

METHOD

Journal of Lonergan Studies

VOLUME 16

NUMBER 2

FALL 1998

METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies aims, first, at furthering interpretive, historical, and critical study of the philosophical, theological, economic, and methodological writings of Bernard Lonergan. Secondly, it aims at promoting original research into the methodological foundations of the sciences and disciplines.

METHOD is published twice yearly, in April and October, by The Lonergan Institute at Boston College.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE 1998: \$16.00 yearly for individuals, \$28.00 yearly for institutions (U.S. currency).

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Selected articles appearing in *Method* are indexed in the *Philosopher's Index*.

ISSN: 076-7392.

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METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies

is published by

The Lonergan Institute at Boston College

THE SCOPE OF RENEWAL¹

Bernard J.F. Lonergan

edited by Robert C. Croken

I MUST BEGIN by asking you to distinguish between two renewals, a great renewal and a small renewal. The great renewal was the one intended in the Second Vatican Council, the renewal of the whole church. The small renewal is the renewal of theology. Our topic in these lectures has been Roman Catholic theology since Vatican II, and so the topic of the present lecture is how far-reaching and, in particular, how radical has been or is to be the renewal in contemporary Roman Catholic theology.

1. THE PASSING OF THOMISM

A first symptom and, indeed, a first measure of this change is the passing of Thomism. In 1879 Pope Leo XIII in a bull, *Aeterni Patris*,² enjoined the study of St Thomas of Aquin on all theological students. In 1918 the then new Code of Canon Law imposed the study of Aquinas on all students of philosophy and theology. But in the Second Vatican Council we find that

¹A lecture delivered by Lonergan at Trinity College, University of Toronto, on November 15, 1973. Together with three preceding lectures on November 12, 13, and 14, it comprised the Larkin-Stuart Lectures under the general title, "Revolution in Catholic Theology?" The second of these lectures, "Variations in Fundamental Theology," appeared in *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 16 (Spring, 1998) 1-24. The complete series will be published in volume 14 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-*.

In the present editing of this lecture, the following sources from the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, were used: the autograph text prepared for the lecture and the tape recording of the lecture. Headings for sections and subsections have been added to the text.

²*Enchiridion Symbolorum*, editio xxxiv, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolphus Schönmetzer (Herder: Romae, 1967), ## 3135-3140, pp. 610-612.

the adjective 'Scholastic' had become a term of reproach. What was Scholastic certainly was not pastoral; what was not pastoral had no place in a pastoral council; and so when a bishop wished to disparage effectively a certain type of proposal or amendment, he would tend to refer to it as 'Scholastic'.

This change of attitude was no passing whim. For decades, three factors had been at work to bring it about, and the Council provided the occasion to articulate publicly throughout the church what already was widely felt.

1.1 First Factor: Historical Scholarship

The first of the three factors, I would say, was historical scholarship. When the study of Aquinas was enjoined on all students of philosophy and theology, what was envisaged was the assimilation of the basic tenets of Thomist thought. But the first concern of historical scholarship is not to set forth and convince readers or hearers of the profundity of an author's thought, the breadth of his vision, the universal relevance of his conclusions. That sort of thing may be allowed to pad a preface or to fill out a conclusion. But the heart of the matter is elsewhere. It is a long journey through variant readings, shifts in vocabulary, enriching perspectives — all duly documented — that establish as definitively as can be expected what the great man thought on some minor topic within the horizon of his time and place, and with no great relevance to other times or places. Only from a long series of such dissertations can the full picture be constructed — a picture as accurate as it is intricate, broad indeed but with endless detail, rich in implications for other times if only one has the time to sort them out, discern the precise import of each, and infer exactly what does and does not follow. In brief, the Aquinas of historical scholarship called for the full time of a specialist. That Aquinas was not to be tucked into a corner of courses for all students of philosophy and theology. And the students had heard enough about historical scholarship to be quite incredulous when a professor would propound this or that interpretation of Aquinas as the genuine thought of the great medieval theologian.

The inner exigencies of historical scholarship went much further. To be a specialist, to rank as an expert, entitled one to no more than the best

available opinion of one's day. Like the results of natural science, the results of scholarship stood within a cumulative, ongoing process. The process would extend beyond one's span of years and into that remote future when there would remain no unexplained phenomena. And this slippery underfooting confronted one not only in medieval studies but also in study of the councils, the Fathers, the scriptures. Catholic theology, whether in the medieval style of the *quaestio* or in the post-Renaissance style of the thesis, found both its basic supposition and its method called in question. For the supposition had been that texts had the same meaning both for their authors and for the readers that chanced upon them centuries later. And the method had been either a dialectic that sought a middle way between contrary views or else a deduction that inferred conclusions from principles. But now, under the new scholarly dispensation, whether views had really been contrary, and what precisely had been the content of the alleged principles, were in the first place unknowns that had to be determined by interpreters working within the original historical contexts. Not only did those prior tasks extend indefinitely into the future, but also what could be anticipated were not permanent views to be reconciled or fixed principles for inferences but rather the starting points of developments that transposed from lesser to more complex modes of human apprehension.

1.2 Second Factor: Modern Science

There was a profounder shock in store. Aristotle's theory of the syllogism and the theory of science he had constructed on that basis in his *Posterior Analytics* had fostered the view that a science consisted in a system of permanent truths. Its principles were to be necessary and self-evident. Its conclusions were to follow necessarily from the principles. Even though such an ideal might not yet be realized at any given time and place, yet in the eternal order of things it was something that eventually was to be had. Such a view was not confined to Aristotelians. All through the nineteenth century the propagandists of science kept referring to the necessary laws of nature, and even the economists backed up their affirmations with a reference to the iron laws obtaining in their field. But the necessary laws of nature were shaken by Einstein's special relativity in

1905 and they were forgotten with the advent of quantum theory in 1926, while the iron laws of economics relaxed remarkably only a little later in the heat of the great depression and the remedies proposed by Lord Keynes.

This illusion of necessity might have vanished earlier. For empirical science is verified science. Any claim to probability or truth that it has results not from the intrinsic merit of its principles but simply from the fact that its proposals happen to be verified. No doubt, what the scientist discovers is intelligible. But the intelligibility that is discovered is the intelligibility not of a necessity but of a possibility. Were it the intelligibility of a necessity, then verification would be superfluous. Because it is only the intelligibility of what might or might not be, only by verification can one settle that in fact it exists.

I have spoken of the slippery footing supplied by scholarship, for there may ever be a better-informed or profounder scholar to come. But the same is to be said of scientific systems generally. They are not Thucydidean attainments for all time. They are just systems on the move: smaller systems that move into and are transformed by larger systems; larger systems that give way to more comprehensive views.

1.3 Third Factor: Modern Philosophy

But if science and scholarship are ever no more than the best available opinions of their day, can our third factor, philosophy, escape such relativity if not relativism? Here, I think, a very massive phenomenon has to be noted. Some two hundred years ago, Immanuel Kant had proclaimed the subordination of pure reason to practical reason: pure reason knew neither the noumenal world nor the human soul nor God; but practical reason could come to terms with these issues. Kant was challenged by the absolute idealists — Fichte, Schelling, Hegel — who put practical reason back in its minor role and assigned supremacy to speculative reason. But the absolute idealists did not have the last word.

In many and differing ways, in a variety of contexts, with widely differing implications, a succession of thinkers tended to reverse the view that had been held not only by absolute idealists but by rationalists, and before them by Aristotelians. In this new style Schopenhauer wrote on *Die*

Welt als Wille und Vorstellung. Kierkegaard took his stand on faith. Newman toasted conscience first and only then the pope. Nietzsche extolled the will to power. Dilthey set up a *Lebensphilosophie*, a philosophy of concrete living. Blondel aspired to a philosophy of action. Utilitarians sought the greatest good of the greatest number, pragmatists stressed decision, personalists dwelt on intersubjectivity. While Edmund Husserl aimed at making philosophy a rigorous science, his phenomenology was taken over by others as a descriptive technique and employed in any of a variety of manners. Logical positivists, finally, discovered what they named a verification principle and, while it has not been verified, personally I should say that it is true if cast in the form of an empirical principle. It was in this sense that in my book, *Insight*, I distinguished between analytic propositions and analytic principles.³ Analytic propositions are just tautologies derived from the definitions of their terms: one cannot accept the definitions without accepting the analytic propositions they entail. But analytic principles are analytic propositions with a difference: each of their terms has been verified in precisely the sense that was defined; to accept the terms in their defined sense, and also to accept the verification of that sense is to accept the verification of the proposition.

1.4 Summary

I have been speaking of the passing of Thomism in Roman Catholic theological circles. Its occasion was the rejection of views named Scholastic in the Second Vatican Council. But its roots were old and deep. The development of historical scholarship, particularly in the nineteenth century, undermined both the medieval method of the *quaestio* and the later method of the thesis. It made the interpretation not only of St Thomas but also of scripture and the Fathers the work not of youthful seminarians but of aging specialists. Further, the notion of a science to be derived from Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and implicit in the commentaries and the *obiter dicta* of Aquinas was the notion of a permanent achievement, of universal and necessary truths valid for all times. But

³Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1957) 304-309 = *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 329-334.

both modern scholarship and modern science held a radically different view. Their endless research aimed not at discovering what was self-evident and necessary, but what ingenuity might discover and patient skill verify; and what was so discovered and verified was not truth but only the best available opinion of the day. Finally, what scholars and scientists had learnt by experience, the philosophers, for all their disagreement, seemed to be concluding from whatever methods they happened to follow. Kant's rejection of the rationalists was followed, indeed, by the absolute idealists' rejection of Kant; but a large and imposing number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinkers rejected the absolute idealists' rejection and, though they might differ from Kant, did accept the empirical principle. Metaphysics based on some *a priori* type of knowledge was rejected and, in general, this meant that no metaphysics whatever was accepted.

Did it follow that there had to be rejected Thomist metaphysics with its basis in *principia per se nota*? I do not think that this question has been found exciting. It could be left to medievalists specializing in Thomist philosophy. It could be left to professional philosophers. It could be left to speculative theologians. But it certainly was not to be an urgent issue for the masses, for the mass of the faithful, for the pastorally-minded products of the Second Vatican Council intent on forgetting old mistakes and pressing forward in winning all men to Christ.

If this pastoral optimism or euphoria is general, there do exist dissenting voices. They are not advocating a return to Thomist metaphysics, but they are adverting to a twofold contemporary need. This twofold need corresponds to the twofold goal Aquinas set himself in writing his *Contra Gentiles*.⁴ As he put it, there are two kinds of truths for the theologian to defend and two contrary types of error for him to refute. One of these lies within the province of the human mind; the other exceeds its capacity. With regard to the former, demonstrative arguments can be had both to establish what is true and to refute what is false. But with regard to the latter, the refutation of errors is possible, since faith does not run counter to reason, but no more than suasive or probable

⁴*Summa contra Gentiles*, 1, c. 9.

arguments can be had for the truth, since faith exceeds the province of reason.

So Aquinas. On both these counts one finds in contemporary Catholic theology that the passing of Thomism is a reality. One finds it in the realm in which Aquinas would expect demonstrative arguments for establishing truth and for rejecting error. One finds it in the other realm in which Aquinas would grant only suasive arguments for the truth to exist, while contending there were certain arguments for the refutation of error. Let me dwell on both the former point and on the latter.

2. CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

In 1968 Patmos-Verlag in Düsseldorf, and in 1969 Newman Press in New York, published a series of interviews with six outstanding Catholic theologians.⁵ Two were French: Yves Congar and Jean Daniélou. Two were Dutch: Edward Schillebeeckx and Piet Schoonenberg. Two were German: Karl Rahner and Johannes Metz. The Frenchmen and the Dutchmen were interviewed singly, but the Germans — Rahner and Metz — formed a team, each speaking in turn, each agreeing in the main with what the other had just said, but each going on to add not a little more that changed the other's perspective.

2.1 Yves Congar

For Congar, the great task facing the theologian today was to appropriate an adequate anthropology. This need he found particularly relevant in combating atheism since most forms of atheism begin by affirming man and only as a consequence go on to the denial of God. So far from admitting that theology was concerned not with man but with God, he urged that in scripture the affirmation of God and of man go hand in hand.⁶

Again, Congar was concerned that the third world should make its contribution to Catholic theology. Even at the Council it was obvious that

⁵*The Crucial Questions on Problems Facing the Church Today*, ed. Frank Fehmers (New York: Newman Press, 1969).

⁶*The Crucial Questions* 9.

the church is Western, though a considerable proportion of the bishops there were non-European. He added that countries that do not belong to Western civilization have, until now, contributed nothing to the theological thinking of the church, and he desired that the human vitality of the third world should begin to have its counterpart in the area of religion.⁷

2.2 Jean Daniélou

Cardinal Daniélou found that in contemporary circles, even religious circles, doubts were widespread about the capacity of the human mind for coming to a knowledge of God, whether through the exercise of reason or by appealing to the truths of revelation. The question was the radical question of the possibility of man attaining knowledge of the divine. The combat between the church and the world today takes place, he contended, not on the level of revelation but on a preceding level where man's apprehension of himself and of human values is formed. The issue is not the obscurity of mysteries hidden in God but the obscurity of the philosophies devised by men.⁸

As Congar, so also Daniélou adverted to the related issue of Christianity and culture. While people today were urging the separation of Christianity from its setting in Western culture, he felt that Christianity is not truly implanted in a country when it is present merely in a number of individuals, or when it exists institutionally simply because the church has been set up there. It must also acquire a cultural expression within the country, and it is implanted there only when it has sufficiently penetrated the country's social and cultural patrimony. Accordingly, he found an ironic contrast between the will in the West to separate Christianity from its Western expression and, on the other hand, the recognition that the main problem in evangelizing other world cultures — in China, in India, in the Arab world — was the need to incarnate Christianity in these cultures.⁹

⁷*The Crucial Questions* 10.

⁸*The Crucial Questions* 26.

⁹*The Crucial Questions* 38.

2.3 Edward Schillebeeckx

Schillebeeckx noted the widespread secularization of the modern world. In the past man's whole personal and social life was imbued with religion. It was not that, in some first instance, religion was something apart and then, in a later instance, it penetrated into secular life. On the contrary, secular life itself was seen and experienced as religious. But now with the massive advance of secularization, everything has been placed within the horizon of rational understanding and, by that fact, withdrawn from religion and the world of religion. In this fashion secularization has come to coincide with desacralization. So there has arisen the question, What place is left for faith? Gradually there has come the answer that faith is concerned with a superstructure, that it in no way impinges on the flow of earthly events, that it is superfluous and humanly irrelevant.¹⁰

Accordingly, Schillebeeckx would argue for a new form of natural theology, not something in the line of the old *theologia naturalis*, but a discipline that would show that it is possible to speak about God, not only on the basis of revelation but also on the basis of secular life itself. If this should not be possible, he feared that there is to be a permanent split between the secularized world and religion, and that religion is to be swept away as no longer relevant. Pointing his moral, he concluded that the ultimate consequence of fideism, of relying on faith and neglecting reason, is atheism in all its varieties, not excluding Christian atheism.¹¹

2.4 Piet Schoonenberg

In his contribution, Piet Schoonenberg contrasted orthodoxy and orthopraxis, right thinking and right doing, and he felt that we needed to get used to the idea that orthodoxy was not simply absolute but had a certain relativity with respect to orthopraxis.¹² On the same issue, Karl Rahner affirmed: '...the question whether we really live Christianity, even in contradiction to the world, or only speak cleverly about it, seems to me to be really almost the ultimate question, and it can naturally be solved

¹⁰*The Crucial Questions* 53-54.

¹¹*The Crucial Questions* 54.

¹²*The Crucial Questions* 106-107.

neither by institutional measures nor by a modern, more sublime theology.’¹³

2.5 Karl Rahner and Johannes Metz

Again, the Rahner-Metz team shared, with Congar, Daniélou, and Schillebeeckx, an awareness of the secularism of the modern world. Rahner remarked that the crucial post-conciliar questions were not the questions treated in the Council, and that the first of these crucial issues was that the very question of God had become lost.¹⁴ Metz complemented this by saying that our environment is a post-atheistic humanism, that it does not offer a world-design, an existence-design *against* God but rather a world-and-existence-design *without* God. No longer can we take for granted the former common basis for a confrontation between Christianity and atheism. Indeed, one of the greatest embarrassments of the believer and the church today is how and in what manner should faith and the church give an answer to the ‘world,’ when this ‘world’ no longer has any questions about the church and about the faith the church offers for consideration.¹⁵

Rahner followed this up by pointing to the paradox of his own position. For over twenty years he had been considered a progressive theologian by those about him. He had not shared their view, but then suddenly he found that, without any change in his own position, he had become a very traditional defender of the church’s central positions. In brief, he felt that the church all of a sudden had been confronted with a radical opposition within itself, that the church had to defend the question of the living God and the question of Jesus Christ against a fashionable secularism, against a fashionable desacralization, in its own midst. To express himself forthrightly, he said that in the coming decades we shall have to be clear about one thing: we shall have to deal with a situation in which genuinely unchristian heresies spring up in the church, whose adherents would not want to leave the church. Against them, the church

¹³*The Crucial Questions* 162.

¹⁴*The Crucial Questions* 144, 145.

¹⁵*The Crucial Questions* 147-148.

in his opinion must have the courage to pronounce in a completely old-fashioned way an unambiguous 'No,' a real condemnation. He considered it obvious that such a thing should occur only after trial, with caution, in love, after real, genuine dialogue, with a real understanding of the grounds which lead to such heresies within the church. But he added that we must realistically and soberly reckon with such heresies within the church, heresies which, even while they want to set up house within the church, attack the very substance of Christianity in the name of the progress of the church and in the name of the modern period and its tasks.¹⁶

Disclaiming any wish to underestimate or minimize the danger Rahner had been sketching, Metz wished to shift the accent. The church, he felt, has still to learn a genuine pluralism, a pluralism that no longer admits a theoretical formulation. The church has to learn to become a real field of tension, taking up within itself and carrying out initiatives of the most varied theological and social origins. It is, he felt, precisely in the ability to take up and assimilate such tensions that the positive integrating power of the institution 'church' becomes evident. He argued for a transformation of the apologia to those without the faith to an apologia for those within, for a deeper appreciation of the difficulties of faith that come up within the church itself, a deeper appreciation of the fact that the person for whom faith must be justified is not so much the person living outside the church but rather the individual believer living within the church.¹⁷

With all of this Rahner expressed his agreement with his customary vehement explicitness: agreement for the need of a genuine theological pluralism, for the greater importance of the apologia to those within, for the need of a critical openness in the church, for an openness to which the faithful and the theologians, the bishops and perhaps the popes, are not accustomed, for an openness, finally, that is the one means that will make the church's contribution to the modern world credible. Nonetheless, he returned to his previous point. Is the situation, he asked, in which the church under certain circumstances can and must say an unambiguous

¹⁶*The Crucial Questions* 148-149.

¹⁷*The Crucial Questions* 149-150.

'No' still a remote one, still a theoretical possibility which one can concede in principle but which still has no real meaning for the immediate future? Such remoteness, he urged, was doubtful, since he had recently met a Catholic theologian, still teaching in the church, who explained that one could still preserve the substance of Christianity under the supposition that Jesus never existed at all. The theologian in question did not, it is true, deny the purely historical existence of Jesus, but he did hold it to be a more or less irrelevant question as far as faith is concerned. If such things already occur today, Rahner continued, if there is talk in such an undifferentiated way about demythologizing and desacralization, as one can already hear everywhere, one must consider such a 'No' on the part of the church, not as an abstract possibility, but as a realistic decision forced upon the church by the circumstances.¹⁸

2.6 Summary

Perhaps enough as been said to indicate what seems to have been lost by the passing of Thomism. The theologians I have been quoting stand in the front rank. Congar urged that the great need facing the theologian today was an adequate anthropology. Daniélou contended that the issue was not the obscurity of the mysteries but doubt about the capacity of the human mind to know anything more than the visible universe. Schillebeeckx pointed out that, unless a new natural theology, quite different from the old one, were worked out, there would result a permanent split between the secularized world and religion, and it would follow that religion would be swept away as irrelevant. Rahner and Metz fully acknowledged the fact of secularism but went on to tackle problems of faith within the church. Nor was the source of these problems obscure to them.

Rahner granted that the proximate possibility of the church having to condemn views held by Catholics was due basically to the fact that theology had not achieved sufficiently what it should achieve today. He said that theology should be able to come to terms with such problems through its own inner strength and not through official ecclesiastical

¹⁸*The Crucial Questions* 151-153.

measures. While he granted that purely ecclesiastical measures as such do not solve the problem, he also urged that the church is not to be confronted with the alternatives either of remaining silent or of promoting the development of a theology that would make such measures superfluous.

Before concluding this section I should state that I have not been offering you the substance of a book of over one hundred and seventy pages. Each of the six theologians raised several distinct issues. I have been quoting them only to add to my own point of the passing of Thomism the further point that currently something like Thomism is very much to be desired.

3. WHAT IS DESIRED

If, however, I am asked what this something else is to be, I must insist that half a century would be a short time for ideas, already in gestation, to mature and reach wide acceptance. Until then, each one can do no more than express the view on which he has labored and leave it for contemporaries to criticize and for pupils to improve. It is only on this understanding and in this spirit that I venture to present what I have been thinking.

What is desired will be, I should say, first, an assimilation of what is new, secondly, in continuity with the old and, thirdly, dialectical. More concretely, an assimilation of what is new will have to involve, first, an understanding of modern science, secondly, an understanding of modern scholarship and, thirdly, a philosophy that is at home in modern science and modern scholarship. Next, continuity with what is old will be a matter of analogy and, indeed, an analogy of proportion; so a theology will be continuous with Thomism, to take one example, if it stands to modern science, modern scholarship, and an associated philosophy, as Thomism stood to Aristotelianism. Finally, the theology will be dialectical, if it distinguishes systematically between the authentic and the unauthentic, between positions and counterpositions, and if it can settle issues by appealing to this distinction.

3.1 Assimilation of the New

This is all very general but, if I am asked to be more specific, unfortunately I cannot do better than refer to what I have already written. By an understanding of modern science I mean not agreeing with what scientists hold and repeating their scientific and extra-scientific opinions but attending to their performance, figuring out what is involved in any process from inquiry through discovery to experimentation and verification, and assembling the elements of the larger movement from one discovery to another. In brief, it is doing the sort of thing I attempted in the early chapters of my book, *Insight*.¹⁹ In similar fashion, understanding modern scholarship is not just practicing it but understanding the practice: what is going on in learning another language, what are the ups and downs in interpreting an ancient text, how does history differ from chronicle, and critical history from the previous stage of uncritical history. Once more, if you wish a concrete example, it is doing the sort of thing I attempted in certain chapters of *Method in Theology*.²⁰

A somewhat fuller answer must be given the next question, What is meant by a philosophy that is at home in modern science and modern scholarship? Here, I should say, there arises a basic disjunction. Either the philosophy follows what above I referred to as the empirical principle or else it does not. If it follows the empirical principle, all its statements will be in some sense verifiable. If it does not, then it will be constructed by deducing conclusions from analytic principles, from what Aquinas or Aristotle would call *principia per se nota*.

Now in *Insight* I accepted the first member of the disjunction. All philosophic statements, if valid, are in some sense verifiable; and they are in some sense verifiable if the empirical principle is always applied though, of course, it is not always applied in the same manner. Let me list such different manners. There is the simple and direct application of the empirical principle in the empirical method of the natural sciences where verification is in the data of sense as given. There is a simple but less direct

¹⁹See above, n. 3.

²⁰Bernard J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, and New York: Herder and Herder, 1972; 2nd revised ed., 1973; 3rd reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

application of the empirical principle in the empirical method of interpreters and historians where verification is in the data of sense, not simply as given, but as given and as carriers of meaning. From simple and direct one turns to simple and indirect applications when one uses ordinary, mathematical, scientific, or scholarly language to direct attention to the data of consciousness. Such is the generalized empirical method employed in *Insight*, a method that operates on the data of consciousness as the method of natural science operates on the data of sense.

Now generalized empirical method not merely enables the subject to assimilate modern science and modern scholarship but also enables him to appropriate his own conscious reality as an existential subject. As a conscious subject, he can attend, inquire intelligently, judge reasonably, decide freely and responsibly, love totally. As a conscious existential subject he confronts and accepts the fact that ultimately it is up to him to decide whether he will really love, whether his free decisions will be responsible, whether his judgments will be reasonable, whether his investigations will be intelligent or biased, whether he will advert to the data both of sense and of consciousness or induce the blind spots that eliminate what for him are the more unpleasant facts of life.

In brief, generalized empirical method goes beyond the empirical to the normative. It reveals the human subject to himself, reveals norms immanent in his own operations, confronts him with the alternatives of being an authentic human being or, in some measure, unauthentic, and leaves him with the responsibility of making himself whatever he makes himself.

3.2 *Dialectical Analysis*

This transition from the empirical to the normative provides the foundation for a dialectical analysis. For dialectic has to do with the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory. But the existential subject is concrete; he is dynamic for his living is operating; he is confronted with the contradictory alternatives of being an authentic or an unauthentic human being.

Further, while the psychological reality of authenticity and its opposite are accessible only within the consciousness of the individual

subject, it remains that these inward events and transactions have their outer manifestation in silence and speech, in words and deeds, in motives that move some and not others, in goals that some pursue and others oppose. So it is that from the inner opposition of authenticity and unauthenticity there proceeds the generally accessible opposition of positions and counterpositions; and it is only a fuller manifestation of the radicalness of this opposition when it is covered over with the confusion that ensues when the authentic name positions what the unauthentic name counterpositions and, vice versa, when the authentic name counterpositions what the unauthentic name positions.

3.3 *Continuity with the Old*

Something has been said on two of the three points to be presented. There was to be an assimilation of what is new, and this was obtained through a generalized empirical method reaching an understanding of modern science and modern scholarship. There was to be attained a dialectic, and this was reached in a transition from the empirical through the norms of authenticity to the opposition between authentic and unauthentic and to its manifestations in an opposition and a confusion of positions and counterpositions. It remains, however, that this new style has to be continuous with the old style if it is to make use of what was valid in previous achievement.

Now this third and last requirement calls for a longer disquisition than can be attempted tonight, and so I propose to be content with indicating an analogy and a difference between the old *theologia naturalis* of the Thomist tradition and the new natural theology desired by Schillebeeckx if we are to meet the challenge of secularism.

Let me begin by recalling a point made by another eminent member of the Order of Preachers. I have already quoted Congar to the effect that contemporary atheism denies the existence of God because it affirms, or because it insists on making room for, the full reality of man. For this reason he urged that the main task facing the theologian today is to appropriate an adequate anthropology.

Now for me the basic step in such an appropriation is the appropriation of one's own reality as existential subject and, in

consequence, freely and responsibly though not necessarily, the decision to become and remain an authentic human being. In brief, to appropriate one's own reality as existential subject raises the question for deliberation, Will I be an authentic human person? It can be met by the judgment of value: it is supremely worthwhile for me to become and to remain an authentic human person. And this judgment of value may and should be followed by a decision that underpins all the honorable decisions of a lifetime.

The secularist, who denies God that he may affirm man, who rejects institutional religion because he finds it blocking human development, can hardly reject the existential subject's discovery of himself, acceptance of himself, realization of his own potentialities. He cannot but share the effort to apprehend the workings of human understanding in mathematics, in science, in common sense, in scholarship. He cannot but distinguish between the merely bright ideas of understanding and the affirmations of sound judgment, and so to prefer astronomy to astrology, chemistry to alchemy, science to magic, history to legend, philosophy to myth. From such objective realms he will turn in upon the subject, upon his capacities for attention, for intelligent inquiry, for reasonable judgment. From the cognitional theory of grasping what happens when one knows, he will derive an epistemology that explains why such happenings are knowing. From both cognitional theory and epistemology he will derive an account of what one knows when such happenings occur; and it is such an account that is what the hardheaded mean by metaphysics. Further, the secularist is neither premoral as the child or amoral as the psychopath. He is aware of his feelings, of the values they can reveal, of the moment of moral truth in which he finds himself when he asks himself whether this or that course of action is truly good, really worthwhile. Because he would affirm all that is good in man, he will face the existential challenge and make the existential decision to be guided not by satisfaction but by value, to seek not just the maximum of satisfaction for the greatest number but, far more, the greatest value realized by the greatest number.

But the appropriation of one's own reality as existential subject can lead one further still. One can observe that the whole development of

science and scholarship rests on two pillars. The first is the rejection of obscurantism, of the failure to face the relevant questions that arise. The second is the empirical principle, that answers to questions be verified in the data of experience. From the two principles the secularist concludes that science can know only objects in this world, that it can never attain knowledge of anything beyond this world. But one may ask whether science is the only knowledge man can attain. The question is relevant, for scientific knowledge is of its nature bound to be incomplete. It can reduce every x to some y ; but every reduction ultimately is a mere matter of fact; it happens to be verified and it would not be true if it did not happen to be verified. Every scientific affirmation gives rise to the further question, Does it really just happen? Is there not a massive obscurantism involved in brushing aside the question that obviously arises whenever any scientific proposition happens to be verified?

I need not carry the argument further, for my purpose has been no more than to indicate the lines along which the new natural theology, desired by Schillebeeckx, might be worked out. It starts from the self-appropriation of the existential subject, and it advances beyond the realms of science and scholarship and existential subjectivity by pushing further the questions by which subjectivity comes to appropriate itself and to constitute itself. It differs from the old *theologia naturalis* both in its starting point and in its procedure. Where the old *theologia naturalis* begins from the material universe, the new begins from the self-appropriation of the existential subject. Where the old proceeds from the material universe to God by invoking the principles of a metaphysics, the new advances from the existential subject to God by the claims of a full rejection of obscurantism. The old and the new are analogous for they proceed from knowledge of the finite to a conclusion about the infinite. The old and the new differ, for the old thinks of objects and objective principles while the new adverts to the subject and the exigencies of his intelligence and reasonableness.

It remains that the new has a triple excellence relevant to the needs of our times. It concludes to God as did the old. But it does so in a manner that begins from what the secularist can discover in his own reality to overcome his own secularism. At the same time it is a tool that churchmen

can bring to bear only if they repudiate the very obscurantism that in the past led men beyond secularization to secularism. At a single stroke it would recall those that have gone astray and, as well, remove the scandal that led them to go astray.

4. CONCLUSION

My question in these lectures was, 'Revolution in Roman Catholic Theology?' I have offered instances of profound change in the notion of pastoral theology, in the conception of fundamental theology, in a critique of both sacralization and secularization. I have endeavored to make it clear, both in the previous lectures and in the present one, that in an extremely serious manner the whole mind-set of Roman Catholic theology is being overhauled.

As yet, issues are unsettled. There is the danger that new notions in science, scholarship, philosophy can be exploited in the manner Karl Rahner would name substantial heresy. There is the opposite danger that the whole effort of renewal give rise to a panic that now, as on earlier occasions, would close doors, and shut eyes, and stop ears. But there exists the third possibility that the new can be analogous to the old, that it can preserve all that is valid in the old, that it can achieve the higher synthesis, mentioned by Leo XIII in his bull, *Aeterni Patris, vetera novis augere et perficere*, augmenting and perfecting the old by what is new.²¹ To that end we must labor and for it we must pray.

²¹See above, n. 2.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I PAINT?

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IN THE FALL of 1997, when the *New York Times* asked seventeen art-world experts the question "What is art?" they all answered that there is no answer. Art is whatever people say it is.¹ This hasn't put critics out of work, however. They still talk as if there is a difference between good and bad art, although their explanations of the difference can seem highly subjective. One critic may call a piece 'extraordinary' or 'exciting,' but these terms say more about the critic than the art. Another critic may call a piece 'marvelously structured' or 'luminous' or 'lacking coherence,' which give us insight into the piece, but is it carved in stone that *structure*, *luminosity*, and *coherence* make for a good picture? Might these criteria be just as much a matter of normless taste as preferences for the artworks themselves? Is there such a thing as objectivity in art?

The first critics, of course, are the artists, as they erase a line here and glaze a too-bright section there. It is not clear how artists make these decisions. From the late seventeenth century, most European artists visited the Louvre to see what good painting looked like, and they followed the examples they saw there. But the painters of works hanging in the Louvre had no Louvre to visit. Where did they go for their examples? Or if it is not example but inspiration that counts, it does not seem enough to call great artists 'inspired.' Their greatness lies not in having inspirations, since there are a million bad ones for every good one, but in a discernment that recognizes which of the million and one inspirations to follow.

If any method exists for discernment among artistic inspirations, we should look at what happens when an artist makes a value judgment. This approach relies on an empirical method which expects to find norms in

¹Reported in *The New Yorker*, February 9, 1998, p. 40.

consciousness that shape all our judgments, and in which such norms can be made explicit. So we can begin with the very question that artists who are curious about how they make aesthetic decisions ask themselves: "What do I do when I paint?"

In general terms, the answer is simple. Speaking as a sometime artist, the first thing I do is *see*. Either in my mind's eye or in my surroundings, I see something I judge is worth painting. The second thing I do is *express* my visual experience through thousands of choices about paint. In a third step I decide when the painting is finished. But even then, the critique goes on. I value my wife's fresh observations of a piece I think is finished. And whether or not my painting will end up as landfill depends on what people think of it for years after.

To account for this variety of value judgments, we need to look closer at each step, from artist to critic to public. Along the way, we will look at the evolution of ideals in art and make some observations on what an analysis of artistic judgments might hold for the future of art.²

SEEING

"There are mighty few people who think what they *think* they think." So wrote Robert Henri, author of *The Art Spirit*,³ speaking of the various answers to the question, What do I do when I paint? Beginners in art usually think of themselves as 'painting *that*' — say, a landscape. So they include every visible cow, barn, tree, and cloud. In reality, their first artistic impulse sprung from a rather quick glance, which is something far different from a photographic visualization of everything stimulating their retinas. What attracted them to notice *this* landscape was the massive, quiet dignity of a weathered-red barn surrounded by wind-

²My personal discoveries of what I do when I paint has been guided mainly by a lecture on art by Bernard Lonergan, which he delivered in 1959 at Xavier University, Cincinnati. A transcript of this lecture appears in Lonergan's *Topics in Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 208-232. It has also been guided by René Huyghe's *Art and the Spirit of Man* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1962). Lonergan referred to the original 1960 French version in "The Analogy of Meaning" (1963). See R.C. Croken and F.E. Crowe, eds., *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958-1964*, vol. 6 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 191.

³Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1931) 63.

shook acres of grain. In their original glimpse, they never saw the cows, they didn't notice the clouds, and they barely registered the trees. Later, upon reflection, they *think* they did, and that mistake in thinking accounts for many an ineffective painting.

Accomplished artists do not think of themselves as painting the total landscape seen after inspection. Rather they feel moved by some image, and they lay paint on canvas in a way that they hope will create a similar reaction in a viewer. They will leave out the cows and rearrange the clouds to enhance the impression of the majesty of that barn rising from those fields. They often remind themselves, "I am not painting *that* — a visible figure over there. I am painting *this* — a melange of paint that expresses my disposition when I see *that* and promises to evoke the same disposition in someone else." This image may be something in nature, a sitting model, the memory of several experiences, or even the pure image of colors in a pattern.

The aesthetic patterning of experience

Obviously, the artist sees in a special way. To see with an artist's eye means recognizing which parts of a scene sparked the emotional response and which parts, noticed later, are irrelevant or distracting. This is no easy trick. Henri taught that it is harder to *see* a landscape than to paint it. Seeing artistically is not a matter of learning some technique. It is not an ocular skill. It doesn't require noting every hue, every texture, and every detail in our field of vision. It is not even learning to see in a *new* way. Bernard Lonergan described it as learning to *exclude interference* with an aesthetic seeing that comes naturally.⁴ Notice, for example, how ordinary knowledge can interfere with aesthetic seeing: rarely do we see walls standing at 90-degree angles to floors, but knowing they are perpendicular can interfere with the aesthetic seeing where they slant off at odd angles. Or notice how didactic purpose can interfere: some fine artpieces glorify historical persons, but it is not a didactic message that makes the picture 'art.' Paintings of John F. Kennedy on black velvet seldom rate a gallery show.

⁴*Topics in Education*, 214.

The interference most responsible for the slow growth of art over the ages, in Lonergan's view, comes from flawed ideas about what knowledge is and the role seeing plays in knowing. If, as Plato proposed, sight is deceptive and knowing is mediated by ideals, then art should represent ideal forms. But if, as Pope Gregory the Great proposed, sight is a component of knowledge but knowledge is devalued in favor of piety, then art should teach about divine reality. Or if, as today's deconstructionists propose, all categories are arbitrary and sight is a pleasure, then art should break the rules and indulge the senses.

Lonergan's tack is to suspend judgment on theoretical differences like these until we first understand what our intentionality does when we see. In his analysis, even though aesthetic seeing avoids interference from prior knowledge, from didactic purpose, and from theories about knowing, it is patterned nonetheless.⁵ It has already selected some figures in the visual field and excluded others. I believe this is something every artist should know and every would-be artist should learn: It is part of human wonder to select, exclude, organize, and relate elements within the eye's total visual field, prior to any thought of ours.

We may think that the promising patterns around us are just 'there' to be seen, like a stream of images projected through the lenses of our eyes onto our minds. But this actually compares quite badly with filmmaking. Many an amateur with a camcorder has recorded friends on videotape only to discover later that a tree seems to be growing out of someone's head. This aesthetic patterning of our visual experience spontaneously overlooks a thousand unrelated figures. The mind seeks order, or the possibility of order. It may be only upon reflection that these potentialities are noticed and conceptualized, but they are *felt* immediately. It is the nature of our attentive consciousness to be on the lookout for images with promise, even when we're not on the lookout for anything specific.

We should pause to note an amazing parallel here. The promising patterns in nature are matched within by a selective openness, a preliterate censor that channels the flow of our experience toward them.⁶

⁵See *Topics in Education*, 188; *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) 29; *Insight*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1957) 181 ff.

⁶Here I am developing Lonergan's point: "According to the Aristotelian axiom, sense in act is the sensible in act." *Topics in Education*, 215-216.

Viewed from a cosmic perspective, nature itself encompasses a marvelous linking of seer and seen. The Milky Way, which has always had the potential for producing a lovely watercolor, realizes that potential in a Winslow Homer, as a pattern in his wonder resonated with a pattern he perceived in nature.

How symbols shape seeing

Loneragan referred to this natural sense of wonder that accompanies the purely visual experience as the 'operator on the sensitive level.'⁷ It exists only minimally in animals. Beavers do not *admire* a wooded pond; they dam it and build a hutch. In humans, this operator turns our attention to images with promise. This focused attentiveness is our normal experience of that nearly irrepressible virtue, hope.

Just as philosophers travel down roads restricted to precise meanings, so artists carry out their apostolate of hope by exploring roads closed to words but crowded with images⁸ This is the domain where images are united with affects to form 'symbols' in our psyches. Here we should distinguish this elemental and empirical meaning of symbol from more derivative and normative meanings. Our elemental meaning differs from the sheerly conventional signs such as a green light on a boat that 'symbolizes' starboard. Our meaning also differs from the physical images representing the appearance of something — icons on a computer screen, snapshots in an album, even the paint on canvas that 'symbolizes' something recognizable. It differs, finally, from nineteenth-century Symbolist use of images that represent established concepts such as dove = peace, skull = death, and snake = temptation. In contrast, our

⁷*Topics in Education*, 214. See also, *Insight*, 546. Lonergan also referred to a "symbolic operator that correlates neural potentialities and needs with higher goals through its control over the emergence of images and affects." See "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 134. Curiously, Lonergan refers to this as a 'quasi-operator' in *Mission and the Spirit*. See Frederick Crowe, ed., *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist, 1985) 29.

⁸Betty Edwards, in her *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (New York: J.P. Tarcher/St. Martin's Press, 1979), draws on the bicameral theory of brain activity and her own teaching experience to propose that the right side of the brain specializes in symbolic and imaginal apprehension while the left side specializes in conceptual and logical apprehension.

elemental meaning refers to the pure experience of images that grab our attention prior to conceptualizing and naming. It includes the thousands of everyday glimpses that bear a world of meanings. As a compressed experience of an image and an affect, symbolic apprehension is the initial mode of any adult's experience, and is the dominant mode of preliterate societies, whether in Homer's Greece or in today's kindergarten. This is an important use of the term because no other term seems available to refer to the compact, richly associative experiences of life that occur prior to the more differentiating operations of logical deduction, sufficiency of evidence, measured deliberation, discerning evaluation, and picture painting.

If we imagine the mind as containing an immense store of concepts, each a result of an act of understanding, so we can imagine it containing an even larger store of symbols, each a result of undeliberate fusions of images and feelings. The task of understanding these symbols is impeded by the expectation that the images are essentially images for the eye. After all, in art, symbols draw their images from the data of sense and are eventually expressed as data of sense. However, if we want to understand how symbols are first formed and what actual meanings they may carry, we need to focus on the data of consciousness. So our first step is to look at how certain images link up with feelings in our psyches.⁹

Symbols in our consciousness can range from the pure to the complex. Pure symbols may carry no external reference whatsoever and still shape how we see. A good example is the doodles on the notepads of people stuck in boring meetings. They can express calm stability, disturbing explosions, off-balance tensions, suspense, rising anticipation, or falling hope. They are patently escapist in the same way that all aesthetics is — a free-floating exploration of symbolic forms.

⁹Here I am at variance with the philosopher Susanne Langer and, I believe, in line with Lonergan. Langer takes the artwork to be the symbol, with feelings being the data of consciousness represented by it. Lonergan distinguishes between the artwork (an objectification of a purely experiential pattern of both feelings and images) and the affect-laden images ('symbols') it reflects. For Lonergan, the meaning of a symbol "has its proper context in the process of internal communication in which it occurs, and it is to that context with its associated images and feelings, memories, and tendencies that the interpreter has to appeal if he would explain the symbol." (*Method in Theology*, 67) See Langer's *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953) 40.

While these pure symbols are generic, the specific symbol most significant to us is the human face. Infants, in their earliest differentiations of consciousness, learn to notice faces. I am always amazed at how they spontaneously look at our looking organs — not our ears extending out from the sides, not our noses sticking out in front, not our lips that sing them lullabies and give them kisses — but our eyes. They ‘read’ a frown far earlier than they understand a word. This image of the face and eyes is loaded with feeling and remains at the core of their sensibilities for the rest of their lives.

Supporting these personal symbols, there are the complex symbols of things around us: the private and unique ways we picture a vegetable garden, a hardware store, a cemetery, a grade school desk, a gravel road, a back door, an introspective teen, a bowl of soup, hard manual labor — all the images that represent memorable and poignantly felt experiences.

The reason these symbols have such a pervasive effect on what we notice is that they represent our first ‘take’ on things. They hold in image form what we have yet to dissect, conceptualize, formulate, name, relate to other things, verify, assess, approve, or dismiss.¹⁰ In the meantime, they run along the speedier circuits that we need to keep our bodies, hearts, and minds working together. They define whether our self-image is one of pride or shame. They keep us sane by holding our attention to experiences overladen with the heart’s feeling yet needing the mind’s understanding, for which we may need a therapist’s help. And they focus our attention on all the practical problems that come with moving about physically and maintaining our health.

Symbols govern the flow of consciousness both in our dreams and in everyday awareness — a fertile field of study for psychologists, anthropologists, and literary critics. More to the point about art, when we’re contemplating the mysterious suchness of our lives, symbols invite us to revere the unknown in the familiar, drawing us to savor, in a sensual, particular way, the possibilities latent in the universe: The lovely intricacy of a single maple leaf. The bald fact that I am, and didn’t have to be. The stunning immensity of a cloudless, moonless night sky.

¹⁰For Lonergan’s explanation of how symbols function in consciousness, see *Method in Theology* 64–69.

So seeing is nothing like letting what's out there shine on some inner mental screen. Seeing is shaped by how we feel at the moment and by a legion of images stored from our past with unique conglomerations of harmonious and conflicting feelings. What we see around us is refracted by the very symbols that harmonize our instincts for dignity, sanity, safety, and salvation. When we see with an artist's eye, we give these symbols the run of our psyches, while practical, dramatic, and intellectual seeing await their turn. To sum up, aesthetic seeing is initially spontaneous yet selective, shaped by symbols, elicited by a natural process in which the world invites wonder, and requiring of the wonderer deliberate efforts to exclude other kinds of seeing.

PAINTING

Seeing is one thing, but painting is quite another. The artist's decision to paint is first a decision to share. No matter how secluded the artist, painting is a way to be linked to other people. Whatever the artist's motives, whether money and fame or a desire to help others see with an aesthetic eye, the painting is a medium of communication.

The essence of this communication is less a 'statement' and more an 'invitation.' A painting creates a virtual space — the space perceived in the viewer's symbolic sensorium — and invites viewers to enter, which means leaving behind the virtual space of everyday concerns. Lonergan's description of art highlights this movement: "Art is a withdrawal from practical living to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world."¹¹ For a painting to be effective, viewers must first notice that part of their environment has been fenced off from useful things and reserved for their entry. While the choice of an actual frame and setting for an artwork can influence whether viewers notice it, even more important is the artist's awareness from the beginning that this painting should frame an *experience*. Good paintings invite the viewer to go on an exploration.

¹¹*Topics in Education*, 217. See also page 211 (and *Method in Theology*, 61) where Lonergan reflects on what he names as Langer's definition of art as the "objectification of a purely experiential pattern." Oddly, neither Lonergan nor Langer explicitly defines art in these exact terms.

Paintings that fail to draw the viewer into another psychic space serve merely to signal that there's a wall here — don't bump into it.

Presentation and representation

If we think of art as an invitation, then the usual distinction between 'representational' and 'nonrepresentational' art obscures what goes on between artist and viewer. Viewers of Robert Delaunay's cubist "Window" (1912) who are unaware that this represents a window in Paris will not experience what Delaunay experienced. Piet Mondrian meant his famous "Composition 2" (1922) to *represent* an equilibrium that ought to characterize human consciousness, but few viewers get his point, let alone call it representational art. Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, pioneers in contemporary abstract art, noted how 'representation' can and should include inner experience: "Today the artist is no longer constrained by the limitation that all of man's experience is expressed by his outward appearance."¹²

Whatever the artist intends to represent — a real person, a typical scene, an allegory, an objectification of the visible world or of invisible psychic spaces — the significance of an artwork depends on how well it objectifies a purely experiential pattern.¹³ It does not depend on how faithfully it represents the appearance of known objects or how well it diagrams conceptualized ideas. It seems to me that what is essential in all art, despite how the artists themselves may have understood it, is that the pure presentation be rich and attractive in its own right. It is the richness of presentation that opens the door to the viewer's warm sensorium of symbols. Without it, the viewer will move on to cool analysis. Some paintings clearly point to objects outside of themselves, but no one

¹²Cited by Roger Lipsey, *An Art of our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997) 310.

¹³Loneragan (*Topics in Education*, 211) credits Langer here (*Feeling and Form*). Langer, following Cassirer, distinguishes symbols and signals to make the same point. She defines art as the "creation of forms symbolic of human feeling" (40). The purpose of art, she says, "is to objectify the life of feeling" (374). "That life of feeling is a stream of tensions and resolutions. Probably all emotion, all feeling tone, mood, even personal 'sense of life' or 'sense of identity' is a specialized and intricate, but definite, interplay of tensions — actual, nervous, and muscular tensions taking place in a human organism" (372).

considers them art because, lacking a strong sensate design, they do not connect to symbolized experiences in the viewer. Other paintings have no specific reference, but everyone considers them art because they express a recognizable pattern of feelings and images without any discernible distracting elements, much as good instrumental music does.

Design and technique

Sensate elements are largely a matter of technique, but they need to be incorporated into the larger design of the painting. A good piece of art should grab viewers first from a distance, as they notice the overall design. Then, moving closer, viewers see the types of things portrayed, if any. Moving closer still, viewers may notice any recognizable figures that may be represented in the painting. Henri Matisse knew this: "A work of art must carry in itself its complete significance and impose it upon the beholder even before the beholder can identify the subject matter."¹⁴

We may define a design as an intelligible unity of different elements. But, to begin with the less familiar but more fundamental point, there is a difference between the design of the painting and the design of the virtual space it frames. The design of the painting includes shape, line, value, hue, and texture. These can be measured with rulers, light meters, and scanners. But the design of the virtual space may contain figures, gestures, attitudes, atmosphere, tone, pace, dominance and submission, the familiar and the strange, advancing and receding masses, radiance, shadows, threats, alarms, consolations, concepts, ideals, and invitations. These elements are the real constituents of an artwork. Each one of them lies not on the canvas but in the *interaction* between the painted design and the symbolic world of the viewer. The 'intelligible unity' that the artist envisions should be *an event in the viewer*, which the design of the painting should support. So, while every artist needs to submit technical ability to the services of good design, the design of the painting should serve the artist's intention to share a visual experience connected to the viewer's feelings, ideas, passions, hopes, fears, loves and hates, faith, and despair.

¹⁴ Langer, *Feeling and Form* 83.

THE ARTIST'S CRITIQUE

Artists don't have to have put these ideas into words. They may explore the pure potentials of paints and stave off practical concerns without ever having said to themselves, "There's a difference between artistic attention and practical attention." On the other hand, some of the great artists wrote reams on artistic standards and the elements of design. Just as a mature musician carries questions from music theory about harmony, progression, theme, melody, and resolution, so the mature artist supports the artistic pattern of experience by trips to and from an intellectual pattern, answering in words the question "What do I do when I paint?"

The acceptable result.

The artist solves design problems through a critique that begins long before the brush is loaded and continues after every brushstroke. Before beginning, there are choices to be made about the theme, the design, and the medium. During the painting, it is difficult to predict exactly what the paint will do. It depends on how wet the surface is, how thick the pigment is, how pointed the brush tip is, and so on. So the artist lays down a pigment with more or less expectation of the result, but blotters, erasers, and scrapers are on hand in case the results are not acceptable.

An acceptable result is not always the planned result. Sometimes the paint lies better than expected, and the artist changes direction, following possibilities emerging from the painting itself. (It is no small achievement to watch the painting's development with an artistic eye and to follow its leads. Many an artist begins with a well-conceived vision of what a painting should look like, but then slavishly subjects the work to this vision and suppresses insights into more promising forms accidentally emerging from the brush. Individual paintings may be impressive, but the artist's oeuvre will show little spontaneity. So it is that even the best artists tend to copy themselves.¹⁵)

¹⁵In a legendary story about Picasso, he told some collectors that certain works attributed to him were not 'originals.' It was only after they sold these works at some financial loss that they discovered that he did paint them, but that he felt he was copying himself.

Nor will an artist be satisfied with seizing the attention of viewers. What's in the frame can so violate the viewers' moral sensibilities that they easily quit the virtual space and return to their everyday world. We sometimes call a portrayal of violence 'gratuitous,' meaning it makes no sense. And this is the point. When the results are to the artist's liking, images make sense; even violence can make sense, as in Picasso's "Guernica."

The act of painting is, itself, an exploration. What artists want to discover, the 'sense' that images must make, is a specific virtual space in their psyches which expresses an emotional viewpoint that cannot be put into words. They want to objectify, in paint, that particular compacted vision, overcast with an attitude, which calls for attention. Painting is an artist's exploration of the psyche's elusive penchants and passions by using symbols to find associations where concepts can only find differences. The result will make sense when the painting captures how the artist feels about an intriguing image and does so in a way that viewers will likely recognize. Artists want to help people experience what they, the artists, have experienced when confronted with a particularly poignant manifestation of nature's mystery. They seek to convey their feelings about an original aesthetic glimpse straight to the psyches of their viewers through a visible pattern in a frame. They say to themselves, "Is my arrangement of painted elements likely to convey the same emotional response in you as it does in me?"

Beauty

If the artist's criterion of acceptability is the discovery of an image that speaks both to the artist and to the viewer, then is the criterion of beauty irrelevant? Beauty appears to be a transcendental notion — a psychic driver — because of the sensitive operator propelling consciousness to explore the harmonious.¹⁶ But take, for example, Goya's "Third of May,

¹⁶Notice that Lonergan seems to locate the transcendental notion of beauty at the first level of consciousness: "Indeed, so intimate is the relationship between the successive transcendental notions, that it is only by a specialized differentiation of consciousness that we withdraw from more ordinary ways of living to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophical pursuit of truth, a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty." *Method in Theology*, 13.

1808." It's a terrifying depiction of innocent civilians being shot by Napoleon's soldiers. Even at the level of the purely sensate representation, Goya deliberately disturbs the viewer through the tensions in its painted design. Is this a 'beautiful' painting?

Yes and no. Yes, because when the purely sensate elements are harmoniously integrated into a unity, there will always be 'beauty' at this level. Even elements of high tension will be perceived as beautiful as long as they are intelligibly related to other elements. But no, it is not beautiful, because the painting shows the murder of astonished and helpless people. And not just any people, but those Spanish women and men whom faceless French soldiers killed on the night of May 3, 1808. Yet such a painting is beauty-alerting because aesthetics sometimes uses the beautiful to convey feelings about the awful. It is the very contrast between a beautiful rendering and an awful scene that fixes our attention on the gap between what is and what could be. All tragic operas rely on this contrast. This is the 'broken' virtual space that does violence to our sensibilities in a way that heightens our *sehnsucht* — our insatiable longing that all things be well. It is an inverse stimulant of hope. A criterion, then, for the kind of image that speaks both to the artist and to the viewer might be the following: A beautiful sensate *presentation* combined with at least a beauty-alerting *representation*.

THE ONGOING CRITICAL PROCESS

The artist is painfully aware that the critical process is not finished when the paint dries. Critics, the public, and eventually historians will take their turn. Their critiques will be based on their personal experiences of ordinary life, on their unique clusters of desires to transcend themselves, and on other artworks whose virtual spaces have already left an affective stamp on their psyches. But these factors are only the beginning of the larger process of criticism that artworks undergo.

The progress of art

As artworks enter a culture, the value judgments of critics may seem extrinsic to the artistic process. After all, we usually think of a great

painting as a finished piece hanging in a museum somewhere, with critics standing around passing judgment on what they see, completely barred from making alterations to the painting itself. But compare this to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Where is that located? It's not in the original manuscript: notes there are only coded instructions to musicians. It's not the ideas in Beethoven's head: Beethoven is dead and ideas are inaudible anyway. If the music is anywhere, it's in the hearing of playing, and not only by one performer, but by many. Without numerous renditions of the same score adding to the rich affective associations of the music in the listeners, there is no classic. Likewise, art is the seeing of virtual realities. There is no great painting without people viewing it, expressing their opinion, each interpreting it, each translating affective associations into words, each describing the many overlapping and mutually reinforcing virtual realities available to other viewers. Critics play an integral part in the artistic process not only because they influence what their readers see but because their seeing is already conditioned by previous artworks, personal experience, and theories of criticism. So while the critical process in art begins with the artist, it never really ends. The philosopher Margaret Macdonald nicely sums it up, "In art, the dead are never finally buried."¹⁷

Critics contribute to the artistic process by helping viewers see the richness of a virtual space. If others fail to see it all, or if they see it and think little of it, so be it. They too contribute to the public's appreciation of a painting. The professionals know this. It is because they know how easily public tastes can degenerate that most of their work is 'criticism' of bad art. Unfortunately, many critics specialize in this guardian role and neglect their essential vocation of assisting the artist in helping people to see the world with fresh eyes.

As the men and women of each generation discover what speaks to their hearts, the meanings attached to great works will accumulate progressively, although more like historiography than science. Scientists look at phenomena that recur, seeking general rules that explain what goes on and will continue to go on under the same circumstances, while historians look at unique phenomena to understand what went on then and what

¹⁷"Some Distinctive Features of Arguments Used in Criticism," in Morris Weitz, ed., *Problems in Aesthetics* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1970) 850-863, at 860.

can never occur in the same manner again. In this perspective, historians look to art for clues on what a culture was concerned about but was at a loss for words commensurate to experience.

Also, science progresses by replacing earlier hypotheses while art progresses by enlarging and transforming earlier symbols. The meaning of good art quite literally grows. And herein lies the problem of how to track what progress may mean in art. At best, the verbalizations of critics only approximate certain aspects of an artist's vision; at worst they misrepresent the artist's meaning altogether. At the same time, the psychic symbols of later generations will resonate quite differently than those of the artist's contemporaries. In any case, because art reaches deep into the symbolic layers of consciousness, bypassing ordinary conceptualizations, it shapes the very questions that later generations can ask about the worth of an artwork. We can measure progress in art only if we have grounds for objectivity in this entire, complex, and open-ended chain of assessments.

The idea of ideals

Our realization of what's involved in this critical process has been long delayed, a delay resulting, to a great extent, to confusion over what it means to have an 'ideal.' The emergence of the beautiful body as art's ideal came with fifth-century BC Greek sculptures of men and women alive with intention. The Greeks were first because no one discovered the body before they did, according to the philosophical historian Bruno Snell. He proposed that when the Greeks discovered the mind as a unifying center of activity governing speech, they simultaneously discovered the body as a unifying center governing our limbs. Prior to Heraclitus,¹⁸ both art and words concerning the body depicted hands, feet, legs, heads, and arms as separate entities. Paintings show them connected, but in a way where each organ was shown in profile according to a set of stock

¹⁸Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953) 17. Also: "With the discovery of this hidden unity, of course, it is at once appreciated as an immediate and self-explanatory truth. This objective truth ... does not exist for man until it is seen and known and designated by a word; ... Of course the Homeric man had a body exactly like the later Greeks, but he did not know it *qua* body, but merely as the sum total of his limbs."

images.¹⁹ The Greek cultural standards of beauty resulted from the combination of their discovery of the human body as a unity and Plato's views on both epistemology and politics. From then on, sculpture, and by association, painting, should show 'ideal' bodies in all their beauty as standards for the Republic.

This standard, based on this particular notion of an ideal, reigned over Hellenized and Romanized cultures for the next thousand years, usually in the hardened fashion that copies products rather than follows a vision. Artists, or better, 'artisans,' shared the low status of manual laborers²⁰ as they reproduced Greek and Roman prototypes, often in the service of political or religious ends. With Christianity, art at first gradually distanced itself from the Jewish prohibition of images of the divine, no doubt under the revolutionary doctrine of the Incarnation. By the late sixth century, without challenge to Greco-Roman standards of beauty, Pope Gregory the Great proposed a higher purpose for art, namely, that it should teach people about divine realities. This program, in conjunction with the neoplatonic vision of ideal forms above material appearances, governed Christian art up to the Reformation. The 'symbols' of the divine were the material artworks, the visible sculptures and stained glass that represented the invisible world of grace and sin.

Gradually and haltingly, there appeared works that strayed from both the Greek ideals of citizens in the *Republic* and the Christian ideals of divine and saintly figures in the *City of God*. St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1286) turned the attention of devout Christians to the beauties of the natural world. Giotto di Bondone (d. 1337) painted realistic sacred scenes so that the faithful could contemplate the actual events. The sculptures in the cathedral at Prague (1380s) showed people as observed, with all their non-ideal characteristics. The paintings of Donatello (d. 1446) depicted landscapes and still lifes that revealed beauty in non-personal nature. By the middle of the fifteenth century, these artistic explorations found an

¹⁹Egyptian wall paintings, for a good example, never show feet from the front, always from the side. While it is true that sculpture forces an artist to see a limb from all sides, it is quite another achievement to portray how these limbs are governed by a body headed somewhere.

²⁰See Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," in Morris Weitz, ed., *Problems in Aesthetics* (note 19) 110-118.

audience that accepted actual bodies and in actual settings, without any expectation that they 'stand for' a higher, more spiritual or more ideal order.

This shift in the meaning of 'ideal' from civic beauty and pious learning to observable matter would never have affected artists were it not for the work of philosophers and theologians. Scholarly academies, particularly the University of Paris, had recovered the Aristotelian doctrines that reality is informed matter and that knowledge begins with experience.²¹ Then Aquinas' doctrine that the universe is an "intelligible unity mirroring forth the glory of God"²² enthroned a theological ideal with an inescapable impact on art: Anything observable held the potential to depict the transcendent. Material reality, hitherto a distraction from the divine, now reveals it. So earthly images of the divine need not be restricted to human bodies unified by a soul (which is why earlier works look like paintings of statues against a nondescript background). The divine can also be seen in a group of real people, unified with all of nature as they lounge in a real garden. Thus was developed an ideal regarding *how* a painting works, not merely what it should depict. Specifically, a painting should present a virtual space that unifies all the material elements it depicts, an ideal eventually achieved by Jan van Eyck in his "Betrothal of the Arnolfini" (1434).²³ For artists, this switch from Platonic idealism to Aristotelian realism meant switching how to begin a painting.

²¹Well-preserved evidence of how purposefully this shift was implemented can be found in the foundational texts of the Society of Jesus, founded in 1556 by Ignatius Loyola, who studied at the University of Paris. To this day, Jesuit novices are taught to "see God in all things." They must undergo 'experiments' — learning the meaning of charity and poverty through doing. They are taught a method of prayer called 'application of the senses' whose aim is to gain a real assent to the historical events of Christ's life. The uniquely Ignatian definition of 'contemplation' means to visualize a historical event for the sake of seeing God at work on earth — the same exercise that Giotto aimed to facilitate.

²²This is Lonergan's interpretation of the Thomistic synthesis. See "The Natural Desire to See God" (1949) in F.E. Crowe, *Collection* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) 88 and 84.

²³The ideal of a unified virtual space could not have been achieved without Giotto's (d. 1337) discovery of how volumes can be represented, Brunelleschi's (d.1446) discovery of perspective, and van Eyck's (d.1444) own development of painting with oil to depict the gradual shading of something round — all of which make the illusion of figures at different depths possible.

Before, you painted what you *think* persons would ideally look like. Now you paint what you actually *see*, more or less, but the persons must blend with their environments as an intelligible whole.

Along with the ideal of a unified virtual space, there emerged the ideal of the spirit of the individual. The seeds of this individualism had been sown by the Aristotelian turn to personal experience and by the highly personal mystical experiences of Teresa of Avila (d. 1582) and John of the Cross (d. 1591) — the same individualism that supported not only the Protestant rejection of Roman dominance in religion but also the artists' rejection of ancient, formulaic standards. Protestants and artists alike were now paying more attention to the inner mystery of the person. At first, a few brilliant artists discovered the depths of that mystery in the persons they painted. Leonardo da Vinci (d. 1519) had pioneered the use of dark and shadow to depict a world of mystery, anticipation, and hope. Rembrandt (d. 1669), Vermeer (d. 1675) and Ruisdael (d. 1682) painted not just persons but *personalities*, rich in dignity and full of quiet depth.

Eventually, according to art historian René Huyghe, it was Eugène Delacroix (d. 1863) and Charles Baudelaire (d. 1867) who discovered the depth of the mystery of person in the artists themselves. They made the "incalculable discovery of themselves and were the first to formulate consciously what they had done ... that it is not what a sensation refers to in the outside world that matters but what it evokes in the self."²⁴ In other words, it makes no difference *what* the painting depicts. As Delacroix put it, "Art is a bridge between souls."²⁵ With this insight, the entire structure of art theory based on conceptual understanding, ideal forms, and rules for composition became exposed to winds of doubt that blow still today. It appeared that the real bedrock had always been at the experiential level in the artist, where we find the data of pure sensation, free imagination and spontaneous emotion. Conceptual and moral norms for art would have to find their justification here, where artists explore the depths of their own preconceptual experience.

While this shift to the individual was taking place, there was also a shift in the art market. By the eighteenth century, as the spirit leading to

²⁴Art and the Spirit of Man 438.

²⁵Art and the Spirit of Man 424.

the French Revolution (1789) threw off one inherited standard after another, artists were no longer sought after by a public with traditional, predictable tastes. Public tastes diversified, with the result that artists vied for income-producing work by each developing a unique style. Their subject matters were no longer limited to religious, mythical, and allegorical themes. They now included recent historical events and scenes from nature. Individual style itself became the norm.²⁶

Finally, there was a third shift going on, in epistemology. The scientific revolution dismantled the ideal that knowledge should be the attainment of universally valid truths and erected in its place the ideal of progressive understanding of particular realities. Many scholars and artists who formerly looked to inherited teachings and traditions for knowledge now turned their attention to personal, verifiable experience. As a result, just as 'culture' no longer carried a single, normative meaning based on some classical model, so 'art' no longer could sustain a single, normative definition based on Greco-Roman works. Where earlier art was conceived sometimes as the imitation of nature and sometimes as the idealization of nature, now art was conceived as the 'illusion of experience.' Lacking any technical definition of experience, however, artists developed this standard in widely different directions. Goya, Blake, and Ensor tapped their private dreams for material, with little regard for common norms. Manet, Monet, and Renoir stuck to sensible impressions, where the norm was the purely visual experience, the fresh look that classical norms had stifled for centuries. Cézanne and Van Gogh, influenced by Romantic ideas of the expanded self, deliberately imagined themselves as *being* the landscapes or still lifes before them in an effort to express an introjected experience on canvas. Kandinsky and Mondrian, reacting to the abuses of the Industrial Revolution, revived the neoplatonic vision of ideal forms suffusing both the material universe and our experience of it.²⁷

²⁶For this history, see E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (New York: Phaidon, 12th edition, 1972) 375-394.

²⁷Roger Lipsey, in his *An Art of our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art*, finds high spiritual intentions among twentieth-century 'abstract' artists. While their intentions may be lofty, their philosophical idealism has led many of them to reject recognizable material realities as capable of conveying transcendent meaning.

Intellectuals today question the very idea of an ideal. Critiques of style based on normative definitions of art have diminishing effect because each artist lays claim to a 'style' based on personal experience or on one of many proliferating theories of art. As a result, where critics traditionally had been the guardians of consistent and common ideals in art, they currently are just promoters of individual artists or movements. Disagreements among these critic-promoters cannot be resolved until they agree on what artistic norms really are. But if they are not going to find norms in classical examples, and if a norm of purely personal experience exposes art criticism to an anarchy of styles, where should they look? The twentieth century may well be characterized as the unsuccessful search for the nature and function of artistic norms.

OBJECTIVITY

Lonergan finds those norms through an analysis of how we make judgments. Just as factual judgments of reasonable persons will be provisional as long as there remain the possibility of further relevant questions, so too the value judgments of a responsible person will be provisional. Although this seems to preclude the possibility of final, unrevisable judgments in most areas of our lives, the values of a culture can develop progressively anyway if we pay attention to the integrity of the process. In the symbol-laden world of art, where meanings and values are continuously developing, being objective cannot mean reaching unrevisable certitudes; but it can mean reaching probable judgments based on available evidence. In this perspective, objectivity would not be exercised by comparing an artwork to some conceptualized or painted standard. Nor would it lie in some imagined correspondence between our judgment and the reality in question. It lies rather in how faithfully we notice a correspondence between a conditional judgment and the evidence that would meet our judgment's conditions. Being objective, in other words, is a way of being a subject, not a way of being right. It requires that we abandon certitude as an ideal and remain open to any new evidence that might change our mind.

In painting, the new evidence is not simply a new painting. It includes what happens in us as we enter the virtual space evoked by the

painting. Since this space is partly unique for every viewer, and since the different meanings of this space for many viewers usually reinforce rather than cancel each other, the objectivity of artists and critics lies in how attuned they are to inner experience, both their own and others'. Their objectivity depends partly on how well they know the old clichés, the allusions to other artworks, the classical motifs, and the many ways painted forms can create virtual worlds. It also depends on whether or not they suppress new questions about their visual experiences. So the norm for an individual's artistic judgment is quite simple: "Does this painting leave me bothered by unanswered questions about the feelings this picture evokes?" Both those who ignore questions and those who wait for absolute certainty will be 'unobjective' — not because their opinions fail to match some conceptualized standard but because their opinions do not meet all their questions about how they feel and what they imagine. How successfully artists and critics deal with these questions about feelings and imagination will depend on what questions they let themselves recognize.

CRITICAL-PRACTICAL METHOD

Loneragan's understanding of objectivity as an ongoing process of dealing with questions could trigger a revolution in aesthetics. His critical-practical method²⁸ helps explain not only 'what I do when I paint,' but also 'what I do when I paint badly.' By spelling out how the norms of consciousness reject and approve, it clarifies how to make the sound artistic judgments that Classicism seeks in rules, that Idealism seeks in various conceptualized standards such as Theosophy, and that Expressionism seeks in an uncritical, individual frankness. By making the norms of consciousness explicit, the method envisions the critical enterprise as a collaboration to develop evaluative categories that really explain and in terms that everyone understands. Two critical-practical categories seem particularly fruitful: 'horizon' and 'the unwanted image.'

²⁸Loneragan also calls this method of scrutinizing consciousness for limited horizons, *praxis*. It "starts from the assumption that authenticity cannot be taken for granted." See his "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods" in *A Third Collection*, p. 164 *et passim*.

Horizon

By 'horizon,' Lonergan means everything a person knows or can question. Realities outside a person's horizon are not simply 'unknown.' The person cannot even raise a question about them. The most 'objective' assessments, then, will come from the artists and critics who have the least limited horizons. Artists aware of a broader range of questions will explore a broader range of images until they find an appropriately representative virtual space. Likewise, critics aware of the history of aesthetic questions will more frequently grasp the sense of great artists and what's missing in the mediocre.

To objectify the norms of good art, then, is not just professing your standards; it also includes revealing your limits. It requires the sometimes embarrassing work of an ongoing mutual exposure of horizons carried out in time like a conversation. Artists who live in a narrow horizon will misunderstand the work of fellow artists, while artists who live in broad horizons will allow unusual works to speak to their souls. Similarly, critics living in a narrow horizon will snub unusual works just for being unusual, while critics living in broad horizons will let unusual works affect them and will suggest to their readers how to let the works affect them as well. This dialectic already goes on, of course, but usually without the more fully explanatory terms that would be developed were artists and critics to recognize the process as a matter of limited and unlimited horizons.

As a beginning toward developing these terms, we can look at several ways that horizons may be limited.²⁹ We find the usual limitation in people who have only partially developed their artistic sensibilities. Vincent Price³⁰ made the point that while everyone claims, "I know what I like," the truth is, "I like what I know." So, for example, if Andy Warhol's work makes no sense to me, it may be because I have not yet developed an understanding of the sheer superficiality of the virtual space he aims to create. But I can develop such an understanding and maybe come to like what I know.

²⁹I rely here on Lonergan's distinction between three kinds of differences — genetic, complementary, and dialectical. See *Method in Theology*, 236.

³⁰Vincent Price, *I Like What I Know* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

Another limitation results from the different personal experiences and interests different people bring. I may already understand that Warhol is exploring the two-dimensional personages on posters, but if I happen to love folk dancing, I may prefer Breugel's more lusty crowds in a marketplace. I do not deny all sense in Warhol's work, but Breugel has the key to my soul because of similarities in how we experience people in public places.

Intellectual horizon

The most limited horizon would be an *a priori* exclusion of certain realities.³¹ Completely ignorant of a particular world of questions, I would be blind to what the artist sees very well. That is, I can be ignorant of entire realms of meaning, particularly the realms of aesthetic theories, of the history of art, and of epistemology (understood as the study of objectivity).

Artists who are completely unaware of theoretical, historical, and epistemological questions never wonder what art should do or has done. Some presume all art is instrumental. The question of objectivity has not occurred to them because they are intent on teaching some moral lesson or boosting their reputation. They have yet to catch up with the ancient Greek discovery of the beauty of a body for its own sake. Others may appreciate beauty where they see it, but because they have not advanced to the eighteenth-century discovery of Style, they are blind to beauty that fails to conform to their visualized ideals about what beauty ought to be. They realize that some viewers dislike their 'beautiful' paintings, but they resign themselves to being unable to teach cretins how to see.

Artists who have kept up to date with intellectual advances, however, particularly advances in cognitional theory and epistemology, are

³¹I realize that Lonergan discusses dialectically different horizons in terms of conversion, but I feel that the term too easily connotes a sudden, transforming event, particularly to readers less familiar with Lonergan. I prefer to pursue the question of dialectical differences as a matter of available questions. That being said, to my mind, a critical-practical method is essential for any artist or critic, which requires an intellectual conversion. Also, because the meaning of art is mainly potential, I currently find it difficult to distinguish between moral, religious, and affective conversions and so have thought it better to cast the issue in terms of a more undifferentiated 'transcendent' meaning.

more likely aware that the data of consciousness are centrally important to any study of art. They more likely understand that art occurs in a world that we experience through a prepatterned attention and in which we are motivated by the perception of forms that carry an affective significance. They more likely think of their paintings as expressions of their visual experiences and as invitations to the viewer, where both the artist's expression and the viewer's impression are patterned by symbols in their respective psyches. They typically will try to objectify a visual experience laced with feeling through a strong design at the purely sensate level, knowing that any painting that fails to meet this sensate requirement will fail to cross Delacroix's Bridge from their souls to the souls of their viewers. These artists know what they do when they paint.

The advantages are similar for broad-horizoned critics. But in addition they will be able to identify any idealist or materialist views entertained by artists (and other critics). This puts them in the advantageous position of understanding artists better than artists understand themselves about what they're doing and what their contribution to history may be.

Transcendental horizon

We also can be blind to the realm of 'transcendence.' I'm not speaking of religious art. Much of 'religious art' is so poorly rendered that no sensitive viewer resonates with it. In any case, the transcendent significance of a good piece of art lies not what it represents; even atheists admire Raphael's madonnas. It lies rather in the communication of a virtual space in a way that draws the viewer to a beyond, to an anticipated yet unrealized meaning, to the shadow of 'almost' that falls on even our highest achievements. There is nothing strange about this transcendence. Wherever we expect to extend human achievements, we transcend our present state of affairs while, in that same reach, we transcend the selves that we are by amplifying our personal meaning and worth. Artists who ignore questions about these ultimate extensions of life live within self-imposed confinements to their hopes and paint virtual spaces that reveal their self-confinement to others. On the other hand, to live with unanswered questions about our origins, our present meanings and our final

destinies opens artists' eyes to the potentials around and within them. These potentials suggest that the universe may be ultimately a matter of self-transcending love and of hope for human history. These are the potentials that words dissect but paint arouses — potentials of a universe understood as the totality of all things real, ranging from the concrete and familiar to the immaterial and strange.

Typically we discover the realm of transcendence in any of three ways: through an upbringing by parents who believe in God, through an idealist belief in Absolute Spirit, or through an intellectual assent to being as horizon. Belief in God already carries the implicit belief that the real includes the transcendent. Belief in Absolute Spirit breaks from the materialism that infects common sense, although it tends to devalue the material for the sake of an imagined ideal. Assent to being as horizon amounts to a realization that reality is what it is, that reality may prove to be quite other than what I think it must be, and therefore that the best attitude in an open universe is an open mind.

We have evidence of transcendent meaning in easy reach. Recall that the operator at the sensitive level is an awareness of the possibility of meaning, and even when that and other transcendental operators in us do their best, we are aware of the possibility of more meaning yet. Art, Lonergan says, "presents the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the 'plus' that is in things." The "splendor of the world," he adds, "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."³² It is what we feel is missing when scientists say "the moon is just earth and clouds are just water." He also observed that while the West in the twentieth century has grown familiar with the horizon of intellectual theory, both the East and the Christian West in prior centuries have been familiar with the horizon of transcendence.³³ Still, an artist does not have to believe in God to believe in the *question* about such ultimates. Lonergan regards art as an element of meaning, but only on the potential level. It is open to a variety of interpretations, capable of shaping new realities, suggestive of good things and worthy enterprises, and available

³²Topics in Education 222.

³³See Method in Theology 266

as an instrument for other ends.³⁴ But these are expansions of the potentials first felt directly as symbols in consciousness. As potential meaning, then, art's essential function is to pose questions, not fix answers.

Painting is not a satisfying experience. Artists are typically a frustrated lot. The temptation is to push for perfection past the point of a transcendent suggestiveness — the point where you don't know what to do next because every stroke you consider imposes a literalness, a knowing certainty about an experience that eludes understanding. So there is always a gap between the virtual space in the painting and the aesthetic pattern of experience on which the painting is based. Some artists will read this as the absence of desirable qualities and press on to gild the lily, usually relying on unnoticed criteria. Others will see a virtual space whose incompleteness points to the 'plus' in things and stirs up a thirst for this 'plus' in their viewers. Artists who are familiar with the realm of transcendence recognize this gap in themselves and aim to alert their viewers to it.

The unwanted image

A critical-practical method among artists and critics would also recognize the phenomenon of the unwanted image. When artists lay down their brushes, step back, and ask themselves "Is this any *good*?" they are not asking the typical moral question. Plenty of artworks carry a moral message, but ordinary ethics can be called upon to judge these messages.

What concerns the artist — as artist — is not primarily the painting's message or its use, but whether it actually draws viewers to explore their purely experiential patterns. Since these are the patterns borne by symbols in consciousness, the worth of a piece of art will depend on the integrity of the symbol: how clear is it that *these* feelings go with *those* images? Suzanne Langer puts it like this: If "art is the envisagement of feeling," then this envisagement "may be interfered with by emotions which are

³⁴Here I am spelling out Lonergan's view that potential meaning is open to formal meaning, to actual meaning, to effective meaning and to instrumental meaning, and that these are expansions of the potentials directly felt as symbols in consciousness. See *Method in Theology*, index, "Elements of meaning."

not formed and recognized, but affect the imagination of other subjective experience." She agrees with R. G. Collingwood: "A bad work of art is an activity in which the agent tries to express a given emotion, but fails."³⁵ Both focus on the 'candor' of the symbol, which I take to mean how effectively the image on the canvas conveys a specific, distinguishable cluster of emotions in the viewer.

But neither philosopher explores, as Lonergan has done, the several ways that an artwork can be wrecked because the artist refused to explore a prior image in consciousness. Artists often spend months waiting for the muse to conjure up an arresting image, so it may come as a surprise to learn that there are appropriate images available that they scorn for no good reason. Lonergan has analyzed this phenomenon under the rubric of 'the unwanted insight'³⁶ and has explained the workings of four different biases — neurosis, egotism, group-centered bias, and a bias against the thorough explanation. But since insights pivot on images, for our purposes we can extend his analysis to reveal four ways in which we really do not want an image.

1. Neurosis works by repressing an original image and replacing it with a counterfeit.³⁷ A virtual space may convey an artist's frank feelings effectively, but it may still be 'dishonest' in the sense that the image in the artist's original glimpse remains a secret. Masochistic and sentimental works often present just such masquerading images. Since the discovery of Style and, following on its heels, the discovery of the unconscious, many artists mined their personal dreams and fantasies without any concern that a neurosis may be fooling them. The Expressionist James Ensor (d. 1949) and the Surrealist Salvadore Dali (d. 1989) laid bare their souls as if self-transcendence should be equated with frank revelation of every image, no matter how weird.

³⁵Quotations from Langer's *Feeling and Form* in this paragraph are taken from pp. 380-381.

³⁶See *Insight* 193.

³⁷Note that what is inhibited in a neurosis is the image, not the affect. Therapists who have this backward encourage their patients to 'be uninhibited' with their feelings, without ever identifying the inhibited image which, linked to an inappropriate affect, can easily switch to a different and more socially acceptable affect and just give the old neurosis a face-lift.

2. The egotist-artist knowingly favors images that might enhance a reputation or income and shrewdly turns a blind eye to less advantageous inspirations. True, most artists appreciate the gentle erosion of the ego that comes with maintaining friendships, but they also feel the baser human desires to have clout in the lives of others and to maximize their standard of living — desires symbolized by blatant images that can overpower the subtler images of using the mind and heart in self-transcending ways.
3. One's community allegiances will not only suppress sympathetic images of some other community whose well-being is alien to one's own; it can surreptitiously promote those handed-down images that reinforce a community's irrational attitudes. Discernment of images is more difficult here than in egotism because of an interesting reversal of the role of affection: Where affections and camaraderie tend to starve egotism, they feed group loyalty. An individual's grudges need 'nursing,' we say, to withstand the weaning effect of fellowship, but the grudges of a fellowship are badges of honor.
4. The bias against complete explorations always threatens to cut short the tedious work of artistic exploring in favor of some easier diversion. Artists trying to explore uncharted spiritual waters constantly hear the Sirens' call to pull ashore and relax. Why ply the turbulent river of self-transcendence when self-contentment is so pleasant?

CRITICAL-PRACTICAL METHOD TODAY

Our concern about narrow horizons and unwanted images applies to the string of critics as well as to the artist. Voyeur critics will praise the fantasies of exhibitionist artists, both of them oblivious of the heart's transcendent impulses. Even highly ethical critics may have the benefit of the viewer in mind, but to the degree that they are unfamiliar with the compromises that love demands and the joys that love delivers, they have no store of the psychic symbols of the fruits of love — being patient and

kind, and so on.³⁸ They will regard the artist's emotions as idiosyncrasies rather than noble achievements available to all. The virtual space they see is nothing like what the critic in love sees.

On the other hand, critics who know what it means to discern among inspirations³⁹ will carefully savor how they experience the works they review. In a painting designed merely to sell, they will see not a beauty-alerting virtual space but just evidence of a psyche that lacks this discernment. In a painting that portrays a fresh attitude toward a familiar subject, they will experience the birth of a new symbol that will shape how they see the world. In both cases, they will help their readers see the difference.

Today's critics note how twentieth-century artists have explored the unconscious, the grotesque, the abstract structures of reality, the superficiality of posters, and the hardware of a technological age. Many of these artists were educated through textbooks that trace the development of art as a succession of new art forms, and, as a result, they tend to imagine themselves as latter-day inventors hoping to discover some newer form yet. But art is not about discovering new and exciting ways to paint. Art expresses the attitudes of men and women who experience inner invitations to deal with their present worlds in a real and caring manner. Artists face the moral work of discriminating among inspirations in order to become more authentic persons — just like everyone else.

So what is needed for the twenty-first century is a theory of aesthetics that envisions the artist's work as the honest exploration of the soul for the sake of sharing. Artists should abandon hope of discovering new forms. Let new forms appear as happy by-products of expressing symbols that reveal dimensions of present experience that cannot be put into words. The main critical task will be to develop an ordinary way of talking about each other's horizons that doesn't belittle but rather assists. If we are going to promote an environment in which artists welcome negative judgments and critics 'criticize' in constructive terms, we need to

³⁸1 Corinthians 13. Van Gogh's 'plus,' for example, was entirely misunderstood by several of his major critics, according to Clifford Edwards. See his *Van Gogh and God* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1989).

³⁹1 have retrieved guidelines for this practice from the works of Ignatius Loyola. See my *Spiritual Exercises for Today* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991) 161-175.

get beyond the twentieth-century competitive assumptions about unique styles and talk as though art were an exploration we carry out together.

Because we viewers are part of this joint exploration of soul, we should allow the same room for new symbols in our consciousness as the artist and critic do. After all, everyone carries a baggage of repression, suppression, and lopsided development. But if the willingness to explore is there, good art can be a lamp unto our eyes.

First-hand experience of this illumination is available at our local art museum. If we stop at a painting that grabs our attention, we might notice the difference between the design of the painting and the design of the virtual space it creates. We might notice how the virtual space completely dominates our sense of what we're looking at, so that it's impossible to think of the painting as just paint. We might notice how unified everything is in that virtual image. No details distract us from the whole, and our many feelings about the image are all of a piece. As we stand there in that virtual space, we might contemplate this: An artist is talking to us, talking about extending our spirits in a realm where speech fails. At the same time, our admiration doesn't want to stop. The symbolic operator has planted in our hearts a question about the 'plus' of reality. Our feelings of hope and transcendence are the reason for this art. We are being addressed, and not only by the artist. We are experiencing, first-hand, without insight or judgment, nature's potential in us for its furthest reach. Then, if we go outside and look around, we may realize, as if for the first time, that the world itself is an invitation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰I have conceived of this article has as a contribution to the functional specialty, Foundations, inasmuch as I propose an intentionality analysis of the aesthetic pattern of experience and an account of the objectivity of artistic value judgments. My sketch of how the idea of ideals in art has evolved represents a brief venture into the specialty, History. My hope is that anyone offering guidelines on art and art criticism (Principles/Doctrines) and suggesting proposals for ongoing development of good art (Policies/Systematics) would rely on these foundational elements. Likewise, these reflections may promote an understanding of particular artworks (Interpretation), a reasonable location of their place within a school or movement (History), and a responsible assessment of their value (Dialectics).

A BIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CONVERSION AND THE FUNCTIONAL SPECIALTIES IN LONERGAN¹

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STUDENTS OF LONERGAN are familiar with the fact that some time during February of 1965 he had the insight into the eight functional specialties of theology.² This in turn became the center point, the defining feature, of his book *Method in Theology*. What may not be so well known is that the original discovery in 1965 was not actually the same as what we read in the book. Initially, conversion was one of the eight functional specialties. Between his initial insight and the publication of an article in *Gregorianum* in November 1969 it was replaced by dialectic. Conversion as such was removed from the functional specialties or theology as he now understood it. That replacement was part of an unfolding process of clarifying what in fact the functional specialties actually were. It, in turn, left him with the tasks of determining the relation between theology as so defined and conversion, and of redefining

¹I am greatly indebted to Frederick Crowe and Roland LeBlanc for providing me with materials necessary for this study. Frederick Crowe provided me with access to archival material in the Toronto Archives and to his correspondence with Lonergan. There are used with permission of the Trustees of the Lonergan Estate. Roland LeBlanc provided me with access to his correspondence with Lonergan. I am also drawing on tape recorded interviews with the late Sr Florian (Winnifred Tattersell), with Roland LeBlanc, Matthew Lamb, Howard Logan, Colin Maloney, and Bernard Tyrrell.

²See *Caring About Meaning, Patterns in the life of Bernard Lonergan*, eds. P. Lambert, C. Tansey, and C. Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers 82, 1982) 59, 74-75. Here Lonergan recalls how he started off with four functional specialties, eventually arriving for the first time at eight in February of 1965.

dialectic. Those challenges would give rise to a further major development in his thought, in its own way almost as significant as the February discovery, the task of differentiating and relating theology and religion. Initially he thought about theology as the science of God and of all things as related to God. His intermediate position early in 1965 was that theology was concerned with knowledge of God mediated through Christ. Under the challenge of removing conversion from theology and of relating it to theology, he came to define religion as the object of theology. At this point theology was reflection on religion. Later a theology became reflection on a religion in its cultural matrix. The implication seems to be that religion mediates a knowledge of God.

In the present biographical study I would like simply to show some of the details of these movements in Lonergan's life from the February discovery to the publication of the article in *Gregorianum*. The passage was highly dramatic in that it had to move from the high point of the discovery through the low point of a death-threatening encounter with lung cancer in August of the same year before it could emerge. Before he could work on the article he had to make a long and difficult recovery. He had to regain his health and he had slowly to come alive again as an author. This, in itself, was a significant episode in his faith journey within his religious history. The February discovery, the August passion-like experience, the recovery of his health and powers of writing, the subsequent tasks of relating theology to conversion and religion and of redefining dialectic, define the stage from which, finally, he began to compose *Method in Theology*. Actually writing up the final text of the article on the functional specialties after recovering from the operation settled him into the task of writing the book, enabled him to resume as an author. The study of significant developments in his understanding of the relation between theology and religion is linked with equally significant events in his personal religious history. In this movement he shows a simple acceptance of the providence of God at work in these events in his life.

I

In the late 1950s after his move to Rome in 1953 Lonergan began to focus on the question of method in theology. In the Gregorian University in 1961 he gave his first formal course on the topic. For the next four years there was an interplay between his work on method and his courses on the Trinity and Incarnation. In those courses he was struggling with the problem of relating dogmatic and systematic theology with the new notion of history. The older dogmatics and systematics used history as a source for proofs. But modern history is more critical and autonomous. The question arises, how could doctrinal and systematic theology be reconciled with modern critical history? That was a central element for him in the problem of method in theology. In 1964 he gave a significant course on "Method in Theology" in Georgetown University. In it he was struggling to relate positive theology, systematic theology, dogmatic theology, and foundations to human cognition. From the later perspective his probings were quite out of focus.

Lonergan returned to Rome at the end of September 1964. His only course at the Gregorian was on the Incarnation, from September until February. By November of 1964 it is clear that he was ready to go to work on the book *Method in Theology*, but was experiencing a certain frustration in establishing the circumstances necessary for its composition. On November 15 he wrote to Frederick Crowe remarking that he had refused invitations to give lectures as a visiting professor because he wanted time to write. He was reading Balthasar, *Phenomenologie de la Verité*, and Betti, *Teoria generale della interpretazione*. On December 29 he remarked that he had put off till tomorrow an attempt to get started on *Method in Theology*. In January he started to try and get work on *Method* off the ground. He was still on the runway, the motors had hummed a bit, but there was no movement. The question of translating his textbook on the Trinity into English was raised. His response was that he could not be bothered with it while he was trying to get *Method in Theology* going.³ Francis Sullivan, then Dean, remembers him complaining that the problem of preparing his

³For details see Letters 71, November 15; Letter 73, December 29; Letter 74 January 5; and Letter 75, January 23 from Crowe's collection.

class notes on the Incarnation and Trinity over the years made it difficult for him to focus satisfactorily on the problem of method in theology. This, despite the fact that he acknowledged that it was through his work on the Trinity that the key insight would emerge.

On January 22, 1965 he featured in an article in *Time*, a surprising achievement for a shy and retiring professor of dogmatic theology in Rome. The reaction in the Gregorian was very cordial. There was loud and prolonged clapping from his class when he gave his next lecture. Despite what he called the 'aura of myth' and the indelicate insinuation that his fellow professors were behind the times, the article pleased him.⁴

On February 1, 1965 he gave his last class of the academic year. On February 20 he wrote to Crowe that he had until the following October to get *Method in Theology* going. He considered it was now or never. He was arranging to travel to Canada at Easter, and to return to Rome for the slog of the June oral examinations. Around this time Matthew Lamb remembers joking with him about the *Time* article.

In any event I remember there was an article that came out in *Time* magazine on Lonergan as a sort of underground Wittgenstein of the Catholic Church. Bernie thought I had put them up to it and I assured him that I hadn't. We were laughing at that. Then he said, "Well, I've had some marvelous discoveries" and I said, "Good. I'll be up to see you." Then I ran into Colin Maloney in the street several days later. He said, "Oh Bernie was talking my ear off on this discovery that he had had ... And I said Bernie, I don't understand it, but you write it down and I'll read it."⁵

Without apparently fully appreciating it, Lonergan had made the discovery of his lifetime, the discovery that would give him the ground plan for *Method in Theology*.

It is clear he recognized that he had made some kind of breakthrough. He shared it with some of his students, Lamb, Maloney, and Lawrence. For Maloney, Lonergan was possessed by an enormous intellectual passion. Although his memory of the discussion about the discovery is vague he felt Lonergan had a broader awareness of his own

⁴Letter 75 of the Crowe collection.

⁵From a recorded interview.

passion. "His excitement and the breath of it got to me. That something was happening was clear. It was clear that there was a shift, it was coming down to much broader perspectives. ... What struck me was the whole thing of conversion."⁶

Lamb remembers that the content of the discovery was so new and so radical that he and others had difficulty entering into it. He did remember that there was an enormous sense of release. Lonergan was not an extrovert.

What I picked up right away from the monastic theology was the *lectio* and the *quaestio*, that these were the two orientations and terms of the four levels. I remember him very distinctly because it was obvious several times that he was correcting me in: All four levels operate, but they operate towards the goal set by one level.⁷

In the first semester Lamb had been talking with Lonergan about three levels, but now Lonergan kept commenting on the level of deliberation and choice and decision. In the notes he made of the conversation, conversion was listed as a functional specialty. Lamb had a sense of a release — things were now falling into place.

II

In his notes from work in progress Lonergan sketched the elements of the discovery on a number of extant pages. These, his original expression to himself of his discovery, bring us closer to that insight experience. Some of the details from an unnumbered page in a file in the Archives are given below:⁸

METHOD

<i>mediating</i>	<i>hearing</i>	<i>saying</i>	<i>mediated</i>
<i>object</i>			<i>object</i>

⁶From a recorded interview.

⁷From a recorded interview.

⁸Toronto Archives, Batch V, 7.a. I am only reproducing a fraction of what is on the page and have bolded the word, conversion.

Given	Research	Communication	World
Meaning	Interpretation	Explanation	History
Truth	History (historie)	Doctrine	Redemption
Encounter	Conversion	Foundations	God

Significant is the appearance of conversion in the place where in the final version he would write dialectic.

Later in the file he sketched what was then his view of the chapters of the book:⁹

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----|---|
| | 1. | Theological Operations |
| | 2. | Operational Specialization |
| <i>Theology</i> | 3. | Research |
| <i>as</i> | 4. | Interpretation = meaning + Understanding |
| <i>Openness</i> | 5. | Historical methods |
| | 6. | Horizon, development, conversion
undifferentiated — diff. consciousness
Patterns of experience
worlds, weltanschauungs. |
| <i>Theology</i> | 7. | Categories, recurrent questions on their roots |
| <i>as</i> | 8. | Doctrines |
| <i>Action</i> | 9. | Theories |
| | 10. | Communication, explanation, Meaning |
| | 11. | Mutual Mediation |
| | 12. | Logic and Method |

As far as I can ascertain the term, dialectic does not appear anywhere on these two crucial pages.¹⁰ On the next page opposite history he wrote the terms comparative, organistic, genetic, and dialectical. Clearly here he was thinking of dialectic as a feature of history. In this we can detect an influence from his earlier work on the positive or historical treatment of

⁹Toronto Archives, Batch V, 7, c.

¹⁰The line, "Science and Value (UCF v Dialectic)" does occur on an extended version of the above in a list of topics given after the title of chapter 12 but is not linked to the functional specialties.

the Trinity, composed largely in the summer and autumn of 1960.¹¹ The later publication, *The Way to Nicea*,¹² translates the 1964 version of the preface to this work. In this text there are three significant remarks on dialectic. In his discussion of the positions of Tertullian and Athanasius it was his view that the dialectic that brought about the movement from one position to another was the heart of the whole matter. Similarly Origen had to be located within the general dialectic that brought about a development in our conception of the Trinity. Finally, the material foundation of the process of dialectic was to be discovered in an inconsistent mixture of dogmatic and naive realism.¹³ Influenced by these sources he was now, in 1965, situating dialectic within history.

In the existential phase of theology, instead of foundations he has categories, recurrent questions and their roots,¹⁴ and theories instead of systematics. In his earlier notes he had worked on all of these topics as well as horizons and conversion. What is clear is that in the initial insight Lonergan grasped that the tasks of theology had to be mapped, not onto the three levels of cognition, but onto the fuller account of conscious intentionality in terms of four levels. But he was still searching for a precise fit of the related theological tasks to the four levels and there was a resulting fluidity in his language use.

This process is made manifest later in the same file of notes.¹⁵ A first section will deal with method in general, a second with the theological operations, a third with their specialization and mediation. The theological operations are E-U-J-D. On a page entitled "Theological Operations" he types a paragraph on each. The data will be of revelation, the understanding will be of mystery. Under judgment we find him

¹¹He gives an extremely interesting account of this in Letters 49 (September 26, 1960) and 50 (December 25, 1960) to Crowe. In August 1962 he wrote to Eric O'Connor that he had just spent three days at Alma where he gave a talk on "The Origins of Christian Realism," (first part of my *De Deo Trino*).

¹²*The Way to Nicea* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976).

¹³*The Way to Nicea* 48f., 59, 133.

¹⁴The root meaning of these terms is to be found in his earlier personal notes in the Toronto Archives: batch V, 6, h. These seem to be notes he made just prior to his course, "De Intellectu et Methodo" (On Understanding and Method), given in February 1959.

¹⁵Toronto Archives, V, 7, c.

commenting that its method is dialectic but with this he paradoxically associates the term, values. Decision relates to conversion. In religious conversion a cradle Catholic must move towards being a 'subject in Christ' through prayer. This was a topic he had treated in greater detail in his lecture, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," in September 1964.¹⁶ There he talked about the transition from being a substance to being a subject in Christ. In the latter the hand of the Lord ceases to be hidden in our lives. In moral conversion there is a swing from an animal in a habitat with competing egoism towards a person among persons. Intellectual conversion will involve clearly distinguishing between two views on knowing, reality and objectivity.

On the next page the operational specialization of the theological operations is treated in short paragraphs. Research is concerned with what was said or done, interpretation with what was meant. History is concerned with the sequence of ideas and doctrines. It is involved in comparative, organistic, genetic, and dialectical methods.¹⁷ The final line in the history section reads, "dialectic sets fundamental alternatives of judgment." Conversion is my encounter with intellectual, moral and religious history. Foundations, as well as involving categories and recurrent questions, now include conversion made thematic. (On another page in the file he would refer to it in terms of dealing with positions and counterpositions in intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.) Further brief remarks follow on doctrines, theories, and communications. Starting quite simply Lonergan was sketching, filling out what he considered to be the elements or details of each of the functional specialties. The almost random groping characteristic of his Georgetown lectures, in fact of his strivings since the mid-fifties, has been replaced by a highly coherent structure. He now has the insight which, with the modifications I am exploring, will eventually bring under a system elements that previously

¹⁶See *Collection, Papers by Bernard Lonergan* eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 222-231.

¹⁷The linking of genetic with dialectical method here reminds us of section 3.2 of chapter 17 of *Insight* where he talks about a universal viewpoint as a potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints.

were unrelated or coincidental in his thinking. Most of the elements of the book were now in sight.

He did not report his discovery in his letters to Crowe in February or March, which suggests that perhaps he was still tentative about it and not yet ready to go public. In his March letter he commented: "Method is beginning to move along. For a while I was getting the feeling that my capacity to write had vanished. But there is not the same old drive. ..." ¹⁸ It was a remark he would repeat. At this point he would have no idea as to why his energies were running down. Preparing his Marquette lecture on "Dimensions of Meaning," to be given on May 12, 1965, would have meant that work on those chapters would soon have to be put on hold. After the visit to Marquette he returned to Rome from June 10 until July 8 for the end-of-year examinations.

In June, after returning to the Gregorian for the examinations, he commented to Crowe that he was "awake from 3.00 am on this morning and my idle mind ..." ¹⁹ Whether he suffered from insomnia up to this point is not known but it would certainly become a major problem for him in years to come. Towards the end of June, advised by Swain, he wrote a letter to the Jesuit General requesting more time to write. One of the listed possibilities was having a secretary. That also would become an element in the drama. The heat had started and his shutters and windows were tightly closed. In the last letter he would write from Rome to Crowe on June 27, he commented, showing another side of his character, that he was fascinated by the last of the twenty-four examinees of the day. This student was from the Upper Volta, "mulatto, delicately built, with three beautifully curved scars rising across each cheek, and, to add a touch of asymmetry, another scar under the right eye." The mortality rate in the exams was high, 60 out of 400. After the examinations he left for Montreal on July 4, hoping to work on method in theology until November when he would have to return to Rome and resume his course work.

¹⁸Letter 78, March 18.

¹⁹Letter 79, June 12.

III

After spending some time in Montreal, presumably resting after the end-of-year examinations, which always drained him, Lonergan arrived at Regis College, then located at Willowdale, a Toronto suburb, on July 4. Towards the end of the month he decided to have his varicose veins examined. According to Stan Machnik he had suffered from them at least since the 1940s, brought on, Lonergan thought, by cycling. On many previous occasions he had discussed the possibility of having something done about them with John Olney, who looked after health matters at Regis. But nothing came of it. In July 1965 he took the plunge and consulted the Regis doctor, Dr Callahan. The examination involved a stay in hospital. As part of the standard procedure his blood pressure was taken and his lungs X-rayed. The lung X-ray showed that there was a lesion or shadow on the lower left lung. Further tests revealed an egg-size tumor. On August 5 it was discovered that the tumor was malignant.

According to Callahan if the tumor had not been identified Lonergan would have coughed one day (and he coughed a lot) and hemorrhaged, and that would have been the end of him. The impact of this discovery on Lonergan is almost impossible to grasp, but I suspect that the memory of the death of his mother must have returned to him. She died from cancer in Buckingham, Quebec in 1940 while he was in Rome writing his doctoral dissertation. The event upset him so deeply that he could not speak for three days. There is also the fact that he knew that in the previous February he had made a major discovery, possibly the discovery that was the center point of his life's work. That he was now facing a death-threatening situation before he had the opportunity to articulate it must also have weighed on his mind. Although waiting for the results of the test was hard on him, once they came Crowe found him outwardly in good spirits.²⁰ He always had a most simple acceptance of basic life situations such as this, an almost fatalistic acceptance of Providence. He would take the same stance for a later cancer operation in Boston.

²⁰Crowe has described some of the details of Lonergan's hospital experience in three letters which he sent to a circle of Lonergan's friends, dated August 6 and 17, and October 22, 1965.

Dr Callahan referred him to Dr Clair Baker, who was one of the top cancer specialists in the field. The type of treatment he would undergo, radiation or surgery, depended on the power of his good lung. After testing it, it was decided that his bad lung could be removed. Sr Florian and her assistants took total charge of his nursing from then on. The operation, which involved the total removal of the bad lung, took place on Friday, August 13. Lonergan was in intensive care until the following Monday. According to Sr Florian the pain involved in the recovery was crippling: "He was, oh he was drowned in pain I would say. He had so much pain after the operation, he never seemed free from it."²¹ Usually in post-operative care of serious cancer operations the patient is put on painkillers, at the time morphine by injection. Sr Florian remembered that Lonergan would not take painkillers:

So I said to Dr Baker, he doesn't want to take a needle. I think he wanted to suffer, myself. But it was more than you could cope with I think. Well that is my opinion. He was perspiring buckets. He would be soaking wet and you would get him dry and he would be wet again. However, we gave him some brandy. Dr Baker said, give him some brandy, see if he would take some brandy. So I gave him an ounce of brandy for his pain. I wouldn't say that it relieved it, to a certain extent you know.

It was not as good as Morphine or Demerol, which were in use at the time and would normally be administered every four hours. He did in fact take painkillers in two extreme situations when persuaded, but he never explained why he refused them as part of the treatment. Sr Florian remembered that if he was uncomfortable or in pain he would not call for help. The nursing staff had to watch him carefully.

A select group of people was allowed to visit him including Crowe and LeBlanc. Crowe visited him on Tuesday, August 17 and found him out of bed for the first time. He was very weak, sweated profusely at the least exertion, and was troubled by his cough.

In the last days of August congestion began to build up in the good lung, eventually to crisis levels. On September 2 a second operation had to take place on the good lung, inserting tubes to drain the congestion. It

²¹From a recorded interview.

seems that only an intervention by Sr Florian brought him through it. In a letter to LeBlanc Lonergan commented that Sr Florian "did much for me during my 82 days; and when my three doctors were all away on holidays, she called in another, had a drain inserted, and that helped greatly."²² In fact by so doing so she saved his life.

Despite this action the poison was still draining from the cavity of the old lung into the good lung, which meant that the infection was going to heal very slowly, if at all. So on September 20 a third major operation took place to alleviate the problem. Several ribs were opened up in the sidewall with a view to eliminating the cavity and cutting off the sources of further infection, as well as some internal plastic surgery. According to Sr. Florian it was a harrowing affair, requiring four hours on the operating table and leaving Lonergan in a state of some shock and extreme exhaustion.

The third operation was very risky. It was dangerous to expose his good lung to the effects of further anesthetics as well as operations. About his experience Sr Florian remarked: "Well I can't say I thought he was going to die there and then, but I knew it was a risk and he might. And he knew himself. He could feel it, sense it. ... He had a sense he couldn't take any more. He didn't say it but I could read him, almost you know, without talking to him."²³ Yet it was successful. But at the end of the month his pulse went up to 150 and stayed there for the whole day. Somehow he survived it. The tubes were finally removed on October 8 and he left the hospital ten days later, after almost three months.

In its unexpectedness, its threat to his very life and life's work, in its acute suffering and pain, and in the sheer duration of the three operations this experience in Lonergan's life comes across as passion-like.²⁴ Within that experience the providential arrival of Sr Florian was highly significant. As well as being a deeply caring nursing sister she also had a profound spirituality and sense of humor. Lonergan trusted her. In her

²²Letter dated March 8, 1966.

²³From a recorded interview.

²⁴For many the term passion is to be associated exclusively with the passion of Christ. It is my own belief that encountering in faith paschal-like cycles of suffering, death, and resurrection within our life histories is an inherent element in Christian spirituality. It is from this perspective that I am locating these experiences in Lonergan's life.

nursing and human care at this drastic moment in his life he encountered a profound experience of being-cared-for, a sense of being loved by another person that was quite outside of his normal intellectual experiences and horizons. In no little way did it influence his later repeated assertion that religion was primarily the experience of the love of God. Theology for him was a particular expression of that religious experience, the experience of being in love with God.

Without being informed of the danger he was in, his friend Beatrice Kelly, who had typed up *Insight* for the publishers for him and who would do the same for *Method in Theology*, phoned after he was anointed in the hospital for the second time. She had sensed something was wrong and was disturbed. Lonergan considered her to be quite psychic.²⁵

IV

He left the hospital in October to convalesce in Regis. John Olney, who in years to come carefully looked after his health, remembers that he needed some form of arm therapy. There was an extensive scar around his torso and the inner change due to the absence of the lung meant that the movement of the arm on that side had to be built up. He was also having trouble sleeping. Callahan was not keen to prescribe sleeping pills to help him to sleep. At the time they were barbiturates, Tuinol, and habit-forming. Usually you had to build up the dose and could build up a dependency. So he said to Lonergan that he would be as well off taking a shot of whisky — by which he meant an ounce — in the evening. His efforts to resolve his problem of insomnia through alcohol would in time lead to problems, despite the fact that the whisky did not really help him to sleep. This poses for us the question of just how deeply the operation and his encounter in it with death affected him, given that from this point on in his life he never really slept normally. Some form or degree of insomnia was a feature of his life from now on. It seems he had difficulty switching off his mind at night. It must also be clear that his focus on the intellectual in the previous years, to the exclusion of developing other

²⁵Letter to LeBlanc, November 10, 1965.

aspects of himself left him vulnerable, ill prepared to deal with this whole experience.

Sr Florian, in a motherly way, cajoled him through his convalescence. A deep bond came to exist between them. But they related as a professor of theology and a nursing sister and their conversation, when he did not ask about his health, was mainly pious. He did not discuss his life with her, but repeatedly asked her if she thought the cancer was cured and in one letter he wrote to LeBlanc seems to have been under the mistaken impression that she held he had at most five years to live.

By November, 1965 he had made some progress and even managed to talk about method in theology with Crowe. His reflections covered method in general and the functional specialties and then went on to discuss the specialties and their relation to the four levels of conscious intentionality. Again dialectic was treated within history. Reminiscent of *The Way to Nicea*, different interpretations form a dialectic leading to a yes or no, and conversion corresponded to the level of decision. Foundational theology was an account of what happens in conversion, intellectual, moral and religious. It is self-appropriation expressed. From the page of notes Crowe made and which are extant it is clear that despite his great physical weakness he was obviously still exploring the problem.

On November 10, still quite weak, he had a friend write a letter for him to the Rector of the Gregorian. He thanked him for his letters and prayers and his invitation to return and give special courses in the future. For the moment he simply requested that his belongings be sent on to him in Toronto. His teaching days in Rome were now ended but later he would return there from time to time as a member of the Theological Commission. He wrote to LeBlanc that "I still go round the house in a wheel chair to mass and meals and any slight effort at concentration, such as writing a letter, makes me perspire."²⁶ His achievements were modest. He was able to take a shower, standing on one foot he could just pull on his trousers. He could walk for ten minutes on the balcony and still had quite a crease in his tummy. He was weak and incapacitated. He jokingly described the pain, when it came, as being like a hippopotamus beginning to bite his side. Thoracoplasty, he added, is a brutal operation. By the end

²⁶Letter to LeBlanc, November 10, 1965.

of November he could sit up for about twenty five minutes and then felt the need to lie down again. Getting a cold was a bit of a set back, but the X-ray news from the hospital was good.

In the middle of December he raised the question with the Jesuit Provincial of having LeBlanc assigned as his secretary. The Provincial replied that while he had other intentions it was a possibility. From now until the following April he was quite preoccupied with the problem of getting a secretary and research assistant to help him with his book. He had Roland LeBlanc as someone to nose around everywhere and bring him information he needed. As things turned out, under the influence of Fr Nash, LeBlanc was assigned to Campion in Regina to be near his mother who was in bad health.

Just before Christmas, Beatrice Kelly sent him a copy of Dag Hammarskjöld's *Markings*, a spiritual diary that moves from the ethical to the mystical. On Christmas day she phoned and they discussed it. It must have impacted on him because after Christmas he began to read again, a significant event in his recovery. He read Wellek and Warren's *Theory of Literature*, presumably at the prompting of LeBlanc. He found that it amounted to a method for the study of literature done out in an international manner with forty pages of bibliography. It would be nice, he thought, if his *Method in Theology* could rival its learned manner. His letter goes on, "What dismays me is getting as complete as possible a list of questions with references and quotes on good and bad theological practice."²⁷ He asked LeBlanc to jot down all the questions he could think of.

In January, 1966 Dr Baker examined him. He concluded that the outlook was quite good and cheered him up with the information that the discomfort and the ache in his left side would be over in about two months. He dropped using the wheelchair for meals but could still get breathless. In his letter of February 13 he remarked significantly, "Incidentally, it is six months today since my pneumectomy, and it will be twenty-six years tomorrow since my mother's death." The conjunction of the two events is significant. No doubt, under the mistaken notion that Sr Florian held that he had at most five years to live, there was an inner

²⁷Letter to LeBlanc, December 27, 1965.

anxiety at work in him. The statistics for the operation are not encouraging. So we have to bear in mind that for about five years after it, while he was composing *Method in Theology*, Lonergan was living permanently under the shadow of the question, has all the cancer been removed? Every six months or so he would go for an examination and each time there was no sign of any more cancer. But he seems to have suffered from a deep anxiety and it took a long time before his confidence in the surgery and its success was complete. Physically his convalescence took perhaps a year, psychologically much longer. He has stated that actually writing the book, *Method in Theology* got him through it. He recognized that if providence wanted it, it would happen. This did not absolve him from a primordial sense of a fear of death.²⁸

By the end of February he was putting on weight. He continued to read, working his way through most of Herman Pongs, *Das Bild in der Dichtung* (The Literary Image): I, vol. 2 (1927) A morphology of metaphor; II Preparatory Studies of the Symbol which he considered to be brilliant. But he was still agitated about the question of a secretary or research assistant. He desperately needed help with his work on *Method in Theology*, but it did not come. His belongings arrived from Rome which meant that he could browse through his notes on work in progress over the previous years. He began to walk down the driveway at Regis and for relaxation watched Fellini's 8-1/2 and *Marienbad* on successive nights, joking that they were no doubt acting deeply on his psyche.²⁹

By early April he felt his health was good. Michael Longman was in touch with him about a possible new preface to a printing of *Insight*. Longman wanted him to recount in it how he came to write the book. It would have involved an account of such influences and given him space to write about Newman. His response is significant. It would, he felt "have complicated issues by introducing, as I then felt, too much of myself. A strictly objective account of my dependence on Newman would have forced me to give Plato and Augustine, Aristotle and Aquinas, theirs;

²⁸In interviews Howard Logan, SJ and the nursing sisters who looked after him in his final days at the Jesuit Nursing Home in Pickering, a Toronto suburb, commented that like a number of priests they had encountered, Lonergan, in the end, was afraid of death and dying.

²⁹Letter to LeBlanc, March 23, 1966.

and even as yet it is not clear to many what I got from them."³⁰ Clearly he was not yet ready to write "Insight Revisited."

In April, although he was reading voluminously, he had not yet got down to composing *Method*, had not yet begun to come alive again as an author.³¹ Even at the end of April he was still sounding off teasingly about the fact that it embarrassed him that his former pupils, now professors, had secretaries and he could not explain why he had not one. In response Jean Marc Laporte called to his room every morning at nine to get him books from the library. In May, Phil Leah brought him a copy of Jung's *Aion*. His comments to LeBlanc about it are interesting in relation both to theology and communication. He found it to be conspicuously devoted to Christ as a symbol of the self, and relevant to the history of Christianity and dogma: "Jung complains that dogma is now just believed, that its bridge to inner experience has been lost, and much in that vein. It is the sort of thing that I think interests you and I would like to have you researching and thinking, and indeed, feeling through." Eric O'Connor sent him a paperback collection of papers that had been published between 1953-1959 in Marshal McLuhan's review, *Explorations*. McLuhan's message that there are vast areas of human unawareness that become explicit through the new media came through to him clearly. As one can say in English what one cannot say in Latin, so for the new media: "There exists then the question, what is latent in contemporary or historical Xtianity, overlooked in older mores of expression, capable of, begging to be expressed in the new modes. There are new bottles awaiting a new wine."³² He was making progress with his reading but could still get breathless while walking.

V

During May Bernard Tyrrell visited Regis. He was a favorite of Lonergan's. He arrived late in the evening and just ran into him by chance in the building and they talked. For half an hour or so Lonergan "just

³⁰Letter to LeBlanc, April 20, 1966.

³¹Letter to Lamb, April 23, 1966.

³²Letter to LeBlanc, May 2, 1966.

spilled out the eight functional specialties and in such an enthusiastic and utterly simple way. He obviously had the thing so together that he could just articulate it.”³³ Although like Lamb and Maloney he had no clear idea what Lonergan was talking about, he had a real sense of sharing in his joy. He remembers talk about the four levels and the interrelationships, and the two phases, direct and indirect and found the emphasis in it on conversion quite striking: “It was something that I found utterly overwhelming. But it was so clear that it was some radical breakthrough for him.” It was the turning point in Lonergan’s work on *Method* and brought all of it together. “I was dazed by it. I mean — but it was so beautiful, I kind of just got enough of a glimpse of what was going on there that I was just utterly delighted too.”

Tyrrell compared it to listening to a symphony, “kind of the way he unfolded the thing, and it was obvious with the enthusiasm that he had, and it was late and so forth, and yet he just kind of exploded with this thing.” It came across to Tyrrell as something extraordinary, like the celebration of the discovery of a lifetime. Lonergan was delighted “and well — Archimedes running from the baths is the best image that I came away with, just this child-like joy.” It was, he felt, something central for Lonergan, and it was important that he share it like this with someone even though it was a year after the discovery. It is my belief that Lonergan, through sharing his experience of the joy involved in his insight with Tyrrell in this encounter, brought to a completion certain elements of the process of discovery. After his passion experience of the previous summer here we see the joyful beginning of resurrection. It was a deep moment of celebration of human creativity. In his shared joy he is confirming Gruber’s thesis that the study of insight ought not be dissociated from feelings such as joy.³⁴

Lonergan continued reading, at this time Louis Beirnaert, *Experience Chretienne et Psychologie*, a collection of papers from various journals. He and Beirnaert were together during his year in Amiens and at the Gesu in

³³The quotations in this and the following paragraph are from a recorded interview with Tyrrell.

³⁴Howard Gruber, “Insight and Affect in the History of Science,” eds. Sternberg, R. and Davidson J., *The Nature of Insight* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1996) 421-427. On page 426 he discusses the joy a major insight brought to Piaget.

Rome. Beirnaert later became a Freudian but wrote perceptively on the mythic dimension of sacramentalism, as well as on the mystic's use of conjugal love as a symbol, a work which could have influenced some of his remarks on mysticism in *Method in Theology*. In a letter to Matt Lamb on September 18 concerning faith and the intellectual life he wrote:

I was almost forty when my first article was published and over fifty when my book came out. What carried me on over all the years was my trust that what God wants will be done; it also carried me through my pneumectomy and thoracoplasty last year; my *Method in Theology* is advancing very slowly but I feel confident that it will be done.

The letter is a significant window on the role of faith in Lonergan's life as a whole. It was his faith that sustained his intellectual vocation right up to February 1965. It was the same faith that sustained him through his cancer operations and would enable him to resume the project. In limit situations like this there is no other human resource other than our faith to guide us through them. At the same time in letters he was reassuring LeBlanc that God loved him. Slowly, through these experiences, many details of which I have omitted, he was moving towards the moment, the time, when he would begin again to wrestle with the composition of *Method in Theology*.

VI

In September 1966 he gave the lecture for the opening of the academic year at Regis, formerly known as the Quamquam. His title was "Transition from a Classicist World View to Historical Mindedness," a paper he would later read to the Canon Law Society.³⁵ In the paper he contrasted two notions of the human being, the classicist and the modern. Whereas the classicist focused on the nature rather than on the accidents, on the substance of the human, the modern apprehends the human as a concrete aggregate developing over time. That development will involve dialectic and meaning for meaning is constitutive of human living. For Rahner the natural law needs to be approached through a transcendental method. For Lonergan the foundations of historical existence have to be

³⁵A *Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1974) 1-9.

found in a transcendental method. Responding to the question of how from a theological perspective a community of love adapts itself to its mission he brings in two things, his analysis of history in *Insight* and of the law of the cross in his work on the Incarnate Word. There is progress, decline, and redemption. Under the inspiration of Romans 12:21 he ends with the question, Is the proper Christian ethic the law of the cross, i.e., the transformation of evil into good? Does law use good to defeat evil?

This was his first piece of serious writing and first academic talk since the operation and it signals the fact that he was now beginning to come alive again as an author. He was greatly relieved when after the first ten minutes he found he was not suffering from any shortness of breath and now felt that his speaking voice had recovered. In October he began travelling again, at first to Notre Dame, and later to Pittsburgh and to Boston College to meet Joseph Flanagan, and eventually to the Chicago Divinity School to give a lecture. Around this time Fred and Sue Lawrence were married in Buffalo by Fr Worthling, a friend of David Tracy. In the following year they would move to Basel where Fred would work on his doctorate.

By October 1966 Lonergan began to focus again on the book. On October 11 he wrote to LeBlanc that the work was moving ahead:

Chapter 1 has shifted from an attempt to set forth the problem to a more straightforward matter of describing The New Context (from logic to method, from the *Posterior Analytics* to Modern Science, from philosophy as ancilla to transcendental method, and from apprehending man in terms of human nature to apprehension through human history.)

He had finished the first two of these four topics, and by the end of the month he was struggling with the fourth and finding it tricky stuff. In his earlier notes Lonergan had put a lot of work into explaining the *problem* of method in theology as he understood it. He now dropped that work in terms of something more manageable. In time he would drop even the study of context. Clearly he did not have the compositional energies involved in *Insight*. We should read the book in the light of these decisions. The lack of a chapter introducing the problem of method and setting forth the new context of theology in *Method in Theology* is serious.

Throughout November he was at work on method but progress though real was very slow. By mid-November both *Theological Studies* and *America* were after him for a response to Dewart's *Future of Belief*, but it seems that initially he was not interested, considering it a mare's nest. Still, on December 11 he wrote to LeBlanc that after two letters from J.C. Murray and four from Thurston Davis of *America* he had decided to write a critique of it, commenting, "Am in it. Total involvement, hope to finish soon, as it plagues me day and night." His quite unfavorable review was published in *Theological Studies*, June 1967. In opening his discussion of the book Lonergan distinguishes between a problem, which is genuine and widespread, and the solution proposed by Dewart. As he sees it "the problem is, at its most basic level, whether one can, while complying with the demand that human personality, character, and experience be inwardly integrated, at one and the same time profess the Christian religion and perceive human nature and everyday reality as contemporary man typically does."³⁶ Dewart's solution held that in order to relate the everyday experience of today with theism there was required not merely the *demythologisation of Scripture* but the more comprehensive *dehellenization of dogma*, and specifically that of the Christian doctrine of God. For Lonergan, who held that in the Patristic era Christianity had worked out its own distinctive kind of realism, it was like waving a red flag in front of a bull. Many such distractions would arise on the road to the final text of *Method in Theology*. It is my own opinion that, given his general state of wellbeing after the operation, he needed them.

By January 14 he had finished what he proposed as the first chapter of *Method in Theology*. Entitled "The New Context" it ran to 61 double spaced pages.³⁷ On February 11 he wrote to LeBlanc that he was held up over a sub-section on conversion as part of theology: "not just as an object that theologians discuss, but as a change in theols themselves. It seems a very obvious requisite for theology, but it calls for a revised notion of science." On pages 57-58 of the text of the draft we find the following comments.

³⁶A *Second Collection* 12.

³⁷With the exception of section 3, pages 15-25 on philosophy as *ancilla*, the rest of the text is extant, Archives A577, Batch VI, file 1.

On conversion and its three forms — intellectual, moral, and religious — more will be said in due course. ... Such science (as conceived in the Posterior Analytics) has to be the work of some pure intellect, equally *per se*, abstract, and for that reason, necessary. It must prescind from values, from will, from conversion. Whether or not we are able to conceive theology as analogously or properly a science of the modern methodical type, had best, I think, be discussed in another context.

The theme would be developed centrally in the chapter on Functional Specialties, and in his essay, "Theology in Its New Context," which developed out of chapter 1. He was now on page 16 of chapter 2, which was on the functional specialties. He hoped that when it was finished things would start picking up as he now had a good deal of work done in outline on Hermeneutics, History and Horizon, Meaning, and System.

By March he was hammering away at *Method*, sixty-one pages on chapter 1 and thirty on an unfinished second chapter. But he would now have to leave it to one side to prepare talks for Notre Dame and Chicago. He relaxed at the movies, enjoying *The Pawnbroker* and *The Collector*. He commented to LeBlanc that he was now drinking beer instead of scotch, an indication that he was generally getting back to a more normal lifestyle. But the remarks are intimations of a further passion he would yet have to endure.³⁸ On the bright side, Harper and Row offered him a contract for *Method in Theology*.

By mid-April, after his various trips and lectures, and with the completion of the two chapters he had been working on he reached a milestone in the process of writing himself back into the process of composing *Method in Theology*. He now had the text of the chapter on functional specialties completed. It was within the text of this chapter that dialectic and conversion on the one hand and theology and religion on the other began to find their place. For the first time in his writings dialectic was now defined as a functional specialty associated with the fourth level of intentional consciousness. The materials for the theological task of

³⁸Letter to LeBlanc, March 11. By February, 1973, a year after successfully publishing *Method in Theology*, his dependence on alcohol became such that treatment was necessary. That experience I believe was for him another passion. He recovered up to a point and got on with his life but it left emotional scars.

dialectics are the conflicts centering in Christian movements. Its aim, through an ecumenical spirit, is the attainment of a comprehensive viewpoint.³⁹ We should not underestimate the significance of this relocation. In *Insight* dialectic was an intellectual problem. It arose because of the love of light and of darkness in the human mind and of the biases of common sense and counterpositions of philosophy that resulted from that conflict. In *The Way to Nicea* it was a problem on the level of judgment and of the conflict between naive and Christian realism. Now, when completing this chapter, it was for him a problem on the level of values. In his treatment of dialectic in a later seminar on method in theology at Regis College in July, 1969 Lonergan commented almost apologetically on the shift involved. What is also clear is that only slowly did he begin to work out the implications of the move.⁴⁰

After describing research, interpretation, history, and dialectic Lonergan went on:

As conversion is basic to Christian living, so an objectification of conversion provides theology with its foundations.... Research, then, interpretation, history, and dialectic reveal the religious situation. They mediate an encounter with persons witnessing to Christ. They challenge to a decision: in what manner or measure am I to carry the burden of continuity or to risk the initiative of change? That decision, however, is primarily not a theological but a religious event; it pertains to the prior more spontaneous level on which theology reflects and which it illuminates and objectifies in the fifth specialty, foundations.⁴¹

Conversion, which he had now removed from theology, is existential, intensely personal, intimate, and involves a change in direction. It can be authentic or inauthentic. It is a central element in Christian spirituality. It can happen to many and they can form a community. Lonergan is suggesting that the kinds of conversions or religious experiences outlined in for instance Merton's *Elected Silence* or Emilie Griffin's classic on

³⁹*Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972) 129-130.

⁴⁰A text of the lectures is available at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto. The remarks on dialectic and will occur on page 427. This redefinition leaves us with the problem of determining precisely how his earlier definitions of dialectic relate to it.

⁴¹*Method in Theology* 130, 135 (italics mine).

conversion, *How God Became Real*,⁴² are now to be viewed as sources for theological reflection. Those experiences or their absence radically determine the sense we make of Scripture, on the one hand, and doctrines on the other. Reflection on such experiences will provide a future theology with its foundations.⁴³ The task of theology is not to accomplish conversion but to objectify it and its consequences.

If a clear distinction between theology and conversion, which here is identified with religion, is emerging so also later in the article we find a distinction between theology and religion.

Initially the Christian religion and Christian theology were not distinguished. ... So religion and theology became distinct and separate in the very measure that religion itself develops and adherents to religion move easily from one pattern of consciousness to another. Still this withdrawal must not be without a compensating return.⁴⁴

Even though he still complained of a lack of energy, completing this chapter at this point had, I believe, a settling effect on him for effectively it contained the plan of the book. It was one thing to have the elements of the discovery expressed on a page in outline, it was another to fill it out into a carefully written chapter for the first time. Once this was achieved it became the base from which he built up the text.

The fate of his drafted sixty-one-page first chapter entitled "The New Context" is more complex. Lonergan invited a number of his colleagues at Regis to read this proposed first chapter, the text of most of which survives. It was an uneasy mixture of what he would later publish as chapter one of *Method* and separately as "The New Context of Theology." Containing sections on the new context, subject and soul, transcendental

⁴²Emilie Griffin, *How God Became Real* (London: SPCK Press 1981). *Turning* seems to be the American title. All students of Lonergan interested in religious conversion should read this book.

⁴³Equally there is the question, to what extent are human passion-like experiences such as that suffered by Lonergan during this time significant elements in Christian religious experience and conversion, in Christian spirituality? Does the passion of Christ reflect the passion of humankind? Does reflection on such experiences provide theology with its foundations?

⁴⁴*Method in Theology* 140.

method, and the new theology, the quality of the writing was rough and unfinished, nowhere near his later expression, which would move the treatment onto a new level. As in his recovery he had first to get his physical strength back, and secondly begin to read again, so also he had slowly to recover his writing style. The feedback was critical, mainly holding that it was too philosophical in tone in a book addressed to theologians.

In July 1967 Lonergan wrote to Courtney Murray wondering if it would be wise to send him the text of that first chapter of his book on method with a view to publication. He added that it explores the new context in terms of five transpositions; "From Logic to Method; from the Posterior Analytics to Modern Science; from apprehension of man in terms of human nature to apprehension in terms of human history; from soul to Subject (cf Intro to *Verbum* finally out at Notre Dame Press); and from First Principles to Transcendental Method." Clearly he was thinking of offering the text of the original chapter to Murray. As things worked out Lonergan radically reworked the whole text so that almost nothing of that first draft was actually published. A section of it was reworked to become chapter 1 on transcendental method in the book. Other sections were revised to become "Theology in its New Context." He read this paper at a Congress on the renewal of theology in Toronto, in Montreal, and as the opening lecture of the academic year in Regis College in September.⁴⁵

A simple comparison of the headings, so to speak, of the new text with those of his original is revealing. Elements of the new context are a need for renewal, *aggiornamento*, bringing things up to date. Central to the new context is the year 1680, the year when Herbert Butterfield placed the origins of modern science, Paul Hazard placed the origins of the Enlightenment, and Yves Congar placed the beginnings of dogmatic theology. After some paragraphs on Butterfield and Hazard he turns quickly to dogmatic theology. This was opposed to the older scholastic theology which was strong on the element of the intellectual quest of faith seeking understanding. Dogmatic theology, under the inspiration of Melchior Cano, its founder, who was also a bishop and inquisitor,

⁴⁵The text is given in *A Second Collection* 55-67.

replaced the inquiry of the *quaestio* by the pedagogy of the thesis. It was a conception of theology that has survived right up to the present day but among theologians, at least since the 1890s, its defects have been becoming more and more apparent.

What, for Lonergan, is needed is not a new revelation or a new faith, but a new understanding of theology. Central to a new notion of theology will be new foundations by which he means two things. Firstly, the new foundations will not be found in propositions but rather in the very dynamism of the human mind and heart itself, transcendental method. Theology is a human enterprise and uses our mental and moral apparatus. In the second sense he notes that fundamental to religious living is conversion, a topic little studied in the era of dogmatic theology.

When conversion is viewed as an ongoing process, at once personal, communal, and historical, it coincides with living religion. For religion is conversion in its preparation, in its occurrence, in its development, in its consequences, and also, alas, in its incompleteness, its failures, its breakdowns, its disintegrations.⁴⁶

Fundamental to religion is conversion and so it follows that for Lonergan reflection on conversion can supply a renewed theology with a foundation which is concrete, dynamic, personal, communal, and historical, and which gives true meaning to doctrines. In his initial discovery the functional specialties were about differentiating a set of interdependent tasks within theology, with an internal differentiation. In the process of clarifying those tasks the further differentiation of theology itself from religion begins to emerge. Initially the Christian religion and Christian theology were not distinguished. But now religion and theology become distinct and separate. Theology is a withdrawal that aims at a later return.

It is interesting to speculate whether Lonergan wrote the functional specialties before or after this text. But what is clear to me is that in his revised version here of *The New Context* he was answering all the criticisms that his colleagues had rightly addressed to the first draft. The tragedy is that the text, with a few paragraphs from "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical Mindedness," was not published as

⁴⁶*Method in Theology* 66-67.

the first chapter of *Method in Theology*. His significant explorations of the classicist and historical notion of the human, of the shift from the intellectualism of Aquinas and medieval scholasticism through the dogmatism of Melchior Cano, the dominant influence on early twentieth-century Catholic theology, were written out of the final text of *Method in Theology*. Lonergan clearly intended them to be a part of the text and it is within the text of the book that they should be read.

During the summer of 1967 Leblanc returned to Regis from Regina. He remembers Lonergan at the time as being anxious about *Method in Theology*. It was to be his major work, but Lonergan felt that because it was turning out to be a smaller work it would not take pole position. He was worried that *Insight* would overshadow it.⁴⁷

A year later, in July 1969, Peter Henrici, the editor of *Gregorianum*, wrote to Lonergan to the effect that he was bringing out a special edition of the journal on the teaching of theology and was interested in a contribution from him. In October he wrote to thank Lonergan for submitting his article on Functional Specialties. In May of 1969 he wrote again with the remark that "Functional Specialties in Theology" seemed a more appropriate title, a point Lonergan did not take up in his book. Through a crooked path, the discovery which Lonergan had made in February 1965 in Rome and which, in the meantime, was delayed because of his passion experience and through the need for further refinement of the relation between theology, conversion, and religion, was first published in Rome. All of these elements and more should, I believe, be taken into account when we come to read the eventual text of *Method in Theology*.

VI

To conclude: the main objective of the present biographical study of a segment from Lonergan's life has been to show some of the elements of the movement that resulted in the groundplan for his book, *Method in Theology*. There was involved in this not one but two major insights. The first, in February 1965, grasped that there were eight distinctive and functionally related tasks within theology, the functional specialties. At

⁴⁷From a recorded interview.

this point his understanding of those actual tasks was subject to revision. It was followed by a period of clarification in which conversion was replaced by dialectic. This, in turn, led to the second insight which involved an understanding of the relation between religion as intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and theology. It was in reflection on conversion or, as some might like to put it, on Christian spirituality that the foundations of a future theology would be worked out. There resulted for him a redefinition of theology from knowledge of God mediated through Christ to reflection on a religion in a culture. These insights seem like elements of paradigm shifts rather than simple clarifications. Because of this, it will take time to assimilate the depths of this development.

Two further aspects of the study are of human and religious significance. Firstly, Lonergan's celebration of his insight with Bernard Tyrrell shows us that we, as a species, need to identify and celebrate both our particular insights and our power of insight itself. The present study can be read as an exercise in the identification and celebration of that uniquely human attribute. This, in turn, opens up a further possibility. For every insight is both an achievement and a sign. As achievement it illuminates possible or actual qualities of our world. As a sign it points us beyond ourselves to a mysterious and unknowable signified. In every Archimedean cry of "Eureka" there is to be glimpsed darkly the unfathomable mystery of God's infinite and eternally joyful understanding. In our own insights as identified and celebrated we can experience and celebrate our participation in the creativity of God.

Secondly, the study deals with a significant episode in Lonergan's religious history, in his faith journey. In February 1965 he had some intimation that he had made the discovery which was at the center of his life. In August of the same year he had to face a death-threatening encounter with cancer which threatened to destroy his life's work. It was his basic religious faith that sustained him through this painful experience, through his difficult recovery and his coming to life again as an author. Is it the case that his very life at this point is comprised of the kind of religious episode on which a future theology ought to reflect in order to deepen its foundations?

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