find themselves in a relation of *Aufhebung* (sublation) with respect to the existential subject. There is a surpassing, a break, a higher integration that preserves and guarantees the best of what came before. So spiritual subjects do not renounce taking charge of their life, but do so in response to Christ's call, according to God's plan. In this sense there is a surpassing, an entry into a higher plan for oneself. There is also a break, because one loses one's life by orienting it in terms of another's call. But the one who loses his life finds it. There is a higher integration: God's higher plan is the key to our being, our deepest truth. Such is the love of the eternal Father, of the infinite Plan. We do not seek God because we are fleeing the call to self-actualization, but because we believe that God knows better than we what is good for us. Such is the wager of Christian existence. God's plan for us is our own best plan, and our own best plan is at heart God's plan.

The spiritual subject who sets out to follow Christ is called to make a long journey. All along the way this question arises: What do you want me to do? What is God's intention? And this question is the driving force, on the conscious level, of the journey; this question moves one from stage to stage, advances one on the way with progressive confidence. Obviously there are also other aspects to the spiritual journey — prayer, personal discipline, care for others. But love-inspired questioning is central.

I recently read in an article that for Sartre the human being is a project that actualizes itself.³¹ In Christian terms, this project is a

³¹ See *Magazine littéraire*, issue on "L'Existentialisme de Kierkegaard à Saint-Germain-des-Prés," no. 320 (April 1994), 24 (and elsewhere).

call, a vocation, God's plan. But we must pass critically from self to others. Although 'others' are often taken in a global way, we can also come to think of them as other subjects. While for Sartre one discovers that the other is also a project, in Christian terms, the other also has a calling, and is also a plan of God. When one thinks about the relationship between these different callings, one realizes with Sartre that if there are many projects, but a scarcity of space in which they may be actualized, there will be conflict. Tensions are probably inevitable, even concrete tensions between different callings, but in spite of everything one can still evaluate things upon a deeper basis. First of all, competition is not the only form of relationship with others; there is also service. What began as the form of our seeking turns into our path in the service of our brothers. Our identity is a service in the context of a larger whole. Moreover, if others are different, and not by way of deficiency, it is because there are diverse callings. In this way is born the idea of the body that has many members but constitutes a unity. What is more, each member's carrying out his own function is what allows the actualization of the whole. It is a matter of integrated diversity. But we see this diversity as integrated because we believe that the various callings all originate in a divine plan, and that the whole is itself also a divine plan. The Spirit gives each individual a place and a service to carry out in a larger plan actualized with a view to the good of all.

POSTSCRIPT

Note that the essence of the spiritual journey lies in God's will — not in a state, such as contemplation. It is a matter of remaining faithful to God in all circumstances. Does God call us to the mountain? We must follow him. Does God ask us to return to the plain? We must still be faithful. One must be as faithful in the night as in the noonday brightness, in darkness as in the light, in distress as in consolation. So it is that the guiding principle of the spiritual life is not so much contemplation as love: the love of God, faithfulness to his call, to his will, in all circumstances.

‘ANOTHER THING NEEDFUL’: REASON, FEELING, AND IMAGINATION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

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FEW THEMES RUN with such persistence through nineteenth-century English literature as does that of the reconciliation of head and heart, thought and feeling. And nothing is more central to that reconciliation than the imagination with its symbol-making and symbol-recognizing power. Looking at four representative English writers I want to show how each achieved that reconciliation by suggesting a human capacity that united cognitive and affective activity. I refer to Wordsworth's idea of the imagination as 'feeling intellect,' Newman's 'illative sense,' Arnold's 'imaginative reason,' and last but not least Dickens's 'another thing needful,' a chapter heading from *Hard Times* which provides the title for my presentation.

Hard Times is a moral fable which pits the utilitarian, rationalistic educational scheme of Thomas Gradgrind against the imaginative and caring life of Mr. Sleary's circus performers. To listen to Mr. Gradgrind's opening exhortation to Mr. M'Choakumchild is to hear an indictment of all that is cold, mechanistic, and rationalistic in Victorian England:

Now what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form minds of reasoning animals upon facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to the facts, Sir.¹

These 'reasoning animals,' taught to hold suspect the entire aesthetic and affective dimension of human experience, would make their moral

¹ *Hard Times* (New York: New American Library, Signet Classics, 1961) 4.

decisions based on hard, cold facts — on pure unadulterated reason. By clumsily suggesting to his daughter Louisa a specious algebraic equation rather than the motive of love, Gradgrind maneuvers her into a tragically mismatched marriage. Later he is forced to watch the marriage collapse and then witness his son, Tom, Jr., fall victim to the very principle of enlightened self-interest that his system dunned into these young reasoning animals. Tom, always mindful of number one, shabbily tricks the laborer Stephen Blackpool into taking the blame for his own crime. When Gradgrind confronts Tom's captor, Bitzer, the perfect product of this educational system, he asks whether his heart is accessible 'to any compassionate influence' and Bitzer replies that "it is accessible to reason, sir ... [a]nd to nothing else." Gradgrind continues to plead: "if this is solely a question of self-interest with you ...," but, Bitzer, the perfect disciple, in a moment of profound irony, interrupts to lecture the master: "but I am sure that you know that the whole social system is a question of self interest. It's your only hold. We are so constituted. I was brought up in that catechism when I was very young, sir, as you are aware."²

Near the end of the novel, Mr. Sleary reflects on the loyalty of a daughter and a dog to the memory of a drunken horse trainer and lispingly admonishes the now chastened Gradgrind: "It theemth to prethent two thingth to a perthon, don't it, Thquire? ... one, that there ith a love in the world, not all Thelf-interetht after all, but thomthing very different; t'other, that it hath a way of its own of calculating or not calculating, whith thomehow or another ith at leatht as hard to give a name to ath the wayth of the dog ith." He concludes by repeating his philosophy, first articulated early in the story: "People mutht be amuthed. They can't be alwayth a-learning, nor yet they can't be alwayth a-working, they an't made for it. You *mutht* have uth, Thquire."³

The three divisions of *Hard Times*, sowing, reaping, and garnering, clearly echo biblical parables about farming. "The One Thing Needful" of Book I, Chapter I, which is answered in Book III, Chapter I by "Another Thing Needful," echoes the New Testament primacy of faith. The moral of the story is that facts must give way to feeling. In *Hard Times* it is, of course, not faith but a complex human ability to

² *Hard Times*, 281-282.

³ *Hard Times*, 287.

fuse feeling and imagination into a concrete knowledge that far surpasses mere logic or notional apprehension. By the end of the novel Gradgrind, Sr. might indeed have agreed with Newman that “after all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal.”⁴

The speaker in Matthew Arnold’s “Stanzas from the Grand Charteuse,” who might well have been a contemporary of Tom Gradgrind, Jr., stands before the ruins of that ancient center of faith and describes himself forlornly “Wandering between two worlds, one dead / The other powerless to be born.”⁵ As Gradgrind’s classroom turned children into “reasoning animals,” so the more sophisticated worlds of Eton and Oxford had had their effect on Arnold, whose speaker says:

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimm’d its fire,
Show’d me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.

But the ‘white star of Truth’ provided no warmth, kindled no feeling, assuaged no gnawing human doubt.

Suspended between the impossibility of belief and the sterility of reason, Arnold, too, looked for a middle ground, another human resource that would give meaning to life. In an early sonnet he says to a friend: “Who prop, thou ask’st in these bad days my mind?” and recommends Homer, Epictetus, and Sophocles, especially the latter “Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole.” For Arnold the saving human resource would become poetry, particularly that poetry which allows us to see life steadily, and see it whole. In an essay on “Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment” he recasts this duality by contrasting the focus on sense and understanding of paganism with the focus on heart and imagination in medieval Christendom. The “ideal, cheerful, sensuous pagan life” dwindled into the sensualism of Pompeii and Herculaneum while the poverty and suffering of medieval Christians devolved into gloom and austerity, into “the repulsive,

⁴ *Grammar of Assent*, ed. I.T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 67.

⁵ All quotations from Arnold’s poetry are taken from *The Major Victorian Poets: Tennyson, Browning, Arnold*, ed. William E. Buckler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

because self-caused, sufferings of the end of St. Francis's life."⁶ Arnold, interestingly enough, reaches a conclusion not altogether unlike the unsophisticated Mr. Sleary for whom there must be a mean between learning and work on the one hand and amusement on the other. "Human nature," Arnold says, "is neither all senses and understanding, nor all heart and imagination. Pompeii was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of sensualism had been overpassed; St. Francis's doubt was a sign that for humanity at large the measure of spiritualism had been overpassed. Humanity, in its violent rebound from one extreme, had swung from Pompeii to Monte Alverno; but it was sure not to stay there."⁷ Where then is humanity to turn? To a synthesis of reason and imagination, of course. In what has become a classic Arnoldian locus he says:

The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses and the understanding; the poetry of mediaeval Christianity lived by the heart and imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit's life is neither the senses and the understanding, nor the heart and imagination; it is the imaginative reason. And there is a century in Greek life — the century preceding the Peloponnesian war, from about the year 530 to the year 430 B.C. — in which poetry made, it seems to me, the noblest, the most successful effort she has ever made as the priestess of the imaginative reason, of the element by which the modern spirit, if it would live right, has chiefly to live.⁸

He then singles out Simonides, Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles as the four leading figures of this poetic effort.

Since Arnold characteristically makes his point by repetition rather than by analysis, the reader is left at the end of the essay holding the bag as it were, waiting for a fuller explanation of his operative phrase 'imaginative reason,' knowing only that poetry is the fullest expression of it. But turning to Arnold's poetry, perhaps we can see imaginative reason at work. In "To a Friend" he had praised Sophocles "Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole." Near the end of

⁶ *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. R.H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962) 226.

⁷ *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, 226.

⁸ *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, 230.

Empedocles on Etna just before he hurls himself into the mouth of the volcano the philosopher says

And then we shall unwillingly return
Back to this meadow of calamity,
This uncongenial place, this human life:
And in our individual human state
Go through the sad probation all again,
To see if we will poise our life at last,
To see if we will now at last be true
To our only true, deep-buried selves,
Being one with which we are one with the whole world;
Or whether we will once more fall away
Into some bondage of the flesh or mind,
Some slough of sense, or some fantastic maze
Forged by the imperious lonely thinking-power.

Finally, in a poem titled "The Buried Life," a lover addressing his loved one describes a deep inner self, a sort of a subconscious moral gyroscope that steadies one amid the turbulent storms of conscious life. Hidden for our own good, it is occasionally accessible through the concrete experience of human touch:

Only — but this is rare —
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafen'd ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd —
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

Interpreting Arnold in Lonerganian categories, I would suggest that through this imaginative reason one achieves concrete self-appropriation, discovers the unity of one's own experiencing, understanding, judging, loving, an achievement which in turn allows one to be one with the world, to see it steadily and see it whole. One knows oneself

as a knower and a lover, one who thinks and feels, whose being is in the world. One of the primary functions of poetry then is to touch us, to put us in contact with our own inner selves

Much of what Arnold says about poetry is, of course, derived from his reading of Wordsworth, something that is evident both in the similarity of ideas and the verbal echoes of poems like "Tintern Abbey" and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality." At two key points in *The Prelude* Wordsworth undergoes epiphanic experiences, "spots of time" he would call them, which in a kind of self-appropriation give him a deepened insight into the nature of the imagination caught in the act of imagining. In the middle of the poem he describes the exact moment, in 1789, of crossing the Alps at the highest point on his route. Five years later in the act of writing this part of his narrative, he experiences the imagination because of these recalled images and says:

Imagination — here the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
At once, some lonely traveler.

This moment of self-awareness is characterized as apocalyptic, religious — as a "flash that has revealed / The invisible world."⁹ At the end of the poem, again high on a mountain in Wales, he experiences a similar revelation. Profoundly moved by the complex image provided to his senses of the overhanging mist, illuminated by the moon, yoking together the land and the sea, he sees it as "the type / Of a majestic intellect," "the emblem of a mind / That feeds upon infinity," and again struggles to find words for a human power simply called imagination "Through sad incompetence of human speech." He now calls it "absolute power / And clearest insight, amplitude of mind, / And Reason in her most exalted mood." It coexists with spiritual Love or 'intellectual Love,' and lies at the depth of one's individuality. There is no exterior help in rising to 'the height of feeling intellect.' For,

No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
The prime and vital principle is thine

⁹ All quotations from Wordsworth's poetry except "A Night-Piece" are taken from *Selected Poems and Prefaces*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965).

In the recesses of thy nature, far
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else is not thine at all.

One can see here the roots of Arnold's 'buried life.' The source of both poetic creativity and of Wordsworthian 'primal sympathy' with one's fellow creatures are rooted in this mysterious fusion of thought and feeling.

How the imagination provides insight that transcends the original sense data can best be exemplified by comparing one of Wordsworth's poems with an entry in his sister Dorothy's journal. On the evening of January 25, 1798, returning from tea with friends, brother and sister shared a common experience: seeing the moon momentarily break through the clouds. In her journal Dorothy wrote:

The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small, and bright, and sharp. Their brightness seemed concentrated.¹⁰

Shortly after that date Wordsworth conceived a poem embodying the same experience. That he returned to Dorothy's journal to refresh and rekindle the experience is borne out by both the strikingly similarity of certain phrases and by his documented practice of using the journals and other written sources for his poems.¹¹ Substantially written between 1798 and 1800, the final 1815 published version reads:

A NIGHT-PIECE

The sky is overcast
 With a continuous cloud of texture close,

¹⁰ *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, (London: Macmillan, 1941), I, 4.

¹¹ See Beth Darlington, "Two Early Texts: *A Night-Piece* and *The Discharged Soldier*," in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Essays in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970) 424-448.

Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
 Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
 A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
 So feebly spread that not a shadow falls,
 Chequering the ground — from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
 At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
 Startles the pensive traveller while he treads
 His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
 Bent earthwards; he looks up — the clouds are split
 Asunder — and above his head he sees
 The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
 There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
 Followed by multitudes of stars, that small
 And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
 Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
 Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
 But they are silent: — still they roll along
 Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
 Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
 Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
 At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
 Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
 Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
 Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.¹²

Where Dorothy's journal entry records a series of discrete, acutely observed sense impressions, colored by predictable metaphoric language, the poem achieves a unified imaginative insight and fuses together all the details of imagery in the experience of the now solitary observer. Michael C. Jaye astutely observes that

"Wordsworth's clear debt to Dorothy for the particularity of his description of the natural world also emphasizes the primacy of the transforming imagination that creates a drama where before there was only a pointing at things. So, too, his dependence on Dorothy's descriptions would make apparent his greater independence — his disengagement from the tradition of descriptive nature poetry. 'A Night-Piece' escapes the constraint of static description by making a way for the subliminal drama

¹² *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), II 208-9.

of mind and world, by making motions of the natural world analogues to the mind's interior motions."¹³

This insight into the data of experience transcends the senses without leaving them behind; it reaches understanding in an imaginative synthesis that yields meaning at once affective and intellectual. It is an example of what Lonergan has in mind when he says that "there's imagination as art, which is the subject, doing — in a global fashion — what the philosopher and the religious person and so on do in a more special fashion. It's moving into the known unknown in a very concrete, felt way."¹⁴ The poem is, then, a paradigm of the 'feeling intellect' at work, an example of the creative process Wordsworth describes in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*:

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced.¹⁵

Thus again, thought and feeling unite in the imaginative act which yields insight into self and the world.

So much commentary has dealt with the importance of imagination in understanding Newman's illative sense that my intention here is only to stress the similarity between it and Arnold's imaginative reason and Wordsworth's feeling intellect. The very term, illative sense, suggests a fusion of thought and feeling, for 'illative' is derived from the Latin *infero* which also gives us the English word 'inference.' Thus the illative sense is a reasoning that involves more than mere reason. It is, I would suggest reasoning imaginatively or thinking feelingly.

Like Wordsworth's *Prelude* the *Grammar of Assent* moves toward two climactic moments, one near the middle, the other near the end.

¹³ "William Wordsworth's Alfoxden Notebook: 1798" in *The Evidence of the Imagination: Studies of Interaction between Life and Art in English Romantic Literature*, ed. D.H. Reiman, M.C. Joyce, and B.T. Bennett (New York: New York University Press, 1978) 51.

¹⁴ *A Second Collection*, ed. W.F.J. Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) 223-224.

¹⁵ *Selected Poems and Prefaces*, p. 460.

To make his point about real assent in chapter 4, he reprints five and a half pages from his 1841 Tamworth Reading Room letters. The following passages will be familiar to readers of Newman:

The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma: no man will be a martyr for a conclusion ... No one, I say, will die for his own calculations: he dies for realities. This is why a literary religion is so little to be depended upon; it looks well in fair weather; but its doctrines are opinions, and, when called to suffer for them, it slips them between its folios, or burns them at its hearth ... Logic makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism.¹⁶

This long passage provides a transition to chapter five where Newman asks the key question of part one: "Can I enter with a personal knowledge into the circle of truths which make up that great thought? Can I rise to what I have called an imaginative apprehension of it? Can I believe as if I saw?"¹⁷

A similar pattern occurs in part two. In chapters five through eight Newman methodically analyzes assent, certitude, and various kinds of inference. Then in chapter nine, dealing with natural inference, he introduces the concept of the illative sense, already anticipated in part one where he describes the apparently innate 'eye' for concrete matters certain initially unpromising schoolboys show in later life. In contrast to the other chapters in this part, this one, like chapter four, grows in rhetorical intensity and aphoristic expression, none more central than a blunt assertion that aligns the *Grammar* with the *Essay on Development* and *The Idea of a University*: "Everyone who reasons, is his own centre; and no expedient for attaining a common measure of minds can reverse this truth."¹⁸ This sets up a thematic motif that runs through the rest of the chapter: "Such as I

¹⁶ *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁷ *Grammar of Assent*, 71.

¹⁸ *Grammar of Assent*, 223.

am, it is my all ... I am what I am, or I am nothing."¹⁹ "It is his gift to be the creator of his own sufficiency; and to be emphatically self-made."²⁰ "In all of these separate actions of the intellect, the individual is supreme, and responsible to himself."²¹ "No science of life, applicable to the case of an individual, has been or can be written."²² "It is seated in the mind of the individual, who is thus his own law, his own teacher, and his own judge in those special cases of duty which are personal to him."²³ "The conclusions vary with the particular writer, for each writes from his own point of view and with his own principles, and these admit of no common measure."²⁴ "Men become personal when logic fails; it is their mode of appealing to their own primary elements of thought, and their own illative sense, against the principles and judgment of others."²⁵ "Each of us looks at the world in his own way, and does not know that perhaps it is characteristically his own."²⁶ Among the components of arguments are antecedent reasons "which are especially in point here, because they are in great measure made by ourselves and belong to our personal character."²⁷

I have taxed the reader with these quotations because I believe their cumulative effect serves the same purpose as the passage from the Tamworth Reading Room letter serves in part one. They lead thematically into Newman's habitual sentiment expressed in the opening paragraph of chapter ten, that regarding mental or moral sciences, "egotism is true modesty. In religious inquiry each of can only speak for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak."²⁸ One can never forget for an instant that what Newman is communicating is his own imaginative apprehension of God and his own process of concrete inference leading to real assent to God, the Trinity, and Christian dogma. Who else's illative sense could he be speaking about, given the

¹⁹ *Grammar of Assent*, 224.

²⁰ *Grammar of Assent*, 225.

²¹ *Grammar of Assent*, 228.

²² *Grammar of Assent*, 228.

²³ *Grammar of Assent*, 228.

²⁴ *Grammar of Assent*, 237.

²⁵ *Grammar of Assent*, 237.

²⁶ *Grammar of Assent*, 240.

²⁷ *Grammar of Assent*, 245.

²⁸ *Grammar of Assent*, 248.

explicitly personal nature of the process of discovery indicated by the many excerpts just cited? Who is the small child whose conscience is being awakened by the “the smiles or the frowns” of his parents,²⁹ the schoolboy to whom passages of Homer and Horace are “but rhetorical commonplaces” but who after “he has experienced life” finds in them a “sad earnestness and vivid exactness,”³⁰ the boy who reaches complex assent in working out an arithmetic problem?³¹ If the illative sense is personal, natural, individual — unique — then Newman knows only one, and knowing it by reflexive self-appropriation he renders it thematic as an ‘aid’ for readers to achieve their own grammar of assent.

Why Newman changed the manuscript phrase ‘imaginative assent’ to ‘real assent’ one will never know. But it is clear that the illative sense relies heavily on the imagination, if the imagination is conceived of as a complex affective and cognitive process, a living organon Newman called it — not an inert mechanism — by which we appropriate ourselves and engage the world and others around us.

The contemporary relevance of this is borne out by the aphoristic utterances of a character in John Guare’s recent play *Six Degrees of Separation*:

The imagination has moved out of the realm of being our link, our most personal link, with our inner lives and the world outside that world — this world we share. What is schizophrenia but a horrifying state where what’s in here doesn’t match up with what’s out there?

Why has imagination become a synonym for style?

I believe that the imagination is the passport we create to take us into the real world.

I believe the imagination is another phrase for what’s most uniquely *us*.³²

Thirty years ago Archibald MacLeish said the absence of imagination had produced in us a sense of nightmare because “the *knowledge* of the fact has somehow or other come loose from the *feel* of the fact, and that

²⁹ *Grammar of Assent*, 47.

³⁰ *Grammar of Assent*, 56.

³¹ *Grammar of Assent*, 125.

³² *Six Degrees of Separation* (New York: Random House, 1990) 34.

it is now possible for the first time in human history, to *know* as a mind what you cannot *comprehend* as a man." He concluded that "not until mankind is again able to *see feelingly*, as blind Gloucester says to Lear upon the heath, will the crucial flaw at the heart of our civilization be healed."³³

While the postmodern mind will bristle at this apparently prolonged Romantic apotheosis of the imagination, I am tempted to suggest that the unimaginative life is not worth living. To denigrate or impoverish imagination in favor of reason is to miss the point of Newman's Aristotelian maxim "that it is the same fault to demand demonstration of an historian as to be content with probabilities from a mathematician."³⁴ Any act of self-appropriation that reveals a compartmentalization rather than a synthesis of our cognitive, affective, and imaginative activities suggests a rather impoverished human spirit, a spirit incapable of what may possibly be the greatest imaginative activity of all — prayer.

Karl Rahner once wrote of prayer in language that harkens back — in its translation at least — to Wordsworth and Arnold. "The life of men," he says, "is made up of many and varied activities. Deep in the heart of men is the longing, fitfully glimpsed and but half realised, to gather up all these strivings into an intense pursuit of one all-embracing objective worthy of the toil and tears and devotion of the human heart." This dream or longing, Rahner says, is of course shattered by the fragmented chaos of our daily lives in the world. But, he continues,

"a man may turn from it all; and immediately the noise of his activities sinks to silence as, in a spirit of reverence and love, he speaks to God in prayer. With one swift upward glance of his soul, he has got as near as his finite nature will allow him, to that sublime fusion of all his activities into one glowing point of heart and light. Only in Heaven can he fully achieve this synthesis of all his faculties, of all the energies of his being, in the contemplation of the Beatific Vision. Here on earth, hedged in by the things of the senses, such synthesis is impossible to

³³ "Crisis and Poetry," an address before the Yale Alumni Convocation in *Arts and Sciences*, 7 Oct. 1960. Cited by Maynard Mack in "To See it Feelingly," *PMLA* 86 (1971) 373.

³⁴ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. C.S. Dessain and Thomas Gornal, vol. 24 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) 119.

men; and yet, in prayer, though 'through a glass in a dark manner,' a man looks upon God and comes as near as he can to that unity of action and purpose for which his heart has a deep and secret longing. Prayer is, therefore, one of the essentials of our life — the food we feed to our souls in order that this deep and secret longing may live into eternal life."³⁵

Here, finally, is a richer, more hopeful version of Arnold's buried life, a personal imaginative synthesis of one's inner life and one's world that sustains and nurtures.

If there has been an apparent circularity in my approach it is inevitable if not deliberate. Theologian Ray Hart writes that

it is fair warning that one should not put 'imagination' in one's conceptual diet if he has little stomach for circularities, for the tendency of one thing to be led into its opposite and back again endlessly (e.g, activity-passivity, intension-extension, memory-intention, immediacy-wholeness (mediacy), construction-destruction etc.). Every important theory of the imagination has had to reckon with its mediational or schematic character, its role in putting 'unlikes' into contact with one another.³⁶

And with that bit of self-defense I thank you.

³⁵ *Happiness Through Prayer* (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1958) 7.

³⁶ *Unfinished Man and the Imagination: Toward an Ontology and a Rhetoric of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968) 184.

'DEVELOPMENT' IN *METHOD* AND THE IMAGINING SUBJECT

Hamish F. G. Swanston

AFTER RE-ASSURING MYSELF in 1987 that "expression bears the signature not only of the controlling meaning, but also the underlying psychic flow,"¹ and that "style is in the man before it appears in the artistic product,"² and before it appears in the inartistic, too, I attended to the classicism, the colloquialisms, the quotations, the misquotations in the text of *Insight*. I attended to metaphors. I noted a recurring metaphor of 'the drama of life,' reaching from the bathtub "Eureka!" to "Guys and Dolls" by way of "All the world's a stage."³ But then I thought I detected in *Gratia operans* and *Verbum* an awareness that his references to the achievements of classical, medieval and renaissance theaters put him at a distance from those he would persuade. At a distance as great as that at which he was put by references to Aristotle, Aquinas and the varieties of geometry. This must have been a moment of crisis for a man who had received a decent Jesuit education. He makes it clear enough in his 1956 *De constitutione Christi* that he considers popular Broadway and West End shows to be fit only for those who would remain ununderstanding all their lives.⁴ He would not substitute *Hamlet* by *The Mousetrap* and go on with his dramatic metaphor. His whole enterprise must be translated. There is a nice last flick of the old man as he turns to address a 'contemporary consciousness' which is 'historically minded' with the confident assertion that "history is concerned with the drama of life."⁵ He can then go on, more peaceably, to translate experience as drama into history as 'development.' Thus it is that the *schema dramatico-practicum* of

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) 593.

² *Insight* 187.

³ See also, among others, *Insight* 188, 191, 210, 228.

⁴ *De constitutione Christi, Pars I, De Notione Personae* 14.

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 179.

Loneragan's 1964 *De Deo Trino* comes to be entirely subsidiarized to his conduct of the argument *de Evolutione Dogmatica*.⁶

Most of my third Workshop paper was devoted to considerations of Lonergan's language of 'development,' to 'progress,' 'decline,' and 'recovery,' and to explaining the greatest difficulty I had in making sense of his attempt to speak of 'recovery' whilst denying the relevance of 'myth' to his enterprise. 'Mystery' is plainly 'fact' for him, and 'history.' 'Myth' is 'fiction' and 'story.'⁷ His controlling meaning is manifest in the extraordinary effort to reduce, in *De Deo Trino*, the Hebrews' *anthropomorphismi* in their talk of God.⁸ But sometime, I thought, he must settle terms with biblical metaphor. And so with metaphor generally. And, since metaphor is 'revised and contracted myth,' with myth.⁹

And so it seems he will in *Method*. After 'the question of God'¹⁰ and 'historical process'¹¹ and 'what is so,'¹² religion reaches beyond 'idea' and 'hypothesis' even to that 'being-in-love' with God which grounds the conviction of St. Paul. "There is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or super-human powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths — nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹³ But then comes a comment as alien as it could be. And alienating. There is in all this, says Lonergan, an articulation of "the basic fulfillment of our conscious intentionality."¹⁴ That does seem a very odd way of expressing what is happening in that great 'recovery.' These 'spirits' and 'superhuman powers' and 'forces of the universe,' which are more familiarly the 'angels' and 'principalities' and 'powers' of King James' men, were in the christian communities of Rome and Ephesus and Colossae, Corinth and north

⁶ See also *De Deo Trino* I 40.

⁷ *Insight* 724.

⁸ *De Deo Trino* I 91.

⁹ *Insight* 545.

¹⁰ *Method* 103.

¹¹ *Method* 104.

¹² *Method* 104.

¹³ *Romans* 8:38ff.

¹⁴ *Method* 105.

and south Galatia, recognized as personal antagonists, working against human happiness in the cosmos as it is, plotting to frustrate the hope of the cosmos as it shall be. These 'heights' and 'depths' are elements in the astrologers' calculations of the influence of such antagonists. It must appear that for Paul, if not for all who enjoy our 'contemporary consciousness,' astrology is not always 'beyond the pale.'¹⁵ In order that he may speak appropriately of the transcendence of self, the Apostle judges that he has to employ this language of the imager. And of the mythic imager. And whatever their share in contemporary consciousness, the girl and the boy next door could have told Lonergan that this mythic language is the only available language for any being-in-love. The lover will go on declaring "you're an angel" and "She is all States, and all Princes, I,"¹⁶ go on asking

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being.¹⁷

And I cannot but doubt that 'myth' will have its chances again in Lonergan's own enterprise as he is describing the shift from 'ordinary languages' of common sense to an expression, through *Method*, of that being-in-love.¹⁸ The 'humble and docile' initiate has first to face a way 'in the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation' into the 'realm' of interiority, and then to come out at transcendence.¹⁹ This is the initiation myth and ritual of the bloody Minotaur and the youngster, of the threaded way in the dark Cretan maze, and of his coming into his Athenian inheritance as Theseus, 'all Princes, I.' It is, alas, a love story in which girl and boy do not live happily ever after together, but at least the girl experiences something of transcendental

¹⁵ *Method* 237. Lonergan had himself used the King James version of this text in the ninth of his 1959 *Topics in Education* (Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 10 [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993] 220). Was he attempting to prevent the mythic language having its proper effect by using such a dulling translation in *Method*?

¹⁶ John Donne, "The Sunne Rising" 1.21.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Sonnets from the Portugese," I 43.

¹⁸ *Method* 85.

¹⁹ *Method* 85.

recovery as the starry bride of Dionysius. The rotter, of course, suffers a decline into the husband of the amazonian Hippolyta.

It may be that cheating the poor Ariadne after she had held the string was the only way Theseus saw of getting home free, but I cannot think it progress, that, after *Verbum* and *Insight*, Lonergan is still using the singular for *Method*. The title has something about it which may encourage a modernist hope of at last, after the pluralities of the past, getting things straight, even, perhaps getting things straightened into a catechism. But I comfort myself with the remembrance that, along with writing the best book about myth, Vico proposed *uno methodo* of study for a range of academic disciplines, countering thereby the Port-Royal emphasis on the mere certainties of knowledge.²⁰ And I note, comfortedly again, that Lonergan is, in a few years, going to talk of 'the Ongoing Genesis of Methods.'²¹

Perhaps it is only the remembrance of vichian controversy which makes me nervous of the two groups of four specialties. Or perhaps Lonergan has indeed been taking example from the account of method in *L'Art de penser*, Part IV of the 1662 Port-Royal *Logique* of Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nichole. In the plan of these fastidious Jansenists, the thinking man may, by a first set of four procedures, be brought to analyze evidences and come, according to 'the method of resolution,' to realize the facts of a matter, and then, by a synthesizing 'method of doctrine' in the second half of their pedagogy, learn how to communicate the truth he possesses.²² Arnauld, who also cared nothing for 'myth,' hoped that, coming first to "cognitions founded on clear and certain reasons," a man might proceed to speak understandingly of 'mystery,' even to speak understandingly of theological mystery.²³ But, whatever other likenesses there be, there is nothing in *L'Art de penser* to be put alongside Lonergan's structuring the two halves of his enterprise so that they hinge a 'conversion' in Foundations.

²⁰ See also Giambattista Vico, *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* (Naples, 1709), reprinted, *Opere*, vol. I (Bari, 1911) 41.

²¹ See also *A Third Collection, Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 146ff.

²² See also Arnauld, *La Logique, ou l'art de penser* 41 362ff.

²³ Arnauld, *La Logique* 41 236-240.

Such 'conversion' proves to be of chiefest importance for his method:

it is not merely a change or even a development; rather it is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments.²⁴

So decisive is it that I found it increasingly difficult, as I read, to appreciate how Lonergan should be content that Foundations be positioned as the fifth in a series of eight specialties, or as the first in a second set of four within that series.²⁵ Foundations did not seem to fit with the others. I took comfort in my puzzlement in Lonergan's describing 'conversion' in Foundations as a shift in the use of language. It is a shift from theology *in oratione obliqua* to a theology *in oratione recta*.²⁶ So I can go on looking at how he's saying what he's saying.

Drama having given way to history, and history having been described as 'development,' what happens now to 'development'?²⁷ After my noting some changes, developments even, in Lonergan's usage whilst seeking to gloss that *finale* of 'development' in *Insight* by having recourse to the Latin writings, it would seem politic to make a pause, and not to go forward assuming that the 'development' of *Insight* is simply being recapitulated as the 'development' of *Method*.

²⁴ *Method* 65-66.

²⁵ Perhaps a more Lonerganian person might reconstruct *Method* as two sets of four specialties hinged at Foundations. Perhaps material from sections 3-8 of Foundations together with some of the material of History and Historians could be shaped into a 'Sympathetic' in balance with the Dialectic objectification of subjective differences.

²⁶ *Method* 133. I am, perhaps, particularly aware of a significance for Lonergan's enterprise in what he is saying in the first two subsections of Foundations because I do not do theology at anything like that university within the Roman Catholic community which he is describing. Heading a department of divinity in a state university, I am by convention, and perhaps even by statute, required to facilitate the first three only of Lonergan's specialties: Research, Interpretation, and History. And if an ecumenical professor may now and again engage in the apologetics of intellect proposed in his Dialectic and my postulated Sympathetic — indeed, I hope my lectures on Luther in both Canterbury and Rome do just that — I am certainly not expected to promote anything like the Foundations that Lonergan describes.

²⁷ See also *Insight* 743 and *Method* 291.

Such a pausing should at least make me feel more secure as I set out afterwards on my customary examination of usage.

After only the second sentence of the Preface, about 'the development of my investigation,' almost everything in *Method* develops at a rate. There are some less fortunate entities which have their places in "a process of slow development" or, worse, in "rapid dissolution."²⁸ But, generally, "the baby develops,"²⁹ commandeering human skills as it goes, "no less of skills there is a development of feelings,"³⁰ and "undifferentiated consciousness develops"³¹ in the manner of common sense, and common sense is, of course, "style of developing intelligence."³² And as Lonergan reveals that mathematics and the other sciences have "developed ever more effective ways" of settling issues³³ and that man's critical bent has effected "the development of philosophy,"³⁴ that besides a "development of a special technical language" for each science and philosophy,³⁵ "all language develops" and "literature develops,"³⁶ the least insightful of us may gather that a fully differentiated consciousness must indeed be "a fruit of an extremely prolonged development."³⁷ So we are very ready to be told that we are to attend to "the development of religious traditions,"³⁸ and to notice that "theology develops"³⁹ and even that "the specialties develop."⁴⁰

If there were a danger of some other exegete's getting caught up in "some thirty-one different types of differentiated consciousness,"⁴¹ there would appear to be at least as great a danger of my being netted by the retiarius Lonergan in as many different types of development. I

²⁸ *Method* xi.

²⁹ *Method* 27.

³⁰ *Method* 32.

³¹ *Method* 272.

³² *Method* 272.

³³ *Method* 94, see also 260.

³⁴ *Method* 258.

³⁵ *Method* 258.

³⁶ *Method* 258.

³⁷ *Method* 257.

³⁸ *Method* 272.

³⁹ *Method* 271.

⁴⁰ *Method* 241.

⁴¹ *Method* 272.

will, therefore, with familiar cautiousness, keep here to a reading of Lonergan's account, in subsection 8 of Doctrines,⁴² of how "the ongoing discovery of mind" in "ongoing contexts" prompts "the development of doctrines." Lonergan, at the close of his 1973 paper, "Insight Revisited," describes a 'development' which is "a gradual accumulation of insights that complement, qualify, correct one another."⁴³ I must hope that my gradually accumulating evidences of a history of 'development' within Lonergan's account of the development of doctrines, and the way in which these evidences may be taken to complement and qualify one another, will at least not prevent an imagining subject from having an insight into what Lonergan is saying in this subsection. And then, of course, the truly imagining subject will have no compunction in correcting me.

Even the most desirable development is likely, or so it seems to classicists, to be accompanied by a regretful, backward look to the past. The dramatic pattern being surrendered, "one murmurs one's 'Eureka,'"⁴⁴ and then, empirically, accepts that it is "just the last insight in a long series of slowly accumulating insights,"⁴⁵ or rather, the latest in that series, just another moment of development. It certainly looks as if those references to the cardinalitial motto *Cor ad cor loquitur*,⁴⁶ that distinguishing "between notional and real apprehension,"⁴⁷ that approving nod towards its being "better to believe

⁴² *Method* 319ff.

⁴³ *Second Collection* 278

⁴⁴ *Method* 188.

⁴⁵ *Method* 167. There may have been an element of nostalgia for post-graduate days and nights in Lonergan's choosing as an example of development in theology the topic of his *Gratia operans* thesis. "Over a period of a dozen years or more," Aquinas writings exhibit "a single development," "a remarkable development," in the theology of grace (*Method* 165). But Lonergan is himself moving on. Developing, even. "This book has been long in the making." There were "over a dozen years or more" between *Gratia operans* and *Insight* and again between *Insight* and *Method*, and "today it is very evident that Aristotle has been superceded" however magnificently he represented "an early stage of human development" (*Method* 310). And so, in theology, with the genuine achievement of Aquinas. In a present-day account of grace, "the method I am proposing would lead to several significant differences from the presentation of Aquinas" (*Method* 352).

⁴⁶ *Method* 73, 113.

⁴⁷ *Method* 169.

everything than to doubt everything,"⁴⁸ those repeated tributes to the common sense self-understanding exhibited in *A Grammar of Assent*,⁴⁹ and that pleasure at Newman's part in the nineteenth century's emphatic shift from knowledge to faith, will, conscience, decision, action,⁵⁰ reveal, in the underlying psychic flow, the backward hope for some newmaniac control for the meaning of 'development' in *Method*. But to use the same language is not necessarily to be expressing the same idea. Newman himself was not using 'development' in the same way as it was being used by Hegel or those who followed him along the philosophic street, or by the historians of religious development, Milman and Michelet and Johann Sebastian Drey, or even as it was used in the ecclesiastical market-place by Adam Möhler.⁵¹ And given the range of nineteenth century usages, it would seem very possible that Lonergan would, in a *Method* being proposed to modern theologians, have his own 'empirical' understanding of 'development.' It is part of my purpose in this paper to suggest that, in working out his sense of 'development' for 'the development of doctrines,' Lonergan has taken note of at least four other distinguished classicists, and that some reference to them should be made in any exposition of his meaning in that subsection and in any calculation of the part he is allotting there to the imagining subject. I shall be making mention, therefore, after Newman, of Perrone, Vico, Schelstrate, and Liguori. But first, to Newman.

Transferring, like the rest of us, a personal idiosyncrasy into the general habit of human kind, Lonergan asserts that always and everywhere "there is the same transcendental tendency of the human spirit that questions" until it comes to "the question of God."⁵² But for Newman there never was such a question. From his boyhood, Newman

⁴⁸ *Method* 223.

⁴⁹ *Method* 261, 338.

⁵⁰ *Method* 316.

⁵¹ See H.H. Milman, "Newman on the Development of Christian Doctrine," *Quarterly Review*, March 1846, reprinted in *Savonarola, Erasmus and Other Essays* (1870) 296ff; J.S. Drey, *Dissertatio historico-theologica in originem et vicissitudinem exomologeseos in ecclesia catholica* (Ellwangen, 1815), and *Kurze Einleitung in das Studium der Theologie* (Tubingen, 1819); J.A. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (Tubingen, 1825).

⁵² *Method* 103.

was aware of "two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator."⁵³ For Newman, the only question was how rightly to connect 'myself' with 'my Creator.' We make a mistake if we suppose that in this Lonergan is representing our twentieth century doubt whilst Newman represents the certainties of nineteenth century bourgeois British episcopalianism.

Newman's contemporaries, in turning from Georgians into Victorians, became ever more uncertain of self and God. Tennyson, the 'Lord of language' who never had an original thought in his life and was thus the perfectest expresser of the concerns and attitudes of decent middle-class English men, most affectingly presents their questioning his final images of the two heroes of *Idylls of the King*.⁵⁴ Each is brought to a crisis of self-doubt. Sir Lancelot looks back at a life of gallantry in tourney and battlefield, at the contradictions of loving and being loved, at the antagonisms of honest friendship and desire, of fame and self-awareness, and demands of someone somewhere an answer to his despairing question:

What am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight?⁵⁵

And Arthur, the king, after the last great battle by the sea, as the tide comes up the beach, tossing the dead bodies of his men, turns to his squire in horror:

O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.⁵⁶

And if Newman were peculiar in his confidence in his own self-evidence, he was equally peculiar in his confidence in the self-evident being of God. George Eliot, walking with F.W.H. Myers in the Fellows'

⁵³ *Apologia pro vita sua* (1865) 4.

⁵⁴ Published in sections, 1859-1885.

⁵⁵ "Lancelot and Elaine," published 1859 as "Elaine" 11, 1402ff.

⁵⁶ "The Passing of Arthur," (1869), a re-working of "Morte d'Arthur," (1842) 11, 140ff. That things were getting more doubt-worthy in England in the later nineteenth century than they had been earlier may be gauged by these lines of the 1869 poem not having appeared in the 1842 original. Tennyson described this last Idyll as exhibiting "the confusion of moral order."

Garden of Trinity College Cambridge, in 1873, taking as her text the three words which have proved so often to be the inspiring trumpet-calls of serious men, the words 'God' and 'Immortality' and 'Duty,' "pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third."⁵⁷ More representatively yet, Sir Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf's distinguished papa, was coining 'agnostic' for the response properly to be made to any question of God.⁵⁸ But, for Newman, taking thought in his Oriel rooms, there was only a question of which, among those who made the claim, is the community in historical continuity with the Church of the New Testament.⁵⁹

Some Britishers, Newman knew, did not think historical continuity a matter of moment. It was evident that Christianity has accommodated itself to changing circumstances, that Christianity has a history, but it was 'difficult' for them to understand, as he says, "how such a view is compatible with the special idea of revealed truth."⁶⁰ So they left it alone. "The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants."⁶¹ And continuity of doctrine was not much of a problem for those Anglicans who rested in the comfortable knowledge that they belonged to a branch of the original ecclesiastical tree.⁶² On their theory, the Roman church was allowed to be in continuity, even if in decadent continuity, with the ancient Church, along with the Anglican and Orthodox churches. It would be perverse, of course, for Anglican Christians to opt for foreign decadence when they were already enjoying decent religious life at home. Along with this branch theory of

⁵⁷ F.W.H. Myers, *Essays — Modern* (1883) 268f.

⁵⁸ There is a quite unjustifiable notion going the rounds that the word was coined by Professor T.H. Huxley at a Metaphysical Society meeting attended by Cardinal Manning in 1869. It is only the rumor that was started by Huxley.

⁵⁹ In the *Grammar of Assent* (1870), Newman gave final expression to his sense of conscience as the personal connector of self and God. This is as autobiographic a book as the *Apologia*. And so are those earlier explanations of the Church as the communal connector of self and God, the University Sermon of 1843 and the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

⁶⁰ *Development* 10.

⁶¹ See William Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation* (1638) for a notorious and generally cogent exposition of this slogan.

⁶² Newman found, after the Tract 90 crisis, that most Anglican bishops held some such notion of the state of affairs.

the Church went a theory of doctrine and its not developing into the present doctrines of Rome. The theory demanded that the church preach now only what had been agreed doctrine whilst there had been only the trunk: *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*.⁶³ Using this Vincentian canon as an instrument for discerning truth, or at least of discerning a truth that would rule out the oddities of Rome, is, however, problematic. There is, for example, as much or as little evidence for the shared Trinitarian dogma as for the peculiar Roman doctrines of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and Papal Supremacy. So 'the solution' to their problem must, if couched in Vincentian canon terms, be for Anglicans "as difficult as the original problem."⁶⁴ Newman, therefore, felt called to consider the Roman claim that in that Church and that Church only was there true continuity with the Church of ancient Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople. The Roman Church did now look and sound so very unlike those first century churches, but then, wiping his steel-rimmed spectacles and taking his stand at the looking glass above the Oriel jug and basin, Newman saw that in early middle-age he looked and sounded very unlike his young self. And he knew that he was still the same person. He had developed. So, evidently, on this personal paradigm, the Church could have developed. Had, indeed, developed.

Newman realized that others read primitive, medieval, and modern church history rather differently, and they would have questions about how they were to distinguish such Roman developments from 'corruptions' of the first communities' teaching. He made some really quite unselfish efforts to identify 'development' in terms of 'preservation of type,' 'continuity of principles,' 'chronic vigor,' and the like,⁶⁵ but his personal paradigm does not admit a test for corruption. He has developed to what he is. He cannot conceive that along his way he may have succumbed to corrupting influences. His *Apologia* is written to counter precisely that suggestion. Not experiencing corruption himself, he is at a loss to talk about a corruption in the history of

⁶³ In the *Commonitorium* (II.3) of S. Vincent of Lerins the 'Canon' appears as *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est* but all nineteenth century British disputants put *quod semper* first.

⁶⁴ *Development* 27.

⁶⁵ *Development* 171-177 and 207-321, 178-184 and 323-354, 203-206 and 437-444.

christian doctrine. He is content to have framed his 'ineffably cogent' argument for development.⁶⁶ His *Essay* would surely be read by Anglicans as an effectively converting book. He had, after all, himself become a Catholic before it was published. He had now only to convince Roman Catholics that this was indeed the way they should explain themselves.

In the summer of 1847, Newman wrote out a Latin summary of his position for the Jesuits of the Collegio Romano.⁶⁷ He described the origin of 'new doctrine' in the Church in terms of his own birth: *post difficilem partum dogma novum nascitur*. Giovanni Perrone, convinced of the existence of an immutable deposit of doctrine, observed tartly, *non oritur dogma novum*, thus rejecting both Newman's hypothesis and his paradigm. Perrone suggested that Newman rephrase his notion. He should say, rather, *vetus veritas nova definitione explicite credenda proponitur*.⁶⁸ 'Explicit' and 'explication' were members of the received language in the Schools. They were expressive of the underlying curial psyche. In the seventeenth century, as Lonergan knew either before or, certainly, after reading Professor Owen Chadwick's 1957 lectures "From Bossuet to Newman,"⁶⁹ bishop Jacques Bénigne Bossuet of Meaux had employed 'explication' in this context with the restricted sense of 'putting into clearer language' without effecting the least variation in the doctrine already being preached by the Church.⁷⁰ He was contented that the Roman theologian should keep himself occupied within the specialties of Research and Interpretation and, perhaps, if his bishop let him, History. Perrone knew that something rather more than Bossuet envisaged had been happening in the history of doctrine. He was

⁶⁶ See also *Grammar of Assent* 498.

⁶⁷ See T. Lynch, "The Newman-Perrone paper on Development," *Gregorianum* xvi (1935) 402-447. Newman merely puzzled the gentlemanly canonist Giacomo Mazio, talk of 'development' irritated, however, the patristic scholar, Claudio Passaglia, and it took time for the exact, scholastic, Perrone to recognize what Newman was attempting.

⁶⁸ See Lynch, art.cit. 417.

⁶⁹ Birkbeck Lectures, 1957, published that year, second revised edition, 1987 (Cambridge University Press). See also *Second Collection* 59 and 136.

⁷⁰ See, for example, *L'Histoire des variations* XV 134. This was the view, much later, expressed in the angry articles of Orestes Brownson in *Brownson's Quarterly Review* July 1846, January 1847, October 1847, and October 1848.

aware that the language of 'explicit' and 'implicit,' which was first used by kindly medieval exegetes who wished to appreciate the Pauline celebration of the faith of the Patriarchs in *Hebrews*, and which had gradually been accepted for the description of what dogmatic theologians were doing as the elucidation of doctrine went on in the Church, had been transferred by Francisco Suarez to talk of the Church's defining doctrine.⁷¹ The Church, in defining, is simply declaring what is presently seen to be logically inferable from the original revelation.⁷² Gabriel Vasquez had raised questions about whether or no Suarez were saying that the inference would be already *de fide* for an individual making the inference before the ecclesial definition.⁷³ And Suarez was asked, too, about the distinguishing of divine revelation from human inferences. So, complementarily, cardinal Juan de Lugo went on to say that an ecclesial definition is by definition prevented by the Spirit of God from being anything other than a definition of what is included in divine revelation.⁷⁴

⁷¹ See Francisco Suarez, *De Fide*, vol. XII, disp. II, 6.18 and disp. III, 11.1,6,7, and 11 (Paris, 1858).

⁷² Even Newman had employed this language in *Via Media*, i, 82: "doctrines remain implicit till they are contravened, they are then stated in explicit form." Even in *Development* he was suggesting that after a particular development had occurred, "this logical character which the whole wears becomes a test that the process has been a true development" (190-191). But he insisted that the development of doctrine was not 'a logical operation' or engineered by 'a conscious reasoning from premisses to a conclusion' (189).

It is remarkable that Newman, as he lived within the Catholic community, needed less to rely on 'development.' In the 1850 *Difficulties of Anglicans* he was still suggesting that "the dogmatic truth of the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin may be said in the lapse of centuries to have grown upon the consciousness of individuals," (I, xii, 7). By 1866, in reply to Pusey's *Eirenicon*, he could say: "I do not allow that the doctrine concerning her has undergone a growth for I believe that it has been in substance one and the same from the beginning" (28).

⁷³ Gabriel Vasquez, *Comm in I div. Thomae*, q.I, art.2, disp.v. cap.3. Professor Chadwick knew about all this either before, or, certainly, after reading Lonergan's 1948 paper on "The Assumption and Theology," *Collection* 68-83.

⁷⁴ See J. de Lugo, *De virtute fidei divinae*, disp. I, xiii, I n. 261 and 269ff., *Opera Omnia* III (Venice: 1718) 40ff. Even those who lived before the 1907 decree of the Holy Office, *Lamentabili*, knew well that revelation is given "before the death of the last Apostle."

See also, for this whole controversy, G. Martinez, "La Solucion del Suarez al problema del progreso dogmatico," *Estudios Ecclesiasticos* XXII (1948) 151ff, and M. Flick, "Il problema dello sviluppo del dogma," *Gregorianum* XXXIII (1952) 5ff.

Perrone acknowledged that there remained some historical problems to be resolved, but, using Suarezian modes, he had in 1845, the very year that Newman published his *Essay*, delivered a lecture suggesting that the Pope may propose a doctrine for Christians' believing which, since it is "contained only implicitly in divine revelation" would not be known before the definition, or at least could not be known with that certainty with which doctrines *de fide* are knowable.⁷⁵ The process of explicatory definition is a process of newness *non quoad se sed quoad nos*.⁷⁶ These things were of contemporary interest. Perrone, along with everyone else in Rome,⁷⁷ was anticipating an early definition of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady. He was attempting to forestall an objection that this would be a 'new' doctrine.

Just when he was being introduced to the study of Suarez and de Lugo and the mildly exciting Vasquez, in the undergraduate theology classes at the Gregorian University, Lonergan received the discussion of 'development' with 'implicit' and 'explicit' in precisely the form that Newman and Perrone had given it. In 1935, *Gregorianum*, the university's own periodical, published Lynch's article on the discussions Newman had had with the Collegio Romano professors, including a transcript of Newman's paper for Perrone, and Perrone's marginal comments.⁷⁸

"There is not some one manner or even some limited set of manners in which doctrines develop."⁷⁹ And "teachers differ."⁸⁰ Though Lonergan is evidently content to take up Newman's 'development' language, and to talk in newmaniac fashion of human understanding developing over time,⁸¹ it is to be remarked that he found the

⁷⁵ See G. Perrone, *Praelectiones Theologicae de virtutibus fidei, spei, et caritatis* (Rome, 1845) 45ff.

⁷⁶ See Lynch, art.cit. 444.

⁷⁷ See G. Perrone, *De immaculato B.V. Mariae conceptu* (Milan, 1852).

⁷⁸ With the *Gregorianum* article, it is useful to read Lynch's separately printed commentary *The Newman-Perrone Paper* (1935), and G. Cavallera, "Le document Newman-Perrone et le development du dogme," *Bulletin de litt. eccles.* (1946) 132-134 and 208-225.

⁷⁹ *Method* 319.

⁸⁰ *Method* 295.

⁸¹ *Method* 302. See also *Development* 29: "From the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas."

language of 'clarify,'⁸² of 'better understood' and 'better and better understood'⁸³ sufficiently appealing to make a kindly translation into his own terms: "what has often been described as a transition from implicit to explicit, really was a transition of Christian consciousness from a lesser to a fuller differentiation."⁸⁴ This translation is of unnewmaniac significance.

The first recorded use of 'differentiation' occurs in Woodhouses's 1802 account of "the processes of evolution, differentiation, integration" in a differential calculus,⁸⁵ and the typical use is instanced by Gosse's remarking in 1865 that in an organism "the less differentiation we find, the less of specialty in the assignment of function,"⁸⁶ and by Darwin's describing, in the *Descent of Man* (1871) his evolutionist preoccupation with "the differentiation and specialization of organs."⁸⁷ So, when Lonergan writes of development as "a process of differentiation and specialization"⁸⁸ he is, like many of us, like Mark Pattison for example, who so annoyed Newman by indiscriminate praise, thinking of 'development' as 'the dominant idea' in biology and physics and cosmology as in the doctrinal history of the Church.⁸⁹ And he is thinking, like few of us, but like Perrone, in Latin. He is thinking of 'development' as *evolutio*.⁹⁰ He is writing again *de Evolutione Dogmatica*.

Newman never allowed anyone in his hearing to assimilate his 'development' into the popular use of 'evolution.'⁹¹ He knew that he was recapitulating his past. Evolution discards the unfit. When Loner-

⁸² For example, *Method* 319.

⁸³ *Method* 325.

⁸⁴ *Method* 309.

⁸⁵ Robert Woodhouse, *Philosophical Transactions* XCII (1802) 123.

⁸⁶ Edmund Gosse, *Land and Sea* (1865, second ed. 1874) 213.

⁸⁷ Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man* (1871) I,ii, 61.

⁸⁸ *Method* 138.

⁸⁹ I am very happy to announce that I have re-found the scrap of paper with the reference to Pattison's letter: 5 April 1873, Birmingham Oratory MSS archive.

⁹⁰ See also *Method* 94 and *Second Collection* 59 for talk of 'evolution and development.'

⁹¹ I have this from Denis Sheil who lived long enough in the same house with Newman to know, and long enough in the same house with me to tell. He had, however, in the 1843 sermon allowed himself to speak of 'evolution' from an idea.

gan suggests that meaning comes into artistic pattern as we draw on 'organic analogies' and that this movement of perception is "from root through trunk to branches, leaves and flowers" until the multiplicity is organized as a whole,⁹² he is already re-inforcing *evolutio* and weakening 'development.' He is doing rather more when he talks of the 'elimination'⁹³ of the child's inadequately formed notions of reality.⁹⁴ Lonergan is there, at the least, ignoring everything Newman says of himself and his being from the first aware of his Creator. And aware in a way that he never wished to develop. He is doing it again when he describes the process of 'eliminations' as well as of 'additions' and 're-arrangements' that attends the shifts out of pagan into Hebrew and out of Hebrew into christian understanding.⁹⁵ And again when he describes the shift in christian understanding from medieval to modern ways of conducting enquiry. Now, aristotelianism has been 'superseded,'⁹⁶ we can 'dispense' with the Suarezian modes,⁹⁷ and simply apply to the greatest of Jesuit evolutionists: "It has been the great merit of Teilhard de Chardin to have recognized the Christian's need of a coherent image of himself in his world and to have contributed not a little towards meeting that need."⁹⁸

Lonergan is not, of course, simply celebrating "the continuance and progress of learning and liberty"⁹⁹ which so pleased Bishop Butler; he is, even more deliberately than Butler, insisting on the necessity of 'moral insight' and 'conversion.'¹⁰⁰ He hopes for 'continuance' and for 'conversion.' For 'development' and *evolutio*. He is looking for that investigative theologian who shall proceed "by a *posteriori* research, interpretation, history, dialectic."¹⁰¹ "Often enough development is dialectical."¹⁰² But with this there is the abiding

⁹² *Method* 61.

⁹³ *Method* 213.

⁹⁴ *Method* 303.

⁹⁵ *Method* 306.

⁹⁶ *Method* 310.

⁹⁷ *Insight* 511.

⁹⁸ *Method* 315.

⁹⁹ Joseph Butler, *Analogy of Religion* II, iii, 21.

¹⁰⁰ *Method* 253.

¹⁰¹ *Method* 319, 111, and 293.

¹⁰² *Method* 319.

attraction of Newman's very *Essay* on 'development' being a clearest instance of that evolutionary shift from the first to the second four specialties at Foundations.¹⁰³ The very writing of the *Essay* had been a 'conversion' experience, as Newman remarked in the Advertisement to the first edition.

So there is in all this a hint that the unsatisfying character of Foundations and its positioning which I noted earlier is unsatisfying of necessity. Lonergan is concerned at Foundations for both the realities of continuity, of "Lead Thou me on," expressible as 'development,' and the realities of discontinuity, of "Turn around!" expressible as *evolutio*, and so has both to position Foundations in a series and, equally, to withdraw Foundations from the series.

The reader must next be alert to a development which occurs at the very close of 'this brief section' on the development of doctrines. Almost as an aside, Lonergan notes Professor Geiselmann's view, put forth in a *Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe*, that the definitions of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption of our Lady were, unlike definitions which settled disputes in the conciliar Church, simply 'cultic' events.¹⁰⁴ We are, evidently, still with

¹⁰³ See *Development*, xi:

But when he had got some way in the printing, he recognized in himself a conviction of the truth of the conclusion to which the discussion leads, so clear as to supersede further deliberation. Shortly afterwards circumstance gave him the opportunity of acting upon it, and he felt he had no warrant for refusing to do so.

His first act on his conversion was to offer his Work for revision to the proper authorities; but the offer was declined on the ground that it was written and partly printed before he was a Catholic, and that it would come before the reader in more persuasive form, if he read it as the author wrote it.

¹⁰⁴ See Heinrich Fries, *Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe* (1962) I, "Dogma" 213. Lonergan likes this *Handbuch*, see *Second Collection* 60. Professor J.R. Geiselmann had spent a lifetime thinking about these matters, see his *Lebendiger Glaube aus geheiligter Überlieferung* (Mainz, 1942) and *Die theologische Anthropologie Johann Adam Möhlers* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1955).

Lonergan must suppose that it will be possible to declare the reference of his own meaning for 'development' in *Method* through this note on Geiselmann's handbook entry. But what he says about the definition of Marian doctrines here, in at least one important respect, is not quite what he was saying in a 1948 article in "Vers le dogme de l'Assomption," *Collection* 69. There, he had begun from the "practically universal agreement and consent both down the centuries and throughout the church" which allowed a theologian to affirm that the Assumption could be

the doctrine that occupied Perrone's apologetic lectures, but we are about to be taken further than Perrone manages to carry us, certainly further than Professor Geiselmann manages, by Lonergan's suggesting that "human psychology and specifically the refinement of feelings" is the area to be explored by those who would come to understand the development of Marian doctrines.¹⁰⁵

It cannot have been what Professor Geiselmann says about the settlement of 'controverted issues' which impressed Lonergan as a means of separating Marian doctrines from the processes which operated in the making of other definitions. Given the oppositions of Saints Bernard, Albert, Bonaventura, and Thomas, and of a host of erudite Dominicans, Lonergan would hardly suppose that the defining of a doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was adequately described as uncontroverted among Catholics.¹⁰⁶ Perrone's colleagues, both the ferocious Passaglia and the milder mannered Ballerini, allowed that they had a hard fight of it when they were arguing for the definability

defined. He went on to discuss first, the proper base of this agreement and consent in an implicit revelation of the Assumption in Scripture and, then, in consequence, the nature of scriptural implication. He had, in this, recourse to the medieval scholastics' habit, after Emmaus, of discovering the doctrine of the redemption in the Old Testament. He went on, in outlining the processes of 'the development of Christian doctrine' (76), to place the Assumption within 'the general scheme of things' revealed in Scripture and understood by the Church. "That implication is grasped as understanding, illumined by faith and aided by grace." And then he came to Suarez and Vasquez and de Lugo, and to that question of whether the conclusion of a syllogism could be *de fide* if it were derived from one premise revealed by God and another merely humanly certain. Lonergan determined that "this discussion throws no doubt on the definability of the assumption," for the doctrine depends exclusively upon divine revelation. Those who are worried by doubts on this matter have it seems not gone 'beyond conceptualism' (80).

Towards the end of this article, Lonergan extends this determination so that he can say that "the implication of the assumption is of the type that has sufficed for previous dogmatic definitions" (83). So, whilst Lonergan is, as ever, insisting on the shift from conceptualism to an understanding of an act of understanding, he is not, as in *Method*, placing the Assumption in a category with that one other doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, it looks as if, at one place in the article, he is placing the Assumption at the end of a line after "the immaculate conception, divine maternity, and perpetual virginity" (75). The *Method* pairing of the Assumption with the Immaculate Conception seems to be a development prompted by Geiselmann's piece.

¹⁰⁵ *Method* 320.

¹⁰⁶ Geiselmann is, equally, ignoring the later demurs of Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant Christians.

of the doctrine in the years just before the definition.¹⁰⁷ So the interest for Lonergan, and thus for anyone who would make out his meaning as it advances from his reading of the Newman-Perrone encounter, must reside in Professor Geiselman's use of 'cultic.' The professor is, after all, simply referring, though unacknowledgingly, to the general thesis of Emmanuel Schelstrate and the particular account of the Marian doctrines given by the greatest of eighteenth century Catholic theologians, Saint Alfonso de' Ligouri.

Schelstrate, the seventeenth century Belgian scholar who became Vatican Librarian of Pope Innocent XI, suggested that the teaching Church, from the first, had known, consciously, all that the Church knows and teaches now. But the Church, at the first, had been surrounded by persecutors who would have misunderstood, mis-liked, mocked, the doctrines and sacred rites of the community. Therefore, the Church instituted a knowing silence among initiates. There had been a regimen of the secret knowledge. The theory of such a *disciplina arcani* had been held in unsystematic ways by several persons, Melchior Cano,¹⁰⁸ Roberto Bellarmino, and the Protestant patristic scholar Jean Daillé,¹⁰⁹ among them, before Schelstrate set it out in disciplined manner in his *Antiquitas illustrata* (1678), and *Sacrum Antiochenum concilium* (1681), and, on the assumptions of these treatises being derided by the Lutheran Tenzel, in his grand *De disciplina arcani* (1685).¹¹⁰ "The fact of this concealment can hardly be denied," Newman acknowledged in his *Essay*, and "that it existed even as a rule, as regards the Sacraments, seems to be confessed on all hands," and "that it existed in other respects, as a practice, is plain from the nature of the case, and from the writings of the Apologists."¹¹¹ He allowed that 'this fact' of a *disciplina arcani* "goes some way to account

¹⁰⁷ See C. Passaglia, *De Immaculato Deiparae Semper Virginis Conceptu Commentarius*, 3 parts (Rome, 1845-1855); and A. Ballerini, *Sylloge Monumentorum as Mysterium Conceptionis Immaculatae Virginis Deiparae Illustrandum*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1854-1856).

¹⁰⁸ Lonergan seems ambiguous in his judgment of Melchior Cano, see *Method* 281, *Collection* 77, and *Second Collection* 57, 109, and 197.

¹⁰⁹ See J. Daillé, *De usu patrum* (1631).

¹¹⁰ See L. Ceyssens, *La Correspondance d'Emmanuel Schelstrate*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1949) for the details of Schelstrate's pugnacious life.

¹¹¹ *Development* 27.

for that apparent variation and growth of doctrine” which embarrasses the historical researcher who hopes for vincentian uniformity.¹¹² But it did not go all the way. The theory built on the fact supposed that the keeping of the secret went on long after the persecutions had ceased. No such worry occurred to Schelstrate as he downed Arnauld and Bossuet in the debate about the papal position in the Church, cheerfully appealing to evidences of the discipline in the writings of the pseudo-Denis.

It was not, however, the matter of disputable patristic citations which constituted the usefulness of Schelstrate’s theory for Professor Geiselmann’s purposes. Rather, it was that Schelstrate established, beyond disputing, an ancient intimacy of doctrinal proclamation and liturgical practice, of what was ‘taught and celebrated’ in the Church.¹¹³ A uselessness of the theory for any who was working towards the articulation of a thoroughly modern ongoing progress in the discussion of ‘development’ of doctrine derives from Schelstrate’s assuming that not only all knowing but also all defining in the Church had been completed by the seventeenth century, it dealt with what was ‘already taught’ and is now celebrated.¹¹⁴ Perrone had, in his Roman lectures, glanced rather more approvingly than Newman at Schelstrate’s thesis, *doctrinam ita a revelatione eductam*,¹¹⁵ but he recognized the need to introduce into the discussion someone who could talk about future definability as well as past definition. He brought in Ligouri as an expert witness to the Church’s teaching on the Immaculate Conception, scattering his text with newly-fashionable references to *aequiprobabilitas* as part of an anti-Dominican campaign.

Newman, too, had cited Ligouri in this connection but not as an academic expert. The saint’s Italian devotion to our Lady, and most particularly to her immaculate conception, was, Newman agreed with Pusey, as one English gentleman with another, ‘notorious.’¹¹⁶ New-

¹¹² *Development* 29; see also *Arians of the Fourth Century* 47-56, 136f; *Grammar of Assent* 145; *Athanasius* vol. ii, 208ff.

¹¹³ *Method* 320.

¹¹⁴ *Method* 320.

¹¹⁵ G. Perrone, *Praelectiones Theologicae* 45.

¹¹⁶ *Difficulties of Anglicans* ii, 98.

man was happy to assure Pusey that "I have never read his Glories of Mary."¹¹⁷ This was a silly boast. I would find it very pleasant to be assured that Lonergan had read Ligouri's interesting book, and more than pleasant to be assured that he had read, too, Ligouri's dissertation on the doctrine appended to book 7 of his *Theologia Moralis*.

Schelstrate's theory expressed Liguori's own conviction that we are members of a community which is always the same, *sempre uniforme*¹¹⁸ that we share in eternal life now.¹¹⁹ He was careful that the first edition of his *Theologia Moralis* (1748) should be submitted for ecclesiastical *imprimatur* to Francesco Zaccaria, the Venetian Jesuit censor. He had recently been widening the scope of Schelstrate's thesis in his discussions of 'liturgical books and theological questions' in a controversy with the Augustinian, Giovanni Lorenzo Berti, concerning the forms of the sacraments. And in considering how better to frame an account of the relation of doctrine to definability and of definability to dogma, Liguori made use of the arguments of both Schelstrate and Zaccaria in their presentations of the primitive character of the sacramental rites. It was, Liguori maintained, in the celebration of these rites, and most particularly in the eucharistic liturgy, that what is known to the Apostles is made known to the Church. There is no development in the actualizing of eternal life, *sempre uniforme*.¹²⁰ He repeated, with devotional vigor, that saying of

¹¹⁷ *Difficulties of Anglicans* ii, 103.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, *Storia delle Eresie colle Loro Confutazioni* (1772); *Intento dell'Opera* 10.

¹¹⁹ For example, *Opere Ascetiche* (Rome, 1935); *Eucaristia, la Visita al SS Sacramento*, vol. IV 293; *La Vera Sposa di Gesu Cristo*, vol. XV, ii, ch. xviii, 3 268.

¹²⁰ Nothing could come between us and the Lord as we celebrate:

Our most loving Redeemer, knowing that he must leave this earth and return to his Father as soon as he should have accomplished the work of our redemption by his death, and seeing that the hour of his death was now come ... would not be separated from us by his death, but he instituted this Sacrament of love in order to be with us even to the end of the world. Behold him, then ...

Meditazioni per l'ottava del SS Sacramento, Med. I, *Opere Ascetiche*, vol. IV 437. This sacramental revelation was the beginning and is the continuing of doctrine in the Church.

Saint Teresa of Avila when she came in vision to one of her nuns: "What you do here, we blessed do in Paradise."¹²¹

Referring liturgy to Marian dogma more precisely than Professor Geiselmann, Biguori held that however plain the evidences of widespread belief in a doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, before the doctrine could be recognized as definable it had to be received in the liturgical practice of the Church, and this reception could only be known upon the celebration's being granted papal authorization.¹²² Until that authorization, Liguori argued, taking up a matter that had bothered Suarez, who was one of his heroes, the doctrine itself could not be said by any individual to be *de fide*. It was, thus, entirely proper that Saint Bernard should have upbraided the canons of Lyons for their public celebration of a feast of the Immaculate Conception.¹²³ The necessary papal authorization had not in their time been given for such a liturgy. As Bellarmino, another of Liguori's heroes, had said, "if Saint Bernard were now to see the feast of the Immaculate Conception being celebrated by the authority of the Roman Church, he would himself most willingly have joined in."¹²⁴ Liguori, of course, would have said, better, that Saint Bernard is joining in. "What we are doing, the blessed are doing." The liturgical argument could be opened up delightfully. Liguori was able to turn Aquinas' very opposition into a defense of the present definability of the doctrine. Aquinas, when he was denying the definability of the Immaculate Conception of our

¹²¹ *La Vera Sposa*, ed. cit. 268; see also Yepes, *Vita S Teresa*, book 2, ch. 29.

¹²² See *Dissertatio* appended to book 7, ch. 2; Liguori, "de excommunicatione, Dubium 4, obquas causas incuratur excommunicatio major," *Theologia Moralis*. Liguori had also been reading the *Réflexions* (1713) of Honoré de Sainte-Marie "on the rules and use of criticism." There, reason and piety had been alleged as coming together in a Catholic's trusting the inerrant liturgy. Trusting even second nocturns of Matins. This would be more faithful than indulging a personal critical taste and distaste as a scholar picked his way among ancient authorities. De Sainte-Marie was evidently estimating liturgy as expressive of something more than that artistically differentiated consciousness which, when joined with 'religious sensibility,' makes rituals solemn (*Method* 278). He is proposing something more like what is going on when Lonergan cites the Preface for the Mass of Trinity Sunday as expressing the meaning of the 'consubstantial' of the fourth century (*Method* 307).

¹²³ *Theologia Moralis, Dissertatio*; see also *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, clxxv.

¹²⁴ R. Bellarmino, *de Cultu sanctorum*, book 3, ch. 16.

Lady,¹²⁵ was maintaining that since the universal church kept a feast of the Nativity of our Lady it was right only to hold that Mary was released from Original Sin, was sanctified, in the womb. Liguori puts Aquinas' argument in the form of a caudated syllogism. No feast is celebrated in the Church unless in honor of what is holy. The Church celebrates a feast of the Nativity of our Lady. Therefore she is holy at her birth. Therefore she was sanctified in the womb.¹²⁶ The force of the liturgical witness to doctrine is evidenced by Aquinas' followers being perfectly correct in their maintaining his opposition to the doctrine of an immaculate conception of anyone born of woman outside the Garden of Eden despite the letters *Cum praeexcelsa* and *Grave nimis* (1483) of Sixtus IV, *Super speculum* (1570) of Saint Pius V, and *SSmus Dominus noster* (1617) of Paul V. These letters did not fix the meaning of the liturgical celebration. But Aquinas' argument must, after the bull of Alexander VII, *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum* (1661), declaring that the Church celebrates not the sanctification but the conception of our Lady, lead all true Thomists to be consistent, liturgically correct, celebrating, defenders of this doctrine.¹²⁷

If the careful arguments of Liguori's *Theologia Moralis* indicate the possibility of improving Professor Geiselman's formulation of the 'cultic' character of the Marian definitions, the gallantries of *The Glories of Mary* suggest just that refinement of human feeling which, in the final section of the subsection 8 of Doctrines, Lonergan is connecting with the development of those doctrines.

There is, in *Method*, a continuing usage of 'feelings' which is attended by talk of refinement: "feelings are enriched and refined"¹²⁸ by attentive study of the wealth and variety of the objects that arouse them, intentional response is all the more discriminating "the more refined one's sensibility, the more delicate one's feelings,"¹²⁹ and this is evidently related to the educator's responsibility for "fostering and developing a climate of discernment and taste,"¹³⁰ and

¹²⁵ See *I Senten. Distinct.* 44, qu. 1, art. 3, ad 3.

¹²⁶ See *Summa Theologiae*, III, qu. 27, art. 2, ad 3.

¹²⁷ *Theologia Moralis, Dissertatio* cit., par. 260ff.

¹²⁸ *Method* 32.

¹²⁹ *Method* 245.

¹³⁰ *Method* 32.

to the Church's hope for "the development of feeling" and "a development of feelings,"¹³¹ for "moral feelings have to be cultivated, enlightened, strengthened, refined ..." until at last there arises the question of God.¹³²

It may be doubted that the sorts of thing that Lonergan was saying about 'feelings,' about 'cultic,' or about the significance of dogma for the developing self-understanding of human beings, were much to the fore when Pio IX, on December 8, 1854, issued the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. The Pope proceeded, next day, to give an allocution to the bishops assembled for the definition of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady which dealt at length with 'rationalism' and 'indifferentism,' and invited them to meditate again on the darkneses of the human mind *ex culpa primi parentis*, but made nothing of any help that the doctrine might be to them in these present difficulties. But Pio XII was certainly hoping for a refining effect on the affects of the race when, by *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950, he defined Mary's being, at the end of her earthly life, assumed body and soul into heaven.¹³³ He was, assuredly, attempting some Lonerganian transpositions. He had encountered the past and was taking an affective stand towards the future. He made his appeal to a universe of feelings. The Pope

¹³¹ *Method* 30, 32.

¹³² *Method* 38, 39.

¹³³ Professor Geiselman was so far right to link the 1854 and the 1950 definitions in that the justification from an "outstanding agreement of the Catholic prelates and the faithful" given for the one by Pio XI, was repeated word for word by Pio XII for the other. It is never made quite clear in the Curial argument, perhaps deliberately never made quite clear, just how an agreement of the Church's ordinary doctrinal authority and the customary faith of the Catholic people may secure certainty and infallibility, this mysterious privilege of Mary as revealed truth contained in the original deposit made by Christ. Pio XII's advisers had led him among evidences in the recitation of the Rosary, the writings of the Fathers, the celebration of the liturgy, the conclusions of theologians and the proofs from, or at least the consonances with, Scripture. The text of the definition expresses "something already known" with "ever more perfect knowledge," "presented more clearly" and "connected with other revealed truths" and "fitting" until it announces "a divinely revealed dogma." The coming together of evidences and concluding definition is not perfectly managed. But, then, it is only the dogma not the alleged reasons for defining the dogma that is presented to the Catholic people for belief. Professor Geiselman, evidently, opted for clarity in selecting the 'cultic' character of the definition for comment, but he was not able to produce so convincing an underpinning of his argument as that of Saint Alfonso.

began with the feelings of God, "Who from all eternity regards Mary with a most favorable and unique affection"¹³⁴ continued to rejoice that "the Blessed Virgin is fulfilling in the most affectionate manner her maternal duties on behalf of those redeemed by the blood of Christ," while "the minds and hearts of her children are being vigorously aroused to a more assiduous consideration of her prerogatives."¹³⁵

After the Stalinist denial, in a series of educational decrees, of a heavenly destiny of the human spirit, and the Nazi denial, in the concentration camp ovens, of the value of the human body, the definition of the Assumption was intended to reaffirm "the lofty goal to which our bodies and souls are destined." Pio XII discerned in the doctrine of the Assumption as affirmation of the human being as 'incarnate spirit' and a proclamation of 'incarnate meaning': it was "our hope that belief in Mary's bodily assumption into heaven" would "make our belief in our own resurrection stronger and render it more effective."¹³⁶ The pontiff was, in 1950, determined that the assumed Lady would be received as a modern symbol, the image of a real object that evokes a feeling. The

¹³⁴ *Munificentissimus Deus*, par. 12. There is a serviceable translation of the bull by J. C. Fenton (NCWC News Service, 1950).

¹³⁵ *Munificentissimus Deus*, par. 2.

¹³⁶ *Munificentissimus Deus*, par. 42. Pio XII proved to be very aware of a contemporary coarseness of the race. As he proposed the symbolic function of the doctrine, it is manifest that he was taking care not to offend modern sensibilities. It was, for example, in regretful deference to the contemporary estimate of what sort of exegesis of the Scriptural text could be justified today that he remarked as a preface to citing the older authors that

often theologians and preachers, following in the footsteps of the holy Fathers, have been rather free in their use of events and expressions taken from the Sacred Scriptures to explain their belief in the Assumption (par. 26).

So the Pope put himself at a distance from the "various images and analogies" of this tradition, including those of Saint Alfonso in his *Glories of Mary*, "represented in that woman." This was *signum magnum* and if it were to be read literally it would be interpreted imaginatively as a sign (Discurso 7). And as a liturgical sign. Liguori had a story of Saint Stanislaus getting his patron Saint Lawrence to take a letter to our Lady asking that he should be present the next time that the feast of the Assumption was kept in heaven. So he died at the dawn of the day on August 15 (*Discurso, Esempli*). Liguori sees in this story of liturgy here and in heaven an affirmation of our enjoying here the life of heaven. "What we do here, they do in Paradise." The Lady assumed into heaven has incarnate meaning for the christian here and now.

world, however, responded to definition as presenting an image of an imaginary object that is evoked by a feeling. And an explanation for this frustrating of Pio XX's hope for an Assumption relation of 'image' and 'feeling' is offered at Lonergan's placing of 'incarnate meaning' in *Method*.

The subsection of Meaning which treats of symbol and the reciprocities of feeling is separated from that which treats of 'incarnate meaning' by the sudden arrival of an ally. "With Giambattista Vico, then, we hold for the priority of poetry."¹³⁷ I have reached the last of those whose complementing, qualifying, correcting, enterprises seem to me to have been taken in aid of Lonergan's discussion of the development of doctrines.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ *Method* 73. The affective capacities, dispositions, habits, and 'assumptions about normality' of the Catholic people in 1950 are specifiable from the interplay of affects and symbol in their reception of the definition of the Assumption. It is no great matter to specify those of Lonergan himself. He evidently would not share Hopkins' feelings about Perseus and 'Time's Andromeda'; he feels that 'the monsters of mythology' are 'just bizarre' (*Method* 65). Saint George and the Dragon has been for a while an effective compound symbol of ascensional values and decadent disvalues (*Method* 65). But even this symbol of high horse and scaly monster belongs with the feelings of a child. If he is no longer frightened of the dark, it is because the gospel has given an adult transvaluation to being swallowed by a whale and vomited up three days later. Such transvaluations of symbol in the Church and the refinements of feeling which accompany such transvaluations witness to an insightful development of thought and language together. Indeed, the history of the controversy about 'development' is itself a history of development from language to language. From the domestic language of the group in the gospel, through the technical, logical, language of the theologians' treatises, to a literary language which, Lonergan says, in the ugliest phrases of *Method*, "tends to float somewhere between logic and symbol" (*Method* 72). It would seem that there is a reminiscence here both of the cloud-floating Lady and the curious arguments used in defending her floating. But Lonergan means to concentrate attention on the power of literary language to bring a listener or reader not only to understand but to feel, to express feeling through symbol, and to prompt the recognition of incarnate meaning.

¹³⁸ It must be a cause of some happiness for all of us that Lonergan read Vico before he came across the evolutionist structures of Bruno Snell. Lonergan was thus enabled, anticipatively, to take early retirement from anything like that arbitrarily constructed history of a development from Homer's dealing with mere perception and hearsay through Hesiod's attempt to tell the truth and Xenophanes' more critical enterprise to the deliberate and planned search for knowledge conducted by Hecataeus (*Method* 91).

Whichever is temporally prior, Homer or Hesiod, there can be no argument among decent readers, classicist or empiricist, about the decline represented by a line which continues with the derivative pythagorisms of Xenophanes and the mythographic rationalisms of Hecataeus of Miletus. It is some help to Snell, of course, that only

It is some way into Vico's *Principi di Scienza Nuova* (1725, 1730, and 1744) before Lonergan's line appears: "inasmuch as the poets came certainly before the vulgar historians, the first history must have been poetic."¹³⁹ Before this, he has been the proleptic Lonerganian, proposing that the world and its ways be studied as exhibiting "the modifications of the mind of him who meditates upon it."¹⁴⁰ He marvels

that philosophers should have bent all their energies to the study of the world of nature, which, since God made it, He alone knows, and that they should have neglected the study of the world of nations, or civil world, which since men made it, men could come to know.¹⁴¹

Vico starts his own study from considerations of the stirrings of human beings' thinking about themselves and God as these stirrings are articulated in the work of the 'theological poets' of ancient Greece.¹⁴² He recovers that first age in which the intent of Jove and the significance of his thunderbolt were divined by these poets, and the second age, in which social order depended on the tip of Achilles' spear and the lawyer Odysseus had to persuade the hero to act well.¹⁴³ Vico left

fragments, and fragments whose authenticity was disputed by the 'playful and artistic' Callimachus, survive of the works of Xenophanes and Hecataeus. They would not have formed part of any sensible curriculum. Very surely, they would not have formed part of the Jesuit schoolroom studies. But Homer's epic management of symbol, obedient to the 'laws of image affect' enables, us, as we read, to appreciate, according to our sensitivities, something of growing up, of generation gap, fidelity, and patriotism, of death and the dead, home, and the bed. And Lonergan is readied to consider these things after these ways because he shares a classical experience with Vico and Liguori.

¹³⁹ *Scienza Nuova* 811.

¹⁴⁰ *Scienza Nuova* 331.

¹⁴¹ *Scienza Nuova* 331. As Lonergan remarks in his lecture on "Ongoing Genesis of Methods," Vico understood that "it is human affairs that men best understand, for human affairs are the product of human understanding" (*Third Collection* 154).

¹⁴² Vico was eminently a classicist. But he thought that his Greek examples of the first age were well seconded by evidences for primitive thinking and behaving among Americans and among those barbarians whom Tacitus described and who still crowd on the northern side of the Alps (*Scienza Nuova* 314).

¹⁴³ Vico was certainly not a member of the solid right. He was almost a sharer in the vagabond roguishness of the scattered left. On his account, it was the aim of the first theological poets, as it became the aim of all successive good poets, to invent

the third age and “our own Christian theology” to the care of the Naples Inquisitors.¹⁴⁴

Vico’s study of the civil order and its history impressed Lonergan.¹⁴⁵ The changing self-understanding of communities is expressed in *Insight* in perfectly vichian form: “the stories of the gods yield to the more human stories of the heroes,”¹⁴⁶ and, perfectly shadowing Vico, Lonergan stops short of any reference there to the story-tellings of ‘our Christian theology.’ And he was, doubtless, encouraged in his admiration of what Vico was saying about society and poets by a reading of Gadamer’s *Wahrheit und Methode*.¹⁴⁷ His meaning in his own *Method* in 1971 is, I hope, anticipated in the paper on “Dimensions of Meaning” in 1965: “to proclaim with Vico the priority of poetry is to proclaim that the human spirit expresses itself in symbols before it knows, if it ever knows, what its symbols literally mean.”¹⁴⁸ It is to open the way for talk of ‘symbolic animal’ and archetypes, and affect-laden images. For myth, again. “So the twentieth century has witnessed a rediscovery of myth.”¹⁴⁹

In that twentieth century, with Freud, as I intuited when putting my first paper together, Lonergan is particularly aware of the “the terrifying figures of family relationships set forth in the Theban cycle

sublime fables whose telling should disturb the governing classes by questioning the permanence of their institutions. See *Scienza Nuova* 376.

¹⁴⁴ *Scienza Nuova* 31, 365.

¹⁴⁵ Lonergan noted, in *Insight* (233-234) that “the notion of a practical theory of history” was conceived “in one manner or another by Vico in his *Scienza Nuova*, by Hegel, and by Marx.” He repeated this grand listing two years later, in his lecture on “The Human Good as Object” (1959), though rather spoiling the effect by an anticlimactic addition. “There is a move from Vico, with his insistence on the priority of poetry, and the compact symbol, vis-a-vis differentiated consciousness, to Hegel, Marx and Troeltsch” (*Topics in Education* 77).

¹⁴⁶ *Insight* 536.

¹⁴⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960), cited in *Method* 153, 161, 164, 169, 182, 209, 317. In that book Gadamer registers his proper admiration for Vico’s exposition of a *sensus communis* by which we are aware of our living within a tradition and of that tradition’s being framed by the poets. Gadamer recognizes that it follows from Vico’s account that the interpreting of our civil order must be more ‘aesthetic’ than ‘scientific.’

¹⁴⁸ *Collection* 263.

¹⁴⁹ *Collection* 263. Surely this rediscovery must be taken into account, sympathetically, by any who now would frame a thoroughly modern position?

of the Greek tragedians.”¹⁵⁰ In the dramatic pattern of contemporary human living we are recognizing that Oedipus is the boy next door and Ismene is living next door but one. “We know their histories.”¹⁵¹ We use their language. To ask Catholic theologians to envisage and effect those necessary ‘transitions’ from classicist to modern differentiations of consciousness, to translate the revelation given in Christ into the language of the new cultural order, is to invite them “to Herculean labors.”¹⁵²

The theologian, recognizable now as imagining subject, and accepting that invitation, may think it peculiarly right that it is in a lecture which offers Lonergan’s lengthiest mention of Vico that he makes this reference to Hercules. Vico found that others, Pierre Bayle in articles for the horrid *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1695-1697 and 1702), chief among them, had been putting it about that the old gods of the theological poets had been insensitive, immoral tyrants, and that they had in their depravity become the models for the later heroes. Jove had become the model for the lustful, oppressive David. And David, Bayle observed, had been received as a type of their messianic Lord by Jews and Christians. Vico had countered by pointing to the figure of Hercules, the son of god, who by his labors had freed human beings from oppressions, letting them know, exemplifyingly, that they were to be both grateful for divine protection and careful of one another’s good.¹⁵³ Hecataeus might try to deny the dorian Heraclidae their happiness at having Hercules as their ancestor, Vico proclaimed that by his struggles against the Hydra and the Nemean lion, his hardy pilgrimage to the garden of Hesperides, Hercules becomes the protector of all peoples, showing them that they are to dig and delve and earn the fruits of their labors. And, by his descent into the underworld and his return in happy triumph, he has given them a figure of the seed’s dying and returning as crop, encouraging them to shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture and thus to come into decent social arrangements. Vico had not been at all surprised to learn

¹⁵⁰ *Collection* 263.

¹⁵¹ *Collection* 265.

¹⁵² *Collection* 266.

¹⁵³ *Scienza Nuova* 2.416.

that Varro had discovered versions of Hercules in over forty different societies. He is an 'imaginative universal.'¹⁵⁴

In Vico's own classicist, christian, society, there was no lack of Herculean celebrations and transitions. Giordano Bruno had written of Luther as 'the new Alcides,' Zwingli had been hailed as 'Hercules Helveticus,' the Tudor courtier Sir Anthony Coke had greeted Henry VIII as the Hercules who slew "the Romayne monster Hydra." Whilst the Catholic Giraldi had celebrated the Herculean character of the Emperor Charles V. More theologically, equally transitionally it may now appear, d'Aubigne's *L'Hercule Chrestien*, Ronsard's *Hercule Chretien* and Alexander Ross' *Mystagogus Poeticus*, conspired to announce that "Our blessed Saviour is the true Hercules."¹⁵⁵ Milton, in Sonnet XXII upon the death of his wife had seen that Hercules, bringing back Alcestis from the dead, offered him a personal figure of Christ's resurrecting power:

Me thought I saw my late espoused saint
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
 Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
 Rescued from death

He had, in his "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," presented the baby Hercules strangling snakes in his cradle as another pre-image of the Lord's capacity to command demons"

Our babe to show his Godhead true
 Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew

Neither Vico nor Milton would have been surprised that Liguori should recognize, as he knelt before the crib, that the baby there would fulfill the Herculean promise. It did not seem to Liguori as he read the story of Alcestis' rescue in the *Hymnus to Apollinem* 49, that Callimachus was content to be 'playful and artistic,' though that is better, we all know, than being playful and aesthetic.¹⁵⁶ Rather, the relation that Callimachus prompted him to experience of Hercules and his myth with the Gospel seemed to Liguori to be the best represent-

¹⁵⁴ For Vico and his *universali fantastici*, see D.P. Verene, *Science of Imagination* (Cornell, 1981) passim.

¹⁵⁵ See Merritt Y. Hughes, "The Arthurs of the *Faerie Queene*," *Etudes Anglaises* VI 3, *Aout* (1953) 193-213.

¹⁵⁶ *Method* 98.

ative he knew of the intimate relation of 'what is of imagination' with 'what is of faith.' "It is of imagination" that "the god Hercules, for the love which he bore king Augea, undertook to tame his stable of horses"; "it is of faith" that "Jesus Christ, true Son of God, for the love of men, humbled himself to be born in a stable."¹⁵⁷

Liguori was making his Herculean estimate of imagination and its uses in relation to christian faithfulness within a contemporary local debate. In the years before he was born, Cardinal Innico Caracciolo of Naples was complaining that his city was full of madcap Quietists who had set themselves to rid religion of every work of imagination. They were liable, as they walked to the altar-rail for Communion, to give a physical shake of the head to rid themselves of every distracting image, even the image of the Lord on the cross. Liguori set himself to renew neapolitan appreciation of affect, image, symbol, and incarnate meaning.

Liguori's distinction of imagination and faith is not to be put in parallel with his other distinction of fictions and truths. Rather, there is, he is saying, more than one way of coming into the divine presence. The first is 'by imagining' the Lord in various situations, in the manger, it may be, or on the cross. The second is 'by the eye of faith,' perceiving that the Lord is ever-present and we ever in his presence. These are complementary apprehensions. Liguori's whole enterprise began from the announcement that at the eucharistic celebration we, like Paul, may both see the crucified Lord in imagination and see in faith that the Lord is with us in communion. "By imagining," he says in *The True Bride of Christ*, we see that "our Redeemer is in our company" and "by faith" we see that we remain in his company.¹⁵⁸ Liguori had evidently his own understanding of what Vico, who had, as Professor of Latin Eloquence, admitted him to Law School in Naples, meant by 'the priority of poetry.' He discerned the same

¹⁵⁷ "Novena del Santo Natale," *Il Verbo Eterno da Sublime si fece umile, Opere Ascetische*, Discorso 9 (Rome, 1939), vol. 4, 115.

¹⁵⁸ *La Vera Sposa*, ed. cit. 500. We are, he says, not to encourage empty reconstructions of the past but to enable intenser sensitivities to our present. We are not to suppose that we may imagine truly 'the peculiar features of our Saviour' or get a true picture of 'his countenance, his stature, or his color.' The imagining subject, at the sink, the *prie-dieu*, and the communion rail, is to come to a lively, affective, understanding of the Lord's presence.

sequence of imagination and faith, image and presence, in his meditation upon the Assumption of our Lady. "Let us imagine her blessed death" and "let us imagine Jesus is now come to take his Mother to the Kingdom of the blessed" and let us keep hold on our faith that already, now, "we are her servants in that Kingdom."¹⁵⁹ The imagining subject may become faithfully aware of a present sharing in the wonder of eternity.

Liguori's considerations may prompt affections in a variety of readers, and he will meet the needs of many, but the same feelings need not evoke the same symbolic images, nor, amidst the breakdown of classical culture, need the same symbolic image evoke the same feeling. I, with Liguori, and I suspect with Lonergan, may feel the symbolic energy within the image of the mythic rescuer. But Hercules can as easily nowadays be reduced to a lap-top logo whilst those analysts continue their 'tireless labors.'¹⁶⁰ He is no more the 'imaginative universal.'

What may happen to myth, may happen to mystery. After Lonergan's exploration of 'the laws of image and affect,' of 'the priority of poetry,' and of 'incarnate meaning,' the imagining subject is in a better position to appreciate what happened to *Munificentissimus Deus*. There has been 'development.' Liguori may have known as well as we that the doctrine of the Assumption is *de fide*. The Church had, after all, for some time been celebrating a papally approved liturgy of the feast. But the doctrine had not been defined in his time as it is in our own. And there has been *evolutio*. Like Liguori, before the definition, many Catholics thought the Assumption a personal privilege, fulfilling for Mary herself the promise inherent in Immaculate Conception. Unlike Liguori, a lot of them thought this a matter of very little relevance to the conduct of their lives. Pio XII was unable to persuade them that they should discern 'incarnate meaning' in the assumed Lady. That a deal of devotion had been discarded was thoroughly demonstrated by the disappointing reception of the encyclical *Fulgens Corona* with which, centennially, on December 8, 1953, the Pope announced the start of a Marian year.

¹⁵⁹ *Le Glorie di Maria, Opere Ascetiche*, VII, Discorso vii and viii.

¹⁶⁰ *Method* 54, 73; *Collection* 266.

It has not all been a refinement of feeling lately, but Lonergan recognized that the strongest resonance of 'incarnate' is set up by 'incarnation' as, with or without hopes of arriving at that thoroughly modern position, we make our efforts to maintain the inter-subjective, imaginative, and symbolic language of our group tradition. If, then, there were a problem for the imagining subject in the expression of feeling and the carriage of meaning in the present Church and the present world, we can surely understand that 'the solution,' once we have come to terms with a development *quoad nos* and an *evolutio* within and without us, "is," as he said in 1958,¹⁶¹ "put symbolically by the death and resurrection of Christ."

This is not evidently, the language of being-in-love. But there's some real pleasure for me in a 'development' which opens upon symbol, incarnate meaning, and the resurrection of the Lord. Am I right to hope that Lonergan is getting ready to use the language of myth?

¹⁶¹ *Understanding and Being* 236.

THE CHURCH: A COMPANY OF SYMPATHETIC FRIENDS

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THIS REFLECTION BEGINS with the experience of having taught a course in Feminist Theology to a group of eleven women and two men, juniors and seniors, all of whom had had the feminist insight, most of whom were Roman Catholic, and all of whom were dedicated to the hope that the Christian church could remain their spiritual home. Just prior to that semester, our new bishop suddenly forbade the long-established practice of allowing females to act as altar servers, and our college had been embroiled in a controversy over the fact that our bishop, our president, and our director of campus ministry had denied use of our chapel for the consecration of the Episcopalian bishop of Vermont because the bishop-elect was a woman. The intensity of the reaction to these two incidents can perhaps be appreciated only by those who live in small communities, where all events are everybody's business, and no one shrugs anything off. For my students, they constituted a sort of Rubicon.

They had all been very much aware of the tensions between traditional Christianity and the feminist insight, between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and feminist concerns, but had heretofore been able to proceed as both practicing Christians and feminists, bolstered by the conviction that, however sluggish was the institutional church in understanding the value of feminism, there was no inherent contradiction between feminism and Christianity and so, eventually the Church would catch up to the rest of the world. But these events struck too close too home, made them feel unsafe, and gave them pause.

As a consequence, a course which is bound to be emotionally charged under any circumstances, was electrified further by the students' desperate need to make sense — right now — of the Church's attitudes toward, theologies regarding, and practices concerning women, and come to some decision about their religious lives. They were in crisis, as the mental health workers say, and the crisis

regarded not just their institutional religious affiliation, but their sense of selves as women and men and as Christian believers.

They were keenly aware that the intellectual questions of the course were of existential import. "Can I remain a Christian only by being a hypocrite?" asked Sarah, faced with acknowledging that, as a Eucharistic minister she bore witness to the validity of Catholic teachings with which she did not agree and which cause harm in the lives of women. Here were students about to embark on adulthood, trying get their selves out into the world and at the same time just beginning to discover their selves, and finding that their life-long religious self-identities were coming under assault from within and from without. Betsy put it the most heart-wrenchingly, talking about her experience of discovering herself in her studies: "The more I discover who I am, the less I feel like *me* in the Church."

Teaching such a course under such circumstances was an extraordinary experience, and I had to take some time at the end of the semester to reflect on just what had gone on there. Two things struck me.

The first was how much the students' feelings prompted and guided their questions and judgments as we slogged through the material for the course and they struggled to relate that material to their own religious situations. Ultimately, the sense they made of the arguments being put forth in the material, and their evaluation of them, depended on how they made them feel. And by the end of the course it became clear that whether or not these students would continue to be members of the Roman Catholic Church depended on how it made them feel. Dan, a young man considering the seminary, put it this way. "I can intellectually assent to almost everything the Church teaches, and I can tuck the rest away in my hope-chest, but the *real* question is, 'does it sing to me?' Does the Church sing to me? And," he added, "if it doesn't sing to women, what music can it have for me?"

Indeed, Dan had summed up for me what I'd seen going on with the students all semester. These students *did* have questions about the validity of traditional Christology, they *did* have questions about the sources and norms for theology, they *did* have questions about biblical exegesis and the matters of inerrancy and inspiration. They did. But the real dilemma stemmed from the fact that they had grown up with Mother Church singing to them, and now Mother had ceased singing and taken up screaming and punching at them. And what hurt them

most of all, was the fact that Mother was not particularly interested in how the screaming and punching made them feel.

The second thing that struck me was the tension between how the institutional Church made them feel and how their Christian *faith*, the spiritual relationship with God that Christianity provides, made them feel. They were puzzled to the point of stupefaction how it could be that the same institution that had provided them with the faith that made them feel so located, so much at peace, they now experienced as the institution in which it was a struggle, if not impossible, to feel that sure and calm sense of self.

And all that is a very long introduction to a very much abbreviated reflection on two things:

- 1) feelings are a way of knowing when rooted in love;
- 2) the Christian mission of truth, the mission of the Word, is possible only by way of the mission of love, the mission of the Spirit, and we participate in this mission at least in part by concern for and attentiveness to feelings.

I begin where I always begin, with Frederick Crowe's¹ explication of the Thomistic notion of *complacentia boni*. I will not be able to do justice to the breadth and depth of Crowe's work here, but the key insight is that love is not in the first place active desire, *eros*. Thomas recognized a passive aspect of the will, whereby its first act, love, is receptive, quiescent, terminal. Crowe finds room for the two aspects of the will, passive and active, the two aspects of love, complacency and concern, through application of the Thomist heuristic structure for understanding psychological activity, the *duplex via*. Accordingly, intellect apprehends the good and informs the will with this apprehension. The will, so informed, spontaneously yields to this good as suitable to itself. This yielding is at once an appreciation of, a conformation to, and a perfection by the good. As perfected, the will comes to term, to rest (*terminatur et quiescit*), finding complacency (*complacet*) in the good and becoming one with it, that is to say, loving it. Love, thus, is first and foremost not a tending toward or desire for the good but simply a transformation of the will, a change effected in the will, by the thing loved. Love, *complacentia boni*, thus becomes the unmoved mover of *eros*, and of all operations of intellect and will which

¹ Frederick E. Crowe, "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas." *Theological Studies* 20(1959) 1-39, 199-230, 343-395.

have the thing loved as their object of desire. The change effected in the will by the thing loved becomes the guiding principle for further activities of will and intellect that seek complete union with that which is loved. As principle, *complacentia* assures the rectitude of these further acts, which are marked by the steadiness and quiescence of certain love.

Crowe makes a further distinction in recognizing that, since goodness is a notional relation added to being, the first act of the will responds to the act of the intellect, which apprehends the intelligibility and truth of being. That is, intellect's judgment of the good, which gives rise to *complacentia* in the will, is a judgment not of the good as end, but of the good as convertible with being. As purely receptive, *complacentia* is a general 'consent to being,' arising in the nascent understanding that what is perceived is good precisely because it belongs to a universe of being that is ultimately intelligible and, so, ultimately lovable. As principle, *complacentia* guides the seeking of the realization of being in its particulars, but in itself, *complacentia* is an attitude of harmony toward being, occasioned by the particular object apprehended as an indication of the wholeness and wholesomeness of the universe.

In other words, *complacentia boni* is the affective aspect of what Lonergan calls 'the spontaneous notion of being,' which is 'the supreme heuristic notion' of conscious intentionality,² the apprehension of an ordered totality that would constitute 'the complete set of answers to the complete set of questions.'³ As affect it is as simple as an "Ah!" — a sudden warming, a sudden stilling of the heart. But as apprehension it intends the real, the true, the good. It thus permeates all of conscious intentionality. *Complacentia boni* is the motor, the affective *sine qua non* of the perfection of cognitive consciousness, for it is the peaceful bonding of oneself to the world in which one lives that grounds and allows and furthers our attentiveness, our willingness to ask and answer questions with care, to act responsibly and lovingly from moment to moment.

Again, in itself, *complacentia boni* is simply the affective response to the apprehension of the universe of being as intelligible, true, good. It is a feeling, but one which "channels attention, shapes one's horizon,

² Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) 356.

³ *Insight*, 350.

directs one's life,"⁴ for it is a feeling that responds to this or that particular object not as isolated in one's experience, but as a manifestation of being, as part ordered to the whole of which oneself is also a part, and a privileged part, for I am not only intelligible and good, but intelligent and loving: the human being is that part of the universe which, by virtue of its capacity to know and love, can contribute to its intelligibility and loveliness. *Complacentia boni* locates us in a new world, a friendly world, a world in which we have a vocation to intelligibility, truth, goodness, a world in which we realize that we are in one sense more important and in another sense less important than we had thought before. Our world is transformed, and we are transformed with it, for *complacentia boni* is conscious intentionality in love with the fullness of being.

Complacentia boni is thus a conversion, a turning of the heart, a re-bonding (*religio*)⁵ of the heart to that which is utterly transcendent. Because it is a casting of the heart, it is a recasting of all of one's conscious intentionality, for one's mind, one's will, indeed, one's attention and affectivity, follow on the heart's attachment: as you love, so shall you be. And so *complacentia boni* is an operation of the religious level of consciousness whereby one's intelligent, rational, and rational self-consciousness are sublated by one's affective consciousness of the universe of being as an intelligible and so lovable whole.

Because *complacentia* engages the whole of one's conscious intentionality, it is operative on all levels and in all operations of consciousness: in our feeling, attending, thinking, conceptualizing, in our verifying and knowing, in our valuing, deciding and acting: in our thoughts, words, and deeds. It engages the whole of our subjectivity, it suffuses the whole of our affectivity, it furnishes the whole "mass and momentum, drive and direction"⁶ of our being. For however long it lasts, it changes our lives. "Such being in love has its antecedents, its causes, its conditions, its occasions," Lonergan writes. "But once it has blossomed forth and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It is the first

⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 32.

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 81, a.1 Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (New York: Denziger Bros, 1914).

⁶ *Method in Theology* 30-31.

principle. From it flows one's desires and fears, one's joys and sorrows, one's discernment of values, one's decisions and deeds."⁷

Loneragan's compact statement here underscores an important point that is borne out by Thomas' treatise on the passions.⁸ *Complacentia boni* gives rise to the passions as the appropriate affective response to the good as either present (in fact or potentiality) or lacking. *Complacentia* assures the rectitude, not only of further acts of intellect and will in regard to the good or its lack, but also of the affective responses to the good or its lack. *Complacentia* assures that one's feelings can be trusted.

We have no doubt that when Lonergan refers to feelings as "the mass and momentum, drive and power of intentional consciousness,"⁹ he is attributing to them a self-transcendent function. Self-transcendence, he writes, "is the eagerly sought goal" of the entire human being in its multi-leveled manifolds,

not only of our sensitivity, not only of our intelligent and rational knowing, not only of our freedom and responsibility, but first of all of our flesh and blood that through nerves and brain have come spontaneously to live out symbolic meanings and carry out symbolic demands.¹⁰

We are more human the more the operations of 'flesh and blood' are sublated by the operations of knowing and loving. As self-transcendent, feelings function as what Lonergan terms 'operators' of conscious intentionality. That is, they act to hold the lower manifolds of 'the events and processes of the nervous system'¹¹ open for the higher manifolds of asking and answering questions, and help the transition from one integration to another. The affect "so integrates the underlying manifolds as to call forth ... its own replacement by a more specific and effective integrator."¹² Feelings, then, are integral to the human dynamism of self-transcendence, the pure and unrestricted desire to know.

⁷ *Method in Theology* 105.

⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* qq. 23-46.

⁹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 30-31.

¹⁰ Bernard Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press 1985) 133.

¹¹ *Insight* 468.

¹² *Insight* 465.

All along the line of human unfolding, feelings either grease the skids or gum up the works of this inner dynamism. They function either as the servant of self-transcendence or the slave of bias. If knowing the intelligible, the true, and the good depends on asking and answering questions, feelings guide us through the process of asking and answering questions. If moments of stupidity, error, rashness are the effect of the failure either to ask and answer questions, or to do so rightly, that failure can be linked either to our failure to advert to the guidance of feelings or to the failure of our feelings to have guided us. For it is by feelings that we apprehend, prior to any question, the value of any intelligibility, truth, or right, or the disvalue of any stupidity or falsehood or wrong to be eschewed, avoided, rectified. And by feelings of ease or dis-ease we respond to the correctness or error of our own negotiation of the process of knowing what is true and what is good.

Such affective responses are intrinsically evaluative: what is experienced is apprehended as valuable or not. Thus Richard S. Peters writes that what characterizes an emotion is precisely that it involves some sort of appraisal and therefore "emotions are basically forms of cognition"¹³ in the sense of apprehensions of values.

Thus, feelings have passive and motive aspects. In the mode of complacency they arise spontaneously, they 'come over' us, they register in our consciousness the general character of a situation. But in the mode of concern they also move us. Indeed, intellectual and moral self-transcendence themselves depend on affective self-transcendence. This ability to move beyond affectively apprehending a situation as it relates to us to apprehending a situation as it is in itself, affects knowing across the board: the correctness of our knowing; the ability to move beyond understanding things as related to our sensitivity to understanding things among themselves; the correctness of our decisions for action; the ability to move beyond judging what is good for ourselves to judging what is truly good in itself.

The spontaneous and intimate character of feelings make it difficult to think of them as anything but self-referential. As such they are dangerous, distortive of reality, unless vigorously controlled by reason. But feelings as self-transcendent are not just self-regarding. In

¹³ Richard S. Peters, "The Education of the Emotions" in *Feelings and Emotions*. Ed. Magda B. Arnold (New York and London: Academic Press, 1970) 188.

fact, clear thinking and responsible action require the impetus and guidance of feelings. It is precisely when the feelings that have emerged are in some aspect self-referential and incapable of motoring the transcendence from one level of consciousness to another that our feelings block the inner dynamism to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. As Peters writes,

The predicament of most of us, an extreme case of which is presented by the paranoid, is that we are too much subject to a kind of monadic myopia. Our interpretation of the world is inveterately self-referential. We find difficulty in peering out and seeing the world and others as they are, undistorted by our own fears, hopes, and wishes. Better understanding of ourselves could not, of itself, remedy this condition.¹⁴

On the other hand, when and insofar as we are caught up by feelings in the self-transcendent dynamism do we succeed in being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible at the appropriate moment. As Peters says, "there are, however, certain appraisals which lack this self-referential character, notably love, respect, the sense of justice and concern for truth."

Peters takes his cue from Arthur Koestler, who distinguishes self-transcendent emotions from the self-assertive emotions in which "the ego is experienced as a self-contained whole and the ultimate value."¹⁵ In such self-transcending emotions as sympathy, awe, and wonder, on the other hand, "the self is experienced as being a part of a larger whole, a higher unity which transcends, as it were, the boundaries of the individual self."¹⁶

In this context wonder is an affective consciousness of intelligibility and thus promotes intelligent consciousness, an affective consciousness of truth and thus promotes rational consciousness, an affective consciousness of good and thus promotes rational self-consciousness. These feelings apprehend and respond to experience not as relating just to oneself but as embracing the universe of being, as it invites one to participate in intelligibility, truth, goodness by being intelligent, reasonable, responsible. Wonder at, respect for, love of being as 'a higher unity' than our narrow egos is the desire to partici-

¹⁴ Peters, "The Education of the Emotions" 200.

¹⁵ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1967) 54.

¹⁶ Koestler, *The Act of Creation* 54.

pate, to take one's place in that unity — by coming to know it, by coming to live out of it. The self is not left behind, but comes to be in a new way by its operations of asking and answering questions on the different levels of consciousness. Our desiring, thus, becomes no longer the servant of ego, but the motive of self-transcendence.

Crowe makes clear that the possibility of such an attitude of harmony with the universe becoming habitual to be dependent on the general tenor of experience in a person's life.¹⁷ We can experience the universe as intelligible, good, wholesome, but we can also experience the unintelligible, evil, and chaotic to such a degree that stupidity, evil, and chaos seem to define the universe and our place in it. The will can be conformed to non-being, its basic stance in the universe can become one of hatred, resistance, anxiety, despair. Then we respond to the surd more or less absurdly. We are unable to think clearly and deliberate carefully; we turn our backs or we lash out. Bad situations are met with bad solutions. The root of the disordering of the human good is a disorientation of affect, a *radical bias* that is quite simply a failure to be in love with the universe of being. When the universe is experienced as not whole, as broken by the unintelligibility of evil, conscious operations get crippled. One's capacity for loving intelligence seems pointless, even something of a cruel joke. The universe is thus alienating, and the alienated subject is cut off from its very means of self-transcendence.

Thomas, too, holds that¹⁸ when evil is encountered, normally the steadiness of *complacentia* holds sway over psychological activity. Precisely because the good loved is lacking, *complacentia* sponsors the appropriate affective response to the evil: sorrow, hatred, anger, aversion, fear, daring. These passions in turn sponsor the appropriate responses of intellect and will in dealing with the evil. *Complacentia's* absolute peace is disrupted for the sake of concern for the good lost; *complacentia's* reasonableness, however, remains the effective principle for action.

According to Thomas, when evil is *suffered* the resultant sorrow can so depress intellect's power of apprehension that the evil is no longer apprehended as the lack of the good loved; *complacentia* then loses its effective control over the passions, and dissonance holds sway.

¹⁷ Crowe, "Complacency and Concern" 370-371.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1-2, q. 37.

This is especially so in the case of pervasive evil, suffered over long periods with no perceived possibility of escape or relief, in which case sorrow may be intense to the point of 'stupefaction or madness.'

In such cases, Thomas says, the need is to moderate the sorrow in order to free intellect and will from the distortions of frenzied passion, restore the apprehension of evil as a lack of that which is loved, reseat *complacentia* as the appropriate response to the universe, and allow for reasonable action on behalf of the good which is lacking.¹⁹ The key to that moderation, Crowe and Thomas agree, is the contemplation of being, by which one gains the insight into the true nature of the universe and one's place within it.²⁰

Now the Church is in the business of the contemplation of being. Its unique task is to create the conditions of the possibility for people to fall in love with the Word as the source and ground of the wholeness of the universe of being. But it is the Spirit, operating in us as sanctifying grace, who leads us to and holds us in the Word. According to the psychological analogy, the Spirit is to be understood as the eternal moment of Appreciative Love who proceeds from the Inner Word of Understanding, and so the Spirit is Divine Infinite *Complacentia*. As the habit of charity in us, *Divine Complacentia* proceeds as term in human consciousness in a supernatural habit of *complacentia*: "Charity attains God Himself that it may rest in him."²¹ Charity establishes friendship between God and the human, for it is in charity that we respond in love to the love God offers in sanctifying us; in charity, in other words, the love between God and us becomes mutual, the human heart having been capacitated to respond to divine love by the indwelling of divine *Complacentia*. And from that habit of divine friendship flow the activities of graced consciousness.

Whatever is valid in this analogy may be brought together with the thesis that feelings rooted in *complacentia* are affective modes of knowing the true and good, in order to conclude that feelings rooted in the grace of the Spirit are revelatory of God's will. They are holy feelings because they respond to the presence or lack of intelligibility and goodness in a given situation by sharing in God's own affective apprehension of the true and good.

¹⁹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* q. 39.

²⁰ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* q. 38 a. 4: Fred Crowe, "Complacency and Concern" 377.

²¹ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2-2, q. 23, a. 6.

To live in the Spirit is to live in the utter peace of Intelligibility, to regard it "with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26), to put on the love "which brings everything together in perfect harmony" (Col 13:14). It is to walk in a world that shares that intelligible harmony, knowing "that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to God's purpose" (Rom 8:28). It is therefore to answer the groaning of creation for the fullness of that intelligibility (Rom 8:22) by manifesting it, shedding light on it, speaking to it, working for it, to "prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:12).

Let me apply this to the situation of my students. If, as Christians, they bear in their consciousness the gifts of the Spirit, then can it be that when they feel hurt and angered by the Church's teachings regarding ordination, gender-laden language, the anthropology of gender, and so on, they may not be operating out of self-referential desire, egoism, and biased consciousness? They may not be operating out of power-politics. They may not be confusing the secular order with the divine intention. They may be operating out of the steady surety of divine charity. Their sorrow may be the felt apprehension of evil that *complacentia* makes possible; their anger and unsettledness may be the appropriate response to that evil.

The steadiness of their faith may be shaken to the core, perhaps because sexism is a pervasive evil of the sort that Thomas says evokes debilitating sorrow 'even to the point of stupefaction and madness.' What is at stake then, is not just women's leaving the Church, but their losing a sense of the universe as an intelligible and lovable whole and, thereby, their very ability to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving: the ability to be human. As pervasive evil, sexism is dehumanizing at the very core of our humanity. It sponsors that radical bias of the affections which history experienced at its extreme in Hitler, and which would explain what Rahner calls the fundamental option against God.

The Church cannot afford to dismiss the feelings of its faithful. They are clues that lead us into the mind and heart of God because, insofar as grace is operative in those feelings, they emanate from the mind and heart of God. This is what the American Catholic bishops seemed to have recognized in the manner in which they approached the first draft of the ill-fated pastoral letter on women. Whatever its

shortcomings, it listened to how women felt. And it was precisely on that point that the bishops were chastised by Rome.

In *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, Crowe advises that we are in danger of being “practical binitarians: not denying the third person doctrinally, but acting as if we did.”²² And that is natural enough. We are, Crowe writes, “born extroverts,”²³ and our attention is more easily drawn to that which has extension and duration: we are more prone to the reading of the gospels than to the discernment of the Spirit, more apt to consider ourselves ambassadors of Christ than vessels of the Spirit, more easily named Christians than Spiritans, less nervous about following the example of Christ in the Scriptures than following the prompting of the Spirit in our hearts. “Of course,” Crowe continues,

it is difficult to determine what the Spirit is saying. Diggings in Palestine, dictionaries of Aramaic, the comforting feel of a holy book — all the data that make the mission of the Son so really real — they tell us nothing of what the Spirit is saying to us here and now.²⁴

Yet, he insists, intentionality analysis has given us a philosophical tool on which to base a practice of developing an intimacy with the Spirit which, though interior, is as concrete as those practices by which we develop an intimacy with the Word. In intentionality analysis we have

a new tool for understanding an ancient faith, a philosophy that shows us a twofold human need, a human receptivity for a twofold sending from God, a philosophy that accepts internal data as well as external, that has no trouble seeing the Spirit as really real, just as really real as the Son, just as really sent by God as the Son, just as really present in the world as the Son, with just as real a purpose and function.²⁵

Our share in the Mission of the Spirit begins with the discernment of the Spirit’s workings in the body of the faithful, and those workings reveal themselves most immediately in the feelings that

²² Frederick E. Crowe, “Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions,” *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989) 331.

²³ Crowe, “Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions” 331.

²⁴ Crowe, “Son and Spirit: Tension in the Divine Missions?” *Appropriating* 18.

²⁵ Crowe, “Son and Spirit: Tension in the Divine Missions?” 18; Crowe, “Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions” 322.

respond intentionally to the good and its lack. To trust in those feelings may be precisely to abandon ourselves to the Spirit.

But there is another point. If sexism, as pervasive evil, evokes a sorrow so intense as to thwart the self-transcendence of conscious operations, then the Church has a fundamental responsibility to promote the moderation of that sorrow. The contemplation of is the surest cure for such sorrow. But in this case there is the dilemma faced by my students in the disjunction between the feelings evoked by their faith and the feelings evoked by the vehicle of that faith, the Church. What if the Good News is used to dictate the exclusion of women from the wholeness that it offers? Or if the Word is invoked to exclude women from the order of intelligibility? Those were the questions with which my students wrestled. They considered the Church, precisely as the home of their experience of divine love and faith in the liberating Word, the one place where they should be safe from the day-to-day assaults of sexism. Yet they couldn't rest in the sacrament of their peace, and they began to wonder about their own spirituality.

However, Thomas gives us further clues about the moderation of sorrow: "Naps and baths," he says, "tears and groans," and "the company of sympathetic friends," as well as the contemplation of being comprise his prescription against intense sorrow.²⁶ From the order in which these are given, one can see that the first three are properly offered as preparation for the contemplation of being. Bodily well-being, psychic catharsis, social comfort — the ascending order of human manifolds — are preparatory to spiritual re-alignment.

Before the Church can function effectively for the contemplation of being as revealed in the Word, it must become a company of sympathetic friends. What Dan was recognizing when he said, "What music can the Church have for me if it does not sing to women?" was the Scriptural injunction, "If any in the Church suffer, we all suffer together" (1 Cor 12:26). To be a friend means to be willing to listen to the tears and groans of one's fellows, and to cry and groan with them. It means taking their sorrow seriously, acknowledging the affective inverse insight that sorrow is, honoring the love of the good-in-itself which is its source. It means, further, doing something about the source of sorrow, the dehumanizing evil, sexism, whatever the source and whatever the cost, and not stopping until the afflicted *feel* better.

²⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1-2, q. 38.

That will be the only sure signal that all is well. Only then will the habit of contemplation be possible, only then will the Word be revelatory of infinite intelligibility, only then will the Good News be revelatory of infinite goodness, and only then will the Church cease to be a scandal and become the sacrament of Christian truth.

