

ISTITUTO ITALIANO PER GLI STUDI FILOSOFICI

GOING BEYOND ESSENTIALISM:  
BERNARD J.F. LONERGAN  
AN ATYPICAL NEO-SCHOLASTIC

edited by  
CLOE TADDEI-FERRETTI

NELLA SEDE DELL'ISTITUTO  
NAPOLI MMXI

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## PRESENTATION OF THE VOLUME

SATURNINO MURATORE

*Seminario Permanente di Epistemologia, Istituto di Filosofia,  
Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale, Sezione San Luigi,  
Naples, Italy*

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the first publication of *Insight* by the Canadian Jesuit Bernard J. F. Lonergan (1957), and to present the new critical Italian version of this monumental volume published in the year of that anniversary (2007)<sup>1</sup> under the High Patronage of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, emerit Archbishop of Milan, two events have been organized in Naples, Italy, which have to be considered as completing each other.

The first one has been the presentation of the new Italian edition of *Insight* at the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy, Section Saint Louis, Naples, (17 December<sup>2</sup> 2007). The second one has been the International Workshop “*Going Beyond Essentialism: Bernard J. F. Lonergan, an Atypical Neo-Scholastic*” at the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies, Naples, (13-15 May 2008); the International Workshop was promoted by the same Institute, presided by the Advocate Gerardo Marotta, and by the Permanent Seminar of Epistemology, directed by myself in the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy, Section Saint Louis.

The very title of the International Workshop refers to the different way of interpreting Thomas Aquinas by Lonergan compared to the essentialistic reading carried out by Scholasticism and Neo-Scholasticism: a way which holds in mind the strong meaning of the term “being” and the predominance of what is existing over what is possible.

In his major work Lonergan exploited some of his previous researches on the thought of Thomas Aquinas and materials gathered by him in order to treat the theme of the method of theology, according to his original idea, in view of the

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 3, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992 (1957<sup>1</sup>); Italian edition *Insight: Uno studio del comprendere umano*, S. Muratore and N. Spaccapelo, eds., Città Nuova, Roma 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan was born on December 17th, 1904.

attempt, which by that time could not be postponed any longer, to renew the framework of Catholic theology, updating it and bringing it up to the challenges of the contemporary cultural context.

A quite decisive factor had been his encounter with Thomas. In fact, Lonergan had quickly matured his conviction of a persistent and widespread “conceptualist” misunderstanding of the thought of Thomas Aquinas, since the Aquinian doctrine became commonly interpreted in Scotistic key, giving the priority to the concept rather than to the *intelligere*.

But Lonergan was also convinced that to confront oneself effectively with contemporary philosophical problems it was not sufficient to simply recall Aquinas: in fact, in the new context created by modern philosophy and science, one could no longer take for granted the metaphysical framework of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. *Insight* was born just as an attempt to transpose the fundamental philosophical insights of Aquinas into the contemporary context.

By turning upside down the traditional formulation of philosophical Scholasticism,<sup>3</sup> Lonergan moved on ahead to give privilege to the critical demand and methodological control with respect to the reference frame of metaphysical theory. All that was obtained thanks to a radical process of self-appropriation by the subject, a self-appropriation of what later Lonergan will call «the basic pattern of conscious and intentional operations»,<sup>4</sup> which the volume *Insight* aims to stimulate and guide in its fundamental articulations.

The ultimate base of reference for the philosophical knowledge ceased to be the conceptual network of metaphysical theory and became the same operative structure of the questioning subject. As a consequence, in *Insight* the metaphysical categories are no longer elaborated by means of a pre-scientific analysis of the *physis* and of the ordinary language, but find their justification and fundamentally heuristic significance in relation to the intentional activity of the mind. Therefore, Lonergan can consider the supreme principles not as truths in themselves, but as historically conditioned thematizations of the rationality and responsibility in act.

Thanks to that fundamental shifting from the priority regarding the field of meaning of theory to that of interiority, Lonergan will later be capable of characterizing theology not starting off from its “formal object” or referring to a knowledge that has been completely systematized, but rather referring to its procedures and method.

The present volume includes the contributions (lectures and communications) relating to the International Workshop “*Going Beyond Essentialism: Bernard J.*

<sup>3</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “*Insight: Preface to a Discussion*”, in *Collection*, second edition, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 4, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992, pp. 142-152, in particular p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1972, p. 13.

*F. Lonergan, an Atypical Neo-Scholastic*". This initiative gathered together various scholars and admirers of Lonergan's thought from many different nations.

Advocate **Gerardo Marotta**, who is the sponsor of a new rigorous translation of Lonergan's major works into Italian, opens the Workshop. Marotta remembers how he was particularly struck by the amplitude of interests and the radical nature of the reflections of the Canadian Jesuit, as well as by his courage to look ahead and distantly, with a basic attitude towards modern philosophy and science that is rather rare for an ecclesiastic, as being an attitude not of refusal and counterposition, but of openness and evaluation. Marotta hopes that this thought may continue to operate for a renewal of the Catholic cultural tradition from the inside.

In his magisterial lecture, Cardinal **Carlo Maria Martini** relates his own experience of study and the importance of the encounter, many years back, with the philosophical and theological thought of Lonergan. It is a thought which, playing on the transcendental method, has consequences regarding all the rest of the philosophy; a thought which is capable of evaluating the basic mystical experience of every person, and is also open to the dialogue with culture and religions.

**Robert M. Doran** throws light on the convergences and fundamental complementarity of the two treatments of ethics which can be drawn out in the major works of Lonergan, recognizing also in the psychological analogy, regarding the divine processions developed in *De Deo Trino. Pars Systematica*, an important intermediate moment. Recalling his recent studies, Doran, in particular, reaffirms the «abiding significance» of Chapter 18 of *Insight*.

**Frederick G. Lawrence** underlines the originality of the integral hermeneutics of Lonergan, which is fruit of a hermeneutical circle much more ample and complete than that expounded by Heidegger and Gadamer. Moreover, Lonergan evaluates both the vectors of human development, that from below, and that from above, and throws light on the importance of the threefold conversion as a foundation of hermeneutics.

**Rosanna Finamore** recalls the developments of the theme of intentionality in the work of Lonergan, in which heritages from Kantian and post-Kantian traditions (Husserl and Maréchal, in particular) enter into confluence, but also fundamental acquisitions from Aristotelian, Thomistic and Scholastic traditions. She highlights the spontaneous notion of being as unrestricted intentionality, while she discovers new assonances in particular with the thought of Husserl.

**Patrick H. Byrne** recalls the contribution of Lonergan for the overcoming of the conflict between science and religious faith, which had already taken form with Galileo. For Lonergan, who goes beyond the Kantian division between noumenal domain, proper of faith and morals, and phenomenal domain, proper of a deterministic natural reality, what is in question is not scientific methods as

such, but the erroneous philosophical interpretations connected with the carrying out of such methods.

**William A. Matthews** presents the explorations of Lonergan regarding consciousness as fundamental contributions to the fields of philosophical anthropology and theological anthropology. He recalls how the generalized empirical method must also face up to the intersubjective relations, and how Lonergan examined consciousness from a moving viewpoint in his many works up to the point of considering the elusiveness of consciousness.

**Elizabeth A. Murray** raises the question of the nature of the self, or the subject, in the thought of Lonergan. In the light of *Method*, the subject is as much affective as cognitive. It is also historical and existential. The self of the critical realism of Lonergan finds its place beyond the field of Scholasticism, but is also critical of modernism's presuppositions still operative in post-modernism; it escapes the reductionisms of many currents of philosophical modernity, and relinks with the critical realism of the Kierkegaardian tradition which gives evidence of our temporality and freedom.

**Matthew C. Ogilvie** shows how Lonergan makes regular use of analogy in systematic theology, in the light of the teaching of the First Vatican Council. Differently to what is happening in recent theological currents, Lonergan places value in the analogy having the enrichment of understanding in view, and not as a free construction of conceptual schemes. In this way the difference and disproportion between the analogical base of reference and the transcendent reality of God is dealt with intact.

**Giovanni B. Sala** wishes to compare the concept of transcendental in Kant and in Lonergan. For Sala the idealistic outlet of Kantian analysis is due to the paradigmatic function which Kant endowed to the sensitive perception (*Anschauung*) regarding entire human knowing. Evaluating the cognitive doctrine of Aquinas, Lonergan, contrarily, places sensitive perception into the context of all-inclusive intentionality. Human intellectuality-rationality, as a consequence, is not closed into the horizon of sensitivity, but is rather the concrete capacity to place the phenomenic datum into the ultimate and definitive context of the real.

**Saturnino Muratore** underlines the originality of the philosophy of being of Lonergan, projected not towards the elaboration of a fundamental conceptual network, but towards the self-appropriation of the same intentional dynamics of intellectual consciousness which characterize "latent metaphysics". This acquisition enables the philosopher to shape up him/herself as "generalist", counterbalancing contemporary tendencies towards fragmentation of knowledge, and the theologian to carry out a methodological control which links the critical encounter with the past and the elaboration of a doctrinal argument fully inserted into contemporary cultural context.

**Hugo A. Meynell** recalls the analysis of Lonergan relating to the understanding and to the “flight from understanding”. This last phenomenon is met up in the context of everyday life, regarding questions of morality, politics, and relationships with ourselves and others. However, such flight from understanding is also not totally unfounded in the field of science and theology.

**Cloe Taddei-Ferretti** proposes a comparison between the analysis of intersubjectivity, that can be obtained from the writings of Lonergan, and some recent developments achieved in cognitive science, regarding the activity of the neural networks underlying intersubjective actions and the understanding of the intersubjective actions of others. According to Taddei-Ferretti, the view of Lonergan can offer interesting hints for deepening research in cognitive science.

**Ivo Coelho** evaluates the treatment of a “universal viewpoint”, as a part of the hermeneutical method offered by Lonergan in *Insight*, with the subsequent contributions that can be gathered from its transformation in the general method of *Method in Theology*. Thus, a practical proposal for ecumenical, interreligious and multicultural collaboration has been shaped. This paper offers various hints and suggestions for such implementation.

**Catherine A. Clifford** deals with the theoretical structure underlying the method of convergence or ecumenical consensus and the most recent differentiated consensus. She suggests the necessity of an integration with all the functional specialties of Lonergan’s method in order that the statements of ecumenical consensus may have a transformative effect, and highlights the importance of Lonergan’s reflections for the contribution of such statements to the development of doctrine.

**Howard Richards** underlines the convergence between Lonergan’s proposals regarding a new political economy and the recent papal Encyclical *Spe salvi*. Richards maintains that Lonergan’s thought regarding economy is capable of constructing a valid alternative to the current dominating paradigm and can also favour the dialogue and collaboration with non-Catholics for a responsible social and economic development.

**Paulette Kidder** examines the position of some feminists on the principles that regulate ethical decisions in situations of health care, and gathers in Lonergan’s works a reinforcement of feminist criticism of the atomistic subject, since the autonomous and free choices are made by historical subjects, embodied in domains mediated by social meaning. Just as Lonergan places the problem of autonomy in a theological framework, so feminist bioethics should have some theological orientation, like faith in a transcendent mystery or in human solidarity.

**Adolfo Russo**, in his closing address to wind up the Workshop, makes evident the importance of the thought of Lonergan for the academic studies of philosophy and theology. Lonergan is most certainly to be considered a master, particularly

of method, and a safe reference point in the formative curriculum of a Faculty of Theology.

Integreting the lectures delivered, there were presented at the Workshop some communications, starting from that of **Carla Miggiano-di Scipio**, who had accepted to carry out the first Italian translation of *Insight* just after its publishing in English at the end of the 1950's. Her meeting Lonergan in person, who was grasped as a master of thought and life, is remembered, after half a century by this time, with a deeply felt participation.

**Gerard Whelan** testifies the influence of Lonergan in the forming of a course of fundamental theology, which highlights the history of theology and the historical consciousness applied in theologizing, by considering also the history of the relations between Church and State and that of modern science.

**Giuseppe Guglielmi** also recalls the influence of Lonergan in the forming of the fundamental theology as a foundational structure and taking into account the organization of the transcendental method, in the light of the problems of the quest of meaning and of religious indifference.

**Ermenegildo Caccese** is concerned with Lonergan's contribution to the contemporary debate between ontological and relational conceptions regarding the philosophy of time and space. By this, Lonergan testifies an interest, uncommon in a Neo-Scholastic philosopher, for the cultural context of philosophical and scientific modernity.

**Edoardo Cibelli** draws a comparison between the theme of will, developed by Lonergan in his two principal works, and the research in the field of neuroscience carried out by Benjamin Libet. Cibelli affirms the legitimacy and fruitfulness of this interdisciplinary approach.

Finally, **Jim Morin** places in relationship the characterization of the generalized empirical method, proposed by Lonergan in *Insight*, and the genetic epistemology, developed by J. Piaget and his school. In both cases one can notice instances of convergent consequences concerning the formative curricula and integral human development.

A concert with works of Domenico Gabrielli, Johann Sebastian Bach, and Paul Hindemith, given by the cellist **Drummond Petrie**, has recalled Lonergan's interest not only in art in general, but also in particular in music, as testified by several of his writings.

The contributions presented in this volume – as well as those given during the presentation of the new Italian edition of *Insight* – will also be included on the website [www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com) of the Marquette Lonergan Project, directed by Prof. Robert M. Doran. Both the publication of these Proceedings – as well as that of the contributions for the presentation of *Insight* – and their inclusion in

the website will result as a joint initiative of the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies and Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

At this point, as Scientific Director of the International Workshop, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have made possible not only its realization, but also both the publication of its Proceedings and their inclusion in a Lonerganian website.

Regarding the International Workshop, it has been possible thanks to the economic and logistic support of the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies, in whose prestigious building, that of the historical Palace Serra di Cassano in Naples, Italy, the Workshop was held. My deepest and warmest thanks go to Advocate Gerardo Marotta, founder and President of the Institute, for his interest shown in the thought of Lonergan and also for his support given to various activities regarding Lonergan. I would also like to sincerely thank Prof. Antonio Gargano, General Secretary of the Institute, for his cooperation, as well as all those who work at the Institute. I must warmly thank all the contributors, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, who wished nevertheless that his lecture be delivered despite a commitment unexpectedly preventing his presence there, and all the scholars who, coming from different academic and cultural centres from throughout the world, have woven the fabric of this Workshop with their lectures and discussions. I thank those coming from Naples, Potenza and Rome in Italy, and from Chile, who have contributed by their communications, enriching further the themes dealt with. I thank the cellist Drummond Petrie for his concert. I also thank all those who participated in the event coming from several parts of Italy, from religious institutions – among which professors and students from the Section Saint Louis of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy, where I work –, and from laical academic institutions and various other cultural fields. I thank Cloe Taddei-Ferretti for her complex activity performed as organizer of the Workshop in all its various aspects. I thank Edoardo Cibelli, Antonio Cotugno, and Germana Grasso, who took care of the reception at the site of the Workshop.

Regarding the publication of the Proceedings, I wish to thank Cloe Taddei-Ferretti, as editor of this volume, for her competent work of preparation, including the final revision of the translations. We both thank, she and I, very warmly Advocate Gerardo Marotta who wanted the publication to be realized by the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies, and Prof. Antonio Gargano for his qualified and precious work of actually realizing the publication.

Regarding the inclusion of the Proceedings in the website [www.lonergansource.com](http://www.lonergansource.com) of the Marquette Lonergan Project, we both thank, Cloe Taddei-Ferretti and I, full-heartedly Robert M. Doran, Director of the Project, General Co-Editor of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan in press by University of Toronto Press, full Professor of the Emmett Doerr chair in Systematic Theology at Marquette



University, co-founder and past Director of the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, for his continuous moral support for the work of carrying out producing the new 2007 Italian version of *Insight*, for his active interest in the intention of publication of the International Workshop's Proceedings, for his many related precious suggestions, and for his proposal to include the Proceedings in the Lonerganian website. We thank also Gregory Lauzon for his work with electronic devices performed with great expertise.

I hope that this volume, which is fruit of the cooperation of many and provides a high level material that could be object of further reflection, may contribute to an ever more complete understanding of Lonergan's thought, and also to its further spread in laical and religious fields.

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During the correction of the proofs of this book, news has been received of the death of Father Prof. Giovanni Battista Sala (born 28-04-1930, died 15-03-2011), to whom I had a bond of deep long-lated friendship. All of us remember him with great esteem, affection and gratitude.

THE ISTITUTO ITALIANO PER GLI STUDI FILOSOFICI  
AND THE THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN

*Opening Address*

GERARDO MAROTTA

*President of the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Naples, Italy*

I am most pleased to welcome all those attending and open the International Workshop *Going Beyond Essentialism: Bernard J. F. Lonergan, an Atypical Neo-Scholastic*.

I would like to, above all, express my great gratitude to Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, who has from the onset been a determined, clairvoyant encourager and long-sighted inspirer and patron of the Italian edition of “Opere di Bernard J. F. Lonergan”, and desired to give his enlightening contribution at this International Workshop.

I must also give my warmest thanks to the illustrious speakers of the Workshop, who have come to the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici from various Institutes and Centres all over the world where Lonergan’s thought continues to be expounded, and who honour us with their presence and expert contribution.

Lastly, I would like to heartily encourage my friend, Professor Saturnino Muratore, who is directing this Workshop and has wished to dedicate all his energies to the critical Italian translation of the greatest philosophical work of Bernard Lonergan: *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*.

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What is striking about the scientific corpus of the Canadian Jesuit, Bernard J. F. Lonergan, who died in 1984 and whose numerous works have dealt with problems in philosophy, theology, methodology, and economy, is: both the breadth of his range of interests as well as the radical level of his reflections; the continuation with the great classical tradition with an ability to be contemporary with the cultural evolution of the West, along with the courage to look ahead and into the future; an outlook towards modern philosophy and science that is somewhat rare for an ecclesiastic, which was never that of a rejection or opposition, but of openness and appreciation.

The Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici recognizes the tremendous value of this author, and has enthusiastically welcomed the proposal – endorsed by the General Editors, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, of the “Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan” – to be part of the team promoting the series “Opere di Bernard J. F. Lonergan”, with Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini as patron, and Natalino Spaccapelo and Saturnino Muratore as editors, which is in the process of being published by Città Nuova as the Italian translation of the twenty-five volume English series published by University of Toronto Press.

The Istituto has also been aware of the need for a new and rigorous Italian translation of *Insight*, the most important philosophical work of Lonergan, and *Method in Theology*. Thus, it promoted a research, entrusted to Saturnino Muratore, whose aim is to produce editions which include original critical editors’ notes, which should take into consideration the evolution of the author’s thought and show his direct or indirect links with other authors in the philosophical and scientific field. The publication of *Insight. Uno studio del comprendere umano* in 2007 – the fiftieth anniversary of its original publication –, thanks to the initiative taken by Muratore and Spaccapelo, is the product of that research, while it constitutes a suitable tool for further and deeper study of Lonergan’s thought and an indispensable introduction for a critical Italian edition of *Method in Theology*.

The Italian reader is able to appreciate an invaluable contribution to the study of the dynamics of knowing, an important work for the advancement in reflection on what constitutes the basis of critical realism in philosophy. This work gives more importance to an epistemological form, and attempts to establish a metaphysics and an ethics; it is characterized by a methodological rigor and the radical nature of its themes, while it is a witness of the author’s ability to shift from scientific thought and common sense to the realms of religion and theology, which incarnates the needs of a generalist philosopher. With the vigour of his reflections, Lonergan, on the one hand, questions religious thought, which could run the risk of fragmenting into specializations, the prevailing of praxis and, occasionally, the fear to think. On the other hand, he challenges the secular world; this world has, in Italy, created a sense of mistrust in strong thinking and a disregard for basic scientific undertakings.

The promotion of this thinker and scholar in Italy, who is so unusual and innovative, is something the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici will do with great pleasure and conviction. The Istituto hopes that all those who have offered and will offer their contribution to this undertaking will see the completion of this work despite all the difficulties and unforeseen problems. In an age of profound crisis in thought and fragmentation of culture, one hopes that the voice and example of a master such as Bernard Lonergan will not lose their impact as time goes on, and that the many scholars who have appreciated his teaching will continue to keeping it alive.

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As for the magisterial lecture of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, which is to be seen as a preeminent opening to the Workshop and a starting point for the other lectures, I received a letter from the Cardinal informing how an unexpected duty has impeded his presence here today. I am now going to read the essential parts of this letter.

\*\*\*

Dear President Adv. Gerardo Marotta,

[...] first of all I desire to thank you for your personal commitment to making Bernard Lonergan's thought better known. It is important that this thought be known not only in religious but also in secular circles. In fact, he represents a link between ancient thought and the thought which has matured in recent times, in an age of great scientific discoveries. His critical thought gives the ability of analysing the different jargon of each science; this leads one to find in oneself the confidence to formulate a sound judgment and maintain a responsible decision.

For this, I myself gladly would have come to Naples to discuss some aspects of this thinker, beginning especially with his recently published book in a critically revised Italian translation, entitled *Insight. Uno studio del comprendere umano*. Unfortunately, [... commitments that I cannot put off ... have] forced me to lay aside all other projects. [...] I have done everything possible to figure out [the way ...] of being in Naples on the 13th or 15th May. But here also, problems of old age and health have intervened making [another] journey impossible [in such short period]. [...] I send you [...] a written text, that can be read by a professor attending the workshop during the 30 minutes that would have been allowed to me.

[...] I conclude thanking you again for your courtesy [...].

Yours cordially  
+ Carlo Maria card. Martini

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At this point I ask Professor Elizabeth A. Murray, who is the Chairperson of this Session, to invite the Professor Adolfo Russo, Dean of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy, to read the written lecture of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, which he wanted to be sent to this International Workshop on the thought of Lonergan.



# THE VALUE OF THE THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN TODAY

*Magisterial Lecture*

CARLO MARIA CARDINAL MARTINI

*Jerusalem, Israel*

I cordially greet and thank the President of the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Advocate Gerardo Marotta, for his invitation to speak in this prestigious site for the event of the critical Italian edition of B. Lonergan's masterpiece *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*.

I would also like to apologize for not being able to read these pages in person, as I would have liked to do so much. However, a convocation from high places forces me to be elsewhere at this moment, and I would like to express my regret at not being able to be personally present.

It may seem strange, and really is, to be invited to speak about the value of the thought of a philosopher while I myself am not a philosopher. Actually, I must confess that the first years I had dedicated to theoretical philosophy (from the distant years of 1949 to 1951) neither gave me many good memories, nor do I consider them the most productive years of my life. After my philosophical studies, I devoted myself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, finding great joy in delving into and teaching the Word of God. Moreover, I became particularly interested in the history of ancient manuscripts and their textual traditions. Through this, I have been able to work on recently rediscovered manuscripts, comparing them to the most ancient copies. Thus, I have had the opportunity of having the experience of enlightening, which the philosopher Bernard Lonergan denoted as "insight" and placed at the centre of his thought; this offers contemporary man a paradigm when doing research that is capable of meeting the challenges of the present world. I will come back to this later.

At the time, I was not became aware of this fact. I continued to work in biblical textual criticism up until my obedience to the Holy Father, John Paul II, made me totally change the nature of my interests and activities; I was designated as Archbishop of one of the largest dioceses in the world, the Archdiocese of Milan,

where I remained for 22 years. There the problems were completely different, but not entirely.

I soon realized that at the the root of many questions lay a problem of language, and ultimately a problem of method. It was then that I discovered some of Lonergan's most fundamental philosophical intuitions. I discovered pages of philosophy which were up until enshrouded; instead, they were imbued with a remarkable validity and relevance, and were capable of dealing with the many problems, or pseudo-problems, of contemporary man.

Bearing in mind all what I have said, one can understand how, in highlighting the value of Lonergan's thought for our times, I will not appeal to the reasoning which most philosophers and scholars of civilization would employ. They usually start off contemplating our era's crisis, denounced by some authors as being a dangerous devolution of the West. They indicate how a philosophy or current of thought contains elements that can act as a remedy to some aspects of such a crisis. What will follow is the relevance and importance of this current of thought or philosophy.

Neither would I like to imitate others, especially sociologists, who carefully analyse the characteristics of the contemporary world, especially when it belongs to what is called "postmodernity". Thus, the categories that are examined include: secularization; the self-affirmation of the human subject; the locality as opposed to globality; the emergence of subjectivity as opposed to the objectivity of tradition; the rejection of metaphysics, etc. From this, there turn out the relevance and importance of a philosophical doctrine which allows one to best understand such characteristics and provide an adequate answer to the problems that so emerge.

These two paths can both be trod upon, and they have been trodden by illustrious scholars. However, I do not believe they pertain to me, and therefore I will gladly leave them to others.

I would like to, above all, explain how I came to be aware of what Lonergan calls the transcendental method, grasping its consequences for the rest of philosophy and understanding, at this juncture, the novelty of the thought of this philosopher. Lonergan dedicates a good portion of his book *Insight* in examining how the different sciences reach their conclusions. It could be said that these first chapters form an ample phenomenological overview of the ways through which, in different fields of research, one arrives at conclusions that are certain or at least probable. With this in mind, various aspects of knowledges in mathematics and physics are examined, along with the certainties or probabilities empirically-gathered, which make up what is called "common sense". What emerges bit by bit from this analysis is that the general method by which the human intellect reaches valid conclusions, in any field, passes through analogous paths. These are summarized by Lonergan in three successive and cumulative moments: one goes from attentively observation

phenomena to getting an intuition (“insight”), which then needs to be examined and verified. Once all the possible explanations of the phenomenon have been analysed and only one explanation can adequately answer all the verification’s demands, one can then reach a certain or probable judgment depending on the nature of the case.

Comparing this process, which I have briefly summarized, to the various phases of my research, I saw myself being mirrored precisely by that general method, which I had applied without having theorized it. I found that this method described the same steps which I had used in my doctoral dissertation at the Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Rome, whilst studying the nature of the text of Papyrus Bodmer XV (a codex dating from 2nd-3rd century, which contains the oldest text of the gospel according to Luke) in relation with the text of the Vatican Greek Codex 1209 (B) dating from the 4th century. Thus, I became aware of the structure of knowing, which one applies to a thousand different arguments while following one fundamental path, and I gained great confidence in my conclusions. I also realized that the “truth” is not only “objective” (for which it would be enough to pay attention to “what is out there”), but also subjective, as the famous saying of Saint Augustine: *«in interiore homine habitat veritas»*.

I actually arrived to understand, through the analysis of the process of human knowing, that this process has a universality and a transcendence which allow it to be applied to every path of knowing, regardless the differences of the subject. It was thus possible for me to understand the harsh criticism which Lonergan levied against any process of knowing which limited itself to “look at what is out there”, while every real process of knowing is not a “simple look”, however deep and detached it is, but the beginning of a process which ends in the judgment.

The pure and detached desire to know, which is at the base of this process, shapes, in the path of a person, an overcoming of oneself, which allows to value data not only of philosophical nature, but data coming from other sciences and experiences, such as psychology and the science of interior life. Lonergan dedicates many pages to the study of such mental states that cloud proper judgment, even unconsciously. Thus he deals with “scotosis”, “repression”, “inhibition”, etc. One sees which and how many premises form the conditions for a honest judgment, above all when one has to resist already received notions which are too simple and superficial.

For me personally, I am neither a philosopher or pure scientist, and such other data are those which profoundly interest me, since they demonstrate the vastness with which a given thought touches and stimulates deep experiences in the human being. Here I would like to underline two more points: that of manifold conversions, and that of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is a common knowledge the general meaning of “conversion”, a changing in



direction, a consequent opening of oneself to new horizons. For Lonergan, this term is neither restricted to religious conversion (placing God above every good), nor to a moral conversion (deciding for the good of all, even if I lose out); rather, it also includes that which he calls “intellectual conversion”, which is overcoming the empirical identity between seeing attentively and knowing, in order to accept that the process of knowing is more articulate and complex and that only at its end can we say to know something with at least some probability.

Human knowing therefore is not a simple element; rather, it brings about a dynamism in the human being; only at the end of a journey, in which one overcomes oneself, one’s scotoma, and one’s negative feelings, can one arrive at a sound judgment that is either certain or at least probable. Therefore, one somehow deals with an “ascesis” of thought which puts human being in position to grasp the truth.

This vision, which evidences a certain transcendence of being, is closely tied to a type of “mystical” vision of human existence. This puts God’s love in first place, a love poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. In particular, the fifth verse of the fifth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans is cited: «God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us». Lonergan indicates in several places that the axiom «*Nihil volitum quin praecognitum*» («nothing is wished if it is not been known before») holds always true, but this law has one important exception: men and women fall in love and the fact of falling in love goes beyond what they previously did know. This applies *a fortiori* regarding the knowledge of God, who is first a gift to the believer by way of the Holy Spirit, then becomes a dynamic force of growth in knowledge and love.

At last I had run into a philosopher who gave primary importance to the experience of God, or, as he himself put it, the falling in love with God, and viewed everything deriving from that fundamental experience. Such experience is what permits ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, where one is not dealing solely with comparing doctrines, but searching for the base of a common experience. The same could be said of inter-ecclesial dialogue. And since this was the view of existence that my twenty-plus years as Bishop gave me, I can say that I found Lonergan to be a philosopher who was not only able to explain the long journey of knowledge, and so compare the different languages and interpretative methods, but also to account for the basic mystical experience that constitutes the essence of every human existence.

# THE ABIDING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ETHICS OF *INSIGHT*

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The problem that I wish to address can be specified by adverting to Bernard Lonergan's acknowledgment in his 1973 paper 'Insight Revisited' that significant developments had taken place in his articulation of the notion of the good between the publication of *Insight* and the completion of *Method in Theology*. There has been something of a tendency among Lonergan students to see this admission as an indication that in Lonergan's later view chapter 2 of *Method* should replace chapter 18 of *Insight*. No matter what Lonergan's position on this question was, I wish to suggest that simply replacing the position of *Insight* with that of *Method* would result in a position on the good and on decision that is just as incomplete as would be the position one would entertain were one to refuse to consider any account other than the one presented in *Insight*. My position is that there is a limited validity to both accounts, and the limit is imposed not by the objective content of the accounts themselves but by the state of the human subject who would employ either method in making a decision.<sup>1</sup>

My paper has three parts. In the first, I summarize conclusions reached in earlier work to the effect that the ethics of chapter 18 of *Insight* presents in philosophic terms the general form of the method of making decisions that St Ignatius Loyola calls the 'third time of election,' while the ethics of *Method in Theology* presents in philosophic terms the general form of St Ignatius's 'second time.' Since each 'time' has a limited validity, each of Lonergan's accounts of the good and of decision would also have its proper justification. This will constitute my first argument for the abiding significance of the ethics of *Insight*. A second

<sup>1</sup> My interest focuses on the respective notions of the good in *Insight* and *Method in Theology* and on the suggested structures of rational self-consciousness (*Insight*) or existential responsibility (*Method in Theology*) corresponding to these respective notions. Recently Patrick Byrne has provided a valuable commentary on and critique of the argument of chapter 18 of *Insight* with which I concur, but far from criticizing the identification of the good with the intelligent and reasonable Byrne's article strengthens Lonergan's argument in favor of that identification. I hope to make a limited contribution in the same direction. See Patrick Byrne, 'The Goodness of Being in Lonergan's *Insight*,' *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (2007) 43-72.

argument for the continued validity of the approach taken in chapter 18 of *Insight* lies in the fact that the chapter displays the dynamic consciousness that is employed in the psychological Trinitarian analogy found in Lonergan's work, and especially in *De Deo Trino: Pars systematica* (now available with English facing pages as volume 12 of Lonergan's Collected Works, *The Triune God: Systematics*). In fact, this early analogy of Lonergan's may prove to be of assistance in filling some lacunae in *Insight*'s account of the dynamic structure of the relation between knowing and deciding.<sup>2</sup> In the third part, I argue that the notion of existential autonomy presented in *The Triune God: Systematics*, which relies on and in some ways expands the account of dynamic consciousness that is found in chapter 18 of *Insight*, is necessary if Lonergan's intentionality analysis is to be integrated with René Girard's 'interindividual psychology.' Such an integration is important if I am correct in my view that two of the most important intellectual breakthroughs to come from Catholic thinkers in the twentieth century – breakthroughs for culture in general and not simply for the Church – are Lonergan's intentionality analysis and Girard's mimetic theory. It is significant that these breakthroughs are both studies of desire. Integrating them with one another will provide, I believe, a more complete account of human desire than either of them alone offers. Moreover, the anticipation of that more complete account will bring our reflections full circle, returning us to the theme of discernment with which we began, since Lonergan and Girard together can greatly advance the Catholic tradition's understanding of what Ignatian language has called the discernment of spirits. The advance is by way of shifting the articulation of our understanding of discernment from description to explanation.

Because the first two sections represent summary statements of positions that I have articulated more fully in other publications, while the third section presents the major field of my present research and thinking, I will devote more attention to the third section than to the first two.

### **1. The Ethics of *Insight* and St Ignatius Loyola's 'Third Time of Election'**

In this section I wish to review and summarize work linking Lonergan's two accounts of ethics with St Ignatius Loyola's times of election. More precisely, because of time constraints I will limit these considerations to the connection I have suggested between chapter 18 of *Insight* and the third time of election in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, barely mentioning a similar connection between chapter 2 of *Method in Theology* and St Ignatius's second time of election.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These lacunae are spotted incisively in Byrne's article mentioned in the previous note.

<sup>3</sup> For the fuller account, see Robert M. Doran, 'Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan,' *Toronto Journal of Theology* 22:1 (2006) 39-54; 'Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan: Revisiting a Topic That Deserves Further Reflection,' *Lonergan Workshop* 19, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, Lonergan's acknowledgment in 1973 that significant developments had taken place in his articulation of the notion of the good between the publication of *Insight* and the completion of *Method in Theology* has led some interpreters to suppose that Lonergan wished to replace the approach to ethics in *Insight* with that found in *Method*. My position is that there is a limited validity to both accounts, and the limit is imposed by the state of the human subject making a decision at a given point in his or her life.

Because I have gone into a fair amount of detail on this question in other presentations, I will be very brief here in summarizing my position. A number of years ago it occurred to me that there might be some correspondence between Lonergan's two accounts of the human good and of decision and St Ignatius Loyola's times of election, as proposed in his *Spiritual Exercises*. I first suggested these connections in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*,<sup>4</sup> and have developed them considerably in the past few years. St Ignatius proposes in the *Exercises* three times for making a 'sound and good election.'<sup>5</sup> Each of these 'times' is really a mode of proceeding, and in each case the mode of proceeding depends on the interior state in which one finds oneself when one is faced with having to make a decision. The three modes of proceeding are all valid, but only one of them will be proper or useful at a given time, and what determines the mode one will employ is precisely the interior conditions in which one finds oneself: in Heidegger's term, one's *Befindlichkeit*.<sup>6</sup> The first time is exemplified in St Paul and St Matthew, who were so moved that there was no possibility of doubt as to what they were to do. The second time calls for the discernment of the pulls and counterpulls of affectivity, in the reading of consolations and desolations. In the third time, one is tranquil, and so is free to employ one's intelligence, rationality, and moral existential responsibility, one's 'natural powers,' freely and quietly.

The three times are exhaustive. Either God has so moved one that there are no further questions, or this has not happened. If it has not happened, either one is pulled in various directions affectively, or one is not. If one is, one is in St Ignatius's

College, 2006) 83-106; 'Discernment and Lonergan's Fourth Level of Consciousness,' *Gregorianum* 89:4 (2008) 790-802.

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, 2001) 57-58, 87-88.

<sup>5</sup> *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, trans. Henry Keane, S.J. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1952) 61.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) index, 'state-of-mind.' A former student of mine, Ravi Michael Louis, S.J., has argued that the basic *Sorge* is really discernment. This argument appeared in an unpublished paper that he wrote for a course that I taught, 'The Christian Imagination: Some Operative Symbols.' This connects with my use in *Theology and the Dialectics of History* of Eric Voegelin's phrase 'the search for direction in the movement of life.' See Eric Voegelin, 'The Gospel and Culture,' in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian, vol. 2 (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971) passim.

second time, and one relies on the various suggestions provided for discerning the pulls and counterpulls of affective inclinations in order to determine where they lead and whether they lead to what is truly or only apparently good. If one is not, one is in St Ignatius's third time, and relies on one's native powers of intelligence and reason and on the inner demand for consistency between what one knows and what one does.

That St Ignatius's third time corresponds to *Insight's* account of the good and of decision is confirmed by the two methods the Saint proposes for making an election in the third time. For each of them is a matter of being 'intelligent and reasonable,' which is exactly how Lonergan describes the good as it is presented in *Insight*.<sup>7</sup> In the first method, one weighs, in the light of the service of God, the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives, precisely to see 'to which side reason most inclines.'<sup>8</sup> And in the second, one imagines oneself counseling another on the same issues and asks oneself what one would advise the other to do, or one imagines oneself at the point of death or at the day of judgment, and then one asks oneself what one would wish one had done. In either case, one's decision flows from reasonable judgment based on a grasp of evidence. In the language of *Insight*, 'the value is the good as the possible object of rational choice.'<sup>9</sup>

I note here especially Lonergan's use of the word 'value,' for while there is no mention of *judgments* of value in *Insight* except in the discussion of belief in chapter 20, still there is in *Insight* a *notion* of value. Section 1.3 of chapter 18 is entitled 'The Notion of Value,' and it is clear in reading that section that the phrase means 'the dynamic exigence of rational consciousness for self-consistency' between knowing and doing.<sup>10</sup> This is precisely the exigence that governs St Ignatius's 'third time of election.' One questions 'to which side reason most inclines,' and once that question has been answered, one experiences a moral exigence to act accordingly. The question, To which side does reason most incline? is answered in what Lonergan in *Insight* calls 'the practical insight' (section 2.3) and 'practical reflection' (section 2.4), both of which lead to a judgment concerning the reasonable possibility of a certain course of action. The judgment is not called a judgment of value or even a practical judgment, but simply a judgment.<sup>11</sup> It is such considerations as these

<sup>7</sup> 'In *Insight* the good was the intelligent and reasonable.' Bernard Lonergan, '*Insight* Revited,' in *A Second Collection*, ed. William F.J Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 277. Byrne's article refers to the list of questions that Lonergan suggests the subject might ask, questions that complement those suggested by St Ignatius in his presentation of the third time.

<sup>8</sup> *Spiritual Exercises* 63.

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 624.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 625.

<sup>11</sup> There is a fascinating study waiting to be made of the development of Lonergan's thought on judgments of value. I do not think that the position on judgments of value that is expressed in *Method in*

that have led me to suggest that chapter 18 of *Insight* be regarded as presenting in philosophical terms the general form of St Ignatius's third time of election. And if that is correct, then we have a first argument for the permanent validity of *Insight's* account of the good and of human decision.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The Ethics of *Insight* and the Psychological Analogy

My second argument for the permanent validity of the ethical position presented in *Insight* appeals to the role that this position plays in establishing the contours of the psychological analogy for the Trinitarian processions presented in *The Triune God: Systematics*, that is, in Lonergan's two Latin treatises in Trinitarian systematics, *Divinarum personarum* and *De Deo Trino: Pars systematica*. More precisely, Lonergan's two accounts of decision provide, respectively, the elements of two distinct but complementary approaches to a psychological analogy for a systematic understanding of Trinitarian processions and relations. But again, time constraints do not permit me to go into detail on the correlation between *Method's* account of decision and Lonergan's later articulation of the psychological analogy.<sup>13</sup>

In the first psychological analogy found in Lonergan's work, which is the

*Theology* emerged until about 1967. The expression occurs earlier, of course, but either in the context of the discussion of belief, where one makes 'a judgment on the value of deciding to believe with certitude or with probability that some proposition certainly or probably is true or false' (*Insight* 730), or as a term to describe the same judgment that is spoken of simply as a judgment in chapter 18 of *Insight*. There is an evolution of the latter usage from the 'iudicium practicum seu iudicium valoris' of *Divinarum personarum conceptio analogica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957, 1959) to the simple 'iudicium valoris' of *De Deo Trino: Pars systematica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964). See Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 181. See also Byrne, 'The Goodness of Being in Lonergan's *Insight*' 59-60.

<sup>12</sup> A related issue concerns the so-called 'fourth level of consciousness.' It is well known that there is no explicit mention of a fourth level in *Insight*. If in fact the account of decision in *Insight* does imply the affirmation of a fourth level, that level would consist *only* of the further element of free choice that *Insight* adds to the cognitional process of experience, understanding, and judgment. The mode of proceeding that is suggested in *Method in Theology*, which I suggest presents in philosophical terms the general form of St Ignatius's second time of election, entails a far more fulsome fourth level, which emerges when and only when one is proceeding according to this mode. The fourth level would include everything from the apprehension of possible values in feelings, through the discernment of these feelings and the judgment of value that concludes the process of discernment, to the decision itself. There remains the further question, however, which I raised in a recent article, as to whether we must dispense with 'level' language entirely and simply talk about sublating and sublated operations and states. See Robert M. Doran, 'Addressing the Four-point Hypothesis,' *Theological Studies* 68 (2007) 680. I believe too much ink has been spilled over the question of how many levels there are; the spatial metaphor is interfering with the real question of sublating and sublated operations and states.

<sup>13</sup> For more on this question, see Doran, 'Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan: Revisiting a Topic That Deserves Further Reflection' 96-99. See also Robert M. Doran, 'Being in Love with God: A Source of Analogies for Theological Understanding,' *Irish Theological Quarterly* 73 (2008) 227-42.

analogy that he has developed most fully, the analogue in the creature is found in those moments of existential self-constitution in which the subject grasps the sufficiency of evidence regarding what it would be good for one to be, utters the judgment of value, ‘This is good,’ and proceeds to decisions commensurate with that grasp of evidence and judgment of value. The analogy is in the order of existential self-constitution or of what in *The Triune God: Systematics* Lonergan calls ‘existential autonomy.’ We will investigate the notion of autonomy more in the next section. It is sufficient at present to acknowledge that, from the act of grasping the evidence, there proceeds the act of judging value, and from the two acts together there proceeds the love that embraces the good and carries it out. This is precisely the account of decision presented in *Insight*, even if the wording is different. The analogy consists in the fact that in divine self-constitution, from the Father’s grasp of the grounds for affirming the goodness of all that the Father is and knows, there proceeds the eternal Word of the Father saying Yes to it all, a Word that is a judgment of value,<sup>14</sup> and from the Father and the Word together there proceeds the eternal Love that is the Holy Spirit. This theology of God’s own self-constitution in knowledge, word, and love is informed by an analogy with human rational self-consciousness as Lonergan has understood the latter in *Insight*. One’s self-appropriation of one’s rational self-consciousness in the form in which it is presented in *Insight*, or again as it functions in a commonsense mode in St Ignatius’s presentation of the ‘third time’ of election, thus entails the recognition that those processes, those processions, that mode of making a decision, constitute an *image* of the Trinitarian processions themselves.

While I cannot here go into detail regarding Lonergan’s second articulation of the psychological analogy,<sup>15</sup> the analogy is that, as moral integrity in the account in *Method* is a function of generating the judgments of value of a person who is in love in an unqualified way, and as those judgments of value are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving, so the Father is infinite and eternal being-in-love, an *agapē* that generates a Word, the eternal Yes that is the Son, a Word that breathes love, a Yes that grounds the Proceeding Love that is breathed forth as from *agapē* and from its manifestation in such a Word. While the being-in-love that provides the starting point of the analogy may be any of the three variants of love that Lonergan

<sup>14</sup> See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 181.

<sup>15</sup> The principal difference is in the starting point of the analogy. ‘The psychological analogy [...] has its starting point in that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love. Such love manifests itself in its judgments of value. And the judgments are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving. Such is the analogy found in the creature.

‘Now in God the origin is the Father, in the New Testament named *ho Theos*, who is identified with *agapē* (1 John 4:8, 16). Such love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value. The judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit.’ Bernard Lonergan, ‘Christology Today: Methodological Considerations,’ in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985) 93.

acknowledges – love in the family, love in the community, and the unrestricted being-in-love that is sanctifying grace – the possibility *is* open for an analogy in the order of grace itself. The dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified way is what theology has traditionally called sanctifying grace, and Lonergan speaks of sanctifying grace as a created participation in and imitation of the active spiration of Father and Word lovingly breathing the Holy Spirit, while the habit of charity that flows from sanctifying grace is a created participation in and imitation of the passive spiration, the divine Proceeding Love, that is the Holy Spirit. This is one way of understanding the relation of *gratia operans* and *gratia cooperans* in the order of habitual grace.

I have argued that it may be quite fruitful in many ways for us to pursue this possibility and to detail as precisely as we can the processions of act from act that would constitute *emanatio intelligibilis* in the order of grace.<sup>16</sup> However, Lonergan is very clear in his agreement with the First Vatican Council that appropriate theological analogies are from what is naturally known, and so while there may be analogies within the supernatural order of the mysteries themselves, and while it may be fruitful in the contemporary theological scene to stress these analogies – I am thinking here especially of furthering the possibilities between students of Lonergan and those of Hans Urs von Balthasar – still even these must be derived from the analogy with naturally known realities. Here is where the first psychological analogy in Lonergan’s work shows its permanent significance. If there are indeed processions of act from act in the supernatural order, these can nevertheless be understood only by analogy with processions of act from act in human intelligent, rational, and moral consciousness. The argument can be made that nowhere in the theological literature is there a clearer articulation of what precisely is meant by the *emanatio intelligibilis* that constitutes the psychological analogy than in Lonergan’s work. The most significant aspect of that claim for my present purpose is that it is precisely the account of decision presented in *Insight* that provides Lonergan’s first psychological analogy from what is naturally known.

This constitutes a second, theological argument for the permanent validity of chapter 18 of *Insight*.

### **3. Existential Autonomy and Interdividuality**

I begin this section with a statement of psychiatrist Jean-Michel Oughourlian, in the dialogical encounter with René Girard published as *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*: ‘[...] the real human *subject* can only come out of the rule

<sup>16</sup> See Robert M. Doran, ‘Being in Love with God: A Source of Analogies for Theological Understanding.’



of the Kingdom; apart from this rule, there is never anything but mimetism and the “interdividual.” Until this happens, the only subject is the mimetic structure.’<sup>17</sup>

The phrase ‘the mimetic structure’ refers to the account of acquisitive desire that Girard has been exposing for several decades, in various works of literary criticism, anthropology, psychology, and theological reflection. Very briefly, many of our desires are neither as spontaneous nor as autonomous as we like to believe, but originate rather in the desire of another whom we take as a model or mediator of our own desire. When the desire is acquisitive, that is, when I want what you have or want because you have or want it, the other becomes the rival, and attention is gradually removed from the object of the respective desires to focus more or less exclusively on the rivalry between the model and the imitator. Acquisitive mimesis has become conflictual mimesis, and conflictual mimesis is contagious within a community, leading eventually to the selection of an arbitrary victim or scapegoat, whose immolation, exclusion, or marginalization from the community restores peace at least temporarily and avoids the danger of escalating violence in the community.

One possible initial heuristic structure for integrating the respective studies of human desire composed by Bernard Lonergan and René Girard may be specified by reference to a quotation from *The Triune God: Systematics*: ‘[...] we are conscious in two ways: in one way, through our sensibility, we undergo rather passively what we sense and imagine, our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness; in another way, through our intellectuality, we are more active when we consciously inquire in order to understand, understand in order to utter a word, weigh evidence in order to judge, deliberate in order to choose, and exercise our will in order to act.’<sup>18</sup>

The first way of being conscious is sensitive or psychic; the second is intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Both ways of being conscious are also ways of desiring. The first entails a preponderance of ‘undergoing,’ while the second, though it surely involves passivity – ‘intelligere est quoddam pati,’ Lonergan repeats from Aquinas<sup>19</sup> – stresses as well and indeed highlights the self-governed and self-possessed unfolding of operations that is indicated by Lonergan’s repetition of the phrase ‘in order to ...’ The first way appears more spontaneous, though if the ‘undergoing’ is interdividual this may be an illusion. The second shows greater autonomy, but only if it manifests what Oughourlian calls ‘the real human subject,’ the subject that has transcended the influence of the mimetic, however precariously. For the two ways

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Michel Oughourlian, in René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987) 199, emphasis in the text. Girard’s response (*ibid.*): ‘That is quite right.’

<sup>18</sup> Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 139.

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* 142, quoting Thomas Aquinas, *Super I Sententiarum*, d. 8, q. 3, a. 2 sol, who himself is quoting Aristotle, *De anima*, III, 4, 429a 13-15.

of being conscious interact, and the relative autonomy of the second way may be compromised by the gradual infiltration of mimetic desire into the performance of spiritual operations. A clear instance of how this may happen is illustrated by expanding on a comment in Max Scheler's essay on *ressentiment*, an essay which may justly be interpreted, I believe, as foreshadowing Girard's work, in that Girard adds the crucial piece regarding mimesis. Scheler writes,

Beyond all conscious lying and falsifying, there is a deeper 'organic mendacity.' Here the falsification is not formed in consciousness but at the same stage of the mental process as the impressions and value feelings themselves: *on the road* of experience into consciousness. There is 'organic mendacity' whenever a man's mind admits only those impressions and feelings which serve his 'interest' or his instinctive attitude. Already in the process of mental reproduction and recollection, the contents of his experience are modified in this direction. He who is 'mendacious' has no need to lie! In his case, the automatic process of forming recollections, impressions, and feelings is involuntarily slanted, so that conscious falsification becomes unnecessary.<sup>20</sup>

The expansion on this comment that I have in mind would stress that the very processions of act from act at the levels of intelligence, reason, and decision – the emergence of a word from insight, the emanation of a judgment from reflective grasp, the procession of a decision from the preceding acts – have already been derailed by an earlier distortion that reaches into the organic interdividuality of the less than 'real human subject' and occasions a deviation in the emergence of act from the potentiality of underlying manifolds all along the line. The distortion of the emergence of act from potency gives rise to a distortion also in the emergence of act from act.<sup>21</sup>

The first way of being conscious and of desiring is more (though not exclusively) characterized by the emergence of act from potency, and the second more (though not exclusively) by the emergence of act from act, by *emanatio intelligibilis*, intelligible emanation or what I prefer to call autonomous spiritual procession. Girard specializes in clarifying the first of these ways of being conscious, emphasizing its intersubjective or 'interdividual' character, while Lonergan has explored the second perhaps more acutely and thoroughly (to say nothing of more accurately) than any other thinker.

Precisely because of the interplay between these two dimensions of interiority and desire, Girard regards as illusory most of our attempts to describe our acts, including our intentional operations, as either spontaneous or autonomous. In the first book-length presentation of his theory of mimetic desire, *Mensonge*

<sup>20</sup> Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. William W. Holdheim (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) 77-78.

<sup>21</sup> Questions raised by Fred Lawrence prompted this articulation, which needs further development.

*romantique et vérité romanesque*, translated into English as *Deceit, Desire and the Novel*, he speaks of the illusion that our desires are spontaneous inclinations toward attractive objects.<sup>22</sup> But the same illusion is spoken of there as the ‘illusion of autonomy.’<sup>23</sup> As an illusion of spontaneity, the desire is imagined to be ‘deeply rooted in the object and in this object alone.’<sup>24</sup> As an illusion of autonomy, it is thought to be ‘rooted in the subject.’ In fact the two delineations of the illusion cover over the same fact, namely, that the desire has been mediated by another and is contaminated by mimetic contagion.

In a recent paper delivered at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, I proposed some considerations to enable us to make our way through these complex relations. I will repeat these suggestions here in summary fashion.

First, Lonergan speaks of the need for a fourfold differentiation of consciousness required if we are to replace classicism with an acceptable *Weltanschauung* for our time, in which ‘the workings of common sense, science, scholarship, intentionality analysis, and the life of prayer have been integrated.’<sup>25</sup> But as I have attempted to argue from the beginning of my own work, ‘intentionality analysis’ is one dimension of ‘interiority analysis,’ but not the only one. There is also the sensitive-psychological dimension, the conjugate intelligibilities that, if Girard is correct, reside largely in the intersubjective roots of Lonergan’s first ‘way of being conscious.’ But in this context the word ‘autonomy’ can take on an added significance, beyond the salutary hermeneutic of suspicion that Girard exercises with regard to our illusions. There is a discussion of existential autonomy that appears in Lonergan’s presentation of his analogy for the Trinitarian processions, and again it is rooted in the rational exigence for self-consistency between knowing and doing that constitutes the notion of value in the ethics of *Insight*.

Lonergan reaches a clear specification of the proper Trinitarian analogy through a series of disjunctions. The disjunctions, he says, will provide a set of criteria by which we may discern whether any given analogy is appropriate or not. The first six of these disjunctions may be treated very briefly.

In the first disjunction Lonergan establishes that we must move from the appropriation of some concrete mode of procession in human consciousness, rather than from an abstract definition of procession; in the second that any knowledge of divine procession must be analogical; in the third that the analogy must be systematic, that is, capable of resolving every other theoretical question in

<sup>22</sup> René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1976) 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Lonergan, ‘Doctrinal Pluralism,’ in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

Trinitarian theology; in the fourth that the analogy must be from what is naturally known; the fifth establishes that it must be from a specific nature, not from metaphysical common notions as in natural theology; and the sixth that that nature must be spiritual.

The seventh disjunction brings us closer to the notion of autonomy. The seventh disjunction is between those spiritual processions in which act proceeds from potency and those in which act proceeds from act. Since in God there is only act, only the latter processions in human consciousness will provide an appropriate analogy. 'The analogy [...] must be selected from the conscious originating of a real, natural, and conscious act, from a real, natural, and conscious act, within intellectual consciousness itself and by virtue of intellectual consciousness itself.'<sup>26</sup> Such are the procession of conceptual syntheses from direct understanding, the procession of judgments of fact and of value from the grasp of sufficient grounds, and the procession of decisions from reflective grasp and the inner word of judgment that follows upon it.

The eighth disjunction is between an *appropriation* of the dynamics of intellectual consciousness and a more distant metaphysical statement of cognitional fact. Only appropriation can enable us to distinguish the autonomous intellectual procession of act from act under the power of transcendental laws from the spontaneous intellectual procession of act from potency and from the spontaneous sensitive processions of act from both potency and act in accord with the laws specific to continuations of prehuman processes such as those manifested in primordial human intersubjectivity. Note that Lonergan has here introduced his own meaning for the words 'spontaneous' and 'autonomous.' By 'autonomous intellectual procession of act from act' he is referring to a consciousness that is under rule or law only inasmuch as it is constituted by its own transcendental desire, to which there are attached what he came to call the transcendental precepts. But by fidelity to these precepts such a consciousness 'rules itself inasmuch as under God's agency it determines itself to its own acts in accordance with the exigencies' of intelligence, rationality, and existential responsibility.<sup>27</sup>

This, I propose, is the autonomy of what Oughourlian called the 'real human subject.' It does proceed from an intellectual spontaneity, namely, the conscious transcendental notion of being that is the native desire to know and the conscious transcendental notion of value that extends that native desire by force of a further question, a question in the existential order. But that spontaneity becomes preceptive, and this is what converts the spontaneity into a genuine autonomy: not only *do* we raise questions, we must raise them; not only *do* we doubt, we must doubt; not only *do* we deliberate, we must deliberate. We must raise questions lest

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 175.

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

we pass judgment on what we do not understand; we must raise doubts lest we adhere to a false appearance of truth; we must deliberate lest we rush headlong to our own destruction.<sup>28</sup> And it is in fidelity to the *must*, to the exigency into which the spontaneity has been transformed, that there emerges the only genuine autonomy of which the human subject is capable. That autonomy governs only some of the processions that occur in intelligent, rational, responsible consciousness, those processions in which act proceeds not from potency but from act. Such is the case with the autonomy of freedom whenever we choose *because* we ourselves judge and *because* our choice is in accordance with our judgment; such is the case with the autonomy of rationality whenever we judge *because* we grasp the evidence and *because* our judgment is in accord with the grasped evidence; such is the case with the autonomy of clarity whenever we define *because* we grasp the intelligible in the sensible and *because* our definition is in accord with grasped intelligibility.<sup>29</sup> And it is only in the procession of act from act, and not in the procession of act from potency as in the emergence of insight from questions, that the proper analogy is found for understanding, however remotely, the Trinitarian processions: ‘as is the case when a word arises by virtue of consciousness as determined by the act of understanding, and a choice arises by virtue of consciousness as determined by the act of judgment (that is, by a compound word).’<sup>30</sup>

The ninth disjunction is tripartite, for such autonomy can be manifested in the realm of practical intelligence and rationality, in the realm of speculative intelligence and rationality, and in the realm of existential self-determination through rational judgment and responsible choice. ‘When one asks about the triune God, one is not considering God as creator or as agent, and so one is prescinding from practical autonomy. Nor is one considering God insofar as God understands and judges and loves all things, and so one is prescinding from speculative matters. But one is considering God inasmuch as God is in himself eternally constituted as triune, and so one takes one’s analogy from the processions that are in accordance with the exercise of existential autonomy,’ the autonomy in which one decides to operate in accord with the norms inherent in the unfolding of attentiveness, intelligence, rationality, and moral responsibility.<sup>31</sup> That alone is the genuine autonomy of the ‘real human subject,’ and while it is an autonomy that has transcended the mimetic structure of the interindividual and thus emerged into genuine subjectivity, it has not transcended every form of subordination or of imitation. Rather, ‘the autonomy of human consciousness is indeed subordinate, not to every object whatsoever [and, we must add, not to every mimetic structure whatsoever], but to the infinite subject

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, emphasis added.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

in whose image it has been made and whom it is bound to imitate.<sup>32</sup> Even more precisely, of course, we must emphasize that the autonomy of human consciousness has been made in the image and likeness not of one but of three infinite subjects of the one divine consciousness, and its genuine autonomy consists precisely in its fidelity to that image, issuing a word *because* it has understood something and moving to loving decision *because* that decision is in accord with the true value judgment that is its *verbum spirans amorem*. In such fidelity there *is* imitation, but it is the imitation built into the image of the triune God, the imitation of the divine relations themselves.

In the final analysis, then, the abiding significance of the ethics of *Insight* is found in the fact that it is a clear articulation of precisely what constitutes the imitation of the Trinitarian relations that constitute us even in our human nature as images of God. By fidelity to the transcendental precepts, we move from mimetic contagion to an imitation of God that converts the deviated transcendence of mimetic rivalry and its false religion into the genuine transcendence of being in love with God.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.



# LONERGAN'S SUBLATION OF INTEGRAL HERMENEUTICS

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## 1. Augustine's Ancient Hermeneutics of Love

St Augustine's last 10 chapters in *Confessions*, Book XII, are on the principles of interpretation of Sacred Scripture. It begins with a prayer that defines his hermeneutic method:

[... A]s for those who feed on your truth in the wide pastures of charity, let me be united with them in you, and in you find my delight in company with them. Let us approach the words of your book together, and there seek your will as expressed through the will of your servant, by whose pen you have dispensed your words to us. (XII.23.32)<sup>1</sup>

When interpreting Scripture the goal is to find the *voluntas*, the desire or intention, of God who originated the words. Augustine realizes that we discover this through the mediation of the *verba* communicating the *voluntas* or intention of the human author, who in the case of Genesis he believed to be Moses, and concedes that there may be many interpretations of the same passages: "Amid this diversity of true opinions, let truth itself beget concord." (XII.32.43) Inquiring into the originating *voluntas* of the Bible, he considers the origins of "the Word of God" that "shall not pass away," namely, the Holy Spirit as God's *velle*, who inspires the human author, and he argues for the "rule of charity" in reading it.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Augustine's later treatise on the interpretation of Scripture, *De doctrina Christiana*<sup>3</sup> left its imprint on Christian learning and on medieval and early Reformation theology. It was preceded by the establishment of the canon of Sacred Scripture and the dogmatic creeds of the great ecumenical councils. As a theory of

<sup>1</sup> The translations of *Confessions* used in this essay are from *The Confessions* with introduction, translation and notes by Maria Boulding, OSB, and edited by John E. Rotelle, OSA, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> See Robert McMahon, *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent: An Essay on the Literary Form of the Confessions* (Athens, GA and London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 130-135.

<sup>3</sup> The classic treatments are Henri I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, Boccard 1949<sup>2</sup>); Charles N. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (London, 1939).



education centered on the study of the Bible, it took for granted both creeds and the dogmatic theological tradition. He understood education as the activity of the mind “by which faith is engendered, nourished, defended, and strengthened” [*De Trinitate*, XIV, 1 (3)],<sup>4</sup> and rooted his hermeneutics in liturgical practice (especially Baptism and Holy Eucharist) and in the Christian praxis of love. Besides being a “hermeneutics of love,”<sup>5</sup> then, Augustine’s was also a “hermeneutics of consent.”<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Spinoza’s Modern Hermeneutics of Suspicion

The second great watershed in Western hermeneutics emerged with the modern revolt against the Great Tradition. Paul Ricoeur characterized the overarching thrust of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud as the “hermeneutics of suspicion.”<sup>7</sup> The classic inauguration of such hermeneutics was Chapter VII, “De interpretatione Scripturae,” in Baruch Spinoza’s *Theologico-Political Treatise*.<sup>8</sup> Spinoza’s demand that interpreters of the Scriptures put their faith in brackets and treat the texts with the same ‘reason’ to be applied to any humanly composed text effectively ends the hermeneutics of love by neutralizing belief in order to carry out a rationalist study of the data. Rationalist presuppositions of Enlightenment epistemology also underpin Gotthold Lessing’s “gaping abyss” inasmuch as the relationship between the contingencies of history and the truths of faith reflect the subject-object split and the ‘problem of the bridge’ characteristic of the point of departure of Descartes, Locke, and others. From the eighteenth century onwards, historical-critical method gradually succeeded in removing from the hands of ecclesiastical authorities the retrieval of ancient sources, church history, and the history of dogma.

Kant exacerbated the issue of suspicion by seeking the limits of reason in order to “*make room for faith*,” giving rise to liberal Protestantism’s *relativism* in, for

<sup>4</sup> St Augustine, *The Trinity* with introduction, translation and notes by Edmund Hill, OP, edited by John E. Rotelle, OSA, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> See Ernest Fortin, “Augustine and the Hermeneutics of Love: Some Preliminary Considerations,” *The Birth of Philosophic Christianity . Studies in Early Christian and Medieval Thought*. Ernest L. Fortin: Collected Essays, Vol. 1, Ed. Brian Benestad (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996) 1-19.

<sup>6</sup> The expression comes from Ben F. Meyer, “Conversion and the Hermeneutics of Consent,” *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989) 57-75.

<sup>7</sup> This term comes from Paul Ricoeur’s *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* translated by D. Savage (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Hermeneutics of Suspicion,” *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects* edited by Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

<sup>8</sup> On Spinoza see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1962) 169-172; in English, *Truth and Method* Second, revised edition. Trans. revised by Joel Weinsheimer & Donald Marshall. (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 181-184. See also Leo Strauss, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975); *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1951); Nicholas Boyle, “Lessing, Biblical Criticism and the Origins of German Classical Culture,” *German Life and Letters*, New Series, 34 (1981) 196-213.

instance, Troeltsch's 'Christ without absolutes';<sup>9</sup> to the *historicism* of the so-called quest for the historical Jesus from David Friedrich Strauss through Adolph von Harnack and Albert Schweitzer to Rudolf Bultmann and the present;<sup>10</sup> and to the *subjectivism* of Albrecht Ritschl's and Wilhelm Hermann's grounding of theology on 'religion within the limits of reason alone.' Kant has the effect upon his followers of reducing religion to imagination and then subordinating it to morality.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Karl Barth, Martin Heidegger and the Postmodern Hermeneutic Revolution

The breakdown of the traditional hermeneutics of love in liberal Protestantism or *Kulturprotestantismus* accommodated Christianity with present culture among the nineteenth-century theologians who encouraged the modern secular human beings to take their destiny into their own hands *etsi Deus non daretur*. Hermann and Harnack, Karl Barth's teachers, supported the German World War I effort.<sup>12</sup> This provoked the young Swiss pastor Karl Barth to rediscover the Bible with the help of Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Overbeck.<sup>13</sup> In his wrestle with Paul's *Sache* (subject matter) in the first two editions of *The Epistle to the Romans* Barth demonstrated that the evangelical Word of God can speak in a living way to our time precisely in its difference from secularized twentieth century Western culture.<sup>14</sup> Barth caused the explosion that helped initiate the postmodern "hermeneutic revolution."<sup>15</sup>

Martin Heidegger made his "hermeneutic breakthrough" from neo-Kantian transcendental philosophy and from *Weltanschauung*-philosophies between 1919 and the publication of *Sein und Zeit* in 1927. This is generally acknowledged to be the postmodern hermeneutic revolution's 'ground-zero.'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Sarah Coakley, *Christ Without Absolutes. A Study of the Christology of Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> See Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861 to 1986* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Ben F. Meyer, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Roger A. Johnson, *The Origin of Demythologizing in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann: Philosophy and Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), especially on Bultmann's teacher, Wilhelm Hermann.

<sup>12</sup> See Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life and Letters and Autobiographical Texts* translated by John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976); also the review of this work by Hans W. Frei, in *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven: Yale University, 1992) 147-163.

<sup>13</sup> See Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth. His life from letters and autobiographical texts* translated by John Bowden (London and Philadelphia: SCM and Westminster Press, 1975) 60-125.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Barth, *Römerbrief* (Zurich: Zollikon, 1984 [1922]).

<sup>15</sup> See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Existentialism and the Philosophy of Existence," *Heidegger's Ways* translated by John W. Stanley, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 1-13 at 7.

<sup>16</sup> Based on his life-experience and personal knowledge of Heidegger, it was Gadamer I believe who pioneered this opinion, "Die religiöse Dimension," *Hegel-Husserl-Heidegger*, 308-319 at 309; in English, "The Religious Dimension (1981)," *Heidegger's Ways*, 167-180 at 171. Other key researchers follow, especially: Theodore Kisiel, "Theological Beginnings: Toward a Phenomenology of Christianity," *The*

Already greatly influenced by Luther's distinction between the inauthentic *theologia gloriae* and the truly evangelical *theologia crucis*,<sup>17</sup> in the course on "Einleitung in die Phänomenologie der Religion (1920/21)" Heidegger found in Augustine's *quaestio mihi sum*, and in his accounts of *defluxio in multum* and of the concupiscences that render life a *tentatio* and a *molestia* a paradigm for the finitude-cum-fallenness so central for his *Hermeneutik der Faktizität*. Commenting at length on Book X of the *Confessions*, he uncovered the typical structures of *Dasein* thereafter transposed into completely secular terms in *Sein und Zeit*.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Hans-Georg Gadamer's Integral Hermeneutics

In his famous "Natorp Report (1922)"<sup>19</sup> and in the *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*,<sup>20</sup> Heidegger used Aristotle to secularize the philosophical point of departure he gained from Augustine. Heidegger's recognition of the priority of the truth of existence over the propositional truth dominant in the sciences of nature and mathematics championed by the neo-Kantians had a life-changing effect on Hans-Georg Gadamer, who had just finished his doctorate at Marburg in 1922 when Paul Natorp asked him to evaluate the report.

Heidegger's hermeneutic breakthrough blossomed fully in Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960),<sup>21</sup> more than thirty years after *Being and Time*. The hermeneutics

*Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California, 1993) 69-115, on the years 1915-1919; "Heidegger (1920-1921) on Becoming a Christian: A Conceptual Picture-Show," *ibid.*, 175-191. Also see John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1994) 133-156; and "Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther," *Reading Heidegger from the Start* (note 47), 159-174. See Walter Strolz, "Herkunft und Zukunft: Martin Heideggers frühe Auslegung urchristlicher Lebenserfahrung," *Herder Korrespondenz* 4 (1996) 203-207. Most recently, see Jean Greisch, *L'Arbre de vie et l'Arbre du savoir: Les racines phénoménologiques de l'herméneutique Heideggerienne (1919-1923)*, (Paris: du Cerf, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> See Christian Sommer, *Heidegger, Aristote, Luther. Les sources aristotéliennes et néo-testamentaires d'Être et Temps* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Augustinus und der Neuplatonismus, Wintersemester 1921" *Ga* 60, ed. Claudius Strube, 157-299; "Augustine and Neo-Platonism, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 113-227. See James K.A. Smith, "Confessions of an Existentialist: Reading Augustine after Heidegger," Part I: *New Blackfriars* (2000) 273-282; Part II: *New Blackfriars* (2000) 335-347.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indications of the Hermeneutical Situation," translated by Michael Baur, *Man and World* 25 (1992): 355-393 = English version of "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles [Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation]," ed. Hans-Ulrich Lessing, *Dilthey Jahrbuch* vol. 6 (1989), 236-269; now also in Gesamtausgabe, II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919-1944, Band 62, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen Ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zur Ontologie und Logik* edited by Gerhard Neumann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975) 345-375.

<sup>20</sup> *Gesamtausgabe* 61, edited by Walter Bröcker et Käte Bröcker-Oltmanns; in English *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research* translated by Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1965<sup>2</sup>) in English, *Truth and Method* Second, revised edition. Translation

of facticity showed the flaws in the Romantic hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey and resonated deeply with Gadamer's humanistic and philological formation. *Truth and Method* starts with a recovery of truth in art, the humane letters, and the legal, ethical, theological, and philosophical disciplines, and goes on to elaborate an integral hermeneutics. His hermeneutic philosophy overcame the Enlightenment 'prejudice against prejudice' and rehabilitated tradition, including the Christian dogmatic theological tradition.

## 5. Lonergan's Sublation of Integral Hermeneutics

As a young Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) tells us, his early questions had to do with knowing and methodology. William Mathews has woven the dramatic story of Lonergan's path to *Insight*.<sup>22</sup> Frederick E. Crowe's "Editor's Preface" to the Collected Works edition of *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*,<sup>23</sup> details how Lonergan reacted against the dominance of universal concepts during his philosophy studies at Heythrop College (1926-29) as when, for example, in one of his earliest essays for a student journal there, "The Form of Mathematical Inference,"<sup>24</sup> he all but displaced universals from their central role in knowledge. Although Newman had influenced him enormously,<sup>25</sup> it was Plato as interpreted by J.A. Stewart who first led him to understand the importance of understanding: "You get to the equation of the circle just by understanding." As he put it in a question session at Boston College:

Aristotle and Thomas held that you abstracted from phantasm the *eidōs*, the *species*, the *idea*. And my first clue into the idea was when I was reading a book by an Oxford don by the name of J.A. Stewart [...] on Plato's doctrine of ideas. And he explained the doctrine of ideas by contending that for Plato an idea was something like the Cartesian formula for a circle, i.e.  $(x^2 + y^2) = r^2$ , and that exemplified the act of understanding for me. And the idea was getting what's behind the formula for the circle. So you have

revised by Joel Weinsheimer & Donald Marshall. (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 181-184.

<sup>22</sup> See William A. Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest. A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005). On J.A. Stewart, see now also, Mark D. Morelli, *At the Threshold of the Halfway House. A Study of Bernard Lonergan's Encounter with John Alexander Stewart* Lonergan Workshop Series (Chestnut Hill, MA: The Lonergan Institute at Boston College, 2008). On all the early influences see Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light. Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> See Frederick E. Crowe, "Editor's Introduction," in Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), vii-xxiv.

<sup>24</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Shorter Papers* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 20, edited by Robert C. Croken, Robert M. Doran, and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 3-12.

<sup>25</sup> Newman's influence pervades Bernard Lonergan, "True Judgment and Science," *Shorter Papers*, 34-44.

to have something in between the concept and the datum or phantasm. That is the sort of thing that you can't hold and be a naïve realist.<sup>26</sup>

This means that Lonergan considered untenable the naïve realist view that understanding and knowledge occur chiefly in the act of perception (so that the concept is a mere impoverished replica of what is seen, heard, tasted, and touched, and the judgment is only a rubber-stamping of what perception already knows).

About the Cassiciacum dialogues Lonergan remarked that Augustine “was talking about *intelligere* all the time.” In the autobiographical “*Insight Revisited*,” Lonergan recounted that while he was studying theology at the Gregorian University, one of two important influences upon him came from conversations he had with an Athenian fellow student, Stefanos Stefanu.

It was through Stefanu by some process of osmosis, rather than through struggling through the five great *Cahiers*, that I learnt to speak of human knowledge as not intuitive but discursive with the decisive component in judgment. This view was confirmed by my familiarity with Augustine's key notion, *veritas*, and the whole was rounded out by Bernard Leeming's course on the Incarnate Word, which convinced me that there could not be a hypostatic union without a real distinction between essence and existence. This, of course, was all the more acceptable, since Aquinas' *esse* corresponded to Augustine's *veritas* and both harmonized with Maréchal's view of judgment.<sup>27</sup>

The young Lonergan had never believed the fourteenth-century Scholastic opinion that truth depends on “the validity of an intuition of what exists and is present.” It did not accord with his experience of knowing, nor did this naïve realist view of truth have anything to do with the *veritas* so crucial for Augustine. Through reading the *libri platoniorum* and his contact with Ambrose of Milan, Augustine realized that there is more to mind or consciousness than the senses or sense intuition. Similarly, William Mathews could express the issue that radically changed Lonergan's self-understanding as follows: “Truth is not the conformity of perception to things but of the way of understanding.”<sup>28</sup>

A Roman paper written on Newman shows the increasing clarity of Lonergan's grasp of human knowing as involving both understanding and judgment. He clearly articulated here how a hypothesis “is an act of understanding, an idea that has to be evident in the object. Thus, there is an intelligible relation between the hypothesis and the facts; [...] Certitude is therefore an assent to an idea, to a theory, as the

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, Transcript of Lonergan's *Docta Ignorantia* session at Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 19 June 1979, cited by Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest*, 56.

<sup>27</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “*Insight revisited*,” Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection* edited by William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 263-278 at 265.

<sup>28</sup> Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest*, 70-71.

sole possible explanation of the facts.”<sup>29</sup> In a later interview<sup>30</sup> Lonergan illustrated Aristotle’s understanding of substantial form on the way to clarifying the meaning of Thomas’s real distinction between essence and existence. Lonergan said that to answer Aristotle’s *what is it?* question, change the ‘what’ to a ‘why,’ change ‘what is a human being?’ to ‘Why are these flesh and bones a human being?’ Then it becomes evident that one has to go beyond what Aristotle ever made explicit to understand that Augustine’s *veritas* as existing in a mind corresponds to what Thomas meant by *esse*. The What? and Why? (*quid sit*) questions intend only the form, the essence, the nature, or the common matter of a reality. Judgments answer Is it so? (*an sit*) questions about the existence or occurrence of a thing or a property. So Lonergan never held the naïve-realistic interpretation of cognition or of the so-called ‘correspondence theory’ of the truth.

## 6. Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas

While he was a professor in Montreal and Toronto, Lonergan’s historical work on the *verbum* in Aquinas demonstrated that Thomas’s hypothesis of intelligible emanations is not based on the Stoic comparison of the outer words people utter to the inward reasoning the words express. In *De Trin.* books IX and XV Augustine articulated the first completely spiritual (in the sense of not entailing matter or potency) analogy for the processions of Word and Spirit in God by discovering “a third *verbum* that was neither the *verbum prolatum* of human speech nor the *verbum insitum* of man’s native rationality but an intermediate *verbum intus prolatum*.” Lonergan notes that “as Augustine’s discovery was part and parcel of his own mind’s knowledge of itself, so he begged his readers to look within themselves and there to discover the speech of spirit within spirit, an inner *verbum* prior to any use of language, yet distinct both from the mind itself and from its memory or its present apprehension of objects.”<sup>31</sup> Augustine, Lonergan explained, *performed* a phenomenology of the subject.

Unlike prevalent scholastic interpreters, Lonergan like Aquinas, learned from Augustine that by understanding the process in ourselves by which understanding and conceiving, reflecting and judging occur, we uncover the finite analogue for the *emanatio intelligibilis* in God. In Thomas Aquinas’s words, “The human soul understands itself through its act of understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature.”<sup>32</sup> Aquinas used Aristotle’s

<sup>29</sup> Mathews, *Lonergan’s Quest*, 72, citing “Essay for Keeler on Newman,” 33-34.

<sup>30</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Caring About Meaning. Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, edited by Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey, Cathleen Going (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers/82, 1982), 50.

<sup>31</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum*, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m: *Anima humana intelligit seipsum per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam.*

metaphysical categories to retrieve Augustine's analogy for his theology of the Trinity by distinguishing clearly and explicitly within human cognition between (1) the movement from potency into act, when the act of understanding interrupts questioning with the insight that apprehends the answer in the phantasm, and (2) the procession of act from act when understanding is perfected in the utterance of the inner word.

Lonerger noticed the incompleteness of the epistemology implicit in Aristotle's metaphysical account of knowledge by identity, because it did not adequately account for why the perfection of knowledge by identity of the intelligence in act and the intelligible in act is knowledge *of the other*. To go beyond Aristotle, Aquinas transformed Augustine's metaphorical explanation in terms of the vision of eternal truth that justifies rational reflection's knowledge of the truth by eliminating from Augustine's account the vestiges of Platonism.<sup>33</sup>

Lonerger explains that for Thomas, the finality of judgment is to achieve assent; to be rational, assent is produced by or results from a *resolutio in principia* [reduction to principles]: "Human reasoning [...] in the way of judgment returns to first principles, to the things already discovered which it examines."<sup>34</sup> Referring to the work of Julien Peghaire,<sup>35</sup> Lonergan tells us that the expression, "'ratio terminatur ad intellectum' [...]" also refers to the fact that reason is understanding in process." Rather than interpreting the phrase *resolutio in principia* in the solely logical terms of coherently drawing conclusions from first premises, Aquinas adverted to reflective understanding as grounding the judgment of reality. "Human reasoning, since it is a sort of movement, starts from an understanding of some things, namely, the things that are known naturally, without the investigation of reason as from a kind of unchanging principle; and it also terminates at understanding, insofar as, through naturally known principles, we judge of those things which are discovered by reasoning."<sup>36</sup> According to Lonergan:

We may infer that the reflective activity of reason returning from the synthesis of intelligibilities to its origin in sense and in naturally known principles terminates in a reflective act of understanding, in a single synthetic apprehension of all the motives for judgment, whether intellectual or sensitive, in a grasp of their sufficiency as motives and so of the necessity of

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 2, c. 98 ad fin: *secundum autem positionem Platonis, intelligere fit per contactum intellectus ad rem intelligibilem [...]*.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 79, a. 8 c: *Ratiocinatio humana [...] in via iudicii resolvendo redit ad prima principia, ad quae inventa examinat.*

<sup>35</sup> Julien Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio selon s. Thomas d'Aquin* (Ottawa: Institut d'études médiévales; Paris: Vrin, 1936), 169-172; and 161-172.

<sup>36</sup> *S. th.*, I, q. 79, a. 12 c: *Ratiocinatio hominis, cum sit quidam motus, ab intellectu progreditur aliquorum, scilicet naturaliter notorum absque investigatione rationis, sicut a quodam principio immobile; et ad intellectum etiam terminatur, in quantum iudicamus per principia naturaliter nota de his quae ratiocinando inveniuntur.*

passing judgment or assenting. For no less than the first type of inner word, the second proceeds from an *intelligere*.<sup>37</sup> No less than the procession of the first type, the procession of the second is an *emanatio intelligibilis*.<sup>38</sup>

Lonergan stressed that Aquinas held that one knows by what one is, and not by any vision or contact or confrontation with the other, however lofty and sublime. The ultimate ground of our knowing is indeed God, the eternal Light; but the proximate reason why we know is the light of our own intelligence within us; and by it we can know because “the very intellectual light that is in us is nothing other than a participated similitude of the uncreated light.”<sup>39</sup> Our minds move from the identities both of the sensible with the act of sensation, and of the intelligible with the act of understanding to “valid concepts of essence and true affirmations of existence, because such procession is in virtue of our intellectual light, which is a participation of eternal Light.”<sup>40</sup> Lonergan summarizes his interpretation of Aquinas as follows:

Inasmuch as the act of understanding grasps its own conditions as the understanding of this sort of thing, it abstracts from the irrelevant and expresses itself in a definition of essence. But inasmuch as the act of understanding grasps its own transcendence-in-immanence, its quality of intellectual light as a participation of the divine and uncreated Light, it expresses itself in judgment, in a positing of truth, in the affirmation or negation of reality.<sup>41</sup>

Lonergan alone seems to have realized that while Aquinas’s account of *verbum* both as definition and as judgment was expressed in terms of Aristotle’s metaphysics of the soul, they were both discovered by and grounded in an Augustinian phenomenology of the subject.

## 7. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*

*Insight* brought this Augustinian phenomenology of the subject into the modern world marked emphatically by the rise of modern science and of modern historical science. In *Insight* Lonergan states boldly that “the question of human knowledge is not whether it exists but what precisely are its two diverse forms and what are the relations between them.”<sup>42</sup> This boldness of approach yields a startling result:

<sup>37</sup> Here Lonergan adduces the following texts of Aquinas as warrants for this interpretation: *De veritate*, q. 3, a. 2 c.; q. 4, a. 2 c.; *De potentia*, q. 8, a. 1 c.; q. 9, a. 5 c.; *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, 5, a. 9 c.; *Super Ioannem*, c. 1, lect. 1.

<sup>38</sup> See Lonergan, *Verbum*, 77.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 85, citing Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 2 c: *ipsum enim lumen intellectuale quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis increati.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 85-86.

<sup>41</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum*, 94.

<sup>42</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* Collected Works of Bernard



[The appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness] is a necessary beginning. For unless one breaks the duality in one's knowing, one doubts that understanding correctly is knowing. Under the pressure of that doubt, either one will sink into the bog of a knowing that is without understanding, or else one will cling to understanding but sacrifice knowing on the altar of an immanentism, an idealism, a relativism. From the horns of that dilemma one escapes only through the discovery (and one has not made it yet if one has no clear memory of its startling strangeness) that there are two quite different realisms, that there is an incoherent realism, half animal and half human, that poses as a half-way house between materialism and idealism and, on the other hand, that there is an intelligent and reasonable realism between which and materialism the half-way house is idealism.<sup>43</sup>

This separation of realisms entails both a position on knowing and a correlative position on the reality known. Knowing involves asking and answering questions for understanding and judgment; and the reality known is *not* an instance of the 'already-out-there-now real' made accessible by "taking a good look".

Once Lonergan broke through to the judgment of the self as a knower who attains knowledge by understanding and judging,<sup>44</sup> he was able to encircle the scope of knowing within the notion of being,<sup>45</sup> and to state explicitly the critical realist sense in which human cognition attains objectivity.<sup>46</sup> This enabled him to thematize the metaphysics of the known latent in the activity of human knowing. On the basis of this cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics, he presented a comprehensive semantics<sup>47</sup> of whatever may be discovered by the classical, statistical, and genetic methods of explanatory natural science.<sup>48</sup> Lonergan then came fully to terms with the protean notion of being<sup>49</sup> congruent with the unity-in-tension constituted by the organism, psyche, and rational self-consciousness of the human being in order to establish foundations for the *human* studies (scholarship) and sciences, including philosophy and theology.<sup>50</sup> These foundations unequivocally reject all positivist, naive realist, immanentist, or relativist accounts

Lonergan 3, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>43</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Lonergan, "The Self-Affirmation of the Knower," *Insight*, 343-371.

<sup>45</sup> Lonergan, "The Notion of Being," *Insight*, 372-398.

<sup>46</sup> Lonergan, "The Notion of Objectivity," *Insight*, 399-409.

<sup>47</sup> See the 4 chapters on metaphysics, Lonergan, *Insight*, 410-617.

<sup>48</sup> On the natural sciences, see "Heuristic Structures of Empirical Method," "The Canons of Empirical Method," "The Complementarity of Classical and Statistical Investigations," "Space and Time," and "Things," Lonergan, *Insight*, 57-195 and 270-295.

<sup>49</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, 509, 545, 590, 609.

<sup>50</sup> On the human, social, and cultural sciences, see "Common Sense and Its Subject" and "Common Sense as Object," and in the chapter, "Metaphysics as Dialectic," especially section 3, The Truth of Interpretation, Lonergan, *Insight*, 196-269 and 585-617.

of interpretation. Moreover, this full-blown non-relativist rejection of ‘the principle of the empty head’<sup>51</sup> is grounded in a basic context for integral hermeneutics that overthrows the prejudice against prejudice through its positional account of the critique of belief.<sup>52</sup> The hermeneutics of suspicion is thus revealed to be like Hans Christian Anderson’s king who had no clothes.

Writing *Grace and Freedom* in the 1930s and *Verbum* in the 1940s led Lonergan to appreciate the world of theory, and to understand the nuances of the movement from the commonsense world of the *priora quoad nos* through the *via inventionis* to the *via doctrinae*’s attainment of the *priora quoad se*. He was able to exploit these complex relationships in working out his courses on the Trinity<sup>53</sup> and on the Incarnate Word<sup>54</sup> at the Gregorian from 1953-66. He taught these courses while simultaneously reflecting on method in theology. He discovered that the materials of *De Verbo Incarnato* were not susceptible to being fitted into the scheme provided for *De Deo Trino* by the ascent in the *via inventionis* through the history of questions to the hypothesis of intelligible emanations as the psychological analogy<sup>55</sup> from which the *via doctrinae* revisited all the salient questions of the ascent to treat the divine missions of Son and Spirit. Lonergan realized that in general the integration of history into theology would require a much more differentiated account of ‘hearing the word’ in the specialties of indirect discourse that could adequately retrieve the heritage of the past in order to shift authentically into the direct discourse proper to theology’s dogmatic, speculative, and communicative tasks.

## 8. From *Insight to Method in Theology and Beyond: Lonergan’s Kehre/Reversal*

Protestant theology faced profound challenges from two directions since the eighteenth century modern.<sup>56</sup> In the first place, after Spinoza it realized that if its chief access to “Christ and his benefits” (in Melancthon’s words) was through the Holy Scriptures alone, then this access had to be mediated by a historical-critical

<sup>51</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 157-158, 204, 223.

<sup>52</sup> On “The Notion of Belief,” see Lonergan, *Insight*, 709-740; on “The Critique of Belief,” 735-739.

<sup>53</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, 2 vols. (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964); volume 2, *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica* (1964) is now in English, *The Triune God: Systematics* Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 12, translated by Michael G. Shields, edited by Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *De Verbo incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.).

<sup>55</sup> Lonergan, *De Deo Trino*, vol. 1, *Pars Dogmatica*, of which the *Pars Prima* is entitled “*Praemittenda*,” which has been appeared in English as *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology* translated by Conn O’Donovan (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); *Pars Altera* is comprised by 5 Theses on the Consubstantiality of the Son, On the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, On the Unity of God and the Distinction of the Persons, On the Procession of the Holy Spirit, and On Mystery.

<sup>56</sup> An excellent summary of the developments in modern Protestant theology is John E. Wilson, *Introduction to Modern Theology: Trajectories in the German Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007).

retrieval of its sources. Secondly, the foundations for Protestant scholasticism after Melancthon were eroded by Kant, the early Idealism of Fichte and young Schelling, Hegel, and the later Schelling; and then demolished further by the so-called “Young Hegelians” (D.F. Strauss, Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx), and finally by Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher. Post-reformation Catholic theology met these challenges by inventing a “dogmatic” theology that “replaced the inquiry of the *quaestio* by the pedagogy of the thesis” and “gave basic and central significance to the certitudes of the faith, their presuppositions and their consequences.”<sup>57</sup>

The climate of opinion dominated on the one side by tendencies toward historicism and nihilism and by versions of fideism on the other brought the ahistorical Catholic neo-Scholastic and anti-Modernist theology into a *Grundlagenkrise*. The revival of Augustinianism in the apologetic approaches of Laberthonniere and Blondel, in the rise of the *nouvelle théologie*, in what came to be called transcendental Thomism from Maréchal to Karl Rahner, and by what might be termed more the Bonaventurian approaches of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger, marked attempts on the part of Catholic theology to engage the crisis without falling into Modernism. Nevertheless, it appeared that none of these foundational enterprises were capable of showing adequately how genuine history could be brought into theology.

Probably when Lonergan went to Rome in 1953 he thought that he had met the foundational philosophical challenges of Kant, Hegel, Marx, and of Liberal theologians such as Schleiermacher and Paul Tillich. However, he had not yet adequately faced the difficulties raised by the slow but sure invasion of theology’s sources by historical-critical *ressourcement*, or the gradual development of a Catholic positive theology since the 1890s for traditional Catholic dogmatic theology’s strategy of proving its theses from the premises provided by Scripture and Tradition. On top of this, his predominantly European audience of students at the Gregorian University confronted him with the further challenges stemming from the phenomenologies of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, from French and German existentialism, and from Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. To replace dogmatic theology’s by-passing of history and to authentically renew the Augustinian hermeneutics of love, more was required than the basic context or universal viewpoint<sup>58</sup> Lonergan worked out in *Insight*. His foundations would have to be revised further in order provide a more adequate account of history and to handle the apparently irreconcilable pluralism characteristic of the results of modern historical scholarship.

In *Verbum* Lonergan had written, “For Augustine our hearts are restless until

<sup>57</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “Theology in its New Context,” *A Second Collection* edited by William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974) 55-67 at 57.

<sup>58</sup> On the Notion of the Universal Viewpoint, see Lonergan, *Insight*, 587-600.

they rest in God; for Aquinas, not our hearts, but first and most our minds are restless until they rest in seeing him.”<sup>59</sup> Later on, Lonergan said that although in *Insight* he had relinquished the metaphysical viewpoint’s faculty psychology for an intentionality analysis proper to a phenomenology of the subject, his explanatory thematization of the data of consciousness in *Insight* still occurred under Aquinas’s auspices, so that it was expressed in terms of a faculty psychology not properly accessible to conscious experience.<sup>60</sup> Faculty psychology compels one to a choice between the primacy of the intellectual faculty and that of the will. Aquinas’s definition of the will as an intellectual appetite gave intellect the clear priority. This primacy of intellect entails as a notorious corollary, *nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum*.<sup>61</sup> During the years after completing the writing of *Insight* (1953), Lonergan underwent a reversal in the course of which he abandoned both the last vestiges of faculty psychology and he discarded the priority of knowledge.

The reversal in Lonergan’s thinking appears especially in the changes Lonergan made to his fundamentally Thomist *analysis fidei*,<sup>62</sup> which sets forth the steps in the appropriation of the Christian faith from an abstract, *de jure* point of view. From that perspective ‘faith’ is understood classically as ‘belief’, with the emphasis on a person’s assent to revealed truth based on prior judgments of value enabled by the grace of the *lumen fidei*. Meanwhile, he studied two phenomenologists with a decidedly Augustinian orientation, Max Scheler (using the work of Manfred Frings) and Dietrich von Hildebrand, who helped him to see the role of feelings as “the mass and momentum and power of [human] conscious living, the actuation of [human] affective capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of [human] living.”<sup>63</sup> Lonergan faced the implications of abandoning the standpoint from which the mind or intellect takes precedence over the will, and knowing takes precedence over love. Once he understood that feelings as intentional responses to value are irreducible to the attainment proper to judgments of fact,<sup>64</sup> the way opened for him fully to recognize that love plays *the* determinative role in personal orientation and authenticity.<sup>65</sup> He thereby recovered Augustine’s radical teaching that “my weight is my love; by it I move wherever I move.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, whereas he had spoken earlier of the Christian form of religious conversion (that ironically had

<sup>59</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum*, 100.

<sup>60</sup> Lonergan, “An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, SJ, edited by Philip McShane,” *A Second Collection*, 209-230 at 222-223.

<sup>61</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 22.

<sup>62</sup> See Lonergan’s posthumously published “Analysis of Faith,” *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 20 (2002) 125-154.

<sup>63</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 65.

<sup>64</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 30-33.

<sup>65</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 33, 36, 105-106, 122, 240, on the revolution caused by falling in love.

<sup>66</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, 13. 9. 10: *pondus meum amor meus, eo feror quocumque feror*.

been a central issue in his work on *Grace and Freedom*) in terms of judgments of credentia and credibility leading to a decision to give assent to Christian beliefs,<sup>67</sup> his eventual acknowledgment of the primacy of love allowed him then to speak of religious conversion in terms of “God’s gift of his love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is in us” (Rom 5:5), of falling in love with God, and of being in love with God.<sup>68</sup>

This Augustinian recognition of the pivotal role of love, of conversion, and especially of religious conversion, led Lonergan to the insights that made possible the most satisfactory articulation of the intelligibility of the relationship between Jerusalem and Athens or faith and reason with which I am familiar. First, Lonergan methodically distinguished (and did not separate) faith and belief.<sup>69</sup> *Faith* becomes “the knowledge born of religious being in love,” “the eyes of being in love with God.” In a religious context, it is the knowledge – largely affective – born of religious love attained in virtue of God’s gift of religious conversion. It is the same as Pascal’s ‘reasons of the heart.’ What his *analysis fidei* called faith then becomes *belief*, which for the religiously converted generally occurs in the context of faith, which in turn is constituted by the affective and cognitive effects of being in love with God. Outside the horizon of being in love with God, belief means a person’s reasonable and responsible assent to truths that he or she has not been able to personally verify by his or her own immanently generated acts of experience, understanding, and judgment.<sup>70</sup> Within the horizon of the gift of God’s love and in the case of revealed truths unattainable by the light of reason alone, this assent can only be performed because of the *lumen fidei*, now more clearly understood as the pressure of God’s love upon human intelligence.

Second, this distinction freed Lonergan to explore the two concrete vectors of human development:

There is development from below upwards, from experience to growing understanding, from growing understanding to balanced judgment, from balanced judgment to fruitful courses of action, and from fruitful courses of action to the new situations that call forth further understanding, profounder judgment, richer courses of action.

But there also is development from above downwards. There is the

<sup>67</sup> Thus, for instance, he would relate that the chief problem for Christian missionaries in Japan was to teach possible converts the principle of non-contradiction; or again, in relation to an earlier version of functional specialties, the third functional specialty, called history, established the Yes’s and No’s of the councils; and the fourth, conversion, was a matter of willing to believe in accord with the councils.

<sup>68</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105; see too, “Bernard Lonergan Responds,” *Foundations of Theology: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970* edited by Philip McShane (South Bend: IN: University of Notre Dame, 1972), 223-234 at 225-227.

<sup>69</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 115-118 on faith; 118-124 on religious belief.

<sup>70</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 41-47.

transformation of falling in love: the domestic love of the family; the human love of one's tribe, one's city, one's country, mankind; the divine love that orientates man in his cosmos and expresses itself in his worship. Where hatred only sees evil, love reveals value. At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved. Where hatred reinforces bias, love dissolves it, whether it be the bias of unconscious motivation, the bias of individual or group egoism, or the bias of omniscient, short-sighted common sense. Where hatred plods around in ever narrower circles, love breaks the bonds of psychological and social determinisms with the conviction of faith and the power of hope.<sup>71</sup>

Together, these two developmental vectors disclose the ontological structure of the hermeneutic circle. Prior to all our actions and sufferings, there is the way of heritage emphasized by Gadamer, which moves from above downwards, operating through love's influence on one's decisions, judgments, understandings, and experiential perceptions. Earlier Lonergan's devotion to intellectual probity and his distress with the flaccid character of modern scholasticism had caused him to emphasize the way from below upwards almost exclusively at the expense of the way from above downwards.

By acknowledging the priority of the way from above downwards, Lonergan joined forces with Gadamer's hermeneutics in stressing the aspect of the hermeneutic circle relegated to oblivion by the Enlightenment's 'prejudice against prejudice'; and with the recognition of the inevitability of intellectual development's proceeding in a rhythm of believing to understand and understanding to believe, rationalism was routed. Lonergan went beyond Gadamer to argue that philosophy can only be comprehensive in its reflection on the human condition if it is grounded (knowingly or not) upon religious being-in-love with God. The more comprehensive philosophy becomes in its fidelity to the ongoing enactment of the integral hermeneutic circle, the more it cannot in all honesty avoid facing the theological issues of good and evil, sin and redemption, as well as the offer of grace and its rejection. It follows that what *Insight* championed as the "appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness" is really an "intellectual conversion";<sup>72</sup> in like manner, intellectual conversion normally demands a prior, distinct, moral conversion from satisfactions to true values or the good;<sup>73</sup> and finally, as Augustine dramatically realized, moral conversion is usually only made possible by religious conversion.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 100-109, at 106.

<sup>72</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitive Structure," *Collection*, 205-221 at 219.

<sup>73</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 240-243

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

For Lonergan the Catholic teaching on God's universal salvific will implies the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit to *all* human beings, which occurs (as Lonergan always insisted) *propter Christum*, but does not require explicit knowledge of Christ to be operative.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the movement from above downwards starts with the prior gift of God's love. As a result, first religious, and then moral and intellectual conversion become integral to the foundations of the hermeneutics of love, and the context and purpose of inter-religious dialogue is transformed.

Philosophy's counter-positions regarding knowing, objectivity, and being – both in themselves and as influencing the implicit or explicit presuppositions of historians and scholars that have bedeviled theology and faith since the 18<sup>th</sup> century – can be faced by intellectually converted dialectical engagement without threatening Christian theology and faith. As a result, the specialized discipline named dialectic articulated by Lonergan<sup>76</sup> becomes integral for the contemporary theological enterprise of *lectio* that functions analogously to the way down as mediated by the functional specializations of research, interpretation, and history.<sup>77</sup> Such a dialectical confrontation with the scholarly mediation of tradition heads toward, but also depends for its success upon, foundations that thematize intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.<sup>78</sup>

As the beneficiary of Lonergan's life-long project of bringing history into theology, the functionally specialized<sup>79</sup> collaborative enterprise of *fides quaerens intellectum* reoriginates Augustine's hermeneutics of love. The specialty of foundations that thematizes theology's horizon will be the basis for theology as operating analogously to the way from below upwards. For Lonergan, of course, the more differentiated theology becomes, the more it needs the help of philosophy for explanatory analogies that "open a window" on the mysteries of faith; and the more the traditional theological enterprises of *disputatio*, and *praedicatio* will be differentiated into the ongoing, functionally specialized collaborative tasks of foundations, doctrinal theology, systematic theology, and communications, to round out the hermeneutics of love as a sublation of integral hermeneutics.<sup>80</sup>

## 9. Conclusion

Augustine's hermeneutics of love was displaced after Spinoza by the hermeneutics of suspicion. Aided by Heidegger's *Hermeneutik der Faktizität*, H.-G. Gadamer

<sup>75</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, "The Future of Theology," *Second Collection*, 135-163.

<sup>76</sup> Lonergan, "Dialectic," *Method in Theology*, 235-266.

<sup>77</sup> Lonergan, chapters 6, "Research," 7, "Interpretation," 8 & 9, "History," and "History and Historians," *Method in Theology*, 149-234.

<sup>78</sup> Lonergan, "Foundations," *Method in Theology*, 267-293.

<sup>79</sup> Lonergan, "Functional Specialties," *Method in Theology*, 125-145.

<sup>80</sup> Lonergan, chapters 12, "Doctrines," 13, "Systematics," 14, "Communications," *Method in Theology*, 295-368.

elaborated an integral philosophical hermeneutics to overcome Enlightenment rationalism's 'prejudice against prejudice' and positivist method within the limits of philosophy as unenlightened by revealed truth.

From the perspective of intelligence under the pressure of God's love, Lonergan's foundational methodology (made possible by Augustine, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas) appropriated and explicated the ontological structure of the hermeneutic circle's two vectors of human development, from below upwards and from above downwards. The more concrete and historical the unfolding of the two vectors, the more they pivot on religious, moral, and intellectual conversion.

In accord with the two vectors of the hermeneutic circle, Lonergan articulated the mediated and mediating phases of functional specialization, thereby subsuming integral hermeneutics into the hermeneutics of love.





# INTENTIONALITY, CONSTITUTIVE DIMENSION OF KNOWING, IN BERNARD LONERGAN

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The theme of intentionality requires a punctual investigation both for the semantic density acquired in the course of centuries and for the relevance it also acquired in the various stages of thought of B. Lonergan. On one hand, its roots lie in ancient and Medieval philosophy, and on the other, it reaches the contemporary philosophy of the Twentieth century. Which speculative contents were expressed by the ancient *intentio*, and what was the study carried out by Lonergan in relation to it? Which theoretical features and modalities distinguish intentionality in contemporary thought, and how did Lonergan receive it?

The investigation to be undertaken, subdivided in five parts, leads us back to the works of the Canadian master, and consents the revisitation and evaluation of already well known philosophical heritages – on one side Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Scholasticism, and on the other Immanuel Kant and Joseph Maréchal – and at the same time consents a formulation of hypotheses on the assonances, hitherto unexplored, relating to the philosophical context of the Twentieth century, particularly to the thought of Edmund Husserl.

## **1. In the Reflection on *Verbum*, the *Esse Intentionale* Opens to the Insight**

*Verbum. Word and Idea in Aquinas* is the first work to be examined, dating from the original papers written from 1946 to 1949, by which Lonergan confronted Medieval philosophy in which different meanings of *intentiones* were developed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By the representatives of Arabic Neo-Platonism, concepts were denominated intentions, expressing the known object; Avicenna relied on intentions to explain the difference between real sciences and logic; real sciences are constructed on “intentions understood from the onset” *intentiones primo intellectae*, which are the concepts of real things, whilst logic has as an object “intentions understood a second time” *intentiones secundo intellectae*, which are concepts of other concepts. The Avicennian distinction was assumed by Albertus Magnus, becoming diffuse among the Thirteenth century philosophers. For these historical references and successive ones: see V. Melchiorre, *Intenzionalità*, in Fondazione Centro Studi Filosofici di Gallarate, *Enciclopedia Filosofica*, vol. 6, Bompiani, Milano 2006, pp. 5741-5743.

In Saint Thomas the interior word is *primo et per se intellectum*,<sup>2</sup> which was also denominated as *intentio intellecta*;<sup>3</sup> it indicated what happens in our mind when we understand, when we have an act of understanding; it is distinct from the external object which, thanks to this act, becomes *res intellecta*.<sup>4</sup> In other passages Aquinas affirmed that the *intentio intellecta* is “similar” to the thing,<sup>5</sup> and therefore the *intentio*, in being interior word, assumes the role of mediating between external things to be understood and the intellect. The *intentio intellecta* is relative to every act of meaning and defining, it is universal.<sup>6</sup>

Our *intentio* does not determine the existence of the things that have been understood; only in God the *intentio intellecta* is *res intellecta*, He is the *Ipsum esse*, the *Ipsum intelligere*, with full identity of both; in ourselves the *intentio* or our acts of understanding are neither our existence nor the existence of the things; to us it pertains the *esse intentionale*.<sup>7</sup> To the one who would object that such would bring about the risk of the skeptical question regarding the certainty of what we understand and know, regarding the identity between the *intentio intellecta* and the *res intellecta*, and to the one who would rise up the basic question as to whether the object of the human intellect could be the very object, the *quidditas rei materialis*, comes the lucid discussion of the Chapter four, “Verbum and Abstraction,” and what is there inferred on apprehensive abstraction.<sup>8</sup>

One must distinguish between the form of the knower and that of the known; they are similar, but between them there is a modal difference given by the “intentional existence” of the first and the “natural existence” of the other.

In the Introduction a precious clarification of the position of Aristotle in *De anima*

<sup>2</sup> B. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1997, p. 19. From here onwards the work will be quoted only as *Verbum*. See Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 5 c.

<sup>3</sup> *Verbum*, p. 19. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, 11. In metaphysical key, the *intentio* is expressed also as *ratio* when it is referred to the definition of the thing. See Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Metaphysica*, lect. 16, § 733.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 2 ad 3m.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 53.

<sup>6</sup> Cf *Verbum*, p. 188. This is the formative abstraction; linked to the acts of meaning and defining there will be the meant and defined things.

<sup>7</sup> See *Verbum*, p. 208; Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles* IV, 11, §§ 6-7. In God the *ipsum esse* is “the ocean of all perfection,” grasped in its comprehensivity by the *ipsum intelligere*: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 13, a. 11 c; q. 14, a. 3 c.

<sup>8</sup> See *Verbum*, ch. 4, § 4, pp. 168-179. The section deals in depth with the apprehensive abstraction. Among the various tracts, it is fruitful to dwell on that dealing with the object of intellection which, beyond being “*quidditas sive natura rei materialis*,” “*forma intelligibilis*,” and “*species intelligibilis*,” is “concretely though inadequately identical with the particular material thing, just as the Aristotelian quiddity is concretely though inadequately identical with the particular” (p. 175). The object of insight is always *quidditas*, *forma*, and *species*, and that is universally worthy for every insight, it has therefore an “anterior” universality, which sends back to the understanding of the particular thing; insight is therefore without *intentio universalitatis*.

and the interpreting one of Saint Thomas is given. Aristotle, in that work, dealt with biological and psychological questions of the vegetable, animal, and human life, without going into depth regarding the specific differences of the human life; he adopted a sole method to determine differences of souls and investigate each species in its genre. The potencies differentiate the souls, and these are known by their acts, which in turn are specified by the objects. In the economy of a reflection on intentionality, we are urged to grasp the terms in which the object is talked about; Lonergan grasps the first problematic knot about exactly the meaning to attribute to the object; one must inquire if for Aristotle it was the intentional term of a conscious act; for Aquinas, commentator of *De anima*, there was certainty that the objects lay in the order of causality and not intentionality, as being efficient causes or final causes. After having made it clear that Aristotle used the term “object” *tó antike menon* with a plurality of meanings, mixing intentional relationships (sensible and intelligible objects) and causal ones (objects of vegetable life), Lonergan allows the Augustinian roots of his intellectual formation to appear, affirming that only with Augustine one could meet the relationship subject-soul-object thanks to the role of introspection and the truth demand of *verbum*, which ended in Thomas’ theorization; the Aristotelian heritage of *anima* joined with the Augustinian one of *mens*.<sup>9</sup>

Lonergan does not terminate with a repetitive reading of Thomas, but questions him searching to identify the exegetic and hermeneutic keys that are most appropriate: this makes that already in *Verbum*, the insight, the intellection starts to stand out originally; the attention paid to the cognitive aspect, which he had already discovered in Thomas, shall constitute the first base on which he will construct his theory of knowledge.

Following the meaning of the *esse intentionale*, the further developments after Thomas have to be borne in mind. Between the end of the Thirteenth century and the beginning of the Fourteenth century, the doctrine of the *species* as the intermediary of knowledge began to break up, the cognitive action did not limit itself to producing the image or finding the similitude, but aimed to establish, so to say, a direct grip with the object. Further confirmations in such direction had been with Durando of Saint Purçain and Peter of Aureol; if the object of knowledge was the *species*, we could only know the image of the real and not the real itself. Peter of Aureol, in particular, identified the object of knowledge with the thing itself as intentioned in its objectivity. He spoke of the thing to be known both as *esse apparens* and as *esse intentionale*: the thing which manifests itself is intentional in order to knowledge; to manifest oneself is to take on intentionality. With William of Ockham the act of knowing is *intention*, it refers directly to the signified thing; the concept, that is the intention, is a sign that takes the place of real objects.

<sup>9</sup> Cf *Verbum*, pp. xii-xv. The context of Trinitarian doctrine, for Augustine and Thomas, is a common base on which the reflection on intentionality developed.

We point out, in the end, that even though Lonergan addresses himself preferably to Aristotelian epistemology and to the Thomistic one, in *Verbum* there is no lack of critical underlinings both of Kant and of modern Scholastics<sup>10</sup>; regarding Kant, he criticizes the mere conventional nature of intellects,<sup>11</sup> the contradictoriness of the *a priori* forms,<sup>12</sup> and the unknowableness of the material world in itself.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. The “Spontaneous Notion” of Being and the “Unrestricted” Intentionality

It is in the work of 1957, *Insight*, that the reflection on intentionality acquires a more marked configuration. In Chapter twelve, the notion of being is thematized as “spontaneous notion,” which belongs operatively to all men; it is intrinsic in the “pure desire to know”; it also goes beyond what we understand. Right at the end of this chapter, the Canadian master confirms the choice operated in the succession of the chapters of the Second Part of *Insight*: to have anticipated the the proposal of the self-affirmation of the knower in the chapter which precedes that of the notion of being. One is not dealing with merely a thematic option; this is above all a methodological and epistemological option, linked to the characters of his metaphysics distinguished by the consciousness’ dynamics of the subject, starting off from the pure desire to know, as expression of the intentionality of the subject.<sup>14</sup>

Knowledges do not exhaust our referring to being; there are also thoughts, the objects of which may not even exist. Thinking can set aside existing or not existing, also because it is not ordained to decide in such a sense; in fact, it is judgment that determines the existence or not of the object. This is, however, only one side of the considerations. On another side, thinking cannot be taken out of the attention towards existence or non-existence of the object, and this simply because thinking is an intentional activity which distinguishes the acts of intellectual and rational consciousness. In fact, Lonergan highlights the exigence of consistency which distinguishes the thinking, and that exigence manifests itself in the desire to come to correct concepts to be able, on their base, to form judgments. Thinking is not a causal act, or merely spontaneous or free from aims which characterize it: “thinking is for the purpose of determining whether or not what is thought does exist.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See *Verbum*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>11</sup> See *Verbum*, pp. 38-39 and note 126.

<sup>12</sup> See *Verbum*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> See *Verbum*, p. 157.

<sup>14</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3, University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London 1992, p. 398. From here onwards the work will be quoted only as *Insight*. The methodological option emerges from the penultimate sentence: “The pure desire to know is a constituent element both of the affirming and of the self that is affirmed.” The epistemological option seals the last sentence of the section and of the chapter: “But the pure desire to know is the notion of being as it is spontaneously operative in cognitional process, and being itself is the to-be-known towards which that process heads.”

<sup>15</sup> *Insight*, p. 378.

The intentionality of thinking, therefore, if it binds itself to a desire, it does it not to mitigate the fatigue of what is to be undertaken, or to render lighter or more flexible its task, but to discover the importance of the notion of being which accompanies antecedently and following each conception and each judgment. The same notion of being, besides, is “the immanent, dynamic orientation of cognitional process,” is an orientation which rises and develops with the process itself, and this is because that notion is to be identified with the “detached,” “disinterested” desire to know, it “is” this same desire.<sup>16</sup>

The intentionality of thinking, made clear in the intentionality of understanding and judging, arrives at being, the notion of which, as it is presented, characterizes itself in intentional terms; it is “intention of being, in the act.”<sup>17</sup> The preciousness of this expression is undeniable; in particular, we would like to underline the words “in the act,” which comes to enrich the “intention of being” itself with anthropological, metaphysical, and epistemological notes. The words, far from restricting the intention of being to that which would circumscribe it or almost isolate it, is directed towards opening a possibility of access, to invoke a relation which is to be searched for and established, in order to assure its success. It is in the act that we catch the intention of being, and without that every effort to reach it would be in vain.<sup>18</sup>

The object to which the process tends calls to the notion of being; the process does not have to be assimilated to an introspective analysis. “Immanent within it and operative of it” clarifies Lonergan, “lies an intelligent and rational consciousness that unrestrictedly intends a correspondingly unrestricted objective named being, or the all, or everything about everything, or the concrete universe.”<sup>19</sup> Thanks to the intelligent consciousness and to the rational one, to their acts, the objective can

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Desire and orientation enter into alliance beginning from the awareness of the subject in order of what is noticed as an aspiration and in sight of the end; the desire nurtures the research as well as the orientation; this indicates the direction, the criteria with which to proceed, which in the meanwhile can be assumed and followed in as much the desire is vigilant, active. “The desire to know is conscious intelligently and rationally. It is inquiring intelligence and reflecting reasonableness”: *Insight*, p. 379. With a seemingly simple metaphor of the “obverse” and “reverse,” Lonergan illustrates the dynamics of the desire and orientation directed towards their objectives; intelligence and reasonableness, as “obverses,” address themselves respectively to intelligibility and, as “reverses,” to what is founded. The “obverses” are correlated to the “reverses” and *viceversa*; however, these are not but a sole objective: the being. The notion of being, therefore, theoretically governs the dynamics. The orientation is, therefore, corroborated by desire; without this conscious desire, the orientation would be ineffective, but, if sustained by that, it itself becomes intelligent and rational.

<sup>17</sup> *Insight*, p. 379.

<sup>18</sup> In the example, presented by Lonergan, of the geometer who intelligently concentrates his attention on the circle leaving aside all other particulars, or in the example of he who is committed to judge, concentrating rationally on all which is pertinent setting aside all that is not pertinent, we find explicit models of the act, which, making use of abstracting and prescinding, cannot limit itself to them, because on their basis there will be further questions and discussions which will contribute to the entire process.

<sup>19</sup> *Insight*, p. 380.

be reached, and they also must intend towards the objective “unrestrictedly.” What really interests Lonergan is an intelligent and rational all-embracing effectiveness, a full investment of the subject with his/her levels of consciousness, which in their dynamic and operational activation give reason to the notions that have been theoretically enunciated. “Just as the notion of the intelligible is involved in the actual functioning of intelligence, just as the notion of the grounded is involved in the actual functioning of reasonableness, so the notion of being is involved in the unrestricted drive of inquiring intelligence and reflecting reasonableness.”<sup>20</sup> The notion of being is inclined to every act of meaning, it is the common “core,” constitutive of the act itself, it is the vital, generative core, which is distinguished from other elements pertaining to the meaning, such as the sources, the acts, and the terms of meaning. The intention of being finds a further explication in the core of meaning, and here it manifests its all-inclusivity: “the core of all acts of meaning is the intention of being.”<sup>21</sup>

Being is the objective to which the intelligence intends dynamically; this intending is not blind or casual, but is oriented, knows where to direct itself; that does not go towards a detriment of the intelligence, almost as if it was a limit of its free intending and therefore a type of its restriction, since just the goal, being, demands the breaking down of all restrictions. There is a correlation between unrestricted intentionality and being, between being and intentionality; the objective of intentionality can be happily pursued in as much as it is sustained and nourished by the pure desire to know, and in as much as being is intelligible. “Now if by being one means the objective of the pure desire to know, the goal of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, the object of intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, then one must affirm the intrinsic intelligibility of being. For one defines being by its intelligibility; one claims that being is precisely what is known by understanding correctly; one denies that being is anything apart from the intelligible or beyond it or different from it, for one’s definition implies that being is known completely when there are no further questions to be answered.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* All the above notions for Lonergan are not intuitive knowledges, neither general tracts of particular knowledges; they are implied, or rather connected, and bring about effective, real functioning of intelligence and reasonableness; thus, not by chance Lonergan entitled this section “A Spontaneous Notion,” playing both on what the subject lives almost with immediateness and not less characterizes it in his human acts, and on the all-pervasiveness of the notion of being which gives nerve to all the cognitive contents.

<sup>21</sup> *Insight*, p. 382. We shall not dwell upon the analysis of the various theories of the notion of being and the different implications on the intention of being, which Lonergan also recalls, evaluating their positions after having caught the various problematic aspects of the notion itself, which appears “puzzling” and just for this solicits judgment. In these pages the thoughts of Duns Scotus and of Thomas Aquinas in particular, the Scotist and Thomist positions emerge: just placing them in comparison even more highlights what characterizes them.

<sup>22</sup> *Insight*, p. 523. The section containing this quotation is entitled “Cognitional or Ontological Elements?” By means of the title the reader is reached by a lucid provocation, an invitation to reflect;

Regarding the recall of intellectual dynamisms, one can find an undoubted consonance between Lonergan and J. Maréchal, but the theoretical framework of the two authors is different, as we shall see later on; with Lonergan we are certainly distant from the transcendental deduction of the ontological affirmation of Maréchal, as well as from the concurrence of intellect and will in defining truth.

Lonergan declares the position of the one who adheres to the position of Saint Thomas: “For the Thomist, on the other hand, being is the whole of what intelligence anticipates; it is the objective of an unrestricted, dynamic orientation; it is whatever intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation will determine; and so the notion of being is open to all the incomplete and partial moments from which cognitional process suffers without ever renouncing its all-inclusive goal.”<sup>23</sup> Lonergan makes no declaration in the first person, but there is no doubt that what he is expressing is really his position as a disciple of Saint Thomas, even though he did not recognize himself to belong to the Thomism that was contemporary to him.

The whole cognitional process is intentional, the distance between the knower and the real to be known becomes filled with spontaneous ability of putting questions for intelligence and for reflection, the relationship with the real is established thanks to intentionality and its dynamisms. The intentionality is the condition of possibility to know, its ways of operating and modes anticipate the quality of the different ways of intending; intentionality can be considered “an a priori in a cognitive sense,” and has a transcendental character.<sup>24</sup> If on one hand there is an analogy with the Scholastic transcendental, on the other hand there is a connection with the Kantian transcendental, despite undoubtedly there remaining a deep difference between the Phenomenalism of Kant and the threefold structure of knowledge starting from the three levels of consciousness and intentionality.<sup>25</sup>

by means of the section she/he is put in a condition of solving the dilemma, in order to overcome the distinctive value of the terms and to catch and motivate their conjugation.

<sup>23</sup> *Insight*, p. 396.

<sup>24</sup> See G.B. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant. Five Essays on human knowledge*, translated by J. Spoerl, R.M. Doran, ed., University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London 1994, pp. 123ff.

<sup>25</sup> The chapter 5 of G.B. Sala’s work, above quoted, “Kant’s Antithetic Problem and Lonergan’s Rational Conception of Reality,” vividly illustrates the different positions of the German philosopher and the Canadian philosopher. In *Insight*, in Chapter eleven, § 10, pp. 362-366, Lonergan exposes the “contrast,” the “differences” between his position and that of Kant. However, the comparison does not stop at Kant, but opens up towards other thinkers of modern and contemporary philosophy, such as Hegel, with mentions also to Marx and Kierkegaard; regarding every position Lonergan elaborates his own personal interpretation. Thus, for example, whilst he recognizes the aspect of disagreement with Hegel, he shows appreciation, in a note added when reading the proofs, of a characteristic Hegelian tract, that of *Aufhebung*, and reveals to have assumed it as a criterion of advancement of the theoretics in *Insight*: to advance “from the objects of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense understanding, through the acts of understanding themselves to an understanding of understanding.” *Insight*, p. 398, note 21.



### 3. The Intentional and the New Implications, Coming from Husserl

In the year of the publication of *Insight* in 1957, Lonergan held the *Lectures on Existentialism* at Boston College; in those lectures intentionality was more punctually dealt with in reference to the last work of Husserl published in 1954 on *The Crisis of the European Sciences and the Transcendental Phenomenology*. In the context of those lectures Lonergan had presented “the priority of the subject” as a “remedy” or “cure,”<sup>26</sup> following on the diagnosis relating to the crisis in modern science, in the conviction that science was still to be explored, evaluated in a way different from what was already achieved. The subject is the source from which springs what is intentional, in as much as she/he is capable of meaning, symbolizing, representing, and intending.<sup>27</sup> Such activities in their particular acceptations are free of metaphysical presuppositions in Phenomenology, unlike what occurred in Scholasticism. Husserl discarded the metaphysical implications to concentrate on the correlation which becomes established between subject and object, and it is intentionality that reaches a characterization of them in a new way. The subject cannot but be she/he who “intends” and the object “what is intended”: it is the subject which renders it such starting from his/her activity, and the subject, on the other hand, is she/he who “intends” because his/her act is directed to the object. Lonergan defines the subject as “the source of the intentional”; does he thus indicate a criterion that contributes to distributing in a different way the weight which Husserl attributed to both poles of the relationship? We can also ask ourselves: To affirm the role of the subject as a source is it to express oneself only in terms of temporal priority, or could it be considered a precise advancement towards an ontological relationship which must be maintained but expressed again leaving space for other factors which make intentionality explicit? Lonergan recognizes in Husserl the merit of the analysis of the psychological process, just recalling another two correlations, which originally Husserl established: one between *Abschattung* and *Horizont*, the other between *Einstellung* and *Welt*, which arrive to be further ways of making explicit and illustrating the intentional act and the meaning.<sup>28</sup> In the first correlation an integration takes place between all that is perceived, for example, all the objects reached by eye, all that is personally adverted, felt (*Abschattungen*); the integration constitutes the *Horizont*. In the second one there is an amplification of integrative dynamics, since the *Welt* embraces all possible integrations, and thus is “the total horizon” and itself “corresponds” to the

<sup>26</sup> B. Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, Philip J. McShane, ed., Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 18, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2001, pp. 256-258. From here onwards the work will be quoted only as *Lectures on Existentialism*.

<sup>27</sup> See *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 257.

<sup>28</sup> See *Lectures on Existentialism*, pp. 257-258.

*Einstellung*, to the “intelligence” which every subject is and not only has. The subject is his/her “own world.”

Lonergan seems to underline with a certain pleasure the choices operated by Husserl; he uses words which put his position in light, differently from those used for Descartes. The French philosopher has stepped over the objects towards which the intentionality of the subject is directed and, at the same time, over the capacity of the subject to intentionally find a relationship with the others, being the subject “a metaphysical entity called a soul” of the same value of “a ghost in a machine.”<sup>29</sup> Descartes has suppressed the intentional, that is the two correlated poles of the subject and the object.

Lonergan declares that the subject of Husserl is “transcendental,”<sup>30</sup> in coherence with his philosophy, psychology, and phenomenology which are transcendental. At first Lonergan interprets the Husserlian transcendental by recalling the Kantian transcendental, but proceeding in the reading one can deduce that this has been more a semantic mediation of an exemplifying type in order to the identification of the possible conditions of knowing, rather than a putting a theoretical equivalence between the *Ich denk* of Kant and the subject of Husserl. In fact, the precise recalling of the two “key notions” of *epochê* and transcendental reduction, their exposition adherent to the thought of Husserl sweep away any misunderstanding into which Lonergan could have run, and point out yet again his closeness to the thought of Husserl in giving theoretical space to the subject which intends and to the object which is intended, in their intimate correlation, taking thus a step back from the fiction of the “really real,” from its insignificance emerging from mechanistic and behaviouristic positions, which limit the field of consciousness to what is observable or reachable from the outside, inducing the subject into submission to the objects up to his/her reduction and disappearance. Lonergan reiterates: “The subject is what is prior. [...] The subject is what we can examine with perfect accuracy and complete certitude, without any wild leaps”; whatever we undertake and say, we have “intentional acts, and they are what we know and what we can be certain of.”<sup>31</sup>

Under this aspect, between Lonergan and Husserl there are surprising assonances, which cannot be left to fall away; they, besides, can stimulate a new interpretation of the transcendental in Lonergan, in the sense of extending the study of the transcendental while maintaining the reference to Kant, as it is explicitly expressed in *Method in Theology*,<sup>32</sup> but also going beyond Kant, arriving at a confrontation with Husserl, in view of the need of finding again a common foundation for science

<sup>29</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 258.

<sup>30</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 259.

<sup>31</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>32</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1972; University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Reprinted 2003. From here onwards the work will be quoted only as *Method in Theology*.

and philosophy. It is clear, however, that Lonergan does not limit himself to this call; for him the problem is that of the relationship among science, philosophy, and theology, not only in terms of reaching a “vertical” synthesis as achieved by Saint Thomas and the Scholasticism, but not even in the terms of Husserl, who considered philosophy as a “rigorous science” as being “grounded in necessity and yielding absolute certitude.”<sup>33</sup> Lonergan considers as disastrous a proposal which asks the human subject to outdo himself/herself in his/her constitutive characteristics. Only “God is absolutely necessary, and God has absolute certitude without any condition whatever.”<sup>34</sup> Our certainties are linked to judgments, by which we reach the virtually unconditioned, that is they are “true” as “matter of fact,” but we cannot forget our knowledge which is connected to a contingent world, and as such is itself contingent.

Lonergan acknowledges the contribution made by Husserl to the analysis of the components of human knowledge, namely that there can be “two worlds” and “two truths” relating to the criteria which one adopts, the point of view where one places oneself; there can be that of common sense and that of science, and consequently one can distinguish the truths of one and the truths of the other, but at the same time one can open out towards a wider vision, towards the consideration of the problematic nature of the two worlds too, as did Heidegger with his questions on being, and with the evaluation of human intelligence which cannot understand all perfectly. An opening of the mind towards being has to be recognized, the mind can orient itself towards Being. Lonergan translates this assumption in terms of Christian philosophy: God is *lumen intellectus nostri*, and human intellect is *participatio creata lucis increatae*. The priority of the subject is to be then reconsidered. It cannot be an absolute priority; as priority which “is,” it could not be, that is the priority can assert itself in as much as it takes its place in the sphere of being: the subject “is” since she/he “is among the beings.” To recognize that phenomenology has an importance does not exonerate Lonergan to identify its limits. “God is absolutely necessary, and God has absolute certitude without any condition whatever.”<sup>35</sup>

#### **4. Intentionality and Structure of Knowing, Characterized by Dynamics of Ulteriority**

Lonergan had by now faced up for years to the critical problem of consciousness when in his essay *Cognitive Structure*, originally published as a paper in 1964,<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 261.

<sup>34</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 262.

<sup>35</sup> *Lectures on Existentialism*, p. 262.

<sup>36</sup> Initially the essay had been published in *Spirit as Inquiry. Studies in Honor of B. Lonergan*, Saint Xavier College, Chicago 1964, pp. 230-242. Now it is in B. Lonergan, “Cognitive Structure,” in *Collection*, second edition, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 4,

achieved a way of presenting with admirable clarity his own philosophical convictions regarding objectivity in knowing in terms of “epistemological theorem,”<sup>37</sup> so that every possibility of doubt or uncertainty was conquered:

- a. objectivity is determined by the relation which knowledge establishes with being, or “is” such relation;
- b. the cognitive activity, for its intentionality, is intrinsically objective, or “is” intentionality itself.

Intentionality is not, therefore, what arrives in a second moment, it is not the result of a deduction, in as much as it is “the dominant content of the dynamic structure that assembles and unites several activities into a single knowing of a single object.”<sup>38</sup> It is intentionality that governs the dynamic structure, in such a way that the operations themselves are affirming themselves in their specificity, developing functional relationships with one another, on a conscious base, by employing intelligence and rationality. The structure is, thus, pervaded by intentionality: all that is known by manifold activities does not get dispersed, nor remains isolated, but is brought back to unity. Knowledge does not fall into pieces, and the object, therefore, can be known in its uniqueness and wholeness. Intentionality has the function of activating, coordinating, unifying and, thus, objectifying what is pertaining to the cognitional dynamics and its results.

The objects belong to the experience which the subject has externally to himself/herself, exercising his/her own senses; at the same time it is not destined to remain isolated, but to join itself with the internal experience in which the subject, as stated by Medieval Scholasticism, reaches their apprehension and appetite. In his recalling the Scholastic position, Lonergan is more greatly interested in the “original datum” expressed with the metaphoric spatiality of the internal/external and, therefore, with the meanings of the “presence.” Being established the difference between “material presence,” as a mere phenomenic presence of the object, and “intentional presence,” as an activation of cognitional dynamics according to the two types of the presence of the object to the subject and the subject to himself/herself, the latter affirms itself as a presence correlated to that of the object. Lonergan underlines the importance of the subject as a subject, considered in its continuous dynamism, directed towards raising the level of his/her own activities, reaching a self-knowledge starting from his/her own consciousness.

Does one find oneself facing a theory that exceeds regarding the subjective, which accentuates the subjectivity reducing objectivity? The solution is quite

Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992, pp. 205-221. From here onwards the work will be quoted only as *Cognitional Structure*.

<sup>37</sup> *Cognitional Structure*, pp. 211-214.

<sup>38</sup> *Cognitional Structure*, p. 211.

another: knowledge, as knowledge of the real, is intrinsically objective, and such an objectivity coincides with its intentionality.

To give more details to the reflection on what occurs in the knower, Lonergan distinguishes the various experiential tracts in the midst of which intention emerges, which initially expresses itself by questions. “Human intelligence actively greets every content of experience with the perplexity, the wonder, the drive, the intentio, that may thematize by (but does not consist in) such questions as, What is it? Why is it so?”<sup>39</sup> Then there follow the activities of the intellectual and rational levels. The intention, which initially expresses itself by questions, has a much wider range of action, and due to this it cannot consist in them; such a range reaches up to intending the being, revealing the link between such capability and the opening questions, pointing out an absence of limits in parting and arriving. The intention, in fact, is “unrestricted, for there is nothing that we cannot at least question,” and is “comprehensive, for questioning probes every aspect of everything; its ultimate goal is the universe in its full concreteness.”<sup>40</sup>

The complete circularity, which is established in the intentional dynamics by the aforesaid link, if on one hand configures them ideally in their intimate succession and connection, on the other hand does not bring about any rigidity or closure of what is constitutionally open; such circularity is destined to open itself again to new, further circuits.

Here we have, therefore, that the relationship of the dynamic structure of knowledge with the being is to be considered as a maintaining of the dynamics and not as its exhaustion; the *intentio* cannot be but *intendens* at the beginning, during, and at the end of the process; it does not ever arrive at exhausting itself as *intenta*, as the thought remains “thinking” and the *noësis* exceeds the *noëma*.

From here the dynamism of ulteriority and transcendence which characterizes knowing: “Consciously, intelligently, rationally it goes beyond: beyond data to intelligibility; beyond intelligibility to truth and through truth to being; and beyond known truth and being to the truth and being still to be known. But though it goes beyond, it does not leave behind. It goes beyond to add, and when it has added, it unites.”<sup>41</sup> This testifies once again the all-inclusiveness of intention, but the knowledge which we manage to reach in each moment cannot be but limited, the *intentio* from *intendens* becomes *intenta*; the answers to which we arrive are all the same related to the questions regarding a particular object, in that particular moment. The reflection of Lonergan gives space to the knowledge of a particular object without closing it in a relativistic clamp, which sends back solely to the subject which questions himself/herself; and this, because an ordered series of

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

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Cognitional Structure*, pp. 211-212.

relationships has to be recognized: “As answers stand to questions, so cognitional activities stand to the intention of being.”<sup>42</sup>

The cognitive activities, belonging to the dynamic structure, while are addressed to the object, are related to the intention of being. Not only answers and questions come together on the object, but the intentionality of the cognitive activities is called to connect itself with the intention of being. Thus, an ontological curvature is declinated, which guarantees the objective dimension, without any subjectivistic risk whatsoever: the *intentio intendens* of the whole structure gives place to the *intentio intenta* of the cognitive activities directed towards a particular object, and this in turn establishes an intrinsic relationship to being and the real. The two forms of *intentio* and their two relationships to being have therefore to be assured. To Lonergan, in fact, interests shedding light to the non-identity of the two relationships: “The *intentio intendens* is not knowing but merely intending: it is objectivity in potency. But the *intentio intenta* resides not in merely intending but in structured activities of knowing: it is objectivity in act.”<sup>43</sup>

Thus, for Lonergan objectivity is similar to a “triple cord,” that is, it has articulated components on three levels: “experiential,” referring to data of experience; “normative,” referring to intelligence and rationality, which guide the cognitive process up to judgment; and “absolute,” referring to reflective understanding, which “combines the normative and the experiential elements into a virtually unconditioned.”<sup>44</sup>

## 5. Intentionality and Consciousness Combined in the Method

*Method in Theology*, in its first chapter,<sup>45</sup> is a symphony of intending, intentional, intentionality; at first Lonergan underlines their “psychological sense,” but in Chapter one discovers more than psychological aspects.

The tracts that prove particularly significant are the relationships which become established between intentionality and consciousness, the presence of the objects and the presence of the subject. Lonergan affirms: “Just as operations by their intentionality make objects present to the subject, so also by consciousness they make the operating subject present to himself.”<sup>46</sup> In this case, intentionality comes to take a priority over consciousness. The operations appear in all their vigour, they are protagonists on the two distinct, but undoubtedly connected, fronts of intentionality and consciousness. Object and subject are both present, the first has

<sup>42</sup> *Cognitional Structure*, p. 212.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Cognitional Structure*, p. 213.

<sup>45</sup> The first chapter introduces to the method, meets its notion, explains its operations, and ultimately manages to present its functions.

<sup>46</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 8.

passive voice, receives the gaze, the intention, is intended; the second has active voice, fixes his/her gaze, pays attention, intends, and at the same time is capable of grasping his/her own presence as an operating subject, in the respective presences of object and subject, with their intrinsic differences. The subject so much is conscious as she/he directs his/her attention towards the object and tends to it. They are not two different operations, but a sole operation which “besides being intrinsically intentional, also is intrinsically conscious.”<sup>47</sup>

Here, therefore, it is that the levels of consciousness meet with the levels of intentionality;<sup>48</sup> the operations of all the levels are intentional and conscious (sometimes Lonergan turns the order round, they are conscious and intentional), but intentionality and consciousness are different at every level. There are various ways to intend: the intending of the senses, of imagination, of understanding, conceiving what one has understood; they are qualitatively different. The difference arranges itself on two “modes”: there is the intending in the “categorical” mode and the intending in the “transcendental” mode; the categories on one side, and the transcendentals on the other characterize them. While the categories are limited in denotation, as they are always relative to a culture, and are types of classification elaborated by philosophy or by the sciences, the transcendentals are comprehensive in connotation and unlimited in denotation, and do not change with culture. The categories help us “to put determinate questions and give determinate answers”; the transcendentals, instead, belong to “questions prior to the answers,” and are “the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge.”<sup>49</sup> They consent us to go always beyond what we know always posing new questions, they are unlimited; they tend towards all that is unknown, about which we can only partly answer. In correspondence to intelligent intending, rational intending, responsible intending, we shall form respectively the transcendental concepts of the intelligible, the truth, the value, but anteriorly to them there are the transcendental notions; they are constitutive of the same dynamics of conscious intending, thanks to which we advance from merely experiencing to understanding, from merely understanding to the truth and the real, from knowledge of the facts to responsible action.<sup>50</sup>

The levels of consciousness, with the manifold operations, unfold the *eros* of the human mind; the proceeding of the stages promotes the elementary knowledge of elementary objects, but it is also possible to join together the different elementary knowledges in composite knowledges of composite objects formed by the union of the elementary objects, intensifying and bringing to development the *eros*, which

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

<sup>48</sup> For a deeper analysis of the theme in question, also in order with making explicit the transcendental meaning, see G.B. Sala, “Coscienza e intenzionalità in Bernard Lonergan,” in V. Melchiorre, ed., *Studi di filosofia trascendentale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1993, pp. 49-99.

<sup>49</sup> *Method in Theology*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> See *Method in Theology*, pp. 11-12.

will lead to composing the manifold composite objects in a single universe. All this will happen with “a conscious intending, ever going beyond what happens to be given or known, ever striving for a fuller and richer apprehension of the yet unknown or incompletely known totality, whole, universe.”<sup>51</sup> We know that the analysis conducted by Edmund Husserl on intentionality was not only well known to Lonergan, but was esteemed by him, who arrived to qualify it as “painstaking” in *Method in Theology*.<sup>52</sup>

Lonergan concisely affirms that Husserl “made it evident that human thinking and judging are not just psychological events but always and intrinsically intend, refer to, mean objects distinct from themselves.”<sup>53</sup> Despite its brevity, the recall has its importance:

- the thought of the subject and the formulation of the judgment cannot be read only as happenings of the psyche, or as simple results of psychism, or as a physical-organic product;
- the three verbs used (*to intend, to refer to, to mean*)<sup>54</sup> recall the opening of the acts of thought and judgment towards the surrounding reality as acts of the subject, which cannot withdraw solipsistically on the subject himself/herself, but are tending to plural and diversified external objects;
- the thinking and judging subject exerts his/her own intentionality, but thinking and judging is always thinking and judging something/someone, they are acts which are referred back to an object present to the subject.

The three verbs propose their own shades of meaning and, at the same time, connections at the semantic level; on the first plane there is always the subject, which has an initiative with an aim, which is capable to tend towards an object, to recognize it among many, to pre-choose it in order to enter into relation with it. The object, in its turn, has a role that must not be undervalued, since just thanks to it the act of the subject is not to be held as only psychic. In *Method in Theology* Lonergan confirms what he expressed more widely in his *Lectures on Existentialism* and, at the same time, works an advancement. According to the differentiated levels of consciousness one differentiates operations; to the differentiated levels of

<sup>51</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 212.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *To intend* is “to direct the attention to”, “to tend in the direction of,” “to direct oneself towards”; the object cannot remain implicit, it has to be made explicit; the destination of the act one undertakes is, thus, declared; certainly it is also “to have the intention to,” “to wish to say,” “to mean.” *To refer to* is “to refer to” an object calling it into question, “to establish a relationship” with an object, “to be directed to.” *To mean*, in the sense of “to indicate” an object, can be a synonym of “to refer to” an object, but, in addition to “to have a proposal or an intention in the mind,” it is also “to have a significance,” “to have a meaning,” “to signify”; it could be a synonym of “to intend” in the sense of “to have the intention of expressing that meaning.”



consciousness correspond differentiated levels of intentionality: the intending of the senses is not the intending of the intellect, and the intending of the intellect is not the intending of the reason. Even in the multiplicity of the levels of consciousness, of operations, of intentionality, there is a unity of consciousness, as there is a basic unity of intentionality. The conscious dynamisms, which are not to be identified with introspection, lead the subject to grasp his/her own subjective experience in the process characterized by the differentiations which occur to consciousness and intentionality, and by means of the same process the subject manages to objectifying the contents of consciousness.

The transcendental method meets the needs of the human subject so that she/he uses all his/her capacities in materially and formally dynamic operations. The conscious intention will lead him/her to go beyond what is given or known, asking him/her to be attentive employing his/her own senses, to be intelligent unfolding his/her own intelligence, to be reasonable making use of his/her own reason, to be responsible finding and exercising his/her own freedom and responsibility. The method is “universally significant and relevant,” every subject lives this reality concretely; each person arrives to the method by intensifying his/her own consciousness objectifying it, and to objectify “is a matter of applying the operations as intentional to the operations as conscious.”<sup>55</sup>

By means of the dynamics of consciousness and intentionality the subject is called to self-understand, self-affirm, self-transcend, that is, to establish significant relationships with the world, with the others, with God. The questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation realize the capacity of self-transcendence; through such questions, the question on God unfolds. “As the question of God is implicit in all our questioning, so being in love with God is the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality.”<sup>56</sup>

Lonergan noticed that the meeting with the modern consciousness was not realizable by Thomism, or by Neo-Scholasticism due to a question of philosophical mentality; furthermore, he noticed that one could not ignore the proposals of the phenomenology of Husserl and the philosophy of Existentialism. Certainly the transcendental structure of consciousness and intentionality of the human subject in Lonergan are not the consciousness and intentionality theorized by Husserl, but we hold that one can undertake a reading which explores fruitfully the assonances and most likely the resonances of Husserl in Lonergan. We indicate here only some tracts of Husserl’s thought which can sustain the hypothesis put forward.

- a. Husserl understood that philosophic research could not ignore the problems raised by the development of logical-mathematical sciences, by natural sciences, by psychological sciences, and by historical sciences; this demands a

<sup>55</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> *Method in Theology*, p.105.

non-abstract employment of reason; in particular his philosophy took on a task to clarify the “world of life” and, because of this, to be critical of reason called to discover the rational meaning of lived experience.

- b. He analysed the term “consciousness” in its variety of meanings. Consciousness is a “phenomenological-real unity of the elements of living of the ego,”<sup>57</sup> being present in the subject his/her different acts together with what is correlated to them, and coming to be established a relationship between the living of consciousness and the lived content; consciousness is “internal consciousness,”<sup>58</sup> which perceives the internal elements of living as its own objects; intentionality is what specifically characterizes them, it is “intentional elements of living,”<sup>59</sup> or “act” which intends the object, and therefore it will become “intended” inside the elements of living, as already Scholastic expressions signified in terms of “intentional in-existence.”
- c. The act consists in consciousness’ relating to the object; it is distinguished by a unit in strict relation to intention; the content is intentional in relation to the object, as well as to the matter, as to the quality; in relation to the object, one has to distinguish the “way” in which it is intentioned from that which will become the object itself when it will be intentioned, that is, when it will be “intentionally present.”<sup>60</sup>
- d. Husserl was interested in “the living elements of consciousness in all the fullness of concreteness,” and therefore in “the stream of the elements of living,”<sup>61</sup> each one with its essence, to be grasped in its peculiarity which distinguishes it, keeping hold of the unity of consciousness. Regarding “the living elements of consciousness in general,” the first reference of Husserl is to the Cartesian *cogito*, not limiting itself to just the intellectual component of thought, but referring to the multiform activities of the ego (“I perceive, remember, imagine, judge, feel, desire, will”), without this signifying however a sharing of the rationalistic demands of the French philosopher, since the phenomenological reflection looks at the “egological elements of living in their innumerable and fluid particular formations.”<sup>62</sup> When Husserl employs the term *cogitatio*, he is referring to the activity of perceiving; that which is perceived is a *cogitatum*,

<sup>57</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag 1984, p. 356ff. From here onwards the work will be quoted in the paragraph by a personal English translation; in the bibliographic notes the pages belong to the indicated edition.

<sup>58</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, pp. 365ff.

<sup>59</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, pp. 377ff.

<sup>60</sup> E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, p. 386.

<sup>61</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. I: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag 1950, p. 75. From here onwards the work will be quoted in the paragraph by a personal English translation; in the bibliographic notes the pages belong to the indicated edition.

<sup>62</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideen*, p. 75.

which becomes present to the “field of intuition” of the ego, capable of selecting its attention on a particular object, leaving the background, but the one and the other, background and object, are living elements of consciousness.<sup>63</sup> The modifications relative to the different *cogitationes* are acts of consciousness, intentional elements of living, they are “consciousness of.”<sup>64</sup>

- e. Intentionality is “an essential peculiarity” of all the elements of living in general, but each of them has its own intentionality, as well as referring back to a particular consciousness. There are different types of intentionality, and different “consciousnesses of,” all of which can be recomposed unitedly in the consciousness of the subject which is unique. “Intentionality is what characterizes *consciousness* in a pregnant sense, and consents at the same time to indicate the whole stream of elements of living as a stream of consciousness and as a unity in a *unique* consciousness.”<sup>65</sup>

With Husserl intentionality acquires the peculiar profile of phenomenological reflection, totally inclined to the living elements of consciousness in their original concreteness, in the dynamic presence of their flowing, but not less in their essence; the intentionality of being of classical metaphysics, all pervaded by the demands of perfectability, by the tension towards the ontological perfection, remains distant, in the background; the tie that binded to the *adaequatio intellectus ad rem* has been loosed.

## 6. Criticism and Transcendental Method

To conclude, the analysis of the intentional and intentionality, in its long winding, testifies the deep rootedness of Lonergan in the thought of Saint Thomas; what and how Saint Thomas understood in connection with Aristotle, but no less than with Saint Augustine, was systematically analysed and interpreted by Lonergan. The admiration for Newman consented him to read *memoria* and *verbum* of Saint Augustine in parallel to the illative sense and unconditional assent. Lonergan did not terminate with Thomism, in line with J. Maréchal, even if in a different way from him, linking Thomism and critical philosophy.

Lonergan fully assumed the question of transcendental method; if with Maréchal he shared the dynamic character of consciousness leading to judgment, he did not share the idea of the metaphysical theorem: the epistemological theorem, the formulation of his metaphysics, and his personal elaboration of the transcendental method impeded it.

In Maréchal the dynamic tension of the intelligence, strictly connected to the

<sup>63</sup> See E. Husserl, *Ideen*, p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> See E. Husserl, *Ideen*, pp. 79ff.

<sup>65</sup> E. Husserl, *Ideen*, p. 203. The italics are of Husserl.

will,<sup>66</sup> is directed to an end which belongs to it, it is, in fact, fed by a desire which accompanies a person in his/her life, is the natural desire to unite himself/herself to God, to reach his blessedness. For the author of *Cahiers*, the question was of combining the biblical message, the Thomistic conception, and the teaching deriving from the experience of mystics,<sup>67</sup> relative to the limits of human knowledge, but above all to the gift, which God freely gives, of his communication with the soul. From here, the intelligible form of knowledge and the supernatural destiny of man. This does not imply any form of immanentism, or any reduction of the transcendence of God; the intelligence maintains all its creaturalty and remains open to the initiative of God. The intelligent act knows its end, but it is not the intelligence that assigns it, even less the desire which can only signal the possibility to reach that end: blessedness.

Just the intentional and intentionality show us that in Lonergan no fracture occurred in his intellectual itinerary, but rather an integration of perspectives thanks to the accumulation of intellections. He deepened the meaning of subjectivity to reach that of objectivity, all the more because moved by the need to explore human living. Not by chance he invites every subject to differentiate his/her own consciousness up to the rational self-consciousness, which consents him/her to actuate the good. In *Cognitive Structure*, in fact, he underlined the close relationship between the reflection on our normal living and the knowledge of oneself, and called it “an original creation,” and this refers solely to the subject: “Freely the subject makes himself what he is” in as much as he is called to the “authentic living.”<sup>68</sup> Lonergan chose to insert himself in the school of Saint Thomas, fleeing from essentialism, inviting human subjects to know and know themselves, to appropriate the dynamic structure which is the same human living, with a view to authentic living,<sup>69</sup> drawing from the “immanent source of transcendence” which is their “detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know”;<sup>70</sup> just pursuing that dynamic structure he did not draw back from the comparison with contemporary currents of the Twentieth century, and of those he was able to distinguish lights and shades, as his conferences and notes on Existentialism testify. He did not discard the intentional in the phenomenological formulation of Husserl, as happened in those who linked themselves exclusively to the intentional proposed by Saint Thomas,<sup>71</sup> all the more because he did not exclude the problems of the truth,

<sup>66</sup> The relationship intelligence/will is given more evidence in Maréchal than in Lonergan. See P. Gilbert, “Maréchal, Lonergan et le désir de connaître,” in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63/4 (2007) 1125-1143.

<sup>67</sup> See J. Maréchal, *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*, voll. I-II, Desclée De Brouwer-L'Édition Universelle, Paris-Bruxelles 1924-1937.

<sup>68</sup> *Cognitive Structure*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>69</sup> *Cognitive Structure*, p. 221.

<sup>70</sup> *Insight*, p. 659.

<sup>71</sup> Among the others we can also remember André Hayen. A. Hayen, author of *L'intentionnel dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas*, in the Introduction declared his opposition to the phenomenological

belonging to the dimension of intentional life.<sup>72</sup>

Maréchal wove together metaphysical and transcendental research, focusing on the value of the intellectual and ethical dynamism of consciousness and its contents. He did not ignore the phenomenology of consciousness of Husserl, on which he also wrote,<sup>73</sup> expressing both displeasure for putting ontology in brackets, and the need to reach a transposition of the ontological method in the transcendental method.<sup>74</sup>

Did Lonergan belong to the school of Maréchal?<sup>75</sup> Some claim he did, as does

thought affirming: “*L’intentionnel, dont ne peut se passer une métaphysique réaliste de la connaissance, n’est pas exactement l’intentionnel, encore trop imprégné d’idéalisme, de la phénoménologie ‘néo-cartésienne’ de Husserl*”; furthermore, wanting to impede any possible “*confusion illégitime du thomisme avec la phénoménologie contemporaine*,” he hastened to rectify his own use of the term “object.” In fact, when discussing on consciousness which “*est essentiellement conscience d’objet*,” immediately he made clear “*conscience du réel*” to avoid whatever type of phenomenological interpretation, the reciprocal relation between real and consciousness still holding: “*Le réel est essentiellement objet de conscience*.” In other parts relating to the *intentio mentis*, he seems rather to make less of the concern that he could be misunderstood in Husserlian terms: “*l’intentio mentis est objective parce qu’elle est un act d’attention volontarie se fixant sur l’objet*,” to the point of affirming the role of the object in terms of “*influence de l’objet sur la faculté connaissante*,” and again more incisively of “*activité de l’objet sur le sujet connaissant*”: see A. Hayen, *L’Édition Universelle-Desclée De Brouwer, Bruxelles-Paris 1942*, pp. 15, 287-288, 228, 236. Defending the profound unity of the realism of Saint Thomas and of a “metaphysics of the intentional,” the principles of which are amply diffused in the work of J. Maréchal (see pp. 17-18), Hayen in this work, the value of which must be recognized, commits himself to a punctual and interesting reconstruction of the historical and doctrinal accounts of the notion of *intentio*, starting from the terminology of the authors quoted by Saint Thomas (Saint Augustine, Avicenna, Averroës) as well as the terms of Saint Thomas himself. The work is equipped with the Preface by J. Maréchal who, while examining the question of the intentional, shows himself freer from the above worries of Hayen, his friend and colleague, throwing light above all on an intentional distinguished by the mediation that it can carry out regarding the ends, perfection, and faith in contemporary epoch.

<sup>72</sup> J.I. Piedade, “Verità e intenzionalità. Un percorso husserliano,” in *Gregorianum* 87/1 (2006) 128-151.

<sup>73</sup> J. Maréchal, *Phénoménologie pure ou philosophie de l’action*, in *Mélanges Joseph Maréchal*, I, pp. 190-191.

<sup>74</sup> J. Maréchal, *Au seuil de la métaphysique: abstraction ou intuition*, in *Mélanges Joseph Maréchal*, I, p. 106.

<sup>75</sup> Lonergan did not know Maréchal in person: at first he had heard about him through a fellow student who had studied at Louvain, this however did not prevent him from becoming one of the group of disciples. However, it did not happen. See B. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being. The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, second edition, revised and augmented, E.A. Morelli and M.D. Morelli, eds., *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 5, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1990, Discussion 4, § 6, pp. 348-350, where Lonergan clarifies “[...] my knowledge of Maréchal’s position was acquired largely by osmosis. When I was a student of philosophy, there was a man of the same year, an Athenian who entered the Sicilian Province, and studied his philosophy at the scholasticate in Louvain. [...] So he picked up Maréchal, not by studying Maréchal’s book, but by being in the milieu, that is, the philosophy in his course. And I did a fair amount of my studying with him – we prepared our final exams together, and so on. And I picked up a good deal of Maréchal this way. Familiarity with the ideas. I learned a lot from him. But you can see that there is no direct connection.” Then, precise epistemological differences among his thinking and Maréchal thinking were signified by Lonergan in his reply to requesting.

G.B. Sala.<sup>76</sup> Although common speculative nuclei are recognizable – the accurate investigations into the thought of Saint Thomas, the theorization on the subject and on the implications on the transcendental method, the identifying and valorization of the dynamism belonging to human knowledge, the re-evaluation of the objective dimension of knowledge, and the shedding of light on the role of judgment –, in the two eminent Jesuits the intellectual profiles, the process of theorization, the criteria that they adopt in untying problematic knots, and the method are quite different.

In Maréchal the approach is immediately critical in his two “roads” – “metaphysical criticism” and “transcendental criticism”<sup>77</sup> –, the gnoseology belongs to metaphysics as indicated in “The theory of knowledge in the framework of Thomist metaphysics,”<sup>78</sup> the ontology affirms itself for the application of the deductive method “necessary for the completing of a critical demonstration,” wanting “to establish *a priori*, ‘by concepts’, that for any non-intuitive intelligence *whatsoever* the only means to represent, as *objects*, the contents of consciousness is the strictly metaphysical affirmation of them, that is to say, their determined relationship, at least implicit, to a transcendent reality,”<sup>79</sup> with the final end of reading Thomas in the transcendental view, that is, to meet “the Thomistic criticism of knowledge transposed in the transcendental way.”<sup>80</sup>

## 7. Conclusive Remarks

Lonergan, with *Insight*, had wanted to undertake “a study of human understanding” by means of a double analysis of insight: Part One, “Insight as Activity,” and Part Two, “Insight as Knowledge,” facing in the latter the metaphysical question and coordinating the two Parts around the activity of the subject. Theory of knowledge, epistemology, and metaphysics are all joined in Lonergan not only in his working out the thematic treatment, but also in the epistemological and metaphysical implications, since they are the answer to three

<sup>76</sup> See G.B. Sala, “Coscienza e intenzionalità in B. Lonergan,” in V. Melchiorre, ed., *Studi di filosofia trascendentale*, pp. 55-57; here Sala traces Lonergan back to the transcendental Thomism, that is the Maréchal school of Thomism. See G.B. Sala, *Bernard J. F. Lonergan (1904-1984)*, in E. Coreth, W.M. Neidl and G. Pfligersdorffer, eds, *La filosofia Cristiana nei secoli XIX e XX, Il Ritorno all'eredità scolastica*, Italian edition, G. Mura and G. Penzo, eds, Città Nuova, Roma 1994, pp. 843-863.

<sup>77</sup> Regarding this, the most significant work is J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la Métaphysique: Leçons sur le développement historique et théorique du problème de la connaissance. Cahier V: Le Thomisme devant la Philosophie critique*, Desclée De Brouwer-L'Édition Universelle, Paris-Bruxelles 1949, pp. 47-71. From here onwards the work will be quoted in the paragraph by a personal English translation; in the bibliographic notes the pages belong to the indicated edition.

<sup>78</sup> See J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la Métaphysique*, pp. 73-315.

<sup>79</sup> J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la Métaphysique*, p. 318; the Section III is entirely relative to the “Deduction of ontological affirmation,” pp. 317-504.

<sup>80</sup> J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la Métaphysique*, pp. 505-608.

fundamental questions that every knower, aware of himself/herself and his/her activities, cannot but ask himself/herself:

- “What am I doing when I am knowing?”
- “Why is doing that knowing?”
- “What do I know when I do it?”<sup>81</sup>

Such questions, even in their different characterizations, recall themselves circularly; they refer back to acts governed by intentionality and consciousness, mark peculiarly every field of knowing, and look at their unity.

Lonergan understood the profound difference between the ways of intending: the categorial way of intending, and the transcendental way; between the two, he highlighted the second one, characterized not by the answers, but by the questions; the transcendentals, in fact, belong to the questions which precede the answers. “They are the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge. They are *a priori* because they go beyond what we know to seek what we do not know yet. They are unrestricted because answers are never complete and so only give rise to still further questions.”<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, the transcendentals could not affirm themselves with all their dynamicity if the subject do not draw from that “source” of transcendence which is inherent in himself/herself.

In *Insight* such source, while it leads the subject to self-appropriation, it stimulates the subject to start from the “general transcendent knowledge” – with which she/he comes to the knowledge of God in terms of notion and affirmation of God on the base of the idea of being – to reach the “special transcendent knowledge,”<sup>83</sup> in which the subject shall be called to deepen the meaning of belief and of collaboration with the work of God in terms of faith. In *Lectures on Existentialism, Cognitional Structure, and Method in Theology*, the influx of phenomenology is more noticed; intentionality is turned to identify not so much what distinguishes the relationship consciousness/being, consciousness/real, intelligibility and the inner word, as in *Verbum*, but rather the experience that the subject has, the presence of the subject to himself/herself, the act with which she/he directs himself/herself to the object, the objectivity of the knowledge founded on the deepening one’s subjectivity, the subject’s intentional operations, his/her place in the world, his/her relationship lived in various contexts, the transcendental method through which she/he operates.

Certainly, one cannot say that the reflection on the intentionality in Lonergan has lightened the ontological substance or metaphysical demands which distinguishes his thought, nor that it has led self-consciousness to reduce its expressions on a

<sup>81</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 25.

<sup>82</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 11.

<sup>83</sup> See *Insight*, Chapter nineteen and Chapter twenty.

phenomenological level;<sup>84</sup> rather, it will be necessary to acknowledge that just the attention to the intentionality of transcendental phenomenology has contributed to focus even better and deepening the subject with his/her demands, starting off with the pure desire to know, as well as to widen the meaning of the *a priori* so as to constitute the world proper of the subject, but also a world which is characterized as being truly human.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> For an affirmation of the coexistence of the speculative values of intentionality in a Husserlian key and of the maintenance of orienting criteria, also of a metaphysical type, R. Lazzarini had already expressed himself in a work of great breadth, in which the ones combine themselves to the others: see R. Lazzarini, *Intenzionalità e istanza metafisica*, Fratelli Bocca Editore, Roma 1955.

<sup>85</sup> Regarding the extension of the Kantian *a priori*, carried out by Lonergan, see G.B. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, pp. 30ff.





# LONERGAN'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES AND CHRISTIAN FAITH IN *INSIGHT*

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Bernard Lonergan's *Insight* is a difficult and demanding philosophical work. Strangely, one of the greatest obstacles to any beginning reader of *Insight* is the way this book begins. The first five chapters engage in intensive discussions of modern mathematics and empirical science and their methods. Even before the end of the second chapter, Lonergan has covered irrational surds, uncountable infinite magnitudes, Hilbert's implicit definition, the invariance principles of relativity theory, differential equations and statistical methods. Why begin the book with such difficult material? To put the question more sharply, if Lonergan indeed intended to "issue an invitation to a personal, decisive act" to know oneself,<sup>1</sup> then why begin with five such formidable and daunting chapters? Why begin with such "impersonal" material on the natural sciences that is so unfamiliar to most readers?

Lonergan actually offers several explanations for beginning in this fashion, but they are not all convincing, nor perhaps even compatible. In the first of these explanations he writes, "the meaning of all these sentences, their intention and significance, are to be grasped only by going beyond the scraps of mathematics or science or common sense or metaphysics to the dynamic, cognitional structure that is exemplified in knowing them" (12). In other words, his discussions of mathematics and science are meant to provide illustrations of insights and other cognitional activities, so as to facilitate the self-appropriation of these acts. But if that is the case, then why offer examples so foreign to the vast majority of readers?

A bit later he offers a different explanation for his beginning:

if one's apprehension of those activities [e.g., insights] is to be clear and distinct, then one must prefer the fields of intellectual endeavor in which

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 3, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992, p. 13; hereafter, page references to *Insight* appear in parentheses in the main text.

the greatest care is devoted to exactitude and, in fact, the greatest exactitude is attained. For this reason, then, I have felt obliged to begin my account of insight and its expansion with mathematical and scientific illustrations (14).

Exactitude, it would seem, is the objective of Lonergan's philosophy, and so he needs to turn to the paradigms of exactitude for guidance. This impression is surely reinforced by a remark that comes at the conclusion of his treatment of scientific methods: "In the previous five chapters, precision was our primary objective, and so our examples were taken from the fields of mathematics and physics" (196).

To grant exactitude and precision such prominence in philosophy may have seemed quite appropriate when *Insight* was first published in 1957. This was a time when the scientific and engineering advances of World War II accelerated in the Cold War era, and a time when some of the great developments in relativistic cosmology and elementary particle physics were capturing the imaginations of the best young minds around the world. The natural sciences were growing in prestige and influence in the universities and in societies at large. Philosophy departments were dominated by logical positivist philosophers of science. So it might seem that Lonergan was writing for the audience of those times.

Today, however, emphases on exactitude and precision are met with a very cool reception. Post-modernist criticisms have made many people highly suspicious of the obsession for control – control of nature, of self, and of the other – which drove modernity's preoccupation with certitude. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Lonergan used such terminology to explain his way of beginning *Insight*. That he did use such terms cannot be ignored, and such passages have led some critics to dismiss Lonergan as yet another modernist philosopher obsessed with control.<sup>2</sup> Still, the suspicion that Lonergan is guilty of modernist obsession for control does not stand up to a closer reading of the book. Lonergan's actual account of scientific methods and the world as known by science – especially his emphasis on the non-systematic dimension of nature – does not fit at all well with the control-obsessed view of science painted by modernity. Hence we need to look beyond Lonergan's comments about exactitude and precision if we are to fully understand the place of his emphasis on natural science within the context of his larger intentions in *Insight*.

Still another rationale for Lonergan's way of beginning is implicit in the following remarks:

Further, while all acts of understanding have a certain family likeness, a full and balanced view is to be reached only by combining in a single account the evidence obtained from different fields of intelligent activity. Thus,

<sup>2</sup> See for example Ronald H. McKinney, "Deconstructing Lonergan", *International Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1991) 81-93.

the precise nature of the act of understanding is to be seen most clearly in mathematical examples; the dynamic context in which understanding occurs can be studied to best advantage in an investigation of scientific methods; the disturbance of that dynamic context by alien concerns is thrust upon one's attention by the manner in which various measures of common nonsense blend with common sense (4).

In other words, it might seem that the obvious place to begin the project of self-appropriation would be in the field of ordinary, everyday understanding (i.e., common sense). But this approach would be problematic, since at the outset what is acceptable to common sense will be a mixture of insights and oversights – and how is one to know the difference? It seems necessary, therefore, to begin by appropriating insight in a context least clouded by the distortions of bias (“common nonsense”), and the methods of science are intended to eliminate that corrupting influence.

Yet recent philosophy of science has called the oversimplification of this assumption into question. Indeed Lonergan himself observes “it would be excessively naïve for the self-knowing subject to suppose that his scientific knowledge and common sense are purely and simply the product of experience, intelligent inquiry, and critical reflection” (424). So the access to self-appropriation of insight through modern science is not without its own difficulties. Even so, Lonergan's phenomenological strategy does have merit to it, for whatever distorting influences remain embedded in the methods of modern science, they at least are *intended* to minimize those influences. In doing so, they make it more likely that the reader will properly appropriate the difference between genuine insights responding to questions for intelligence and reasonableness on the one hand, and oversights evading those demands on the other. Nevertheless, even if this were the sole reason for Lonergan's way of beginning his book, this still would not explain, for example, his inclusion of the complex discussion of diverging series of conditions nor his long, detailed account of emergent probability.

Of course, yet another reason for beginning *Insight* with modern science is the fundamental dialectical tension between intelligibility and “the already out there now” as fundamental criteria of reality. This tension is linked to the basic divisions between thing *versus* body, the intelligible *versus* the imaginable, the theoretical-explanatory *versus* the commonsense modes of knowing. Confronting these tensions truly plays a very important role in the development of *Insight*. Oddly, however, Lonergan does not explicitly offer this as a justification for beginning his book with science.<sup>3</sup> And even if he had, this still would not explain his inclusion of the long, detailed discussions of the different heuristic methods, the diverging

<sup>3</sup> This justification is of course implicit in his remarks about modern science needing four centuries to realize its proper objects are not imaginable, *Insight*, p. 15.

series of conditions, or the account of emergent probability. The basic differences between scientific/explanatory *versus* commonsense/immediate modes of knowing could have been achieved without all of these elaborate digressions.

Lonergeran's disparate explanations for his way of beginning *Insight* reveal that he was moving on several levels simultaneously. In some sense, *all* of his rationales for beginning with science can be parts of the complete explanation. Still I believe that the rationales surveyed thus far do not go to the deepest of those levels. I think Lonergan hints at his deepest reason for what he is up to in those first five chapters when he writes, "it has taken modern science four centuries to make the discovery that the objects of its inquiry need not be imaginable entities moving through imaginable processes in an imaginable space-time" (15). That is to say, it is not so much exactitude, but rather the dramatic transformation of our notions of reality and the natural universe by twentieth-century science that Lonergan regarded as having such great philosophical import. And later still, Lonergan offers yet another complementary explanation for beginning as he does:

there is also a third purpose that I hope to achieve through an appropriation of the modes of scientific thought. For such thought is methodical and the scientist pins his faith, not on this or that scientific system or conclusion, but on the validity of scientific method itself. But what ultimately is the nature and ground of method but a reflective grasp and specialized application of the object of our inquiry, namely, of the dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in human cognitional activity? It follows that empirical science as methodical not merely offers a clue for the discovery but also exhibits concrete instances for the examination of the larger, multiform dynamism that we are seeking to explore (16).

Taken together, these last two explanations mean that a new and deeper reexamination of the *methods* of science will lead to a transformation in our vision of the natural *world*. The natural world will be revealed as open and dynamic, and not as a deterministic world contained within the limits of a mechanistic imagination. Such, I would argue, is the deeper intention behind Lonergan's placement and treatment of science at the beginning of *Insight*.

Even so, we may well wonder why Lonergan thought it so important to begin *Insight* with such an intensive argument about the true character of the natural world as it is heuristically intended by the methods of modern science.

### **1. Lonergan's Questions; Weber's Extra-Scientific Opinion**

Perhaps Lonergan revealed the profound significance of beginning *Insight* in this way some years later when in *Method in Theology* he wrote:

Is moral enterprise consonant with this world?[...] is the universe on our

side, or are we just gamblers and, if gamblers, are we not perhaps fools, individually struggling for authenticity and collectively endeavoring to snatch progress from the ever mounting welter of decline? The questions arise and, clearly, our attitudes and our resoluteness may be profoundly affected by the answers. Does there or does there not necessarily exist a transcendent, intelligent ground of the universe? Is that ground or are we the primary instance of moral consciousness? Are cosmogenesis, biological evolution, historical process basically cognate to us as moral beings or are they indifferent and so alien to us?<sup>4</sup>

Loneragan's remarks point to a deep concern that modern science has revealed a world that is inherently inhospitable to the most profound human aspirations to live life ethically and authentically. Has modern science revealed a world, and a "vocation" in that world, which are fundamentally opposed to the most fundamental tenets of Christian faith? How are we to answer these questions?

Now in a very influential essay, "Science as a Vocation," Max Weber gave one kind of answer to Lonergan's questions. Weber argues that any true scientist, any one who has a genuine vocation to science

knows that what he has accomplished will be antiquated in ten, twenty, fifty years. That is the fate to which science is subjected; it is the very *meaning* of scientific work [...] Every scientific 'fulfillment' raises new 'questions'; it *asks* to be surpassed and outdated. Whoever wishes to serve science must resign himself to this fact [...] to] engage in doing something that never comes, and never can come, to an end.<sup>5</sup>

Notice that Weber does *not* claim that scientific methods produce "cumulative and progressive results" as Lonergan does.<sup>6</sup> Rather, says Weber, science is part of a "process of intellectualization which we have been undergoing for thousands of years," a process of mastering the world by calculation, a process which "means that the world is disenchanted."<sup>7</sup> For Weber, therefore, scientific work is without any inherent or ultimate end or purpose. At best, scientists can only resign themselves to their fate and heroically forge onward, like Nietzschean *Übermenschen*, realizing that their work will have no lasting worth and accepting their fate anyway. Weber explicitly proclaims that science itself can offer no answer to the question of the

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Herder and Herder, New York 1972, pp. 102-103.

<sup>5</sup> Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New York 1946, p. 138.

<sup>6</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 4. Nor is Weber able to envision the possibility that progressive results can come about through "the many, contradictory, disparate ... contributions to the clarification of some basic but polymorphic fact," as Lonergan also does, *Insight*, p. 412. But Lonergan can do this because, unlike Weber, he has at hand an appropriate dialectical method grounded in self-appropriation.

<sup>7</sup> Weber, "Science as a Vocation," pp. 138-139.

meaning of science, or the meaning of the world as known by science, while at the same time offering his extra-scientific account of what science reveals.

In Weber's view, therefore, it is precisely the modern sciences – social sciences as well as natural sciences – that strip the scales from our eyes and confront us with the cold, harsh reality of a disenchanted universe that is devoid of ultimate meaningfulness. This view of science and the world implies that authentic moral agents are indeed just gamblers because the universe is a cold and purposeless place. Those of Christian faith would be foolish, therefore, for believing that “the universe is on our side.”

Although many contemporary thinkers share something like Weber's view of faith, science and the natural world, Lonergan does not. He points out that it is not science, but rather “extra-scientific opinion” that produces such a view:

There are precise manners in which common sense can be expected to go wrong; there are definite issues on which science is prone to issue extra-scientific opinions; and the reorientation demanded and effected by the self-knowledge of the subject is a steadily exerted pressure against the common nonsense that tries to pass for common sense and against the uncritical philosophy that pretends to be a scientific conclusion (424).<sup>8</sup>

Lonergan argues that the natural universe is ultimately intelligible – ultimately meaningful<sup>9</sup> – and he uses his analysis of scientific methods as the first step in his argument. His counter-cultural analysis of science is therefore a decisive first step in *Insight*.

When viewed in this light, Lonergan's analysis of science parallels Kant's endeavor to “make room” for faith and morals.<sup>10</sup> There is an important difference, however. Kant *assumed* that the rise of Newtonian science implied a deterministic universe, and thereby undermined the reasonableness of morals and faith. Thus his critique of pure reason was intended to isolate the results of modern science in a merely phenomenal realm, so that they would not imperil the noumenal realm of morals and faith. While Kant's achievements were impressive in many ways, it must be acknowledged that this aspect of his project failed miserably. Subsequent generations accepted Kant's account of science and the phenomenal realm as the

<sup>8</sup> Weber himself explicitly acknowledges that his own answers to these questions are extra-scientific, although this is seldom acknowledged by others.

<sup>9</sup> In *Insight* Lonergan equates intelligibility and meaningfulness – e.g., “insight into insight includes the apprehension of the meaning of meaning,” (5) and the anticipation of unconditioned intelligibility by the notion of being is “the core of meaning” (381). After *Insight*, of course, Lonergan recognized the need to expand his analysis of meaning. While not renouncing the centrality of intelligibility to meaningfulness, he expanded the horizon in a way that includes but goes beyond the construal of meaning strictly in terms of intelligibility. Clearly much more needs to be said on this topic.

<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith, trans., St. Martin's Press, New York 1965, pp. 28-29 [Bxxviii-Bxxx].

account of the whole of knowledge and the whole of reality, leaving behind his more problematic discussions of the noumenal realm and its implications for faith and morals. Weber represents just one of the progeny of Kant's failed attempt.

Lonerger on the other hand rejected Kant's assumptions about the universe because even more fundamentally he also rejected Kant's analysis of science and human reason. Therefore, let us now turn to Lonergan's analysis of the methods of modern science, and to the implications that he drew regarding the meaningfulness of the natural universe.

## **2. Inquiry: The Dynamism of Scientific Methods and of Human Knowing**

Lonerger's basic method of self-appropriation goes back behind the extra-scientific opinions about natural science to a critical retrieval of the intentional and conscious activities that are the dynamic, generative sources of all natural scientific knowledge. He is thereby able to show that the natural sciences themselves imply an open and dynamic universe in which are possible and essential, both intelligibility and randomness, as well as "natural laws," emergent novelty, and genuine human freedom. In what follows, I show how Lonergan drew attention to these more fundamental sources in modern science, and how he worked out their implications for an understanding of the natural universe that provides a proper home for authentic human existence.

Lonerger says that his analysis of scientific methods will reveal that their ground is to be found in "the dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in human cognitional activity" (16). "Dynamic" here is clearly meant to be contrasted with "static," and what Lonergan has in mind is the static, classicist notion of science as rooted in deductive logic.<sup>11</sup> Ever since Aristotle's seminal reflections on science in his *Analytics*, it has been almost universally assumed that deductive logic forms the basic core of all scientific knowledge and method. But the methods of logic are quite static. Logic has to operate with concepts and propositions (premises) as already fixed and given. While logic can draw new conclusions from these premises, the range of possible new conclusions is quite limited.<sup>12</sup> Rigorous adherence to the operations of logic cannot yield new premises or concepts.

Lonerger departed from this widely shared assumption about science. Logic itself plays a part, but only a part, in the much larger enterprise of modern science. Scientific *inquiry* is both more fundamental and more profound than logic. While logical operations, along with observations, hypotheses, theories, and laws all have important roles in modern scientific methods, much more fundamental than any of

<sup>11</sup> See for example, Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, William F. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., eds., The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA 1974, p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> See Patrick H. Byrne, *Analysis and Science in Aristotle*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1997, p. 143.



these is inquiry, questioning, wonder. The most basic thing that scientists do is to inquire. According to Lonergan, “*There is, then, common to all men, the very spirit of inquiry that constitutes the scientific attitude*” (197, emphasis added). Moreover, inquiry is not just one part or one operation among others within the methods of science. Inquiry itself constitutes and structures all of the other operations in scientific practice. Inquiry not only leads scientists to make observations in order to answer questions; inquiry also turns new observations into sources of more questions and novel discoveries. Indeed, all of the procedures of scientific methods are underpinned by and in the service of the objectives determined by scientific inquiry. As Lonergan puts it,

Just as inquiry into the data of sense yields insights that are formulated in classical and statistical laws, so inversely, the laws provide premises and rules for the guidance of human activity upon sensible objects. Such activity, in its turn, brings about sensible change to bring to light fresh data, raise new questions, stimulate further insights, and so generate the revision or confirmation of existing laws and in due course the discovery of new laws (97-98).

These further questions stimulate a self-correcting, cyclical process that heads toward verified scientific knowledge in the fullest sense.

In light of this more fundamental characterization of scientific method in terms of the dynamism of inquiry, logic is seen as no longer basic. Logic is recognized instead as an aide to the grander project of science. Logic serves to compare and contrast with one another the formulations of insights – whether these be formulations of observations or formulations of potentially explanatory hypotheses. Once logic detects inconsistencies, it hands the direction of the scientific enterprise back to the further questions it provokes, as self-correcting inquiry heads toward revision, rejection or eventual confirmation of insights into the data of sense.

By focusing our attention on the fundamental role played by inquiry, Lonergan also reveals that the intentionality of scientific inquiry is toward intelligibility. That is to say, the tension of inquiry into the data of sense is *always* a purely intellectual tension that finds its proper release and fulfillment in this or that insight. Insights in turn are always cognitional acts that grasp intelligibility: “By intelligibility is meant the content of a direct insight” (44). Hence, scientific inquiry always seeks insights into the possible intelligibilities that pertain to scientific data.

Yet scientific inquiry does not rest content with merely possible, hypothetical intelligibilities. Scientific inquiry also heads beyond the grasp of the merely hypothetical toward judgments about the actual intelligibilities that are true of the natural world. Spontaneously, therefore, scientists act as though the world is intelligible and that their efforts to discover and verify such intelligibility will pay off. As Albert Einstein once said, “The most incomprehensible thing about

the universe is that it is comprehensible.”<sup>13</sup> Lonergan’s analysis of the inquisitive dynamism of science reveals that this commitment to the intelligibility of the natural world is deeply embedded in the very methods of science.

### 3. Scientific Explanation *versus* Commonsense Description

As Lonergan argues later in *Insight*, the commitment to the intrinsic intelligibility of the world is not unique to modern scientific methods. This tacit commitment to intelligibility is also to be found in all modes of human knowing – practical and interpersonal (“dramatic”) modes of commonsense knowing, as well as in the realms of scholarly, historical, artistic, philosophical, religious and theological knowing. The self-correcting process of inquiry, insight, and judgment runs throughout all of these domains. The spirit of inquiry – the pure, unrestricted desire to know – is the “supreme heuristic notion” (380) that underpins all forms of human knowing. This means therefore that even though dynamic inquiry in search of intelligibility is foundational to modern science, this alone does not make science be science. Rather, what is distinctive about modern science are the *kinds* of intelligibility that it intends and seeks methodically.

In order to identify the kinds of intelligibility that distinguish scientific from other kinds of knowing, therefore, Lonergan invokes a distinction between what he calls explanation and description. Of course this pair of terms has been used in various ways by many different philosophers – Edmund Husserl for example<sup>14</sup> – so it is important to understand accurately Lonergan’s own unique way of drawing this distinction. As he puts it, “Description deals with things related to us. Explanation deals with things related to one another.” (318).<sup>15</sup> This simple formula certainly calls for fuller explication.

First, then, Lonergan expands his formula as follows:

Both ordinary description and empirical science reach their conclusions through the self-correcting process of learning. Still they reach very different conclusions because, though they use essentially the same process, they operate with different standards and criteria. What is a further, pertinent question for empirical science is not necessarily a further, pertinent question for ordinary description ... Because he aims at ultimate explanation, the scientist has to keep asking ‘Why?’, until ultimate explanation is reached.

<sup>13</sup> An exact citation is difficult to find; but see “The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility... The fact that it is comprehensible is a miracle.” Albert Einstein, “Physics and Reality”, in *Ideas and Opinions*, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., New York 1954, p. 285.

<sup>14</sup> See for example, Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, David Carr, trans., Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL 1970, § 64.

<sup>15</sup> Here Lonergan is deliberately transposing into a contemporary context Aristotle’s famous distinction between what is “more intelligible” [*gnorimoteron*] according to us, versus what is more intelligible by nature. See for example *Posterior Analytics* I, 2 72a 1-5; see also *Physics* I, 1, 184a 17-25.

Because the layman aims at knowing things as related to us, as entering into the domain of human concerns, his questioning ceases as soon as further inquiry would lead to no immediate, appreciable difference in the daily life of man (320).

Lonergan regards descriptions as among the tools, so to speak, employed by common sense in its pursuit of meeting ordinary human needs, interests and concerns. Thus in his view, the range of relations that things can have to ordinary human interests is considerably narrower than the vast, all-encompassing range of relations that things have with all other things.

Second, the differences in further pertinent questions lead to significant qualitative differences in the kinds of intelligibilities that are sought after. Explanation leads into a “comprehensive, universal, invariant, non-imaginable domain,” whereas description “remains within the familiar world of common sense” (202) and is concerned with the “particular, relative, imaginable domain” (319).

Third, even though descriptive inquiry is more limited than explanatory inquiry, Lonergan does not believe explanation is somehow more important than description. He is opposed to the reduction of the rich concreteness of human experience and the multifaceted wisdom of the many cultural varieties of common sense into the cold categories of mechanistic explanations. He insists rather that the “rational choice is not between science and common sense; it is a choice of both” (203). The explanatory and descriptive modes need and complement one another (202-203, 316-24). It was the mistake of Renaissance science, says Lonergan, to devalue the descriptive wisdom of tradition and common sense. That devaluation was the result of too heavy a reliance on the superficial distinction between primary and secondary qualities introduced by Galileo (319; see also 107-108).

Fourth, while Lonergan emphatically intends to preserve all the richness and nuances of human experience and ordinary commonsense descriptive knowing, he also observes that, “since we are things, the descriptive relations [of things to us] must be identical with some of the explanatory relations [of things to one another]” (419; see also 515-520). What he means is that every descriptive understanding of how things are related to this or that human being will be transformed and enriched by being incorporated into a more comprehensive context. That is to say, common sense inevitably takes an individual or a particular group of human beings as the ultimate focal point of descriptive relationships. But this cannot be the whole story. Each person and human group is itself always and intrinsically related to all other people and indeed to all other non-human objects – and not only in the present state of the universe, but throughout the whole of time. As Lonergan observes,

There is, then, a subtle ambiguity in the apparently evident statement that common sense relates things to us. For who are we? Do we not change? Is not the acquisition of common sense itself a change in us? (204)

Who are we indeed? In large part, Lonergan's answer is that we are actors and participants in the drama of history – the grand history of the human race, and the even grander cosmic drama of the unfolding of the whole universe within which human history is situated. Thus our advance in explanatory understanding eventually

reveals to man a universe of being in which he is but an item, and a universal order, in which his desires and fears, his delight and anguish, are but infinitesimal components in the history of mankind. It invites man to become intelligent and reasonable not only in his knowing but also in his living, to guide his actions by referring them not as an animal to a habitat, but as an intelligent being to the intelligible context of some universal order that is or is to be (498).<sup>16</sup>

Descriptive knowing, then, is expanded and enriched by explanatory knowing – at least in Lonergan's sense of those terms. Indeed, this enrichment of descriptive and commonsense knowing confronts us with a significant challenge to self-understanding and responsible action. This is no less true for scientists themselves than it is for ordinary people who operate in the realms of commonsense descriptive knowledge.

But what does Lonergan mean by this “universal order”? And, how does it relate to the question of the ultimate meaningfulness of “cosmogogenesis, biological evolution, historical process” and the struggle to guide our actions intelligently and to live a morally authentic life? In order to discern Lonergan's answers to these further questions, we must next turn to the further differentiation of explanatory knowing into the basic forms of scientific method.

#### **4. Modern Natural Science: Three Heuristic Methods**

Lonergan identified still further differentiations within explanatory knowing itself. While acknowledging the many varieties and great differences among all of the methods employed in different branches of science, he identified three basic kinds of heuristic<sup>17</sup> methods. According to him, all natural sciences now employ classical and statistical heuristic methods. In addition, the biological sciences also employ a third kind of heuristic method, a genetic method that seeks correct understanding of development – embryological development, for example.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> With due apologies for the gender non-inclusiveness of this citation.

<sup>17</sup> Because of the fundamental role that inquiry plays in directing scientific investigation, he argued that all scientific methods are “heuristic.” By this he meant that inquiries anticipate different types of insights, and that scientists use these anticipations methodically to guide them as they seek answers.

<sup>18</sup> Of course in *Insight* Lonergan also identified a fourth, dialectical explanatory method (see pp. 268-69, 412-14), as well as the “integral heuristic structure” that along with its “universal viewpoint” integrates all four explanatory methods, and then later a “theologically transformed universal viewpoint” that broadens out into theological method – which were later revised and refined in terms of the eight functional specialties

Lonegan dubbed the first kind of scientific method “classical heuristic method” (60-70). It is a structured seeking of insights into the intelligible correlations among events and things. In physics, these correlations are expressed in equations that relate variables to one another. In chemistry, the periodic table provides a point of departure for investigating molecular reactions and correlations. In biology, comparative methods seek to understand both correlations among parts of organisms and among different organisms. In biochemistry, scientists seek to understand how disparate chemical reactions are related to one another in complex sequences to form the basic constituents of organic functioning.

These classical correlations play so fundamental a role in modern science that we emphasize their role by use of a metaphor – the “laws” of science. For example, in physics we speak of Newton’s “law” of gravitation and the “laws” of conservation of energy and momentum. In chemistry there are similar correlations, such as the “law” of balancing oxidation and reduction states in chemical reactions, and in biology Darwin regarded as his supreme achievement that his “law” of natural selection explained the “two great laws – Unity of Type, and Conditions of Existence.”<sup>19</sup>

Despite certain misleading implications that have been drawn from this juridical metaphor, the phrase “laws of science” signals the prominence of this type of investigation in modern science. Hence classical heuristic methods seek to discover to what extent the natural universe is constituted by the intelligibility of classical correlations (or “laws”).

During the nineteenth century scientists began to develop the second kind of scientific method, statistical method, to investigate the intrinsically non-systematic and random dimensions of nature (70-89). Statistical methods seek to understand populations of events and things. Statistical methods are heuristic because they, too, anticipate and methodically pursue a kind of intelligibility that is characteristic of populations. The activity of counting lies at the heart of statistical method – counting events and things in populations in order to determine their *actual frequencies* of occurrence.

However, statistical methods do not rest content with determining mere actual frequencies. Actual frequencies are transient and ephemeral, because actual populations are subject to non-systematic and random fluctuations in their memberships. Hence, statistical methods seek to go beyond the mere determination of actual frequencies. They use various theoretical and practical techniques (e.g., theories and practices of “sampling”) in order to arrive at hypotheses about

of *Method in Theology*. However, for present purposes I must limit myself simply to what Lonegan has to say about the three heuristic methods of the empirical natural sciences, and the roles they play in the project of *Insight*.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Penguin Books, New York 1982, p. 233.

*ideal relative* frequencies (called *probabilities*). The actual frequencies of events will fluctuate non-systematically and randomly around the ideal frequencies (probabilities). Populations can thereby be characterized by their “schedules of probabilities” as Lonergan puts it – i.e., the lists of probabilities in association with different categories of events that occur in various populations. These probabilities form the norms, from which the actual frequencies in populations fluctuate only non-systematically. In spite of these transient fluctuations, populations retain the unchanging norms of intelligibility in the form of their lists of probabilities.

The third type of heuristic scientific method is what Lonergan referred to as genetic method (476-507). Genetic method seeks insights into and judgments that verify hypotheses about a third, distinctive type of intelligibility. This third type is the unified intelligibility characteristic of development in the proper sense. Like statistical method, genetic method also began to emerge in the nineteenth century. Historian of biology William Coleman argues that biology established itself as a distinct modern science only in the nineteenth century. He emphasizes the important role that investigations of developmental and embryological phenomena in plants and animals played in this rise of modern biology.<sup>20</sup> As Coleman puts it, the phenomena of embryological development could not be adequately comprehended by means of mechanistic explanations alone. Thus, it was necessary to forge a distinct type of method (genetic method) with its own heuristic anticipation of a distinct type of intelligibility (development). While genetic method was initially applied almost exclusively to embryological development, its applications were eventually extended to other fields, most notably to developmental psychology in the pioneering work of Jean Piaget.

Coleman and Lonergan both observe that genetic method had an especially difficult time breaking loose of certain kinds of descriptive modes of thinking. Gradually, however, the descriptive, anthropomorphic projections of vitalism were abandoned in favor of more explanatory modes. Lonergan articulates this explanatory mode in a highly technical definition of the heuristic notion of development. In understanding the development of anything, Lonergan argues, the scientist seeks to understand the intelligibility of its “flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence” (479).

Although this technical definition is complex, its centerpiece is the term “sequence.” In the explanatory sense, a development is not just a single event, but rather an intelligibly integrated sequence of events. More precisely, it is an intelligibly integrated sequence of stages of events. Stages differ from one another

<sup>20</sup> William Coleman, *Biology in the Nineteenth Century: Problems of Form, Function, and Transformation*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1977, pp. 1-3, 9, 35-56.

by the differences in the patterns among the many events occurring within each stage. Hence, the stages are not just static; they are “higher integrations” of recurring processes of events. Moreover, those stages (higher integrations) are self-modifying. As they function, they also modify their own cellular and biochemical constituents. Eventually this self-modification reaches an extreme where the higher integration can no longer function as it has been, and that particular stage must come to an end. What is truly distinctive and remarkable about a developmental sequence, however, is that this self-modification of one stage sets the conditions both for its own demise, and simultaneously for the emergence of its replacement by a more differentiated successor stage. Genetic method therefore anticipates insights and judgments about not just this or that stage, but rather about the entire sequence of stages. Genetic method therefore seeks the explanatory intelligibility of an interconnected sequence of successor and predecessor stages.

In summary, then, Lonergan identified three broad but distinct types of heuristic methods in modern empirical sciences – the classical, statistical, and genetic methods – which correspond to three distinct types of intelligibilities that the sciences anticipate to be constitutive of the natural universe – correlations, probabilities, and developments, respectively.

## **5. Scientific Methods Combined and Their Worldview**

After offering his analyses of these very broad methodologies, Lonergan next considered how they connect with and complement one another. First, he observed the “creative and constructive” role played by a subtle but important set of additional insights. These insights find ingenious ways to combine classical correlations and laws by selecting from among them, particularizing their parameters, and matching them with sets of initial conditions. These creative combinations of classical correlations yield new kinds of intelligibilities – which Lonergan called “systematic processes” and “schemes of recurrence” (70-71, 141-45). Such intelligible combinations may yield no more than merely speculative possibilities, or they may reveal intelligibilities that truly explain complex natural processes. Indeed, systematic and recurrent processes do abound throughout our planet and the entire universe.

Nevertheless, these systematic schemes share the inherent indeterminacy of the classical laws that they bring together. As Lonergan observes, “each scheme presupposes materials in a suitable constellation that the scheme did not bring about, and each survives only as long as extraneous factors do not intervene” (110). This is one of the most important and original findings in Lonergan’s analysis of the methods of modern science. While there is a widespread opinion that the laws of science determine the course of events, Lonergan realized that classical correlations are in fact inherently under-determined (113). The very same sets of correlations

can manifest themselves in very different and indeed incompatible ways under different conditions. Applying Newton's laws to just two celestial bodies, for example, can yield orbital paths that are hyperbolic, parabolic, elliptical, or circular, depending upon their relative energies, momenta, and positions. Likewise, the laws of relationships among chemical elements lead to very different kinds of chemical reactions, depending upon the different conditions of temperature, concentration, pH level, and so on. This under-determination of classical laws themselves is therefore passed along to their constructive combinations into systematic processes and schemes of recurrence, for both the laws and their combinations depend upon conditions that are completely extraneous.

This under-determination of the schemes makes possible a still more complex combination of classical correlations. Since schemes of recurrence depend upon extraneous conditions, it is possible that certain kinds of earlier schemes could be the conditions for other kinds of later schemes. For example, the radiation schemes of our sun supply conditions for the schemes of plant cell life on the earth. This conditioning process can be repeated indefinitely to form a "conditioned series of schemes of recurrence." Once the most elementary systems and schemes emerge, they themselves can form the conditions for other more complex schemes of recurrence. These in turn can become the conditions for still later schemes. Just as solar schemes condition plant-life schemes, so also plant schemes condition the schemes of herbivorous animal life. Again, these very same conditioned plant-life schemes also condition schemes transforming carbon dioxide back into oxygen.

Lonergan went on to point out a most important way in which these complex combinations of classical correlations can be further combined with statistical intelligibilities. "In other words, classical laws tell what would happen if conditions were fulfilled; statistical laws tell how often conditions are fulfilled" (131; 109-121). Statistical methods reveal the inherently non-systematic manner in which such conditions are fulfilled. But they also reveal the ideal frequencies or probabilities that intelligibly govern the conditions for the emergence and extinction of schemes of recurrence. Lonergan focused attention on these probabilistic, inherently uncontrollable, non-systematic dimensions of science and the natural universe, which clearly places him at odds with the modernist obsessions with control.

Lonergan went on to argue that "the combination of the conditioned series of schemes with their respective probabilities of emergence and survival" yields the worldview that he called "emergent probability" (145). The notion of a "conditioned series of schemes of recurrence" forms the core of what Lonergan called his worldview of "emergent probability." As he puts it, "Emergent probability is the successive realization in accord with successive schedules of probability of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence" (148-49). This worldview is called "emergent" because schemes or systems of increasing complexity emerge,



begin to function, and survive as long as their requisite conditions are in place. Emergence is characterized by probability, because the conditions for the schemes come together non-systematically and relatively randomly, but nevertheless do so in compliance with ideal frequencies. Finally, the worldview is called “emergent probability” because the emergence of lower and simpler schemes actually increases the probabilities for the emergence of subsequent, more complex schemes.<sup>21</sup> In addition, once conditioned series of schemes emerge, their continued survival is still conditioned by extraneous conditions that are fulfilled not necessarily, but only in conformity with probabilities of survival.

Finally, Lonergan observes that this notion of emergent probability is transformed into a “*generalized* emergent probability” once genetic heuristic method is added to classical and statistical methods (487, emphasis added). That is to say, just as primitive schemes of recurrence form conditions for the emergence of more sophisticated schemes of recurrence, so also primitive developments form the conditions for the emergence, survival, and maturation of more sophisticated developments. For example, developing insects provide nourishment for developing birds. More generally, the natural history of biological evolution is overwhelmingly a matter of earlier developing organisms setting the conditions for the emergence and survival of later developing organisms.

Yet as is the case with emergent probability, so also the distribution of developing organisms that nourish other developing organisms is only statistical. Hence, the emergence and survival of developing beings – of generalized emergent probability – remains ultimately a matter of actual frequencies of conditions for developments that fluctuate around ideal frequencies (probabilities).

From his analyses of the methods of the modern empirical sciences and from their implications, Lonergan concluded that the scientific universe would be a “world process in which the order or design is constituted by emergent probability” (125; see also 139). That is to say, the universe intended by the possible ways of combining the three general, heuristic methods of the modern empirical sciences is a universe with a very intricate but nonetheless very intelligible order immanent in its processes. The universe has “an upwardly *but indeterminately* directed dynamism” (659, emphasis added; also 497). It is “an incomplete universe heading toward fuller being,” but in an indeterminate fashion (471). Nevertheless, even though the direction of the universe is indeterminate, the manner in which that direction unfolds is truly intelligible. The intelligible order of generalized emergent probability does not imply a determinate plan; there is no pre-determined future somehow pulling the universe into increased complexity. Nevertheless, intelligibility does permeate the order of the evolving universe. As Lonergan explains,

The increasingly systematic character of world process can be assured. No

<sup>21</sup> The argument for this claim is beyond the limits of this article. See *Insight*, pp. 143-51.

matter how slight the probability of the realization of the most developed and most conditioned schemes, the emergence of those schemes can be assured [...] For actual frequencies do not diverge systematically from probabilities. (149)

The precise places and times of the emergent schemes is of course is radically under-determined. Nevertheless, even under-determined contingent emergences occur inevitably, according to the intelligibility of generalized emergent probability.

As people living with the inheritance of modern science, we are challenged to take seriously what modern science has to say about our natural world. Generalized emergent probability is what Lonergan meant by “the intelligible context of some universal order” (498). Generalized emergent probability is Lonergan’s version of cosmogenesis. Generalized emergent probability is the intelligibility of the natural world within which we human beings are invited to become intelligent and reasonable not only in our knowing but also in our living (498). As Lonergan argues, to take modern science and its account of the evolving universe with complete seriousness means that we must take our actions to be not merely those of animals in habitats, but rather as those of intelligent beings participating in the intelligible context of this intelligible universe.

By his analyses of the methods of science, therefore, Lonergan goes a long way toward answering his own questions. The natural world as intended by modern natural scientific methods is not the cold, heartless, disenchanted world envisioned by Weber and many others. *That* disenchanted world is not the product of modern scientific investigations themselves. Rather, the disenchanted universe is no more than the figment of a very long, complex, and dark growth of extra-scientific opinion. Again, the deterministic world assumed by Kant is likewise a matter of extra-scientific opinion; it is not an inevitable outcome of science, Newtonian or otherwise.

Lonergan acknowledges that the methods of modern science do imply an evolutionary universe in which randomness is indeed an essential feature. And yet he argues that randomness does not completely characterize the natural universe. Beyond its randomness, the universe of the natural sciences is also an intelligibly evolving universe in which random combinations set the conditions for the rise of novel, emergent intelligibilities. This is not a naturalistic universe of mere brute facts and brute forces. The universe as known by modern science is indeed a natural universe, but one which is radically open because it is radically contingent. It is a universe whose natural yet contingent intelligibility calls out for further, extra-scientific philosophical inquiry (*versus* extra-scientific opinions) about its ultimate source and meaning. Hence there is no need to carve out an unknowable noumenal realm as Kant attempted, in order to provide a home for human freedom. The

“upwardly but *indeterminately*” directed intelligible universe intended by natural scientific methods already *is* that home.

## 6. The Primary Instance of Moral Consciousness?

But is the intelligibility of the natural universe *ultimately* meaningful? After all, precisely this further question in precisely this form must be faced in order to bring some sort of closure to Lonergan’s original concern. Lonergan does indeed take up these further questions later in *Insight*. When he does, he explores an analogical conception of God as the “unrestricted act of understanding.” He writes,

Our subject has been the act of insight or understanding, and God is the unrestricted act of understanding, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of “Eureka!” (706)

He explores the implications of this analogical conception of God in great detail. Toward the end of that exploration, he proposes that virtually all that can be affirmed about this unrestricted understanding are also the sorts of things that traditional theists would affirm about God (although with subtle refinements). Most importantly, Lonergan argues, the passionate, unrestricted act of understanding would understand the *reason why* the order of the universe is being realized (679-80, 686-88). That is to say, God would understand the transcendent value and purpose that make it worthwhile to realize the actual universe of generalized emergent probability. Because of God’s unrestricted understanding of the value of our universe, therefore, the universe is ultimately intelligible and meaningful.

Lonergan would at least agree with Weber to this extent: the methods of the natural sciences themselves would have to leave the question of the ultimate meaningfulness of the universe undecided. While they do reveal a universe shot through with meaningfulness, the question of ultimate meaningfulness must await another method of inquiry. But Lonergan’s more fundamental method of self-appropriation provides a way of answering this extra-scientific question with philosophically and theologically grounded wisdom, not merely with extra-scientific opinion. In the light of his methodical approaches to questions of being and God, Lonergan can argue convincingly that what would be properly regarded as undecided by the methods of natural sciences, can be comprehended as special, important, indeed transcendentally valuable and worth realizing by the unrestricted act of understanding. As Lonergan puts it, God’s unrestricted understanding “is the ground of value, and it is the ultimate cause of causes for it overcomes contingency at its deepest level” (679-80).

Insofar as these further claims hold true, then we can say with great joy: Yes, those who endeavor to live in accord with authentic moral values, and those of authentic Christian faith, are neither gamblers nor fools. They are indeed genuine

participants and contributors to an order consonant with cosmogenesis, biological evolution, historical process – in other words, with the generalized emergent probability that is ultimately intelligible, meaningful, valued and authored by God.

Of course the details of these further stages of the argument in *Insight* are beyond the scope of this article, but this will have to suffice for the present occasion.<sup>22</sup> What I have tried to show in this article is merely how Lonergan’s radical reinterpretation of the methods of science and the meaningfulness of the natural universe known by their means removes a serious contemporary obstacle to this profound conclusion of Christian faith and hope.

<sup>22</sup> For further details, see Frank Budenholzer and Patrick H. Byrne, “Lonergan’s Transformation of the Darwinian World View”, in *Darwinism and Catholicism*, Louis Caruana, ed., forthcoming; and Patrick H. Byrne, “Lonergan, Evolutionary Science, and Intelligent Design” in João J. Vila-Chà (ed.) *Os Dominios da Inteligência: Bernard Lonergan e a Filosofia (The Realms of Insight: Bernard Lonergan and Philosophy)*, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63 (2007), 893-918.



# CONSCIOUSNESS ACCORDING TO BERNARD LONERGAN AND ITS ELUSIVENESS

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As conscience is a word that can enter our vocabulary during our early formative years, so consciousness enters in a reading of the philosophers. Literature exposes us to streams of consciousness and the fleeting way in which sometimes intense experiences grip us for their duration and then fade into our past to be replaced by those of a new day. Our self-consciousness now is always in movement, the present slipping into our past possibly to be forgotten forever. In sleeping and waking we encounter the difference between being conscious and being unconscious. The science of consciousness people will wonder how we can measure it. Mysterian philosophers, some quite distinguished, are convinced that the sensory qualities of the awareness of purple are irreducibly different from any complex of neural correlates. They challenge us with their claims that unlike the planets and the stars, there is something elusive about consciousness which will never find an explanation in terms of the neural structures of our brains. Is consciousness like a deep dark unfathomable well beyond the domain of our imagination within which all the sources of our creativity and destructiveness lie hidden? Does its ultimate explanation elude us? In different ways our language game comes to be formed until one day we stop and ask ourselves, what exactly is it that we are talking about? Does the language we are using conceal more than it reveals? Does the language use run on different tracks from our own factual existential conscious experiences, even distract and distance us from them?

## **1. Consciousness before *Insight***

The image of a moving viewpoint emerges spontaneously out of a review of Lonergan's writings on the topic of consciousness in his various works. The steppingstones encountered along that moving viewpoint sow the seeds of the problems which I believe it is up to us to grow. An important influence from his early education would be the Jesuit examination of conscience and its later enlargement

into the exam of consciousness by Descartes. His first philosophical encounter with the topic would have occurred in his reading of Carolus Frick's *Logica*. Being the textbook used to introduce him to philosophy it was written by a German Suarezian who was very familiar with both scholasticism and the German idealist tradition. As well as a critical section on Kant and brief remarks on the idealism of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, it also contains sections on consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Helpful here in setting the scene is Will Dudley's *Understanding German Idealism* which situates the word 'consciousness' in those thinkers.<sup>2</sup> According to Dudley, Friedrich Jacobi convinced Karl Reinhold that 'Kant's philosophy lacked the foundations it needed to withstand sceptical attacks on its positive claims.' He became motivated by the question: 'Suppose that *The Critique of Pure Reason* already is authentic science: where are then the principles which, together with the one which is highest, would make up its foundations?' It is in response to this question that he proposed 'the principle of consciousness as the foundation of philosophy.'

Philosophy begins, in other words, when the subject attends to what is implicit in the incorrigible fact of his own consciousness. This attentive reflection makes explicit that consciousness involves being aware of an object by means of a representation. Consciousness is thus constituted by a subject, an object of its awareness (which may be a spatiotemporal thing in the world, such as a rock, or may be one of its own internal states, such as hunger), and a representation of that object, each of which must be present and distinguished from the others. The philosophical science of cognition, according to Reinhold, can take its departure only from this self evident truth.<sup>3</sup>

Significant here is the identification of consciousness with cognition, an identification that is currently under challenge by Ray Jackendoff and others.<sup>4</sup> Neither Dudley nor Jackendoff directly identifies cognition with the creative problem-solving of the great scientists.

I have drawn attention to this piece of history because it is my impression that *Insight* has never really been accepted by the philosophical traditions. Yet the fact of the matter is that *Insight* is in its core thrust a response to the questions that run through the whole movement of German Idealism. It is also a response that I believe breaks out of the impasse about the true nature of the subject-world relation which that entire tradition never really transcended.

<sup>1</sup> Carolus Frick, *Logica* (Friburg: Herder and Herder, 1924) Part II, Liber II, De Fontibus verae certaeque cognitionis, Caput I, De experientia interna seu de *testimonio conscientiae* (fonte I). (177f \*286).

<sup>2</sup> (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> Ray Jackendoff, *Language, Consciousness and Culture, Essays on Mental Structure* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007) pp. 80ff.

Although Lonergan became passionately engaged with the problems, he was not so enthusiastic about the answers in the tradition. His response differs in its position on the causal relations involved in the mind-world-language relation, on the distinction between the 'is' of predication and the 'is' of existence, and on the dynamic desire at the heart of the human mind. It also differed in its use of, and the very central significance it attached to, the word 'insight,' a word whose use is growing hugely in current scientific writings but has never been accepted as significant in the philosophical traditions.<sup>5</sup>

Although Lonergan's 1943 'The Form of Inference' articulates as its aim 'the working out of an empirical theory of human understanding and knowledge,' it does not use the word 'consciousness.' It is in his 1943 essay 'Finality, Love, Marriage' that we find some of his earliest uses of the word. Love forms and sets up a union of selves whose common ends actuate 'the common consciousness of mutual other selves.'<sup>6</sup> As 'a man is to himself in consciousness of his being,'<sup>7</sup> that consciousness arises through activity. Friendship entails the pursuit of common activities and values with others.

Now this expansion of a common consciousness in a common life cannot but be, as we have indicated already, also an expansion and development of a common conscience. For one's ideas on life, one's moral conscience, one's deeds, the expressed ideas of others near one, and their deeds, all are

<sup>5</sup> *Einsicht* is a word that occurs frequently in the *Critique of Pure Reason* but for Kant has no epistemological or philosophical significance. Quentin Lauer in his *Reading Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982) pp. 199ff comments that insight is the natural translation of *Einsicht* in the section on 'Belief and Pure Insight.' Hegel's *Einsicht* is for Lauer intellectual, whereas Kant's *Anschauung* is sensible but he writes that "the object of insight, 'looking-in,' after all is self." P.M.S. Hacker's book, *Insight and Illusion, Wittgenstein on Philosophy and the Metaphysics of Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) does not index the word 'insight' or use it in any chapter heading. The point of his title seems to be that it is through his strictly philosophical insights that Wittgenstein apprehended the illusions and oversights of the philosophers. If this is the case such insights are foundational in the work of philosophers but not analysed. In his letter to William Richardson Heidegger did acknowledge three insights which were the foundations for his major work, *Being and Time*. (William J. Richardson S.J., *HEIDEGGER: Through Phenomenology to Thought* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967] pp. viii-xxiii). Maria Shradly includes an account of Wittgenstein's two major philosophical insights into the picture theory of the proposition and language games in *Moments of Insight, The Emergence of Great Ideas in the Lives of Creative Men* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) pp. 16-18. Insights are just as foundational of the creative thinking and writings of the philosophers and theologians as of mathematicians and scientists but are not recognised as such. On Lonergan's position on the need to identify and study the insights of philosophers see my *Lonergan's Quest, A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) p. 367.

<sup>6</sup> 'Finality, Love, Marriage,' *CWL 4 Collection*, edited by Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) pp. 35-36, (35). *CWL* stands for *Collected Works of Lonergan*, the numbers in brackets are page references to the original version.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



linked together in a field of mutual influence and adaptation for better or worse.<sup>8</sup>

In the remainder of the essay he writes about the expansion of love into a common consciousness and conscience.

Central to that common consciousness will be a sense of the shared lives and values of the husband and wife. This poses the challenge – can or ought the later invitation to self-affirmation in *Insight* be enlarged so that the experiment is conducted with the Other as the object to be understood rather than the puzzles of mathematics, or of classical and statistical laws. Can I not wonder about the current dramatic experiences in your life, the problems you are wrestling with, your dreams and desires, fears, feelings, suffering, ambitions, insights and judgments and vice versa? On this basis can we not both make the three judgements of the principal notion of objectivity; I judge that you are experiencing X and interested in Y, I am thus a knower, I am not you, in this intersubjective context?

In the discussion in ‘Finality, Love, Marriage’ of the tension between eros and agape we find an opening up of the extremely troubling problem of the basic dualism in human knowing and acting. The domain of consciousness properly considered, is not just cognitive or ethical in the intellectual sense. Human cognitive powers are united in the unity of a human being with an animal mentality and extroverted animal consciousness towards the already out there now real. A core dialectical component, it will be involved centrally in the struggle both within and between the individuals involved in the precarious pursuit of a common consciousness. This poses a critical problem which is taken up in Lonergan’s course on Intelligence and Reality and related notes in terms of an intellectual conversion.<sup>9</sup> In the Introduction to *Insight* Lonergan writes with intensity about the philosophical challenge of overcoming this dualism. He was, when questioned about how he himself experienced this problem, not forthcoming. I would go so far as to say that no real growth has taken place in the field of this problem since the publication of *Insight*.

In *Verbum* Lonergan’s focus seems to be on the cognitional operations rather than with the problems associated with their consciousness. Thought or cognition is largely presented as a process. As he had not yet arrived at the notion of levels and structure we find a blanket usage of the term ‘rational consciousness’ for our thought processes. *Verbum* also claims that the infinity of the pure desire to know comes within the horizon of introspective analysis posing the question – can it

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, see also pp. 44, 49 (45, 50).

<sup>9</sup> *Lonergan’s Quest*, p. 219 on the background of the course, 254-255 on its treatment of intellectual conversion; 254 for remarks on animal realism in related notes. For a parallel treatment of the same problem see Jo-Ann Piliardi, *Simone de Beauvoir, Writing the Self: Philosophy Becomes Autobiography* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999) pp. 28-29; Kristana Arp, *The Bonds of Freedom, Simone de Beauvoir’s Existential Ethics* (Chicago: Open Court, 2001) Chapter 4.

be naturally known or is it based on religious presuppositions?<sup>10</sup> After all most persons experience their finitude rather than their unrestrictedness. It is almost assumed that what is meant by introspection is self-evident.

There are in the *Verbum* articles key insights into the problem of the mind-world-language relation that are not to be found in Kant and the tradition articulated by Dudley. Following Aristotle on the theorem of the identity of the knower and the known, insights are not purely internal experiences but are caused to emerge by the intelligibility that is signed in the sensible phantasm of the elements of the problem in the world. The world interacts with the understanding and the understanding with the world and in so doing produces an inner word, concept, thought, or proposition which finds its expression in the system of sensible symbols of a language. In this we find the possibility of putting back together what Kant and the later linguistic tradition have separated.

It is in the *Verbum* articles that Lonergan begins to use the word ‘insight’ in a significant manner. In the notes taken at his lectures on ‘Thought and Reality’ in 1945-6 we find him for the first time describing what it is like, psychologically, to have an insight.<sup>11</sup>

## **2. Consciousness in the Proto Insight – Intelligence and Reality**

The story of the eureka moment of Archimedes appears for the first time on the opening page of Lonergan’s notes for his Intelligence and Reality course in March-May 1951. Helpful will be a recent account by Francis Crick of such an experience. He and Sydney Brenner were working on the problem of protein synthesis in the cell but found themselves utterly and totally stuck. In the middle of a seminar one afternoon in Cambridge François Jacob gave an account of an experiment in which he had recently been involved and apparently, without knowing it, provided the missing clue. Crick has described his experience of the event as follows:

It is difficult to convey two things. One is the sudden flash of enlightenment when the idea was first glimpsed. It was so memorable that I can recall just where Sydney, François, and I were sitting in the room when it happened. The other is the way it cleared away so many of our difficulties. Just a single wrong assumption (that the ribosomal RNA was the messenger RNA) had completely messed up our thinking, so that it appeared as if we were wandering in a dense fog. I woke up that morning with only a set of confused ideas about the overall control of protein synthesis. When I went to bed all our difficulties had resolved and the shining answers stood clearly before us. Of course, it would take months and years of work to

<sup>10</sup> See ‘Openness as Religious Experience,’ *CWL4 Collection*, pp. 185-187 (198-201).

<sup>11</sup> *Lonergan’s Quest*, pp. 219-220. There are several uses of the word insight in ‘Forms of Inference’ and in ‘Finality, Love, Marriage.’

establish these new ideas, but we no longer felt lost in the jungle. We could survey the one plain and clearly see the mountains in the distance.<sup>12</sup>

The new ideas opened the way for some of the key experiments used to crack the genetic code. What must be clear from the eureka moments of Archimedes and Crick is that insights as intellectual explain how to do something or why something is the way it is in the world. In this sense they go beyond the sensible data of the problem as presented.

Also in those notes, prefiguring chapter 9 of *Insight*, Lonergan writes about the data of sense and of consciousness posing questions about their distinction and relation: 'Data of consciousness: acts of seeing, hearing, imagining, desiring, fearing, inquiring, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, judging, choosing.'<sup>13</sup> In Chapter 9 he makes a significant remark about what is meant by introspection to the effect that the three levels of the direct mode of cognitional process provide the data for the introspective mode. Cognitional operations for Lonergan involve two dimensions of awareness, what he will later term conscious and intentional. One of his best accounts of these points is given in 1956 in which he uses the term 'subject,' rather 'self':

In the very act of seeing a color I become aware not only of that color on the side of the object but also, on the side of the subject, of both the one seeing and the act of seeing. In the very act of understanding an intelligibility there becomes known not only that intelligibility on the side of the object but also, on the side of the subject, the one who understands and the act of understanding. In the very act of judging that a certain thing exists there becomes known not only the existence of that thing on the side of the object, but also, on the side of the subject, the one who judges and the act of judging.<sup>14</sup>

The potentialities of cognitional structure are not internally self-activating but need to be activated by interaction with the world. Self consciousness emerges and grows in this daily interaction. This implies that the greater one's cultivation of the direct mode in its engagement with scientific problems and the life problems of the dramatic pattern of experience, the greater will be the field of conscious data for one's philosophizing. But many philosophical explorations seem to go in

<sup>12</sup> Francis Crick, *What Mad Pursuit* (Basic Books, 1988) p. 120. Notice the flash and the glimpse in his account of the unimaginable. A good way to prepare oneself for a reading of *Insight* is to read some of the recent scientific accounts of the discovery process such as François Jacob's *The Statue Within*, Kary Mullis's Nobel Lecture, James Watson's *The Double Helix*, and Craig J. Venter's *A Life Decoded*. Those memoirs present a rich narrative of the interaction in their lives of the dramatic and the intellectual patterns of experience.

<sup>13</sup> *Lonergan's Quest*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>14</sup> CWL 7 *On the Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) pp. 159-161.

the opposite direction, get involved in a linguistic and analytical regress from the data.

Loneragan adds that as data, such conscious acts are experienced; but as experienced 'they are not described, distinguished, compared, related, defined, for all such activities are the work of inquiry, insight, and formulation.'<sup>15</sup> We are largely familiar with the task of describing the data of sense, the moon and its phases, the features of a colour or sound, the traffic, even of a landscape or a group photo. In that context I would invite you to describe some of the sensible features – sights and sounds – of the next traffic jam you experience or the next landscape you traverse. In those descriptions note your use of many familiar descriptive categories. It is usually from this perspective that our anticipations are formed about describing the data of consciousness.

That enlargement of interest invites us to engage with the further task of trying to describe the *coincident* awareness of ourselves sensing and perceiving those traffic jams and landscapes, the conscious awareness involved in the looking and listening and attending and distinguishing and situating involved in that exercise. For a start that self-awareness, although inseparable from the situation as object, seems to be characterized by the negation of all the sensible qualities of the perceived or heard. Seeing does not seem to have brightness, hue or saturation, shape; listening does not have tone or pitch. There are many more visual contents present in our field of vision, sounds present in our field of hearing but we cannot attend to all of them at once, only to a small fraction of the total field at a time. We can also become aware of ourselves changing that attention. Just what distinct qualities can you identify in the awareness of yourself seeing, listening, attending and changing the focus of your attention? What is also disproportionate and notable is that the memory of the sensible content can remain for a very long time after the situation has passed but that of the coincident conscious awareness and attentiveness, even when it is attended to, tends to slip away into oblivion.

Similarly, it is relatively straightforward to describe the intelligible content of a scientific problem that arises on the level of the data of sense. With Galileo one rolls the ball down the plane a number of times and waits for a spectator to be struck, firstly by the regularity of the successive movements, and secondly by the puzzle about the manner in which it speeds up. Following Mendel one might show them a garden full of hundreds of pea plants and ask them to figure out their different sensible qualities, size, flower shape and colour, seed colour and shape. This in turn could lead to the questions: when you cross-breed plants with different sensible qualities, height, seed color and shape, how often do those different qualities show up in subsequent populations? Mendel discovered that in 7324 seeds 5474 were round and 1850 wrinkled, giving a ratio of 2.96:1. In 8023 seeds 6022 were yellow

<sup>15</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 299 (274).

and 2001 green giving a ratio of 3.01:1. The modern science of genetics began with the further question, what is the explanation of such ratios? In the science of materials researchers wonder about and subject metals to tensions and stresses. In this way the wonder of the student can be drawn out and a description given of the elements of the problem in the world. The same is true of the existential questions that arise spontaneously in I-Thou relations: what are the dominant but perhaps unexpressed interests, concerns, anxieties of the Other? In the dramatic pattern of experience the unexpected behavior of a colleague can become the source of a problem in the world whose intelligible content can be teased out.

This leads to the different task of describing one's own coincident emergent wonder when it is evoked by these problems in the world. What noticeable differences does the emergence of one's wonder make to one's self-awareness and one's orientation and behaviour in one's world? What, subsequently, is it like to be in that tension of inquiry in the course of a significant unsolved problem? How might it differ from the stress or tension in the wing of an aircraft? What degrees of intensity does it exhibit? How might it differ from the awareness of attending sensibly to different elements of one's visual or acoustic fields? Again, the self-awareness involved does not seem to share directly in any of the qualities of the problem, in the movement or plant shapes and flowers or the behavior of the Other. Yet it cannot be activated, experienced and ultimately described without those objects or subjects in the world. Once so activated it can continue in and through the imagination in the absence of their immediate presence. It cannot be identified and described without reference to those objects but it seems the best we can do is to refer to it as a real unimaginable, indescribable form of self-awareness, that is to say consciousness that accompanies the problem-solving. It cannot be described directly in the categories we use for describing the data of sense or the content of the problem.

The awakening of one's wonder, spirit of inquiry, by some puzzling phenomenon in the world in turn poses the question, Of what is that currently unsatisfied desire an anticipation? Is the desire to explain rather than describe an anticipation of a more refined or more perfect sensible or imaginative awareness and description of the data? Is it an anticipation of a gestalt shift in one's perception by means of which one will see the data differently, as a duck rather than a rabbit? Or is it an anticipation of some relational properties of the data which cannot be sensibly perceived but which are nonetheless properties of what one sensibly perceives? Is there involved an anticipation of an intelligibility in the very sensible movement of the ball down the plane or in the frequencies with which certain properties of the plants occur in successive plant populations? This, of course, is high heresy for Kant and his followers, for whom the thing in itself and related noumenal world are unknowable. Modern science with its experimental and explanatory stance

with respect to data in all disciplines from particles through atoms, organisms and humans, has put paid to such an attitude.<sup>16</sup>

That anticipated explanation becomes understood only through adding to our sensible experiences insights into possible experimental measurements and ways of statistically sampling the data. Only through following up those insights can a table of measurements of the variables of distance against time which characterise the movement of the ball down the plane be recorded. Through the mediation of those measurements one comes to understand the equation governing the movement:  $s = kt^2$  where  $s$  and  $t$  are the correlative measured distances moved and times taken to move them. Once one understands the genesis of the law in this simple case one has in principle understood the meaning of the equations in which the laws of nature in physics come to be articulated, from Boyle's Law,  $PV = k$ , to the iconic  $E = mc^2$ .

In every instance such equations express, not the sensible attributes but an intelligible correlation between measurable variables in the data. There is nothing that one can point to, camera-like, on the level of the senses that corresponds to the meaning of the equation. One cannot verify it by taking a more focussed look. Rather one has to have the insights into what are the significant measurements to be made in the data and how they are to be made. It follows that the meaning of the equation cannot be separated from its relation with the sensible data. It also follows that the explanations arrived at by means of such insights and expressed in such equations are unimaginable: they cannot like texture and smells and colours be accessed directly by the senses and imagination. The same holds true for the probabilities, that is to say the ideal frequencies of occurrences such as 3:1 around which the actual measured rates in a population fluctuate randomly. They are intelligible attributes which can be verified in the empirical and sensible properties of the pea plant population but not articulated in terms of such sensible properties. There is no sensible quality of the entire pea plant population that corresponds to the meaning of the numerical probabilities.

The realm of practical problem-solving in daily living also provides scope for exploring self-consciousness. Many adults have distinct memories of the first time they tried to use a mobile phone. Initially it was an alien object out to frustrate one's day. After one's initial sensitive apprehensions have died down there comes a time when one understands that what one is being invited to do is, with patience, learn how to perform a succession of tasks and assimilate the related skills. The tensions and frustrations give way to an understanding of how to perform some of the tasks. Once a particular item is mastered, how to use this menu and that sub-

<sup>16</sup> To the accusation of the falsification of Newton by Einstein it can be replied that if the imaginative presentations of the problem are defective the insight will be defective. Unlike Kant's understanding, insights are always caused by such imaginative presentations of the elements of the problem in the world.

menu, one can now with ease add a new contact name to the address book almost effortlessly. That understanding has taken place is indicated by the emergence of new practical skills.

In the worlds of education, scientific research, and practical living, the tension of inquiry in most particular problems does not persist for ever.<sup>17</sup> It is usually resolved by one or more aha, click, or eureka moments. Suddenly the elements of the solution fall into place and the frustrations of being in the dark are replaced by a clear understanding and an ability to experiment, act, write, communicate, and teach. In writing a paper such as this, much of the thoughts and related language come almost automatically, the language game unfolding with apparently little self-awareness of its complex emergence. Still there arise times in which that smooth flow of the words gets stuck. Such interruptions of the performance in the successive revisions of an initial crudely drafted text are resolved by a number of aha moments. Their product is publicly expressed in the succession of revised patterns of words that are now included in the text. In this sense authoring a text is grounded in a number of such moments but although their changing product is there to be publicly inspected in the series of texts, the aha moments themselves, which gave rise to such adjustments, by and large are overlooked and forgotten. Unless I deliberately go out of my way to journal them – and that is not easy – they are quickly forgotten. It is because of this radical elusiveness that many conclude that for them such intellectual experiences do not exist.

In this a further question arises. In the journal one can record the experience of being stuck, one can record being aware of an aha experience and one can record the experience of being able to go on with the writing or the experimenting. When one notes in a journal that I had an aha experience, that how to go on with the words clicked, what is one writing about? One is not writing about the words or the thoughts which they express but an experience which gave birth to both the thoughts and the words or, in scientific and mathematical problem-solving a new equation or an understanding of what experiments to conduct in order to solve the problem. The symbols that express the equation, the written account of the experiments to be conducted, and the revisions of the words of the text have a public dimension.

By way of contrast the moments of insight that gave birth to them are hugely elusive and fleeting. Not only that, but contrary to the popular presentation of an insight as a light bulb switching on in the brain, they are an unimaginable self-conscious awareness. Even though technically we cannot imagine the intelligibility of a classical or statistical law, somehow we grasp it in the sensible data without mastering what is involved in its unimaginability. But it seems that one cannot catch on and describe the coincident experience of the awareness of the wonder and

<sup>17</sup> Resolving a deep-rooted conflict would be one of several exceptions.

insights involved without directly addressing the issue of unimaginability. Nowhere in *Insight* is the unimaginable nature of the data of consciousness suggested. Nor are the implications for the notion of introspection, the meaning and practice of which Lonergan almost assumes at this point to be self-evident, explored. Only when he had finished the book did the unsettling problems associated with the unimaginability of the data of consciousness arise.

Still there can be, it seems, degrees of intensity of the unimaginable awareness of our mental operations, unforgettable eureka insight experiences being the exceptions. In the process of writing Ayn Rand draws an interesting distinction between the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious. 'When we speak, it feels as if the words come automatically – as if the words and the thoughts come simultaneously. Of course, they do not. If you observe children learning to speak, or yourself learning a foreign language, you discover that language is not innate and automatic, but an acquired skill. It is so well integrated at the adult level, however, that the transition from the thought you want to express to the words you use is automatic.'<sup>18</sup> Her distinction between the thought and the words that express it is spot on. But so also is her observation that it is in the learning process that we have a heightened conscious awareness of our mental operations. When we have acquired a mastery of the types of questions, insights and related linguistic and action skills in a particular field, the self-awareness of their emergence in response to a further problem-solving situation in that field is of a low order. Only when things go wrong does that self-awareness rise in the degree of its conscious awareness. This suggests that introspection will find its greatest rewards by attending to the learning process.

As well as the challenge to describe there is also that of explaining the elusive data of consciousness, that is to say discovering some universal pattern of relations between the conscious awareness and properties of the distinctive types of cognitive acts involved in problem-solving. In 1983 Lonergan remarked to Tom Daly in a personal communication that 'he had to work very hard on the question of self-knowledge before he got his notion of consciousness. It can't be clarified until you realize that there are levels in knowing.' In the Intelligence and Reality course notes the levels in knowing are held to presuppose and complement each other but this hardly constitutes a proper explanation. The levels cannot be visually related, as the data of consciousness are unimaginable.

In the explanation of the circle there is a kind of common species level of membership of the elements of the center, radii, and circumference involved in the explanation. Similarly in the explanation of the relation between mass, energy, and the velocity of light in the equation  $E = mc^2$  the physics variables share a common

<sup>18</sup> *The Art of Nonfiction, A Guide for Writers and Readers*, (New York: Penguin, 2001) p. 58. See also index under subconscious.



species level of membership. The same could be said of the variable in Boyle's Law. In cognitional structure it could be argued that the empirical, intellectual, and rational operations and levels, the variables of the explanation linked by the pure desire to know, belong to different levels of reality. In this they are to be identified more by their reality differences than their similarities. Because of this an explanation of their relations will be different from the above.

In consciousness studies David Chalmers has drawn attention to the difference in properties between neural processes and what he terms qualia, that is to say empirically conscious experiences such as hearing the sound of the telephone. He has defined as the hard problem the fact that the latter cannot be reduced to and explained in terms of the former.<sup>19</sup> Miraculously, he has succeeded in convincing some materialists that brain and mind might be quite distinct. Mysterians find themselves mystified by the correlation between the neural brain processes and the conscious awareness that emerges out of them.

If there is a property chasm between the neural level and empirical consciousness, there are even greater property chasms between empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness. The properties of the awareness of the direct insight are just in another dimension from those of the experiential act of seeing or hearing, differences that can be identified. Nonetheless the direct act of insight is caused by the content of the imaginative presentation of the elements of the problem, in which are represented the intelligible features being sought. Lonergan only begins to address the problem of explaining the strange relations between different levels of being in the section on higher conjugate forms in Chapter 8. Written about a year after chapters 9-11, there is to be found there an exploration of the explanatory relations between levels.<sup>20</sup> In an emergentist world view the explanation of the relation between such levels is addressed in terms of upward and downward causality, that is to say causal relations between different levels of reality.

### **3. Consciousness in the Autograph of *Insight***

Lonergan's first really significant engagement with the notion of consciousness in the movement of his thought so far occurs in the composition of Chapter 11 of the autograph of *Insight* on the Self-Affirmation of the Knower. At the very start we find him defining the self as a 'concrete and intelligible unity, identity whole,' 'self' being a term that has only featured minimally in his earlier writing. In self-

<sup>19</sup> David Chalmers, 'Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness,' *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2(3) (1995) 200-29, and 'Moving Forward on the Problem of Consciousness,' *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 4(1) (1997) 3-46.

<sup>20</sup> See *Lonergan's Quest*, p. 337 on his attempt to explain the relation between the neural and the psychic levels in terms of emergent probability in the first ending to chapter 6. After he had completed Chapter 8 he went back and changed the ending of chapter 6 to the current one.

affirmation the self is invited to affirm that it performs the cognitional activities or operations that he has specified as conscious. Related is his use of the phrase ‘The Unity of Consciousness.’

By this, of course, I do not mean that it is the object of some inward look. What is meant is that a single agent is involved in many acts, that it is an abstraction to speak of acts as conscious, that concretely consciousness pertains to the acting agent.<sup>21</sup>

He goes on to ask, what do I mean by ‘I’? and replies that it is the unity within which is to be found the activities of empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness. Being more heuristic than specific his account leaves open questions about the beginning and ending of consciousness in human lives and of the characteristics of intellectual activity throughout the different phases of the lifetime of the agent. The absence of references to the role of memory which accesses the concreteness and historicity of the self in the judgment of self-affirmation and in related remarks about cognitional structure and introspection needs to be addressed. Lonergan will acknowledge its importance in some later passing remarks on historicity:

[...] a person suffering from amnesia does not know who he is. If I were to forget that I was a Jesuit, a priest, a professor of theology, and so on, my possible activities would be entirely out of conformity with what I am. My memory of myself is constitutive, a fundamental determinant, of what I do.<sup>22</sup>

Adding that memory is constitutive of a people as well as of an individual Lonergan concludes that historicity is a difficult notion to get hold of. Introducing the dimension of the historicity of the self involves an enlargement from the what to the who question. The question: Who am I? cannot be answered in terms of abstractions.<sup>23</sup>

In his remarks on Augustine in the Introduction to the book version of *Verbum* Lonergan comments that he was ‘a subject that may be studied but, most of all, must be encountered in the outpouring of his self-revelation and self-communication.’ The reference is clearly to the encounter with Augustine’s self in and through a reading of his *Confessions*. This suggests a more concrete and richer notion of the self than we find in *Insight*. Augustine shows us that it is through writing one’s

<sup>21</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 350 (326).

<sup>22</sup> CWL 6 *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, edited by Robert Croken, Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) p. 74. In *Insight* we find references to the memory of the ‘startling strangeness’ of mastering the duality in one’s knowing, p. 22 (xxviii), screening memories 220 (196) and the remembered data of the house burnt down 306-307 (281) but in general memory does not seem to feature significantly in his account of cognitional structure.

<sup>23</sup> On the who question see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998) Section V, Action, pp. 175ff.

memoir that one's lived selfhood, in the fullest sense, is both revealed to oneself and communicated to others. Otherwise it remains hidden from us both.<sup>24</sup> It also shows that remembering, so significant for Augustine, is foundational in understanding the intelligible unity of one's selfhood.<sup>25</sup>

There follow in Lonergan's treatment of patterns of experience in chapter 6 and generalized empirical method in chapter 7 (whose final versions were written after Chapter 11) further significant developments in the field of consciousness studies. The brief points on the biological, aesthetic, intellectual and dramatic patterns of experience invite us to relocate the intense emphasis on cognitional acts, their structure and objects in the broader canvas of the life of a human person. Scientific memoirs draw us into the narratives of lives dominated by the intellectual pattern, family and political narratives by the dramatic pattern, the lives of artists and musicians by the aesthetic pattern. The treatment needs to be complemented by such imaginative input addressing the awareness of hunger, beauty, the quest, the drama of the self and the other. There also arises the question about what gives unity to the aggregate of such patterns in an entire life.

Lonergan's treatment of the patterns of experience and the four biases of common sense leads to some remarks about his vision of a generalized empirical method for consciousness studies, the seeds of the problem going back to his work on the philosophy of history in the 1930s.

However, generalized empirical method has to be able to deal, at least comprehensively, not only with the data within a single consciousness but also with the relations between different conscious subjects, between conscious subjects and their milieu or environment, and between consciousness and its neural basis.<sup>26</sup>

It seems here that we are back at 'Finality, Love, Marriage' with its emphasis on forming a community of consciousness and conscience. The generalized empirical method has to deal with one's self not as a single solitary consciousnesses, but as a member of a particular family, social groups and province, of a specific nation and the vast associated web of relations extending to the global situation and consciousnesses that make up the United Nations. Inevitably those aggregates of consciousnesses lack unity; all are to a greater or lesser degree dysfunctional. Some

<sup>24</sup> In Chapter V of the *The Human Condition*, Arendt shows how in a life as lived an unread story is being formed. Until the story is told the story remains unknown. See also the item by Pilardi in note 9 which expands this point on narrative selfhood.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine's *Confessions* influenced Stephen Crites' essay: 'The Narrative Quality of Experience' (*Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39 (1971) 291-311, in which he speculates that the unity of consciousness is a narrative. I believe that the transcendental notion of value, the human pursuit of something worthwhile in the world and of becoming someone worthwhile, is the foundation of that narrative unity.

<sup>26</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 268 (243-4).

might even be hostile to the extent of being at war with each other. One way of opening up the imaginative correlates of this passage would be through reading family, social and international histories including those in which one is personally involved.<sup>27</sup>

Further developments in consciousness studies emerge in Lonergan's broader notion of self-affirmation in chapter 14 and his explorations of development in chapter 15 of *Insight*. In Chapter 14, echoing Dudley, he writes:

Philosophic evidence is within the philosopher himself. It is his own inability to avoid experience, to renounce intelligence in inquiry, to desert reasonableness in reflection. It is his own detached, disinterested desire to know. It is his own advertence to the polymorphism of his own consciousness. It is his own insight into the manner in which insights accumulate in mathematics, in the empirical sciences, in the myriad of instances of common sense. It is his own grasp of the dialectical unfolding of his own desire to know in its conflict with other desires that provides the key to his own philosophic development and reveals his own potentialities to adopt the stand of any of the traditional or of the new philosophical schools. Philosophy is the flowering of the individual's rational consciousness in its coming to know and take possession of itself. To that event, its traditional schools, its treatises, and its history are but contributions; and without that event they are stripped of real significance.<sup>28</sup>

In this quote he is greatly enlarging the earlier invitation to self-affirmation in the light of the experiences and developments that have taken place in authoring the previous 13 chapters. Of importance is the significance in the above quote of the dialectical role of desires, reminiscent of eros and agape in 'Finality, Love, Marriage,' and absent from the definition of patterns of experience in chapter 6.

If philosophic data and evidence are within the lives of philosophers, how are they appropriated? In Lonergan's 'Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response,' we find some hints. In self-appropriation there are four precepts that are independent of cultural differences: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. But 'since the actuation of the structure arises under social conditions and within cultural traditions, to the four there may be added a fifth: Acknowledge your historicity.'<sup>29</sup> I believe this enlargement of the project will be assisted by the addition of intersubjective and narrative approaches.

<sup>27</sup> Simon Berthon and Joanna Potts, *Warlords, An Extraordinary Re-creation of World War II Through the Eyes and Minds of Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin*, (Cambridge, MA: Perseus/ Dirst Da Capo Press, 2006) contains an account of the dramatic interaction of the consciousnesses of Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in the course of the second world war, providing a helpful phantasm.

<sup>28</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 454 (429). The remarks do not extend to the moral or religious spheres.

<sup>29</sup> CWL 17 *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, edited by Robert Croken and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) p. 378.

The intersubjective approach will move the exercise of self-appropriation beyond its purely transcultural aim with its emphasis on the solitary self and incorporate it into a generalized empirical method. The I of self-affirmation has to further understand itself directly in its relations with the others in its life: with you, him and her, and as a member of us in relation to them. The biases of common sense are relational unfreedoms which advance decline and hinder progress in our interpersonal relations and the formation of our personal narratives. Such blind spots have enormous implications for our lives lived as members of the social, cultural, and historical groups to which we belong. Our own subjectivity is a part of their associated struggles, both within and in their external relations with other groups, with their polarities of creativity and destructiveness. Involving elements of dialogue and encounter the exploration of our cognitional and ethical selfhood in such an intersubjective context will differ greatly from that of the opening exercises in mathematics and physics to be found in *Insight*. This dimension of the project will necessitate some form of structured pedagogy along the lines of courses in counselling and psychotherapy which insist on interpersonal encounters as part of the learning process. Philosophers have to acknowledge the same need for them to grow in understanding through a parallel form of group interaction with others.

If Arendt is right that a human life as lived is an emerging but unread story is it not the case that philosophic data and evidence are concealed in the emerging life and only become accessible through the composition of some form of journal, memoir or autobiography? Without remembering and articulating the personal narrative, the philosophical quest and related experiences remain hidden, both as data and as evidence. In general philosophers have been slow to take this route.<sup>30</sup> The assimilation of the structure of one's self-awareness and its complexities is a serious undertaking and cannot be resolved in a few casual moments. In the process of authoring *Loneragan's Quest* I came to understand self-affirmation as involving a moving viewpoint which develops through a series of stages and is always open to further deepening.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4. Consciousness as a Human and Divine Attribute**

Loneragan's explorations of the human subject and of human consciousness in *Insight* influence his parallel writings in theology. In Chapter 19 he wrote what seems a single reference to God as conscious: 'As man, so God is a rational self-consciousness, for man was made in the image and likeness of God. But what man

<sup>30</sup> For a hostile stance see Galen Strawson, 'Against Narrativity,' *Ratio* (new series) XVII 4 December 2004, 428-452. On the positive side see Paul Trainor 'Autobiography as Philosophical Argument: Socrates, Descartes, and Collingwood,' *Thought*, Vol lxiii, No 251, December 1988, 288-396.

<sup>31</sup> *Loneragan's Quest*, pp. 369, 392.

is through unrestricted desire and limited attainment, God is as unrestricted act.<sup>32</sup> This recalls his remark in *Verbum* that intellectual light, the desire of the mind is ‘the most convincing sample in us of the stuff of which the Author of the universe and of our minds consists.’<sup>33</sup> On this basis he concludes that his notion of God is personal. Although not specifically employing the word ‘consciousness,’ the remark: ‘Our subject has been the act of insight or understanding, and God is the unrestricted act of understanding, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of Eureka’ clearly implies divine self-consciousness.<sup>34</sup> All understanding, human and divine, is characterised by that awareness that we name self-consciousness.<sup>35</sup>

The question of the consciousness of Christ was one that ran through certain sections of twentieth-century theology. Lonergan drafted some notes on the topic during his course on Christology in Toronto in 1952 during the final stages of composing *Insight*.<sup>36</sup> His Christology text was published in 1956 and became the subject of a severe critical review in Rome by Perego in *Divinitas*.<sup>37</sup> In response Lonergan composed his ‘Christ as Subject: A Reply.’ In it he made a sharp distinction between two notions of consciousness: as an inward look and as an experience, that is to say a datum. It was in this essay that for the first time Lonergan made the remark that: ‘The data of consciousness are not imaginable.’<sup>38</sup>

With respect to the consciousness of Christ he takes the article of the creed that ‘Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate’ which acknowledges the concrete historicity of Christ’s subjectivity. To the question: did he suffer unconsciously? he answers no; he suffered consciously. An affirmative answer to the further question: Is not Jesus Christ God? leads him to ask: does this mean that God suffered? Lonergan replies that in Christ there is one person with two natures. He continues: ‘I do not mean that the one person suffered in his divine nature. I do mean that the one person suffered in his human nature.’ As Christ was humanly the conscious subject

<sup>32</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 691 (668).

<sup>33</sup> CWL 2 *Verbum*, p. 100 (90).

<sup>34</sup> CWL 3 *Insight*, p. 706 (684); see also CWL 2 *Verbum*, p. 196 (188), on extrapolating from insight into phantasm to unrestricted understanding not limited by sensible presentations.

<sup>35</sup> I am aware of Crowe’s remarks in ‘For a Phenomenology of Rational Consciousness,’ *Method Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 18 (2000) 72, that ‘understanding understanding is not quite the same as insight into insight’ and ‘We do not say that God has insight, for that at once suggests insight into phantasm, which is the human way of understanding.’ The human way of understanding is for Lonergan insight into phantasm. Human understanding and insight are in this context identical and in the above sense differ from Divine understanding. At the same time the human way, whether we name it as insight or understanding, as the previous quote with its Archimedean reference makes clear, can in some aspects point beyond itself to the creative understanding of God that is without imagination.

<sup>36</sup> *Lonergan’s Quest*, pp. 87, 398 for earlier influences, n 43 on 305 for details of his notes on the consciousness of Christ, 465 for his drafting of the subsequent book.

<sup>37</sup> CWL 7 *On the Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*; on the dispute CWL 4 *Collection*, pp. 153-184 (164-197).

<sup>38</sup> CWL 4 *Collection*, p. 173 (186).

of physical pain so also he 'was the conscious subject of looking and listening, of imagining Solomon in all his glory and seeing the lilies in the field, of the acts of his *scientia beata, infusa, acquisita*, of the free and responsible acts of will by which he merited our salvation.'<sup>39</sup>

In his 1963 lecture at the North American College in Rome entitled 'Consciousness and the Trinity' Lonergan makes some pointed remarks. The classical theology of the Trinity began by treating the unity of God. In response to the question: are there processions in God, the creed informs us that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. But as the Son and Spirit are not creatures such processions cannot have causes. So the question arises:

How are we to conceive the divine processions? The position taken there is that, unless we conceive the processions in terms of consciousness, we can have no analogy at all. For the Son and the Holy Spirit are not caused, they are not created, they are not made. .. we have to find an instance in which there is not merely causality, but also that different type of dependence which we – and St Thomas, I believe, called *emanatio intelligibilis*.<sup>40</sup>

Following Aquinas, Lonergan maintains that the *only* created analogy or likeness to the divine processions in the universe is in intellectual consciousness. At a certain stage in a research problem in science or in a medical diagnosis we can find ourselves in the dark, cannot yet think, speak or write a solution. It is through insight into the imaginative presentation of the elements of the problem that there comes to be uttered in and through our understanding what Augustine named a *verbum mentis*, that is to say a thought and its concepts. The meaning and reference of that thought is not to be confused with the different ways it can be expressed in the language symbols of any of the spoken or written languages. The insight itself is caused by, among other things, the correctly disposed image, but the *verbum mentis* is spoken within the understanding. It is not caused. Aquinas and Lonergan both recognised in this conscious procession of a mental word in the understanding a created analogy of processions in God.

In Lonergan's Christology there arose the notion of a single divine subject of both a divine and human self-consciousness. Extending this analogy there arises in his Trinitarian works the transition from the classical language of three persons in one God to three conscious subjects of a single consciousness. Lonergan holds that 'we can say "three persons" and mean three conscious subjects, that is, use the word in the sense of three who are somebody although there is one consciousness for the three subjects. There is no major difficulty in integrating the notion of

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-182 (192-4).

<sup>40</sup> CWL 6 *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 124-125. For Rahner's divergence with Lonergan on this central point see Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, (London: Burns & Oates Limited, 1970) p. 81.

person as “conscious subject” with the whole tradition of systematic theology on the Trinity.<sup>41</sup> There are three conscious subjects of a single existential consciousness.

## 5. The Elusiveness of Consciousness

In two groundbreaking articles Frederick Crowe has brought out into daylight problems involved in the analysis of consciousness that were latent in *Insight*.<sup>42</sup> The source of the problem is the emphasis in *Verbum* and in the Greek quote on the title-page of *Insight* that for Aristotle ‘forms are grasped by mind in images.’<sup>43</sup> In the 1953 Introduction to *Insight* we find Lonergan using the phrases, ‘understand what is it to understand,’ and ‘insight into insight.’ In the later 1954 Preface the phrase ‘insight into insight’ occurs some fifteen times. At this point it seems the problem latent in these remarks had not come to light.

For Crowe a turning point occurred in Lonergan’s Christology text, *De Constitutione Christi* in 1956 where he remarks that internal experience or consciousness is not described but indicated. Description, it seems, is the product of intellectual inquiry.

Still consciousness as experience is indicated inasmuch as a method is described by which there is a return from the experience which had been formed by understanding and conception, a return to experience itself in the strict sense. But consciousness is neither the method of returning nor the return but is that to which one returns.<sup>44</sup>

Although he continued to use the phrase ‘insight into insight’ in his lectures at Boston College in 1957, according to Crowe he was acutely conscious of the difficulties involved. In his discussion of a phenomenology of insight into insight he stated:

You have your structured data and your insight. You can attend to the data that are structured, and your attention centers there. Or you can attend to the insight, and it’s a different focus of attention [...] But insight is an elusive thing [...] Just as if you just center on what is experience, in any given mode, it’s so elusive that it tends to vanish [...] When you’re seeking insight into insight, not only have you a different term of attention, but your methods of procedure have to differ if you’re going to get anywhere.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> CWL 6 *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, p. 132. Lonergan distinguishes between something and somebody. The person in this sense is a who rather than a what.

<sup>42</sup> ‘For a Phenomenology of Rational Consciousness,’ *Method Journal of Lonergan Studies* 18 (2000) 71ff, opens up the problem of ‘insight into insight,’ 74; ‘The Puzzle of the Subject as Subject in Lonergan,’ *International Philosophical Quarterly* 43/2, issue 170 (2003) 187-205, especially 195-200.

<sup>43</sup> ‘For a Phenomenology of Rational Consciousness’, p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.



In his Halifax lectures in 1958 Lonergan continued to talk about insight into insight, but for Crowe it is in his 1959 essay, 'Christ as Subject,' that the matter starts to come to a head in the statement: 'The data of consciousness are not imaginable,' to which Crowe adds 'not just the datum in consciousness of insight, but the datum in consciousness of attention, inquiry, conception, reflection, judgment – none of them is imaginable.'<sup>46</sup> This forced Crowe drastically to reconsider the whole history of the problem from the repeated remarks on insight into insight in the Preface of *Insight* to the interview with Luis Morfin in 1981. There we find the remark: 'It's tricky though: insight into phantasm, and we have no phantasm of our actual understanding.'<sup>47</sup> Crowe began to recognise that the problem went deeper than he initially suspected. Insight is always into phantasm but if there is no phantasm for insight itself how can we have an insight into insight?

In the 1981 interview with Morfin Lonergan employs the illustration of proving that there can be no integer that is the square root of 2. The insight in this case is into the mathematical symbols that you write down: the primes –  $p$  and  $q$ , 2 and the square and square root symbols. In this Lonergan comments that you are creating a phantasm to which Morfin replies: 'But there is not a phantasm of the insight operations.' Lonergan replies that just as mathematicians need phantasms when they do mathematics, cognitional theorists also need phantasms in which are presented the elements of the problem. By this he seems to mean that the very writing down of the mathematical symbols involved in the proof and manipulating them becomes in turn an element of the phantasm of the cognitional theorist.

This brings me back to a personal conviction that you cannot do introspection in relation to problem-solving without writing down a precise and detailed account of both the phantasms/images involved in the direct mode of problem-solving and the coincident account of engaging with the problem. As one engages with the problem the imaginative presentations change. The older images are expanded, revised or replaced. Coincident with that development there is an awareness of the expansion of one's desire to understand, of one's growing mastery of the details of the problem and of a number of aha moments. Although the conscious awareness is immediate, the only way we can identify it is through a backward reference through the described account of the problem-solving.

I opened the present paper with some comments on how the language of consciousness can enter our vocabulary and in and through our use of it convince us that we have a real and down to earth commonsense grasp of what it is. The discovery that consciousness is an extremely elusive unimaginable self-awareness that accompanies our problem-solving activities in the world challenges that attitude. Lonergan's reflections on the natural desire to know God imply that our

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

own desire to know contains an anticipation of the divine. It is the very same desire in us that desires to understand other people in the world that will understand God. In the fifth *Verbum* article Lonergan held that for Aquinas human understanding bore some resemblance or likeness to the Divine. The creativity of the great eureka moments of the scientists point beyond themselves to that mystery. Only in the understanding of the unimaginable God, the source and origin of all creativity, will their full explanation and significance be found. The affirmation that in our intellectual self-awareness there is present an analogical likeness of the mystery of the processions in God should give us pause for thought. If this analogical likeness is a fact then it must be concluded that, ultimately, there is something astonishingly mysterious at the heart our self-conscious awareness and its ultimate and absolute destiny. We should never take our real but unimaginable consciousness for granted. If in one of its dimensions it is activated by the interaction of our mental operations with our empirical world, as unimaginable it points to another finality. There is at the heart of our conscious awareness a vector of transcendence.



# THE SELF OF CRITICAL REALISM

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## 1. Introduction

In the 1968 Aquinas Lecture “The Subject,” Lonergan explores how the subject or self has emerged in the post-classical age. He classifies contemporary treatments of the subject as neglected, truncated, immanentist, existential, and alienated. The obstacles to self-knowledge, which he outlines, such as objectivism, conceptualism, and epistemological obfuscation, variously ignore the subject as freely self-constituting, as reasonable, or as intelligent. While he outlines these difficulties, he also highlights positive developments to be advanced, particularly through an existential approach to the subject. He concludes his paper with the following summation:

These are large and urgent topics. [...] I have pointed throughout this paper to the root difficulty, to neglect of the subject and the vast labor involved in knowing him.<sup>1</sup>

In the forty years that have passed since Lonergan made that remark, the problems of the nature of the self and the possibility of self-knowledge have not become less urgent.

Contemporary thought on both sides of the philosophic divide struggle with the nature of the self and in some cases deny that there is a self. Reductionistic empiricists are comfortable dealing with neural networks, but shrink away in Humean fashion from personal identity. Similarly, phenomenology has eroded the Cartesian bedrock of philosophic certitude, the *Cogito, ergo sum*. While reflection may allow one to assert indubitably that there is doubting taking place, the rational conclusion “Therefore, I exist” is seriously doubted. Husserl’s pure ego of the field of conscious intentionality is *de trop* because as Sartre argues consciousness unifies itself. Derrida, with his thorough rejection of the onto-theological notion of self-

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S. J., *The Subject* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1968), p. 33.

presence, announces like Nietzsche's madman the "death of the author." We can well ask with Westphal: "Does the death of long-honored philosophical paradigms of the self entail the death of the self itself?"<sup>2</sup>

From the position of critical realism, Lonergan is able to preserve a self that is ensnared neither in the problems arising out of materialism and naïve realism nor in the problems arising out of immanentism with its residual, albeit critical, empiricism. In Chapter 14 of *Insight*, "The Method of Metaphysics," Lonergan formulates the three tenets of cognitional theory which he considers fundamental to the development of a critical metaphysics. The dialectical option is stark; one's philosophy will either be a basic position or a basic counterposition:

It will be a basic position (1) if the real is the concrete universe of being and not a subdivision of the 'already out there now'; (2) if the subject becomes known when it affirms itself intelligently and reasonably and so is not known yet in any prior 'existential' state; and (3) if objectivity is conceived as a consequence of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, and not as a property of vital anticipation, extroversion, and satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

This statement of the basic position reveals the central and fundamental significance of the self and self-knowledge for Lonergan. The core of a basic philosophy could have been articulated in terms of reality, truth, and objectivity, but Lonergan makes the self and self-knowledge prominent. This emphasis is consistent with the existential aim of the work *Insight*, which is to assist the reader in effecting a personal self-appropriation.<sup>4</sup>

Acknowledging that we cannot fully understand any one of the three basic tenets in isolation from the other two, let us nevertheless focus on the second that the self is known intelligently and reasonably and so is not known in any prior 'existential' state. We can draw two main points from this statement: (1) the self as known is the object of understanding and judgment; and (2) the self of any state prior to intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation may be experienced concretely but merely as such is not known. The self as an object of an act of understanding is a unity, identity, whole – in metaphysical terms, a central form. As such the self is what Lonergan names technically a "thing" as distinct from a body.<sup>5</sup> As an object of an act of judgment the self is affirmed as an existing unity, identity, whole – a central act. And, the self of any state prior to being known is the individual self as given in experience – central potency.<sup>6</sup> In this paper I shall consider three of the

<sup>2</sup> Merold Westphal, *Becoming A Self* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1996), pp. viii-ix.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, S.J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* [1957], CWL, Vol. 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> *Insight*, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Insight*, p. 271.

<sup>6</sup> *Insight*, p. 484.

many aspects of this thing which is the self: first, the self as given in consciousness; secondly, the self as an intelligible unity, the hylomorphic self; and thirdly, the self as an existing whole, the polymorphic, historical, and loving self.

## 2. The Self as Given<sup>7</sup>

In *The Subject* Lonergan writes:

The study of the subject is quite different [from the metaphysical account of the soul], for it is the study of oneself as one is conscious. It prescind from the soul, its essence, its potencies, its habits, for none of these are given in consciousness. It attends to operations and to their center and source which is the self.<sup>8</sup>

The term 'self' in this passage is used as another term for 'subject', and both terms are distinguished from the classical, metaphysical term 'soul.' Conscious operations are given in consciousness. But, is the center and source of conscious operations, the self, also given in consciousness or must we not prescind from the self as we do from the soul?

In his account of self-affirmation in *Insight*, Lonergan would have us advert not only to conscious operations but also to the identity involved when I see, hear, imagine, inquire, and so forth. There is an identity on the side of the object, which makes the perceiving, inquiring, and understanding pertain to the same ultimate known. But, there is as well, a unity on the side of the subject of the conscious operations. And, this unity is neither posited on the basis of our experience of operations nor transcendently deduced, rather it is given in consciousness. "Indeed," Lonergan adds, "consciousness is much more obviously of this unity in diverse acts than of the diverse acts, for it is within the unity that the acts are found and distinguished, and it is to the unity that we appeal when we talk about a single field of consciousness [...]"<sup>9</sup> The given identity is a unity, but it is not a Kantian epistemological point that has position but no magnitude; it is not a "needle's eye through which all [cognitive] relations pass."<sup>10</sup> Rather, the given unity is a field of conscious intentionality. It is 'a' field rather than 'the' field, because as merely experienced it is mine.

Sartre is credited with providing a devastating argument against the idea that a self is given in consciousness. His argument in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, which was published incidentally in the same year as *Insight*, was directed against

<sup>7</sup> In this section I am drawing on my article, "The Unity of the Self as Given" *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), pp. 93-104.

<sup>8</sup> *The Subject*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Insight*, p. 349.

<sup>10</sup> James Brown, *Subject and Object in Modern Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), pp. 23.

Husserl's pure ego. But, we can ask whether it also poses a threat to Lonergan's subject.

Husserl's pure ego is not Kant's transcendental ego. Sartre explains the difference this way. When Kant concludes that "the *I think* must be able to accompany all our representations," he is asserting that in fact it does accompany all of them. Sartre questions this transcendental necessity: "Is the *I* that we encounter in our consciousness made possible by the synthetic unity of our representations, or is it the *I* which in fact unites the representations to each other?"<sup>11</sup> To advance his position that the former is closer to the truth, Sartre takes up Husserl's account of the *I*'s relation to consciousness. Husserl's phenomenology, he explains, is a science of fact; it is existential rather than critical in the Kantian sense.

Husserl's phenomenological method requires suspension of all that is not directly given in consciousness, all *noumenal* objects and events as well as commonsense and scientific propositions concerning them. He calls the objects not directly apprehended as evidence in consciousness 'transcendents.' All transcendents are to be assigned the epistemological value of nil – neither positive nor negative. There is only one thing purely given in consciousness prior to constitution, the pure ego. This *I* is a transcendent in immanence. In an intentional act, according to Husserl, "the subject 'directs' itself towards the intentional object. To the *cogito* itself belongs an immanent 'glancing towards' the object, a directedness which from another side springs forth from the 'Ego,' which can therefore never be absent."<sup>12</sup> Thus, for Husserl, the ego is the source of attention within the already intentional act, and the directedness towards the object from the ego is a permanent feature of conscious acts. Further, while the 'glance' which goes through every instance of intentionality, changes with every distinct act, it remains self-identical.<sup>13</sup> Finally, this self-identical source of attention in every act is individual. Husserl writes:

[...] As residuum of the phenomenological suspension of the world and the empirical subjectivity that belongs to it there remains a pure Ego (a fundamentally different one, then, for each separate stream of experiences).<sup>14</sup>

Husserl's pure ego is neither posited as a transcendental necessity nor constituted by intentional acts. To adhere rigorously to the canons of transcendental phenomenology, Husserl counts the pure ego as a phenomenological datum only insofar as "it is given together with pure consciousness."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, trans. Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1957), p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* [1913], trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1931), p. 109.

<sup>13</sup> Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

Sartre does not deny that an *I*, as attached to intentional acts and as the source of those acts, appears in consciousness, but he insists that it is only in reflective consciousness that the *I* appears. The *I* is constituted through reflection, and as constituted it is just as much a transcendent as any other object. If Husserl had been rigorously thorough in his methodical procedure, the transcendent *I* would have fallen before the stroke of phenomenological reduction. To adopt the pure ego as a transcendence in immanence is to introduce a superfluity. One should not say, for example, “I have consciousness of this chair;” instead all one can say is “There is consciousness of this chair.” Sartre accounts for the unity and the individuality of consciousness without this fabrication. The *I* is not the unifying principle of conscious acts and states. It only appears on the foundation of a unity that it did not create; the given unity is the unity of consciousness itself. Furthermore, what differentiates one conscious whole from another conscious whole is not some attached *I* but consciousness itself. The individuality of consciousness stems from the very nature of consciousness – it can be limited only by itself.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, for Sartre the *I* is not distinct from the *me*. If there were an *I* of the type Husserl describes, “it would be to the concrete and psycho-physical me what a point is to three dimensions: it would be an infinitely contracted me.”<sup>17</sup> The factual existence of the pure ego given in consciousness would introduce an ontological problem of multiple selves, but Sartre affirms the existence of only one concrete self.

Does Sartre’s critique of Husserl’s pure ego also undermine Lonergan’s account of the subject as given? Lonergan and Sartre both affirm the existence of only one concrete self, yet Lonergan’s subject as given in consciousness is very similar to Husserl’s pure ego. The subject of *Insight* is the center, source and unity of conscious operations given in consciousness as an individual unity. The pure ego is the self-identical, individual, permanent source of the glance in every intentional act given together with consciousness.

If we take into account Lonergan’s analysis of the notion of consciousness as articulated in *de Constitutione Christi*, it can be shown that his subject escapes Sartre’s critique. Lonergan distinguishes in that work two competing conceptions of consciousness, consciousness as experience and consciousness as perception. These two conceptions are rooted in two competing theories of knowledge, the Aristotelian view that knowledge is based upon an identity, and the more Platonic view that knowledge involves a duality. Lonergan following the Aristotelian tradition understands knowledge, and so also consciousness, as rooted in identity. Consequently, he maintains a conception of consciousness as experience. Consciousness as experience strictly so called is in the operating subject on the side

<sup>16</sup> Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.



of the subject, and is that through which the operating subject is rendered present to himself under the aspect of experienced.<sup>18</sup>

Both Husserl and Sartre fall into the phenomenological school of thought that maintains a dualist, confrontational view of knowing, and so they both maintain a view of consciousness as perception. Lonergan explains:

If knowledge is grounded upon duality, then consciousness, like all other knowledge, is a kind of intuition or perception or confrontation through which an object is known [...]<sup>19</sup>

Husserl and Sartre assume that knowing, in the sense of any intentional operation, is a confrontation with an object over and against, that is, outside of consciousness. In the special case of the pure ego, Husserl does suggest a notion of consciousness close to consciousness as experience when he writes:

This glancing of the Ego [...] this having in one's glance, in one's mental eye, which belongs to the essence of the *cogito*, to the act as such, is not in itself in turn a proper act, and in particular should not be confused with a perceiving (in however wide a sense this term be used), or with any other types of act related to perceptions.<sup>20</sup>

However, a distinction between two conceptions of consciousness is not made explicit. Both Husserl and Sartre on the whole conceive of knowing as a kind of confrontation and consciousness as a form of perception.

Lonergan, on the other hand, conceives of consciousness as experience. Consciousness is not a kind of perception, in fact, it is not an act of intentionality at all. Rather, consciousness qualifies intentional acts, more concretely, it qualifies the subject. Lonergan distinguishes two senses of experience: the broad sense of one's life experience; and the strict sense of a "preliminary and unstructured sort of awareness that is presupposed by intellectual inquiry and completed by it."<sup>21</sup> The latter is meant when we speak of the level of experience. While one might make the further distinction of exterior and interior experience, this distinction is only a function of later intellectual operations. In the strict sense, experience forms an undifferentiated whole; it is a kind of preliminary and unstructured apprehension. Not only is this experience prior to the exterior/interior distinction, it is also prior to any subject/object distinction. Thus, Lonergan can write:

What we experience interiorly, however, is known to us neither by some special act nor as an object. [Note that Lonergan is in complete agreement

<sup>18</sup> Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, CWL, Vol. 7, ed. Michael Shields, S.J., Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), Section 102.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Husserl, *Ideas*, p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, p. 157.

with Husserl on this point.] In the very act of seeing a color I become aware not only of that color on the side of the object but also, on the side of the subject, of both the one seeing and the act of seeing.<sup>22</sup>

In this passage Lonergan has articulated the very point that Sartre would dispute. Can we legitimately assert that in undifferentiated experience not only are the content and the intentional act given, but also the one who performs the act? Is the subject given in experience as preliminary or is the subject only differentiated through subsequent acts, as Sartre claims with his insistence that the *I* appears only in reflection? For Lonergan, undifferentiated experience is only completed by subsequent intellectual and rational operations. However, this further activity or reflection presupposes what is given in the initial experience. When one does come to understand and to judge the nature and the existence of the subject of conscious intentional acts, one does not need to perform a transcendental deduction in order to conclude that there must be an *I* attached to and unifying all conscious activity. The subject is already given in the experience that is subsequently presupposed by the further operations.

Regarding the superfluity of the self, Lonergan is in agreement with Sartre's view that consciousness is self-unifying. He writes that "Experience in itself forms a sort of continuous [...] whole."<sup>23</sup> But, this does not mean for Lonergan that the unity of conscious experience does not involve a subject. Rather, he means by the subject given in consciousness this very single field of consciousness. The subject given in consciousness is not a point with no magnitude, but the whole within which acts and contents are experienced. Lonergan summarizes the controversy neatly in the following:

If consciousness is conceived as an experience there is a psychological subject, while if consciousness is conceived as the perception of an object there is no psychological subject.<sup>24</sup>

Lonergan's conception of consciousness as experience is grounded in the tenets of the basic position of critical realism. The subject, while *given* as a unity in a preliminary, undifferentiated experience, is *known* only through intelligent and rational operations. Further, conscious operations of the subject are not only intentional, they are also constitutive of the object. However, the conception of consciousness as a form of perception commits one to an empiricist view that conscious intentionality has no constitutive effect upon its object. Consciousness as perception would disclose an object as it is in its proper reality prior to the occurrence of the perceiving. The object of consciousness as perception, in other

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

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

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, "Christ as Subject: A Reply," in *Collection*, CWL, Vol. 4., ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 164.

words, is a kind of already-in-here-now-real. From the standpoint of critical realism, consciousness cannot be any knowledge of an object; rather, it is a qualification of the subject in act. He writes, “The subject in act and his act are constituted and, as well, they are known simultaneously and concomitantly with knowledge of the object.”<sup>25</sup> As the object is constituted through conscious intentional acts, so the subject is constituted as intelligent or rational through those acts. The knowledge of the subject alluded to here is not knowledge of the subject as an object, but knowledge of the subject as subject. This preliminary knowledge is not the result of nor does it require reflection; it is mere self-presence, the apprehension of oneself in act. In sum, the self as the unity given in consciousness is not the self to be understood and affirmed as an object of intelligent inquiry and rational reflection, but the self as subject.

### 3. The Self as Unity-Identity-Whole

According to Lonergan’s critical realism, then, the self is given as a unity in consciousness as experience. What is the self as understood? The self as the object of an act of understanding is grasped in conscious data as a “unity, identity, whole,” in other words, as a thing. The term ‘thing’ corresponds to the classical term ‘substance’ or ‘entity.’ To understand the self as a thing is not to adopt mechanistic determinism; it is not to engage in an alienating and dehumanizing reification of the self. The self as a thing is the self as an intelligible unity. Lonergan develops his notion of a ‘thing’ as distinct from a ‘body’ which is experienced in extroversion as an “already out there now real.”<sup>26</sup> Lonergan’s distinction of things and bodies combined with his account of the developing self provides a way out of the seemingly intractable mind/body problem which still plagues contemporary philosophy. We have inherited a Cartesian manner of imagining and conceiving of the body and the mind. Descartes conceives of both as substances. He identifies the self with the mind, and is faced with the problem of how the self is related to the body. As the filmmaker Woody Allen quipped in sympathy with Descartes’ problem: ‘My mind can never know my body, although it has become quite friendly with my legs.’<sup>27</sup>

The problem of the relation of the mind and the body is grounded in the supposition that the body is a material substance, a *res extensa*, and the mind is a thinking substance, a *res cogitans*. A material substance and a thinking substance have two opposite sets of characteristics. The body is spatially extended and has mass; it is subject to the mechanical laws of impact, force, and velocity; and it is publicly observable and measurable. The mind is not spatially extended and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>26</sup> *Insight*, pp. 275-276.

<sup>27</sup> Woody Allen, “My Philosophy” in *The Complete Prose of Woody Allen* (New York: Wings Books, 1994), p. 170.

lacks mass; it is free of the mechanical laws of impact, force, and velocity; and it is private. The mind is accessible only to the self engaged in introspective reflection. The problem is how two such opposite things can interact with each other. If the mind as immaterial is incapable of being impacted, how is it affected by any change in the material substance of the body? Conversely, how is the body moved or directed by something with no extension or mass?

Descartes' solution is famously inadequate. He located a point of intersection or communion between the mind and the body in the pineal gland in the brain. The pineal gland is itself a material substance, or at least a part of the material substance which is the body. There is no problem in relating the pineal gland to the body; the pineal gland is a part of the body causally linked to the rest of the nervous system. The problem of relating this material gland to the mind remains, however.

The history of early modern philosophy provides a spectrum of attempts to solve the Cartesian problem. On one end of the spectrum, we find materialism, which denies the existence of a spiritual realm and immaterial substances altogether. If all is material, there is no mind and hence no mind/body problem. On the other end, absolute idealism denies the existence of a material, natural world independent of the mind. If all is spirit or the objectification of spirit, the problem similarly evaporates. A number of theories were advanced between these two extremes, notably the occasionalism of Malebranche and the parallelism of Leibniz. Such attempts fall today on more critical ears. Any *deus ex machina* violates contemporary canons of parsimony.

Contemporary philosophic discussions of the mind/body problem are informed by developments in neuroscience; yet, they remain heirs to the same Cartesian legacy. Prominent contemporary theories of mind fall into two main camps, reductionistic materialism or naïve dualism. The idealistic option has apparently fallen below the contemporary radar screen. Current philosophic discussions of the mind/body problem center on the brain. The crux of the problem now is the relation of consciousness to the brain. One even hears questions raised about the relation of the brain to the body! Materialists reduce all mental phenomena or consciousness to cerebral events and conditions. According to the identity theory of J. J. C. Smart, "mentalistic discourse is simply a vaguer, more indefinite way of talking about what could be talked about more precisely by using physiological terms."<sup>28</sup> Smart's identity theory does not account for how the mind and body interact. It simply claims that they are identical, and attempts to explain how language about one is related to language about the other. Materialistic functionalism is a weaker form of identity theory. It maintains that "each instance of a given type of mental state is numerically

<sup>28</sup> Jerome Shaffer, "Consciousness and the Mind-Body Problem," in Louis P. Pojman, *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991), p. 287.

identical with some specific physical state.”<sup>29</sup> The relation of functionalism to strict identity theory mirrors the relation of occasionalism to parallelism. Paul Churchland’s position is a form of reductionistic materialism. His primary aim is to reduce all that is popularly described as mental acts and states to neuroscientific fact.

Reductionistic materialism is rejected by analytic dualists such as Sir John Eccles. Eccles, a Nobel laureate in medicine and physiology, argues that mind and body are not identical, that mental phenomena cannot be reduced to brain events. He does not credit materialists with having any greater scientific rigor than dualists. In fact, he characterizes them as finding “the identity theory in one or more of its guises attractive [simply] because it gives the future to them.”<sup>30</sup> He ultimately regards materialism as “superstition without a rational foundation.”<sup>31</sup> His position is that the mind and the brain are two independent entities which interact. This interaction can be studied and tracked as he attempts to show in his information-flow diagrams. He explains:

Information from sense organs is transmitted both to the brain and within the neuronal machinery of the brain, but on crossing the frontier [...] there is a miraculous transformation into the manifold experiences that characterize our perceptual world.<sup>32</sup>

Eccles’ account leads us to ask whether a dualism which resorts to talk of “miraculous transformations” has a better claim to a rational foundation than the materialism he rejects. Despite advances in neuroscience, contemporary theories concerning the mind/body problem whether of the reductionistic materialistic kind or of the interactionist dualistic kind have not apparently advanced beyond Descartes’ basic problem. So, let us turn to Lonergan’s critique of Descartes.

The ground of Descartes’ dualistic interactionism is his account of the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans*. The self is identified with the *res cogitans*, but the *res extensa* is also somehow associated with me, it is mine. In some sense, the human being is comprised of both mind and body, two distinct and opposite entities. Lonergan does not dispute Descartes’ fundamental principle *cogito, ergo sum*. Although the Cartesian account of the *cogito* was to be significantly developed by subsequent philosophers, it is the product of rational, critical inquiry. Lonergan does, however, take issue with Descartes’ account of the body. He contends that Descartes is in error when he affirms the existence of the *res extensa*, because he arrives at this object not through intelligent and rational inquiry, but through animal extroversion.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, Paul Churchland, “On Functionalism and Materialism”, p. 325.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, John Eccles and Daniel Robinson, “A Contemporary Defense of Dualism”, p. 299.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>33</sup> *Insight*, p. 414.

A body is an object of sense and of perceptual imagination. The term ‘body’ for Lonergan is a general term, which does not refer just to the human body, but refers to any object of consciousness experienced as already constituted and as out there at a distance from the observer. A thing, on the other hand, is the object of an act of understanding, not the object of imagination. While it may be possible to diagram a thing depicting its components, conjugates, functions, and relations to other things, still a thing cannot be imagined. To arrive at a thing, one must grasp in concrete data a unity that remains identical through time, alteration, and development. Further, a thing is grasped when we understand a single whole, which is greater than the sum of its parts and which is not simply an aggregate. Lonergan’s distinction of bodies and things clarifies his critique of Cartesian dualism. The mind is not one thing and the body another; the self is one hylomorphic thing. When Descartes refers to the body as a *res extensa*, he is confusing aspects of the human being experienced through animal extroversion as extended – already out there – with a real and distinct thing. Lonergan understands the self to be one thing – a unity, identity, whole –, not two distinct things, and not a body.

In order to see how the self can be understood as a unity, identity, whole, let us turn to Lonergan’s account of a human being as developing. Development is the proper subject matter of Lonergan’s genetic method. He offers the following definition of development:

A development may be defined as a flexible, linked sequence of dynamic and increasingly differentiated higher integrations that meet the tension of successively transformed underlying manifolds through successive applications of the principles of correspondence and emergence.<sup>34</sup>

This compact statement serves to introduce key elements of Lonergan’s genetic method: (1) the linked concepts of higher integration and lower manifold; (2) the principles of emergence and correspondence; and (3) the notion of finality. As a thing develops higher levels of organization emerge. If we consider any two stages or levels of a thing’s development, the preceding level is the underlying manifold of events and components for the successive level which introduces a new organization into the underlying manifold. The principle of emergence is the fact that “otherwise coincidental manifolds [...] invite the higher integration.”<sup>35</sup> The principle of correspondence is the fact that “significantly different underlying manifolds require different higher integrations.”<sup>36</sup> And, by ‘finality’, Lonergan means that the underlying manifold is directed indeterminately towards fuller organization. Finality comprises the tension between the limitation of the existing, successful integration and the inherent push to transcend that established barrier.

<sup>34</sup> *Insight*, p. 479.

<sup>35</sup> *Insight*, p. 477.

<sup>36</sup> *Insight*, p. 477.

Development involves the negotiation of a tension between inertial equilibrium and expansion.

Lonergeran names five levels of higher integration of otherwise coincidental manifolds: the sub-atomic, the chemical, the organic, the sensitive, and the intelligent. Each higher level of integration introduces laws and ways of organizing which are not to be found on the preceding underlying level. In each case, the attempt to explain the nature of events and components of a higher level solely in terms of the laws or events of a lower level necessarily obscures or denies the intelligibility unique to the higher level. Various brands of reductionism are based on the presumption that the elements of one's favorite underlying level have an exclusive claim to reality. Reductionism is a kind of field totalitarianism.

How can Lonergan's genetic method be applied to the mind/body problem? "In man," Lonergan writes, "there is the threefold development of the organism, the psyche, and intelligence."<sup>37</sup> It is the same unity, identity, whole that develops on all three levels. The account of three levels of human development already indicates that Lonergan's position is not a dualism. A self is a multi-leveled thing. A self as organism is already multi-leveled, for the organic level is a higher integration of the chemical level, which is a higher integration of the sub-atomic level. The number of levels of integration comprising the self depends upon the specificity of differentiations. If we add the differentiation of levels of conscious intentionality, we can easily list eight levels of integration: the sub-atomic level, the chemical level, the organic level, the neural level of unconscious processes, the level of sensitive consciousness (the psyche), the level of intelligent consciousness, the level of rational consciousness, and the level of rational self-consciousness (moral consciousness). Clearly, a self is not simply two things, a body and a mind. The so-called human body itself is an imaginary representation of many levels of organic integration.

The mere generation of levels of integration, however, does not by itself resolve the mind/body problem. A contemporary dualist or materialist might concede that the body is comprised of many levels of organization, and that what is taken to be the mind is similarly complex. The question remains how does the material relate to the immaterial, or is the mind simply matter? The nexus of difficulty in contemporary debate lies on the border of the mind and the brain, more precisely, perceptual consciousness and neural events. If consciousness is not itself a neural event, state, or condition, how does consciousness relate to brain activity. This question, by the way, is particularly pressing and urgent for anesthesiologists, and for any of us who may require anesthetics for an operation.

The question as posed can be recast in Lonergan's terms. What is the relation of the psychic level to the organic level, or more precisely of the level of sensitive

<sup>37</sup> *Insight*, p. 484.

consciousness to the underlying neural manifold? Sensitive consciousness emerges from neural activity, not as a by-product or epiphenomenon, but as a higher integration. What was otherwise merely coincidental on the level of brain activity becomes increasingly differentiated and integrated by the emergent processes and developing capacities of sensitive consciousness.<sup>38</sup> For Lonergan, psychic phenomena cannot be reduced to the neural. While the neural provides the necessary materials for and the limitation of sensitive consciousness, the latter has its own organization, correlations, and laws. This higher psychic integration, the proper subject matter of the psychologist, cannot be found in neural activity.

Lonergan denies that the psychic is reducible to the neural, and furthermore, he does not consider the psychic to be the human mind. Current controversies surrounding brain activity and perception are wholly concerned with the material realm. Theorists such as Eccles and Churchland are not even dealing with the human mind. One must move to the level of intelligent consciousness to find what classically was referred to as intellect or mind. This is the level of inquiry, understanding, conceiving, supposing, hypothesizing, and theorizing. As such it is intelligent. The underlying level of sensitive consciousness is the level of sensing, perceiving, imagining, remembering, feeling pain and pleasure, and desiring. As such it is intelligible, but not intelligent, although it may be informed by intelligence. Lonergan does not focus on the relation of the psychic and the neural as the point of intersection of the immaterial and the material, because his definition of the material and the immaterial is not a function of animal extroversion. It is a function of his explanatory account of cognitional process and metaphysics which comprises his critical realism. By 'material' Lonergan means that which is intelligible; by 'spiritual' he means that which is both intelligible and intelligent. A self is immaterial or spiritual inasmuch as the self is capable not only of being understood, but also of understanding.<sup>39</sup>

If one would hope to adequately account for the relation of the spiritual and the material in the human being, the focus of one's investigation would not be on the relation of neural activity and conscious perception, but on the relation of images and insights. But, it is abstract and misleading to speak of a material dimension and a spiritual dimension of a human being. A self is a unity, identity, whole with underlying manifolds of components and supervening levels of integration. As a whole the self is both intelligible and intelligent.

We have considered two contemporary difficulties in self-knowledge, the phenomenological argument that there is no self given in consciousness, and analytic arguments for materialism and for dualism in response to the persistent Cartesian mind/body problem. Similar positions can be found in both major

<sup>38</sup> *Insight*, p. 481.

<sup>39</sup> *Insight*, pp. 540-41.



contemporary philosophic movements. There are contemporary phenomenologists, particularly Sartreans, who also employ developments in neuroscience to articulate reductionistic materialism,<sup>40</sup> and there are analytic philosophers who deny that there is a self, any personal identity, and consequently any personal responsibility.<sup>41</sup> I have attempted to demonstrate how Lonergan's critical realism meets two difficulties concerning the self, but counter-positions on the nature of the self and the possibility of self-knowledge sprout like heads of the mythical Hydra. Echoing Lonergan's own prognosis, there remains a Herculean labor ahead of us.

#### 4. The Existing Self

We have considered the unity of the self as given and as understood. The nature of the *existing* self as a unity, identity, whole is a much broader topic. I shall remark upon just three points regarding the self as an existing whole. First, the developing self explored in Lonergan's account of genetic method, is a *hylomorphic* unity in tension. Not only does the self suffer the tension of finality, but also one must learn to appropriate both the sensitive (material) aspect of oneself and the rational (spiritual) aspect of oneself. As Lonergan writes: "Nor are the pure desire and the sensitive psyche two things, one of them 'I' and the other 'It.' [...] Both are 'I,' and neither is merely 'It.'"<sup>42</sup> Beyond hylomorphism, the existing self is polymorphic; one's conscious experience flows in a number of orientations. To comprehend and to appropriate the whole existing self, then, would require attention to the self who is absorbed in concerns of health and well-being, the self who plays roles on the stage of interpersonal relations, the self who freely creates and responds to beauty, the self who is intimately and essentially related to God, as well as the self who is compelled by the desire to know and the exigencies of rationality.

Secondly, the existing self as a whole is a freely self-constituting self whose substance and character take shape gradually over a lifetime. For Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* I, we can only adequately determine whether or not a man is happy by considering his whole, complete life.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Lonergan writes that one can only know one's own will, one's spiritual appetite by "studying the changes [in one's willingness] over a lifetime."<sup>44</sup> One's history is written in on-going self-narratives and in the changing estimation of others. Further, for Aristotle, even the fate of one's children after one's death can affect our estimation of a parent's successful life. The history of the self is entwined with that of the others in our

<sup>40</sup> See for example, Kathleen V. Wider, *The Bodily Nature of Consciousness* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> See for example, Derek Perfit, "Later Selves and Moral Principles" in *Philosophy and Personal Relations: An Anglo-French Study* ed. Alan Montefiori (Montreal: McGill-Queen University Press, 1973).

<sup>42</sup> *Insight*, p. 499.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 1098a 15-20; 1100a 10-1101a 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Insight*, p. 622.

lives. And, one's temporality stretches forwards as well as backwards, so that one's present decisions must be made in light of our responsibility not only to one's own vocation and career, not only to the continued well-being of our loved ones, but to the future of mankind.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, in *The Subject* Lonergan affirms the primacy of the existential. The level of rational self-consciousness, or moral consciousness, sublates the underlying levels of consciousness directing our attention, the kinds of questions we ask, the frequency of our insights, the care with which we formulate our thoughts, the readiness of our response to the exigencies of rationality. Conscious intentional operations on any level, however, take place within the context of a basic psychological sense of self. The very emergence of a self is a function of the love of the mirroring other of one's infancy. As developmental psychologists such as H.S. Sullivan and transactional psychologists such as Hans Kohut make abundantly clear, if the loving gaze and attention of the mother or primary caretaker is absent, the most basic sense of self will not emerge. Instead the child may suffer the pathology of schizoid states or severe narcissism. Considering the crucial role of love in bringing birth to the self and the profound notion of religious conversion developed in *Method*, we should specify the primacy of the existential by affirming the primacy of love. Lonergan describes religious falling in love as a surrender that is not a single act but a dynamic state that is prior to subsequent acts. "It is revealed in retrospect as an undertow of existential consciousness."<sup>46</sup> The existing self, the freely self-constituting and self-transcending self, only emerges in love and is only sustained in love. The primacy of love for the self's very existence reveals the relatedness of the self and others. The existing unity, identity, whole is then a self essentially being with others.

<sup>45</sup> *Insight*, p. 252.

<sup>46</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, CWL 12 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972), pp. 240-241.



# BERNARD LONERGAN ON ANALOGY

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## 1. Introduction

Frederick Crowe notes that analogy is key to identifying Lonergan's style of thinking.<sup>1</sup> Analogy is also crucial for Lonergan's functional specialty "systematics" because he conceives it along the lines of theological understanding taught by Vatican I,<sup>2</sup> namely, that the mysteries of faith are understood both by analogy with what is naturally known by humans and by the interconnections between the mysteries themselves and with humanity's ultimate end.

Determining Lonergan's understanding of analogy is difficult because even though he often used analogous concepts and referred to understanding "by analogy," Lonergan "rarely discussed analogy itself." He has given us neither a detailed account of what he meant by analogy, nor a list of analogy's possible meanings. In fact, for Lonergan, "analogy" is an analogous term with various meanings<sup>3</sup>.

In this paper I would like to cover the pivotal example of Lonergan's use of analogy, which is the "Notion of Being." This paper will show how Lonergan goes beyond constricted conceptualist forms of analogy to a position in which analogy is not based on concepts, but on the very operation of human intellect, especially in human inquiry.

To do this, I will first cover a preliminary understanding of analogy in Lonergan. I will then proceed to the notion of being. I will contrast Lonergan with Cajetan, show how the notion of being is not a concept or idea, but a notion, and explain

<sup>1</sup> See F.E. Crowe, "Lonergan's Early Use of Analogy: A Research Note – With Reflections," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 1 (1983) 31-46, at 31.

<sup>2</sup> See DS 3016; J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith: In the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, 7th ed., Alba House, New York 2001, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> See F.E. Crowe, "Lonergan's Early Use of Analogy: A Research Note – With Reflections," 38; B.J.F. Lonergan, *Collection*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., 2nd ed. revised and augmented, CLW 4, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1988, p. 283 editorial note *a*.

that the notion of being is a notion that penetrates all cognitional contents. I will comment on the significance of this analogy, and then conclude with some comments on the significance of Lonergan's use of analogy, especially with its regard to systematic theology.

## 2. Preliminary Definition of Analogy in Lonergan

For Lonergan, analogous determination occurs when "the mode of an unknown nature is determined on the basis of a likeness to a known nature."<sup>4</sup> So, proportionate understanding grasps the very essence of an object. Analogical understanding does not regard an object's essence but understands the object mediately, by means of a similar, but lesser object that is proportionate to human intellect. Lonergan clarifies that in analogical understanding we do not understand the object itself, but we understand its proportion to another object.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that he makes this distinction on the basis of knowing processes, not on concepts. Lonergan distances himself from emphasis on "the distinction between univocal and analogous concepts," and aligns himself with the intellectualist position, which "emphasizes the distinction between quidditative and analogous knowledge."<sup>6</sup>

Lonergan's early writings show a use of analogy that generally follows the forms of analogy found in St Thomas. However, in examples such as God as *ipsum intelligere* or the analogy of theology and science, we see Lonergan moving out of the forms of analogy that we find in Aquinas into new forms of analogy which can include at the same time attribution and proportion.<sup>7</sup> There are even indications that he moves beyond these forms of analogy. This new way of constructing analogies is shown firmly in the "notion of being," which is presented in chapter twelve of *Insight*.

## 3. The Notion of Being

This notion of being is pivotal because it shows a definitive turn to an intellectualist use of analogy, as opposed to the restrictions of concept-based analogies of attribution [proportion] and proportion [proportionality].

Lonergan understands the notion of being to be the anticipation of being intrinsic to human intentionality.<sup>8</sup> This notion of being is neither a definition of

<sup>4</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, translated by M.G. Shields, and edited by R.M. Doran and H.D. Monsour, CWL 12, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2007, p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, "The Natural Desire to See God", *Collection*, pp. 81-91, at 82; *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, E.A. Morelli and M.D. Morelli, eds., 2nd ed. revised and augmented, CLW 5, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, "Christ as Subject. A Reply", *Collection*, pp. 153-184, at 178 note 47.

<sup>7</sup> In this paper I will use the terms "attribution" and "proportion" instead of the older "proportion" and "proportionality."

<sup>8</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., 5th

being itself, nor a concept of being, nor an idea of being. Lonergan's "definition of being" is of "the second order" because it does not assign the meaning of being but it assigns the manner in which one ascertains that meaning.<sup>9</sup> So we see here an emphasis on the intellectual process, not on the concept.

We can clarify what Lonergan means by first contrasting his account with Cajetan's conception of being. Cajetan advocated the analogy of proportion in order to account for being, and he believed this to be the only analogy in the true and strict sense.<sup>10</sup> This analogy indicated a "functional relation between essence and existence."<sup>11</sup> Cajetan's function indicated that in the same way as "double" indicated the relationship between two and one, four and two, six and three, so too "being" indicated the proportion between existence and essence. Lonergan observes that, while somewhat useful, this analogy does not present a unified notion of being.<sup>12</sup> By dealing with questions of being by precision (one at time) rather than by abstraction (dealing with the essential and excluding the irrelevant), Cajetan's analogy could only account for now this, and then that, "being." From this analogy of being, according to Lonergan, there results a conceptual content of being, which can give us a concept of being in any particular object, but it cannot give us a unifying notion of being.<sup>13</sup>

Cajetan's concept of being helps us appreciate the significance of Lonergan. Lonergan does not define a conceptual content of being. Instead, he makes a definition of being in the "second order," which assigns the manner in which human intellect comes to determine the meaning of being.<sup>14</sup>

It helps here to note that, even though they are commonly used as synonyms, Lonergan sharply distinguishes the terms "concept," "idea" and "notion."<sup>15</sup> A concept is a formulation and implies a content of thought. An idea is "the content of an act of understanding." A notion, though, is a conscious, dynamic anticipation of what one will know and affirm when one understands and judges.

Lonergan sums up the notion of being by writing that:

The pure notion of being is the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. It is prior to understanding and affirming, but it heads to them for it is the ground of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection. Moreover, this

ed. revised and augmented, CLW 3, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992, pp. 372-398.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>10</sup> See E.L. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy: A Sequel to "He Who Is"*, Libra, London 1966, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, p. 360.

<sup>12</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 393.

<sup>13</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, 360; *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 392-393.

<sup>14</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 374.

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 35, 39, 332, 417, 667; R.M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990, p. 565.

heading towards knowing is itself a notion, for it heads not unconsciously, as the seed to the plant, nor sensitively, as hunger for food, but intelligently and reasonably [...]<sup>16</sup>

He continues:

[...] since the pure notion of being unfolds through understanding and judgement, there can be formulated a heuristic notion of being as whatever is to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably.<sup>17</sup>

The notion of being, according to Lonergan, is the notion of the “objective of the pure desire to know.”<sup>18</sup> Now, if being is “all that is known” and “all that remains to be known,” being is unrestricted in its intention. On that account, being includes things that are not known, so in this life we cannot have an idea of being, we can only have a notion of being. This point is reinforced by Lonergan’s comment that our intellect relates to being neither by concept nor by knowledge of being but by the subject’s desire to know what it does not know.<sup>19</sup>

More importantly, because the notion of being is prior to inquiry and reflection and because it grounds that inquiry and reflection, Lonergan observes that “the notion of being is all-pervasive: it underpins all cognitional contents; it penetrates them all; it constitutes them as cognitional.”<sup>20</sup> In terms of underpinning cognitional contents, the notion of being selects data, drives us towards understanding and demands the unconditioned. The notion of being also constitutes cognitional contents as cognitional by bringing human knowing to its term in knowing being.

Of critical interest to us is how Lonergan holds the notion of being to penetrate all cognitional contents.<sup>21</sup> In the first place the notion of being is the “supreme heuristic notion.” Before each cognitional content, the notion of being is that notion of what will be known through that content. When each content emerges, what is to be known through that content becomes what is known through that content. The notion of being is thus a “universal anticipation” that will be filled in, bit-by-bit by the emergence of each cognitional content. When a content emerges it not only ends part of that anticipation, it becomes part of what is anticipated.

Having explained what Lonergan means by the notion of being, we can now understand how that notion is analogous. Lonergan asks whether the notion of being is univocal or analogous.<sup>22</sup> The question is puzzling, because in the next paragraph he reminds us that the distinction of the univocal and the analogous

<sup>16</sup> Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, p. 665.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Lonergan Notes Insight*, Copy held at Lonergan Centre, Sydney, 1972, Lect. 12, (Ch. 12), p. 62; Id., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 372, 374.

<sup>19</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, p. 645.

<sup>20</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 380-381.

<sup>21</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 385.

regards concepts. But the notion of being, as he reminds us in his notes to *Insight*,<sup>23</sup> is not a concept. Nonetheless, when answering the question, Lonergan does tell us that, “Concepts are said to be univocal when they have the same meaning in all applications, and they are said to be analogous when their meaning varies systematically as one moves from one field of application to another.”<sup>24</sup> It is apparent here that Lonergan may be presenting a form of analogy that does not fit the traditional analogical models that applied to concepts.

Lonergan does present a new form of analogy, writing that “the notion of being may be named analogous inasmuch as it penetrates all other contents; in this fashion it is said that [...] the being of living things is being alive.”<sup>25</sup> This analogy is in the form of one notion penetrating other cognitional contents. Thus, this notional analogy involves the same notion penetrating different cognitional contents, even though these particular contents differ. That is, the notion of being is analogous and varies systematically as it is applied to different objects because the notion is constant with regard to all being (in the abstract) but what is dissimilar is the “content” of this or that specific being (in the concrete).

#### 4. Significance of this Analogy

The significance of this form of analogy is that it transcends the restrictions of concept-based analogies of attribution [proportion] and proportion [proportionality]. If an analogy is taken on the basis of inquiry, as it is by Lonergan, distinctions of proportion and attribution fade away. Moreover, such an analogy is open to the unrestricted and infinite. In a theological context, this means that this analogy is more suited to mysteries, which are infinite, and also that this analogy is open to all possible answers.

This form of analogy, based on the spirit of inquiry, highlights Lonergan’s intellectualist focus, which is on human knowing, rather than concepts. In an analogy based on inquiry, what is constant through different objects being analogically related is not the concept, but the same notion within human intellect that penetrates those different contents. His focus on human intellect allows Lonergan to stand better in relation to Lateran IV’s teaching, that “between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed without implying a greater dissimilitude.”<sup>26</sup> However, I would also note that this form of analogy allows Lonergan to avoid Cajetan’s error, which was to restrict analogy to a certain type and to neglect the fact that “analogy” is, in fact, an analogous term.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Lonergan Notes Insight*, Lect. 12, (Ch. 12), p. 64.

<sup>24</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, op. cit., p. 385.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> DS 806. See J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith: In the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, p. 320.

<sup>27</sup> See R. McNerny, *Aquinas and Analogy*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1996, pp. 119, 137-141.



## 5. Conclusion

Neil Ormerod observes that many theologians today neglect analogical understandings of the mysteries and prefer to deal with interconnections of these mysteries.<sup>28</sup> My own research<sup>29</sup> has shown that understanding by analogy is neglected in a number of official Church teachings,<sup>30</sup> even though they may cite Vatican I's *Dei Filius*. There may be many explanations for this neglect, but I suspect it may be due at least partly to the difficulties created by constricted, conceptualist approaches to analogy. However, if Vatican I and Lonergan are right and the ways of understanding God are by both analogy and interconnection, then without analogy, systematic theology is at best only half-empowered to understand the mysteries of faith. Moreover, I would argue<sup>31</sup> that without a prior understanding by analogy, any understanding by interconnections can do little more than link doctrines, rather than giving one an understanding of God, which is, as Aquinas teaches, "the object of this science." That is, understanding interconnections without a prior analogical understanding means that one will only be interconnecting things that one does not understand, and one risks understanding relations, not objects and slipping into a crass conceptualism, or worse a nominalism. Even worse, Ormerod fears a possible slide into fideism, for the fideist finds no need for intelligibility in the objects of faith.<sup>32</sup>

Despite its philosophical sophistication, Lonergan's use of analogy has possible pastoral implications for theology. If we appreciate that Lonergan's use of analogy frees analogy from conceptual bounds, and if we are no longer tied to particular forms of relations or analogates, then we are free to discover analogically the way that a notion penetrates other objects, in whatever way one may find that penetration. The pastoral import of this point is that Vatican I teaches understanding of the mysteries through analogy with what we naturally know. I would suggest this analogy is not only with what professional theologians know, but that with analogies freed from conceptual boundaries as is done by Lonergan, analogies can be formed with what is known by those who are not professional theologians. I would also say that this freeing of analogy from conceptualist restraints also affirms a point made by Doran<sup>33</sup> that if there is no requirement that analogies be metaphysical, then there is nothing to prevent analogies that are aesthetic or dramatic.

<sup>28</sup> See N. Ormerod, "The Psychological Analogy for the Trinity: At Odds with Modernity", *Pacifica* 14 (2001) 281-294, at 281.

<sup>29</sup> M. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding: The Functional Specialty "Systematics" in Bernard Lonergan's "Method in theology"*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 2001, pp. 292-295.

<sup>30</sup> Vatican II, *Optatam totius* (Decree on the Training of Priests); John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor; Catechism of the Catholic Church*. For specific references, see M. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 292-295.

<sup>31</sup> See M. Ogilvie, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>32</sup> See N. Ormerod, "The Psychological Analogy for the Trinity: At Odds with Modernity", p. 292.

<sup>33</sup> See R.M. Doran, *What is Systematic Theology?*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2005, p. 25.

Lastly, the theory of analogy discovered in Lonergan has implications for the nature of systematic theology. If we use analogies in order to explain “reasons and principles” for the mysteries, we find that systematics can be genuinely explanatory, and not a merely descriptive or interconnective exercise<sup>34</sup>. This means that systematics can be more than the project of interpreting classical works. Instead, systematics can constructively present the intelligibility of Christian faith’s meanings and values to modern cultures in a way that is coherent and grounded.<sup>35</sup> From another perspective, by seeking a minimal but fruitful analogical understanding of the mysteries of faith,<sup>36</sup> it is not other texts, but God that is the object of theology.<sup>37</sup> It is through analogical understanding that we can gain a vision of the lofty mysteries of faith. And, as Thomas reminds us, even though that vision is limited, the joy of beholding it is immeasurable.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See R.M. Doran, *Intentionality and Psyche*. Vol. 1 of *Theological Foundations*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1995, p. 181.

<sup>35</sup> See R.M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> See DS 3016; J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, *The Christian Faith: In the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, p. 132.

<sup>37</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q 1, a 7c, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Sheed and Ward, London 1981.

<sup>38</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, q 8, § 1, translated with an Introduction and Notes, by Anton C. Pegis (Book One), James F. Anderson (Book Two), Vernon J. Bourke (Book Three), and Charles J. O’Neill (Book Four), University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 1975.



# THE CONCEPT OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL IN KANT AND LONERGAN\*

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To speak of the “transcendental” today is to refer, like it or not, to Kant, and in particular to his “Critique of Pure Reason.”<sup>1</sup> In the Introduction to this work he speaks of a “transcendental knowledge,” which is occupied “not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.” The term “transcendental” is so important for Kant that he called his thought “transcendental philosophy” (B 25) and, more specifically still, “Transcendental Idealism” (A 369). He gave this term a meaning of his own that has nothing to do with the word’s etymology. But the term itself came from the Scholastic tradition, to which Kant refers in a section (§ 12) of the Second Edition.

## 1. The Transcendental in the Scholastic Tradition

The teaching of the medieval thinkers on what later were called the *transcendental predicates* goes back to two sources.<sup>2</sup> The first was Aristotle, who in Book IV of the *Metaphysics* (Chap. 2: 1003b 22-1004a 1, especially b 22-25) discusses the relation between being (“*on*”) and the one (“*hen*”). They are identical in nature but different in concept. As Aristotle explains (*Metaphysics* X, 1: 1052b 15f), the specific character of the “one” is to add to a being a negation, i.e., that of being’s undividedness (*adiairéton*). The other source of the “first concepts” is Avicenna

\* Translated from the Italian by Donald E. Buzzelli, Washington, DC.

<sup>1</sup> I shall indicate Kant’s First Critique by the symbol KrV. Page references will be to the first (A) edition or the second (B) edition. Generally, however, I shall omit the symbol. For Kant’s other works I shall refer to the Academy Edition by volume (Roman numeral) and page (Arabic numeral). For *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding* by Bernard Lonergan I shall refer to pages in the first edition (London 1957) and in the fifth edition (Toronto 1992).

<sup>2</sup> See J.A. Aersten, the word “Transzendental” in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, Basel 1998, Vol. 10, 1358-1365.

in his *Liber de Philosophia Prima*, where he speaks of “*res*,” “*ens*,” “*necessarium*,” “*unum*.”

The expression “*transcendens*” as applied mainly to a being, and the expression “*praedicata transcendentalia*” for its attributes, are rare in the great medieval thinkers. Only later do they become usual in Scholasticism. In the Middle Ages the terms “*praedicata communissima*,” or “*prima*,” were in use, and also the neuter plural substantive of the present participle of the verb “*transcendere*,” i.e., “*transcendentia*.” The meaning of these predicates is clearly ontological, and they are interchangeable with regard to meaning. Further clarification can be had from the concepts opposed to them, i.e., concepts that are not common to every reality, but valid only for one of the highest genera into which beings can be classified. Classical in this sense are the ten “categories,” from the book of that name by Aristotle. These are ten predicates, each attributable to a single kind of thing.

The number of predicates considered to be common to all reality varies according to the author. There is unanimity regarding the predicates being, one, true (knowable), and good (appetible). St. Thomas, taking up again a conception expressed by other authors of the period, emphasizes the “analogous” meaning that these predicates take on. They are spoken of God and also of created things “*secundum analogiam, id est proportionem*” (*Summa theol.* I, q. 13, a. 5 and also a. 6). In *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1, St. Thomas speaks of a being and then deduces from it five predicates that belong to every being: *res, unum, aliquid, bonum, verum*. We should note that when the first concepts are ordered, “*ens*” has the first place because it is the specific object of the intellect, which has an unlimited range (*Summa theol.* I, q. 79, a. 7). Its various properties express aspects of it that the term “being” does not indicate explicitly. For this reason, these properties are conceived as properties conceptually added to the substantive “being,” and are indicated by the adjective “transcendental.”

## 2. The Transcendental in Kant: *A Priori* Knowledge

In his Introduction to the KrV,<sup>3</sup> Kant observes that our knowledge is characterized by features that are not explained by the receptivity of sense alone. These are *necessity* and *universality*. He concludes that that they are sure signs of an *a priori* mode of knowledge and are inseparable from one another (B 3f). He thus makes concrete the hypothesis he had made in the first paragraph, that our knowledge is a compound of what we know through the senses and an addition (*Zusatz*) provided by our understanding (B 1).

A critical reader cannot help but wonder how Kant can pass so easily from

<sup>3</sup> In this section I shall follow the B Edition, which treats the transcendental in more detail and modifies some of the statements in the previous edition.

features of knowledge that are not explainable in terms of sense to the affirmation that these features are added by the understanding. He never considers the hypothesis that the understanding is able to make this addition to the data of sense because it is able to discover in those data an intelligible component of reality. The senses bear this intelligible component but do not have cognitive access to it. There are two reasons for this oversight: a) Kant conceives knowing simply as a dynamism of extroversion on the model of the faculty of sight. Knowing is “seeing” what stands in front of the subject as distinct from that subject. In other words, the known is an *ob-jectum*, a *Gegen-stand*. b) Kant does not acknowledge in the human understanding a capacity to intuit, i.e., to see. The only intuition (*Anschauung*) of which man is capable is that of the senses, which are all, in different ways, dynamisms of extroversion. This means that in us only the sensibility is properly a cognitive faculty, since it alone is able to “see” and thus to build the bridge that brings the subject into a cognitive relation with the object. It is easy to see that such an intuitionist conception will have decisive consequences for any theory of knowledge based on it.

But Kant is not an empiricist *à la* Hume. While he accepts the conception of sense as the only faculty that properly knows, he refuses to reduce human knowledge to pure sense in the manner of “common sense” (sensist naïve realism). The whole KrV is an extremely acute, but equally complicated, effort to recover for the understanding its role in human knowing. The price of this undertaking is that Kant makes the understanding “the author of experience” (B 127) in the sense that it is the creator of a reality of its own – the reality of appearance (*Erscheinung*) – while at the same time he recognizes the existence of a reality in itself (the “*Ding an sich*”) that is entirely unknowable to us. Kant nonetheless knows many things about this absolutely unknowable: that it exists, that it is multiple in correspondence to the multiplicity of the appearances so that it is somehow analogous to them, that it exercises a kind of causality on our senses (cf. B 1, B 522), etc.

These considerations explain the movement, which starts at the beginning of the KrV, from the “intellectual” characteristics of our knowledge to the conception of an intellect that creates the reality known. They are contained “*in nuce*” in the first two paragraphs of the Transcendental Aesthetic (B 33f). There Kant asserts that a) the sense “sees” while the understanding works up (cf. “*verarbeitet*,” B 1) what the sense presents to it. Hence the conclusion: We know the “appearance” of things. These two theses are the basis of the Kantian conception of the transcendental.

### **3. The Definition of the Transcendental in the Introduction to the KrV**

In the Introduction to the First Edition of the KrV (A 11f), and also the Second (B 25), Kant defines the term “transcendental” in connection with the expression he introduces there, “transcendental knowledge.” The meaning he gives it

sets the fundamental tone of the First Critique. In the First Edition, Kant calls “transcendental” “all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with our *a priori* concepts of objects in general.” But in the Second Edition, he contrasts with objects “the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.” The first connects our *a priori* knowledge of objects only with the *a priori* concepts. In the second, however, our *a priori* knowledge of objects is connected with “the mode of our knowledge,” thus including both the *a priori* concepts and principles of the understanding and the *a priori* intuitions of the sensibility. “Transcendental knowledge” and “transcendental philosophy” in fact coincide: They indicate the discipline that studies the possibility, the nature, and the limits of *a priori* knowledge. In the meaning of B 25, the term “transcendental” thus applies to the two intuitions of the sensibility, as well as to the pure concepts and principles of the understanding. It does not apply to the three Ideas of Reason (though Kant uses it for them also) because while they are *a priori*, they are not constitutive of the object known. Though it does not entirely conform to the definition of B 25, Kant attributes to the various parts of the KrV the character of being transcendental.

If we ask why Kant calls our *a priori* knowledge of objects “*transcendental* knowledge,” there seems to be no other reason than that he chose this term from Scholasticism quite independently of its traditional use and without etymological justification. Things stand otherwise with the term “transcendent,” which he uses with a meaning that draws on the etymology of the word. At the same time, the term acquires a “critical” meaning, in that for Kant all our knowledge of objects is limited to the range of experience, understood in immanentist terms. For the realist Aristotelian-Thomist tradition, the “transcendent” is the reality that is beyond the range proportionate to our human way of knowing. Thus it is beyond the range accessible to our experience. But the transcendent is not therefore entirely unknowable to us. We can know it by an analogical knowledge, starting from proportionate being. But for Kantian phenomenalism the transcendent, which embraces all (!) reality in itself, including the “true” reality of the physical world, is entirely unknowable to us. The things in themselves are “unknown” to us, as regards what they may be in themselves (B 164; cf. also A 276 etc.).

In an important text in the Appendix to the *Prolegomena*, Kant defends himself against the charge that he used the term “transcendental” in the traditional sense of “transcendent”: The word “transcendental” “does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended simply to make knowledge of experience possible. If these conceptions [concepts *a priori*] overstep experience, their employment is termed ‘transcendent,’ which must be distinguished from the immanent use, that is, use restricted to experience” (IV 373f, note). In this same sense, Kant had already written in the

KrV: “*transcendental*” and “*transcendent*” are not interchangeable terms,” but then the text continues with a statement in which “transcendental” is used in the sense of “beyond experience,” and thus exactly in the sense of “transcendent”: “The principles of pure understanding, which we have set out above [in the *Analytic of Principles*], allow of only empirical and not of transcendental employment, that is, employment extending beyond the limits of experience” (A 296). Kant first emphasizes specifically that the transcendental is the *a priori* whose legitimate use is in application to experience, so that in union with the empirical it constitutes the only knowledge of reality (reality as “appearance”!) possible for us. But then he tends to give “transcendental” the same meaning as “transcendent,” i.e., beyond experience. Instances are the expressions “transcendental object” (A 46), “transcendental subject” (A 350, 355), “transcendental employment” in the text just cited at A 296 and also at A 219.

Kant then extends the term “transcendental” from “the science of our modes of *a priori* knowledge” to the *a priori* itself. Under this meaning, the term indicates the intuitions of the sensibility and the concepts and principles of the understanding insofar as they are *a priori*. The transcendentals are the *a priori* components of our knowledge. They are representations that not only are applicable to objects, but are constitutive of them. Precisely because they have this function Kant is able to speak of an *a priori* knowledge of objects. “Transcendental” thus is distinguished from “empirical,” on the one hand, and from “transcendent,” on the other. It is not correct to conceive the “transcendental,” as Kant often does explicitly or implicitly, as being opposed to the “empirical.” “Transcendental” and “empirical” are *complementaries*: The empirical becomes knowable to us as assumed under the “transcendental.” It is assumed first under an intuition [the pure intuitions, i.e., space and time] of the sensibility and then under a pure concept of the understanding. The result is the knowledge that Kant habitually calls “experience” (see the end of the first paragraph of the “Introduction,” B 1). The exact opposite of the transcendent is the *immanent*, where “immanent” comprises both the transcendental and the empirical.

#### 4. The Transcendental and the Object of Science

“Transcendental knowledge” refers, in B 25, to the science of our *a priori* knowledge of *objects*. It is not without significance that Kant uses the term “object” and not terms with more specific philosophical connotation like “being” or “reality.” “Object” is, of itself, open to different interpretations. But in the context of Kant’s arguments, I think it is justified to point to the influence of his general intuitionist theory of knowing modeled on the senses, for which what is known is a “*Gegen-stand*.”

It is more important, however, to note that the text at B 25 clearly indicates that



*the investigation of knowledge will be conducted from the standpoint of the object.* This means that the epochal “turn to the subject” attributed to Kant is under a serious limitation. He will gather from the subject that, and only that, which he considers necessary for explaining the features of our knowledge of objects. To this he adds the no less serious presupposition that the object to be explained is primarily the object of Newtonian physics, taken in a mechanistic sense. This is widely recognized by scholars, who speak of the KrV as a *theory of the constitution of the object*. Kant ascends from the object to the subject and finds or, rather, postulates in that subject content-providing (objective) elements. These elements explain the qualifying characteristics of the object, universality and necessity. It is not decisive for Kant whether or not a reflection on the subject as subject (which, in any case, he does not perform) is able to identify those elements. They *have to* be there anyway, since they characterize the object and cannot be derived from experience.

In the *Prolegomena*, § 5, Kant calls this kind of argumentation the “regressive method” (“*regressive Lehrart*”). It signifies that “we start from what is sought, as if it were given, and ascend to the only conditions under which it is possible” (IV 276). Now natural science in the modern age has become empirical and experimental. It is no longer based on principles borrowed from a higher science, metaphysics. But while the practice of scientists had long ago moved in this direction, reflection on science long remained bound to the Aristotelian ideal of science. Science was conceived as a deductive kind of knowledge whose main instruments were the syllogism, for the “demonstration” of particular items of knowledge, and induction, to obtain the first principles from which these items could be deduced. This conception still shows through in the title of Newton’s epochal work, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. Later still, in 1786, Kant followed his First Critique with his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*.

For its part, modern natural science developed in a quite different way. The “physical quantities” that it uses to express our knowledge of (inorganic) nature, with their interconnections, represent the measurable properties of physical objects, states, or events. These quantities are defined in terms of the procedures employed in measuring them. A quantity is basic when it cannot be obtained from another that is already known, and quantities are derived when they can be obtained from basic quantities.

Scientists determine which quantities are basic from the present state of development of science itself. These quantities serve as ultimate concepts, and the empirically verified correlations (laws) that define them form the fundamental principles of physics. These principles enter into the formulation of the ordered set of laws that make up science at a certain stage in its development. But new discoveries and the further development of science can lead to a new set of basic

terms that are better differentiated and able to encompass new explanations of the phenomena, resulting in new formulations of the previous laws. The earlier basic quantities lose their position as ultimate points of reference and are replaced by others that better reflect the new stage of science. But this does not mean that the earlier laws are simply invalidated. They are now within a different system of concepts and ultimate laws that defines more exactly both their meaning and the extent of their validity and thus of their truth, in the sense of a better approximation to reality.

## 5. The Thetic Function of the Kantian Transcendental

The Preface to the Second Edition of the KrV offers valuable guidance for understanding the transcendental in Kant. Right at the beginning Kant speaks of the “secure path of a science” (B vii). He intends to reflect on science and mathematics as “examples” to “imitate,” so that metaphysics can cease to be a path on which “ever and again we have to retrace our steps” without ever achieving a “permanent possession” (B xiv-xvi).

According to Kant, the characteristic feature of scientific knowledge is that it is “necessary and universal.” These characters, he writes in the Introduction, are “sure criteria of *a priori* knowledge” (B 4). Experience can tell us that “a thing is so and so, but not that it cannot be otherwise” (B 3). Hence, from experience no necessary and universal knowledge can arise.

How have mathematics and natural science arrived at such knowledge? Their “sure path,” Kant explains, is due to an “intellectual revolution” (B xi) that took place in antiquity for mathematics (specifically, for geometry). It was proposed again at the beginning of the modern age by Bacon (1561-1626) and implemented by Galileo (1564-1642) and by other scientists. Scientists “learned that reason has insight only into that *which it produces after a plan of its own*, [...] and that [therefore it] must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to *give answers to questions of reason’s own determining*” (B xiii, emphasis added).

Careful analysis of the text of the Preface (in the light of what actually follows in the KrV) allows us to grasp with certainty the meaning that it gives, in an anticipatory way, for the key term “transcendental.” The section that later takes up and develops this anticipation leaves no room for ambiguity. This is the final section of the “Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding” (A 128-130). A thetic [constructive] function is there attributed to the *a priori* of the subject, which in turn indicates that Kant was not able to grasp the dynamic of question and answer in the human cognitive process.

What is a question? Kant at first recognizes the true function of questioning,

but in the course of his analysis this function is eliminated by another term that he introduces. He has various equivalent expressions for it: “put into (by thought),” “set into” (in German, “*hineindenken*,” “*beilegen*,” “*in (die Sache) legen*,” “*in (die Dinge) legen*”: B xii, xiv, xviii). This is a “placing within” the material provided by the senses of “concepts *a priori*,” which are the very object of our knowledge in its intelligible component. An object is therefore “a mere modification of our sensibility,” so that “all objects with which we can occupy ourselves, are one and all in me, that is, are determinations of my identical self” (A 129). This coincides perfectly with the idealist immanence of Berkeley’s “*esse est percipi*.” Kant had set out the problem in clearly realist terms in 1772, but his 1781 answer leaves no doubt about the outcome of the course he took.<sup>4</sup>

Kant describes the revolution that has opened up “the secure path of a science” in several ways. First, in reference to the discovery of “construction” as a method in geometry (B xif). Second, in reference to the natural scientists who, on the basis of a plan of their own, put questions to nature and compel it to answer (B xiii). Finally, Kant illustrates the new method of science with the example of the judge who interrogates witnesses in order to issue his decision. In all three instances, and in particular in the third, we need to distinguish between two different series of assertions that Kant makes, even though he does not see the difference clearly and ends up with an interpretation of scientific method that does not do justice to what scientists actually do.

In a first series of assertions he says that reason “has insight only into that which it *produces* after a plan of its own” (B xiii). Reason “must adopt as its guide [...] that which it has itself *put into* nature” (B xiv). “We can know *a priori* of things only what we ourselves *put into* them” (B xviii, emphasis added). All these assertions move in the direction of a “thetic,” and thus idealist, interpretation of knowledge. Nonetheless there is in them a tension since Kant speaks not only of “producing” and “putting”, but also of “seeking” and “learning”. It is a learning that occurs

<sup>4</sup> There is a letter (X, 129-135) that Kant sent to his former student Marcus Herz on February 21, 1772, which has rightly been called the “birth date” of the KrV (Ernst Cassirer, *Kants Leben und Lehre*, Berlin 1918, reprinted Darmstadt 1972, p. 135). In it he observes that in his Dissertation of 1770 a problem had been left open. He had attributed to the pure concepts of the understanding an “*usus realis*,” i.e., a use that enables us to know the reality in itself (see esp. i §§ 4-6). But, he now asks, “if such intellectual representations depend on our inner activity, whence comes the agreement that they are supposed to have with objects – objects that nevertheless are not possibly produced thereby? And the axioms of pure reason concerning these objects – how do they agree with these objects, since the agreement has not been reached with the aid of experience?” The answer to this question is found twenty years later in the “Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding,” the heart of Kant’s transcendental idealism. In fact, it was an attempt at an answer that Kant found unsatisfactory. The problem remained open, and he never managed to find the “missing link” between the (content-providing) *a priori* and the *a posteriori* of experience. See my essay “Ein experimentum crucis der Transzendentalphilosophie Kants: Die Erkenntnis des Besonderen,” in, Sala, *Kant, Lonergan und der christliche Glaube. Ausgewählte philosophische Beiträge*, Nordhausen: Bautz Verlag, 2005, pp. 203-220.

under the guide of a plan, of a hypothesis, formulated by reason itself. Thereby the “putting” acquires a meaning which is different from the numerous texts of the KrV in which Kant speaks in an undifferentiated way of the understanding as the “lawgiver of nature” (A 216 end) that “puts *a priori* representations (concepts) into experience” (A 196), or he speaks of the categories “as they were [...] prescribing laws to nature” (B 159). These texts make understanding not an anticipatory stage in the knowledge of reality, but an anticipation that creates the reality to be known. Consequently, the moment of verification through the intellect of what it itself has anticipated (namely, the hypothesis explaining the content of the experience), which in science is actualized in the experiment, turns out to be aimless. The thetic interpretation of our knowledge leaves no room for verification.

In a second series of assertions Kant speaks of a projected meaning that, at first, is only projected. As such it must be distinguished from the following stage of critical reflection that has the task of deciding whether the projected meaning corresponds to the reality given in experience. This is the significance of the experiment with which the scientist approaches nature “in order to be *taught* by it” (B xiii), so that he can know it as it is.

Kant illustrates the whole process of knowledge in natural science with the metaphor of the judge (B xiii).<sup>5</sup> Juridical science enables the judge to put questions to the witnesses in order to discover in the data that they provide the legal meaning that those data bear. What the judge aims at is not the “existential” knowledge of what happened that is possessed by those who lived through it. He is interested in facts as they are relevant to the code of civil or penal law. The witnesses’ answers enable the judge to formulate a legal hypothesis about the event that is *added* to the pure data and makes from them a possible (!) legal reality. Such a legal understanding of the event is possible because the judge knows the law and is able to ask appropriate questions. But only at the following reflective and critical stage does he resolve for himself whether the legal meaning he has added is the *discovery* of a formal element that makes out of the data a juridical reality, or whether instead it is an intelligibility that is not adequate to explain what actually happened and therefore is not sufficient for an objectively grounded decision.

The example of the judge shows that the key element in knowing any reality is the *question*. Not just any question, but one that is relevant to that reality. A question arises out of a *prior* knowledge of the reality one is asking about, and thus it involves a cognitive *a priori*. But this *a priori* is only relative. The pre-knowledge that enables the person of common sense, the natural scientist, or the human scientist to ask a question is that person’s prior familiarity with a certain area of

<sup>5</sup> See my study, “The Metaphor of the Judge in the ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ (B xiiiif): A Key for Interpreting the Kantian Theory of Knowledge,” in the above cited volume, *Kant, Lonergan und der christliche Glaube*, pp. 279-298.

reality, acquired through some *ad hoc* study. But how is it possible to acquire this pre-knowledge of an area of reality, if one has to learn about it by asking questions? There would seem to be an infinite regress, with every question requiring some pre-knowledge that is obtained by answering a previous question. But this would preclude asking any questions at all. We will see this when we examine Lonergan's conception of the transcendental.

Here let it suffice to observe that the question does not impose or *introduce anything into the reality* to be known; on the contrary, it opens up for the questioner the possibility of grasping the reality as it is. The question aims at adding (!) an intelligibility to the data provided by experience. This is simply because experience alone does not give us knowledge of any intelligibility; it only provides material, the "*datum*," which comes to be known as a *determinate reality* only by going through the questions and answers of the intellect. Now the process of questioning and answering that leads from knowledge of data to knowledge of reality is twofold.

One must distinguish between the anticipatory, creative stage and the critical, receptive stage of knowing. In the Preface, Kant is not entirely unaware of the distinction between these two stages, but he ends by eliminating the second one, the stage of verifying the explanatory hypothesis. Consequently, he encloses man in an idealism in which man has to do with a (pseudo-)reality that he has created himself. Kant's failure to recognize the stage of verification is connected in the *KrV* with his fundamental thesis that human knowledge is the result of sense experience together with intellectual concepts (A 50-52). Experience itself already gives us knowledge of a "reality" that has the ontological status of "appearance" (A 19f). Concepts add to this an intelligibility that comes from the intellect itself, and thus they double the phenomenal character to what is known. It is not without reason that *Vaihinger* reproached Kant for canceling the difference between concept and judgment.<sup>6</sup> As I shall explain later, Kant ignores the absolute stage of the judgment, which is the unconditioned affirmation by virtue of which the cognitive process immanent in the subject transcends that subject and reaches knowledge of what "is."

## **6. In *Insight* Lonergan Reflects on the Operation of Our Intentionality**

*Insight* is a study of human knowledge that fixes its attention on the act (the direct act or the reflective act) of understanding, the central moment in the cognitive process that moves from sense experience to the knowledge of reality. Thus it is not a study of the many theories of knowledge that have followed one another in the history of philosophy. That does not keep the author from considering such theories from time to time, as he does in an entirely special way with Kant's idealism. In making the comparison with Kant, Lonergan is guided by the various stages in our cognitional structure that he has

<sup>6</sup> H. *Vaihinger*, *Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft* I, p. 352.

identified by an introspective analysis of the subject in its performance of knowing. This analysis provides critical meaning for any comparison between the KrV and the few places in *Insight* where the term “transcendental” appears.

Only later, in Chap. 1 of *Method in Theology*, did Lonergan use the term “transcendental” not only in the traditional Scholastic sense, but also to designate his own theory of knowledge. In the latter sense, the same expression appears occasionally in subsequent minor writings. For example, the following statement from a series of lectures in 1972 is useful for understanding the sense Lonergan gave to the expression “transcendental method,” which he first introduced in *Method in Theology*: “transcendental method is *intentionality analysis* at its root – you’re starting from the subject and his operations [...].”<sup>7</sup> This refers us back to his intentionality analysis in *Insight* (though he does not use the expression “intentionality analysis” there!).

In *Method* Lonergan writes: “I conceive method concretely. I conceive it, not in terms of principles and rules, but as a *normative pattern of operations* with cumulative and progressive results. I distinguish the methods appropriate to particular fields and, on the other hand, their common core and ground, which I name *transcendental method*. Here, the word, transcendental, is employed in a sense analogous to Scholastic usage, for it is opposed to the categorial (or predicamental). But my actual procedure also is transcendental in the Kantian sense, inasmuch as it brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object in so far as that knowledge is *a priori*.”<sup>8</sup> Now *Insight* is precisely a study of the operations that are concrete and immanent to the knowing subject.

The first chapter of *Method*, which is on “transcendental method,” does not bring anything substantially new to what Lonergan said in *Insight*. But it offers an illuminating summary and also fixes the terminology for some basic concepts from that earlier intentionality analysis, above all for the terms “transcendental notions” and “transcendental concepts.” The transcendental method is specified by our cognitive operations. These are analyzed according to their own nature, according to the structure under which they are ordered in the cognitive process, and according to the norms immanent in them. Lonergan thus concludes that our method of knowing is inscribed in the subject and is the subject itself.

Obviously, speaking of method means formulating (objectifying) the subject. Such an accomplishment can be more or less exact and profound. But the *normative pattern* of our cognitive operations does not consist in this formulation or in the theory that expresses it. The purpose of the theory is to help the subject recognize explicitly what it has always done spontaneously. To the extent that our

<sup>7</sup> “Philosophy of God and Theology,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980*. (Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, 17. University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 176.

<sup>8</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. University of Toronto Press, 1990, p. 14 note.

will, illuminated by the theory, directs our cognitive operations, these operations will thus be performed in the way best suited to their internal norms. The subject will not be led astray by theories that are opposed to the actual performance of knowing with its immanent norms. In this way the subject will be able to keep control over its own cognitive operations, particularly in science, which is a form of knowing that is in movement both personally and socially. With the help of transcendental method so understood, it is possible to recognize the disparity that often is met with in scientists between what they actually do as scientists and what they say they do because of insufficient reflection on their own performance, or because of a misleading “philosophical” theory.

In reality, modern scientists put their trust not in a set of evident premises or of necessary and immutable truths, nor in a logical and demonstrative procedure that draws necessary conclusions from premises, nor in a definite theory of knowledge. They rely, rather, on a method that they gradually develop by trial and error by paying attention to the operations that they perform themselves. Therefore, if the present method fails in the face of a new problem, they try to understand where it is inadequate, under the (mostly implicit) conviction that a more adequate application of cognitional structure is the key to the success of science.

The “anthropological turn” that characterizes modern culture has been, in the field of science, a movement from Aristotelian science in terms of demonstrative and deductive knowledge to science in terms of method. It is here that the “merit” of *Insight* can be identified. There are two sources that brought Lonergan to conceive the turn to the subject in this way and to complete it in himself. Kant is not among these sources. Lonergan’s acute interpretation and consequent criticism of Kant in *Insight* is, rather, the fruit of the self-appropriation of his own subjectivity that he accomplished in substantial independence of Kant.

As early as his doctoral dissertation on “operative grace” in St. Thomas, Lonergan was confronted with a very precise instance of evolution in human knowledge, and thus with the historical nature of our knowledge. Knowing is not mainly a matter of universal and necessary concepts, or even of logical deductions. Rather, it is understanding (2) correctly (3) the content of an experience (1). This already implies the thesis that Lonergan later would call transcendental method: Human knowing is a structure of experiencing, understanding, and judging. This attention to the *performance* of knowing that was basic to the evolution of St. Thomas’s thought on grace was, for Lonergan, the stimulus for a series of philosophical reflections on our knowing that he presented in an appendix to the theological content of the dissertation. These reflections went well beyond the stereotyped formulations of the Scholastic manuals of “logica maior” of that time.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas* (CW 1), Toronto 2000.

In a subsequent study of the “concept of *Verbum* in the writings of St. Thomas” (1946-1949), Lonergan attempted to recover the Thomist theory of the intellect. He set out, not from the metaphysical framework in which St. Thomas had expressed this theory, but from its psychological content. “The Thomist concept of inner word [...] aims at being a statement of psychological fact.”<sup>10</sup> Hence Lonergan’s attention to the “rational psychology” implied in St. Thomas’s metaphysical systematization, and his subsequent move beyond St. Thomas, from the metaphysics of the soul to the doctrine of the psychological subject.

A second source for Lonergan’s turn to the subject was his interest in natural science. While he was not a scientist by profession, he had a knowledge of mathematics and science not usually encountered in philosophers and theologians. After having recovered St. Thomas’s theory of knowledge, he undertook a study of human understanding (“*intelligere*,” “insight”) in the context of the culture seven centuries after St. Thomas. For this he had to take into account in particular, though not exclusively, contemporary natural science. His familiarity with this field of knowledge allowed him to consider the way scientists concretely practice their science, that is, what operations they perform. It was particularly important that, since natural science is experimental, the stage of hypothesis, i.e., of understanding the data, is clearly distinguished from the stage of verification. Verification alone enables the scientist to go beyond mere hypothesis and affirm (in judgment!) that the hypothesis is true; or, taking into account the developing nature of natural science, that it approaches the truth. Similarly, in science the inquiry that precedes the formulation of a hypothesis takes on more and more articulated forms. This enabled Lonergan to go beyond a simplistic conception of understanding on the model of seeing, and to describe concretely the discursive nature of the human intellect. Scientific understanding is a grasping of the relations among things themselves, or among the various components of a thing. Therefore the scientist has to identify the relations that are relevant for grasping the intelligible component that enters into the constitution of a thing or a phenomenon.

We have seen that Kant’s turn to the subject was developed from the standpoint of the *object*. This meant that his investigation of the subject was based on a general conception of knowing as the sort of movement of extroversion that characterizes seeing and, moreover, sensory seeing. Lonergan, however, examines the subject on the basis of the operations that it actually performs when it wants to know how things are. Now, there are many such operations, which differ from and complement one another. They cannot all be reduced to the common denominator of “seeing” without overlooking the special character of each one.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (CW 2), Toronto 1997, p. 59. And farther on, at pp. 104f, a similar statement about the judgment as an act of absolute affirmation based on the reflective understanding that grasps a “virtually unconditioned.”



On the other hand, they are all intentional in the general sense of “tending toward” knowing something. This indeed permits us to say that there is a *characteristic object* corresponding to each kind of cognitive operation. But that object is different for each of the external senses, for the imagination, for the intellect that seeks an intelligible in the content of experience, for the concept that we form to express what we have understood, for the question for reflection on the correctness of what we have understood, for the affirmation that characterizes judgment. Finally, if we consider the entire cognitional structure together with the corresponding objects, the object of human knowledge in the full sense is reality, being. In the first instance, this is the being proportionate to our way of knowing, which is the being accessible to experience, but ultimately it is the absolutely transcendent being of which we can attain only an analogical knowledge.

It is no less important to observe that the “transcendental method” as Lonergan conceived it shows that all our knowledge has a solid basis. It has a structure that is not subject to the possibility of radical revision (*Insight*, pp. 335f / 359f). This structure can be understood and expressed in a more exact and detailed way and, in this sense, it can be corrected and improved. But any attempt at a radical revision that would be rational and thus justified would inevitably imply the validity of the very structure that one wanted to show was invalid. The revision would claim to account for data about our cognitive activity that Lonergan’s transcendental method had not taken into consideration. It would have to offer a better interpretation of them. It would have to assert with justification that this interpretation was correct. In so doing it would confirm the validity of that same transcendental method. There can be no revision of the reviser, without entering into a realm of mere possibilities or, more exactly, a realm of pure fantasy devoid of any control or verification.

## **7. The Operations of Our Intentionality, in Union with Our Sensibility, Are Able to Explain the Characteristics of Human Knowledge**

### *7.1. A Thematization of the Subject as a Knower*

We have seen that Kant’s theory of knowledge started out from the concept of “transcendental knowledge” and led him, in spite of himself,<sup>11</sup> to an idealist conception of knowledge. He arrived at idealism because of the limited and prejudicial way he set up his inquiry. It begins with a question about our presumed *a priori* knowledge of objects, where the character of universality and necessity is attributed to those objects without any clarification. To this guiding question he

<sup>11</sup> Kant’s arguments contain not a few hints that betray a strong tendency toward realism. To these one can add the admission (almost an excuse) that he often repeats in the *Prolegomena*, that his idealism is “solely designed for the purpose of comprehending the possibility of our *a priori* knowledge of objects of experience” (IV 375 note, 377, 292).

added, at the beginning of the Transcendental Aesthetic, the assertion that for us humans the only operation capable of cognitively reaching an object is the intuition (*Anschauung*) of sense (A 19 / B 33). Suffice it here to recall, by way of confirmation, the thesis of B 145: Our faculty of understanding “by itself knows nothing,” in perfect agreement with the text of the Aesthetic on “thinking” (*Denken*).

For his part, Lonergan does not preface his analysis of knowledge with any theory. He does not speak of objects of knowledge or distinguish operations that are properly cognitive from those that are not. His inquiry is without restrictions. Its guiding question is, “What do we do when we know?”, i.e., “What cognitive operations do we perform?” (cf. *Insight*, p. xxii). Consequently, he defines the word “object” from an examination of the operations themselves, and he considers the truth of our knowledge of objects only after he has established what objects these operations have, either individually or as a structured group moving from experience to judgment.

No doubt this approach also is based on some premises, at least two. But these are explained in the course of the investigation itself without falling into a vicious circle. The first premise is that the cognitive operations are psychic, i.e., conscious. They are given to us in the internal experience (consciousness or awareness) that accompanies the activity of the psychic subject (and makes it psychic!). This internal experience enables us to perform the investigation by an *introspective method*. According to this method we thematize the operations in words in order to recognize explicitly their nature (what they are) and the norms immanent in the cognitive process in which they occur. This is a *generalized empirical method*; it extends the empirical method of natural science by taking into consideration not only the data of external experience, but also those of internal experience (*Insight*, pp. 72, 243 / 96, 268).

The second premise is the unlimited scope of our cognitive dynamism. Any question or doubt about whether there is something entirely unknowable to us, in the sense of something we cannot even ask about, shows by itself that the dynamism has no limits. To be beyond questioning, the unknowable would have to be a non-being,<sup>12</sup> i.e., nothing (which includes the “thing in itself” of Kantian idealism). It is one thing to understand what something is; it is another thing altogether to know this as real.

Now, our cognitive dynamism is marked by two characteristics: It is intelligent, since it is capable of asking “questions for intelligence” (“what is it?”), and rational, since it is capable of asking “questions for reflection” (“is it-truly-so?”). These are two different questions to which any other question can be reduced. The same dynamism is also moral, since it is capable of asking “questions for decision”

<sup>12</sup> Being in fact is defined operationally as the “objective of our pure desire to know” (*Insight*, p. 348 / 272).

(“what should I do?”) as questions about the good toward which the dynamism is oriented. Taken as a whole, the dynamism is commonly indicated by the term “intentionality.” Here we are directly interested in intentionality in its cognitive operations, as a tending toward knowing reality.

### 7.2. *Where Does the Universality of Concepts Come From?*

The first operation performed by the subject is experiencing. More precisely, in the first instance this is experiencing by the external senses. In principle, experiencing does not depend on the intellect. Its contribution to fully human knowledge is to provide the material about which the intellect can ask its questions. Experiencing is spontaneously followed by the question for intelligence, “What is it?”, that leads the intellect to form intelligently (!) a concept. In the concept it expresses the intelligible that it has grasped in the content of sense. This concept is universal, that is, valid for any object of sense that bears the same intelligible. Kant’s difficulties begin with this universality of the concept. He resolves the problem of the universal by saying that it indicates a mode of knowledge proper to the understanding (B 3f, cf. Section 2 above). It will not escape the reader that the KrV speaks innumerable times about universal concepts, but never asks whether there is an explanation for their universality that is verifiable in the very experience of knowing (!) without appealing to a kind of *a priori* that leads to a thetic conception of human knowing.

Lonergan’s alternative explanation is in keeping with his turn to the psychological subject with its conscious cognitive operations. Starting with a concrete object of sense, we form a corresponding universal concept. This involves a question, followed spontaneously by an investigation into the content of sense. If the subject is intelligent enough and familiar with the relevant portion of reality, the investigation leads to *grasping an intelligible* that the sense bears, though it is not knowable to sense. Now, the intelligible immanent in the sensible always consists in a relation among the data of experience, whether in their spatio-temporal totality (the intelligibility expressed in the descriptive concept of a “thing”) or under a certain aspect (the intelligibility of an attribute of the thing, e.g., this package is “heavy”).

It did not escape Kant that the intelligible that the intellect “places” (!) in the object that the senses provide consists in a relation (“synthesis”: KrV B § 15). But instead of recognizing that this synthesis is known through an act of intellect by which we understand the sensible content in answer to the question for intelligence, he turns it into an *object-forming a priori* that is already present in the intellect as an endowment from Mother Nature.

The reader encounters the term “concept” (*Begriff*) thousands of times in the KrV, but never the term “understand” (*verstehen*), except on rare occasions where it expresses knowing in a vague sense, without a philosophically relevant meaning.

Anyone who reads St. Thomas runs into the term “*intelligere*” again and again for the specific act in the structure of our knowledge that grasps an intelligible in the content of sense: “*intelligere in sensibili*.” Its source is Aristotle’s *De Anima*, III, 6-8 (*noein en tois phantasmasi*). This act is so far from being esoteric that St. Thomas could write: “*Hoc quilibet in se ipso experiri potest*” (*Summa theol.* I, q. 84, a. 7). The intelligible is not bound indissolubly to the determinate sensible in which it was grasped; therefore it can be realized in innumerable other cases. Hence the one who has understood can consciously express in the concept, as inner word, what he has understood, together with what in the sensed object is relevant to that intelligible. (This is the so-called “*materia communis*”: *ibid.*, q. 85, a. 1. We are dealing with the intelligible of a sensible.) In the concept we think something that is intelligibly determined and at the same time universal: a circle, an atom, a man, a storm.

In Kant’s thought the act of understanding remained literally “*terra ignota*.” Historically, the reason for this is that he was in a conceptualist tradition that goes back at least to Duns Scotus. Scotus had expressly denied the “*intelligere in phantasmate*.”<sup>13</sup> In accordance with his intuitionist conception of knowing, Scotus had fixed his attention on the object of our thought, the concept as universal. He explained its universality through an unconscious abstractive process by an intellect conceived as a kind of abstracting machine. According to Scotus, only when the concept has been formed does the properly conscious activity of the intellect begin, and that consists in grasping the relation between concepts already present (“*intelligere in conceptibus*”).

Kant took over Scotus’s intuitionist conception of knowing (intellectual knowing as “seeing” universal contents). But he dropped the merely metaphysical abstraction of the Scotist tradition and did not recognize the act that connects the intellect with the fertile soil of our knowledge (understanding the content of sense experience). He therefore had recourse to the alternative of twelve *a priori* concepts that our intellect is supposed to be endowed with once and for all. How it might be possible to pass from these twelve categories to the innumerable specific concepts that arise as our knowledge develops, without making them *a priori* concepts, is a problem that Kant would be occupied with for the rest of his philosophical career, without managing to find a solution.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition, the imagination unites and works up the contributions of the various senses into a single object, the “phantasm,” that is the direct point of reference for the cognitive operations of the intellect. This is the significance of the Thomist thesis that man’s intellect is essentially oriented to the sensibility, “*conversus ad phantasma*” (see *Summa theol.* I, q. 84, a. 7). In this natural orientation lies the connection between man’s sensibility and his intellect. The absence of this connection in Kant is at the origin of the dualism that marks all his thought.

<sup>14</sup> See my essay on this subject: “Ein experimentum crucis der Transzendentalphilosophie Kants: Die Erkenntnis des Besonderen,” cited in note 4.

The position taken in this paper regarding the concept can be summarized in the following statements. *A priori* concepts, concepts that were not acquired by our mind in the process that leads from experience to knowledge of reality, do not exist. The concept results from the collaboration of sense and intellect. Every concept therefore is at once a product of sense (hence empirical) and of intellect. Purely empirical concepts do not exist: they would be a mere “*flatus vocis*.”

The *a priori* at the human level of knowledge should be sought not in object-forming contents present in the subject, but in its intentionality. This intentionality has two characteristics: it is intelligent and it is rational, as is shown by the two kinds of questions that initiate the intellect’s cognitive process, accompany it, and govern and norm it from within.

### 7.3. *Where Does the Necessity of the Object Known Come From?*

1. We have seen that in the same text of the Introduction in which he speaks of universality, Kant also speaks of the necessity revealed in the object. For this reason also, our knowledge of the object must be *a priori*. “Necessity and strict universality are thus sure criteria of *a priori* knowledge, and are inseparable from one another” (B 4). The fact leaps out that Kant is placing these two characters on the same level, as if they both belonged to the same phase of the cognitive process and so were consequences of the same *a priori* cause of our knowledge. It seems that this indeed was Kant’s thinking, even if here and there in his arguments the connection between the two characters does not seem to be so immediate. Still, the “official” doctrine of the KrV is that our knowledge has a binary structure. The Transcendental Logic of the KrV opens with two pages (A 50-52) that are nothing but variations on a single theme: “Intuitions and concepts constitute the elements of all our knowledge.” The necessity that characterizes all our knowledge is thus placed at the level of the concept, along with its universality.

In the section “Postulates of Empirical Thought in General” in the “Analytic of Principles” (A 218ff) Kant treats the three categories of possibility, actuality, and necessity (the categories of “modality”). His position appears to be more differentiated than in his discussion of the indissoluble link between universality and necessity, but it is exposed to difficulties that affect his general position even more deeply.

Right at the beginning of his treatment of the categories of modality, Kant notes that they do not represent a determination of the concept of an object that goes beyond quantity, quality, and relation. Rather, they are *predicates* of the object that determine the *relation* of this object (already completely determined in itself) with our faculty of knowing. Now, because of Kant’s sensist intuitionism, this involves the categories, specifically the modal categories, in the “empirical use” of intellect, namely in a relation to a “possible experience and its synthetic unity, in which alone objects of knowledge can be given” (A 219). This means *the relation of the*

*object to sense experience*, since only our senses are capable of intuition, i.e., have a direct relation to “reality” (A 19).

The object thus will be *actual* if the *a priori* forms of sense intuition and the other *a priori* forms of the understanding (those categories under the first three headings) are applied to *a present act of sensation* that directly involves the object in question or any other objects that may be empirically connected with it. Here Kant formulates a general principle that expresses unambiguously the sensism on which the whole KrV rests (including its transcendental idealism): “The perception which supplies the content of the concept is the sole mark of its actuality” (A 225). Consequently, “our knowledge of the existence of things reaches, then, only so far as perception and its advance according to empirical laws can extend” (A 226).

In accordance with our way of knowing actuality, Kant then defines possibility and necessity. *Possibility* requires that “the concept of things should agree with the formal [!] conditions of an experience in general” (A 220). This is because the category of possibility, which like every other category is an *a priori* synthesis of the understanding, is a condition required for our knowledge of objects. Knowledge (in the Kantian sense) of an object is possible only through a synthesis in reference to experience. This may be an *a priori* synthesis, as an *a priori* condition of experience in general. In that case it is one of the pure concepts of the understanding. Or else it will be a synthesis drawn *from* experience, and thus an empirical concept (A 220).<sup>15</sup>

The *necessary* is that which in its connection with the actual is determined in accordance with universal conditions of experience and so is necessarily connected with it. Of this kind are the existence of events and the existence of the states of things, as events and states interconnected according to the law of (natural) causality. From the effect we know that the corresponding cause must exist, and similarly for the cause with regard to its effects.

2. Lonergan explained the universality of the concept by examining the operations that lead from experience to the formulation of an intelligible. The concept emanates from an act of understanding that has grasped in the content of

<sup>15</sup> This statement seems obvious. Kant means that we actually know *specific* objects, whose specificity is not explained by pure *a priori* concepts alone. To the *a priori* determination of the categories, an *a posteriori* determination from experience is added. But this obviousness is deceiving. Behind it lies the great problem that inevitably arises as long as Kant makes intelligible determinations, insofar as they are *universal*, an *a priori element* of the understanding. The problem arises as far back as the level of the pure *a priori* intuitions of sense. Why does this sensation present me with a sphere and not a cube? This difference implies some corresponding difference in geometric intelligibility that does not directly follow from the *a priori* intuition of space. Why is what experience presents me the fall of a heavy body and not a chemical combustion? It seems that there is no other explanation than to appeal to the intellect, which in the concrete *a posteriori* datum grasps this universal (!) intelligibility and not some other one. But just this is impossible for Kant, since it would eliminate the principle of B 4 that is the basis for his whole theory of the *a priori*. See note 14 above.

an experience an intelligible that finds its expression in a universal concept. The appeal to pure concepts independent of experience is thus shown to be superfluous. Introspection also enables us to explain the necessary character of our knowledge of objects. What operation produces this character? It originates in the operation that leads us from the object as intelligible to the same object as real. But that happens at a stage in the cognitive process that goes beyond the intelligible and the concept, i.e., the stage of judgment.

When it asks the first question, our cognitive dynamism is already seeking being. This being comes directly into focus when the cognitive process reaches the thought of a *determinate* object in the concept. This object prompts the second question, “Is it truly so?” As intelligible, the object amounts to a possible being, though not *eo ipso* an actual being. Not an actual being because its intelligibility (essence) is not the intelligibility of being as such. If it were, it would not be a limited intelligibility.

The question that launches the third and final stage of the process aims at knowing whether the content of the experience really bears the intelligibility that the intellect has grasped in it. Now, an intelligible<sup>16</sup> can exist (real being) only as the intelligible of a corresponding sensible object. It is just because this correspondence obtains between the data (the material) and the intelligible expressed in the concept that the intellect is able to not only think an object, but also affirm it. The judgment that concludes the cognitive process says that the thought object “is.”

The analysis of the reflective or critical stage can be objectified as the grasping of a “virtual unconditioned” or “virtually unconditioned.” The virtually unconditioned is a conditioned whose conditions are satisfied, so that it is equivalent to an unconditioned. The *conditioned* is the object thought as something intelligible. We are aware that we cannot reasonably pass immediately from thinking a thing to asserting it as real. Certain conditions have to be satisfied. These *conditions* are data that stand in the relation that the intelligible expresses. Now, if reflection grasps that all the data needed for an intelligibility of this kind are actually present at the level of experience, and that this experience does not present any datum that might place into question the interpretation expressed in that intelligibility, then the conditioned proves to be virtually an *unconditioned*.

This element of absoluteness (the so-called “sufficient evidence”) provides the intellect with justification for its answer of “yes,” for its asserting an “is” not qualified by any restriction.<sup>17</sup> But to assert reasonably and absolutely that something

<sup>16</sup> We are dealing only with the intelligible that we can know directly through our “*intelligere in sensibili*.”

<sup>17</sup> This unqualified character of the “is” depends in turn on the unlimited range of our intentionality. Beyond that range there is no further horizon that can restrict its significance. The “is” of our concrete judgments of fact (the judgments that conclude a cognitive process that started out with an external or internal experience) is not an “*is* from the point of view of ...,” an “*is* provided that ...,” etc.

is, is to know that thing as real. *Intentional being* (the being of the assertion) is the means by which we know the *real being* of things. The being that is thus known is the being of the thing itself, its existing. By means of the *immanent* act of judgment we *cognitively transcend* ourselves. There is no need to insist further on the importance of judgment in Lonergan's critical realism. "*Ens iudicio vero cognoscitur.*" Without the (direct or indirect) contribution of experience there is no knowledge of reality for us. But we do not know being through experience alone, but through an experience that within reflection performs the function of satisfying the conditions of the conditioned.

From this explanation of the necessity in our knowledge of things, we can see what kind of necessity it is. It is not an absolute necessity. Rather, it is the necessity of the contingent,<sup>18</sup> the necessity of what might not have existed but in fact does exist. Nothing within the bounds of the reality proportionate to our way of knowing, including our knowledge itself, is absolutely necessary.<sup>19</sup> Our study of the way in which necessity enters our knowledge shows that is not at the level of the concept, as Kant thought, but at the later level of judgment. This eliminates Kant's identification of judgments with concepts (cf. A 69). The structure of man's knowing is not binary (cf. A 50-52), but ternary: experiencing, understanding, and judging. Judgment, for its part, does not consist in a synthesis of subject and predicate (cf. A 6 / B 10). It is the *absolute positing* (affirmation) of a synthesis, namely, that synthesis that expresses the object whose status as a reality is being sought. Therefore the tending toward the unconditioned that Kant recognizes in reason (A 307; B xxx) does not have a merely regulative function (cf. A 508, 642), but enters constitutively into the cognitive process.

## 8. In What Sense Is *A Priori* Knowledge Possible?

We have seen that Kant sought in the subject the explanation for the characteristics of our knowledge that cannot be explained by experience. In the subject itself he thought he had found (he postulated!) the additional (*Zusatz*: B 1) object-forming elements that explain these characteristics. For this reason he speaks of the "mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*" (B 25). Scholars have noted the vague and variable meaning of the expression "*a priori* knowledge" at different places in the *KrV*: *a priori* elements in the object to be known; knowledge in the full sense; the twelve categories with a meaning that wavers between object-forming components fixed in advance and operative

<sup>18</sup> "*Nibil enim est adeo contingens, quin in se aliquid necessarium habeat*" (*Summa theol.* I, q. 86, a. 3). What is, to the extent that it is and as long as it is, necessarily excludes non-being.

<sup>19</sup> Our knowledge of the absolutely necessary (God) is: (a) as to the act of knowledge, contingent, (b) as to its content, analogical. We do not know the essence of God, his absolutely necessary being, in itself. What we know is a finite intelligibility of the infinite.



components that determine once and for all the syntheses that our understanding is able to perform on the content of perceptions; *a priori* principles in the sense of necessary connections between our perceptions that are supposed to be fixed *a priori* by our understanding (the “analogies of experience”); the “concepts of reflection”; the three transcendental ideas.

For his part, Lonergan in his *Method in Theology*, pp. 14-15, calls the structure of human knowledge that he previously studied in *Insight* “transcendental method.” As he explains, it is a method that “brings to light the conditions of the possibility of knowing an object *in so far as that knowledge is a priori*” (cf. Section 6 above). But this is *a priori* knowledge in a radically different sense from what Kant intends with his “transcendental knowledge.” Lonergan’s *a priori* is not any specific intelligible (however general) that the intellect puts into sense data that in themselves lack any intelligible that is accessible to us. Rather, it is our very intentional dynamism as intelligent, rational (and moral). As such, it is able to *anticipate* consciously the whole universe of the intelligible, of the true, and, through the true, of being (and the good). But it does not have in itself any object-forming content, either as intelligible or as true (or good). Therefore the dynamism is in search of the intelligible and the true, so that it interrogates the content of what the senses present to it. We can call this *a priori* knowledge, first of all in the sense of the “*transcendental notions*” of our intentionality. They make up a fundamental mode of knowledge “*sui generis*.”

This is easily seen if we observe the intellectual development of a small child. Once it has reached sufficient physical and psychic development, he begins to ask “what’s that?” about what he sees, touches, etc. He repeats a phrase he hears from the adults. But the fact that with these words it intends an intelligible that the seen object bears is something it has not learned, and could not learn, from anyone else. The source that enables it to seek the intelligible is within itself. It is the awakening intelligence of its own spirit. It is the transcendental notion of its intelligence. And since it knows (!) what it is asking for, it is able to understand the answer that its mother gives it.

But years later the satisfaction it gets from the explanations of adults is not enough. It wants to know more, and so it goes on to ask “is that really true?” This is the start of its distinguishing between true and false, between reality and appearance, between facts and fictions that indicates that the rationality of its intentionality has begun to operate. This rationality, this *conscious tending toward what is true* so as to know being through it, is not something it has learned from others. It is its own intentionality.

As an unlimited cognitive dynamism, therefore, our spirit is naturally endowed with three *transcendental notions*: the notion of the intelligible, the notion of the true (and of being), to which is added the notion of the good as the objective

of our volitional dynamism. They are transcendental notions because they are “comprehensive in connotation, unrestricted in denotation, invariant over cultural change. While categories are needed to put determinate questions and give determinate answers, the transcendentals are contained in questions prior to answers. They are the radical intending that moves us from ignorance to knowledge. They are *a priori* because they go beyond what we know to seek what we do not know yet. They are unrestricted because answers are never complete and so only give rise to still further questions. They are comprehensive because they intend the unknown whole or totality of which our answers reveal only part.” (*Method*, p. 11)

If we objectify the different ways in which our dynamism operates, we obtain the *transcendental concepts* of the intelligible, the true, and being (and the good). These concepts may be more or less exact, detailed, etc. But what operates in our knowing (and willing), first of all and directly, is not the concepts but the notions (cf. Section 6 above, fifth paragraph).

*A priori* knowledge is, in a first sense, the *isomorphism* that holds between the threefold structure of our knowing, or transcendental method, and the being that is proportionate to our way of knowing. This being is necessarily composed of three metaphysical elements (three principles of being): matter, form (the intelligible), and act (being).

But it is also possible to speak of *a priori* knowledge in a sense that goes beyond the metaphysical structure of the object to be known. This kind of knowledge is linked to the formal element of the object. In this sense, Lonergan speaks of *heuristic notions* and of *heuristic structures* (*Insight*, p. 392 / 417). The Greek word “*heurisko*” means “to find what one seeks.” We know of things only what we succeed in grasping of their intelligibility. That happens in the act of understanding. But before understanding, from which all our concepts originate, there are the questions that anticipate an answer. Now, it is possible to use this anticipation systematically to determine the still unknown answer. Although we do not yet know the content of an act of understanding, we may still know the general characteristics of that act, and thereby have a precise premise that will lead us to it. A *heuristic notion*, therefore, is the notion of an unknown content, a notion that anticipates the kind of act by which the unknown will become known.

What are the general characteristics of understanding? We have seen that understanding is grasping an intelligible, and that the intelligible always consists in a relation within the content of experience. Here we need to distinguish between “common sense,” which is our concrete everyday knowledge, and science. In common sense the relevant relations are those that concern our senses (the color, size, shape, weight, etc. of a thing) or, more generally, the relations of a thing or event to our concrete daily life. This explains, among other things, why in our study of a culture different from our own we expect the people of that time and

place to see certain things and phenomena differently from the way we do, and to react differently.

Much more significant are the heuristic notions that are systematically employed in science. Scientific knowledge seeks the intelligibility that is immanent in things and phenomena and thus is constitutive of them. Therefore science is concerned with the properties of things and their mode of operating. For this purpose it concentrates on the relations that are directly constitutive of a thing or event, or on the relations among things of a kind. On the basis of these relations, science is able to define its explanatory terms and perhaps determine their quantitative values, so that the components of things can be treated mathematically.

The development of modern science has been shown to depend essentially on the development of heuristic notions that are interconnected as *heuristic structures*. In *Insight* we find the presentation of four heuristic structures that represent four methods employed in science: classical and statistical method as the two heuristic structures for the sciences of inorganic nature, genetic method as the heuristic structure for the sciences of organic nature, dialectical method as the heuristic structure for the human or historical-interpretative sciences.

It is characteristic of modern, as opposed to Aristotelian, science that its methods do not only take logical cognitive operations into account, operations that involve propositions, terms, and relations. They also consider operations that are non-logical and therefore not strictly formalizable, such as research, observation, discovery, synthesis, and verification. As a result, these methods do not provide fixed and complete rules that are able to lead almost automatically to new and significant acts of understanding. They are not a substitute for understanding. But they are an effective help (a) so that scientists are not left at the mercy of sheer luck or of flashes of genius, and (b) at the same time they can collaborate effectively in an ordered and cumulative sequence of steps toward common goals. The progress of scientific knowledge is broadly linked to the development of heuristic structures that are more and more differentiated and more and more adequate to the reality being investigated. These methods thus are so many differentiations of the transcendental method inscribed in our intentionality. They require scientists to pay attention to the operations that they perform in the light of the results that they gradually obtain. In this respect, their procedures are in keeping with the turn to the subject.

## **9. Kant: A Theory of Knowledge Without the Performance of Knowing**

Kant's theory of knowledge consists of two parts put together externally, without constituting an intrinsic unity. The first part, the transcendental aesthetic, represents the sensist thread: The senses are directly "touched" by the transcendent reality, but they enable us to know only its "appearance." The second part studies

the contribution of the understanding, which takes up the appearances of sense and makes from them the ordered world of our knowledge of nature, whose ontological status remains that of appearance.

It is not without significance that this second part stands under the title “transcendental logic.” What “transcendental” means in Kant has been the subject of this essay. The “transcendental” is the *a priori* that enters into the constitution of our intellectual knowledge and, at the same time, of its object. The being of the object is therefore a being thought. The fact that the activity of the understanding stands under the term “logic” indicates a fundamental feature of the Kantian theory of knowledge. It is a theory that *does not go beyond the bounds of logic*, which is the discipline that studies the intelligible and formal relations in knowledge.

Logic concentrates on the products of cognitive activity. In Kant in particular, it concentrates on terms (concepts), propositions, relations and, in a word, on the movement from experience to the concept. *Transcendental* logic is concerned with the “molds,” the categories with which the mind shapes the manifold of sense into the united and stable forms of the concept. The non-logical operation of our cognitive dynamism in observation, question, research, formulating hypotheses, discovery, experimentation, verification, remains in large measure outside Kant’s cognitional theory. It is significant that the word “question” does not appear in the various Kant indices (Gottfried Martin, Rudolf Eisler). This is a sign that this word does not occur in Kant in a philosophically relevant sense.

In *Insight* the question has a fundamental role. It is on the basis of the question that Lonergan distinguishes the two intellectual moments that constitute the cognitive process, and thereby recognizes the essential difference between thinking through concepts and judging through the absolute positing of the judgment. Now, such a distinction can be recognized only if one objectifies the operation of our cognitive dynamism and thus the operation of the subject as subject. If one takes the logical approach and formulates a meaning in terms of subject and predicate, one may be dealing with a judgment, or only with defining and thinking.

On the basis of the question, Lonergan was able to identify the transcendental notions of the intelligible, the true, being, and the good. By employing them we know reality and act freely and responsibly. Again, on the basis of the question for reflection Lonergan was able to recognize that the tending of our intentionality toward the unconditioned is a constitutive function in judgment. Our cognitive dynamism as intelligent and rational is itself the basic method in all our knowledge. Lonergan called it “transcendental method.” It is this method again that in its differentiations makes up the specific methods of research in the various fields of knowledge. The same dynamism is differentiated and developed in the various heuristic structures, which anticipate the intelligibility of the various areas of reality by providing the appropriate method for studying them.

For his part, Kant was seeking the formal conditions that enable us to think the objective contents of our thought. These conditions are the intuitions of the sensibility and the categories of the understanding, going up to the “I think” or synthetic-originary unity of apperception (B §16), the highest point of reference in the whole logical mechanism devised to explain the formal aspects of “reality” that are not explainable by sense.

This is a device that does not allow for any verification by introspection, which orthodox Kantians rejected anyway as empirical psychologism.<sup>20</sup> For more than two centuries this mechanism has provided inexhaustible material for a philosophical effort whose intensity has been in inverse proportion to its relevance for understanding human knowing and its relation to reality. Anyone who has seriously put his hand to this effort knows by experience the validity of the assertions I make from outside the mainstream of contemporary Kant interpretation. I am thinking in particular of the “Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding”, the core of Transcendental Idealism, which ever constrains new and eager doctoral students to repeat the mythic labors of Sisyphus.

Tackling the issue in these logical terms hindered Kant from recognizing the contradiction that undermines his entire theory of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> He is telling the reader that we humans do not know reality, but only the appearances of something entirely unknown to us. Such a thesis does not imply any contradiction: the subject “we” does not contradict the predicate “do not know reality.” But a contradiction comes to light as soon as *someone asserts* this thesis. He intends to say: “I state what *really and truly is so* when I state that when we claim to know what *really and truly is so*, we are the victims of a ‘transcendental illusion’ (A 295, 298).” An obvious contradiction arises when we add to Kant’s thesis in the KrV what is implied in that thesis, not as *content*, but as the *performance (Vollzug)* of asserting that thesis.

This contradiction escaped Kant because the KrV is a context of contents that does not consider the performances, i.e., the operation of the subject that asserts these contents. Kant does consider the “I think” as the formal condition of the possibility of thinking objective contents, but he does not find a place for a concrete subject that asks intelligent questions and gives reasonable answers. In short, the phenomena he speaks of “appear,” but there is no subject in which they occur as objects and which asserts knowledge of them. Such a subject would *eo ipso* be involved in the contradiction of knowing truly that it had no true knowledge.

<sup>20</sup> Vaihinger, I. 125 (also 135, 323) no doubt was expressing the “*sententia communis*” of his time when he wrote: “The distinctive character of Kant’s method is to analyze in a way that is purely conceptual and logical, not psychological. This is a point to be held quite firmly from the beginning, that Kant in principle excludes psychological observations.”

<sup>21</sup> For the following reflections I refer to Lonergan’s brilliant essay “Metaphysics as Horizon,” in *Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan*, in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 188-204.

Kant's transcendental conditions of possibility within his transcendental logic do not transcend that logic.

This takes us back to our starting point, which is the "transcendental knowledge" of the KrV (B 25) as a search for the conditions of our *a priori* knowledge of *objects* in their formal aspects. This search leaves out of account the *a priori* conditions of the question, which sets the whole cognitive process in motion. The subject's intelligent and rational questions do not confine it within the closed space described by Kant. This is the space of a transcendental consciousness that supposedly is itself the author of an experience in which it constructs objects that appear to it, though it does not know the truth and thus the reality of these appearances. Kant's turn to the subject in fact stopped halfway: it was the turn to a subject gravely mutilated in its intelligent and rational subjectivity.



# BERNARD LONERGAN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEING

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Less than twenty years separate the publication of the two major works of Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*<sup>1</sup> and *Method in Theology*,<sup>2</sup> the first dating from 1957 and the second dating from 1972; but although it is not difficult to notice a fundamental continuity, one remains struck, above all, by their difference. Whilst *Insight* moves in the context of Neo-Scholasticism, even though displaying a deep split with the deductivistic forms prevalent in that philosophy, *Method* most definitely looks ahead, towards overcoming traditional divisions and counterpositions, and tendencies towards fragmentation of specialized fields which are also reaching a prevalence in theology.

The continuity, one could say, is given through the “latent metaphysics”, a central notion in *Insight*, but also in *Method*, identifiable in the dynamic scheme of conscious and intentional operations, true key in the methodological model of Lonergan.

## 1. The Philosophy of Being from *Insight* to *Method in Theology*

Although enriched through his frequentation of the classical authors, such as Augustine, Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, ..., Lonergan is from the onset conscious of following his own path, and this especially regarding the “philosophy of being”. If Thomas Aquinas – as he will write in 1958, presenting his huge volume *Insight* at the American Catholic Philosophical Association – had placed the relationship between metaphysics and psychology in the right direction by interpreting the field of human subjectivity and interiority in a metaphysical key, then he, Lonergan, «turned everything, upside down» reading the entire reality in reference to the intentional dynamics of consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 3, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992 (1957<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1972.

<sup>3</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “*Insight*: Preface to a Discussion”, in *Collection*, second edition, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 4, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992, pp. 142-152, quotation at p. 142.



One can plainly see that this undoubtable overturning was the fruit of the prevailing of methodological demand already in *Insight*. In fact, whilst Neo-Scholastic metaphysics found its control in the logical schemes of deduction, Lonergan aimed towards a methodological control of metaphysics, which relied on basic isomorphism between the structures of the interrogating subjectivity and the structures of reality.

Thus, already in *Insight* metaphysics is something different from a conceptual construction systematized in a deductivistic form. Its significance remains fundamentally heuristic and talks about the universe of being solely beginning from the mind's operational structures, making use of an ineliminable isomorphism which sets unrestricted openness of human mind as the condition for being able to address the whole as an empirical universe and, above all, as a space for Transcendence. All this offers a fundamental justification of the religious experience of human being, which thus merits being taken into consideration and evaluated in an argument of totality.

Before (and more than) being an explicit argument on the totality of the real, metaphysics is thus identified by Lonergan along with the same inquiring human subjectivity. He speaks, regarding this, about "latent metaphysics". When it is made explicit, metaphysics is presented, instead, as a temporary argument regarding the totality of the real, which valorizes the "heuristic structures" that have been configured historically by exercise along with their progressive and always revisable results. In this way it is possible to go beyond the fragmentation of specialized knowledges, in an attempt to express the whole as an anticipation of a knowledge not yet available, but already laid out along general lines beginning from acquired results.

This constantly open objective, relating to the knowledge of the universe of experience ("proportionate being"), does not exhaust the task of a philosophy of being. In fact, unless one subscribes to the immanentistic closure of philosophic and scientific modernity, one must give credit to the demand, truly meta-physical, of human inquiring, taking on the responsibility of the questions raised by Transcendence, the legitimacy and unavoidability of the question on God.

The very same intelligent, rational and moral subjectivity is concretely question of God. The question can be put in various ways and the answers can also be negative, but the man is question. And this is so since man expresses himself as wonder, questioning, research and unease, all of which constitute the *eros* of the mind. The single man can close himself off from research, but in research itself there is no end. The importance of all this consists in the fact that one is dealing with a not limited potency. No satisfaction is found in anything concrete, immediate, finite; one continues to inquire, one continues to desire.

Making a clear break with the accentuated objectivism of Neo-Scholastic tradition, Lonergan maintained, in fact, that the door to talking about the all-

embracing object (being) could not be anything but the very same inquiring subject, with its intelligent, rational, and moral intentional dynamism.

In *Method* the philosophy of being loses a great part of its relevance, since one is no longer dealing with integrating the knowledge relating to the empirical universe, but rather valorizing the ethical experience and the religious experience that came together in one of the great religious and cultural traditions of humanity. The structural dynamics of human subjectivity (transcendental method) conserve their absolutely necessary methodological relevance, but the objective is no longer one of a theoretical construction relating to the universe of being, but that – (if you want) more limited and concrete – of a valorization in present times of a specific religious tradition, rich in significance, and human values (for example Christianity, but the same could be to for Judaism, Islam, Induism, Buddhism, ...).

*Insight* had been initially conceived as a preliminary study to replace theology in the context of contemporary knowledges through a reconsideration and finalization of its method. In reality, the work ended up taking on an autonomous configuration, having the character of a guided itinerary to the discovery of one's own interiority, with its fundamental dynamics and the horizons which progressively open up by its exercise. Far from opposing subject and object, subjective pole and objective pole, Lonergan considers subjectivity as openness, as notion and pre-knowledge of its all-embracing referent: the being.

The notion of being is not the concept of being, since it is absolutely *a priori*, it is not a conceptual content, as it would be, instead, in the line of Scotus. To use a metaphor, we can say that the notion of being is the opening of the mind, is the horizon of questioning, *i.e.* is a pre-knowledge.

*Insight* is a work readable already in the Neo-Scholastic horizon, along the path of the program of Leo XIII indicated by the motto "*vetera novis augere et perficere*", as the same Lonergan suggests in the Epilogue.<sup>4</sup> In reality, one was dealing with a work which looks ahead, beyond the fragmentation of specializations and the inevitable cultural perspectivism of the West. It is the same anchoring of the philosophy of being in the intentional dynamics of consciousness that permitted Lonergan to overcome the point of view of pure theoretics and more or less self-consistent conceptual construction, in favour of an ultimate and insuperable reference frame represented by the same inquiring subjectivity.

As a "generalist" the philosopher of being lives thus in the tension between a reference to the empirical universe, which demands dialogue and integration of innumerable knowledges, and a reference to Transcendence, which passes through a consideration and a valorization of the multiple religious experiences and the many religious traditions of humanity.

<sup>4</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 768.

The transcendental analysis carried out in *Insight*, by which Lonergan made evident the “latent metaphysics” (the intentional dynamism of consciousness in the various levels of its being built up and expanding), offers the key to Lonergan for a finalization of the model of the eight functional specialties of theology. Once again it is the “latent metaphysics” which provides the fundamental element for the methodological control of “doing theology today”.

But there is more to be said. The fourth functional specialty of theology *in oratione obliqua*, “dialectic”, is aimed at making evident the tensions and counterpositions of the innumerable interpretations and various historical processes which hence follow. This dialectic calls into question the very same theologian, his personal authenticity, and the correctness and adequateness of his self-appropriation. For Lonergan, all this makes necessary great “foundations”, which englobe a “philosophy of being”, by means of which one can speak adequately of man, of the empirical universe, of God.

The decisive role of the philosophy of being emerges also later, at the level of theological “systematics” and “communications”, the last two functional specialties of theology *in oratione recta*, the theology which is constructed in the cultural present regarding the various contexts and bearing in mind the characteristics and needs of the various interlocutors and listeners.

## 2. The Limits of the Metaphysics of Bernard Lonergan

A first limit can be pointed out in relation to what Lonergan calls “metaphysics of the proportionate being” or of the finite.

In fact, diversely from the majority of Neo-Scholastics of his day, Lonergan already demonstrated in *Insight* to have accepted and assimilated the evolutionary paradigm of modern science. However, Lonergan could not avoid interpreting cosmic evolution from the point of view of the scientific theory of “stationary state” which prevailed then and had brought about a hypothesis of almost unlimited temporal and spacial parameters.<sup>5</sup>

The cosmological theory of the “Big Bang”,<sup>6</sup> on the contrary, which was soon to

<sup>5</sup> See H. Bondi and T. Gold, “The steady-state theory of the expanding universe”, in *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 108 (1948) 252ff. The hypothesis has been defended still by H.C. App, G. Burbidge, F. Hoyle, J.V. Narlikar and N.C. Wickramasinghe, “The extragalactic Universe: An alternative view”, in *Nature* 346 (1990) 807-812, while it has been criticized for instance by G. Ellis, *Before the Beginning. Cosmology Explained*, Boyars, New York/Bowerdean, London 1993, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> The hypothesis of the origin of the universe from an extremely small, dense and hot state in expansion, according to the theory of the Big Bang, was already been published when Lonergan was writing *Insight*. Regarding the formulation of such hypothesis, see R.A. Alpher, H.A. Bethe and G. Gamow, in *Physical Review* 73 (1948) 80ff, who developed a solution to the problem similar to that already formularized by both A. Friedmann and G. Lemaître in 1920 albeit independently; it is a theory which today is commonly accepted in scientific fields, along with suitable integrations, among which that of inflation, dating 1980 by

establish itself in scientific fields, was to bring about the hypothesis of an extremely restricted temporal parameter concerning the appearance of the intelligent observer.

All this made it possible to re-introduce the notion of finality into scientific consideration and, thus, to re-accredit, even in philosophical fields, a “project” regarding the emergence of intelligent life (the anthropic principle) in the expectancy of a fulfillment full of meaning, well beyond the quite disillusioning scenarios, elaborated from a base of merely scientific knowledge.

A second limit appears in the context of creationistic metaphysics following the demonstration of the existence of God. Here the basic problem is that of evil, linked to the concept of freedom. The intelligent and free creature, in fact, can give up his/her high responsibilities, making vain any evolutive outcome.

The problem had at least to be formulated in philosophical fields. However, the considerations expressed in chapter 20 of *Insight*, where the problem of evil is mainly treated, seem a little schematic. But naturally Lonergan had much to say on this matter, being a theologian: note the discussion on the *lex crucis* in his christology and several other mentions of the problem elsewhere.<sup>7</sup>

Lonergan: a metaphysician or a methodologist? This question might appear to be misleading in the measure that it accredits a type of “pure theoretics” for the metaphysician and should prefer the methodologist to be concerned with the intentional dynamics of subjectivity. But just the discovery of human subjectivity as “latent metaphysics” leads to overcoming these counterpositions and to consider, as already mentioned, the inquiring subjectivity as the door to be able to speak in heuristic terms about the all-embracing object: the being.

### 3. The Heritage of Bernard Lonergan

The distance in time of two decades, by now, since the death of Lonergan allows us to focus, in some measure, on the contribution of this atypical Neo-Scholastic, relating to the elaboration of a philosophy of being.

A.H. Guth, and that of the strings, for which see B. Greene, *The Elegant Universe. Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory*, Norton, New York 1999, ch. 14.

<sup>7</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer”, in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, R.C. Croken, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CLW 6, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1996, pp. 160-182 (on «*the way of the cross [...] in which fallen nature acquires its perfection*», see p. 181; the references are to *Matthew* 10,38; 16,24; *Mark* 8,34; *Luke* 9,23; 14,27); Id., *De Verbo incarnato*, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Romae 1964 (on the «*lex crucis*», see “Thesis 17a”, pp. 552-586); Id., *The Triune God: Systematics*, Engl. transl. by M.G. Shields from *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica* (1964), R.M. Doran and H.D. Monsour, eds., CWL 12, Toronto University Press, Toronto 2007 (on the «appropriateness [...] that] the Redeemer [...] died] for those whom he wished to die to themselves and live for God», see pp. 498-499); Id., *Method in Theology*, (on the acceptance of «the suffering involved in undoing the effects of decline», see p. 242).

From the supremacy of metaphysics and logic, Lonergan had passed on to the supremacy of critical needs and methodological control. The ultimate base of reference was no longer offered by the basic terms and prime principles of metaphysical theory, but became the operative one of the intentional dynamism of consciousness. All this allowed Lonergan to consider the supreme logical principles and the same ethical principles not as separate truths, but rather as historically conditioned thematizations of rationality and responsibility in act, and consequently to become capable of better articulating the relationship between absoluteness of truth and historicity of human life and knowledge.

Unlike the majority of his contemporary Neo-Scholastics, Lonergan does not demonize Kant.<sup>8</sup> He believes, rather, that the transcendental analysis of Kant is incomplete and, above all, conditioned by an inadequate mediation between empiricism and rationalism, and, thus, showing acritical presumptions. Therefore, while maintaining the inspiration of Kant it is necessary to go beyond him by means of both a more adequate analysis of intentionality overcoming the Kantian acritical counterposition between phenomenon and noumenon, and a renewed philosophy of being.

The analysis carried out by Kant produces a severed subject: the distinction between pure reason and practical reason, in fact, is as if it severs the subjectivity. For Lonergan, instead, subjectivity is total openness: the very same intentional dynamism of the subject makes the subject asking questions in an unrestricted field and, in this way, being not closed in itself. Moreover, in the works of Lonergan there does not exist the division between phenomenon and noumenon, that he judges to be highly arbitrary: in fact, the dynamics of questioning initially refer to the datum, and not to the phenomenon, so that one can also talk about phenomenal datum as manifesting itself, but to place it in counterposition with the noumenic datum is equivalent to introducing a myth. Lonergan, instead, maintains the intentionality open to the universe of being and not the universe of phenomenon.

But – we can ask ourselves – has a philosophy of being still any sense? The question imposes itself and the temptation to reply in the negative is very strong today.

Both in its ancient and medieval configuration and still more in its modern forms (Scotistic, Suarezian, Neo-Scholastic, ...), a philosophy of being seems to be completely out of date today, swept away by a process of differentiation among autonomous figures of rationality which has characterised Western modernity, and, even more, by the process of fragmentation in knowledge, which imposes

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the jesuit Guido Mattiussi, the inspirer of the anti-modernistic movement of Pius X, and author of the 24 themes of Thomistic philosophy, who writes a vast volume entitled “*The Kantian poison*”.

the dropping of any consideration of the whole, as well as of any reference to the Transcendence.

The stake is truly high, implying a renunciation of the very same thought, or at least the incapacity of the human mind to say its referent, indicating it securely, without flattening it on the object of the perceptive extroversion.

The lesson of Lonergan (if we can so say) is to take distance from all the historical configurations of the philosophy of being, which have claimed to accredit some basic conceptual network, a base knowledge, capable of orienting and conditioning all arguments.

Keeping alive the meta-physical demand of the human mind, a philosophy of being should, according to Lonergan, renounce any pretentious knowledge, contenting itself with indicating the whole, the total referent of the intentional dynamics of the human subject, without any sort of reductionisms whatsoever.

Avoiding contenting oneself with a simple philosophic culture, it is necessary to awake consciousnesses, giving space to critical awareness, to a questioning that puts in question the very subject itself.

But then – we repeat – has a philosophy of being still any sense today?

Thomas Aquinas had terminated his intellectual career with a bitter acknowledgment: «it is all straw!», and this despite the Christ on the cross having said to him reassuringly: «*bene de me scripsisti, Thoma!*».

The philosophy of being is a humble knowledge. But this, naturally, on condition that one maintains the tension towards a referent which has to preserve the dimension of transcendence.

Even when philosophic rationality would find its place in the context of the many empirical knowledges, its function should not lose its nature through a total omologation. Its difference lies in the awareness of an atypical and all-embracing referent: the being, which is known by us but, at the same time, goes before us, transcends us and interpellates us.



# THE FLIGHT FROM INSIGHT

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If “insight” or the act of understanding is, as Lonergan expressed it, “the pivot,”<sup>1</sup> a vast number of consequences accrue for metaphysics (being as what is to be understood), the philosophy of natural science (physical reality as to be intelligibly explained), the relation of the human to the natural sciences (what is intelligible as intelligent, and what is otherwise intelligible), and natural theology (God as “the unrestricted act of understanding,” whose intelligence encompasses all possibilities, and whose will is the ultimate explanation of which possibilities are instantiated). Insight may be illustrated by commonsense examples, or by scientific ones. I may see steam arising from the hood of my car, and have the insight, “perhaps the engine is overheating”. Later observation may add the “reflective insight”<sup>2</sup> that this is so, or not so. Johannes Kepler was puzzled by the motions of the planets as recorded by Tycho Brahe, which neither the Ptolemaic system, nor the then newfangled Copernican system (with earth and planets moving in circles round the sun), seemed able to explain. Then it occurred to him that the explanation might be that the earth and planets were moving in ellipses with the sun at one of the foci; and this hypothesis has been confirmed over and over again for the last four centuries.

In matters of commonsense fact and natural science, we often understand things, if we are relatively intelligent, or fail to understand them, if relatively stupid, and our motives do not on the whole affect the issue. In matters of morality, politics, and relations with ourselves and other human beings, however, we are apt to be afflicted by a more or less unconscious “flight from insight,”<sup>3</sup> which is motivated by individual or group desire, fear or privilege, or by psychic trauma. One doesn’t think of Ogden Nash as a moralist; but for the flight from insight in matrimonial relations, one can hardly do better than the following epigram:

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 3, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992 (1957<sup>1</sup>), p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

<sup>3</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 5-6, 8, 215, 223-227.



He drinks because she scolds, he thinks.  
She thinks she scolds because he drinks.  
And neither of them know what's true,  
That he's a sot and she's a shrew.

In Dorothy Sayers' radio play about the life of Our Lord, "The Man Born to be King," two noble Roman ladies are discussing crucifixion.<sup>4</sup> One lady exclaims at the horrifying agony that the victims must go through, with nails driven through sensitive parts of the body as the least of it; the victims are suffocating, and so compelled to increase their frightful pain by raising themselves on the nails in their feet. The other Roman lady replies, in effect, "My dear Domitilla, one must not suppose that members of inferior races would have the same feelings as we would in that situation." In the southern United States of America, in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was often claimed that black people and their children had congenitally weaker bonds of affection than did white; this claim, of course, has no basis in the relevant evidence, but made the economically convenient practice of separating black slaves from their young children seem less abominably cruel than it was. (A Southerner once asked a parliamentarian what was the finest speech he had ever heard, expecting to be told that it was by a famous politician. The parliamentarian answered drily, that it was made by a slave mother about to be separated from her young child.)

The breakthrough of insight can be bloody. It is said that, in the First World War, staff-officers did not have to go through the ranks, or actually see any fighting. During the battle of Passchendaele, a young man had been pushing pins round maps, every now and then taking one off when a battalion or so was wiped out. But afterwards he actually saw the battlefield, mud, corpses, blown-off limbs, and all, and burst into tears; "Did we really send them through that?" he asked. Eugene Heimler evolved a method of psychotherapy in which people simply talked for about fifty minutes into a tape-recorder, and the result was played back to them. This proved highly productive of insight, and accordingly a great help, to most of the patients; but in a few cases, they hardly reacted at the time, but afterwards went into their garages, left the doors closed, and switched on the engines of their cars. Heimler discontinued the practice, not agreeing with the famous dictum of Thomas Szasz, that suicide is a successful outcome of treatment.

Some ways of speaking and writing help to promote the flight from insight. George Orwell wrote of the "pompous and slovenly language" with which people are apt to put over corrupt political agendas. G. K. Chesterton prayed to God to deliver us from "all the easy speeches that comfort cruel men." The Dominican Guy Braithwaite suggested that, among whites in the old South Africa, if the word

<sup>4</sup> I can't remember how far I have got the details right, but the general idea is the point.

“Kaffir” was the subject of a sentence, it was ungrammatical for anything polite to be the predicate – it would be unthinkable for a Hottentot or a Basuto to be outstandingly intelligent or morally virtuous.

Of course, for Lonergan, if we are to come to know anything, three kinds of operation are necessary, experience, understanding, and judgment; and insight strictly speaking operates only at the level of the second and third. I may also restrict my experience by what he calls “selective inattention”; I just don’t pick up the clues to my daughter’s unhappiness, or the misery of the lower classes in my country, which may be obvious to others. (When Queen Victoria passed through the Black Country by the royal train, which she had to on the way from London to Balmoral in Scotland, the blinds were discreetly drawn, so that she could not see the conditions under which some of the more unfortunate among her subjects had to live.) As to the third level: if the inconvenient possibility which happens to be true does occur to me, I can fail to operate at the level of reflective insight; here ridicule or anger are a great assistance. Ha ha, *the very idea* that my class may be unduly privileged, that my treatment of my daughter is permanently damaging her chances of a happy and fulfilled life!

A psychotherapist once told a patient what he had come to believe about him; the patient replied, “That can’t be so, Dr. Jung; if it were, I would have been wasting my time for the last twenty years.” It would be pleasant if the Catholic Church were more unequivocally an enemy of the flight from insight than she is; but, as the old Indian proverb had it, it is always darkest under the lamp. When the sex-scandals in the Church were first becoming notorious, I saw a program on television, where a large and confident priest was being interviewed about the matter together with a concerned layman. So far as the priest was concerned, the Church should just let the culprits be punished and then “forge ahead.” The layman looked unhappy, and wondered whether this attitude was quite adequate. (A few years later, I read the suggestion, by another priest, that these scandals amounted to the worst crisis in the Church since the Reformation; that at least took the measure of what appeared to be going on.) The priest asked haughtily whether the layman was accusing him of lying. I should have said the truth of the matter was worse than that; if he was not deliberately saying what was false, the priest, in thus confidently making light of the issue, was illustrating what Plato called the “lie in the soul.” Perhaps the achievement of sanctity, by the grace of God, is rather like the advance of natural science as envisaged by the late Sir Karl Popper; one must always be on the look-out for evidence which tells against what one wants to hear, the too convenient aspects of one’s self-image, or the self-serving “ideology” of the groups to which one belongs. Using terminology due to Paul Ricoeur, Lonergan suggests that the conscientious interpreter, as opposed to the controversialist, will always be at pains to exercise the “hermeneutics of suspicion” on those who agree

with her, the “hermeneutics of recovery” on her opponents. The controversialist, on the contrary, will fasten on the first interpretation that occurs to him which will make his opponent appear a knave or a fool.

Lonergan postulates what he calls “cosmopolis”<sup>5</sup> as embodying a kind of synthesis between liberal confidence in human progress, on the one hand, and Marxist insistence, on the other, that class warfare was to be expected or desired. The liberals, in his view, were right to stress that the advance of intelligence and reason in human affairs was the sovereign means to social progress; but wrong so far as they underestimated the power of the principles of decline, what he calls group and general bias,<sup>6</sup> with their associated habits of flight from insight. Group bias – which one might say has been capitulated to in a spectacular manner by Marxists – makes one restrict the operations of attentiveness, intelligence, and reason according to the desires and fears of one’s group, in the manner that I have already illustrated. General bias is avoidance of the principle that intelligence and reason are to be applied in an unrestricted manner to human affairs. Lonergan’s attack on general bias reminds one of the “dictatorship of the intellect” recommended by Sigmund Freud. Of course, neither Freud nor Lonergan would infer that human beings were to be treated as though they had no emotions, and as though these did not have the utmost importance in human life; to do so would be the very opposite of intelligent or reasonable. True religion, indeed, recommends itself as that on which we can hang our hearts without in any way sacrificing our intellects; God in Christ has provided us with a “mystery” which delivers us from the need for “myth.” And, as is emphasized over and over again in the later writings of Lonergan, to extol reason to the utmost is by no means to impugn the supremacy of love; as has been rightly said, passion may be blind, but love has its eyes very wide open indeed.

It is up to every educated person in a democracy to contribute to cosmopolis by commending and criticising the domestic and foreign policies of her or his government in accordance with its principles. What William Blake said of Jerusalem applies to cosmopolis – which indeed you could say *is* one aspect of Blake’s “Jerusalem:”<sup>7</sup>

I will not cease from Mental Fight  
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England’s green & pleasant land.

<sup>5</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 263-267.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 247-263.

<sup>7</sup> From the Preface of Blake’s *Milton*, in *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, Geoffrey Keynes, ed., Nonesuch Press, London 1956, p. 376.

It is up to us to build cosmopolis, which, as Lonergan says somewhere,<sup>8</sup> is anticipated by the great social encyclicals of the Church from *Rerum Novarum* in 1890 onward. The great Muslim philosopher and theologian Al Ghazzali said that reason is God's scale on earth; to build cosmopolis is to apply this principle to the big political and social questions that face us, and to criticize the ideologies and flights from insight which bedevil the approach to them by our leaders.

In England, the young squire of a parish came back from active service in the First World War and, as village tradition dictated, took his place as chairman of the parish council. He did his best to run the meeting democratically, scrupulously asking everyone's opinion, and getting people to vote on all the issues under discussion; but it was very hard work. Finally, an old man got up and said, "Why can't Mr. Maxwell tell us what to do, same as what we're used with?" Our duty, as mature democratic citizens and contemporary Catholics, to contribute to cosmopolis, dictates just the opposite behaviour. Unfortunately, as Anne Wilson Schaefer and Diane Fassel suggest in their book, *The Addictive Organization*,<sup>9</sup> the nobler the official aims of any organization, the more oppressive, tyrannical, and obscurantist its internal politics tend to be. There are three rules of a dysfunctional family, and the same seems to apply to organizations; don't rock the boat; don't ask awkward questions; don't laugh. The moral applies to hospitals, universities (I know some horrible examples), and Churches – if only THE Church were an exception. Sure, we laypeople still ought to "pay, pray and obey"; but to be fully authentic – attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible – as members of Church and State is one corollary of our obedience. This entails avoiding the flight from insight in ourselves like the plague, and rebuking and exposing it in the organizations, however august, to which we belong. There is, of course, a proper structure of authority within the Church, which I by no means intend to impugn; but that does not extend, to take an old Irish example, to mentioning it at confession whenever, as a layperson, you contradict a priest; or tell off a priest, or even a bishop, for doing wrong. St. Catherine of Siena, who was constantly telling off her unfortunate Pope, sets us a good example in this respect. And think of *Galatians* 2.11-14.

One main question to be addressed at present by cosmopolis is: when is it proper for one nation to interfere with the affairs of another to the extent of military action? Those who say "Never!" should consider facts like the following. Nearly two years ago, the Israelis bombed a facility for generating nuclear energy out in the Syrian desert. Rather than making vociferous complaints about this act, which was obviously very high-handed of the Israelis at least at first sight, the Syrian government completed the obliteration of the site. Later, it became certain that the Syrians had been within weeks of producing weapons-grade plutonium

<sup>8</sup> I am afraid I have lost the reference.

<sup>9</sup> Harper & Row, San Francisco 1988.

at the facility. Where American politics is concerned, for reasons which I hope are cosmopolitan, my sympathies lie almost always on the side of the Democrats rather than the Republicans. Yet it fills me with dread that one of Barack Obama's top advisers is supposed, some time before the Israel bombing, to have called the rumour that Syria was set to produce weapons-grade plutonium "right-wing nonsense"; Nyerere in Uganda at one extreme, Bush's self-deception on WMDs<sup>10</sup> another.<sup>11</sup> Yet life in Iraq better since "surge", apparently.<sup>12</sup> When the United Nations hobbled, is to be a policeman always wrong? Darfur. Spectrum of cases, actual or conceivable; proto-cosmopolis always asking if so and why, and if not why not. Big question for cosmopolis now – when do you interfere, if at all, in the affairs of another country, when not, and why? Democracy, self-deception, "Let's fight; but let's not fight"; you send in "peace-keepers"; the genocide goes on, and they have to watch it and do nothing.

Closely related to this is the matter of effective symbolism in arithmetic, and the fact that the Arabic notation is such an improvement on the Roman. It is a simple matter to divide 1750 by 9. But just try dividing MDCCLVI by IX.

Cosmopolis has no favorites; especially the societies which seem to foster it; see the MLA<sup>13</sup> who said of two political scientists who expressed disagreement with the provincial government, "We are paying them; they should not be allowed to express disagreement with us." Cosmopolis – entity for criticizing general aims and policies at the widest and highest possible level. (I am not sure how relevant is no oil in or near Darfur as opposed to Iraq/Afghanistan. What ought we to be doing about Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur, and why? When is invasion of a country right, and when is it wrong, and why?<sup>14</sup> Is it not perhaps *prima facie not* to have Darfur invaded? Who has the right to decree such an invasion,<sup>15</sup> and who is the one to carry it out? Obviously the United Nations – but if hobbled into permanent inaction by group bias of members?) Group bias, the Chinese, Darfur and Tibet. Spielberg embarrassed them when Nobel prizewinners had failed. What sort of form should cosmopolis take? We have proto-cosmopolis wherever someone criticizes high-level political action on general rational principles. Since "surge," on criterion of level of terror and suffering, seems to be more justified.

Nathan and David;<sup>16</sup> the parable can put over an insight which a person could not approach directly. If Nathan's king had been Archelaus of Macedon, the prophet's life would probably have been short and his death at once protracted

<sup>10</sup> Weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>11</sup> See A. Gore, *The Assault on Reason*, Penguin Books, New York 2007.

<sup>12</sup> My friend Terry Nail gives a different account on this matter from Conrad Black.

<sup>13</sup> Member of the Legislative Assembly.

<sup>14</sup> See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II, q 40, a 1 (*utrum bellare semper sit peccatum*).

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> See 2 *Samuel* 12,1-14.

and unpleasant. And don't let us pretend soldiers don't get killed. Madrid – not a good reason for change of policy and government – disadvantages of democracy, bombings not good for elected pastrycooks.

Possible merits of Empire – what does that say about past empires? Admitting the *prima facie*, but presumably not defensible, good of national self-determination and rule, are the people in all the countries concerned over all better off for not having colonial rule in the French, British, Belgian fashion? Perhaps there is a natural leader's rather than a white man's burden; I am a poor leader, and better in the role of counsellor or advisor; I am sure the average Basuto would do better bossing me than I would do bossing the average Basuto. Questions where one should start. One asked by a Chinese person in China: what has Darfur to do with the Olympic Games? A perfectly good question deserving a straight answer. Some people disapprove of the fact that China will not use her considerable clout in the Sudan to restrain the government there for its (at best) complicity and (at worst) active collaboration in genocide. To be artistic director for the Games might seem to show approval of the Chinese leadership's actions/omissions on this matter.

I believe – I cannot now find the reference – that Lonergan takes the great social encyclicals, beginning with Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* of 1890, as exemplifying the activity of cosmopolis. I wish one could say the same about the ordinary affairs of the Church. Once, before news broke of the massive scandals in one archdiocese, a mother complained to the archbishop that her altar-boy son had been sexually abused. The archbishop replied that such a wicked lie about one of his priests was a serious sin which ought to be taken straight to confession. Later, the state of the archdiocese was objectively examined by an independent commission – which was presided over by an Anglican – and worse was revealed; like vice-rings organized by clergy for the procuring of boys. When the notorious Mount Cashel Orphanage first came under scrutiny, a boy told a policeman of his experience of abuse, and the policeman promised to protect the boy if he stuck with his story and went public. When he returned to headquarters, the policeman was told that it would be bad for his career prospects if he went on with his investigation, and protected the boy; did not the Christian Brothers enjoy the very highest reputation in the educational system of their province? Such is the flight from insight, when buttressed with institutional power. Perhaps one can't expect the Catholic Church, as an empirical institution, to behave better, and avoid the flight from insight more, than other human institutions; what is heartbreaking is when she behaves considerably worse than the average, and avoids insight into it more sedulously.

In their book *The Addictive Organization*, Anne Schaefer and Diane Fassell state it as a rule that the higher the ideals officially represented by an institution, the worse its conduct of its internal affairs, and, one would add, the more ingrained the flight from insight. One layman, who had been working devotedly for the

church all his life, felt compelled by his conscience to lapse when the truth about the Newfoundland church was revealed. What he wanted, he said, was another organization with just the same beliefs, but without the atrocious corruption, and flight from insight with regard to the corruption, which seemed endemic to the Roman Catholic Church. He was wrong, in my view; but it would be more wrong not to afford him a measure of sympathy. I ought in honesty to add a story about my own flight from insight with regard to this matter. I remarked to a professor of social work, who was an ex-priest, that it was a relief to be sure that things were not as bad elsewhere as in the archdiocese under discussion. He replied, "Whatever gave you that idea?" With regard to the Gulag, devout Russian communists were wont to say, "I am sure that most of the prisoners deserved all that they got. I do think they made a mistake, though, with regard to Uncle Vanya." It would be intolerable to suppose, that the case one happened to know something about was anything but an exception.

I would be more than happy if the Church would publicly make a priority of counteracting the flight from insight, particularly in regard to her own attitudes and practices as an institution within the world. The Pope made an excellent start, I should say, on his recent visit to the United States of America, when he made a frank apology to the victims of the sex-scandals there.

# INTERSUBJECTIVITY IN THE THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN AND IN COGNITIVE SCIENCE

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## 1. Introduction

Sometimes readers of Bernard J. F. Lonergan's works, having only a smattering of the content of *Insight*,<sup>1</sup> express their wonder about such a monumental work, written on human understanding, intellectual and rational activities, and about the achievements of self-appropriation, critical realism, objectivity, metaphysics of the being proportionate to human knowing, possibility of ethics, affirmation of God's existence, account and solution of the problem of evil, gained by the author through his analysis of insight as activity and insight as knowledge. However, such readers express also their discomfort about what, according to their opinion, is a deficiency of Lonergan's thought, that is, a closure of the subject as described by him, a lack of openness to the intersubjective domain which is so important both in philosophical reflections and in correct human praxis. It is also well known how some threads of postmodern thought have engaged a deep critique of the emphasis on subject's autonomy, which has been proper to modern thought.<sup>2</sup>

As, on the contrary, more accurate readers know, such an opinion on Lonergan's works do not correspond to his true and complete view. In fact, not only in *Insight*, but also in other books and several papers, he is dealing with intersubjectivity both at the descriptive level, when he gives examples of intersubjective encounters, and at the theoretical level, when he discusses the role that such encounters, either genuine or biased, play in the shaping of human life, either in a fully developed or in a faulty way.

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 3, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992 (first edition 1957).

<sup>2</sup> See R. Schreier, "La teologia postmoderna e oltre in una Chiesa mondiale", Italian transl., in R. Gibellini, ed., *Prospettive Teologiche per il XX Secolo*, Queriniana, Brescia 2003, pp. 373-388.



This point may be re-considered also within the background of the present interest of cognitive science in the so called second-person perspective, proper to interpersonal relations, which has been added to the third-person perspective, proper to the objectification of other subjects, and to the first-person perspective, proper to the elusiveness of consciousness.

Thus, the present work is divided into three parts.

The first part will deal with the analysis of several points of Lonergan's works, where his thought is applied to the topic of intersubjectivity, from the points of view of the phenomenology of spontaneous intersubjective feelings and reactions, their role for self-emergence, interpersonal relationships, and common enterprises, their interaction with other levels of knowledge.

The second part will deal with recent acquisitions of cognitive science on this topic, gained through the study of neural networks underlying intersubjective actions and the understanding of such actions by subjects themselves, as well as the study of the social behaviour of non-human and human primates, psychological traits shaping social encounters, syndromes of deficits of intersubjective functions.

The third part will deal with the category "Lonergan and ...", envisaged by F.E. Crowe,<sup>3</sup> and applied here as "Lonergan and intersubjectivity in cognitive science." At the end, there will be considered critically the openness of horizon that Lonergan's perspective can give to a cognitive science interested in the study not only of simple spontaneous intersubjective situations, but also of the full development of human interpersonal capabilities.

## 2. Intersubjectivity in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan

Let us consider now several works, even though not all the works, where Lonergan is treating the theme of intersubjectivity.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1. *Insight*

In chapter 7 of *Insight*, Lonergan is dealing extensively with intersubjective spontaneity within the context of community. In this respect, he clearly states that a person 'is no Leibnizian monad,'<sup>5</sup> but a social animal, grown in the field of one's parent's affection, living in community 'having its obscure origins'<sup>6</sup> in

<sup>3</sup> See F.E. Crowe, "The Genus 'Lonergan and ...' and Feminism", in Crowe, *Developing the Lonergan Legacy. Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, M. Vertin, ed., University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2004, pp. 142-163 (original 1995, in C. Crysedale, ed., *Lonergan and Feminism*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, pp. 13-32).

<sup>4</sup> Such works of B.J.F. Lonergan are successively considered here not according to their year of composition or publication, but to the number of the (either published, or forthcoming) *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (CWL) to which they belong.

<sup>5</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 237, 240; see also chapter 15, p. 503.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

spontaneous intersubjectivity, such as a ‘family with its circle of relatives and its accretion of friends,’ where important roles are played by the bonds ‘of mother and child, man and wife, father and son,’ where ‘a sense of belonging together provides the dynamic premise for common enterprise, for mutual aid and succour, for the sympathy that augments joys and divides sorrows.’<sup>7</sup> In particular, ‘the bonds of intersubjectivity make the experience of each resonate to the experience of others.’ However, ‘besides this elementary communion,’ there are also ‘common ways, common manners, common undertakings, common commitments’ which are generated and implemented by ‘a drive to understand and an insistence on behaving intelligently,’<sup>8</sup> while such intersubjective spontaneity – the efficacy of which ‘diminishes [...] with distance in place or time’<sup>9</sup> – and such ‘intelligently devised social order’ may result in a dialectical tension.<sup>10</sup> At the end of chapter 7, after having recalled, ‘From the beginning we have been directing our attention to an event that occurs within consciousness,’ Lonergan clarifies that his method ‘has to be able to deal [...] not only with the data within a single consciousness but also with the relations between different conscious subjects, between conscious subjects and their milieu or environment, and between consciousness and its neural basis.’<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, according to Lonergan, human development, as treated in chapter 15, may be prompted on the organic, psychic, and intellectual levels: to the psychic level pertain ‘intersubjectivity, [...], the sharing of feeling in laughter and lamenting,’ in which a person functions in accord with the development of perceptiveness, emotional responses, sentiments.<sup>12</sup>

In chapter 17, Lonergan clarifies that it is in the intersubjective community where self-knowledge of a human being occurs.<sup>13</sup> He further affirms: ‘The mere presence of another releases in the dynamism of sensitive consciousness a modification in the flow of feelings and emotions, images and memories, attitudes and sentiments; but words possess their own retinues of associated representations and affects, and so the addition of speech to presence brings about a specialized, directed modification of intersubjective reaction and response.’<sup>14</sup>

Also when he treats, in the Epilogue, the supernatural level of human development, that adds to the biological, psychic, and intellectual levels and is characterized by faith, hope, and charity, Lonergan points out the intensification of

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241; see also pp. 653, 659-660, 749.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 559.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 577.

‘man’s intersubjective awareness of the suffering and the needs of mankind,’ noting that ‘this transformation of [...] intersubjectivity penetrates to the physiological level’ even though ‘the clear instances appear only in the intensity of mystical experience.’<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2. *Collection*

In “Finality, Love, Marriage,” of 1943, Lonergan affirms that love is ‘the principle of union between different subjects,’ spanning from ‘the love of friends pursuing in common a common goal’ to ‘the fulfilment of union with God.’<sup>16</sup>

In “The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World,” of 1951, after having reminded that the lives of human beings ‘are not isolated but solidary,’ he summarizes the correspondence between three levels of community and three components of knowing and of the good: intersubjective community corresponding to experience and desire, civil community corresponding to intellectual insights and the good of order, cultural community (cosmopolis) corresponding to judgments of value; the basis of intersubjective community ‘is spontaneous tendency [and its] manifestation is an elemental feeling of belonging together [while its] nucleus is family [and its] expansion is the clan, the tribe, the nation.’<sup>17</sup>

In “Cognitional Structure,” of 1964, Lonergan writes on ‘the collective subject referred to by “we”’: its principal constituent is the ‘collective responsibility for common or complementary action’; its condition of possibility is communication, and principally the one in which ‘every movement, every word, every deed reveal what the subject is. They reveal it to others, and the others, in the self-revelation that is their response, obliquely reveal to the intelligent subject what he is [... and it is in] our living in common with others that we come to know ourselves’: this ‘psychic interchange of mutual presence’ constitutes an ‘interpersonal situation.’<sup>18</sup>

In “Dimensions of Meaning,” of 1965, when treating the phenomenology of intersubjectivity he describes how a subject receives the revelation of the incarnate spirit of another person in an immediate way just by the bodily presence (with countenance, gesture, stance) of that person, and similarly how the response of the subject affects the subjectivity of the other person.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.3. *Understanding and Being*

In lecture 4, “Common Sense,” of *Understanding and Being*, of 1958, when treating ‘human communication [...] that stands on a series of levels,’ Lonergan

<sup>15</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 763.

<sup>16</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage”, in *Collection*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 4, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1993, pp. 17-52, at p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World”, in *Collection*, pp. 108-113, at p. 109.

<sup>18</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure”, in *Collection*, pp. 205-221, at pp. 219-220.

<sup>19</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “Dimensions of Meaning”, in *Collection*, pp. 232-245, at pp. 242-243.

quotes the sensitive basis for the intersubjective communication that ‘takes place through signs, through the human body’ and ‘perhaps is most intense in mother and child.’<sup>20</sup>

In “Discussion 1,” he describes the type of understanding of people one can have in ordinary intersubjective living: it is the insight arising when one is self-involved and by the slightest sign one knows the moods of other people.<sup>21</sup>

In “Discussion 5,” he says that intersubjectivity has to do with concrete, recurrent, human situations, such as ‘the relations between persons, mother and child, husband and wife, father and child.’<sup>22</sup> He distinguishes also between the concern of the whole human being, including not only the pure desire to know, but also sensitivity, intersubjectivity, affectivity, at one side, and ‘this tiny little thread of pure desire to know that is found in us at times [...] when absolutely necessary you’ll get down and think out a problem,’ at the other side.<sup>23</sup>

#### 2.4. *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*

In “Method in Catholic Theology,” of 1959, Lonergan describes the stages in the development of human understanding. First, there is the intersubjective understanding, by which a symbolic intelligibility is grasped and a person is known ‘not as object, but as another subject, transparent in smile’ and in other bodily signs; it is ‘the understanding of mother and child, of Martin Buber’s “I and Thou”, of Heidegger’s *Mitsein*.’ Second, grafted upon this base there is the understanding of common sense, which utilizes language. Third, ‘at a late stage in the development of the individual and of the race’ there is the understanding systematically, when one asks for a method leading to complete understanding.<sup>24</sup> Analogously, there is an earlier implicit understanding, ‘in the mode of intersubjectivity, of symbolic apprehension, of common sense,’ of what later is understood systematically in theology and then is transformed back ‘into the more immediate modes of intersubjectivity, symbol, and common sense’ during preaching. Moreover, while the intersubjective mode of understanding is legitimate and necessary in some cases, if applied to the apprehension of the universe it will result ‘in a mythical personification of everything.’<sup>25</sup>

In “Time and Meaning,” of 1962, treating the varieties of meaning, Lonergan distinguishes intersubjective, symbolic, incarnate, artistic, and linguistic varieties.

<sup>20</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being. The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, E.A. Morelli and M.D. Morelli, eds, CWL 5, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1990, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>24</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “Method in Catholic Theology”, in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, R.C. Croken, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 6, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1996, pp. 29-53, at p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

Referring to intersubjectivity, he quotes *The Nature of Sympathy* of Max Scheler, and refers to a personal experience of a sudden sense of unity with another person preceding every sense of distinction: one day, when he was walking near a ramp leading to Borghese Gardens in Rome, a small child was running coming down the ramp and tumbled, and Lonergan spontaneously ‘moved forward before taking any thought at all, as if to pick up the child,’ although he ‘was a good twenty feet away’; he notes that a shriek ‘does not merely startle us but also frightens us.’<sup>26</sup> The smile is reported – as it is several other times, and probably in reference to a work of F.J.J. Buytendijk – as a particular form of intersubjectivity: it is not simply muscular movement, but has a natural, spontaneous, not univocal meaning, that cannot be transposed in words but is on the immediate level of relationships and makes the smile be perceived easily while at the same time it reveals the smiling subject; a smiling person ‘is *in communication with* [Lonergan’s italic] another, and the communication is something that antedates the distinction between sign and what is signified.’<sup>27</sup>

In “Exegesis and Dogma,” of 1963, he distinguishes again several preintellectual, preconceptual levels of meaning: the intersubjective, symbolic, incarnate, artistic. ‘To grasp them, to appreciate them, we have to feel our way into them, enter into them as it were, reenact them in ourselves. It is in the concrete, by some type of reproduction in ourselves, that meaning on the psychic level can be attained.’<sup>28</sup>

In “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,” of 1963, he considers subjects ‘not singly as so many isolated monads but as a “we,”’ ‘summed into the intersubjectivity of a community.’<sup>29</sup>

In “The Analogy of Meaning,” of 1963, after quoting again Max Scheler’s *The Nature of Sympathy*, his experience with the child tumbling near the ramp at Borghese Gardens in Rome is reported again: he ‘leaned forward to prevent the child from falling, although it was a quite useless gesture’; he remarks also that ‘a scream not only startles us but frightens us.’ Then he reminds us that ‘St Thomas illustrates the mystical body [...] by the fact that, as the arm automatically raises to protect the head against a blow, so there is a similar sympathy between human beings.’ On the level of intersubjective meaning, ‘the bodily presence [of another] is the presence of the other to me’: ‘the soul expresses itself through the body.’<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 94-121, at pp. 96-97.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 97-98 and note 4.

<sup>28</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Exegesis and Dogma,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 142-159, at p. 151.

<sup>29</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 160-182, at p. 170.

<sup>30</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Analogy of Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 183-213, at pp. 187-188.

The intersubjective meaning is defined as ‘not conceptual, not verbal, but still very real, very vital, and very effective.’<sup>31</sup> The meaning constitutive of human knowing is a compound of the intersubjective, symbolic, and incarnate meanings on the level of sense, and the meaning on the level of understanding and the meaning on the level of judgment.<sup>32</sup> On the psychic level there are the intersubjective, incarnate, symbolic, and artistic meanings, which influence literary meaning; the scientific, philosophic, and theological types of meaning are technical meanings.<sup>33</sup>

In “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” of 1964, it is stated that ‘the vital interchange of mutual presence,’ the interpersonal relations in intersubjective situations make that two subjects are not totally separate, and besides ‘I and ‘thou,’ there is ‘we’ as a viewpoint for living.’<sup>34</sup> A crucial question is asked to Lonergan: ‘How can one hope to have a common subjectivity if the basis of his experience, the experiencing of experiences, is an individual thing?’ Lonergan answers not denying individual experience, but affirming that there is also intersubjectivity: ‘a shriek not only startles but frightens us,’ he observes, as he did several other times. Max Scheler’s *The Nature of Sympathy* is defined a fundamental work. The personal experience near the ramp of Borghese Gardens in Rome is reported again: he was twenty feet away and spontaneously leaned forward to prevent a child from falling ‘as if [the child was] two feet away.’ Again Lonergan observes that, just as, if one is going to be struck, one raises the hands without thinking, and if one is going to lose balance, there are spontaneous reactions, so there are also spontaneous intersubjective reactions, which ‘are prior to the level of distinction between the “I” and “thou.”’ The further question asked him, on the possible amount of intersubjective experience of a person, according to Lonergan should be a question for empirical psychology.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.5. *Topics in Education*

In chapter 7, “The Theory of Philosophic Differences,” of *Topics in Education* of 1959, Lonergan recalls the contemporary ‘great emphasis upon intersubjectivity,’ quoting also the works of Max Scheler and Martin Buber. As an example of subjectivity, he reports the phenomenology of a smile: a smile has a meaning conveyed through muscular movements. Such meaning is an original phenomenon, an *Urphänomenon*, which is not learned, but understood simply from one’s ‘own smiling and from seeing the smiling of others.’ It is not univocal. The smile is the expression of the whole person, ‘prior to the differentiation of consciousness’; it recognizes the existence of, and determines, the interpersonal situation. The

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>33</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>34</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, pp. 214-243, at p. 235.

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 241-242.

limitation of intersubjectivity lies in the generation of ‘mythic consciousness,’ when the mode of apprehension of the universe is exclusively intersubjective and everything is personified, as in primitive consciousness.<sup>36</sup>

In chapter 9, “Art,” the subject is characterized through intersubjectivity (exemplified by the phenomenology of smile), by which he/she has a world-with-him/her of other persons with whom the subject is aware of living.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.6. *The Triune God: Systematics*

In the context of Question 30 “Is it appropriate that the divine persons be sent, the Son visibly and the Spirit invisibly?” of *The Triune God: Systematics*, of 1964, Lonergan recalls that interpersonal relationships have a priority in their mutual cooperation with other elements for the constitution of the good of order, and that ‘besides a rational intellect and will, there is in our very sensibility an intersubjectivity that disposes us to interpersonal relationships [*in ipsa nostra sensibilitate per quamdam intersubiektivitatem ad relationes interpersonales disponimur*], as is clearly evident from the phenomena of presence, sympathy, transference, and the like.’<sup>38</sup>

## 2.7. *A Second Collection*

In “The Subject,” of 1968, Lonergan points out that existential reflection is a starting point to further reflection on the subject ‘as intersubjective, as encountering others and becoming “I” to “Thou” to move on to “We” through acquaintance, companionship, collaboration, friendship, love.’<sup>39</sup>

In “Belief: Today’s Issue,” of 1968, Lonergan mentions ‘the intersubjective meanings of smile and frown, tone and gesture, evasion and silence.’<sup>40</sup>

In “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” of 1968, he repeats with little variations ‘the intersubjective meanings of smiles and frowns, speech and silence, intonation and gesture.’<sup>41</sup>

In “Natural Knowledge of God,” of 1968, while questioning if a person can be an object, and denying that it is possible from the viewpoint of the naive realist, Kantian, or positivist, but acknowledging that persons, that we know and love, are objects ‘toward which self-transcending heads,’ Lonergan denies that persons

<sup>36</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Topics in Education. The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, R.M. Doran and F.E. Crowe, eds, CWL 10, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1993, pp. 165-168.

<sup>37</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>38</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, transl. by M.G. Shields from *De Deo Trino: Pars Systematica* (1964), R.M. Doran and H.D. Monsour, eds, CWL 12, Toronto University Press, Toronto 2007, pp. 492-495.

<sup>39</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Subject,” in *A Second Collection*, W.F.J. Ryan and B.J. Tyrrell, eds, (CWL 13 forthcoming), Darton, Longmans & Todd, London 1974, pp. 69-86, at p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Belief: Today’s Issue,” in *A Second Collection*, pp. 87-99, at p. 91.

<sup>41</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” in *A Second Collection*, pp. 101-116, at p. 102.

are known ‘only intersubjectively,’ as Max Scheler maintains: in fact, as there is a difference between ‘consciousness of the self as subject [and] and objectification of the self in conception and judging,’ so there is a difference between intersubjectivity, proper to a subject-to-subject relation in speaking and acting, and objectification of intersubjectivity, proper to the speaking about ourselves and acting on one another when ‘we are not just subjects, not subjects as subjects, but subjects as objects.’<sup>42</sup>

In “The Example of Gibson Winter,” of 1970, the self is described not as isolated, but ‘as emergent within an intersubjective matrix, as discovering the meaning of its gesture in the response made by another to the gesture, as coming to consciousness of the other and the self within communication.’<sup>43</sup>

### 2.8. *Method in Theology*

In chapter 3, “Meaning,” § 1, “Intersubjectivity,” of *Method in Theology*, the experience with the tumbling child at the ramp near Borghese Gardens in Rome – that we have seen he described with details in “Time and Meaning” of 1962, “The Analogy of Meaning” of 1963, and “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing” of 1964 (see, above, § 2.4.) – is present again in this work of 1972 when he states concisely, after a deep, precise, and detailed introspection, that, ‘just as one spontaneously raises one’s arm to ward off a blow against one’s head, so with the same spontaneity one reaches out to save another from falling’ with a ‘not deliberate, but spontaneous’ help which is adverted ‘not before it occurs but while it is occurring’; he comments that ‘it is as if “we” were members of one another prior to our distinctions of each from the others’: he makes it clear that it is an ‘earlier “we,”’ that is ‘prior to the “we” that results from the mutual love of an “I” and a “thou”’; however, in accord with Max Scheler intersubjectivity is acknowledged to occur also in ‘community of feeling, fellow-feeling, psychic contagion, and emotional identification.’<sup>44</sup>

In § 2, “Intersubjective Meaning,” of the same chapter, the smile, of which the phenomenology is described, is taken (together with ‘all the facial or bodily movements or pauses, to all the variations of voice in tone, pitch, volume, and in silence’) as an example of a special communication of meaning, the intersubjective communication of meaning: this communication is different from both the intersubjectivity of action and of feeling, at one side, and the expression of linguistic meaning, at the other side.<sup>45</sup>

In chapter 10, “Dialectic,” § 6, “Dialectic as Method,” it is noted that as one is enabled by self-transcendence to know others and judge them in a fair way, so we

<sup>42</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “Natural Knowledge of God,” in *A Second Collection*, pp. 117-133, at p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Example of Gibson Winter,” in *A Second Collection*, pp. 189-192, at p. 190.

<sup>44</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (CWL 14 forthcoming), Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1972, pp. 57-59.

<sup>45</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 59-61.



know ourselves and we refine the apprehension of values through the knowledge and appreciation of others.<sup>46</sup>

In chapter 14, “Communication,” § 2, “Common Meaning and Ontology,” the process of genesis of common meaning shared by different persons is analysed. On the elementary level, such process arises ‘when, on the basis of already existing intersubjectivity, the self makes a gesture, the other makes an interpretative response, and the self discovers in the response the effective meaning of his[/her] gesture. So from intersubjectivity through gesture and interpretation there arises common understanding.’<sup>47</sup>

### 2.9. *A Third Collection*

In “Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time,” of 1975, while commenting on the term “Emerging Consciousness,” Lonergan reports the different accounts of the genesis of consciousness lead by different lines of inquiry: among them, ‘the social psychologist, George Herbert Mead, has stressed the social origin of one’s awareness of self. Personalists have urged that the notions of “I” and “you” emerge as differentiations of a prior “we” or “us.”’<sup>48</sup> This personalists’ opinion is echoed by what Lonergan wrote several times on spontaneous intersubjective reactions, which are prior to the level of the distinction between the “I” and the “thou.”

### 2.10. *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*

In “The World Mediated by Meaning,” of 1972, intersubjectivity is clearly defined as persons spontaneously taking care of one another, just as of oneself. This taking care is not deliberate, and is adverted only when it is occurring. ‘It is as if “we” were members of one another prior to our distinctions of each from the others.’ Besides intersubjectivity of action and feelings, there are numerous types of intersubjective communications of meaning, one example of which is smile: it is a combination of movements and meaning, and this meaning, which is not univocal but depends on the context, can be perceived easily and immediately.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.11. *According to other Authors*

We have seen above how deeply Lonergan has treated the theme of intersubjectivity in *Insight* – which some people judge a pure rationalist disquisition insistently centered only on self-appropriation of the subject – and how many

<sup>46</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>48</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time,” in *A Third Collection*, F.E. Crowe, ed., (CWL 16 forthcoming), Paulist Press, New York, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1985, pp. 55-73, at p. 56.

<sup>49</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “The World Mediated by Meaning,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, R.C. Croken and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 17, Toronto University Press, Toronto 2004, pp. 107-118, at pp. 110-111.

times he resumed it again in several others of his works, both of philosophical and theological tone; even better, it is on an intersubjective framework that self-appropriation is going to be performed. However, several further shorter passages on intersubjectivity by Lonergan have not been quoted now. Rather, few instances will be reported here of the reflections by other Authors on the significance of Lonergan's thought on intersubjectivity.

Frederick E. Crowe in "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," when treating human development according to Lonergan, notes that in development dynamism there is an upward movement, that is the *eros* of the mind, the pure desire to know, the subject as operator, and a downward movement, that is characterized not only by subjectivity, but also by intersubjectivity, spanning from spontaneous intersubjectivity to persons in community.<sup>50</sup> In "Rhyme and Reason: On Lonergan's Foundations for Works of the Spirit," Crowe observes that Lonergan, in his turn to the subject, 'aligns himself with the development of the last two centuries'<sup>51</sup> in which, according to Lonergan himself in "Natural Knowledge of God," 'an insistence on the subject' attempted to 'compensate for Kant's excessive attention to sensible objects,' as it is apparent in Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche in various ways, as well as in the phenomenological studies of Husserl, Scheler, and various forms of existentialism, which 'have set up [...] a not-to-be-objectified inner world of subjects [...].'<sup>52</sup>

Robert M. Doran<sup>53</sup> reminds us that, according to Lonergan's *Insight*, in individual bias the self-centered spontaneity interferes not only with intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility, but also with normal intersubjective spontaneity,<sup>54</sup> while in group bias such intersubjective spontaneity interferes with those practical insights that are not to the advantage of one's own group.<sup>55</sup> On its turn, the dramatic bias 'introduces a dialectical element [...] into the intersubjectivity that constitutes the primordial infrastructure of the social order, and the personal relationships that constitute the flowering of the same order.'<sup>56</sup> In the dialectic of community the two poles are the practical intelligence and 'the intersubjectivity that prepares the

<sup>50</sup> See F.E. Crowe, "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value," in Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, M. Vertin, ed., The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC 1989, pp. 344-359, at p. 350.

<sup>51</sup> F.E. Crowe, "Rhyme and Reason: On Lonergan's Foundations for Works of the Spirit", in Crowe, *Developing the Lonergan Legacy. Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, M. Vertin, ed., University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2004, pp. 314-331, at pp. 329-330.

<sup>52</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, "Natural Knowledge of God," at pp. 122-123.

<sup>53</sup> See R.M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990, p. 34.

<sup>54</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 244-247.

<sup>55</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 247-250.

<sup>56</sup> R.M. Doran, *What is Systematic Theology?*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2005, p. 164.

way for the function of the topmost operator.<sup>57</sup> The spontaneous intersubjectivity is one of the constitutive principles of the dialectic of community, as well as one of the elements constitutive of society.<sup>58</sup>

In the editorial note *e* of “The Role of Catholic University in the Modern World,” the Editors of *Collection*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, when commenting on Lonergan’s statements on three levels of community, the first of which is intersubjective community, note that ‘the concept of community is enormously important for Lonergan, a fact that is missed in some criticism, probably because of his insistence on interiority.’<sup>59</sup>

According to Michele Saracino – in the work where she compares the thought of Lonergan and of Levinas – communal relationships are important for Lonergan, and transcendence does not take place in isolation, but within a community and in the presence of God; authentic subjectivity, which is always in relation to another person and to community, lives in the tension between the spontaneous desire for intersubjectivity and the good of a larger order. Lonergan’s interpretation of intersubjectivity is based on both knowledge and self-surrender, while intersubjective relationships are a way out of one’s personal world. When dealing with the dramatic pattern of experience, Lonergan highlights the spontaneous intersubjectivity of each person, which is involved with, and responsible for, others. Lonergan’s cosmopolis is an intersubjective community engaged against bias, while his notion of solidarity deals with the humanity’s bearing both individual and communal burdens. ‘Affectively, the subject is shaped, molded, and positioned in relationship of solidarity with others,’ but injustice, sin, and evil are against the primordial solidarity, that one has always to rebuild. The bond of intersubjectivity is based in a feeling for the other, and the interest of Lonergan for the feelings that constitute the basis underneath intersubjectivity is acknowledged.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, William A. Mathews<sup>61</sup> reminds us of Lonergan’s remark on the structure of our knowing and doing, which states that ‘this structure is a matter of being attentive, being intelligent, being reasonable, being responsible; accordingly, there are four basic precepts that are independent of cultural differences. [...] since the actuation of the structure arises under social conditions and within cultural traditions, to the four there may be added a fifth, Acknowledge your historicity.’<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 170, 187.

<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 175, 189.

<sup>59</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World,” pp. 276-277.

<sup>60</sup> See M. Saracino, *On Being Human. A Conversation with Lonergan and Levinas*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 2003, pp. 81-82, 89, 177, 183, 187.

<sup>61</sup> See W.A. Mathews, “Consciousness According to Bernard Lonergan and Its Elusiveness,” this volume, §§ 1 and 3.

<sup>62</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response.” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, pp. 352-383, at p. 378.

Mathews thinks that such addition of a fifth transcendental precept could be assisted by the addition of intersubjective and narrative approaches. In particular, he suggests that the invitation to self-affirmation, made in *Insight*, 'be enlarged so that [...] the Other [may become] the object to be understood,' and '[t]he intersubjective approach will move the exercise of self-appropriation [...] into a generalized empirical method. The I of self-affirmation has to further understand itself directly in its relations with the others in its life: with you, him and her, and as a member of us in relation to them.' One has to note that in the enlarged intersubjective context outlined by Mathews there is included also the sharing with third persons of the relations with other third persons. In such an intersubjective context, a 'structured pedagogy [is needed] along the lines of courses in counselling and psychotherapy which insist on interpersonal encounters as part of the learning process.'

### 3. Intersubjectivity in Cognitive Science

Intersubjectivity has been defined as the process in which mental activity (that is, conscious awareness, emotions, cognitions, motives, interests, intentions) is transferred between minds (intermental coupling); it manifests itself as an immediate sympathetic awareness both of feelings, and of conscious, purposeful intelligence, pertaining to others; also social cooperation, on which the creation of a social reality depends, requires intersubjectively perceived signaling.<sup>63</sup> Each person is a single subjectivity, but the awareness of self is constructed through social interaction.<sup>64</sup>

Daniel Stern has explored the matrix, the phenomenology, and the function of intersubjectivity. He invites to pass from the viewpoint according to which intersubjectivity is a fact that may be realized in the long run, in particular circumstances, when two independent minds interact, to the viewpoint according to which each mind emerges completely only from an intersubjective matrix, and particularly in a two-way intersubjectivity, when one experiences him/herself by experiencing that another person experiences what s/he is experiencing. On the grounds of this assumption, one can also state that the very essence of the psychotherapeutic process is based on intersubjective relationships.<sup>65</sup>

The intersubjective transmission of mental contents is attained through dynamic forms of facial, vocal, and gestural emotional expressions. Such dynamic patterns

<sup>63</sup> See C. Trevarthen, "Intersubjectivity," in R.A. Wilson and F.C. Keil, eds, *The MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 1999, pp. 415-419.

<sup>64</sup> See C. Trevarthen, "The self born in intersubjectivity: The psychology of an infant communicating," in U. Neisser, ed., *The Perceived Self: Ecological and Interpersonal Sources of Self-Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1993, pp. 121-173.

<sup>65</sup> See D.N. Stern, *Il momento presente in psicoterapia e nella vita quotidiana*, Italian transl., Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2005, pp. 65, 68, 127 (English edition 2004).

are recognized and employed from birth (*i.e.* long before the intentional use of recognized objects is effective), and newborns are ready for, and need, mutually regulated intersubjective transactions.<sup>66</sup> Infants perceive persons as different from nonliving and non-human objects.<sup>67</sup> Later, language and other symbolic conventions enrich intersubjectivity; the intersubjective neural mechanisms of communication by language may have evolved from the systems of mirror neurons.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.1. Processes at Lower Level

Mirror neurons have been found in some areas of the central nervous system of apes and humans; they are active both if an individual performs an action with a hand, and if the individual sees the same action performed with a hand by another individual of the same or the other zoological species.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the comprehension of the other's action is obtained through the simulation of the other's action.<sup>70</sup>

Such neurons are active also if the individual sees another's action directed towards an object, but a screen is hiding the final part of the action itself: thus, it is inferred the purpose of the hidden action;<sup>71</sup> this means that an intention recognition has taken place at neural level,<sup>72</sup> and such capability arises still in pre-verbal children.<sup>73</sup> Such neurons are active also if the individual does not see the other's action, but hears its connected sound (audio-visual mirror neurons),<sup>74</sup> and also if the individual performs an action not with a hand, but with a foot, or the mouth, and sees the other performing the same action with a foot, or the mouth.<sup>75</sup>

In humans, both the imitation of the face expression of a basic emotion (fear,

<sup>66</sup> See G. Kugiumutzakis, "Neonatal imitation in the intersubjective companion space," in S. Bråten, ed., *Intersubjective Communication and Emotion in Early Ontogeny*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, pp. 63-88.

<sup>67</sup> See M. Legerstee, "A review of animate-nonanimate distinction in infancy: Implications for models of social and cognitive knowing," in *Early Development and Parenting* 1 (1992) 59-67.

<sup>68</sup> See G. Rizzolatti and M.A. Arbib, "Language within our grasp," in *Trends in Neurosciences* 21 (1998) 188-194.

<sup>69</sup> See V. Gallese, L. Fadiga, L. Fogassi and G. Rizzolatti, "Action recognition in the premotor cortex," in *Brain* 119 (1996) 593-609; G. Rizzolatti, L. Fadiga, V. Gallese and L. Fogassi, "Premotor cortex and the recognition of motor actions," in *Cognitive Brain Research* 3 (1996) 131-141.

<sup>70</sup> See V. Gallese and A. Goldman, "Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind-reading," in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 12 (1998) 493-501.

<sup>71</sup> See M.A. Umiltà, E. Kohler, V. Gallese, L. Fogassi, L. Fadiga, C. Keysers and G. Rizzolatti, "I know what you are doing': A neurophysiological study," in *Neuron* 32 (2001) 91-101.

<sup>72</sup> See S.J. Blakemore and J. Decety, "From the perception of action to the understanding of intention," in *Nature Neuroscience* 2 (2001) 561-567.

<sup>73</sup> See A.N. Meltzoff, "Understanding the intention of others. Re-enactment of intended acts by eighteen month-old children," in *Developmental Psychology* 3 (1995) 838-854.

<sup>74</sup> See E. Kohler, C. Keysers, M.A. Umiltà, L. Fogassi, V. Gallese and G. Rizzolatti, "Hearing sounds, understanding actions: Action representation in mirror neurons," in *Science* 297 (2002) 846-848.

<sup>75</sup> See G. Buccino, F. Binkowski, G.R. Fink, L. Fadiga, L. Fogassi, V. Gallese, R.J. Seitz, K. Zilles, G. Rizzolatti and H.-J. Freund, "Action observation activates premotor and parietal areas in a somatotopic manner: a fMRI study," in *European Journal of Neuroscience* 13 (2001) 400-404.

anger, joy, disgust, surprise, sadness) of another subject, and the observation of that face expression of another subject activate brain structures implied both in perception and in production of basic emotion through a mirror-type mechanism.<sup>76</sup> The same happens both when a subject feels a disgust, and when he/she observes the disgust experience of another subject;<sup>77</sup> it is a case of unmediated resonance,<sup>78</sup> *i.e.* a direct experience of a body state, connected to an emotion, through the mechanism of simulation (in the sense of imitation) producing in the observer the same body state that is observed.

The same brain area is activated both when a subject is touched on a part of the body, *e.g.* a leg, and when he/she observes another subject being touched on the same body part;<sup>79</sup> both when a subject experiences a pain stimulus, and when sees the same stimulus being applied to another subject;<sup>80</sup> and even both when a subject experiences the pain stimulus, and sees a signal which symbolizes the application of the same stimulus to another subject.<sup>81</sup>

The explicit cognitive interpretation of an emotion is phylogenetically more recent, but it needs a basis in direct, non-propositional experience. This old function is accomplished through the neurons which are adjacent to neurons responsible for movement, and are firing with their same activity pattern, *e.g.* both when an individual performs with a hand an oriented action, and when he/she observes the same action performed by another individual. Thus, the systems of mirror neurons have a role for both execution and representation: the equivalence of neural representations of motor actions both of the subject and of the other is the basis of the possibility of sharing the feel of another's action without the need of imitating that action. Through the activity of mirror neurons, models of self/other are produced at a functional level: they are related to actions and (perceptive and emotional) experiences of both the self and the other, *i.e.* independently of the source of the experience. That corresponds, from the phenomenological viewpoint, in the experiential sharing, and in the feeling of familiarity, of belonging together.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> See L. Carr, M. Iacoboni, M.-C. Dubeau, J.C. Mazziotta and G.L. Lenzi, "Neural mechanisms of empathy in humans: A relay from neural systems for imitation to limbic areas," in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 100/9 (2003) 5497-5502.

<sup>77</sup> See B. Wicker, C. Keysers, J. Plailly, J.-P. Royet, V. Gallese and G. Rizzolatti, "Both of us disgusted in my insula: The common neural basis of seeing and feeling disgust," in *Neuron* 40 (2003) 655-664.

<sup>78</sup> See A.I. Goldman and C.S. Sripada, "Simulationist models of face-based emotion recognition," in *Cognition* 94/3 (2005) 193-213.

<sup>79</sup> See C. Keysers, B. Wicker, V. Gazzola, J.-L. Anton, L. Fogassi and V. Gallese, "A touching sight: SII/PV activation during observation and experience of touch," in *Neuron* 42 (2004) 335-346.

<sup>80</sup> See W.D. Hutchinson, K.D. Davis, A.M. Lozano, R.R. Tasker and J.O. Dostrovsky, "Pain related neurons in the human cingulate cortex," in *Nature Neuroscience* 2 (1999) 403-405.

<sup>81</sup> See T. Singer, B. Seymour, J. O'Doherty, H. Kaube, R.J. Dolan and C.D. Frith, "Empathy for pain involves affective but not the sensory components of pain," in *Science* 303 (2004) 1157-1162.

<sup>82</sup> See V. Gallese, "The 'Shared Manifold' hypothesis: From mirror neurons to empathy," in *Journal of*

However, at this point there arises the problem of distinguishing between the self and the other at the neural level, besides the above neural mechanism underlying the us-centred experience.<sup>83</sup> Thus, while some areas of the central nervous system are implied in the representation of mental states of both the self and the other,<sup>84</sup> different areas are implied in that of mental states of the self alone,<sup>85</sup> and still different areas are implied in the representation of the other alone.<sup>86</sup> Human empathy may arise if the subjective experience of similarity between the feelings expressed by oneself and by others is held without losing the awareness of which feelings belong to each subject; shared neural representations, self-awareness, mental flexibility, and emotion regulation are the components which intervene in the empathy process.<sup>87</sup>

### 3.2. Processes at Higher Level

A further step, with respect to the distinction between the self and the other, is the capability of attributing mental states to oneself and to the other, *i.e.* of having a “theory of mind.”

For what it concerns the development of such capability, a child has concepts about perception, desire, emotion before the age of three (precocious mentalism).<sup>88</sup> At the age of three she has beliefs, but does not understand which is their source, nor (in many cases) the fact that there could be wrong beliefs and a difference between appearance and reality,<sup>89</sup> but understands already that desires can be unfulfilled.<sup>90</sup> At the age of four there occurs a fundamental turning point and a new cognitive capability arises: the child understands that others may have wrong beliefs,<sup>91</sup> manipulates others’ beliefs, discriminates between supposition

*Consciousness Studies* 8/5-7 (2001) 33-50.

<sup>83</sup> See J. Decety and J.A. Sommerville, “Shared representations between self and other: A social cognitive neuroscience view,” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7(12) (2003) 527-533.

<sup>84</sup> See I. Castelli, “Leggere la mente nel cervello. Una panoramica sullo studio dei correlati neurologici della teoria della mente con tecniche di *brain imaging*,” in O. Liverta Sempio, A. Marchetti and F. Lecciso, eds, *Teoria della mente tra normalità e patologia*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2005, pp. 289-307.

<sup>85</sup> See K. Voegeley, P. Bussfeld, A. Newen, S. Hermann, F. Happé, P. Falkai, W. Maier, N.J. Shah, G.R. Fink and K. Zilles, “Mind reading: Neural mechanisms of theory of mind and self perspective,” in *Neuroimage* 14 (2001) 170-181.

<sup>86</sup> See H.L. Gallagher and C.D. Frith, “Functional imaging of ‘theory of mind,’” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7/2 (2003) 77-83.

<sup>87</sup> See J. Decety and Ph.L. Jackson, “The functional architecture of human empathy,” in *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Review* 3/2 (2004) 71-100.

<sup>88</sup> See K. Bartsch and H.M. Wellman, *Children Talk About Mind*, Oxford University Press, New York 1995.

<sup>89</sup> See A. Gopnik and J.W. Astington, “Children’s understanding of representational change and its relation to the understanding of false belief and the appearance-reality distinction,” in *Child Development* 59 (1988) 26-37.

<sup>90</sup> See H.M. Wellman and J.D. Woolley, “From simple desires to ordinary beliefs: The early development of everyday psychology,” in *Cognition* 3 (1990) 245-275.

<sup>91</sup> See I. Castelli, “Leggere la mente nel cervello. Una panoramica sullo studio dei correlati neurologici

and knowledge, appreciates the fact that others could not know some particulars, discriminates between perceptually and conceptually based viewpoint.<sup>92</sup>

Having a “theory of mind,” a subject is able to understand that others have beliefs, desires, intentions (mental states), to interpret others’ mental contents as the cause of others’ behaviour, and to foresee others’ mental states and, thus, others’ behaviour.

The capability of performing inferences within a “theory of mind” should be due to the interaction between low level and high level cognitive mechanisms.

Low level mechanisms, which are functioning already before the age of three, allow to catch (in a rapid, automatic, unavoidable, pre-conceptual, stimulus-driven way) what does it mean to be an experiencing subject on the base of others’ intentions and emotions, directly interpreted from the perception of others’ movements, gestures, postures, face expressions, and contextualized behaviour.<sup>93</sup> The functional basic system of mirror neurons produces the experience of the self and of the others in an implicit, non-propositional way, and allows one to directly experience the meaning of actions and the intentions of others.

Later, when also high level mechanisms are functioning and there is the capability of having a “theory of mind,” the attribution of mental states takes place in an explicit way, by manipulating informational symbols according to syntactic rules of inferential logic. Thus, the “theory of mind”, *i.e.* the capability of interpreting mental contents as invisible cause of behaviours experienced in interpersonal relationships,<sup>94</sup> is at a higher level than the level of shared experience.

However, minding one’s own mind is difficult and develops later (at about 4-7 age) with respect to minding others’ minds, and requires a new self-metarepresentation for which the child’s own thoughts are recognized explicitly as representational.<sup>95</sup>

One has to note that brain areas which are active during the processing of thoughts on beliefs are different from those active in the processing of thoughts on seeing, feeling, willing, physical events, emotions, purposes, and are still different from those where mirror neurons are.<sup>96</sup>

della teoria della mente con tecniche di *brain imaging*.”

<sup>92</sup> See I. Kern and E. Marbach, “Understanding the representational mind: A prerequisite for intersubjectivity,” in *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8/5-7 (2001) 69-82.

<sup>93</sup> See S. Gallagher, (2001) “The practice of mind: Theory, simulation, or interaction?,” in *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8/5-7 (2001) 83-108.

<sup>94</sup> See S. Baron-Cohen, A.M. Leslie and U. Frith, “Does the autistic child have a ‘theory of mind?’,” in *Cognition* 21 (1985) 37-46; O. Carruthers and P.K. Smith, eds, *Theories of Theories of Mind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK 1996.

<sup>95</sup> See R.J. Bogdan, “Why self-ascriptions are difficult and develop late,” in B.F. Malle and S.D. Hodges, eds, *Other Minds. How Humans Bridge the Divide between the Self and Others*, The Guilford Press, New York, London 2005, pp. 190-206.

<sup>96</sup> See H.L. Gallagher, F. Happé, N. Brunswick, P.C. Fletcher, U. Frith and C.D. Frith, “Reading the mind in cartoons and stories: an fMRI study of ‘theory of mind’ in verbal and nonverbal tasks,” in



To have a “theory of mind” it is important also to go beyond social cognition and realize the joint action, *e.g.* in baseball, in a piano duet, in the dance in couple.<sup>97</sup>

For what it concerns human language, it has a social basis and is linked to gestures; gestures become symbols expressing meaning when they implicitly arouse, in a subject performing them, the same response that they explicitly arouse in other subjects,<sup>98</sup> which means that the meaningfulness of a gesture made by a subject depends on a kind of auto-socialization of the subject, on her simulating in herself the social response of another subject.<sup>99</sup>

Mirror neurons, by participating in the imagery of the own gestures of the subject, could be the mechanism of this gestural self-response, which is new from the evolutionary viewpoint: the gestures of the subject activate the brain area that responds to intentional actions of another subject, her gestures included, and become a social stimulus.<sup>100</sup>

The crucial point for the connection thought-language-gesture is the fact that, in a family context, one’s own meaningful movements are treated as a social stimulus; such movements have to be used as an engine to prime the word in childrearing and infant care: a selective pressure is exerted, in particular, by adjusting one’s own symbolic signals to make them fit the viewpoint of the cared child.<sup>101</sup> ‘Gestures fuel speech.’<sup>102</sup>

For this reason, the vocalic game is important, in which the adult repeats and reinforces the spontaneous sounds produced by the child (phonatory capability); by this game, the child learns the communicative character of the sounds that she produces (relational capability), *i.e.* learns the basic elements of communicative interaction and especially what communication is. Later, the child produces proto-words, always more intentional and more full of meaning (semantic capability), to express what she was able to represent to herself even before the production of words. It is important to reinforce and direct towards an aim also the spontaneous,

*Neuropsychologia* 38/1 (2000) 11-21; R. Saxe and N. Kanwisher, “People thinking about thinking people. The role of the temporo-parietal junction in ‘theory of mind,’” in *Neuroimage* 19/4 (2003) 1835-1842; R. Saxe, S. Carey and N. Kanwisher, “Understanding other minds: Linking developmental psychology and functional neuroimaging,” in *Annual Review of Psychology* 55 (2004) 87-124.

<sup>97</sup> See N. Sebanz, H. Bekkering and G. Knoblich, “Joint action: Bodies and minds moving together,” in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 10 (2006) 70-76.

<sup>98</sup> See G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, edition and introduction by C.W. Morris, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1974, p. 47 (1934<sup>1</sup>). The philosopher and psychologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), quoted by D. McNeill, *Gesture and Thought*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London 1995, at p. 250, is quoted also by Lonergan: see, above, § 2.9.

<sup>99</sup> See D. McNeill, *Gesture and Thought*, p. 250.

<sup>100</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 256, *passim*.

primitive, and repeated gestures of the first activities of motor games; later, the child begins to put the various game actions together, creating new sequences, and to put also words together to create sentences (grammatical and syntactic capability).<sup>103</sup>

#### 4. “Lonergan and” Intersubjectivity in Cognitive Science

We have seen, through the above analysis, that not only both Lonergan and cognitive science have treated the topic of intersubjectivity, but also several points of the accounts of both Lonergan and cognitive science coincide.

However, the analysis of the topic “‘Lonergan and ...’ intersubjectivity in cognitive science” cannot be limited to the search of the points of convergence or, at limit, of identity between the views of this author and of this science on this topic. The category “Lonergan and ...” has a wider significance. It has been examined by Crowe, who considers it a case of ‘a thinker of the generalist type, whose ideas have applications in areas that [such thinker] never personally studied [...]; then we have the [...] task of discovering the relevance of [the thinker’s] ideas to those new areas, and pursuing their “application” [...] in ways [the thinker] never attempted. [...] It may indeed be possible to find in [the thinker] explicit ideas on [such area], but [...], independently of such good luck [...], we can still expect the fundamental character of his thinking to make it relevant to [such area].’<sup>104</sup>

Let us now recollect the main points of intersubjectivity expounded, and also reputedly expounded, in Lonergan’s writings above examined.

1. Lonergan is interested not only in the data within a single consciousness, but also in the relations between different conscious subjects, between conscious subjects and their milieu or environment, and between consciousness and its neural basis.
2. The person is not a Leibnizian monad, but a social animal.
3. The ‘obscure origin’ of interpersonal relations (in the most intense way, the interpersonal relations between mother and child), and of human sociality and social institutions lies in spontaneous intersubjectivity.
4. Due to intersubjectivity, the experience of everyone resonates with the experience of others.

There is an elemental feeling of belonging together.

Intersubjectivity implies a sudden sense of unity with another person, just as in the personal experience had once by Lonergan himself who, while seeing a child tumbling twenty feet away, spontaneously moved forward to pick up

<sup>103</sup> See M.T. Menegus, “Lo sviluppo del linguaggio”, (2003), in <http://www.logopedisti.net/Articolo.asp?ID=59>.

<sup>104</sup> F.E. Crowe, “The Genus ‘Lonergan and ...’ and Feminism,” pp. 142-143.

the child, although it was a quite useless gesture, as if the child was only two feet away.

Analogously, a shriek of another person not only startles us, but also frightens us. The spontaneous intersubjective reactions arise without thinking of them, nor deliberating about them, and are adverted not before they occur, but while they are occurring, just as, if one is going to be struck, one raises the hands, and if one is going to lose balance, there are spontaneous reactions.

The spontaneous intersubjective reactions are prior to the level of the distinction between the “I” and the “thou.”

In intersubjective situations, besides the “I” and the “thou” there is an ‘earlier we,’ as if the subjects of that “we” were members of one another prior to the distinction of each of them from the others.

Intersubjectivity occurs also in community of feeling, fellow-feeling, psychic contagion, and emotional identification.

5. The self emerges within an intersubjective matrix, through the subject’s discovering the meaning of his/her gesture in the interpretative-response gesture made by another individual to the original gesture, and through the coming to self-consciousness and consciousness of the other within communication.

Self-knowledge of a human being occurs in the intersubjective community, in our living in common with others.

6. The smile is a particular form of intersubjectivity.

The smile does not merely consist in muscular movement, but has a meaning.

Such meaning is natural, spontaneous, not univocal, but depending on the context, not conceptual, not verbal, not learned, but very effective, immediately perceived, easily understood, and cannot be transposed in words.

7. Similarly to the meaning of the smile, there is the meaning of the frown, of all other facial or bodily movements, gesture, pauses, of speech, evasion, silence, of all variations of voice in volume, pitch, and tone.

In the smile, as well as in other bodily signs, a person is transparent and is known easily and directly, not as an object.

When one is self-involved, one knows the moods of other people by the slightest sign.

The mere bodily presence of a person (with her/his countenance, gesture, stance) both reveals such person to another subject, and affects the other subject.

8. The elemental feeling of belonging together, that is proper to intersubjectivity, is the premise for common enterprise, mutual aid, succor, and sympathy that leads to the sharing of feeling in laughter and lamenting, augments joys and divides sorrows.

Intersubjectivity disposes us to interpersonal relationships, as is evident in sympathy, presence, transference.

In interpersonal situations there can grow the 'collective subject' of collective responsibility for common or complementary action.

9. However, the intersubjective mode of understanding may lead to a mythical personification of everything in the universe, as in primitive consciousness.
10. A specialized, directed modification of intersubjective reaction and response is brought about by the addition of speech to presence.
11. The meaning on the psychic level can be attained by some type of reproduction in ourselves, by reenacting it in ourselves.  
Such type of meaning is one of the constituents of human meaning, together with the meaning on the level of understanding and that on the level of judgment.
12. Intersubjectivity pertains to the psychic level of human development.  
However, the whole human being includes not only sensitivity, intersubjectivity, affectivity, but also the pure desire to know.  
The stages of development of human understanding include intersubjective understanding, common sense's understanding which utilizes language, and systematic understanding which requires a method.  
Similarly, the 'earlier we' that results in intersubjective situations, and is prior to the distinction between the "I" and the "thou", is also prior to the 'later we' that results from mutual love between an "I" and a "thou."
13. For what it concerns the correspondence between levels of community and components of knowing and of the good, intersubjective community corresponds to experience and desire, civil community to insight and good of order, cultural community of cosmopolis to judgment and value.
14. Spontaneous intersubjectivity and 'intelligently devised social order' may result in a dialectical tension.
15. Persons are known not only intersubjectively.  
In fact, in addition to subject-to-subject relation in acting and speaking, there is acting on one another and speaking about one another, when everyone is not a subject as subject, but a subject as object.
16. On the supernatural level of human development there is an intensification of human being's intersubjective awareness of the suffering and needs of others, that penetrates downward to the physiological level.

All the above many points mean that Lonergan was deeply interested in intersubjectivity, which he analysed from different points of view. In particular, he acknowledged the neural basis of consciousness, and the relations between subjects and environment. He described the immediate feelings and spontaneous

reactions proper to intersubjective situations, the ‘earlier we’ that is prior to the distinction of the “I” and the “thou,” the phenomenology of the smile, the meaning carried out on the psychic level by the smile and other bodily signs in a way not mediated by word, and the process to attain the meaning on the psychic level as a reproduction in ourselves.

However, several times Lonergan reminded us also that the immediate experiences and responses of spontaneous intersubjectivity, with its meaning on the psychic level, do not constitute the whole of human knowing and behaving. Spontaneous intersubjectivity is the premise for, and disposes to, higher orders of knowing and behaving. There are the meaning levels proper to understanding and judging, the deliberate sharing proper to sympathy, the interpersonal deliberate relationships, the ‘collective subject’ of collective responsibility, the common enterprises, the structured interpersonal communities, the civil communities, the cultural communities, and the ‘later we’ of mutual love between an “I” and a “thou.” All those are topics that may be fruitfully the object of full investigation by cognitive science, always by applying its proper methodologies.

Going beyond both spontaneous intersubjectivity and higher interpersonal relationships, which are, or may be, the object of investigation also of cognitive science, Lonergan treated spontaneous intersubjectivity also: i) within a metaphysical framework, when he described the risks of a mythical personification of everything in the interpretation of the universe; ii) within an ethical framework, when he pointed out the dialectical tension of spontaneous intersubjectivity with ‘intelligently devised social order’; and iii) within a theological framework, when he reminded us of the intensification of intersubjective awareness of the suffering and needs of others proper to a supernatural level of human development.

As a conclusion, we could consider that, according to Bernard J. Tyrrell,<sup>105</sup> for Lonergan there are different types of feelings, and the intentional feeling response to value is prior to the grasp of the value of what is cognitively apprehended. In fact, in “An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S. J.,” Lonergan confronts,<sup>106</sup> on one side, the different levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging, deeply examined in *Insight*, and, on the other side, the different levels of feeling; he distinguishes: 1) feelings that are states or tendencies (*e.g.*, just the feeling of being hungry, without yet knowing that one needs something to eat); 2) feelings that respond to objects (*e.g.*, pleasure and pain, without yet discriminating between what is truly good and what is apparently good); 3) feelings that are intentional responses, involve the above discrimination, and put themselves in a hierarchy

<sup>105</sup> See B.J. Tyrrell, “Feelings as apprehensive-intentional responses to values,” in F. Lawrence, ed., *Lonergan Workshop. Vol. 4*, Scholar Press, Atlanta, Georgia 1988, pp. 331-360, at pp. 356-357.

<sup>106</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, “An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S. J.,” Ph. McShane, ed., in *A Second Collection*, pp. 209-230, at pp. 221-223.

(e.g., vital, social, cultural, religious values); and 4) being in love, that really reveals values.

Moreover, Kenneth R. Melchin, in his presentation of Christian ethics based on the work of Lonergan, analyses the contribution of intersubjectivity on the role-taking process, which involves putting ourselves in other's shoes, imagining ourselves as others listening to us and interpreting us; our own identity becomes shaped by our "seeing" how others "see" us, so that 'our self-image becomes a socialized identity'; however, 'the socialization of identity goes both ways,' in the formation of one's own character and of others' characters, in which each one has both a passive and an active role.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, Frederick G. Lawrence's account of the openness – according to Lonergan – of the subject as other, and openness to the subject as other, includes the remarks that the self-transcending subject avoids the split between subject as object (substance) and subject as subject (consciousness), and that the subject as other is connected with conversion, considered in Lonergan's framework as radical displacement of one's narcissistic self-image from the centre of one's universe and repositioning of the self for others.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> See K.R. Melchin, *Living with Other People. An Introduction to Christian Ethics Based on Bernard Lonergan*, Novalis, Toronto / The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 1998, pp. 70-71.

<sup>108</sup> See F. Lawrence, "Lonergan's postmodern subject: Neither neoscholastic substance nor Cartesian ego," in J. Kanaris and M.J. Doorley, eds, *In Defence of the Other. Lonergan and Contemporary Continental Thought*, State University of New York Press, Albany 2004, pp. 107-120.



# BERNARD LONERGAN'S UNIVERSAL VIEWPOINT AND ITS TRANSCULTURAL POSSIBILITIES

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In the area of philosophy and high culture, postmodernism seems to be sweeping away everything in its path, with its rejection of universal frameworks and meta-narratives and its emphasis on disparate universes of discourse, language-games, cultural parameters and incommensurable paradigms. In the area of social studies, health, business, management and international relations, instead, the scenario seems to be very different. Fuelled partly also by the forces of globalization, the talk is about cross-cultural movements, understanding and communication.<sup>1</sup> There are also other areas such as education where we have, for example, the phenomenon of some 100,000 Montessori schools the world over,<sup>2</sup> giving support to the transculturality of Montessori's 6-year stages of human growth.<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lonergan, with his notion of the universal viewpoint and generalized empirical method, has something interesting to contribute not only to the debate about the transcultural but also to practical transcultural communication and collaboration.

Initially worked out within the context of the 'humanist viewpoint' of *Insight*,<sup>4</sup> the universal viewpoint was eventually subsumed into the theological method of Lonergan's 1972 book *Method in Theology*.<sup>5</sup> This method, despite being

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, disciplines such as Transcultural Nursing, Transcultural Health Care, Transcultural / Cross-Cultural Psychiatry, Cross-Cultural Management and Cross-Cultural Communication.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.islandvillage.org/ConceptMontessori.htm>. The Wikipedia indicates 8000 Montessori schools in the US alone.

<sup>3</sup> The stages are 0-6, the absorbent mind; 6-12, the age of adventure; 12-18, the period of adolescence; 18-24, the period of young adulthood. Recently Mrs Phyllis Wallbank, long-time friend and associate of Montessori, and herself a pioneering Montessori educationist, conducted a World Tour at the age of 90 covering Singapore, China, the Philippines, New Zealand, the USA, Israel and Russia, sharing her experience of a lifetime spent in applying Montessori. See <http://www.montessoriworldeurope.co.uk>.

<sup>4</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College and University of Toronto Press, 1992), first published 1957.

<sup>5</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), first published 1972.



‘theological,’ is basically a practical proposal for ecumenical, interreligious and cross-cultural collaboration, and is worth exploiting for its cross-cultural possibilities. In the present paper I will present the notion of the universal viewpoint, trace the outlines of its development in Lonergan’s thought, and end by highlighting the transcultural possibilities opened up by the method into which it is eventually integrated.<sup>6</sup>

## 1. The Universal Viewpoint

### 1.1. A Heuristic Structure

The notion of the universal viewpoint is an important part of the hermeneutical method presented in the third section of chapter 17 of *Insight*, ‘Metaphysics as Dialectic.’ Lonergan refers to it as a ‘heuristic structure’ and defines it as “a potential totality of genetically and dialectically ordered viewpoints.”<sup>7</sup> Let me attempt to explain.

The universal viewpoint is, firstly, a *heuristic structure*. It is neither a ‘God’s eye point of view’ (Putnam) nor the actual possession of universal knowledge, but rather an anticipation of something to be discovered, the ‘known’ from which we proceed to the as yet unknown. It is part of the ‘upper blade’ of hermeneutical method, the other part being the notion of levels and sequences of expression. ‘Upper blade’ is a favourite Lonergan expression, the inspiration for which is the way physics approaches empirical data from the vantage point of mathematical formulae. We find Lonergan employing such a procedure already in his 1940 doctoral dissertation on *gratia operans* in Aquinas.<sup>8</sup> He notes there that interpretation can neither pretend to be presuppositionless nor simply impose current categories onto a text. Drawing inspiration from physics, his solution is to discover a neutral set of categories with which to approach the text, and this he finds in the human mind. Since what is being studied is a development in speculative theology, Lonergan goes on to construct what he calls the ‘a priori or pure form of speculative development.’<sup>9</sup> With such

<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that Lonergan uses the term ‘transcendental method’ in *Method in Theology*, I prefer to use ‘general method’ or ‘generalized method.’ *Insight* speaks of ‘generalized empirical method,’ and Lonergan himself noted that the change of terminology to transcendental method was not an altogether happy one: see B. Lonergan, Dialogue at the Lonergan Workshop 1976, unpublished transcript (available at the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto and soon to be available on the website [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com); references to this site in this paper are editorial additions) 96.

<sup>7</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 587.

<sup>8</sup> B. Lonergan, “The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3/2 (1985) 9-46 = B. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 1, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) 153-192.

<sup>9</sup> This pure form may be summarized as follows. All speculative development begins with an insight into a specific point. This insight is then generalized and made the whole explanation. When we realize that this generalization is inadequate, we seek a more general explanation, which in turn is made the

an a priori form, he notes, one is able to approach the data and find a correlation between different historical authors merely in virtue of the assumption that they were all human, all thinking, and historically dependent in their thought.<sup>10</sup>

Loneragan uses an upper blade once again in his 1946-49 study of the *verbum* or inner word in Aquinas.<sup>11</sup> Since what is now being studied is a single notion in a particular author rather than a development in speculative theology involving several authors, the upper blade is simply familiarity with the workings of the human mind. Lonergan refers to this technique as ‘psychological introspection.’ Interestingly, the study of the *verbum* also led him to the discovery that the basis of the upper blade procedure was intellectual light: intellectual light contains an inchoate wisdom or rudimentary view of the whole, and all growth in knowledge is a matter of internal differentiation of this rudimentary view of the whole. All human knowing, therefore, and not only physics and exegesis, proceeds by way of heuristic anticipation: we never move from unknown to known, but rather from some anticipation of the known to fuller determination of that anticipation.

Mathematical physics and the rudimentary wisdom contained in intellectual light are therefore the inspirations for Lonergan’s heuristic notions and structures in *Insight*. The universal viewpoint is one such heuristic structure.<sup>12</sup>

The universal viewpoint is a *dialectical* heuristic structure. Dialectical heuristic structure is the anticipation that there will be a certain lack of intelligibility in human opinions, choices and decisions.<sup>13</sup> Lonergan regards the dialectical theorem as the upper blade of his generalized empirical method. This method admits of a variety of applications, and Lonergan demonstrates its effectiveness by means of brilliant analyses of the dialectic of individual consciousness (the discussion of scotosis and dramatic bias in chapter 6 of *Insight*), of community (group and general bias, and the shorter and longer cycles of decline in chapter 7), and of philosophy (the dialectic of philosophical methods in chapter 14).<sup>14</sup> Now the universal viewpoint is a specification of the dialectical theorem in the area of meaning. Its most

whole explanation. When we realize that this too is insufficient by itself, we return to our original insight, make a synthesis of the particular and the general, and have then a better approximation to a complete explanation. See F. Crowe, “‘All my work has been introducing history into Catholic theology’ (Lonergan, March 28, 1980),” *Loneragan Workshop* 10 (1994) 55.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, “The *Gratia Operans* Dissertation: Preface and Introduction,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 3/2 (1985) 13 = Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom* 158.

<sup>11</sup> B. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 2, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the universal viewpoint can be seen as a combination of the pure form of speculative development and the technique of psychological introspection, for it is diachronic like the former and synchronic like the latter.

<sup>13</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 54; see 721.

<sup>14</sup> Archival matter indicates that Lonergan was adopting and adapting Freud for his dialectic of individual consciousness, and Marx for his dialectic of community: see Editors’ Preface, *Insight* xxi.

immediate context is therefore hermeneutical method: it is the upper blade of hermeneutical method. This hermeneutical method is itself part of the dialectical aspect of Lonergan's metaphysics. Thanks to Hegel, says Lonergan, a contemporary metaphysics cannot exclude consideration of the universe of meaning. But since for Lonergan metaphysics is an integration of all possible heuristic structures, a hermeneutical method with its dialectical heuristic structure is the way to integrate the universe of meaning into metaphysics. Accordingly we find the discussion of hermeneutical method and the universal viewpoint in chapter 17 of *Insight* entitled 'Metaphysics as Dialectic.'

Now the universal viewpoint as dialectical heuristic structure recalls Hegelian dialectic, and the term 'universal viewpoint' itself recalls Hegel's universal history. Lonergan is careful to clarify that the universal viewpoint is neither universal history nor a Hegelian dialectic "that is complete apart from matters of fact."<sup>15</sup> He carefully distinguishes his own use of the term 'dialectic' from that of Hegel:

Hegelian dialectic is conceptualist, closed, necessitarian, and immanent. It deals with determinate conceptual contents; its successive triadic sets of concepts are complete; the relations of opposition and sublation between concepts are pronounced necessary; and the whole dialectic is contained within the field defined by the concepts and their necessary relations of opposition and sublation. In contrast, our position is intellectualist, open, factual, and normative. It deals not with determinate conceptual contents but with heuristically defined anticipations. So far from fixing the concepts that will meet the anticipations, it awaits from nature and from history a succession of tentative solutions. [...] Finally, the appeal to heuristic structures, to accumulating insights, to verdicts awaited from nature and history, goes outside the conceptual field to acts of understanding that rise upon experiences and are controlled by critical reflection; and so instead of an immanent dialectic that embraces all positions and their opposites, ours is a normative dialectic that discriminates between advance and aberration.<sup>16</sup>

If the universal viewpoint is not a Hegelian dialectic that is complete apart from matters of fact, neither is it a Kantian type of *a priori* which is indeed to be applied to data, but is already in itself quite determinate.<sup>17</sup> Rather, the universal viewpoint

is simply a heuristic structure that contains virtually the various ranges of possible alternatives of interpretations; it can list its own contents only through the stimulus of documents and historical inquiries; it can select

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 588.

<sup>16</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 446-447.

<sup>17</sup> See Lonergan, *Insight* 588. For a contrast between the Kantian and the Lonerganian sense of the *a priori*, see Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method: The 'Universal Viewpoint' in Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 31-33.

between alternatives and differentiate its generalities only by appealing to the accepted norms of historical investigation.<sup>18</sup>

The operative word here is ‘virtually.’ Virtual grasp is illustrated in the grasp of the rule for the formation of integers, which is a grasp of the virtual totality that is the infinity of integers. Again, it is illustrated in the grasp of the set of primitive terms and propositions and rules of derivation, which is a grasp of the virtual totality of propositions that is a mathematical logical system.<sup>19</sup> If a single insight expresses itself in many concepts, and if there are mathematical instances in which a single insight grounds an infinity of concepts,<sup>20</sup> it should not be a matter of surprise that insight into insight yields an understanding “of the broad lines of all there is to be understood” and “a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.”<sup>21</sup> But the universal viewpoint merely specifies that insight into insight includes insight into oversight, and thus arrives at the broad outlines not only of all there is to be understood, but also of the consequences of the flight from understanding.<sup>22</sup>

Again, the universal viewpoint is a grasp of a virtual totality of *viewpoints*. Where disciplines such as phonetics, comparative grammar, lexicography, and linguistic or stylistic analysis attend to expression, the universal viewpoint directs attention to meaning. To this end it encourages the interpreter to pay attention to his/her own experience, understanding and critical reflection; it suggests that s/he learn to distinguish and recombine elements in his/her own experience, work backwards “from contemporary to earlier accumulations of insights in human development” and “envisage the protean possibilities of the notion of being [...]”<sup>23</sup>

Further, Lonergan notes that the universal viewpoint is universal not by abstractness but by potential completeness. “It attains its inclusiveness, not by stripping objects of their peculiarities, but by envisaging subjects in their necessities.”<sup>24</sup> “[I]n the measure that one grasps the structure of [the] protean notion of being, one possesses the base and ground from which one can proceed to the content and context of every meaning.”<sup>25</sup> It is the grasp of the structure of this

<sup>18</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 588.

<sup>19</sup>See B. Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 18, ed. P.J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 78.

<sup>20</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 39. See also Lonergan, *Verbum* 3: correspondence of realities to inner words is “like the correspondence between a function and its derivative; as the derivative, so the inner word is outside all particular cases and refers to all from some higher view-point.” Again, Lonergan, *Verbum* 9-10: the more perfect a single act of understanding, the more numerous the inner words it embraces in a single view.

<sup>21</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 22.

<sup>22</sup>See Lonergan, *Insight* 5-6.

<sup>23</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 588.

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 590.

<sup>25</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 590.

protean notion of being that grounds the universal viewpoint: “once the structure is reached, the potential totality of viewpoints is reached.”<sup>26</sup>

We may note, however, that Lonergan is not presupposing problem-free access to conscious intentionality. Self-appropriation is not a matter of taking an inward look, and self-knowledge is not the result of some simplistic Cartesian deduction, but rather the fruit of a ‘long detour’ (Ricoeur) through a prolonged study (in Lonergan’s case) of Aquinas and the functioning of intelligence in the fields of mathematics, science, common sense, the human sciences, and the history of philosophy. Lonergan is not advocating therefore some naïve direct access but rather a hermeneutic access to interiority.<sup>27</sup> Self-appropriation is really a matter of mutual self-mediation through a tradition,<sup>28</sup> and the coming to light of the self is at once the coming to light of the tradition.<sup>29</sup> Fred Lawrence speaks, in fact, of three types of hermeneutics carried out by Lonergan: a hermeneutics of theory, a hermeneutics of cognitional interiority, and a hermeneutics of existential interiority.<sup>30</sup> Lonergan’s universal viewpoint is basically a matter of self-knowledge, though he is certainly far more willing to discover and affirm invariant and transcultural structures in our experience of being human than are either Heidegger or Gadamer.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 591.

<sup>27</sup> *Insight*, far from being a phenomenology of pure perception, was rather an attempt to appropriate the normative structures of cognitive interiority in engagement with mathematics, the natural empirical sciences, sociology, psychology, history and interpretation. See F. Lawrence, “Gadamer and Lonergan: A Dialectical Comparison,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (1980) 36-37: “Lonergan’s program of applying the operations of consciousness as intentional [...] to the operations as conscious [...] may be suspected of advocating some sort of introspective psychology which is sheerly formal and oblivious of all objects of knowledge and love. But this is simply not the case. In the cognitive sphere, the move of self-appropriation is ‘from the objects of mathematical, scientific, and commonsense understanding, through the acts of understanding themselves, to an understanding of understanding.’ [...] Perhaps too many of Lonergan’s followers have failed to admit the number of insights into subject matters without which talk about classical, statistical, and genetic (not to mention dialectical) method remains just ‘talk.’”

<sup>28</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology: The Problem: External Factors* (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives, folder entitled “Various Papers,” notes [14 pp.] pertaining to the summer institute on The Method of Theology, Georgetown University, Washington, July 13-17, 1964, unpublished) 13: “the self-appropriation of the subject, his self-mediation, is also his response to a tradition, his personal touch added to the tradition’s further communication; again, the self-appropriation of the subject occurs along with the self-appropriation of other subjects in a mutual self-mediation.” See [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 85400DTE060.

<sup>29</sup> F. Lawrence, “Method and Theology as Hermeneutical,” *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan s.j.*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981) 101; F. Lawrence, “Critical Realism and the Hermeneutical Revolution” (paper at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 1990, unpublished) 18.

<sup>30</sup> F. Lawrence, “The Unknown 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hermeneutic Revolution: Jerusalem and Athens in Lonergan’s Integral Hermeneutics,” *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 19/1-2 (2008) 87-118.

<sup>31</sup> Lawrence feels that Gadamer himself, despite being unwilling to use the term ‘transcendental,’ also explicates phenomenologically accessible structures of experience that are immanent, operative and normative ‘across the board,’ though in the end these remain sketchy and ambiguous, and are clearest in

Again, despite its connotations, the universal viewpoint is clearly not a 'God's eye point of view' or a 'hook in the sky.' Far from being an escape from historicity, it arises from the dialectical appropriation of inevitable processes and structures in human knowing. It is not open to the objections of anti-foundationalists, because it is simply not a question of privileged links with reality, touchstones of truth, or explicitly formulated criteria or algorithms.<sup>32</sup>

### 1.2. *The Levels and Sequences of Expression*

If the universal viewpoint is one element in the upper blade of the hermeneutical method of *Insight*, the notion of levels and sequences of expression is the other element. Once again, this latter notion is a classification of expression not in terms of language but of meaning. The distinction between levels of expression rests on the sources of meaning in speaker and hearer. The expression may have its source in the experience of the speaker (e.g. an exclamation), or in artistically ordered experience (e.g. a song), or in intelligent and critical ordering of experiential elements (e.g. a statement of fact), or in the addition of acts of will (e.g. wishes and commands). The hearer may be expected to respond simply on the experiential level; or on the level of both experience and intelligence; or with experience, understanding and critical reflection; or also with an act of will. As expressions become specialized, differences emerge more clearly. Thus advertising and government propaganda aim at psychological conditioning, attempting to exclude insight, judgment and rational choices. Literary writing wants to stimulate the understanding and critical reflection, but does so exploiting the resources of images, memories, feelings. Scientific writing, on the other hand, appeals directly to the reader's intelligence. Philosophic writing instead focuses on the reader's judgment.<sup>33</sup>

Once again, the notion of the levels and sequences of expression is a potential rather than an actual classification of expressions. Since, however, the differences between experience, understanding, judgment and will are defined systematically, "the determination of the level of expression has systematic implications which, even when they are mere generalities, at least will prevent interpreters and their critics from committing the grosser blunders."<sup>34</sup>

Since specialized modes of expression have to be invented, besides levels there are also sequences of expression. The relevant heuristic anticipation here is that

what they oppose. According to Lawrence, it is Lonergan's work that is the most radical and comprehensive fulfillment to date of the intentions of the 'ontological turn.' See F. Lawrence, "Responses to Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Hermeneutics and Social Science'," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 2 (1975) 322; F. Lawrence, "Self-Knowledge in History in Gadamer and Lonergan," *Language, Truth and Meaning. International Lonergan Congress*, ed. P. McShane (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972) 199-200.

<sup>32</sup> For more on this point, see I. Coelho, "Rorty's Anti-Foundationalism and *Fides et Ratio*," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 13/1 (2002) 17-57.

<sup>33</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 592-593.

<sup>34</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 594.

development is from the undifferentiated to the differentiated, from the generic to the specific, from the global and awkward to the expert and precise. Lonergan provides some examples. In the area of philosophy, some Greek philosophers wrote verse; Plato invented the dialogue; Aristotle wrote a descriptive science; the medieval philosophers developed a compound of the dialogue and the dogmatic decision; Spinoza and Kant seem to have initiated the scientific treatise in philosophy; and Hegel was the first to envisage the totality of possible positions. In a similar manner, empirical science will at first be inadequately distinguished from philosophy, as in Newton; and literary writing will also, in its early stages, be mixed with scientific and philosophic concerns.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3. *Hermeneutical Method*

The notions of the universal viewpoint and of the levels and sequences of expression together form the upper blade of hermeneutical method. This hermeneutical method, we must note, does not substitute lower level methods of interpretation. Neither does it, like Gadamer, indulge in a phenomenology of understanding (*Wie ist Verstehen möglich?*); that has been taken care of already in the cognitional theory of the earlier chapters of *Insight*. It concentrates instead on issues that lower level methods and commonsense understanding are unable to handle: the conflict of interpretations rooted in individual, group and especially general bias of interpreters, and the problem of the relativity of interpretations to audiences.<sup>36</sup>

How does the method work? A brief idea may be obtained by listing Lonergan's five canons. The *canon of relevance* demands that the interpreter make hypotheses about the content and context or viewpoint of the matter being studied, on the basis of personal attainment of the universal viewpoint.<sup>37</sup> The *canon of explanation* demands that the contents and contexts of documents be related among themselves. Three elements need to be kept in mind here: the genetic sequences in which insights are accumulated; the dialectical alternatives in which insights are formulated, with 'positions' inviting development and 'counterpositions' inviting reversal; and the emergence of specialized modes of expression conditioning exact grasp of discoveries, precise communication, and advance of positions and reversal of counterpositions.<sup>38</sup> The *canon of successive approximations* notes that we approximate towards the ideal of explanation by means of scholarly collaboration extending over time, and sets up common critical principles towards this end. The *canon of parsimony* calls for verification of hypotheses; here the procedure suggested by Lonergan is somewhat

<sup>35</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 594-595.

<sup>36</sup> While Ricoeur attempts to handle the conflict of interpretations, some Ricoeur scholars feel that his efforts are less than adequate. See Joseph Putti, *Theology as Hermeneutics: Paul Ricoeur's Theory of Text Interpretation and Method in Theology* (Bangalore: Kristu Jyoti, 1991) 169, 245-249.

<sup>37</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 609, 602.

<sup>38</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 609-610.

complicated, but he does build on his notion of the ‘virtually unconditioned’ which opens up the possibility of intermediate certitudes, probable conclusions and negative conclusions.<sup>39</sup> The *canon of residues* calls attention to the non-systematic component in the fields “of meaning, of expression as related to meaning, of expression as grounded in dynamic constellations of the writer’s psyche, and of documents in their origins, their production, and their survival.”<sup>40</sup>

Such, in briefest outline, is the hermeneutical method presented by Lonergan in chapter 17 of *Insight*, and the universal viewpoint that is its core. As can be seen, neither the method nor the notion are easy to understand, and even less easy to implement. Further, quite apart from any question of understanding, the personal attainment of the universal viewpoint – which is really grasp of the structure of the conscious intentionality that is our protean notion of being – is the very heart of the method. But is such attainment possible? We would need here to examine closely Lonergan’s handling of the way human beings attain truth, dwelling especially on the open-endedness of the four factors that enter into the way we ‘know’ that an insight is correct: allowing further relevant questions a chance to arise, setting questions correctly, attaining mastery of the situation, and taking one’s temperament into consideration.<sup>41</sup> In chapter 17 of *Insight*, Lonergan casts this in terms of a proximate criterion (grasp of the virtually unconditioned) and a remote criterion (proper unfolding of the pure desire to know and the absence of interference from other desires).<sup>42</sup> Now the hermeneutical method outlined above presupposes attainment of the virtually unconditioned, and attempts to handle the remote criterion. Individual and group bias will be handled by collaborative control, for such biases tend to vary with individuals and with groups.<sup>43</sup> General bias on the other hand cuts across individuals and groups, and is handled by operating from the universal viewpoint, for this amounts to taking one’s stand on the invariant and normative structure of knowing.<sup>44</sup> Collaborative control will itself handle general bias in the measure that collaborators are operating from the universal viewpoint. Still, there is no automatic attainment of correct interpretations. Thus the canon of parsimony notes carefully that radical surprises are excluded “*in the measure that the universal viewpoint is reached*”.<sup>45</sup> This note of caution is linked to the fact that there are degrees of certitude, whose ground lies in the ‘obscure region’ of the remote

<sup>39</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 612; see 603.

<sup>40</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 613.

<sup>41</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 310-312.

<sup>42</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 573-575.

<sup>43</sup>“Hence certitudes may be strengthened by the agreement of others, and this strengthening will vary with the numbers of those that agree, the diversity of their circumstances, the consequent virtual elimination of individual and group bias, and the absence of any ground for suspecting general bias.” Lonergan, *Insight* 574.

<sup>44</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 575.

<sup>45</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 612, emphasis mine.



criterion. Only if this region were to be completely clarified would certitude reach the absolute of infallibility.<sup>46</sup> But can it do so? Do we in fact reach the universal viewpoint? This question is taken up, not in chapter 17 but in the final part of *Insight*, which goes beyond knowing to consider human doing, discovers the problem of moral impotence and the need for liberation, and asks about the possibility of a solution. But we may note that the attainment of truth is linked to the human person in his or her entirety. There is in fact no recipe for producing men and women of good judgment. Lonergan takes up this position in his later work under the slogan, 'objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity,'<sup>47</sup> where authentic subjectivity is the result of a threefold conversion that is intellectual, moral and religious, and where authenticity applies not only to the individual subject but also to the tradition or traditions that have formed that subject. Such is the 'non-exorbitant' notion of truth (Lawrence) underlying Lonergan's method of interpretation.<sup>48</sup>

## 2. From Universal Viewpoint to General Method

In the post-*Insight* period, the universal viewpoint tends to disappear as a term, finding mention only once, and that too in an unpublished text of 1960.<sup>49</sup> It can be shown, however, that it continues to appear under different names and forms, and that its place is taken, finally, by method itself. Thus there is the upper blade for history of the years 1954-61; the 'basic context' of 1962; the 'total and basic horizon' or 'methodical horizon' of 1963; and the transcendental or general method of the subsequent years.<sup>50</sup> Since, however, our interest is in the transcultural, I will follow the development of the universal viewpoint in terms of Lonergan's handling of the transcultural problem.

### 2.1. *The Transcultural Problem in the Context of Christianity*

Lonergan first names the 'transcultural problem' in a Latin text of 1957, *Divinarum personarum...*: such a problem is inevitable among Christians, he notes,

<sup>46</sup>Lonergan, *Insight* 575.

<sup>47</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 292, see 265.

<sup>48</sup> F. Lawrence, "The Hermeneutic Revolution and Bernard Lonergan: Gadamer and Lonergan on Augustine's *Verbum Cordis* – The Heart of Postmodern Hermeneutics," *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education* 19/1-2 (2008) 83.

<sup>49</sup> B. Lonergan, "Philosophy of History," autograph typescript of notes for the lecture of September 23, 1960 (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch IX.7) item a.2 ([www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) 68100DTE060). There exists also a transcript of the lecture (see B. Lonergan, "The Philosophy of History," transcript of the introductory lecture at the Thomas More Institute for Adult Education, Montreal, September 23, 1960, 5) which does not contain this reference to the universal viewpoint (see [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 61800DTEG60). Unfortunately, for some reason the reference is omitted also from the recently published version in the Collected Works: see B. Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan vol. 6, ed. R.C. Croken, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 62.

<sup>50</sup> See Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method*, chapters 5-8.

since revelation is given in one particular culture but is meant to be disseminated to people in all other cultures.<sup>51</sup> He had already acknowledged the problem, however, in *Insight* itself, when he had spoken about the divine solution to the problem of evil, or revelation, being given to a particular people and demanding to be proclaimed to all peoples.<sup>52</sup>

The solution, according to Lonergan, is to find a transcultural principle for making transitions over cultures.<sup>53</sup> Secular scholarship has not been able to discover such a principle, and so either avoids the problem by attempting ‘presuppositionless’ interpretation, or else abandons itself to some form of relativism. The church, instead, has its own ways of handling the problem, which Lonergan names the ‘transcultural process,’ the ‘theological process,’ and the ‘dogmatic process.’ The transcultural process is the ‘ordinary magisterium’ either confirming or itself engaging in the process from the *priora quoad nos* in one culture to the *priora quoad nos* in another. The theological process is speculative theologians attempting to solve the transcultural problem by taking advantage of ‘perennial philosophy’ to rise from the *priora quoad nos* which vary from culture to culture, to the *priora quoad se* or universal formulations of the faith. The dogmatic process is the ‘extraordinary magisterium’ which sometimes confirms the theological process by issuing dogmatic definitions.<sup>54</sup> Now the church, says Lonergan, both ascends to the *priora quoad se* and judges infallibly regarding that ascent; and so it can speak with one voice to all cultures and times.<sup>55</sup> He goes on to note that the first instance of the theological process was the road to the Nicene dogma, and that the first instance of the dogmatic process was the confirmation of this process at Nicea and the acceptance of the non-scriptural term *homoousion*.

Lonergan’s own solution, which we gather from the Epilogue of *Insight* as well as from *Divinarum personarum...*, involves a methodical speculative theology working on the basis of a theologically transformed universal viewpoint, producing pure or universal formulations accessible to “any sufficiently cultured audience”.<sup>56</sup> The transcultural principle he has been calling for is this theologically transformed universal viewpoint. We might note that the universal viewpoint is based on ‘absolute truths in the inner life’ – it arises from grasp of the invariant structure of cognitional activity, and is theologically transformed by the assent of faith. Since *Insight* presupposes a classical notion of faith, the theologically transformed

<sup>51</sup>B. Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum conceptionem analogicam evolvit Bernardus Lonergan, S.I.* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957) 31-32.

<sup>52</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 742-743, 761. See also *ibid.* 585: the problem of interpretation is appropriating the meaning of an expression in one context and communicating it to another in a different context.

<sup>53</sup> Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum...* 17.

<sup>54</sup> Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum...* 33.

<sup>55</sup> Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum...* 18, 20.

<sup>56</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 761.

universal viewpoint includes assent to truths revealed by God and taught by the magisterium. Thus, a methodical speculative theology would begin from faith affirmations using culture-specific terms and convert them into pure or universal formulations. Another part of Lonergan's solution is a historical theology working on the basis of the theologically transformed universal viewpoint. The task of such a historical theology is the *munus nobilissimum* (Vatican I) of showing the identity in difference and in development of the various historical expressions of the Christian faith.<sup>57</sup>

Lonergan insists on the universality of the formulations of the theological process: the transcultural process terminates in categories proper to particular cultures, but the theological process (and by implication, his own methodical theological process), since it terminates in what is *priora quoad se*, in no way terminates at the Hellenistic or medieval stage or at any other stage determined by particular cultural circumstances. He goes on to say the same thing about the dogmatic process: this process also terminates in the *priora quoad se*, and so is similarly distorted if *homoousion* is considered merely Hellenistic or transubstantiation merely medieval.<sup>58</sup>

We may note that, while there is talk of an ascent to universal formulations, there is no mention of a descent to particular formulations. Lonergan begins to speak of such descent in his Latin course *De intellectu et methodo* (1959), where he notes that theologians should adapt their scientific understanding of the faith for the use of people of different classes and cultures. While the basis of this adaptation is the link between intellect and sense and our ability to grasp intelligibility in the sensible itself, the method of adaptation involves the mediation of the human sciences: a psychology of the incarnate spirit, a theory of art, and an explanatory differentiation of different modes of thought such as the primitive, the mythic, the popular, and the semi-educated.<sup>59</sup>

In 1959, Lonergan also begins to give explicit attention to the problem of historicity, but the awareness is not complete, for the lectures on the philosophy of education of the summer of 1959 continue to insist on the transculturality of the universal formulations of speculative theology. Lonergan is not yet ready to say that all expressions, including those of speculative theology and of the dogmas, are historically conditioned. The Latin course of 1962, *De methodo theologiae*, returns to the problem of historicity. The links between scripture and speculative theology are shown by examining the transition first from life to theory, and then

<sup>57</sup> I. Coelho, "‘*Et Judaeus et Graecus e Methodo*’: The Transcultural Mediation of Christian Meanings and Values in Lonergan," *Lonergan Workshop* 16 (2000) 87.

<sup>58</sup> Lonergan, *Divinarum personarum*... 33.

<sup>59</sup> Lonergan, *De intellectu et methodo*, autograph typescript of chapter 1 of the course given at the Gregorian University, Rome, Spring 1959, unpublished (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch V.2.a) 19.

from faith to theology. The principle of transition is basically the dynamic of the question (*Insight* had noted that the operator on the human level is the pure desire to know).<sup>60</sup> The basis of the transition is the transcendence of truth: since truth is independent of the subject and of the circumstances in which it arises, it can be transferred from one context to another.<sup>61</sup> The criterion of continuity, instead, is the dialectical theorem, which Lonergan now explains not in terms of knowing alone, as in *Insight*, but in terms of intellectual, moral and religious conversion. Then he goes on to say something that is worth thinking about because of the way it encapsulates Lonergan's thinking on dialectic: *per se*, thematizations are valid; *per accidens*, when one or other conversion is lacking or not proper, they can be mistaken.<sup>62</sup>

## 2.2. A Concrete Application

So far we have seen Lonergan talking about transcultural method, but we might be forgiven for asking whether he actually ever applied the method. The post-graduate courses of the period 1959-64 contain brief attempts,<sup>63</sup> but there is one substantial instance that deserves attention, and that is his study of the theological movement towards the Trinitarian dogma of Nicea. This attempt at a methodical historical theology is part of his Latin notes of 1964, *De Deo trino*, but was subsequently published, with his blessings, in English translation as *The Way to Nicea*.<sup>64</sup> Lonergan has gone on record to refer to it as one of his permanently valid contributions.<sup>65</sup>

The task in *The Way to Nicea* is to examine the transition between the scriptures

<sup>60</sup> Lonergan's concern with the transition from scripture and faith to dogma and speculative theology, and the fact that he places the principle of transition in the question, helps us understand the extensive discussions of the dynamic of the question in Lonergan's post-*Insight* courses on theological method.

<sup>61</sup> Lonergan, *De methodo theologiae*, autograph typescript (83 pp.) of notes for the course given at the Gregorian University, Rome, Spring Semester 1962 (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch V.1.c.) 62-72 (see [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 426C0DTL060). Once again, this helps us understand Lonergan's insistence on the word of God as true: see *ibid.* 54-56, 58; B. Lonergan, *De Deo Trino: I. Pars dogmatica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964) 106-107 = *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology*, tr. Conn O'Donovan (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976) 129-130. (See vol. 11 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, at 242-45.)

<sup>62</sup> Lonergan, *De methodo theologiae*, autograph 1962, 80-81 (see [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 426C0DTL060).

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, B. Lonergan, *De intellectu et methodo*, notes taken by F. Rossi de Gasperis and P. Joseph Cahill from the course given at the Gregorian University, Rome, Spring 1959, unpublished, 43-45, 52-54; B. Lonergan, Folder entitled 'De methodo theologiae 1963,' handwritten notes for the course given at the Gregorian University, Spring semester 1963 (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch V.11, 1963) items k, l. See [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com), search for 'spring 1963 course De Methodo Theologiae.'

<sup>64</sup> See note 61 above.

<sup>65</sup> Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea* viii.

and dogma, and to show the continuity between the two. The concrete instance being studied is the emergence of dogma with the use of the word *homoousion* at Nicea – in other words, the theological process, the transition from the *priora quoad nos* to the *priora quoad se*. The basis of the transition is the word of God as true.

Lonergan's procedure is familiar to us from the doctoral dissertation of 1940 and chapter 17 of *Insight*: approach the data with an upper blade. He first works out a heuristic structure and then selects from the pertinent mass of data to present the theological process of ascent from the *priora quoad nos* of scripture to the *priora quoad se* of dogma. The upper blade is basically the dialectical theorem, but specified further so as to become the notion of dogmatic development. This notion anticipates that radical conflicts among the original protagonists as well as among historical investigators of the process will be rooted in differing viewpoints or philosophies (Lonergan refers to this as the 'hermeneutical aspect' and the 'evaluative aspect'). It also assumes that the development in question will have an 'objective aspect' in the emergence of a new literary genre (the scriptures are addressed to the whole person, but the conciliar dogmas aim at enlightening the intellect), and in the movement from many truths to a single truth; a corresponding 'subjective aspect' in the emergence of the theoretical differentiation of consciousness; and what we might call the 'cultural aspect' in the fusion of Hebrew and Greek cultures to produce the dogmatic-theological context of a 'Christian' culture. It seems clear that the notion of dogmatic development is a further determination of the theologically transformed universal viewpoint and the notion of levels and sequences of expression. With the help of this heuristic structure, Lonergan proceeds to select data from the Judaeo-Christians, the Gnostics, the Sabellians, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius and the Council of Nicea before finally working it into a unity.

Like the universal viewpoint and the levels and sequences of expression, the notion of dogmatic development takes care of meaning as well as expression. Thus Lonergan asks about the viewpoints of the authors being studied and identifies, for example, the naïve realism of Tertullian, the Platonist essentialism of Origen, and the 'dogmatic' realism of Athanasius.<sup>66</sup> He seeks genetic and dialectical relations between these viewpoints when he assigns praise and blame in his tacit upbraiding of naïve realism and essentialism in favour of 'dogmatic' and critical realism. He also asks about sequences of expression: the process of the differentiation of consciousness, the transition from the commonsense, symbolic, intersubjective language of the gospels to the theoretical language of the dogmas. He defends the transition with the help of the dynamic of the question and the inevitability

<sup>66</sup> 'Dogmatic' realism here means a realism inspired by scripture and dogma; it is not to be confused with Gilson's dogmatic realism, for which see Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 4, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 197-198.

of the process of differentiation of consciousness. Clearly, then, he is attempting to operate from the universal viewpoint, but as theologically transformed (reason illumined by faith).

The material principle of the dialectic is the objective contradiction that is the mixture of dogmatic and naïve realism in several of the ante-Nicene authors, as for example Tertullian.<sup>67</sup> The formal principle of the dialectic is reason illumined or unillumined by faith. “Therefore, given the appropriate occasions, which heretics are apt to provide, the objective dialectic process itself is calculated to drive out naive realism and in so doing to bring dogmatic realism to a greater self-consciousness.”<sup>68</sup> The dialectical process is the actual elimination of the contradiction. “For it is a natural tendency of reason to get rid of contradictions. If the contradiction in question is only implicit, it is first made explicit; then one side of the contradiction can be clearly affirmed and the other denied. Where reason is somewhat tardy, or the matter itself rather difficult, the process is gradual: one by one, different elements of the contradiction are made explicit, until eventually the whole contradiction is eliminated.”<sup>69</sup> The term of the process is either heresy or advance in theology. “It is heresy, where only the light of natural reason is operative; it is an advance in theology, where reason is illuminated and strengthened by faith.”<sup>70</sup>

The last assertion may raise questions and perplexities, but perhaps the issue is between pure rationalism and a willingness to go beyond. The point seems to be made by Lonergan himself in chapter 20 of *Insight*: if there is a supernatural solution to the problem of evil, then “human perfection itself becomes a limit to be transcended,” dialectic is transformed “from a bipolar to a tripolar conjunction and opposition,” and “the humanist viewpoint loses its primacy, not by some extrinsicist invasion, but by submitting to its own immanent necessities.”<sup>71</sup>

At any rate, two things are clear: that application of the method calls for generous doses of personal creativity, and that the core of the method remains the dialectical theorem.

### 2.3. *The Method of 1972*

If the universal viewpoint all but disappears in the post-*Insight* period, it is mentioned twice in *Method in Theology*, once in a footnote indicating that its place has been taken by dialectic,<sup>72</sup> and another time as part of the list of general theological categories generated through the functional specialties dialectic and

<sup>67</sup> The mixture of dogmatic and naïve realism is another way of talking about what *Insight* called the duality of our knowing, the presence in us of both elementary and fully human knowing. See Lonergan, *Insight* chapter 8.

<sup>68</sup> Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea* 133.

<sup>69</sup> Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea* 49.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 749.

<sup>72</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 153 n. 1.

foundations.<sup>73</sup> There is, in addition, the mention of a ‘comprehensive viewpoint’ that is the ‘high and distant goal of dialectic.’<sup>74</sup> Once again, it can be shown that the functions of the universal viewpoint are taken over by method, while the universal or comprehensive viewpoint continues to function both as the goal of dialectic and, as heuristic structure, as part of the upper blade of dialectic.<sup>75</sup>

As for the method that takes over the functions of the universal viewpoint, it differs in significant ways from Lonergan’s earlier attempts, since it is the result of several important developments. There is, first of all, the 1965 breakthrough to the notion of functional specialization which makes possible a method that is more practical and less prone to the imperialism of parts. Again, there is the new notion of theology as a quasi-empirical science that begins not with truths but with data; the placing of theological foundations not in truths but in the subject as undergoing or failing to undergo conversion; and the shifting of dialectic and foundations to the middle of the series of specializations. All this makes it possible to open the method to all comers. The canon of relevance that required investigators to begin from the universal viewpoint is no longer necessary.

The hermeneutical method of *Insight* is now worked out into a practical set of procedures that is far less daunting. Thus where *Insight* required the interpreter to both appropriate the meaning of a text and judge the correctness of this meaning, now this task is spread over various functional specialties: *research* which works on the data; *interpretation* which appropriates the meaning of documents in a ‘commonsense’ way that includes understanding as well as judging; *history* that studies series of interpretations to discover sequences and movements; *dialectic* that handles the problem of conflicting viewpoints and horizons; and *foundations* that ‘takes a stand,’ objectifies intellectual, moral and religious conversion, and thus arrives at a new equivalent of the notion of the universal viewpoint.

The core of the method remains, however, the dialectical theorem. The functional specialty dialectic concentrates on radical conflicts. Such conflicts are rooted in dialectically differing horizons, in presence or absence of intellectual, moral or religious conversion. The aim of the method is to bring such horizons to light, and this it does by recommending a series of steps. These steps divide broadly into comparison and criticism.

*Comparison* involves (1) assembly of the results of research, interpretation and history; (2) completion of these results by saying what is good and bad in each; (3) comparison of the completed assembly to identify affinities and oppositions; (4) reduction to common roots; (5) classification of affinities and oppositions into those rooted in dialectically opposed horizons, and those having other grounds.

<sup>73</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 288.

<sup>74</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 129.

<sup>75</sup> See Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method*, chapter 12.

*Criticism* involves (6) selection of affinities and oppositions rooted in dialectically opposed horizons, and dismissal of the rest; (7) distinguishing among these between positions and counterpositions; (8) operating, or developing positions and reversing counterpositions. More simply, one has to engage in evaluation of results, select those rooted in dialectically opposed horizons, discern which of these are positions and which counterpositions, and attempt to indicate how the former could be developed and the latter reversed. The point of this exercise is the objectification of the personal horizon of the investigator: through the process of comparison and criticism, one inevitably provides evidence about one's own basic horizon, one's own basic positions in the intellectual, moral and religious areas.

The foregoing process is to be done first at an individual level; next, the results of this level are themselves subjected by other members of the team to the process of comparison and criticism; and finally, the results of this second level are discussed in a face-to-face encounter. The first application is already an encounter with the history-making persons of the past. The second and third applications amount to an encounter with the history-writing persons of the present, and so the communitarian dimension of knowledge is integrated even more explicitly into method.<sup>76</sup> If on the first two levels one encounters subjects-as-objects, on the third level one encounters subjects-as-subjects, and dialectic is transformed into dialogue.<sup>77</sup>

This procedure does not assure uniform results, the categorical identification of correct interpretations and histories. What then is gained by it? Well, we have been saying that ultimate differences in interpretations are rooted in subjectivity, in the presence or absence of conversions. Now conversion is a highly personal act; no one can be forced to undergo conversion. What then does dialectic do? It focuses on the topic of conversion, and it aims at the objectification of subjectivity. For while one is identifying radical conflicts, distinguishing between positions and counterpositions, developing positions and reversing counter-positions, one is at the same time providing evidence to others about one's own subjectivity, about one's authenticity or lack of it. While not providing automatic solutions, therefore, dialectic does reduce problems to their deepest roots, and constitutes an invitation to growth in authenticity.

Again, Lonergan is far from saying that all positions are the same, and that there is no way of choosing between one position and another, or between a position and a counterposition. It should not be forgotten that the proper background for *Method in Theology* is the massive achievement of *Insight*. However, it is good to

<sup>76</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 250; see 331. B. Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 182.

<sup>77</sup> B. Lonergan, "Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 159. Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" 182. See also Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method* 184-187.



note also this feature of Lonergan's thought, that ultimately one cannot reason one's way into authenticity. While counterpositions can be pointed out, conversion is a decision, and high decision. It is an exercise of vertical liberty. The process of conversion might consist in glimpsing the possibility of a different horizon, making efforts to find out more about it, and then making the decision to migrate to the new horizon.<sup>78</sup> Even when this decision is taken, there remains the whole work of thinking through the new horizon. For there is a law of integration, and when that is violated, one runs the danger of becoming a basket case.<sup>79</sup>

We must note, however, that dialectic merely promotes conversion; conversion itself is a highly personal act, but one that is the pivot between the theology that merely studies, reports and evaluates the thought of another, and the theology that takes a stand, declares what one believes, and proceeds on that basis to seek understanding, communicate that understanding, and outline possible contributions to the transformation of the world. The functional specializations that follow upon this moment of conversion are foundations, doctrines, systematics and communications. A few comments upon this second phase of theology will help us highlight some of the transcultural possibilities of the method in the next section.

First, the functional specialty, foundations, consists in a decision "about whom and what you are for and, again, whom and what you are against".<sup>80</sup> This decision is prepared for by research, interpretation, history, and illuminated "by the manifold possibilities exhibited in dialectic"<sup>81</sup> and results in an objectification of one's basic horizon, of one's achievement or failure to achieve intellectual, moral, religious conversion. We might note once again that this process of objectification is not to be understood in terms of some vague or naïve introspection. It is, rather, a mutual self-mediation with respect to a tradition, where the coming to light of the self is at once the lighting up also of the tradition.<sup>82</sup>

Second, the objectification of cognitive and existential interiority results in what Lonergan calls 'general theological categories', while the objectification of religious interiority results in 'special theological categories.' Interestingly, Lonergan notes that the generation of the latter set of categories involves not merely the study (research, interpretation, history) of religious texts, but also historical, phenomenological, psychological, sociological studies of religious interiority.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 224: "For any notable change of horizon is done, not on the basis of that horizon, but by envisaging a quite different and, at first sight, incomprehensible alternative and then undergoing a conversion." The role of love or grace is not to be excluded.

<sup>79</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 496-497.

<sup>80</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 268.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> See notes 28 and 29 above.

<sup>83</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 290.

Third, the categories in question are transcultural in the realities they refer to, but historically conditioned in their actual expressions:

[T]ranscendental method [...] is, in a sense, transcultural. Clearly it is not transcultural inasmuch as it is explicitly formulated. But it is transcultural in the realities to which the formulation refers, for these realities are not the product of any culture but, on the contrary, the principles that produce cultures, preserve them, develop them. Moreover, since it is to these realities we refer when we speak of *homo sapiens*, it follows that these realities are transcultural with respect to all truly human cultures.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, God's gift of his love (*Rom. 5, 5*) has a transcultural aspect. For if this gift is offered to all men, if it is manifested more or less authentically in the many and diverse religions of mankind, if it is apprehended in as many different manners as there are different cultures, still the gift itself as distinct from its manifestations is transcultural.<sup>85</sup>

Fourth, the formulation of transcendental or general method is a cutting free from the supremacy of logic, conceptualism, nominalism, essentialism in favour of what is truly fundamental: the transcendental notions, which are Aristotle's *physis* or natural principles of movement and of rest, and the habits of understanding, wisdom and love. Lonergan's general method can be seen, in fact, as a contemporary transposition of Thomist wisdom that is built upon the primacy of the existential and so integrates *sapientia* and *prudentia*.

Fifth, Lonergan's method can provide models for the discussion of cultures and the differences between them. The function of a model is to raise questions, direct attention to aspects that might have been overlooked, and enable discussion of realities that are often very complex. Thus, rather than speaking of a global entity called Indian culture, we might speak on the one hand of smaller sub-divisions, and on the other of diachronically emerging differentiations of consciousness and dialectical diversification of such differentiations. The further question of the interrelationships between cultures in the context of world history might also be raised.

Sixth, cultural differences are profound, but in Lonergan's thinking they belong to the sphere of description rather than of explanation, to relative rather than to absolute horizons.<sup>86</sup> Thus they may imply different ways of expressing cognitional

<sup>84</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 282.

<sup>85</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 282-283.

<sup>86</sup> See Lonergan's 1963 distinction between relative and absolute / transcendental horizons. Relative horizons are related to the 'genetic sequences of viewpoints' of chapter 17 of *Insight*. They are rooted in development, and result more from external factors than from inner conditions. Thus psychological development is a result of education; social development is the result of society; and cultural development is affected principally by the age in which one lives. Transcendental or absolute horizons, instead, are related to the 'dialectical sequences of viewpoints' of chapter 17 of *Insight*; they are rooted in conversion;

theory and metaphysics, but not different cognitional theories and metaphysics. We may note, however, that while cognitional theory and metaphysics are transcultural at root, consciousness develops differently in each culture. If, for example, the theoretical differentiation has not arisen in a culture, people of that culture will, as whole, find it more difficult to understand or master theory.<sup>87</sup>

Seventh, theology has to unite itself with all other relevant branches of human studies and sciences if it is to play its part in the redemptive and constructive role of the church in human society. The possibility of such integration, says Lonergan, is a method that runs parallel to the method of theology; but of this, more in the section that follows.

### 3. Transcultural Possibilities

We come now to the transcultural possibilities of Lonergan's general method, and we begin with the following observations. (1) General method provides both a basis and a framework for dialogue. (2) Such a dialogical method can be worked into a method for interreligious theologizing, with the aim of generating contextualized theologies. (3) Human studies and sciences, and therefore also international justice, relations, commerce, etc., can take advantage of the method to resolve dialectical conflicts.

#### 3.1. Dialogue

Dialogue may be ecumenical, interreligious, intercultural, or international. It could also be between different philosophical persuasions within a single culture or nation. The advantage of Lonergan's method is that it provides a framework that is open without being wishy-washy and relativist, one that takes its stand upon transcultural human constants. The procedure in each case would be simple: set up a team and select a theme; subject the theme to research, interpretation, history; subject the results of these to dialectic; make personal decisions in the light of dialectic, issuing in foundations, etc. We note again that no automatic results should be expected, and yet the method does provide a way of getting down to basics, to the roots of disagreements. The common human desire for authenticity and for peace gives one the hope that men and women of peace will discover areas in common and allow themselves to be challenged in other areas.

and conversion has external conditions, but is deliberate, free, responsible, existential choice, and so is principally in and by the individual. Relative horizons do not negate the existence of other horizons, but transcendental horizons introduce absolute oppositions: what lies beyond them does not exist for the individual, has no value, cannot be known. Lonergan, Folder entitled 'De methodo theologiae 1963' (Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch V.11) items p, r. See Coelho, *Hermeneutics and Method* 128.

<sup>87</sup> See section 1, India and the East in Lonergan, in I. Coelho, "Lonergan and Indian Thought," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63/4 (2007) 1026-1034.

In the ecumenical area, we could certainly expect better mutual understanding, communication and collaboration, and such progress is already being made, though not always at the pace expected or desired by all. I have been told, in fact, that the process of dialogue at official levels between the Catholic church and certain other Christian churches bears striking similarities to the procedures advocated by Lonergan in his dialectic and foundations. This is an area, in fact, where the specific directives of dialectic might be applied with profit: comparison (assembly, completion, comparison, classification, reduction) and criticism (selection, identifying positions and counterpositions, developing the former and reversing the latter).

In the interreligious area, once again we can expect better understanding, communication and collaboration. More specifically, I think we should hope for mutual recognition of different sets of general and special categories as basically equivalent. This would be easier in the area of what Catholics used to call 'natural truths' (such as the existence of God and creation) than in the area of 'supernatural truths' (such as the Trinity and the Incarnation). We might expect, for example, that Christians, Buddhists and Hindus arrive at a recognition of the deep affinity between unrestricted loving, *karuṇā* (compassion), and the realization of *Tat* (That) as one's *Atman* (*tat-tvam-asi*). Lonergan himself has made repeated references to William Johnston and the Zen experience of Japanese monks, indicating that a common infrastructure might underlie differences in suprastructure or interpretation.<sup>88</sup> I personally think that a fruitful initial area of exploration would be the equivalence between the Christian doctrine of creation and the Vedantic thinking about the relationship between *Brahman* and the world. After wading through mutual accusations entrenched in categories such as pantheism and dualism, it might, after all, be refreshing to discover new possibilities of understanding. Another topic would be the clarification of the understanding of the term 'person,' a term whose meaning was wrought within the crucible of Christian thinking about the mystery of the Triune God, but which has subsequently suffered the vicissitudes of history to such an extent as to make Hindus regard a personal God as merely a lower form of God, suitable for people who might not have attained the heights of mysticism. Yet another area, and probably far more thorny, is the Christian insistence on referring to God as Father and Son, and the Muslim abhorrence for such terminology as unacceptably anthropomorphic.<sup>89</sup>

What I have been saying with respect to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue

<sup>88</sup> See e.g. Lonergan, "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection* 67, and Lonergan, "Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection* 59.

<sup>89</sup> For somewhat more detail on this topic, see section 2, Resonances between Lonergan and Indian Thought, in Coelho, "Lonergan and Indian Thought," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 63/4 (2007) 1035-1038.

is equally applicable to dialogue between ‘religious’ people and those who consider themselves *laici* or atheists or agnostics. In the Italian area, especially, topics such as autonomy and authority, church and state, and issues of morality are often and publicly discussed. The historical and emotional obstacles are surely formidable, but I do believe that Lonergan’s method will at least serve to identify the deeper roots of disagreements, while also serving to uncover possible areas of collaboration.

### 3.2. *Interreligious Theologizing*

Methodical dialogue can also be pressed in the service of ecumenical and interreligious theologizing, with the aim of generating contextualized theologies.

Since the method is open to all-comers, the team not only can but should be as diverse as possible, including members from different Christian denominations, different faiths, and even those who do not define themselves in terms of faith or religion. In an unpublished text of 1969, Lonergan made the following comment:

Dialectic occurs principally, not within some one religion, but between many religions. It is the seat, not of authority, but of dialogue. It is not institutional but ecumenist. It is where the many meet, clarify their differences, eliminate misapprehensions, remove incoherences. It is where they endeavour to understand why the other fellow disagrees, to find behind what one thinks his error the truth to which he is so devoted.<sup>90</sup>

Such diversity is already a first step towards ensuring the effectiveness of dialectic, as well as towards the generation of categories that are different while at the same time being transcultural at their core. Such a team of scholars will be diverse not only in virtue of their religious affiliation or lack of it, and their personal, social, cultural backgrounds, but also in terms of their basic horizons, their basic philosophical, moral and religious commitments.

The investigators can be envisaged as engaging, for the most part as individuals, in research, interpretation and history. They will be required to come together for dialectic, first studying the contributions of the other members of the team, then the results of this first level, and finally engaging in face-to-face dialogue. In the light of such dialectic and dialogue, they will each, once again as individuals, engage in the functional specialties foundations and doctrines, seeking now to objectify their basic horizons, opt for particular formulations, and indicate their levels of comfort with other formulations.

As I attempted to indicate earlier, dialectic and dialogue are not sure-fire ways of arriving at uniform results. The function of these specialties is to provide a framework for collaboration, for bringing people of different backgrounds and

<sup>90</sup> Lonergan, “MIT X. Chapter Ten. Dialectic and Foundations” (15 pp., Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, Archives Batch VI.5, 1969, unpublished) 15 ([www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 58400DTEL60, p. 15.)

basic commitments together, in order to carry the discussion to the most basic and fundamental levels, to provide mutual challenge, and to hope for convergence on the basis of a common humanity and a common desire for authenticity. Thus, while there may be no sudden or startling results, in an atmosphere of friendship much can be expected. For each person has his/her own type of questions, and his/her own way of putting questions. Where there is dialogue, there are as many principles for the elimination of bad judgments operative in the discussion as there are genuine persons there. Panikkar says that only the 'others' "can help me discover my presuppositions and the underlying principles of my science." "In brief," he goes on, "*das Ungedachte*, the unthought, can be disclosed only by one who does not 'think' like me and who helps me discover the unthought magma out of which my thinking crystallizes. For my part, I can do him the same service."<sup>91</sup>

We might note here that the objectification of subjectivity that is the key moment of dialectic (Lonergan calls it the crucial experiment<sup>92</sup>) is really also one of the basic insights of contemporary psychological counselling and therapy. There is, in fact, a great deal of resonance between Lonergan's generalized method and the techniques of contemporary psychology, and therefore also another area of fruitful collaboration towards mutual enrichment. Restricting ourselves only to the area of ecumenical and interreligious theologizing, we might note that psychology can offer dialectic much help by way of training participants in the art and skills of interpersonal encounter and teamwork.

Since, further, the objectification of subjectivity involves a willingness to engage in an Augustinian confession of one's past, to question one's personal authenticity, and to engage in prayer, neither the university nor the average academic conference might be able to provide a suitable atmosphere for the functional specialties dialectic and foundations. We will need to make use of institutions such as the retreat houses in the West or the *ashrams* and monasteries in the East as settings for the exercise of dialectic and foundations, providing the required atmosphere of peace, quiet, unhurriedness and prayer within which participants might be helped to introspect, objectify feelings, experiences, attitudes, thoughts, release blocks and prepare for personal commitment.<sup>93</sup>

Connected with the above is the resonance between Lonergan's thinking on judgment and the attainment of truth, and the Christian tradition of discernment of spirits.<sup>94</sup> If this be true, interreligious theologizing, especially in its dialectical and

<sup>91</sup> R. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics: Cross-Cultural Studies* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1983) 333.

<sup>92</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 253.

<sup>93</sup> See Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 1980) 90-92; Coelho, "Applying Lonergan's Method: The Case of an Indian Theology," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 22/1 (2004) 11, 17.

<sup>94</sup> See Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection* 201, note 47, where he makes reference to the articles on discernment in *Sacramentum Mundi* ("Discernment of Spirits") as well as *Dictionnaire*

foundational moments, will have much to learn from the experience of spiritual directors, guides and gurus in various religious traditions, Christian as well as other. If objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, then everything that helps towards authentic subjectivity is grist for the mill of generalized method.

The results of ecumenical, interreligious and intercultural theologizing would be, first of all, the recognition of different sets of general and special theological categories as equivalent. I speak deliberately of different sets of general and special categories, basing myself on the fact that these categories, even though equivalent in the sense that they refer to the same transcultural realities, are historically conditioned in their expression. The existence of equivalent sets of categories will open up the possibility of expressing the Christian faith in different cultural contexts, leading thus to an African theology, an Indian theology, a Chinese theology, etc. What applies to the Christian faith will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to other faiths too.

The exciting possibility is there, of course, not only of recognition of equivalence, but also of incorporation of diversity so as to move, in different ways, to a better understanding of the different ways in which God has come to us, and what is probably the one divine plan for humanity. I am hinting here, not at some universal religion in which all differences are drowned and reduced to lowest common denominators, but at a view in which each religion finds its own place within the divine dream and also extends such recognition to the other religions.<sup>95</sup>

### 3.3. *International Relations, Communications, Commerce*

A third area in which the transcultural possibilities of Lonergan's method might be of use is that of international relations, justice, communications, and commerce.

Lonergan himself has noted that his theological method both needs and can be of use to scholarly and empirical human studies and sciences. Theology needs these sciences if it is to carry out its service to society; on the other hand, these sciences which study the concrete human situation, cannot afford to ignore the fact that this situation has been marked by religion and the possibility that it has been marked also by grace.

*de spiritualité ascétique et mystique* ("Consolation spirituelle," "Démon," "Direction spirituelle," and "Discernement des esprits"). Robert Doran has been researching this area, and proposes that the process of decision-making in chapter 18 of *Insight* corresponds to Ignatius of Loyola's 'third time' of discernment, while the same process in *Method in Theology* corresponds to Ignatius' 'second time' of discernment (see, e.g., his paper at the International Lonergan Workshop, Naples, 13-15 May 2008). My hunch is that not only the judgment of value and the process of decision-making, but also judgment on the third level of conscious intentionality, is somehow linked to the process of spiritual discernment.

<sup>95</sup> See Postscript in I. Coelho, "Religious Experience and Expression in Lonergan," First International Lonergan Workshop, Rome, 7-12 May 2001, submitted for publication to *Lonergan Workshop*. Also section 6, A theology of religions, in I. Coelho, "Francis Xavier, Lonergan, and the Problem of Missions Today," *Lonergan Workshop* 19 (2006) 61-82.

It might help to begin by noting that Lonergan's initial interests were economic, political, sociological, cultural, historical, religious, rather than gnoseological and metaphysical. In a paper of 1935 entitled "*Panton Anakephalaiôsis*" he concerns himself with the human good, is convinced that the restoration of all things in Christ would take place in the social order, and notes the crying need for a *Summa Sociologica*.<sup>96</sup> Lonergan never gave up this early concern for the social order, and *Insight* itself may be regarded as part of this larger campaign. The book engages in a rather lengthy discussion of the shorter and longer cycles of decline rooted in group and general biases, and goes on to note the need for a critical human science which is eventually identified as generalized empirical method. Generalized method, we are told, is the required critical human science because it contains within itself the combination of empirical and critical attitudes necessary to master the social surd, which is the component of the irrational (read 'bias' in the sense carefully defined by Lonergan) within social reality. Generalized method is not, of course, the total solution, for the human problem is not one of reason alone. Since the human being is a compound-in-tension of intelligence and intersubjectivity, the challenge of the major cycle of decline can be met only through the parallel compound of a culture to which Lonergan gives the mysterious name 'cosmopolis' and which he describes as "a dimension of consciousness, a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities" that is akin to the liberal indoctrination of people with the notion of progress and Marxist activation of the class-consciousness of the masses, but goes beyond the liberal thesis and the Marxist antithesis as their higher synthesis.<sup>97</sup> Clearly, such a cosmopolis is a tall order; but it would seem that, in Lonergan's mind, generalized method and dialectical analysis is its operative moment, and *Insight* part of the campaign. Far from ending with *Insight*, however, the campaign continues into the later work. The proposal for the integration of theology with scholarly and empirical human studies that we are examining is clearly in continuity with the critical human science and the cosmopolis of *Insight*.

Coming to the proposal itself, the aim of the integration of human studies and sciences with theology, according to Lonergan, "is to generate well-informed and continuously revised policies and plans for promoting good and undoing evil both

<sup>96</sup> B. Lonergan, "*Panton Anakephalaiôsis*," paper found in File 713 dated 28 April 1935, and published in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 9/2 (1991) 156. See F. Crowe, "Editors' Preface" in Lonergan, *Verbum* vii-viii.

<sup>97</sup> Lonergan, *Insight* 266; see 263-267. See *ibid.*: "It stands on a basic analysis of the compound-in-tension that is man; it confronts problems of which men are aware; it invites the vast potentialities and pent-up energies of our time to contribute to their solution by developing an art and a literature, a theatre and a broadcasting, a journalism and a history, a school and a university, a personal depth and a public opinion, that through appreciation and criticism give men of common sense the opportunity and the help they need and desire to correct the general bias of their common sense."



in the church and in human society generally.”<sup>98</sup> The possibility of the integration is a method that runs parallel to the method of theology. The functional specialties research, interpretation, history can be applied to the data of any sphere of human studies. When the same functional specialties are conceived not as specialties, but simply as experience, understanding and judgment, they can be applied “to the data of any sphere of human living to obtain the classical principles and laws or the statistical trends of scientific human studies.”<sup>99</sup> Next comes the place of dialectic:

Now as in theology, so too in historical and empirical human studies scholars and scientists do not always agree. Here too, then, there is a place for dialectic that assembles differences, classifies them, goes to their roots, and pushes them to extremes by developing alleged positions while reversing alleged counterpositions. Theological foundations, which objectify the horizon implicit in religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, may now be invoked to decide which really are the positions and which really are the counter-positions. In this fashion any ideological intrusion into scholarly or scientific human studies is filtered out.<sup>100</sup>

Yet another role for dialectic is that of analyzing social process and the social situation in order to lead to policy. “The social historian will ferret out instances in which ideology has been at work. The social scientist will trace its effects in the social situation. The policy maker will devise procedures both for the liquidation of the evil effects and for remedying the alienation that is their source.”<sup>101</sup> The first use of dialectic, in which dialectic is applied to their own work, makes the social historian and scientist familiar with alienation and ideology in themselves; accordingly, they are sensitive to elements of these in the processes they study.<sup>102</sup>

Corresponding to the functional specialties doctrines, systematics and communications in theological method, integrated studies would distinguish policy making, planning and execution of plans. Policy is concerned with attitudes and ends. Planning works out the maximal utilization of available resources towards the desired ends under existing conditions. Execution generates feedback which supplies scholars and scientists with data for studies on the wisdom of policies and efficacy of planning.<sup>103</sup>

Such integrated studies will have to occur on many levels, local, regional, national, and international. Action will be according to principles of subsidiarity: problems are to be defined and resolved at local levels wherever possible. The role of the higher levels is to provide information exchange centres for sharing of

<sup>98</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 366.

<sup>99</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 364-365.

<sup>100</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 365.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 365-366.

best practices; to work on larger, more intricate problems that have no solutions at lower levels, and to organize lower levels for collaboration in implementation of the possible solutions; to engage in a general task of coordination, identifying problems, deciding which problems are best studied at what level, ensuring the collaboration of all concerned on any given issue.

Apart from the healing role, there is also the constructive one.<sup>104</sup> To think of the constructive side of Christian action only in terms of policy making, planning and implementation, says Lonergan, is to take “a very superficial and rather sterile view”. There is, he says, “the far more arduous task (1) of effecting an advance in scientific knowledge, (2) of persuading eminent and influential people to consider the advance both thoroughly and fairly, and (3) of having them convince practical policy makers and planners both that the advance exists and that it implies such and such revision of current policies and planning with such and such effects.”<sup>105</sup>

I have been presenting Lonergan’s proposal for a method integrating scholarly and empirical human studies with theology. It is, clearly, a proposal constructed from the point of view of church and theology. My suggestion, however, is that the core proposal is still quite acceptable and worthy of consideration, and that proposal consists of a critical and a constructive method ‘for promoting good and undoing evil.’ The critical part unfolds in the following three moments:

1. The functional specialties research, interpretation, history (for human studies), or experiencing, understanding, judging (for human sciences).
2. Dialectic for handling conflicts and critiquing social situations; and foundations for objectifying basic horizons.
3. Policy, planning, implementation.

The constructive aspect cannot perhaps be planned and implemented with the same facility, but the principle of liberty keeps generating a huge number of interesting proposals, so that Lonergan’s method might perhaps still function in its critical role as represented in dialectic, with the task of filtering out elements of alienation and ideology.

Lonergan provides, therefore, both a formidable theoretical basis for transcultural understanding, communication, collaboration and critique, and a method that is open and dialogical. At its bare minimum, it is simply a question of applying dialectic to human studies and sciences, to issues arising from international relations, communications, and commerce on the one hand, or to the evaluation of policy, planning and implementation on the other. And if, while I have been speaking, you have had the feeling that this is somehow quite familiar and not all that strange, it may be an indication of the fact that generalized method takes its

<sup>104</sup> See B. Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection* (New York / Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 100-109.

<sup>105</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 366-367.

stand on the basic transcultural constants of being human, and that it is an attempt to objectify the dialectical process that goes on in a spontaneous manner both in the sphere of history and in the area of human debate and discussion.

# LONERGAN, THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE AND THE RECEPTION OF ECUMENICAL CONSENSUS

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I write this contribution as somewhat of an “accidental” student of Bernard Lonergan. By that I mean that the corpus of Bernard Lonergan’s work has never been the primary focus of my work. The driving force behind much of my research has been the search for Christian unity, and the effort to overcome church-dividing doctrinal issues through the long and patient process of inter-church dialogue. The ecumenical movement is fundamentally a movement of renewal in the life of the church. In the course of attempting to reflect systematically on theology’s task in the service of growth towards unity, I have found it helpful to appeal to the thought of Bernard Lonergan, in particular to his reflection on *Method in Theology*.<sup>1</sup> I welcome the occasion of this workshop to return to Lonergan’s theory once again and consider the specific question of the development of doctrine. These reflections are very preliminary in nature.

Far from proposing an exhaustive theory of the development of doctrine, Lonergan reflects on the lived experience of the church in the evolution of its corpus of dogmatic teachings. In his discussion of “dogmatic development” in *The Way to Nicea*, Lonergan observed that:

Within the ante-Nicene movement we have to recognize two distinct, though related developments. There is no doubt that those early Christian centuries produced a development in Trinitarian and Christological doctrine, but this doctrinal development contained within it another, more

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990; original version: Darton Longman & Todd / Herder and Herder, 1972. For my application of Lonergan’s framework, see especially, “Lonergan and Ecumenism,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002) 521-538; the former is largely a distillation of *The Groupe des Dombes: A Dialogue of Conversion*, American University Studies, Series VII, Theology and Religion, Vol. 231, Peter Lang, New York 2005. See also “Dialogue and Method: Learning from the Groupe des Dombes”, *One in Christ* 38 (2003) 42-57. Elsewhere, I have attempted to apply Lonergan’s theory to the relationship between developments in church doctrine, including those influenced by ecumenical progress, and canon law: “The Collaboration of Theology and Canon Law in Light of Lonergan’s Theory”, *Studia Canonica* 40/1 (2006) 117-136.

profound development: the development of the very notion of dogma. But this latter development was implicit not explicit; the question was not sharply defined, methodically investigated and unambiguously answered. [...] But other dogmas had to follow, and then the historical investigation of dogmas, before the fact of dogmatic development itself could be clearly established.<sup>2</sup>

The conflicts of the early church concerning the doctrine of the Trinity gave rise, not only to progress in understanding the true nature of the Godhead. Whether or not they were explicitly conscious of it or intending it, the early Fathers of the Church were positing the fact of doctrinal development upon which others would reflect in retrospect. In our own day growth in theological agreement on questions that were once considered church-dividing is actively contributing to the development of doctrine. At the same time, the fact of inter-church dialogue constitutes an unprecedented context for such development. The “ecumenical advance” of the past century, and indeed the ongoing work of seeking theological consensus and considering the implications of growth in agreement for the life of the churches, places us before the fact of a qualitatively different kind of doctrinal development, the likes of which we have never before witnessed in the history of the church. While the true nature of this present development will only become clear as it unfolds and might only be assessed when one looks back from some future point in history, an appeal to Lonergan’s theory can help to illuminate the character of this new reality.

### **1. A New Form of Doctrinal Development**

It is possible to discern two principal types of doctrinal development in the history of the Christian tradition. In the first millennium, the ecumenical councils witness to a transition from the symbolic world of the New Testament to the elaboration of a more precise language, adapting many of the categories of Hellenistic philosophy to clarify and delimit the content of church doctrines pertaining to the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation in a somewhat contentious dialectical process. In Lonergan’s words, the ante-Nicene movement “marks a transition from the mystery of God hidden in symbols, hinted at by a multiplicity of titles, apprehended only in a vague and confused manner in the dramatico-practical pattern of experience, to the mystery of God as circumscribed and manifested in clear, distinct, and apparently contradictory affirmations.”<sup>3</sup> Efforts to expand the realm of doctrinal precision through the integration of Aristotelian philosophical categories into

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea: The Dialectical Development of Trinitarian Theology*, Trans. Conn O’Donovan, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1964, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea*, p. 137.

theological doctrine flourished in the scholastic age of the high Middle Ages, extending their systematic application to the realms of sacramental and moral life.

Another significant transition takes place in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the development of doctrine is conceived less as a matter of clarification in the face of conflict, and more as the unfolding of an idea<sup>4</sup> or the rendering explicit in the form of new dogmatic declarations that which was already implied in the life and prayer of the church.<sup>5</sup> John Henry Newman, who ushers in this new way of thinking about development with his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, described the foundation of the Christian faith as a “living idea.” He understood doctrinal development as a “process [...] by which the aspects of an idea are brought to consistency and form.”<sup>6</sup> The declarations of the Marian dogmas and the teaching of the First Vatican Council on the infallible exercise of the papal magisterium are illustrative of this shifting paradigm. At the same time, a rise in historical consciousness and the concomitant study of the history of doctrines makes possible the emergence of both the skeptical critique of such developments by the likes of Adolf Harnack or Rudolph Bultman,<sup>7</sup> and the first systematic reflections on the legitimacy, and indeed the necessity of these developments in the tradition.

In his study of the idea of doctrinal development, *From Newman to Congar*, Aidan Nichols observes that the earliest attempts to elaborate a theory of the development of doctrine were largely an *apologia* for Roman Catholic dogmatic teaching, a justification and defense against those who would reject such developments as a departure from the unadulterated message of Jesus contained in the New Testament. Other Christian churches regarded the new Catholic dogmatic teachings as a source of deepening divisions. The tone of Catholic thinkers was largely conciliatory, and the ecumenical motive of such a theory was clear. One

<sup>4</sup> The work of John Henry Newman is at the center of this approach. See *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Notre Dame University Press, Notre Dame, IN 1989, especially chapter 1, “Development in Ideas”, pp. 33-54.

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan comments on these developments in *Method*: “Their sole effect was that the solemn teaching office now proclaims what formerly was proclaimed by the ordinary teaching office. Perhaps I might suggest that human psychology and specifically the refinement of human feelings is the area to be explored in coming to understand the development of Marian doctrines”, p. 320.

<sup>6</sup> Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> Their approach to the history of religions and to the historical study of the biblical text respectively led them to conclude that the message of the Gospel had been corrupted by the introduction of Hellenist categories that were foreign to the Christian kerygma, and that Catholicism in particular, as seen in the introduction of the doctrine of purgatory in the Middle Ages, or in the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and later of papal infallibility in the nineteenth century, had broken ties with the original message of Jesus found in its purity in the New Testament. See Aidan Nichols, *From Newman to Congar: The Idea of the Development of Doctrine from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1990, pp. 6-13.

hoped to win over Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants to the reasonable claims of the Catholic position.

According to Nichols, Catholic theology had achieved an important synthesis in the understanding of the historical development of doctrine by the middle of the twentieth century, through the efforts of figures such as Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Yves Congar. This balanced view is reflected in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, whose Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) states,

The tradition which comes from the apostles progresses in the church, under the assistance of the holy Spirit. There is growth in understanding of what is handed on, both the words and the realities they signify. This comes about through contemplation and study by believers, who “ponder these things in their hearts” (see Lk 2, 19 and 51); through the intimate understanding of spiritual things which they experience; and through the preaching of those who, on succeeding to the office of bishops, receive the sure charism of truth. Thus, as the centuries advance, the church constantly holds its course towards the fullness of God’s truth, until the day when the words of God reach their fulfillment in the church (DV 8).<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, in the post-conciliar period, Nichols claims the possibility of maintaining the “serenity and confidence” of that balanced view has been undermined by a shifting of paradigms on three significant fronts: namely, the increasing pluralism and specialization of theology, the increasing complexity of hermeneutics, and the necessity of attending to the process of the reception of church doctrine.<sup>9</sup> My general thesis is that the effort of sustained interchurch dialogue is contributing today, in yet unrecognized ways, and in a manner that has yet to be fully received and integrated into the theological culture and doctrinal expression of the various Christian churches, to a new synthesis in the understanding of the development of doctrine which begins to address the new challenges indicated by Nichols.

Lonergan’s thought on the development of doctrine marks the advent of a new approach to understanding doctrinal development founded upon an understanding of the dynamics of conscious intentional operations. In *Method in Theology*, Lonergan alludes to the engagement of theologians in ecumenical dialogue as concentrating primarily in the functional specialties of dialectic and doctrines.<sup>10</sup> This is an important clue to the way in which dialogue is not simply concerned to

<sup>8</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, edited by Norman P. Tanner, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC / Sheed & Ward, London 1990, pp. 971-981, at p. 974. All subsequent citations of the conciliar texts are drawn from this edition.

<sup>9</sup> Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, pp.266-277.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 367; also pp. 129-130.

uncover the facts of revelation and their interpretation and history. It is a reflective task, an activity of discernment, of deliberation, and of what Lonergan refers to as judgment of value. It is not merely a cognitive or intellectual task, but involves the conversion of whole persons and whole communities. Thus, the work of theological reflection takes place within a context of living prayer and fellowship.

The unprecedented character of this activity lies in the fact that all churches who enter into such a process must display a fundamental readiness to revisit the judgments of the past. They are revisiting areas where they had once thought to have “brought definitive closure to a particular theological debate.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the very fact that Christians can today engage in such an undertaking implies a dramatic shift from considering one another’s positions as simply heretical or erroneous counter positions, to the basic supposition that the doctrinal achievements of each church – even if we persist in a concern that they might be “deficient” in some way<sup>12</sup> – nonetheless represent a genuine attempt to receive the inner Word of God in fidelity to the gospel of Christ and the teaching of the apostles. We now listen to hear beyond the divergent outer word represented in the doctrinal expressions of our partner a reception of the inner word that binds us together.

This initial judgment contains within it the presupposition that diverse Christian churches, in given historical and social contexts, and often in response to particular crises – including ecclesial conflict – or pastoral needs, have functioned as distinctive interpretive communities in their efforts to formulate the outer word of church doctrine. Thus, the partners engaged in dialogue can expect to receive new insights from one another’s unique penetration into some aspect of the inner word. The Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism anticipated this development when it recognized the legitimate variety that exists, even in “the theological expression of doctrine.” Referring especially to the appropriation of revelation in the Eastern and Western traditions, it acknowledges the need to take account of the ways the churches “have followed different methods, and taken different steps, towards their understanding and confession of God’s truth” (UR 17). Further, the Decree welcomes the discovery that at times “one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage” (UR 17). In a common search for

<sup>11</sup> See Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2005, p. 33. My reflections on doctrines and on categories are largely informed by reflections in this work.

<sup>12</sup> This is the outlook retained in the Decree on Ecumenism: “Though the ecclesial communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us that flows from baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the full reality of the eucharistic mystery, especially because the sacrament of orders is lacking [...] [*Communitates ecclesiales a nobis seiunctae, quamvis deficiat earum plena nobiscum unitas ex baptismo profluens, et quamvis credamus illas, praesertim propter sacramenti ordinis defectum...*], (UR 22 ). The frequent translation of *defectum* as “lacking” or as an “absence” of the sacrament of orders is a regrettable inaccuracy. “Deficiency” comes closer to the original the Latin expression, which aims at retaining the positive affirmation of partial or imperfect communion.



the truth, then, it must be recognized that a fuller appropriation of the inner word of revelation will integrate the insights of the very best efforts of all concerned to express the riches of the mysteries of faith as they have been variously received by the churches through the ages. This reality is perhaps most evident in the results of the liturgical renewal which has marked the Western churches in the past half century. And while there may be ample evidence of a fruitful cross fertilization in the work of individual theologians, there is reason to suggest that there is some hesitancy to receive any such developments in church doctrine.

## 2. Dialogue and Dialectic

By engaging in the process of dialectic, ecumenical partners work to distinguish the manner in which the diverging horizons of their respective church doctrines may be complementary, genetic or dialectical. Along the way, they may find it necessary to repent humbly of the fact that in many instances, through misunderstanding, misrepresentation and the lack of conversion which deeply marked the moments of controversy in our shared history, our churches had actually mistaken counter-positions for positions, and positions for counter-positions.<sup>13</sup> Such judgments are the result of working together at the task of critical history to discern what was going forward in past determinations, and what aspects of truth might have been left behind, forgotten and lost from view.<sup>14</sup> Such an acknowledgment creates a new horizon within which the doctrinal expressions of the past must be reinterpreted and the formulation of doctrine must be carried forward in the future. At the same time this active engagement in dialectic prepares what Lonergan has described as “the purification of categories – the elimination of the unauthentic” and begins to generate the special theological categories required to articulate the horizons of common faith.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Lonergan, *Method*, p. 251.

<sup>14</sup> The notion of “forgotten truths” was explored by Karl Rahner, “Forgotten Truths Concerning the Sacrament of Penance,” in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. II, trans. Karl-H. Kruger, Helicon, Baltimore 1963, pp. 135-174.

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 292. Lonergan makes it clear that the elimination of the unauthentic can only be effected “in the measure that theologians attain authenticity through religious, moral, and intellectual conversion.” Again, it is essential that the rigorous theological work produced through the activities of a dialogue commission is grounded in the experience of sincere fellowship and common prayer.

Another point to consider, though space does not permit me to develop it adequately here, is that in the search for a mutually agreed expression of common faith, theologians engaged in dialogue are in fact searching for a set of categories that are transcultural, and apt to mediate between the inherited categories of each tradition. This entails an evaluative judgment concerning the transcultural nature of the inherited categories employed in the articulation of each church’s doctrine, including whether, in the contemporary context, they continue to refer to or to mediate effectively the inner core of faith. See Lonergan, *Method*, p. 284: “[...] both with regard to transcendental method and with regard to the gift of his love we have distinguished between an inner core, which is transcultural, and an outer manifestation, that is subject to variation. Needless to say, theological categories will be transcultural only in so far as they refer to that

As I have suggested elsewhere,<sup>16</sup> the statement of ecumenical consensus by an ecumenical commission has a foundational character or fulfils a role similar to the operations of what Lonergan has described as the functional specialty of foundations or “conversion.” The explicitation of consensus or convergence can be seen as an effort to delineate in ecumenically receivable language a new common horizon for understanding the truth of the faith we share. Such affirmations, though often misunderstood and in recent times regrettably discredited,<sup>17</sup> are intended to promote a process of conversion in the life and teaching of the churches. They are the result of a common search for the truth of our common faith. Engaging together in the evaluative process of rereading, reinterpreting, and re-receiving the inner word of God requires an act of ecclesial self-transcendence and of growth in ecclesial authenticity. Each church strives to appropriate the mystery of faith more fully and to better harmonize the outer word of church doctrine and life with the inner word of revelation, a word that can never be the sole or complete possession of a single Christian community. While the goal is a common re-appropriation of the tradition, this is never to be confused with a uniform expression of church doctrines. Nonetheless, it must be recognized by all that a fuller integration of past achievements of the wider Christian tradition is the condition for all future developments of both theological and ecclesial doctrines.

### **3. Differentiated Consciousness and Differentiated Consensus**

An adequate appreciation of the foundational character of ecumenical consensus statements requires a fully differentiated consciousness and, whatever one’s epistemological position, at least enough critical realism to differentiate between the meaning of the inner word and the doctrinal expression of one’s own denominational tradition, (or as John XXIII noted in his opening address at the Second Vatican Council, between the substance of faith and the way it is expressed). Among the recommendations issued by the Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues held by the World Council of Church’s Faith and Order Commission,

inner core. In their actual formulation they will be historically conditioned and so subject to correction, modification, complementation. Moreover, the more elaborate they become and the further they are removed from that inner core, the greater will be their precariousness.” On this point, the contribution of Ivo Coehlo to this Workshop is most helpful.

<sup>16</sup> See especially, “Lonergan and Ecumenism”, and *The Groupe des Dombes*, Conclusion.

<sup>17</sup> Cardinal Dulles, once himself a pioneer in ecumenical dialogue, recently characterized the work of ecumenical dialogue as an attempt to “harmonize the doctrines of each ecclesial tradition,” or as willing to settle “for the lowest common denominator,” or again as being ready to sacrifice one’s denominational convictions on the altar of political correctness. In his view, the methods of seeking theological consensus or convergence have exhausted themselves and should be set aside. Avery Dulles, “The Search for Unity Since 1957: A Catholic Perspective”. A paper presented in the context of “On Being Christian Together: The Faith and Order Experience in the United States”. US Faith and Order Commission 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event, Oberlin College, July 19-23, 2007. This paper has since been published as “Saving Ecumenism from Itself”, in *First Things*, [http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id\\_article=6081](http://www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6081).

is the encouragement for dialogue teams “to look behind the terminology which each side employs to the theological frameworks within which this terminology finds its meaning.”<sup>18</sup> Progress in theological agreement requires moving beyond what Lonergan refers to as naïve realism or even doctrinal realism, and entry into a spirit of critical realism.

The reception of ecumenical agreement has at times been impeded by an over zealous attachment to the theological categories of the dogmatic achievements of one’s own tradition, in a kind of resistance to the world mediated by meaning. Consensus statements are taken, not as a horizon of meaning within which to reconsider past achievements and correct or complete the expression of church doctrines for the future, but as competing doctrines to be juxtaposed with truly orthodox expressions of faith.<sup>19</sup> On the other extreme, the utility of theological spadework and intellectual achievement is seriously questioned or dismissed in a retreat into a naïve realism unwilling to accept anything more than the vague symbolism of the New Testament, or into the ascetic world of experience based in the realm of praxis and giving priority to common witness.<sup>20</sup>

An important indicator of the fact that ecumenical dialogue is actively contributing to the development of church doctrines can be seen in the efforts of the churches to correct the misjudgments of the past. Such developments are the product of genuine conversions – religious, moral, intellectual – and demonstrate

<sup>18</sup> “Many Ways to Christian Unity? The Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues: The Breklum Statement”, p. 4, at <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/breklum-statement.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> A certain tendency to seek doctrinal uniformity was evident in the Vatican’s initial “Observations” concerning the agreement on “Eucharistic Doctrine” developed by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Observations on the ARCIC Final Report”, *Origins* 11 (1981-82): 752-756. In its official response to ARCIC’s *Final Report* the Vatican disagreed with the assessment of the commission and requested further clarifications, “before it can be said that the statements made in the Final Report *correspond fully to Catholic doctrine* on the eucharist and ordained ministry” (emphasis mine). See “The Official Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I”, in *Common Witness to the Gospel: Documents on Anglican-Catholic Relations 1983-1995*, Jeffrey Gros, E. Roseanne Elder, and Ellen K. Wondra, eds., USCC, Washington, DC 1997, pp. 69-77, no. 30, at p. 76. See also “Requested Clarifications on Eucharist and Ministry”, in *Ibid.*, pp. 114-122. A similar trend was evident in the reaction of many Lutheran theologians in Germany on the eve of the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith by representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>20</sup> This latter tendency is what Nichols identifies as the challenge of “hermeneutics” to the synthesis of understanding in the development of doctrine. It is characteristic of liberationist trends in theology, which give priority to the role of experience, especially to the perspective and to the voice of the oppressed and the excluded. I am sympathetic to the perspectives of Robert M. Doran to the effect that the preferential option for the poor ought to be recognized as a constitutive doctrine of the church (See *What Is Systematic Theology?*, pp. 40-41). While ecumenical dialogues focus primarily on those doctrines which have been the object of controversy and division between the churches, this should not minimize, in any way, the significance of such perspectives. Indeed, the heightened awareness of the church’s mission to work together for transformation of society and for the liberation of all makes it all more urgent for us to arrive at a consensus on matters of sacramental theology and ecclesiology.

that we are on the way to undoing the effects of evil and decline in our halting attempts to express the mystery of faith in time conditioned human language. Among the examples of a critical re-evaluation of past theological achievements one might consider the decision of the 2004 synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America regarding the Heidelberg Catechism. Where the Heidelberg Catechism taught that the Catholic celebration of the Mass “at bottom, is nothing less than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry,”<sup>21</sup> dialogue on eucharistic doctrine and contemporary liturgical renewal enabled Reformed Christians to understand that this was not, in fact the case. The 2004 synod voted to amend the catechism and include a note affirming, “The Mass, when celebrated in accordance with official Roman Catholic teaching, neither denies the one sacrifice and suffering Jesus Christ nor constitutes an idolatry.”<sup>22</sup> In this case contemporary doctrinal consensus served as a criteria and a corrective for judgments born in the polemics of the past. Similarly, a number of Presbyterian Churches have dissociated themselves in recent years from several affirmations in the Scots Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Second Helvetic Confession, and the Westminster Confession, a series of sixteenth and seventeenth century confessional texts which condemn and mischaracterize the sacraments and ministry of the Catholic Church.<sup>23</sup> Such decisions are an effective recognition that, though diverging in the manner of expression, and though perhaps still short of full doctrinal agreement, the doctrinal expressions of the ecumenical partner is a sincere attempt to receive the mystery of the Word in fidelity to the Scriptures and the teaching of the apostles.

Perhaps the clearest expression to date of a clearly differentiated consciousness can be found in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith<sup>24</sup> signed in 1999 by representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman

<sup>21</sup> Questions and Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

<sup>22</sup> See Christian Reformed Church of North America, *Acts of Synod 2004*, Article 47, “Report of the Advisory Committee 7, Interdenominational Matters,” p. 566. [http://www.crcna.org/site\\_uploads/uploads/2004\\_acts.pdf](http://www.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/2004_acts.pdf). For the annotation to the catechism, see: [www.reformed.org/documents/Heidelberg.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/Heidelberg.html).

<sup>23</sup> *E.g.*: “Report of the Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to the Presbyterian Church (USA) 216<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2004), recommendation”. “Specific Statements” in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century confessions and catechism in *the Book of Confessions* contain condemnations or derogatory characterizations of the Roman Catholic Church: Chapters XVIII and XXII of the Scots Confession; Questions and Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism; and Chapters II, III, XVII, and XX, of the Second Helvetic Confession. (Chapters XXII, XXV, and XXIX of the Westminster Confession of Faith have been amended to remove anachronous and offensive language. Chapter XXVIII and the French Confession does not have constitutional standing.) While these statements emerged from substantial disputes, they reflect the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century polemics. Their condemnations and characterizations of the Catholic Church are not the position of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and are not applicable to current relationships between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Catholic Church.” (Item 06-06, no. 1, p. 4).

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/1-rc/doc/e\\_l-rc\\_just.html](http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/1-rc/doc/e_l-rc_just.html).

Catholic Church, and in the approach of “differentiated consensus” modeled by this accord. This same agreement was also affirmed by the Methodist World Council in Seoul, Korea, in July of 2006.<sup>25</sup> The Joint Declaration demonstrates how agreement on the basic truths of the doctrine of justification allows the churches to consider “the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding” (no. 40) and explication of Lutheran and Catholic expressions of this doctrine in a new light. Past theological achievements, in particular the doctrinal condemnations of each tradition are judged in light of this new consensus: “The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration” (no. 41). Similarly, the horizon of common understanding establishes the framework within which future expressions of Lutheran and Catholic doctrine must be developed. The attention of Catholics has been drawn in a new way to the centrality of the doctrine of justification in the Pauline corpus. Another immediate consequence of this agreement has been initiation of a joint study of the practice of indulgences, an area where questions persist regarding a practical culture of “works righteousness.” For their part, Lutherans will be more attentive in future to the transformative power of justifying grace and to the active participation of the faithful in response to God’s free gift of grace.

The approach of differentiated consensus adopted by the Lutheran – Catholic Commission on Unity enables us to consider that, in the light of a shared understanding of the common meaning of the doctrine of justification, the diversity of Lutheran and Catholic doctrine ought to be understood, not as reflecting a divergence on the meaning of the mystery of God’s unmerited gift of grace, but rather, a diversity of special theological categories. The joint affirmation of the basic truths of this doctrine in mutually agreed theological categories helps to mediate between these two worlds of experience and grounds the possibility for a harmonious development in the future articulation of doctrine by each church. One ought not to expect that this new horizon of common faith will be received in the same way by each church or that future Lutheran or Catholic expressions of this doctrine will be uniform. Due to both the diversity of their histories, yet also the diversity of their contemporary experience, these shared special categories will now interact with the data of consciousness and historical experience in the unique context of each church.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See “Report From the Coordinator of Ecumenical Dialogues (Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright),” and “The World Methodist Council and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification”, World Methodist Council, Seoul, 2006, [http://worldmethodistcouncil.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=67](http://worldmethodistcouncil.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=67).

<sup>26</sup> “It is to be stressed that this use of special categories [*i.e.*, their acceptance in doctrines, systematics,

#### 4. Development in Retrospect and the Future Reformulation of Church Doctrines

The long and patient effort of dialogue is proving that it is possible to mediate across the spectrum of different sets of the inherited special theological categories of ecumenical partners and to confirm a unity in diversity on key elements of church doctrine. As well, the growing body of ecumenical agreed statements on a host of issues is contributing to the development of a shared horizon of agreement on the constitutive meaning of foundational mysteries of the Christian faith. Perhaps the most significant effort of this sort that is presently underway is the Faith and Order Commission's attempt to elaborate a common statement on the Nature and Purpose of the Church.<sup>27</sup> One should not underestimate the power of this horizon, when properly received, to become a powerful force for the deepening of authentic communion. The work that remains to be done is the active transposition of this new horizon and its integration into the categories of each ecclesial tradition. Such a process entails the onerous task of re-evaluating each one's doctrinal tradition and refining the living expression of faith and practice. The examples cited above indicate that through such deliberation – an integral aspect of the process of reception – a number of churches have reassessed the systematic meaning behind a number of church doctrines which reflect past achievements and convey the judgments of each denominational church with respect to the doctrinal expression of other Christian churches. Such acts of reception have been largely retrospective.

Perhaps the greater challenge to the reception of the expanding horizon of mutual understanding is in allowing it to perform a constructive role in the positive reformulation of church doctrines with a view to the future of a reconciled church.

communications] occurs in interaction with data. They receive further specification from the data. At the same time, the data set up an exigence for further clarification of the categories and for their correction and development. In this fashion there is set a scissors movement with an upper blade in the categories and the lower blade in the data. [...] So, as theology is an ongoing process, as religion and religious doctrine themselves develop, the functional specialty, foundations, will be largely concerned with the origins, the genesis, the present state, the possible developments and adaptations of the categories in which Christians understand themselves, communicate with one another, and preach the gospel to all nations." *Method*, p. 293.

<sup>27</sup> See Faith and Order, "The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement", at [http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/FO2005\\_198\\_en.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/FO2005_198_en.pdf). Robert M. Doran notes: "In a discussion period at the 1962 Institute at Regis College, Toronto, on 'Method in Theology,' Lonergan expressed a conviction that the sacraments and the church are two areas in systematic theology in which an enormous amount of work needs to be done. In fact, he said, there is needed even doctrinal developments in these areas [...] There is then the field in which the categories are not yet fully developed. For example, categories as to the instrumental causality of the sacraments; they have to be developed more fully. There is also *everything regarding history and the mystical body, and the church*; these need further development." (Emphasis added.)", in *What is Systematic Theology?*, note 23, p. 222. One might reasonably argue that the ecumenical endeavor has been contributing precisely to such development in the past half century.

The Decree on Ecumenism is unambiguous about this responsibility when it refers to the “continual reformation” of which the church is needful: “Thus if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies ... *even in the way church teaching has been formulated* [...] these should be set right in the proper way at the opportune moment” (UR 6).

## 5. Three Shifts Affecting Future Doctrinal Development

Let us now return to the observations of Aidan Nichols, that the easy acceptance of the notion of the historical development of doctrine once achieved in the mid-twentieth century, was being seriously destabilized by the end of the century by the rise of increasing pluralism in theological disciplines and approaches, by the introduction of experience and contextual perspectives to hermeneutics, and finally, by the growing awareness of the complexity of reception in the process of teaching church doctrines.

### 5.1. *Development in a Pluralistic Context*

The challenge posed by the plurality of theologies in a world church is raised by Karl Rahner. Rahner saw doctrinal development as moving in two directions, one expanding (reflective knowledge) and the other simplifying (simple consciousness) with a reciprocal relationship between the two. Somewhat like Lonergan, he conceived of doctrinal development as the coming to consciousness of faith in the subject of the church, and as rooted in human experience. Writing before the Second Vatican Council he explained,

It is not as if all dogmatic development must always move in the direction of multiplying individual assertions. Just as important, indeed, strictly speaking still more important, is the development in the line of simplification, toward an ever clearer view of what is really intended, towards the single mystery, an intensification of the experience in faith of what is infinitely simple and in a very essential sense obvious.<sup>28</sup>

The history of dogma is therefore characterized by both expansive and intensive moments. In the years following the council Rahner was indeed preoccupied with the new consciousness of pluralism which hailed the emergence of a world church,<sup>29</sup> he emphasized the need for simplification and called for a major shift in the teaching role of the magisterium, declaring, “We have arrived at a state, then, on which the possibility of any really *new* definitions being produced by the Church’s teaching authority is at an ‘end’.”<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Karl Rahner, “Considerations on the Development of Dogma,” *Theological Investigations*, Vol. IV, trans. Kevin Smith, Helicon, Baltimore 1966, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> See Karl Rahner, “Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council”, in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. XX, trans. Edward Quinn, Crossroad, New York 1981, p. 77-89.

<sup>30</sup> Karl Rahner, “On the Concept of Infallibility in Catholic Theology”, in *Theological Investigations*,

This is not, as Nichols has suggested, “a less optimistic assessment of the future of the idea of doctrinal development itself.”<sup>31</sup> Rahner was responding to the notion that the infallible teaching office of the pope entailed “a continual process of the formulation of *new* doctrinal positions” in a process of development which leads to an increasing quantity of defined church doctrines.<sup>32</sup> Further, he observed that in recent times the magisterium “has been occupied with marginal areas in the hierarchy of truths of the Christian faith.”<sup>33</sup> For Rahner, the time had come for the papal magisterium to assume a prophetic role in the reformulation of the core of the Christian faith, in a practice which would heighten its character as a service to the unity of the church. He called for a return to the “basic substance of the Christian message”<sup>34</sup> in a manner that would enable a fuller appropriation of the faith by men and women of our age. These observations are not born in a spirit of pessimism, as Nichols suggests, but in a realistic assessment of the potential for reformulating the Christian faith and for bringing to life in new ways the central tenets of Christian doctrine. Rahner extends his reflection into his later proposal for the reunification of the churches, when he suggests that in a reconciled church, the papal teaching office would not “consist of ever-new differentiations of the original substance of faith,” but rather in “the clarification, appropriate to the situation, of *the* substance of faith already contained in the ancient creeds.”<sup>35</sup>

Lonergan was certainly attuned to the challenge posed to the unity of faith by multiple differentiations of consciousness and different common sense worlds. He points to a similar need for simplification in church doctrine when he suggests, “because the gospel is to be preached to all, there must be modes of representation and of expression appropriate to communicating revealed truth to every brand of common sense and to every differentiation of consciousness.”<sup>36</sup> The integration of the mutually agreed expression of faith represented by statements of ecumenical consensus or convergence, which reflect a renewed clarity and use of the symbolic categories of the New Testament and of the early tradition of the church, provide the basis for such simplified and appropriate expression of the gospel. The re-expression of church doctrine in these terms would reflect a second naiveté, a fresh experience of encounter with the love of God revealed to us in Christ and poured into our hearts by God’s Spirit.

Perhaps the most notable call for such a simple re-articulation of the core

Vol. XIV, trans. David Bourke, Seabury, New York 1976, p. 74.

<sup>31</sup> Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, p. 266.

<sup>32</sup> Rahner, “On the Concept of Infallibility”, p. 72.

<sup>33</sup> Karl Rahner, “Magisterium and Theology”, in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. XVIII, trans. Edward Quinn, Crossroad, New York 1983, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Rahner, “Magisterium and Theology”, p. 72.

<sup>35</sup> Heinrich Fires and Karl Rahner, *Unity of the Churches: An Actual Possibility*, trans. Ruth C. L. Gritsch and Eric W. Gritsch, Paulist, New York / Fortress, Philadelphia 1983, p. 89.

<sup>36</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 330.



of Christian doctrine in recent times is that made by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. Kasper has recently noted the need for a new "fundamental ecumenism" that will be more capable of speaking to younger generations who are "no longer interested in the old controversies,"<sup>37</sup> and for whom ecumenical engagement remains an obscure business carried on in an arcane academic language by a few specialists. A "fundamental ecumenism" would make the heart of the Christian message more accessible to younger generations by adopting a "new elementary vocabulary." Such a vocabulary, ought to become a common language for the churches in the expression of the core doctrines.

### 5.2. *The Challenge of Hermeneutics*

Nichols identifies a second challenge to the contemporary development of doctrine in the new priority given to diverse contextual perspectives – including those of the poor and oppressed, of women, and of various cultures – as described by the work of Edward Schillebeeckx. Much hard theoretical and critical work remains to be done, not only to reformulate and develop Christian doctrines in ways that are meaningful for contemporary men and women, but also to explain systematically the responsibility to do so in a manner that will provide a clear accounting for the grounding of both our common understanding of the faith and the contemporary reformulation of church doctrines in relation to the witness of scripture, to the authoritative interpretations reflected in the works of early Christian writers, ecumenical councils, confessional statements, to their historical evolution and to contemporary knowledge and experience, and of the reasoned judgments to which this gives rise. In short, some mutually agreed hermeneutical criteria will have to be developed in order to discern those developments which constitute genuine progress and advance in understanding from those which inevitably lead to decline.

The challenge raised by the integration of development in contemporary learning into church doctrines is profound, as can be seen from the extreme polarization not only between the Christian churches, but within each one, as they attempt to come to terms with new moral questions. The issue of hermeneutics is widely recognized today as a significant one that must be faced by all the churches together. It is significant that the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches identified the need for a study of hermeneutics in light of the churches' responses to the consensus statement on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.<sup>38</sup> This

<sup>37</sup> Walter Kasper, "The Current Ecumenical Transition", *Origins* 36/26 (2006) 407-413, at 413.

<sup>38</sup> Faith and Order, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, WCC, Geneva 1982; Max Thurian, ed., *Churches Respond to BEM*, Vols. 1-6, WCC, Geneva 1986. A fruit of this study process is the text, "A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for An Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics", at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/iv-interpretation-the-meaning-of-our-words-and-symbols/a-treasure-in-earthen-vessels-an-instrument-for->

work on hermeneutics and on authority continues today. There is much more at issue than the interpretation of Scripture, or even the dynamics of Scripture and tradition. The larger hermeneutical question underpinning the tension surrounding such questions is the role of contemporary experience and more specifically the larger question of the appropriate relationship of general categories to the special categories of theology and church doctrine. The divergence of the Augustinian and Aristotelian streams of thought, famously unresolved in the thirteenth century, continues to dog Christian theology and doctrine in our day. The deepest roots of such conflict may lie, not only in various differentiations of consciousness or worlds of common sense, but as Lonergan has observed, in a lack of conversion and a continued resistance to an empirically grounded hermeneutic rooted in a critical realist perspective. He observes that this lack of conversion is especially “perilous” when, “as at present, we there is going forward in the church a movement out of classicist and into modern culture.”<sup>39</sup> We are still very much in the throes of this transition, a fact which makes it essential to arrive at greater clarity and precision in both the expression of church doctrine and on the criteria for discerning genuine unity of faith.

## 6. Development and Reception

The third shift in the understanding of doctrinal development in the contemporary context identified by Nichols, as he draws from the reflections of Yves Congar, is that of reception. At the risk of stating the obvious, Congar himself would readily recognize the act of re-evaluating past articulations of church doctrine, and of re-articulating the faith in light of growth in ecumenical agreement as an activity of reception. Unity and consensus of faith, both diachronically – as expressed in the *sensus fidelium* of the whole people of God – and chronologically – in the truth mediated continuously through the outer word of Scripture and tradition remain a fundamental criteria for the authenticity and the authority of church doctrine. A challenge which must be faced within the Catholic Church in particular, is the extent to which the exercise of the teaching office by the magisterium is in tune with the living faith of the laity, and thus, a reflection of the consciousness of faith of the whole church. While the Second Vatican Council affirmed the co-responsibility of the laity for the life and mission of the church, and the revised Code of Canon Law proposed a number of structures for a more robust synodal life, their implementation has often been half-hearted.

At stake here is the very authenticity of the church, as a self-constituting subject. The internal structuring of the church is essential for this process of self-constitution and communication. These same structures are essential to the

[an-ecumenical-reflection-on-hermeneutics.html](#).

<sup>39</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 330.

process of reception, which is essentially a two-way process. The lived experience of the whole people of God ought to inform the magisterium as it seeks to express the living faith of the church. Similarly, the teaching of church doctrine must be received through a structured process which informs the church's prayer, witness, and service to humankind. If church doctrines are to truly reflect the consciousness of the whole church, effective structures and the lived experience of synodality are a necessary condition for the authenticity of their development. In addition, it is becoming increasingly clear that in the formulation of church teaching, it is no longer possible to work from within an exclusively confessional context – the perspectives of ecumenical partners must be considered. Only then can church teaching be said to reflect the *sensus fidelium* of all Christians.

In the future greater agreement will be required concerning the reliable means for the verification of the existence of such consensus through the synodality of ecclesial life, and for ensuring the continuity of constitutive meaning in the formulation of church doctrine through accountability to the authoritative witness of traditional confessions of faith understood within the horizon of a shared ecumenical horizon. A considerable amount of groundwork has already been done in these areas through the study of communion ecclesiology. Finally, it must be understood that what is fundamentally at issue in the appropriation of ecumenical consensus is not the mere reception of a body of agreed statements, but the re-reception and renewed appropriation of the core of the Christian faith by all the churches. The application of such a renewed consciousness in an intentionally structured process of reception is essential if the churches are to engage, as Lonergan has suggested, “not only a process of self-constitution but also a fully conscious process of self-constitution.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Lonergan, *Method*, p. 364.

# ECONOMIC PARADIGMS AND THE THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN

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## **1. Introduction**

My general theme is Lonergan's contributions to bridging the gap between technical economics and social justice, which I will explore in relation to the specific problem of how to determine a just wage in reference to a specific example which begins with a strike in Chile's copper mines. The state-owned copper company CODELCO had followed contemporary conventional wisdom first in running a state-owned enterprise as if it were privately owned, and second in outsourcing labor. CODELCO fired many of its workers. They were then hired again by small firms that continued to supply CODELCO with the services of its own former employees. The subcontracted workers went on strike complaining that their wages and working conditions were far inferior to those of workers who remained as regular CODELCO employees.

Since Chile depends on copper exports almost as much as Saudi Arabia depends on petroleum exports, the strike resulted in a national crisis. Monsignor Alejandro Goic, the president of the Chilean Conference of Bishops, was called in to mediate. Monsignor Goic is also Bishop of Rancagua, where one of the biggest copper mines, El Teniente, is located, and was, incidentally the founder of the Faculty of Religious and Philosophical Sciences at the Catholic University of Maule, which is the host institution for Chile's only Lonergan study group. Speaking as the man of the hour upon whom all eyes were focused and to whom all ears were tuned, Bishop Goic said that wages should be determined by moral criteria and not only by economic criteria. There should be an ethical wage, and he hazarded the estimate that it would be at least 250,000 Chilean pesos per month, which is approximately 450 US dollars or 340 euros.

Bishop Goic was immediately advised in the press that he should go back to saying mass and stay out of a field he knew nothing about. The bishop replied that

he had spoken as an ethicist, that he did not profess to be an economist, and it was now up to technicians who possessed the necessary expertise to devise means to put ethical principles into practice. The upshot was that on 23 August of 2007 Chile's president, Michelle Bachelet, named a high level commission to bridge the gap between technical economics and social justice. It was called the Presidential Advisory Council on Work and Equity. Of 48 members, 25 were economists. Its executive secretary Oscar Landarretche and its president, Patricio Meller, were both economists. In May of 2008 the commission submitted its report, known as the Meller Report.<sup>1</sup> President Meller described its recommendations as a paradigm shift, and he was telling the truth, according to this observer, inasmuch as the Report calls for a higher level of collective social responsibility for the welfare of all, and especially for the welfare of the laboring poor.

Unfortunately, according to the same observer, the means the technical economists have chosen to promote social justice are those of an old paradigm classically articulated in the 1870s by the English economist William Stanley Jevons and by the Austrian economist Carl Menger, whose views were anticipated by some earlier writers and refined by some later writers. Their gravamen is: to raise wages, raise productivity. Wages are taken to be equal to the marginal productivity of labor. The recommendations of the Meller Report coincide with the policies of the International Monetary Fund and other orthodox agencies, which focus anti-poverty funding on education and health, because these two factors raise the quality of what the poor have to sell, their labor. The price of what the poor sell is their wage. It is important to note that if the objective is to raise wages then according to orthodox theory it is not average productivity (the productivity of the average worker) that needs to be raised, but rather marginal productivity (see below) since it is the latter that determines wages.

I propose to examine the status of the principle that wages are equal to the marginal productivity of labor as an example illustrating Lonergan's call for economists to study ethics and for ethicists to study economics,<sup>2</sup> and as an example of the damage that is done when this advice of his is not heeded.

## **2. Wages and the Marginal Productivity of Labour**

An account of the origins of the above principle is provided in Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*, a book Lonergan studied carefully and a book which, in my opinion parallels many of Lonergan's concerns. It was published in 1954, after Lonergan's first period of writing on economics in the

<sup>1</sup> See P. Meller, and the other members of the presidential commission on work and equity, *Hacia un Chile más Justo: Trabajo, Salario, Competitividad y Equidad Social*, 2008, [www.trabajoyequidad.cl](http://www.trabajoyequidad.cl).

<sup>2</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, F.G. Lawrence, P.H. Byrne and Ch.C. Hefling Jr, eds., CLW 15, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1999, p. 105.

1930s and before Lonergan took up economics again in the 1970s. Concerning the origins of the idea that marginal productivity determines wages Schumpeter writes: “If the explanation of the exchange value of means of production [labor being one means of production, capital and land two others, HR] is based upon their indirect utility or use value to the consumers of their final product, that is to say, if their economic significance is to be derived from the contribution they severally make to consumers’ satisfactions, the problem naturally arises how the contribution of each of them is to be isolated, seeing that all factors are equally requisite for the final product and that complete withdrawal of any one of them will in most cases result in a zero product. The very fact that German critics continued to urge that this problem was insoluble and that, because it was, the marginal utility theory was inapplicable to the evaluation of any goods other than consumers’ goods present in given quantities, hence inapplicable to production, should suffice to show that here was a real and non-trivial difficulty, removal of which was the prerequisite for the fundamental idea’s becoming analytically operative. Menger removed it by applying the analogue of the method he had used to solve the value paradox. He accepted the impossibility of separating the contributions of factors to the product that results from their cooperation. But he observed that in order to remove the difficulty it was sufficient to determine their *marginal* contribution (Wieser’s *Grenzbeitrag*). And these can be very simply found by withdrawing successively small quantities of each requisite of production, keeping the others constant each time, and ascertaining the loss of satisfaction this will cause to the consumers of the product or products.”<sup>3</sup>

The preceding paragraph from Schumpeter can be simplified as follows, albeit at the cost of losing some of its meaning. Economists set out to explain the wages of labor, the rent of land, and the profit of capital. (They also wanted to explain interest which may or may not be regarded as part of profit.) (They also wanted to explain payments for natural factors of production other than land, such as minerals, which can be regarded as similar to rent.) (They did not at the time pay attention to knowledge as a separate factor of production, nor did they pay much attention to putting all or part of the incomes of entrepreneurs or governments in a category not covered by those here mentioned.) The dominant school at the time (and now) wanted to explain all of these things as consequences of the satisfaction of consumers, expressed, for most practical purposes, in the prices the consumers are willing to pay for the products. Now, it is taken as evident that without labor, or without capital, or without land, then there would be no product. Hence there would be no revenue from selling the product, and no pie to divide as wages for workers, profits for capital, and rent for land. Given that the three do come together, and do produce a product, and the product does sell, there is then a pie to divide.

<sup>3</sup> J. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, Oxford University Press, New York 1954, p. 914.

The problem is to explain how it is divided. The marginal solution with respect to wages (similar solutions can be derived for the other two) is to divide the labor up into small portions. The question then becomes how much is added to consumer satisfaction by the last small portion of labor added. That will be the wage.

In the background of this marginal theory of wages are the law of supply and demand, and the principle that marginal cost equals marginal revenue. Stated in terms of that law and that principle, the passage just quoted means that the wage will be what it costs to hire the last worker hired. It is worth the while of the employer (the demand) to keep hiring workers (assuming that as more workers are hired more product is produced) until the satisfaction to the consumer (reflected in the price the consumer will pay for the product) is just equal to what it costs to produce the product (a cost determined in part by the supply price of labor). The wage will be the cost of the last man or woman hired. A higher wage will not be paid even if it would cost more to hire labor if there were more demand for it, because there is no more demand for it; hiring stops at the point where marginal cost equals marginal revenue. A lower wage will not be paid because by definition the wage paid the last person hired is what it takes to persuade that person to take the job. That none of the others (previously hired) will be paid *less* than the last one hired is not obvious, but that point need not detain us.

Two points do detain us: that (given normal assumptions) no *higher* wage will be paid, and that this theory is called a “productivity” theory because it relies on an attempt to measure the contribution of labor to producing consumer satisfaction.

### 3. Explanation and Justification

Schumpeter remarks in a footnote that the theory thus relating wages to productivity is meant to be an explanatory theory, and indeed an explanatory theory only applicable where it is licit to make a great many assumptions, and is in no way an ethical theory purporting to say what wages ought to be. He writes: “This should, however, have convinced both the marginalists and their critics that the marginal utility theory of income formation was constitutionally incapable of defending the capitalist method of distribution. For it is obvious that the merits – moral or other – of *e.g.* the labor factor are not affected if, relatively to the available quantities of other factors, laborers are so numerous that their marginal contribution is small.”<sup>4</sup> If, for example, there are many laborers looking for work, it may cost very little to hire the last worker hired, which is good news for the employer because labor costs are low, and if the employer has many competitors it is good news for the consumer because the price of the product for the consumer will be low insofar as labor is a component of the product’s final price, but it is bad

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 914n.

news for the workers. This bad news is concealed at least as much as it is revealed by saying that the wage is determined by “marginal productivity,” because that phrase makes it vaguely appear to the public, and to the ethicist who does not heed Lonergan’s advice to study economics, that the wage is determined by the skill of the worker or by the physical capacity of the worker to produce consumer satisfaction.

Schumpeter is not worried that the public or the ethicists will be misled by the marginal productivity of labor theory of wages, because it is “obvious” that it does not determine the merits of labor, much less the deserts of labor on an Aristotelian theory of distributive justice, or on a utilitarian theory of greatest happiness of the greatest number, or on any other ethical theory.

Lonergan takes a less sanguine view, finding the consequences of applying the law of supply and demand to the determination of wages genuinely worrisome. Lonergan writes: “[...] if the productive processes are to yield their maximum of human satisfactions, then it is necessary that the less fortunate be able to demand more than they supply, while the more fortunate supply more than they demand. Of itself, the productive process can give the more fortunate more than they desire; moreover, it would like to treat all with a generous hand, for only by such generosity can it attain its maximum. But the delicate balancing of supply and demand necessarily limits each successive group of less fortunate men to the lower standard of living that their abilities and opportunities can command in the market. Against this artificial nemesis humanitarian idealism revolts.”<sup>5</sup>

For Schumpeter the theory of the marginal productivity of labor is not a credible ethical threat. It is obviously a mathematical exercise serving to explain wages and not to justify them, which is relevant even as an explanation only under highly restrictive assumptions only partially realized in practice. It does not define the ethical wage. On Schumpeter’s view, the economists and the ethicists come to an amicable parting of the ways. The former has nothing to say about what wages ought to be, while the latter has nothing to say about what wages are. They reunite, again amicably, when the economist explains to the ethicist to what extent a just wage is feasible. For Lonergan the relationship of ethics to economics is not so simple.

The Meller Report validates Lonergan’s pessimism more than Schumpeter’s optimism, inasmuch as it demonstrates the tendency of economists not to remain on the turf Schumpeter assigns them, but to ignore the boundary between justification and explanation that was obvious to Schumpeter, and to proceed to assume that their explanations are also justifications.

<sup>5</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, Ph.J. McShane, ed., CLW 21, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1998, p. 36.



#### 4. Hitchbound and Hitchless Economics

Although President Bachelet in her charge to the commission described its task as ethical, the commissioners conducted little ethical analysis. There was no sign that they ever doubted that wages both were and should be determined by the law of supply and demand and the marginal productivity of labor. Their new paradigm amounted mainly to improving the skills of workers and the potentially self-employed, implicitly taking it to be an indubitable premise that if the supply of high quality workers is augmented, then the wages (or self-employment income) they will be able to demand in the labor market will also be augmented. The commissioners thus revealed themselves to be what Lonergan calls superficial economists and Schumpeter calls “hitchless” economists.

Schumpeter uses a distinction between “hitchbound” and “hitchless” in the course of discussing John Stuart Mill’s influential ideas in the following passage:<sup>6</sup> “Saving, then, was the powerful lever of economic development.” Saving was the lever of development because it made investment possible; the more investment the more development. “And it never created obstructions; the saving act itself did not, since the sum saved was immediately spent on productive labor; the resulting expansion of productive capacity did not, since products of correctly planned production were always capable of being sold at cost-covering prices.” In other words, John Stuart Mill was a “hitchless” economist. There was for him no obstruction of circulation, no block in sales and therefore no block in production and therefore no lack of employment, because the money saved was always quickly spent; and because there was no need to worry that the augmented supply of goods made possible by investment could not be sold. Here is Schumpeter again in the same passage: “To use our own terms, J.S. Mill’s schema of economic development, like Say’s, was essentially hitchless. Malthus and Sismondi’s schemata are essentially hitchbound ones, the hitches arising in both cases not so much from saving per se, but from the resulting increase in productive capacity.” The increased productive capacity *does* create a hitch for Malthus, Sismondi and other hitchbound economists because they *do* worry that the increased production might not be sold.

This last statement is not quite right in standard technical language because “production” by definition refers only to what can be sold. However, this not-quite-rightness can be regarded as a defect of standard technical language, putting it out of touch with ordinary language. In ordinary language it makes perfect sense to say that goods were produced but not sold. Lonergan wryly acknowledges this gap between technical language and ordinary language when he writes concerning certain situations that actually arise, “The result is an overproduction or an insufficient purchasing power (or whatever it is safe to call it, for superficial economists fancy the thing cannot exist) that generously slices off about half of

<sup>6</sup> J. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, p. 572.

existing economic activity.”<sup>7</sup> Reading between the lines of Lonergan’s parenthetical remark, defining a problem out of existence in a conceptual scheme does not make a problem go away in real life. Lonergan’s reference to overproduction is not, of course, a reference to producing more than people need, but rather a reference to producing more than can be sold.

The members of President Bachelet’s advisory commission revealed themselves to be not only economists who do not doubt that their technical conclusions are valid on the plane of ethics, but who also draw a certain kind of technical conclusion, one that envisions a rosy future in the job market for the better educated. They are optimists twice over, optimists regarding the relevance of their science to ethics and hitchless optimists like Mill and Say who do not believe overproduction is possible. In the famous words of Jean-Baptiste Say, supply creates its own demand. Consequently, whatever is offered for sale can be sold at a cost-covering price. If wages are low, then, on this superficial hitchless view, quite obviously the solution is to augment the supply of the kind of workers who earn high wages. Educate the workers. Make them all highly skilled professionals. Teach them how to write business plans. Teach them marketing. I caricature the conclusions of the Meller Report but I do not misrepresent them; the report does indeed emphasize fighting poverty by improving the skills of workers.

## 5. Lonergan’s Solution

Lonergan sets out to solve a problem which for the superficial optimism of the hitchless economist is not a problem at all. It is the problem of coping with and overcoming the hitches to which economies are in reality all too prone.

Positivists who follow what Lonergan calls “counterpositions” viewing the world as a multitude of facts already out there now, but disregarding its real structure, speciously prove with empirical studies that the optimism of hitchless economists is valid. They show that there are statistically significant correlations between being a highly skilled professional, knowing how to write a business plan, and knowing marketing on the one hand; and high levels of personal income on the other hand. Nevertheless, the weight of historical evidence as well as common sense and insightful logic support the refutation of Jean-Baptiste Say and the more pessimistic conclusions reached by John Maynard Keynes: full employment is rare and when it occurs it is temporary; the supply of labor chronically tends to exceed demand for labor; and these things are so due to a chronic deficiency of effective demand, independently of the skill levels of those who offer themselves for sale in the labor market.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> See J.M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*, Harcourt Brace, New York 1936, pp. 249-250. See J.E. King, *A History of Post-Keynesian Economics since 1936*, Edward Elgar,

Lonergeran calls for a different approach. Let me now offer an interpretation of some ways that Lonergan pulls us out of the hopeless morass that we sink deeper and deeper into when we try to work for social justice employing prevailing pre-Lonergan technical tools. I read Lonergan as a neo-Thomist who reads final causes back into social science. His equations do not describe any existing economy. They describe the flows of goods and services that would occur in an exchange economy that performed its proper functions. They explain malfunctions of existing economies, such as recession, unemployment, and inflation, as deviations from the proper flows of goods and services depicted. Lonergan's system of equations is not an update of the *Acts of the Apostles*; the equations do not depict selfless sharing. They depict a rational exchange economy that is not an existing economy, but which is close enough to existing economies to be a relevant model that shows how to correct certain of their failings.

Contrary to the opinions of people Lonergan calls superficial economists real economic phenomena are full of what Schumpeter calls hitches. Money is saved but not invested. It is withdrawn from circulation. The result is that somebody somewhere is not paid. Sometimes we have stagflation. There is too much money chasing too few goods, and at the same time production and employment decline. There is excess capacity in the sense that the existing productive apparatus can produce more than can be sold, while at the same time there are unmet needs of people who would like to buy but lack the means of doing so.

In Lonergan's equations such hitches are explained as interruptions or deviations from a pattern of rational exchange. The exchange is of two types: "basic," which refers roughly to buying and selling the consumption goods it takes to maintain the existing standard of living, and "surplus" (to some extent identified with accumulation of rents and profits by owners of natural resources or enterprises) which is not needed for basic consumption, but which is needed to buy the inputs needed for production. Surplus can be saved and invested. Lonergan produced a number of flow diagrams, which I interpret as contemporary versions of François Quesnay's *Tableau économique* published in 1758.<sup>9</sup> In Lonergan's diagrams no flow is interrupted and all accounts balance. A bare-bones version of one of Lonergan's flow diagrams is to be found as Table 1 following the references at the end of this article.

In the simplified version of a diagram Lonergan drew in 1981<sup>10</sup> provided in Table 1, circle *I* represents basic income; circle *I'* represents surplus income, circle

Cheltenham, UK 2002, for a history of the issue after 1936 concluding that Keynes' diagnosis was not mistaken, whatever one may think of his prescriptions.

<sup>9</sup> See F. Quesnay, *Droit naturel, Tableau économique et autres textes*, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1991.

<sup>10</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, p. 192.

O' represents basic outlay, circle O'' represents surplus outlay, and R represents redistribution.

Loneragan draws arrows connecting each circle to all the others (directly or indirectly) in order to illustrate the flow of money from one category to another. He introduces quantitative symbols (not shown) indicating how to calculate each flow depicted by an arrow. (At an earlier stage of his analysis he described "pure" flows of goods and services without money).

An underlying idea is that one person's outlay is another person's income. Whenever there is a sale, it is income for the seller and outlay for the buyer. Thus the very existence of I (basic income) implies that there were outlays (basic outlays O' and/or surplus outlays O''). This mutual dependence of incomes and outlays is depicted by arrows connecting the circles in the diagram. The arrows represent "flows." Because the existence of income is the result of a sale of something (be it labor or something else) a quantity of income occurring in an income category (I or I'') implies a quantity of outlay by another category or categories. Similarly, a quantity of outlay in one or other of the outlay categories (O' or O'') implies income, since if there had been no income there would have been no money to make the outlay with. The same diagram that depicts money flows also depicts the flows of goods and services that are exchanged for money.

Quesnay had also drawn a diagram, a *tableau*, illustrating the flow of money and goods from one class of people to another in the economy. Quesnay had postulated that the flow never stops because everyone spends revenue as soon as they get it. In Lonergan's version two centuries later this unrealistic postulate is not necessary; the money can keep moving because banks can move it, for example into loans. Thus there is flow even if from the depositor's point of view there is a stationary deposit sitting in a bank account.

## 6. The Ethical Goals of Economic Development

The flows of basic income used to support the standard of living are during certain periods of economic development reduced in favor of augmenting surplus outlay, for the benevolent purpose of expanding production in order to raise the standard of living in the future. In terms of the diagram, less goes to basic income and more goes to surplus outlay. In ordinary terms, workers get less, owners get more, and the owners invest the surplus in ways which redound to the benefit of future consumers. The process proceeds without hitches partly because Lonergan builds into his system what he calls crossover payments. Some of the arrows (not shown) are crossovers; for example whenever necessary enough of surplus income (I'') is outlay to buy consumer goods to keep consumer goods from being left unsold on the shelves because of lack of enough basic income (I) to buy them all.

The crossover payments assure that nobody's flow of income is interrupted while society as a whole is subtracting resources from current consumption in order to augment future consumption. Circulation also proceeds without hitches because redistribution (the central circle represented by R) is built into the system. Accounts have to balance and flows have to continue as long as the process proceeds as depicted in the diagram.

The process of economic development ends after passing through several phases with what Lonergan calls a basic expansion. The social reward for waiting (*i.e.* for greater flows to surplus outlay used for expanding production, made possible in part by smaller flows to basic outlay) is that everyone's standard of living is raised. Moreover, in the end together with the basic expansion there is also what Lonergan calls a cultural expansion. He writes, "By a cultural expansion is meant a rate of increase in the production of overhead primary products, of the things by which civilization is defended, developed, and maintained."<sup>11</sup> Thus I interpret Lonergan as providing a technical blueprint for a better way the world could and should be. I use the word "blueprint" suspecting that Lonergan himself would resist the use of the term, since it might be taken to imply assigning a greater role to government than Lonergan wanted. Lonergan was critical of the welfare state and at least as hostile to central planning as he was to pure capitalism. The present author's view is that Lonergan's contributions to making an exchange economy more rational cannot be put into practice without the public sector playing larger coordinating, facilitating, and planning roles than Lonergan himself would have desired; but perhaps no larger than the roles for government Lonergan would have reluctantly accepted in practice in spite of the bent of his desires.

One might ask whether what I am advisedly calling Lonergan's blueprint provides an answer to the question raised by Monsignor Goic, the question how many pesos per month constitutes an ethical wage, and, moreover, the further question whether Lonergan provides any assistance in moving to a world in which ethical wages are not only defined but also in fact paid. My answer to both questions is mainly affirmative. I do not say that Lonergan provides complete answers. He provides elements that are usable for constructing answers.

On a first impression it might appear that existing technical economics provides better objective guidance for the human will than ethics. Although the marginal productivity of labor theory usually sets wages at a number lower than an ethical wage, at least it sets them. It is a definite number. It is the amount by which the revenue from the sale of the product (regarded as an index of consumer satisfaction) would be reduced by dismissing the last worker hired. An ethical wage is ordinarily some higher number, but since there exists no technical economics to tell us what that number is, it appears on a first impression that we are left with human

<sup>11</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *For a New Political Economy*, p. 106.

willingness or human unwillingness adrift in a sea where there are no objective standards.

On further examination, what appears on a first impression proves to be mistaken. The opposite is closer to the truth. That is to say, it is closer to the truth to say that standard technical economics sets wages arbitrarily, while an ethical approach sets wages if not with methods that are fully objective at least with methods that are more objective. The methods of ethics lend themselves to the use of objective standards in making decisions generally, and in deciding what wages should be in particular. For example, the nutritional standards developed by health professionals can be used to define an adequate diet, and the requirements of an adequate diet can be an input for the process of determining what is sometimes called a living wage. Life expectancy is a measure of the welfare of an entire population, and is in fact used by the United Nations as a factor in its Human Development Index. Square meters of living space, measures of pollution and air quality, and measures of the availability and quality of water can also be used. The methods of standard economics rest on the contrary simply on observed consumer preferences. Key concepts, including the productivity concepts that are used to explain wage rates, rest in the end on preference schedules. This means mainly that the value of anything is the price someone is willing to pay for it. A price is a contract. It is an agreement between a willing seller and a willing buyer.

Here we connect with a long-standing and ongoing ethical conversation concerning under what circumstances a seller or buyer, say for example a buyer or seller of labor (or labor-power) in the labor market, is willing, and to what extent he or she is more or less coerced. I will not pursue the coercion issue here; I simply note its importance. I also note the importance but do not pursue the bias introduced into using sales as measures of consumer satisfaction by the greater weight assigned to the satisfaction of buyers with more money, the lesser weight assigned to the satisfaction of consumers with less money, and the zero weight assigned to the satisfaction of would-be consumers with no money.

The point I wish to make here concerns the absence of a rational basis for price in standard economic theory. Especially since demand schedules and other preference schedules replaced the older utilitarian foundations of welfare economics and especially since the work of Kenneth Arrow;<sup>12</sup> technical economics has systematically refrained from guiding the human will with any objective standard. When taking a preference schedule as a basis for calculating consumer satisfaction, and therefore productivity regarded as a contribution to consumer satisfaction, the economist refrains from telling the consumer what he or she ought to prefer. The economist simply notes what the consumer does prefer. The dominant tendency is in principle simply to record the price in fact paid. A demand schedule is a list of quantities

<sup>12</sup> See K. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, John Wiley and Sons, New York 1951.

that would in fact be purchased at a series of different prices, and while in practice there is often no hard evidence to support its numbers, in principle economists do not claim any source of knowledge concerning what would be purchased or would be paid apart from what is in fact purchased and paid. An ethical approach is more and not less based on rational standards because it is willing to make judgments about what people should do.

Concerning the question whether Lonergan helps to build a world in which ethical wages are in fact paid my answer is also affirmative. It is affirmative because he shows how to make raising the incomes of the poor compatible with economic stability. In the world we live in, a general increase in the incomes of many working people is generally regarded as incompatible with stability, either because it would be inflationary or because it would reduce profits and thereby discourage production, or both. In his early years Lonergan studied the social credit proposals of Major Douglas, which proposed that the government deliver regular sums of money to consumers both to raise their standard of living and to keep society's productive apparatus moving.<sup>13</sup> He concluded that Major Douglas's proposals would be inflationary and therefore destabilizing, but his negative conclusions regarding Douglas provided part of the stimulus for his own work in economics,<sup>14</sup> which can be described, I believe as an effort to show how an economy could both provide a general increase in the standard of living of all (a "basic expansion" in Lonergan's terminology) and be stable.

Lonergan's equations prescribe sustainable flows, first in terms of what he calls pure cycles (flows of goods and services without money); and then later in terms of sustainable flows with money. As I have mentioned earlier, certain conditions, some of which Lonergan calls crossovers, must be met for the flows to continue uninterrupted. If there is to be what Lonergan calls a long overdue basic expansion, that is to say a general increase in the standard of living of all, then adjustments must be made everywhere in the circuits to keep flows moving and accounts balanced. Of course, there is always a danger that raising wages will stop production, as often happens and as standard economics often predicts. I believe that in the whole of his work – not only in its specifically economic parts – Lonergan cultivates reasonableness and willingness that would lead people not to stop production when wages rise, but instead to adjust production, to adjust profits, and adjust other flows to the conditions of a more rational society with less inequality.

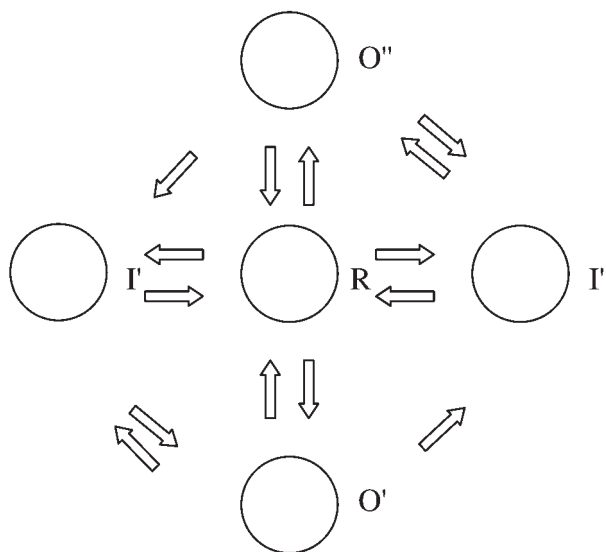
I should perhaps mention that when Monsignor Goic called for an ethical wage he also called on businesses not to regard maximizing profit as their single goal,

<sup>13</sup> See W.A. Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2005, pp. 51-52.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 112.

but rather to pay an ethical wage even if it meant that profit was not maximized. In his specifically economic work, Lonergan maps out what the required adjustments would be. He shows them to be in principle possible. That is to say, adjusting the circuits to an ethical wage is possible if there exists a society or an economy which is increasingly described by Lonergan's blueprint as it increasingly becomes a more rational and ethical economy. The economy described could be a nation or it could be the entire planet functioning as a global economy. A question remains, however, whether it could be a small dependent nation, say Chile, that is so integrated into the global economy that it has no economy of its own. I believe the answer is negative. The blueprint must be applied to some economy. It cannot be applied to a system so open that it is not properly a system. Lonergan could perhaps have rewritten his equations with principles of subsidiarity in mind, showing how a local economy could be partly self-sufficient and partly integrated into regional, national, common market, and global economies. There are indications that he would have approved of such a rewriting, but it was not a task that he accomplished in his lifetime.

Table 1. Simplified version of a diagram Lonergan drew in 1981.<sup>15</sup> Circle I' represents basic income. Circle I'' represents surplus income. Circle O' represents basic outlay. Circle O'' represents surplus outlay. Circle R represents redistribution.



<sup>15</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis*, p. 192.





# LONERGAN, FREEDOM, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF FEMINISM

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In his book, *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*, surgeon Atul Gawande tells the story of a patient, "Joseph Lazaroff," a man in his early sixties suffering from a cancer that had spread to his spine and had begun to cause paralysis. Lazaroff, who at best had only a few months left to live, had been offered the chance of spinal surgery that might halt the paralysis, although in his weakened state there was a high risk that he wouldn't recover from it. Knowing that Lazaroff feared dying in intensive care, Gawande thought that hospice care, in which Lazaroff would be kept comfortable and be able to remain at home, was by far the better option for him.

Sent by a senior resident to "consent" Lazaroff (to get his signature on the permission form for the surgery), Gawande spoke to him in his hospital room. Lazaroff seemed surprised and hesitant when Gawande told him that the risks of the surgery included death. But when Lazaroff's adult son entered the room, Lazaroff became determined. "Don't you give up on me," he said. "You give me every chance I've got." Lazaroff underwent the surgery but was unable to recover. He died without returning home, after two weeks in intensive care.

Gawande wrote that "Lazaroff chose badly because his choice ran against his deepest interest – interests not as I or anyone else conceived them, but as he conceived them." He wondered whether, under the circumstances, it would have been better for Lazaroff's physicians not even to tell him about the option of surgery.<sup>1</sup>

Lazaroff's story illustrates the extent to which American medicine has adopted the point of view that patient autonomy, including the choice of when to accept or refuse medical treatment, has become a central – some say *the* central – tenet of medical ethics. Reversing a long tradition of medical paternalism, in which patients were expected to accede to the authority of physicians, patients now are expected

<sup>1</sup> Gawande, Atul. *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*. New York: Picador, 2002.

to make their own decisions and hospitals are expected to obtain their informed consent before treating them.

## 1. Informed Consent and the Principles Approach

Tom Beauchamp and James Childress, in their influential *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, identify four principles governing ethical decisions in health care: nonmaleficence, beneficence, respect for autonomy, and justice. If we view the case of Mr. Lazaroff through the lens of their “principles approach,” we see Lazaroff’s physicians as faced with a balancing act among the four principles. The value of patient autonomy – famously grounded in the work of Mill, Kant, and others – implies that physicians have the obligation to respect autonomous choice, which Beauchamp and Childress define as one exercised by “normal choosers” acting “(1) intentionally, (2) with understanding, and (3) without controlling influences that determine their action.”<sup>2</sup> The obligation to respect autonomy, however, is not absolute in this view – there are times when it can be overridden by other obligations, such as the obligation not to harm a patient (nonmaleficence).

Would Mr. Lazaroff’s physicians have done better, as Gawande suggests, by withholding from him the information about the surgery? As I read them, I believe that Beauchamp and Childress would argue that the physicians acted as they should have in this case. The choices of ordinary persons, they argue, “even when they have not reflected on their preferences at a higher level” are worthy of respect. “No theory of autonomy is acceptable if it presents an ideal beyond the reach of normal choosers [...] For an action to be autonomous in this account, it needs only a substantial degree of understanding and freedom from constraint, not a full understanding or a complete absence of influence.”<sup>3</sup> While we may see Mr. Lazaroff’s decision as dubious, by this view it was his decision to make, and the physicians acted properly both in making him aware of his options and in obeying his wishes after informing him of the potential risks.

## 2. Informed Consent and Feminist Bioethics

Feminist bioethicists examine cases such as that of Lazaroff through a different lens. As Marilyn Friedman has pointed out, feminists have had “a love-hate relationship with autonomy.”<sup>4</sup> When Immanuel Kant so influentially defined autonomy as the ability of a rational being to give himself the moral law, he excluded women from the full exercise of that autonomy on the grounds that women were designed by nature to think and act “beautifully” rather than with

<sup>2</sup> Beauchamp, Tom L. and James F. Childress. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Friedman, Marilyn. *Autonomy, Gender, Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 81.

rational “depth.”<sup>5</sup> When John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor spoke out against the “subjection” of women, they called for women to free themselves from both the external constraints of law and the internal constraints that stunted their intellects and their characters. Feminists, then, began by accepting an Enlightenment ideal of autonomy as rational self-rule and by promoting that ideal of autonomy for women. Feminist bioethicists adhered to this pattern, advocating greater autonomy for women in areas such as reproductive choice.

Friedman notes that feminists in the 1980s and early 1990s reconsidered their advocacy of autonomy for women, arguing that the traditional account of autonomy is “biased toward male social roles and reflects male conceits and delusions.” Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar identify five kinds of feminist critiques of autonomy: “symbolic, metaphysical, care, postmodernist, and diversity.”<sup>6</sup> The *symbolic* critique argues that the dominant ideal of autonomy is based on a flawed masculine cultural ideal that overvalues independence and disconnection from others. The *metaphysical* critique points out that people’s characters are constituted by social relationships and objects to the atomistic individualism it sees as underlying the mainstream view of autonomy. *Care* critiques seek to rehabilitate the role of human interdependence and mutual empathy. *Postmodernist* feminists argue that the notion of the autonomous individual rests on a discredited Enlightenment view of the human subject as having a stable, singular, or true self. *Diversity* critiques point out the importance of the “multiple identities” of persons – identities that make it impossible to point to an autonomous core self. Mackenzie, Stoljar, and other advocates of “relational autonomy” seek to affirm the importance of autonomy as an ideal while transforming the way it is conceived. Autonomy, they argue, “need not require agents to be completely self-transparent and psychically unified; assume that only a pure will, free from all empirical determination, can be self-determining; or enforce a hegemonic identity.” In the face of these valuable feminist criticisms of mainstream ideals of autonomy, Stoljar and Mackenzie point to the need “to develop notions of autonomy based on richer, more psychically complex, and more diverse conceptions of agents.”<sup>7</sup>

Theorists of “relational autonomy” take a variety of approaches to accomplishing the feminist rehabilitation and deepening of the ideal of autonomy. They have in common a concern to ground discussions of autonomy in the understanding that persons are “emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling, as well as rational,”<sup>8</sup> and to examine the ways that “oppressive socialization and oppressive

<sup>5</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, translated by John T. Goldthwait. University of California Press, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Mackenzie, Catriona, and Natalie Stoljar. *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

social relationships can impede autonomous agency,” through the development of desires, beliefs, and attitudes, the promotion of “competencies and capacities,” and the development of “the ability to act.” These theorists raise the question of whether social influences should be conceived as “causes” that either “impede or enhance” autonomous choices, or whether individual autonomy is actually “constituted” by social choices, such that the line between the individual and the social becomes increasingly blurred.

Bioethicist Susan Dodds takes up these issues in her reflections on Beauchamp and Childress and on the dominance of informed consent in medical practice. She writes that “Medical choices made in the absence of ignorance, coercion, or impediment to decision-making capacity can be understood as voluntary. Whether those choices reflect what a person truly values, wants, or believes, however, is not something that can be determined simply by ensuring the absence of these impediments to choice.”<sup>9</sup> Returning to the story of Mr. Lazaroff, one can see that although according to the criteria of Beauchamp and Childress, he made an autonomous choice, he in fact followed a course of action that was contrary to his own beliefs and values. Feminist bioethicists often focus on the ways that the cultural expectations of women lead them to limit their choices, as for example, if a woman has learned to believe that her life cannot be fulfilled unless she bears a biological child, she may find herself driven to exhaust all the possibilities of assisted reproduction, no matter how difficult and expensive the process may be. Looking deeper into the case of Lazaroff, even though one of his social identities is to belong to a dominant (male) group, as an elderly, ill person who fears abandonment by his family, he can also be seen as suffering from oppression.<sup>10</sup> His current situation limits his capacity to make a choice that reflects his own deeply held values. Sensitivity to this fact might have led the physicians to recognize Dodds’ point that “more information and more alternatives being offered to patients [do not] always enhance their autonomy.”<sup>11</sup> Dodds argues that to provide patients with neutral information about available procedures and their risks may enhance their autonomy less, for example, than listening “actively” to patients’ concerns and asking them “how much they want to know and why.” (Dodds raises a broader question still when she comments, “there is a need to reexamine the basis for assigning to healthcare workers responsibility for patients’ autonomy,” and asks whether there should also be “state and institutional responsibility for some aspects of personal autonomy.”<sup>12</sup>) In a similar vein, Marian A. Verkerk argues that non-interference with patients’ decisions enhances patients’ autonomy far less than “compassionate interference,”

<sup>9</sup> Dodds, Susan. “Choice and Control in Feminist Bioethics,” in Mackenzie and Stoljar, *Relational Autonomy*, p. 217.

<sup>10</sup> Compare Dodds, p. 225.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

in which caregivers actively engage patients in a relationship and follow their care with interest, sometimes giving the patient direction.<sup>13</sup> Verkerk argues that if autonomy is truly “constituted” by social relationships, a more active engagement with patients may actually enhance autonomy rather than infringe upon it.

### 3. Lonergan and Informed Consent

Feminist theorists of relational autonomy, then, share a desire to affirm an account of autonomy that avoids the drawbacks they see in some mainstream theories. As feminists, they are committed to identifying and ameliorating oppressive aspects of cultures and institutions. As bioethicists, they are committed to enhancing the autonomy of all persons who face healthcare decisions. Lonergan’s work dovetails with these commitments, and potentially deepens them, in a number of ways. I will focus on three points: the way in which Lonergan shares the feminist critiques of certain views of autonomy, the way his account of the barriers to effective freedom offers a framework for understanding the social constitution of autonomy, and the way his theological framework both destabilizes and deepens the notion of relational autonomy.

First, it seems clear that although Lonergan’s work predates the five kinds of feminist critiques of traditional accounts of autonomy, his account of the human subject shares in all five of them to varying degrees. The human subject, for Lonergan, exists in community, and exercises (or fails to exercise) free choice within a communal context. “Liberty,” Lonergan writes, “is exercised within a matrix of personal relations [...] People are joined by common experience, by common or complementary insights, by similar judgments of fact and of value, by parallel orientations in life [...] [Personal relations] bind a community together, or divide it into factions, or tear it apart.” The human good, he writes, “is at once individual and social [...] As the community develops its institutions to facilitate cooperation, so individuals develop skills to fulfill the roles and perform the tasks set by the institutional framework [...] The process is above all the making of man, his advance in authenticity.”<sup>14</sup> In arguing that the free choices of individuals are embedded in personal relations, and fostered or hindered by social institutions, Lonergan resonates with the feminist “symbolic,” “metaphysical,” and “care” critiques of those accounts of autonomy that overvalue independence and disconnection from others or that overlook the ways that individual decisions are both influenced by their communities and in some sense constituted by those communities.

Whether Lonergan also shares the feminist “postmodernist” and “diversity”

<sup>13</sup> Verkerk, Marian A. “The care perspective and autonomy,” *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 4: 289-294, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Lonergan, Bernard. *Method in Theology*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, p. 57.

critiques of mainstream autonomy theories is less clear-cut. The central role in Lonergan's thought afforded to the "self-affirmation of the knower" and the "pure desire to know" can lead to the impression that Lonergan shares an Enlightenment view of the subject as having a singular, stable, rational core. I would argue that in fact Lonergan's anticonceptualist view of the subject shares a great deal of the fluidity, instability, and dynamism of the postmodern view of the subject. However, for my purposes here, it is enough to say that Lonergan shares at least some of the central concerns that led to the development of "relational autonomy."

In *Insight*, Lonergan distinguished between "essential" and "effective" freedom. "Man is free essentially inasmuch as possible courses of action are grasped by practical insight, motivated by reflection, and executed by decision. But man is free effectively to a greater or less extent inasmuch as this dynamic structure is open to grasping, motivating, and executing a broad or a narrow range of otherwise possible courses of action." Thus, he continues, "one may be essentially but not effectively free to give up smoking."<sup>15</sup> The four conditions of effective freedom are "external circumstances," "the subject as sensitive," "the subject as intelligent," and "the subject as antecedently willing." To illustrate the ways in which the absence of these four conditions places a limitation on effective freedom, let us return to Gawande's example of Mr. Lazaroff. Lazaroff, we might say, was essentially but not effectively free to make the choice of hospice care over surgery. External circumstances, such as a lack of insurance coverage, could have stood in the way of this choice but did not in his case. Rather, Lazaroff's inability to consider hospice care seems to have rested in his own subjectivity as sensitive, intelligent, or willing. Lonergan describes the "anxiety, obsessions, and [...] other neurotic phenomena" that restrict the "capacity for effective deliberation and choice," presumably by preventing a person from attending to experience or from raising the questions that could lead to new insights. Scotosis, a largely unconscious blind spot, can interfere with the relationship between the person's psycho-neural and intelligent functions. In such a case one may suffer, as Lazaroff did, "the attacks and crises that generate in the mind a mist of obscurity and bewilderment, of suspicion and reassurance, of doubt and rationalization, of insecurity and disquiet."<sup>16</sup> Lazaroff's fear and insecurity may have prevented him from attending to aspects of his experience or from raising the questions that could have led him to consider hospice care not as a form of abandonment but as a form of support. Moreover, a lack of accumulated understanding – in this case, a lack of prior education concerning the nature of hospice care, may also have been in play. Finally, Lonergan describes the full exercise of liberty as requiring "universal willingness that matches the unrestricted

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, Bernard. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran. Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, p. 643.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

desire to know.” Such willingness requires an openness to learn and to achieve “performance” that “matches aspiration.”<sup>17</sup> Lazaroff’s openness to consider hospice care had clearly been undermined – if nothing else, by the physical pain and paralysis from which he suffered.

In this analysis of Lazaroff’s consent to his last surgery, the pain, fear, and insecurity that led to his inability to pay attention, to raise questions, or to be open to a new course of action, along with his lack of understanding of the nature of hospice care, resulted in a lack of true autonomy (or what Lonergan more often calls “liberty”). Lonergan’s account of effective freedom thus affirms the feminist bioethicists’ critique of the principles approach with its narrower view of what constitutes an autonomous choice. In Lonergan’s view, as in that of the relational autonomy theorists, Lazaroff’s consent to surgery did not represent a fully autonomous decision.

If, as Lonergan claims, “liberty is exercised within a matrix of personal relations,” then the autonomous decisions of patients can be hindered or enhanced by the kinds of personal relations and institutional practices they encounter. Beyond “informed consent” of the kind Lazaroff experienced, a kind of patient care informed by Lonergan’s work would likely resemble the one advocated by the feminist bioethicists I discussed earlier. The “active listening” and “compassionate interference” advocated by Dodds and Verkerk provide heuristics for thinking of ways to incorporate into patient care a deeper acknowledgement that the exercise of autonomy is a multilayered and interpersonal process. The “listening” and “interference” undertaken in these approaches could potentially be fruitfully guided by Lonergan’s systematic account of the steps in the unfolding of experience, understanding, judgment, and decision.

The work of William F. Sullivan, a physician and Lonergan scholar, reinforces this account of the way that Lonergan’s work has the potential to contribute to a reorientation of medical practice. Sullivan writes of the impact of Lonergan’s work on his own clinical practice. While Sullivan’s own medical education had emphasized the importance of “detachment and distance,” Lonergan’s thought opened up for him the notion that “certain affective responses play a crucial cognitive role in one’s move from fact claims to value judgments.”<sup>18</sup> Sullivan writes, “Although detachment and distance might be desirable in certain medical settings, educators in fields such as palliative care have found that engaging affectively with patients is the most essential feature of successful performance in caring for people at the end of life.”<sup>19</sup> Characterizing Lonergan’s account of the person as “anti-

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 647.

<sup>18</sup> Sullivan, William F. *Eye of the Heart: Knowing the Human Good in the Euthanasia Debate*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005, p. 286.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*



individualistic,” Sullivan states that in his own clinical practice he is “now more open to the idea of considering medical issues in their social contexts and to the possibility of such things as ‘assisted’ decision-making.” Finally, Sullivan writes that “Lonergan’s analysis has also helped me to understand better, and facilitate responsible medical decisions among, persons by focusing on the cognitive processes and achievements that underpin their decisions.”<sup>20</sup> Sullivan confirms the link between Lonergan’s cognitional theory and a medical practice that appreciates the complex steps of decision-making and the notion that an autonomous or free decision need not be one that is free of the influence of other people.<sup>21</sup>

Consideration of the relationship between Lonergan’s account of freedom and the feminist theories of relational autonomy would be incomplete without an acknowledgement that Lonergan’s framework for discussing human liberation is ultimately a theological one. In *Insight*, Lonergan argues that human beings suffer from “an incapacity for sustained development”<sup>22</sup> because of the opposition and tension between our unrestricted desire to know and our “sensitive and intersubjective attachment, interest, and exclusiveness,” with the result that the biases of individuals and groups, coupled with what Lonergan terms “general bias,” radically distort our understanding and our actions. The solution to this problem, which has historically been understood as the problem of evil or as original sin, is for Lonergan ultimately a theological one.<sup>23</sup> Without venturing here into the depths of Lonergan’s response to the problem of human evil, I would just like to point out that for Lonergan, as one constructs a framework for “relational autonomy,” one would have to include relationships with God. He writes, “Faith recognizes that God grants men their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just his automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good. So faith is linked with human progress and it has to meet the challenge of human decline.”<sup>24</sup>

Feminist bioethics has for the most part avoided explicit reliance on a theological orientation, preferring to seek an “overlapping consensus” of arguments that could be used by health practitioners from a variety of faiths or by those whose orientation is purely secular. However, in a field such as bioethics, which faces at every moment the mystery of the origins and ends of human life, one wonders whether questions of faith can be kept indefinitely at bay. It may be that only some form of faith – whether it be faith in a transcendent mystery or perhaps in human solidarity – will allow health practitioners to remain committed to promoting the fullness of human freedom.

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

<sup>21</sup> Sullivan has stressed, to a greater degree than I have in this essay, the importance of recognizing the role of affects (the “heart”) in making evaluative judgments.

<sup>22</sup> *Insight*, p. 653.

<sup>23</sup> See *Insight*, Chapter 20, “Special Transcendent Knowledge.”

<sup>24</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 117.

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BERNARD LONERGAN FOR ACADEMIC STUDIES

## *Closing Address*

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In our present perception of indeterminacy and often uncertainty, that accompany human consciousness today, facing the complex challenges of pluralism and globalization, one notices the primary need of understanding, putting in order, orienting oneself. The University – and education and in general cultural agencies – feel a renewed sense of responsibility towards a function of discernment and directions. One is dealing with understanding, making understood, individuating a map of references to be shared, tracing new paths and, above all, defining a method.

The scenarios in the world and history are changing today at an always accelerating, rate. In the fields of culture and theology the changes are fast too. In this context, to transmit to the rising generations a particular vision of theology, even the most recent, would actually condemn students to acquire an idea already superceded, if, in reality – along with a specific knowlwdge – one does not teach a method of study and research.

I believe that the fortune of Lonergan is principally linked to this motive. He was an expert scholar in many fields of theological and philosophical knowledge, who took an interest even in the laws of economy, showed competence and openness in various sectors, but above all, he was a master of method. A method, without doubt, helpful for particular routes of research, but also precious, above all, in untangling the fundamental questions of human intelligence and reasonableness, responsibility and liberty, self-knowledge and self-appropriation.

After all, the real master is not he who transmits a particular knowledge, is not he who has a reply ready for his students. It is he who, raising specific questions, teaches how to think and extricate oneself in the complexity and contradictions encountered in experience. It is he who, thanks to a method, teaches how to put

order into one's thoughts and contributes to creating the conditions necessary for a reliable, mature, and critical knowledge.

Some people, searching for quick solutions, could be discouraged facing the pages of Lonergan. But there is no one that fails to see that only this itinerary, through its slowness and dense ruggedness, consents to pointing to an authentic intellectual formation, avoiding thus the risk that can always spring up, that of notionism and dogmatism.

One must take into account that the real antidote against the hurried assimilation of contents and the transmission of a knowledge, that could seem sometimes to be indoctrination, is represented by the mastery of a real method of study and research. This gives students the possibility of autonomous movement in various disciplines, and permits the appropriation of techniques useful in self-formation lasting an entire life. To teach a method – rather than a discipline – signifies consigning knowledge into the very hands of students, rendering them responsible in their choices and towards the future of mankind. This is basically what forms the roots of all free knowledge.

A second interesting element, in function of the utilization of Lonergan's thought in academic studies, is linked to its "modernity". He is not modern because of being fashionable, because he replies to present tastes, to a particular sensibility of today. If this was so, we would inevitably be conditioned by tendencies of the moment and thus already old hat. I believe, rather, that he is modern for at least two deep reasons. The first, for the particular attention which he dedicates to the human subject, to the cognitive structure, to different levels of consciousness, to the dynamisms of intentionality. And it is here, from the operative structures of the mind, that he emerges to set his sights on the totality of being, towards the entire reality.

A second reason for his modernity I perceive as that of a promising idea of pluralism introduced into his horizon. He obviously does not speak about a radical pluralism, deriving from the irreducible plurality of positions which can finish up with compromising any religious identity whatsoever, every necessary condition regarding ethical conduct, and in the end the very search of truth. He recognizes altogether a significant plurality parting from a different plane – that of communicative codes, expressive registers, linguistic levels – and is convinced that such a plurality, in its own turn, penetrates the different phases and configurations of the human consciousness.

One is dealing, as can be seen, with a pluralism regarding more language than thought. But this is all along a decisive sign of modernity, where in the same years the most illuminated minds have been reaching out to sustain, to the most, a revision of theological and ecclesial language, which is by now indispensable in transmitting the contents of centuries of one's own tradition in a comprehensible

and acceptable manner to contemporary man. They certainly have not been thinking in terms of pluralism.

However Lonergan goes beyond the pluralism of language. He recognizes the limits of a conception of the world which in the past has given little space to otherness, and sustains that Western thought has remained too long subdued by the fascination of unity. He notes regarding this with irony how it was necessary to await the non-Euclidean geometry to convince mathematicians that their postulates were not, after all, absolute truths, or the quantum theory to convince physicists not to talk any more about necessary laws in nature. For this, he assumes with an increased awareness the paradigm of the variety and complexity of the real. With a typically modern sensibility he reveals himself to be attentive regarding the problematic nature of the human condition and avoids a linear and simplicistic reading of the matter.

A third element seems significant to me regarding the lessons of Lonergan: his conception of knowledge. This is no more conceived according to the manner of Scholastics as the action of the mind that adapts to an objective reality. It is described rather as a process of continuous drawing near to truth. A process that perhaps never draws definitively to a close, as the truth regarding the ultimate questions of life and its meaning cannot be exhausted forever. It is an itinerary which therefore disactivates every mechanism of intellectual arrogance and renders the scholars humble beggars of the truth, and never lords of it. The words which E. Bloch wanted to be inscribed on his tomb come to mind: "*denken heißt überschreiten*", to think is to go beyond. Beyond traditional acquisitions, beyond the *dejà vu*, beyond every possible boundary fixed in advance. To think is basically always a "trans-gression".

This condition of error, in a direction towards a goal not reached and never fully reachable, is something in common for all men, of all cultures and all faiths. Moreover, the believer, more than any other, is convinced of the inexhaustibility of the Mystery that envelopes man, and the insufficiency of every effort to measure it with one's own capacities. From this arises the need of getting out of one's own cultural fortress, in which some traditions remained prisoners. From this, the interest in diversity, the other, which is figure of any transcendence. From this, the need to weave with all men and the different knowledges a tissue of dialogue that be capable of disclosing unexpected reserves of meaning and illuminating experiences of life.

To sum up, these are the motives for which it would be hoped that the figure and teaching of Lonergan would be highly significant in the formation itinerary of the Theological Faculties. His thought could give birth to an interesting moment of comparisons and stimulus regarding a topic of great relevance today, which is also

very dear to the heart of Benedict XVI: the reconciliation of faith and human *logos*, the enlargement of the spaces for reason inside civil debate. This is one of the major themes in the magistry of the Pope and the commitment of the Church in Italy in line with its cultural project. It would seem, moreover, that the relationship between faith and reason is becoming useful ground for dialogue among the great religious traditions, where discussions about strictly theological themes could run dry too quickly.

In short, Lonergan fascinates not because his lesson is simple and immediate in language. What fascinates is rather his wide breath of thought, his deep penetration into the processes of human understanding, that horizon coming into sight and each time enlarged further. One marvels at seeing reflected in his pages the complexity of our epoch knowingly noticed and critically examined.

Lonergan can be rightly considered to be a real master of thinking and, thus, a significant reference point in the field of formative University education, within the often weak and confused context of the prevalent mentality. As Antonio Rosmini maintained rightly: «Only great men can form other great men».

# REMINISCENCES AND IMPRESSIONS ABOUT THE FIRST ITALIAN TRANSLATION OF *INSIGHT* OF BERNARD LONERGAN

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## 1. The First Italian Translation of *Insight*

Such an important invitation to recall Lonergan as a person is moving me much. I have to cover a very long life by now. Altogether, I feel I can guarantee that what little I can say, even though not strictly documentable, is anyhow sincere and authentic to me, but I do not know if it will meet up to what others expect and think. I must limit myself to events, people and things, the memories of which pile up as a mix of mosaic tiles that now are difficult to be reconnected.

The first and most immediate object found in this “archaeological excavation” out of the memory is obviously the recollection of when I was entrusted – by the Publisher Edizioni Paoline, with the direction of Giacomo Alberione, in 1959 – with the translation of *Insight*<sup>1</sup> into Italian, which was part of the series significantly entitled “*Multiformis sapientia*”, aimed at going beyond strictly Church circulation, offering to the uninitiated the possibility to gain much from texts of a high cultural value. The book, then published in 1961 under the title “*Intelligenza. Studio sulla comprensione dell’esperienza*”, had been presented to me as a “Thomistic, very rigorous” text and, as such, very attractive to me, especially since in 1957 I had already translated “*La philosophie de S. Thomas d’Aquin*” [“*The Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*”] by Antonin Dalmace Sertillanges for the same Publisher.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore I had very much to learn from *Insight*, which offered enormous material and food for reflection. It was the book itself that helped me to overcome a state of discomfort which inevitably accompanies “knowing not to know”. I have not rendered this book an icon, a cult object, but rather something or someone I can count on, a friend that is more than just paper, willing to give me a hand even

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, Longmans, Green & Co., London 1957.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. Sertillanges, *La filosofia di S. Tommaso D’Aquino*, Italian transl. by C. Miggiano di Scipio, Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1957.

over the distance of years, as demonstrated by these general sporadic impressions and few direct memories. With the passing of time, this difficult book in which whatever content, specific or not, was always structured in a persuasive way, gave me more gratification than strain.

## 2. The Meeting with Lonergan

And so I deemed a meeting with the author to be necessary. I knew only that he was a Jesuit and professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, which I found a bit daunting: I was only a philosophy teacher at a “*Liceo*”, a secondary State school specializing in classical studies, in Rome, knowing English and having some skills in dealing with treacherous translation problems. I knew much less about theology, despite being greatly attracted by it. To be daunted was obvious, but the text had taken a grip on me due to the richness of its themes, the space and consideration dedicated to specialists, and above all, the global vision of contemporary culture along with a propensity to unite it to its historical context, as also seemed necessary to me. I add that I was also a little disturbed by the awareness that women, excluded from that field of study at the time, were not recognized, by the Aristotelian tradition, as possessing the intellectual faculties of the other half of the human race.

Made kindly welcome, I had no fear to confess immediately that I did not know how to translate the key word “insight”, whose real sense was not rendered adequately even by the best dictionaries. «Neither do I know how I should ...» replied Lonergan with an unforgettable expression of thoughtfulness and also sense of humour, at which I neither could resist smiling. A sort of complicity in word-hunting was established regarding the least inadequate term, with a historical-philosophical *excursus* having the character of a dialogue on equal terms, a sharing of salient moments regarding the history of philosophy, a rapid series of questions and answers about single terms, and a careful and stimulating examining. My apprehensions ended, including that regarding a philosophical initiation that was quite different and tendentially divergent. In our conversation we talked more about Hegel than Aquinas, maybe also because I had undertaken laical studies at *La Sapienza* University of Rome in the days of Giovanni Gentile, with his idealistic actualism in the philosophy of spirit, and also Pantaleo Carabellese, virtually a mediator with his critical ontologism, all along with the most esteemed currents of thought at that time in Italy: idealism, Marxism, historicism as well as a very Catholic culture.

Various analogous words were examined, for example “*intuito*” [the faculty of intuition], “*intelletto*” [intellect], “*intuizione*” [the act of intuition], “*percezione*” [perception], “*appercezione*” [apperception], along with others. It should not appear as provocative: the first word to be dismissed was “*intellezione*” [intellection],

which has now been rehabilitated in the critical edition of Saturnino Muratore and Natalino Spaccapelo, which is full of wisdom. At that time the word was deemed too “Scholastic” in its two different meanings, the historical-philosophical, a bit worn-out by time, and that of common language, which intends it as “notionistic”. The term “*sintesi*” [synthesis] was also considered for a long time, but if “*intellezione*” seemed too Thomistic, the latter seemed too Hegelian.

What was intended was not only a mental faculty, but rather the intellectual *Eros*, a capability to act creatively within knowledge, and at the same time to observe it in action, by means also of deepened psycho-sociological and anthropological analyses. Moreover, in page XXI of the Preface of the present Editors one can read, among other points, the note 1 «[...] The classical matrix is undiscussably provided by *intelligere* (“to understand, to choose among”), *intelligentia* (“intelligence”). Hence, the choice made in the first Italian translation of the work, the title of which was exactly “*L’intelligenza*” [“The intelligence”]. When the Author, in many of his works, is expressing in Latin, he uses *intelligere*, *intelligentia* [...]»

The author associated his work with that of the construction of «a ship»<sup>3</sup> ready to set off in any direction, inviting specialists in the meantime to carry out research organized in different fields of knowledge. This comparison reminded one of the “intelligences” in nautical language, when a vessel, by means of flags and flashing of lights, gives another vessel the signal of having received a message, and therefore being ready for the ones to follow. At this point it is easy to attribute symbolic values to the whole.

Also the complement of the title, given by “*Studio sulla comprensione dell’esperienza*” [“Study on the comprehension of experience”], has been an object of comparison with the author. One was not giving a strictly empiristic meaning to the word “experience”, but rather an existential connotation, comprehensive of a total and vital involvement of oneself. It is sufficient to read just a few lines of the first chapter, in which Lonergan explains that insight is a flashing moment, unexpected and «dramatic»,<sup>4</sup> as in the case of Archimedes in quite a banal situation, in a moment of relaxation, and not when he could assume the thoughtful posture of a famous statue of Auguste Rodin. And this, precisely because that moment is extremely involving for the whole person: ideas, sentiments, and also physicalness.

Being with Lonergan, we were searching, one could say, to place alongside in some way the Socratic maieutics, the Platonic *Symposion*, Bruno’s *Eroici furori*, the “*esprit de finesse*” of Pascal, the “*amor Dei intellectualis*” of Spinoza, but also the “*concordantia oppositorum*” of Nicholas of Cusa or Kant’s aspirations in

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv; at present B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 3, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, 1957, pp. 3-6; at present 1992, pp. 27-30.



*Methaphysik der Sitten*. I found no crystallization in his affability, no conformism not even regarding the *philosophia perennis* to which he was bound by the Encyclicl *Aeterni Patris* of Leo XIII of August 4th, 1879. Or rather was one dealing with a profound adhesion to the spirit of Aquinas? However, it seemed to me that the Thomism of the tradition, even though rich in suggestions, proved uncomfortable to him, and the term “*intellezione*” too academic and traditional and more suitable for the past than for the future that he aimed to construct; moreover Lonergan throughout his work repeated to be writing from a «moving viewpoint».<sup>5</sup>

Today his thought is taken as forming a “*corpus*”, unitary in its extremely rich articulations and in its diffusion on an international scale which, we hope, will be always increasing also in Europe. We can therefore think that, as it would be reductive defining Spinoza as Neo-Cartesian or Kant as Neo-empiricist, so the “philosophy of philosophies” is distinguished for its recognized particularity and intimate dynamism. By now the term “*intellezione*” has acquired a “Lonerganian” sense, an original meaning which seems to me to go beyond the Neo-Scholastic field and convalidate the qualification of “atypical”; for this, I feel I must accept fully, without any reserve whatsoever, the expression adopted by contemporary translators, who nevertheless have happily conserved, in the title, the original term “insight”, which is so full of significance. I cannot but thank, with a total consensus, the authors of the present superb edition which, apart from being an accurate re-reading and an indispensable revision, proves to be equipped by a rigorous *apparatus criticus*, and by rich informations, with attention paid to the sources, along with the great value of the team work in full harmony with the mentality of the author.

### 3. The First Readers of *Insight* in Italian

Taking for granted the impact of this work on academic circles, I cannot but remember those who were, close to me, its first readers, let us say, “profane” but in any case receivers of the treated material. I refer, with great nostalgia, to a group of friends which gathered restless Catholics, “professional” atheists, couples in crisis, economics scholars, professors, doctors in medicine, mathematicians, and other scientists, each contributing from his daily existence. The tone of the group was high, not one of mundane salons. *Insight* was greatly appreciated, just as a first test in this book’s fortune in an apparently heterogeneous group but full of curiosity relating to many problems. Obviously not everyone read *Insight* in its entirety or in part, but it was greatly talked about. One engineer found that this “*novissimum organum*” of Lonergan seemed him to be the “*pars construens*” of the *Novum*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 1957, pp. xxiii-xxvi, 591, 635-636, 731; at present 1992, pp. 17-20, 613, 658-659, 753.

*Organum* of Bacon,<sup>6</sup> who, acutely denouncing the “*idola*”, the “*scotoma*”<sup>7</sup> according to Lonergan, appears to be too limited when he specifies the means to be used for his *Advancement of Learning*. A famous biologist, admirer of Gilson, appreciated in particular the space reserved several times for Darwin and Freud. Someone else recalled in turn that Giordano Bruno had defined the “*eroico furore*” [“heroic enthusiasm”] as an «*impeto razionale [...] un calor acceso dal sole intelligente dell'anima*» [a “rational impetus [...] a heat alighted by the intelligent sun of the soul”] when man becomes free of bonds with finite things and also reaches the intellectual form of love. At this point someone recalled the verses in which Dante, with intimate transport, ably condensed the thought of Aquinas: «*luce intellettuale piena d'amore / amor di vero ben pien di letizia / letizia che trascende ogni dolzore*» [“intellectual light full of love / love of real good full of joy / joy which transcends every other happiness”].<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. The Cultural Environment

At that time, what is more, in various ways one was greatly disturbed by being Christian in face of the dramatic events in history. We were all “survivors”, having indelible experiences in common. Fifteen or so years did not suffice to remove the weight of horrors lived through bombardments, genocides, delations, dictatorships, deportations, tortures, famine, and recent terrible effects of decolonization. The threat of new conflicts, the question of Korea or Hungary, along with the persistence of the impending atomic risk despite Bertrand Russell’s appeal for nuclear disarmament heightened the awe of the “cold war”, whilst the Berlin wall was being constructed just in 1961. They were also years of the economic boom, the Olympics in Rome, and the naive hope that from this disaster a better world could come to be. One was also celebrating the Beatles, the first human space venture by the Russian Gagarin, the foundation of Amnesty International, and at least the beginning of the end of apartheid in public transport of the U.S.A.. Even if in 1961 one could read *Mater et magistra* of John XXIII regarding social justice, the invoked *Pacem in terris*<sup>9</sup> had still not been published.

An anxiety for religious ecumenism and interdisciplinary character of culture found a robust launching pad in Lonergan’s thought a few years before the Second Vatican Council, and proved capable of avoiding doctrinal rigidities which could be obstacles in interconfessional dialogue. We were hoping for an amply extended politics by means of a gradual pacification entrusted to the United Nations. We

<sup>6</sup> Bacon Francis, *Novum Organum*, Italian transl. and edition by C. Miggiano di Scipio, Edizioni Paoline, Roma 1959.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, 1957, pp. 191-202, 221, 227, 240, 241, 478, 602, 622, 627, 685, 690, 700, 714, 722; at present 1992, pp. 215-226, 246, 253, 265, 266, 503, 625, 645, 650, 707, 712, 722, 735, 743.

<sup>8</sup> Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia, Paradiso XXX*, 40-42.

<sup>9</sup> Of John XXIII, 1963.

encouraged above all the reflection regarding the real function of this institution, in particular, because in 1960 the documents on human rights<sup>10</sup> – gathered together by Unesco and with an introduction by Jacques Maritain, which I had translated in 1952<sup>11</sup> – had been published again by Adriano Olivetti's Edizioni di Comunità. All these themes also organically substantiated the work of Lonergan and included his penetrating analyses regarding social dangers caused by the aberrations of uncontrolled reasoning, such as that read in the pages of his ideal "Cosmopolis",<sup>12</sup> which, among other thoughts, underline the importance of contextualization.

Many of the texts that we debated had been censored by the Church. Some officially asked for the faculty *legendi*, others allowed themselves that faculty, freely and in all conscience, as only in 1966 was the *Index* of forbidden books nominally abrogated. One was talking about Dietrich Bonhöffer, killed by the Nazis, a martyr for his Protestant faith and his hopes in a new truly Christian mankind, K. Rahner, De Lubac, Chenu, Congar, Teilhard de Chardin, Loisy, Laberthonnière, Blondel, Buonaiuti, Fabro, La Pira, Dossetti, Brezzi, and many others. One was talking about von Balthasar and his and our aspirations to a more incisive lay identity in the life of the Church. This was the epoch of priest workers and of discussions on the ideologies regarding the "death of God", including its social aspects and the "secularization" of the Church, up to an extreme radicalism or, better said, a fertile relativism. The theology of hope and later that of liberation were *in nuce*. One was also discussing about a Charles Percy Snow's book then much celebrated, *The Two Cultures*,<sup>13</sup> humanistic and scientific, with the unavoidable way out of the dilemma faith-reason, religion-science. When *Insight* came out in Italian translation, it appeared immediately compatible with our ideals and all those problems we can confirm with bitterness still pertaining to today.

But what cemented our meetings, apart from a deep friendship and an unchanged and mutual respect, was more or less explicitly a sense of anguish which accompanied all our hopes. Neither the lasting fervour of post-war reconstruction, nor, for many, the presence of young children helped atone the sense of guilt which we felt for being responsible in common, even if not individually, for not only a mad war that was passed, but even for the thousand year-old antisemitism which also affected some of us. The scar was made more painful by the memory of a famous booklet by means of which a liberal anticlerical like Benedetto Croce, historian

<sup>10</sup> *Autour de la nouvelle Declaration universelle des droits de l'homme*.

<sup>11</sup> *Dei diritti dell'uomo*, texts gathered by Unesco, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Introduction by J. Maritain, Italian transl. by C. Di Scipio, Edizioni di Comunità, Milano 1952; 2nd ed. Edizioni di Comunità, Milano 1960.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibid.*, 1957, pp. 238-242; at present 1992, pp. 263-267.

<sup>13</sup> Ch.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and The Scientific Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1959.

and philosopher still greatly followed, convinced us that we cannot, in the West, «not call ourselves Christians».<sup>14</sup>

However we felt, even though it was not enough to absolve us, all the value of the comforting presence of someone, man or woman, lay person or not, who consciously risking his/her life had been able to shelter, protect, and comfort some survivor of these massacres, which every day, thorough the gradual spread of information, we learnt to have been even more tragic and degrading. One person, unfortunately, did not manage to tolerate the desperation; another, who had lost five loved ones in a Lager, managed to express a forgiveness having a very high “Christian” value.

We discovered bit by bit that our cultural tension took us on the path where at the end we could see ourselves in the situation of *Matthew* 18,20: «*ubi enim sunt duo, vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum*» [“... where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them”]. But this, more than being an end point, was a prospective goal. We felt ourselves to be “laics aspiring to be Christians”. This was something similar to what was delineated by the spiritual process traced as a whole in *Insight*, to which we attributed the character of an *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* completely conforming to the intellectual needs of the end of the second millennium. For some of us these ideas had a resolving function: to be a progressive was not incompatible with being a Christian, of course not. Neither was the freedom of conscience to be put in doubt. The positive recognition of the other, the different one, the adversary, as well as the need of historical and psychological comprehension of everyone, his social dimension included, were, together with a vigilant use of reason, not only the base condition of human relationships, but also the incessant stimulus of the fertile expansion of humanity in its irrepressible, unlimited aspiration upwards.

## 5. Further Memories of Lonergan

Many years after, it was a priest, presented to us as a “post-conciliar” one, who refreshed the memory of Lonergan, and I hold a very clear remembrance of his precious intervention. One was talking about the motives of our studies and activities, which in their own way were a vocation. He told us how he had undertaken a difficult choice between widening his studies, still not dismissed, and pastoral activity, stating also that there had been an «extraordinary» person who gave him a change in his life and his mentality, orienting him towards professing daily the Gospel among his parishioners. He had attended the Gregorian University of Rome between '60 and '62, and he felt indebted to Father Lonergan who was capable of communicating the joy of knowing, searching, and also doubting. «I cannot

<sup>14</sup> B. Croce, “Perché non possiamo non dirci cristiani”, in *La Critica* 40 (1942) 289-297.

forget» he said «his colloquial attitude which went beyond every conventionalism, his tall stature, his bearing with noble elegance, his capacity to meet people, his perfect Italian not lacking in refined classical references». We realized that, even in his lessons at the Gregorian University, Lonergan transmitted a spirit of sharing comprehension, but also courageous anxiety to continual re-proposals. In his courses *De verbo incarnato* and *De Trinitate* he did not speak “*formalissime*”: he offered original interpretations, intimately experienced and modern. He taught to reflect on the gratuity, the tenderness that come from Christ, without direct references to individual salvation, to be searched “*non spe praemiorum nec metu poenarum*” [“not due to the hope of rewards nor to the fear of punishments”]. He seemed to act on two wavelengths for “religion” and “faith”, “religion” and “theology”. He did not impose rock-solid and consolidated certainties. He knew how to transmit with crystal clarity that anxiety for truth, which identified him with his daily work, with his very life.

Nevertheless, this priest declared to have not sat his exams under Lonergan, but it was clarified that he was dealing only with a feeling of inadequacy. I asked him if the students were frightened by Lonergan, to which he replied: «They were not frightened by him, but by his culture, the awareness that he possessed shareable human values in the depths of a faith not exhibited, but certainly suffered, as he made understood also by his reservedness. He seemed serenely alone, and, to say in one word, he seemed “ἄπαξ”, an “*unicum*”, even among eminent personalities who were the masters at that time».

Among us it is still very much alive the solution of a dogmatic antinomy regarding Christ’s sacrifice, that we put to our interlocutor. He related that on this subject Lonergan seemed inwardly disturbed by the current canonical interpretation, which deemed it to be the price of redemption, in contrast with the “absolute” Love of the Father. In the epoch of the apostles, in a field of Old Testament culture, to “placate” God was unthinkable without the idea of a price to be paid, almost a recalling of human sacrifices. But salvation does not come from the suffering of the Son, not denied, however, but determined by the awareness of dying for us and with us as a witness of infinite mercy, almost a martyr of himself. At this point, I asked if one was not recognizing in that a shadow of modernism, condemned by the Encyclical *Pascendi* by Pius X. He answered that his master seemed aloof towards the problem and, not being a Bible scholar, appeared to give it secondary importance, being more a problem of the French Church and maybe distant from his Anglo-Saxon cultural formation.

## **6. The Influence of *Insight***

Only looking back do I realize how I have unconsciously taken *Insight* into my possession and made it operative in many years at school, above all to support

choices made by me in my instinctive aversion to the “position” of being a teacher. This, maybe because philosophy is not a “subject” to be taught with apodictical preconceptions, but simply to be lived together with the young, who have a physiological thirst to know, always granting that the school does not become, with bureaucratic inertia, a flat conformism generating the terrible boredom which deludes and discourages the best ones. This work, *Insight*, gave me a “method” in the etymological sense of a research which has no end, as it becomes in turn a stimulus for further and never exhaustive investigations. That modern Lonerganian *ratio studiorum* does not foresee obligatory and obligating schemes, rather a method that is not “methodical”, but open to doubt and capable of helping resist the temptations of exclusive and ultimate possession of the truth. To find the irremissible thread of human creativity in one’s searching, with the awareness of its inextinguishable becoming, can be the *leit Motiv* of a modern school course. The affirmation of Lonergan that insight is not reached, in the ultimate analysis, by learning rules, following precepts, studying some method, was almost an anticipation of the much discussed ’68 in its positive motives, which, in this case, could turn into more and better, not less, study. One could thence look with optimism towards a progress based on the capacity to identify oneself with others, with their existential journey, and to share and ideally participate in their self-knowledge.

Understanding young people in their fatigue to grow and evaluate the importance of the individual in relation to the masses, was an explicit invitation to be more persons and less “oceanic masses”. Lonergan encouraged the resistance to falling into anti-philosophy, and ideologies which in every field breed the obscurantism and the violence that, he warned about, spread also inside religions. But it is indispensable, he thought, to pick up all the crumbs of validity from every ideology, and understand their historical genesis and circumstances. Just the historical genesis is what seems today to be put aside at all levels of education, even though it is highly elaborated in the specific fields of historiography.

*Insight* is also a great message of harmony and peace: the “philosophy of philosophies” is ultimately a conscious reflection on the evolution of human history in the alternations of its conquests and its dramas, those dramas which today are called horrendously in mediatic terms “humanitarian”. *Insight*, with its dynamic and self-critical speculation, is a valid antidote to the decadence in thought, particularly because, more than terrorism, the lack of culture which generates it is frightening.



“ONE CANNOT TRANSPOSE WHAT ONE DOES NOT KNOW”:  
OUTLINE OF A PROPOSED COURSE IN  
FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY

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When I read how the theme of this conference makes reference to Lonergan as an “atypical neo-scholastic” who “goes beyond essentialism” I was struck by similarities with the theme of a course in theology that I am planning to teach next year and thought that I might present these plans to this conference. I teach at the Gregorian University in Rome where the majority of students are seminarians or young priests from many countries of the world; my course will be offered to Licentiate students in Fundamental Theology and will be entitled: “Historical Consciousness and the History of Theology”.

My thinking about this proposed course has been influenced by an article written by Fr. Matthew Lamb of Ave Maria University, Florida, USA: “Lonergan’s Transpositions of Augustine and Aquinas: Exploratory Suggestions” and my title for this paper employs a quotation from this article.<sup>1</sup> In this article Lamb stresses how important it is for young people today who wish to engage with the thought of Lonergan to read the Christian classics. By this means, he claims, they can better understand the theological context within which Lonergan wrote and appreciate the achievement he made in transposing the truths they express to a latter-day context:

As I look back on my years of teaching and writing on Lonergan’s work, I have found that many students, who read Lonergan’s *Insight* and/or *Method in Theology* often fail to appreciate the explanatory character of his cognitional theory because they did not engage any in depth study of his earlier works on Aquinas. Instead they misread him by not fully appreciating how his call to intellectual conversion challenges all modern

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Lamb, “Lonergan’s Transpositions of Augustine and Aquinas Exploratory Suggestions”, in *The Importance of Insight: Essays in Honour of Michael Vertin*, editors John J. Liptay and David S. Liptay (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 3. The phrase “One cannot transpose what one does not know” is also found on this page.



and postmodern variations on Cartesian and Kantian themes. In contrast, students who have studied both Aquinas and Augustine have tended to find a more profound grasp of Lonergan's achievement.<sup>2</sup>

I find Lamb's point to be persuasive but would add at least one point that derives from my getting to know some students in the Gregorian University. I feel that I witness tendencies today at least among certain groups of young people to turn to the Christian past in ways that do not fulfil the goal outlined by Lamb. Rather, in reaction to the excesses of modern culture, some young people today seem to be engaging in a romanticising of the recent past of a pre-Vatican II era characterised by essentialist neo-scholasticism. Consequently, I want to add a nuance to Lamb's exhortation for a study of the classics of our Christian tradition: I propose that it is also important to study our theological past in a manner that is clearly dialectical – that carefully identifies the wrong turns that have been taken in Catholic theology as well as its great achievements.

### **1. The Pursuit of Wisdom in Hellenism and Christianity**

A starting point for the course will be a discussion of the manner in which early Christianity came to engage with philosophy. We will make two points: first that there were deep compatibilities between what was best in Greek philosophy and Christianity, and secondly that what was best in both Greek philosophy and Christian theology quickly met with an opposition that was related to the lack of authenticity of those who were opposing it.<sup>3</sup>

In his analysis of Hellenism Lonergan makes much use of Eric Voegelin. With this author, Lonergan discusses similarities between Socrates and Jesus: both proclaimed ideas that provoked the anger of evil men and were prepared to pay the ultimate price for persisting with their message. Lonergan quotes Voegelin's analysis of the aim of the Greek philosopher as being that of conducting "an act of resistance against the personal and social disorder of their age" and stresses a consequent point that students of philosophy will be unable to advance in understanding of what the philosophers have to say unless they themselves are struggling to leave disorder behind in their own lives and to contribute to the building up of order within the political entities in which they live.<sup>4</sup> Lonergan comments on how both Plato and Aristotle speak of competing desires in the human soul: one that is selfish and pleasure-seeking and another that leads to a

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> In elaborating each of these points, I make particular use of Bernard Lonergan, "Horizons and Transpositions", in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980*, Collected works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 17, edited by Robert Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004) pp. 409-432. Also "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response", *ibid.*, pp. 352-383.

<sup>4</sup> Lonergan, "Horizons", p. 412-417.

generous concern for others. Lonergan quotes Voegelin as asserting that “Only from the travail of this movement there emerges man as the questioner” and that this questioning in fact reveals “God as the mover who attracts or draws man to himself.”<sup>5</sup>

Having portrayed the sapiential tradition of Greek philosophy in this manner, Lonergan concludes that it need come as no surprise that Christian thinkers trying to communicate their message within Greco-Roman culture found themselves appealing to such philosophy. He points to the manner in which a pagan philosopher, Justin Martyr, could convert to Christianity and assert that in that religion he discovered “not something opposed to philosophy but philosophy in its state of perfection.”<sup>6</sup> Two hundred years later we witness a highpoint in the integration of a Greek sapiential tradition into a literary expression of Christianity in the writings of St. Augustine who, in his *Confessions*, records his own search for and discovery of true wisdom in Christ: “Late have I loved Thee, beauty so ancient and so new.”<sup>7</sup> This account is at once a creative development of the Greek tradition of the philosopher on a personal quest and a remarkably modern-sounding expression of the *Angst* of an individual in search of identity and goodness in a society whose culture does not offer clear guidance on this question.

Already at this early stage of our course we will introduce a notion of dialectical analysis of ideas, *i.e.*, distinguishing between authentic and inauthentic expressions. We will note the inauthenticity of those who killed both Socrates and Jesus, and note also the less dramatic mockery with which Stoic philosophers were met when they tried to appeal to a notion of wisdom in arguments they made.

## 2. Development in Theology

Much of the remainder of my course will be structured around three major developments that Lonergan asserts occurred in the history of Christian theology from its beginning up to today.<sup>8</sup>

### DEVELOPMENTS

<u>SCRIPTURAL</u> -----	<u>DOCTRINAL</u> -----	<u>THEORETICAL</u> -----	<u>HISTORICAL</u>
WORD OF GOD	AS TRUE	AS INTELLIGIBLE	AS TRANSFORMATIVE

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, “Horizons”, p. 417. We can note that what later Christian tradition will distinguish as the distinct disciplines of philosophy and theology are not differentiated in ancient Greek philosophy.

<sup>6</sup> Lonergan, “Horizons”, p. 415.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine: *Confessions* Lib. 10, 26.

<sup>8</sup> See the two sub-sections entitled “The Ongoing Genesis of Mind” in Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 305-312. The diagram is one produced by Matthew Lamb in “Lonergan’s Transpositions of Augustine and Aquinas Exploratory Suggestions”, p. 14, to summarize this account of these developments.

### 2.1. *Development 1: From Scriptural to Doctrinal Theology*

Having stressed the deep compatibility between aspects of Hellenistic thought and Christianity we next trace how, pretty quickly, Christian thinkers began to alter this inheritance. For all that there was much of value to be appropriated by Christians in Greek thought it remained the case that frequently conclusions from Christian thinkers, who relied over-much on certain philosophies, began to clash with what the Christian community felt was an accurate expression of its faith. To elaborate this point, Lonergan traces the manner in which both the materialist Tertullian and the Middle-Platonist Origen produced theologies that insisted that the Son of God was subordinate to the Father. For Lonergan this in turn provoked a philosophical step forward with the implicit critical realism of Athanasius and his “fundamental little rule” of how to speak about Father and Son: that whatever is said of the Father is also to be said of the Son except that the Son is Son and not Father.<sup>9</sup> At this stage we will introduce students to an analysis of texts that is both critical and genetic. A critical analysis of the writings of thinkers at this stage studies how each of them was or was not employing the different levels of consciousness involved in knowing. This analysis reveals the achievement of Athanasius who, implicitly, broke through, by means of his little rule, to differentiating a level of judgment from a level of insight. As a result, we recognise a “genesis” of a new degree of sophistication which constitutes our first development: now doctrines can be proclaimed even when our understanding of them is limited.

### 2.2. *Development 2: From Doctrinal to Systematic Theology*

The second development in Christian theology mentioned by Lonergan is that from doctrinal to systematic theology. Our ability to employ both critical and genetic methods in our analysis of texts now helps us recognise the genetic development of a new level of sophistication in the theology of the Middle Ages. We will follow Lonergan’s account of how the natural processes of authentic minds led from a more minimal statement of Christian doctrines to more focused efforts to derive a deeper understand of them. Lonergan asserts that this process found its highpoint in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. This theologian employed the thought of Aristotle, re-discovered in the Middle Ages, as a tool to assist an understanding of the doctrines of the faith that was both systematic and coherent.<sup>10</sup> This theology followed the notion of Aristotle, outlined especially in *Posterior Analytics*, that scientific knowledge was obtained through the discovery of the “universal and

<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism”, in *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), p. 250.

<sup>10</sup> As well as using works of Lonergan to trace this second stage of theological development, I follow the advice of Matthew Lamb on how important it is to read even the books of secondary scholarship that Lonergan himself read. Thus we will use books such as: Yves M.-J. Congar O.P., *A History of Theology*, translated and edited by Hunter Guthrie, S.J. (New York, Doubleday, 1968), and Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science* (New York, Collier Books, 1957).

permanent causes” and the consistent use of the rules of logic in doing this. However, in the hands of Aquinas, these tools of logic were always subordinated to a process of enquiry into the mysteries of our faith which were acknowledged always to stretch beyond our understanding. Also, there was always an emphasis that only the individual who was himself or herself growing in virtue could succeed in deriving some intelligibility from employing these tools of systematic enquiry in the face of the mystery of God’s love and action in the world.

Having performed this genetic analysis of the shift to a new stage of development in Christian theology we next switch to a dialectical analysis of other intellectual trends that occurred more or less at the same time. We will stress the sad human reality that authentic developments in human thinking seem never to be without an inauthentic shadow. At this point we will point out that there is in fact what Lonergan refers to as “the ambiguity of the *Posterior Analytics*”<sup>11</sup> and outline how this work can lend itself to a reading that limits itself to exercises in logical reasoning and that loses touch with the wider purposes of growth in wisdom already intended by Aristotle and certainly expanded upon by early Christian thinkers. So it is that we will outline Lonergan’s account of the emergence of nominalist philosophies and theologies that became influential shortly after his lifetime. Here we find the emergence of exercises in logical reasoning that are divorced from the personal pursuit of wisdom and come to form the essentialism of the neo-scholastic manualist tradition that characterised Catholic seminary studies up to Vatican II.

### 2.3. *Development 3: From Systematic to Historical Theology*

The third development in theology occurs in the modern era and is characterised by a move from systematic to historical thinking. Perhaps more than in any another stage of development it is important to maintain clear distinctions between genetic and dialectical analysis of this period (always assuming an underlying critical approach).

With respect to genetic developments, a first and key point is to understand the nature of the discovery of modern scientific method and of how revolutionary this was. Lonergan is fond of quoting Herbert Butterfield on the significance of the modern scientific revolution:

Since that revolution overturned the authority in science not only of the middle ages but of the ancient world – since it ended not only in the eclipse of scholastic philosophy but in the destruction of Aristotelian physics – it outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A phrase taken from the title of a sub-section of Lonergan, “Horizons and Transpositions”, pp. 423-424.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Lonergan, “Questionnaire on Philosophy”, p. 353.

In our planned course we will spend some time making sure we have understood the nature of knowing that emerged in the scientific revolution. Knowledge, by this measure, is always merely probable and open to revision. We can immediately recognize that this is likely to create a challenge for religious belief which will want to be able to make at least certain claims with certainty. Moving on from a study of the revolution in natural science in the seventeenth century we can progress to understand the consequent revolution in human studies such as history in the nineteenth century. This began to target directly the religious texts upon which much Christian reflection was based and so became a very direct threat to religious belief.

Staying with our thread of genetic analysis we next introduce Lonergan's key point about the need to transpose the achievements of the classics of the Christian past to a method that is open to the discoveries of modern science. This will bring our course to a point where we will need to offer an all-too-brief introduction to the key ideas of Lonergan's *Method in Theology*. We will stress how for Lonergan the Christian desire for firm foundations from where to make truth claims about revelation is answered not by a direct use of the various empirical methods of modern science and human studies but by a "general empirical method" that can be discovered as grounding each of these other methods. As students of Lonergan know, this general empirical method is grounded in an act of self-appropriation of the constant structure of our coming to know and decide. So it is that Lonergan will now state that "theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix";<sup>13</sup> that it is performed as an ongoing and collaborative exercise of eight "functional specialties"; and that each functional specialty is characterised by having one of the four levels of consciousness especially central to its aims.

In Lonergan's chapter on "Doctrines" in *Method* he makes it clear that this functional specialty is especially concerned with truth claims and so with the third level of consciousness. He also articulates well in this chapter the manner in which the method that involves all eight functional specialties collaborating with each other is in fact a transposition, or a carrying forward, of the thought of Aristotle and Aquinas to a new horizon:

We are not relativists, and so we acknowledge something substantial and common to human nature and human activity; but that we place not in eternally valid propositions but in the quite open structure of the human spirit – in the ever immanent and operative though unexpressed transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Introduction.

<sup>14</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 302.

We will stress that this transposition of Aquinas by Lonergan stands within the older sapiential tradition to which Aquinas himself was so true. A quotation from Matthew Lamb captures this point nicely:

To recover Aquinas, Lonergan discovered, is going to require a profound change in oneself which many Thomistic scholars never reached. Lonergan's reaching up to the mind of Aquinas changed him profoundly. He realized that to recover the wisdom of Aquinas in more students of Aquinas [...] meant going back to a pre-modern, ancient and medieval, cognitional theory wherein *Theoria* was a speculative-contemplative wisdom fostering the self-knowledge of the soul. In this task Augustine's narratives of his own intellectual, moral, and religious conversion proved a foundational guide. [...] This threefold conversion process of Augustine becomes in Aquinas the fundamental importance of the intellectual, moral, and theological virtues.<sup>15</sup>

Having given at least a reasonable time in our course to discussing the genetic development of theology proposed by Lonergan we will next turn to dialectical questions. The requirements of this short presentation limit the detail into which I can go in explaining these points. Briefly, let me state that I plan to touch on the following three points concerning how difficult it will be to promote the kind of transposed theology advocated by Lonergan.

1. Much of modern and post-modern philosophy has rejected the sapiential tradition of the past and so it is difficult for children of today's culture to perform the act of "major authenticity"<sup>16</sup> to go against this cultural given.
2. We can stress how nominalist theology played no small part in distancing European culture from a pursuit of wisdom. We will note that Lonergan describes a rearguard action undertaken by Catholic theology during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by decadent neo-scholasticism with whom "one entered the rationalist door of abstract right reason, and came out in the all but palpable embrace of authoritarian religion."<sup>17</sup>
3. While Lonergan is critical of Catholic theology immediately before Vatican II he also laments the near over-night collapse of neo-scholasticism that occurred after the council. His point here is that no consensus was arrived at regarding how to replace neo-scholasticism and, as a result, Catholic theology has witnessed fragmentation with many theologies based, simply, on "bad philosophy."<sup>18</sup> He

<sup>15</sup> Lamb, "Lonergan's Transpositions of Augustine and Aquinas Exploratory Suggestions", p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> See Lonergan, *Method*, p. 80.

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan, "Variations in Fundamental Theology", in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, p. 256.

<sup>18</sup> In Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections", in *A Third Collection* (New York,

decries a frequent return to the simplest of attitudes that knowing just requires “taking a good look” and goes so far as to speak of the lowering of quality of theology as “the debacle that followed the pastoral council, Vatican II.”<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

In this paper I have outlined plans for a course in the history of theology that aspires to expand on a theme of this conference: that Lonergan was an atypical neo-scholastic. I have followed the advice of Matthew Lamb in my basic conception of the course but have added a certain emphasis of my own concerning the need to offer a dialectical analysis of the history of Catholic theology as well as of modern philosophy.

In conclusion I propose another insight that I would add to the comments of Lamb – and I expect also only to have opportunity to mention this point briefly in my course. In our efforts at transposing the wisdom of the past I believe that we should distinguish between transposing the theological method of Aquinas and transposing the content of his systematic theology. I want to stress that while transposing his method is both necessary and sufficient for theology today, transposing the content of the systematic theology of Aquinas, as well as that of the other great thinkers of the tradition, is necessary but not sufficient. I would stress that while the classics of the past have achieved much in the way of deepening our understanding of the mysteries of our faith they have not exhausted our abilities to do this. The task remains for theologians today to develop new theological doctrines not least in response to the signs of the times.<sup>20</sup>

Paulist Press, 1985), Lonergan makes the following criticism of the Christology of Pete Schoonenberg: “When the absence of philosophy is taken as proof of sincere pastoral concern, many will be entranced by his proposal. [...] But this claim (is) [...] involved in vast oversimplifications [...] it runs counter to the structure and procedures of the world mediated by meaning” (p. 79).

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, “Horizons”, p. 410.

<sup>20</sup> In this matter, I draw on Robert Doran’s comments on theology as mutual self-mediation of religion and culture in theology and how even Lonergan in *Method in Theology* tends to emphasise rather exclusively theology as self-mediation, *i.e.* as transposing discoveries already made in the past. See Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), Chapter 6: “Mediation”.

# QUEST FOR MEANING, AND RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE: THE FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGY OF LONERGAN

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## 1. Introduction

I intend to begin my brief discussion with an observation: the thought of Bernard Lonergan is still little considered among the philosophers and theologians of the Italian Universities and Academic Centres. There are many reasons for this lack of attention and even diffidence towards this Canadian Jesuit. Many sustain that Lonergan is, without doubt, a difficult author. Certainly attempting a masterpiece like *Insight*<sup>1</sup> is not an easy job. Because of this, many readers renounce dedicating time to a study that will result hard and, at least at first impact, little satisfying. Another obstacle could derive from the fact that philosophers consider Lonergan as a theologian, while theologians consider him a philosopher. Finally, scholars of social science do not give him much recognition because his works do not belong to any well defined school of thought.

Probably these reasons are plausible, but in reality I believe that the real problem with studying this author is due to a basic idea: often scholars give more attention to the contents of a science than to the operations or to the structures underlying the results of a scientific discipline. This expectation, when applied to the theories of Lonergan, becomes discouraging like – as our author would say – trying to teach a blind man colours.

In F. E. Crowe's opinion,<sup>2</sup> Lonergan's work does not simply consist of the philosophy and theology produced by him, but of the tools that he has given so that every one can creatively use them in view of his own philosophical, theological and methodological investigations and elaborations. For this

<sup>1</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, CWL 3, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992.

<sup>2</sup> F.E. Crowe, *Loneran*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville 1992; Italian transl. *Bernard J. F. Lonergan. Progresso e tappe del suo pensiero*, Città Nuova, Roma 1995, p. 162.



reason, those who expect to find exclusively philosophical and theological discussion in Lonergan's work, will be disillusioned.<sup>3</sup> In the first place, because Lonergan writes from a moving viewpoint, so that it is not possible to reflect on one aspect of his thought without necessarily recalling all of the other dynamically correlated aspects. In the second place, because his writings, even before adding to the knowledge that one has, have a pedagogical intention, are an invitation to the discovery and intensification of one's interior consciousness. This is why already in the first lines of *Method in Theology*,<sup>4</sup> Lonergan, on the one hand, recommends the reader to apply to his own interior consciousness what he will outline in his book, with the aim of discovering in oneself that dynamic structure which is the cognitive and moral reality; and, on the other hand, he states precisely: "I am writing not theology but method in theology. I am concerned not with the objects that theologians expound but with the operations that theologians perform."<sup>5</sup> By this expression Lonergan intends to sustain that the method is not a collection of recipes that can be followed by anyone and that always lead to satisfying results. On the contrary, there method indicates that slow and tiring way (*met-odòs*) that takes the subject to possess his own conscious structure. In other words, it means becoming conscious of what one is doing when one knows, thinking in terms of recurrence, observing the continual advance of various disciplines, and becoming more aware of the bias that can distort our perceptions and analyses.

## 2. A Methodical Theology

The *transcendental method* is but the explanation of the formally dynamic structure of consciousness. This method could seem little pertinent in respect to the theological discussion, and it is such if, as I said before, we mean for theology only the material objects of this science. On the contrary, the method is relevant for theology if we consider that "theologians always have had minds and always have used them,"<sup>6</sup> and the same mind is operative according to the same procedures in all the fields of knowledge. Thus, to speak about method in theology means "to conceive theology as a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing towards an ideal goal."<sup>7</sup>

Now the human deliberative and conscious activity works on four distinct levels, where aims and results proper of each level are pursued, so that the structure of

<sup>3</sup> As Crowe often said to the younger and more impatient students: if you want to reach immediate results, stay away from Lonergan. See *ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1972.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, XII. "If I hope many readers will find in themselves the dynamic structure of which I write, others perhaps will not. Let me beg them not to be scandalized because I quote scripture, the ecumenical councils, papal encyclicals, other theologians so rarely and sparingly" (*Ivi*).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

the very human activity is divided in four functional specialties with their own aims and results. So, the result at the first level, that of experience, is the discovery and the collection of data; that of the second level, comprehension, is to grasp the meaning of the data; that of the third level, judgement, is to judge and narrate what has happened; that of the fourth level, decision, is to look for a way to settle conflicts regarding values, facts, meanings, and experiences.

Loneragan uses these functional specialties, based on the transcendental method, in theology.<sup>8</sup> For this reason it is important to underline that the specialties described in *Method in Theology* do not refer to the objects of the theology, as we are used to thinking when we speak about biblical theology, fundamental, dogmatic, moral, and pastoral ones, etc. In this case we distinguish, inside the theological knowledge, manifold disciplines, each one with its own statute, tasks, and objectives.

From a certain point of view we may say that common disciplines depend on the division of results of the particular investigations, that is the objects, while the specialties are a question of functional or operative specialties. The specialties depend on the classification of the recurrent operations of the subject, operations that are responsible for the process from data (field specializations) to results (concept specializations). The functional specialties move from the material and formal objects to the operations that constitute the base of the specialties.

Clearly object and operation are related, but the consideration of the method is not directly the consideration of the objects. To have an idea of what we are saying we can recall the example that Lonergan was using to explain to his students the difference between the theological specializations that refer to the contents of theology and the functional or operative specialties in theology (that is the methodological point of view):

The consideration of method [...] is not directly the consideration of objects. According to St Thomas in *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 1, a. 7, *Theologia tractat de Deo et de aliis quae ad Deum ordinantur*. That is the object of theology. Consideration of method is not directly concerned with the object, not with God, with scripture, with the councils, with the Fathers, with the liturgy, or with the Scholastics, but with me and my operations.

<sup>8</sup> Theology is divided in two distinct phases, a first “mediating” one, that takes the past of the Christian tradition, and a second “mediated” one, that formulates and applies the Christian message in the present cultural context. As a consequence, there will be not four, but eight functional specialties in theology. Lonergan calls theology in *oratione obliqua* the first phase, including research, interpretation, history, and dialectic, while he calls theology in *oratione recta* the second phase, including foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. Theology in *oratione obliqua* used all the resources of historical-critical research and hermeneutics to meet the past already formed of a particular religious tradition, while the theology in *oratione recta* is committed to elaborate a theological discussion capable of putting itself completely into the cultural and religious present.

It is concerned with the theologian and what the theologian does. It does not imply a total neglect of the object – that is impossible. If you eliminate the object you eliminate the operation, and if you eliminate the operation the subject reverts to the state of sleep, and there are no operations at all. But it is not directly concerned with the objects, and insofar as it considers objects it considers them through the operations. Similarly, it considers the subject non purely as subject without any operations, but as operating. Accordingly, while it is necessary to begin from objects, still objects are considered simply as means to pin down the operations that are involved. It considers objects not for their own sakes, but as discriminants of operations.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the acquisition of the methodology proposed by Lonergan gives to the theologian the tools necessary to investigate and creatively elaborate the contents of the Christian faith and to discern those cultural phenomena that have to do with religion.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Foundational Theology

I have just said that functional specialties cannot be confused with the familiar theological specializations, but I have immediately added that the two types of specialization do not have to remain separate as there may not be functional specialties in theology without the objectives or data on which to work. Starting from that, I wish to present now, even if synthetically, an example of interaction between the discipline of fundamental theology and the functional specialty of foundations. This is not an arbitrary choice. In fact, we know that according to Lonergan fundamental theology corresponds to foundations, in the field of the functional specialties.<sup>11</sup> Foundations has to do directly with the fourth level of the operations of consciousness, that is of the existential subject who, overcoming the purely cognitive level, asks himself what he has to do, who he wants to be, and through authentic choices realizes what can be considered the most important human good, that is personal development.

This discussion, if applied to the religious subject or the theologian, means that the subject, once he faces the religious testimony discovered by research,

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from the Lonergan's unpublished lecture "The Method of Theology", in R.M. Doran, *What is Systematic Theology?*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto - Buffalo - London 2005, p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, after publishing *Method in Theology* (1972), came back to his economic studies, writing only brief theological articles. For this reason, he has not offered us a concrete example of re-foundation of his treatment of Christology and Trinitarian theology. However, an interesting application of methodology can be seen in the 1975 paper, B. Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflection", in *A Third Collection. Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, F.E. Crowe, ed., Paulist Press, New York / Geoffrey Chapman, London 1985, pp. 74-99.

<sup>11</sup> *Method in Theology*, p. 131.

interpreted by exegeses, judged by history, and submitted to the alternative of dialectic, is called to decide in which way or in which measure he must carry the weight of continuity or risk the initiative of change.<sup>12</sup>

It should be stressed that this decision is a spontaneous religious event. Theological reflection does not create a basis for, nor determine religious experience, but takes place later to reflect and illuminate questions provoked by the meeting of consciousness with the mystery of God who reveals himself as a love of charity. The job of fundamental theology is to objectify the horizons implied in the religious conversion and to articulate the fundamental questions in order to help men integrate the gift of God with the rest of their life.<sup>13</sup>

While foundations have to do with the decision that man assumes to be an authentic or unauthentic person and, reflecting religiously, to be converted or not, I believe that foundational theology should work in two linked areas: the question of meaning and the religious experience, with the respective counter-positions, the refusal of the question of meaning and the religious indifference.

### 3.1. *The Question of Meaning*

In the last years we have seen a renewed interest of fundamental theology for the question of meaning.<sup>14</sup> However, I have noticed that in some authors the speculation regarding this argument as a grid to formulate the ultimate value (*Letzgültigkeit*) of Christian revelation appears difficult whenever the question is faced from a practical-existential point of view.<sup>15</sup> I ask myself: is it really expected that post-modern man raises a question about meaning?<sup>16</sup>

In order to answer this disturbing question, I consider it necessary to elaborate the problem of meaning beginning from the historical determination of human reason and the dialectic development of the subject. In this direction Lonergan

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123. In 1973 Lonergan held a conference “Variations in Fundamental Theology”, now in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, R.C. Croken and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 17, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2004, pp. 240-258. In that occasion our author, beginning from the notion of existential subject, made clear the new context in which the fundamental theology was inserted and which would allow the abandoning of the extrinsicist model of the rational demonstrative apologetics in which: “[a] natural theology established the existence of God. A natural ethics established the obligation of worshipping God. The prophecies of the Old Testament and the miracles of the New established the divine origin of the Christian religion, and the Christian message settled the identity of the true church”: *ibid.*, p. 243. See also B. Lonergan, “Theology in its New Context”, in *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, W.F.J. Ryan and B.J. Tyrrell, eds., Longman & Todd, London 1974, pp. 55-67; G. Guglielmi, *La sfida di dirigere se stessi. Soggetto esistenziale e teologia fondatale in Bernard Lonergan*, Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, Trapani 2008, pp. 141-145.

<sup>14</sup> See the works of H. Verweyen, Th. Pröpfer, A. Geschè, J. Alfaro.

<sup>15</sup> I refer to the proposal of H. Verweyen, *La parola definitiva di Dio. Compendio di teologia fondamentale*, Italian transl., Queriniana, Brescia 2001.

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 91, recalls some post-modern thoughts that believe outdated every “horizon of sense”, and invite the man to live following temporariness and fugacity.

offers various interesting points, even if he does not discuss directly and explicitly this problem, but inserts it inside his more ample study on the existential subject and the historical category of the meaning. So, it is necessary to concentrate on the pages in which our author, on the one hand, faces the wish for self-transcendence in the existential subject and, on the other hand, recognises the dialectic path that characterises, in a way that cannot be disregarded, the reaching of authenticity.<sup>17</sup>

Through the operations of the fourth level of consciousness (deliberation, evaluation and decision), the existential subject does not only decide what to do, but returns to himself and asks what he wants to be. Existential self-appropriation leads us to the knowledge that each one of us has to build his own life and give it a meaning, and that this possibility is a duty and a responsibility that each one of us must assume by himself, without another who can substitute him. In this way those radically new questions arise that mark man's maturity: towards which reality or which objective do I direct my existence and my personal efforts? What have I to do in order to authentically realize myself? And who have I to be? It is good to remember that these questions are not without the polymorphism of our consciousness, not without our fundamental experience that puts under tension our rational, ethical and religious experience, and lastly not without the cultural tradition that precedes us and in which we slowly begin to make our decisions.

### 3.2. *Religious Indifference*

Starting from the thought of Lonergan, I believe that religious indifference is a phenomenon which recalls two basic considerations: one of an anthropological nature and the other more specifically theological. It is not my intention to stop here on this second aspect, but I synthesize by saying that, in my opinion, if Lonergan qualifies the religious experience as a "being-in-love with God,"<sup>18</sup> consequently the refusal of God that comes from religious indifference must be intended as "disaffection", and not in the meaning of the theoretical negation of God. I add that this change of scene – from a theoretical atheism that "questioned" God and, thus, hid in itself a religious instance, to a practical indifference in which the religious instance is not even hidden, and in which the non pertinence of the problem of God is seen as a normal phenomenon – was already seen by Lonergan. In this sense he wrote that while God was not totally absent from daily happenings, still he seemed an intruder, and while mentioning him was not without meaning, still it seemed to be irrelevant.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In this work a, let us say, obligatory point of departure as regards the existential subject is represented by B. Lonergan, "The Subject", in *A Second Collection*, 69-86, that can be considered as the foundational stone about the existential turning point in Lonergan.

<sup>18</sup> See the fourth chapter ("The Religion") of B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 101-124; Id., "Religious Experience", in *A Third Collection*, pp. 115-128.

<sup>19</sup> See B. Lonergan, "The Absence of God in Modern Culture", in *A Second Collection*, pp. 101-116, especially 114; G. Guglielmi, "Indifferenza religiosa e differenziazione della coscienza", *Rassegna di*

Returning to the first consideration of an anthropological nature, I believe – and naturally it is my hermeneutical point of view, which I do not expect to be exhaustive – that the phenomenon of religious indifference has to do with the scarce differentiation of consciousness that takes the subject to elaborate meanings superficial and little attentive to the complexity and variety of reality in all of its dynamically integrated areas. About this, if I am allowed a comparison with the heuristic notion of proportionate being, I would like to say that, as there is an isomorphism between the structure of the cognitive activity and the reality proportionate to our knowing, so there exists a correspondence and circularity between the differentiation of consciousness and the meaning of reality. The more consciousness is differentiated, the more it is capable of understanding the manifold shades and meanings underlying a reality or historical situation and related to it. If, on the contrary, consciousness is only little differentiated, its capacity to mean will be impoverished to such a point as not to perceive the variety of meanings present in what merely appears. It is as if a little differentiated consciousness tends to perceive and understand the information of its personal and social history according to a monochromatic background and, consequently, not to perceive the multiplicity of areas of meaning, that instead could force it to amplify or change its horizon of life and to raise important and disturbing questions that give sense to individual and social living.

But what is the cause of this scarce differentiation of consciousness? According to Lonergan, it is the bias of common sense. The risk that commonsense men face is to feel omni-competent about every question, and at the same time to accept as a fundamental orientation of one's own life the point of view according to which the area of common sense coincides with the area of the real. So it is that men run the risk of elaborating meanings and making decisions that regard only the concrete and the particular, while they will be more inclined to consider the questions about more universal and theoretical aspects of life as lacking importance.<sup>20</sup> In this way not only the more creative and prolific ideas are disregarded, but the same subject is mutilated in its operations and capacity of self-transcendence ecstasy, because he closes himself in a tight horizon that does not permit his consciousness to further develop and differentiate.

It is here that, according to us, lies one of the anthropological causes of religious indifference. When one is indifferent to something or someone, it is difficult to raise questions and formulate judgements about that object or that person (is it true or not true, is it right or wrong, is it interesting or useless). This absence of comprehension, of judgement and of choice reveals that there is a block at the source. The subject has limited, if not blocked, his spontaneous and natural

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<sup>20</sup> This is the meaning of “general bias” of the common sense faced by Lonergan in *Insight*, pp. 250-267.

orientation towards research and his operative dynamism. Thus, our lives become passive, fragmented and seriously diminished. In its more typical and common expressions, the indifference brings a drastic reduction of sharpness and constancy of our attention. As a consequence, our experimenting becomes less careful and selective. The level of our energy and mental readiness diminishes. Our understanding is always less intelligent and more obtuse. As our judgements lack reflection, search for evidence, and verification, they have a great deal of superficiality. Our level of responsibility lessens due to a growing egoism that makes us satisfy our personal interests leaving behind common good and values. This reduction, if not stopping, of the moral level favours uncommitted ways of life, totally opposed to the existential subject.<sup>21</sup> Within the range of our knowledge we do not notice any more differences, we do not perform any more distinctions. Our conscious state becomes more and more uniform and undifferentiated, due to the exhaustion of our consciousness' vivacity.

In face of this, Lonergan indicates in the area of interiority the possibility of drawing oneself out of this consciousness' atrophy: but this is another discussion.

<sup>21</sup> A figure that represents this state of inauthenticity is for Lonergan the drifter, that is a person who does not make decisions in an autonomous and responsible way. Our author often recalls this figure of the drifter as opposite to the existential subject. The brief conference on existential crisis, that Lonergan held at Loyola College in Montreal in 1968, is interesting about this point: in that year, together with the student movements in the Universities, the use of drugs and the increase of suicide became more worrying. See B. Lonergan, "Existential Crisis", in *Shorter Papers*, F.E. Crowe, R.M. Doran and M.D. Monsour, eds., CWL 20, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2007, pp. 258-262.

# OBSERVATIONS ON LONERGAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME AND SPACE

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## 1. Introduction

The correct organisation of the concepts of time and space is among the most important problems concerning the theory of knowledge as well as the foundations of science. The interpretation of time and space can be roughly classified into *ontological* and *relational*. For the ontologists, time and space can be properly understood only as substances; on the other side, the relationalists reject such interpretation and assume that time and space merely consist of special kinds of *relations* defined among material objects or, more precisely, among phenomena or events.<sup>1</sup> Relational interpretations can be further classified into *object-based* and *subject-based*, according to the nature of the terms involved in the relations. Object-based temporal and spatial relations hold among material objects or events, considered as elements of the real world. On the contrary, subject-based relations hold among phenomena or events, considered as elements of the subjective experience.

Bernard Lonergan, in his studies on the theory of knowledge, and especially in *Insight*,<sup>2</sup> devoted a great effort to the analysis of knowledge as a result from the activity of the concrete human subject, and to its links with scientific knowledge. In the present work I want to point out Lonergan's contribution to the philosophy of time and space in both its aspects of a constructive approach and a of a telling criticism of the conceptions of Newton and Kant. In *Insight* Lonergan criticizes Newton's ontological interpretation of time and space, as well as Kant's transcendental approach. Next, he reaffirms the relativity of those concepts, and the

<sup>1</sup> Events are defined as *elementary* phenomena. That is, for any observer, an event is a phenomenon which can be located at a single instant of time, and at a single point in space.

<sup>2</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 3, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992 (first edition 1957).



essential role played by the invariance with respect to the group of transformations among reference frames, accordingly to the theory of relativity. Such “relativistic” approach is in line with the experiences of duration and extension which are proper to the cognitional activity of the concrete human subject, as investigated in *Insight*. Lonergan’s approach to the philosophy of time and space is essentially (subject-based) relational. It links in an original way the acquisitions of the theory of relativity and those of the modern cognitive psychology to the tradition of Aristotle, which comes to us through Thomas Aquinas and the renewed scholastic approach to the theory of knowledge founded by Lonergan itself, in *Insight*.

## 2. Time and Space and Modern Science

Ontological and relational interpretations of time and space have characterized the debate on the foundations of modern science since its birth, at the beginning of the XVII century. Nevertheless, such interpretations have deep roots in ancient and medieval philosophy. The early modern relational conception was formulated by Descartes and Leibniz, whereas the first modern ontological conception was formulated by Newton.

In Descartes’ natural philosophy, space is nothing but the *extension*; that is, the fundamental attribute of the *res extensa*. Moreover, time is nothing but the *duration*; that is, the measure of motion. Descartes’ conception derives from that of Aristotle; it is (object-based) relational, but not in the modern logical sense, since it is embodied in a philosophical viewpoint based on the substance-attribute framework, and ruled by a purely predicative logic. Newton criticized the physics of Descartes, and especially his explanations of motion and the gravitational attraction. But Descartes’ conception of time and space was yet indirectly involved in that criticism. Newton’s mechanics is based on the celebrated three laws which regulate the motion of any material body. Such laws must be obviously referred to time and space. Newton distinguished *absolute* from *relative* time and space, and referred laws to the former, while the latter results from human measurements. Accordingly, he distinguished absolute from relative motion of material bodies. Newton’s absolute time and space exist separately from matter and do not act on it.

Many kinds of criticism were opposed to Newton’s ontological conception on the grounds of a more sophisticated relational approach.<sup>3</sup> Such critical viewpoints went from Leibniz, and Berkeley. Leibniz opposed to the absolute space of Newton, a theory of *spatial relations* between material bodies. Leibniz’s theory of space was both relational and *relativistic*, and constituted a strong alternative to Newton’s kinematics, but it was defective from the dynamical point of view. Moreover, it was incapable of explaining the centrifugal force arising in circular

<sup>3</sup> See M. Jammer, *Concepts of Space. The History of Theories of Space in Physics*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1954.

motion, which Newton indicated as the experimental verification of the “absolute” motion. Another important contribution to the critical analysis of Newton’s theory of space is due to Berkeley, who was among the founders of the modern empiricism. Berkeley’s arguments were centred on the fact that absolute motion of bodies was not detectable. Indeed, from the empiricist point of view, only relative motions can be experienced, even in the case of circular motions. Nevertheless, like those of Leibniz, Berkeley’s arguments were not yet able to explain the centrifugal forces of circular motion.

In the remaining part of the XVIII, and in the first half of the XIX century, Newton’s mechanics was generalised by the fundamental contributions of D’Alembert, Euler, Lagrange, Hamilton, Jacobi and many others. Such discipline – today called *classical mechanics* – achieved its greatest success in the explanation of the motions of planets in the solar system, as well as in the applications to engineering science, and was among the propulsive forces of the industrial revolution. Such success led scientists to devote all their efforts to the technical development of mechanics. Therefore, the open foundational questions, such as that of the nature of time and space, were set aside. In the last part of the XVIII century, philosophy, on its own side, realized an important new approach to the problem of time and space in the work of Kant. In Kant’s theory of knowledge – which is centred in the subject – time and space are conceived as the fundamental *a priori* forms of the organisation of perceptions. Because of such *a priori* character, the structure of time and space does not depend on experience. As in the physics of Newton, time characterizes the simultaneity and the causal relation between events, while space characterizes the spatial relations between material bodies by means of the Euclidean geometry. Kant’s conception tried to bring together the relational conception of Leibniz and Berkeley with the physics of Newton.

In the second half of the XIX century, great progress took place in physics and geometry which influenced the interpretation of time and space. An important development was the formulation of thermodynamics, which pointed out that any real physical process is *irreversible*; that is, evolves in a fixed direction of time. This “arrow” of time was determined by the increasing of entropy, a macroscopic physical quantity discovered by Kelvin. But such *asymmetry* in time was in conflict with classical mechanics, whose fundamental laws do not determine a preferential direction in time at the molecular level. Maxwell and Boltzmann tried to solve this paradox by formulating a statistical approach to mechanics. On the other hand, the rise of non-Euclidean geometry in the second half of the XIX century must be recalled, because of its relevance in the philosophy of space. The early non-Euclidean geometries were founded on the refutation of the V postulate of Euclid’s geometry on the existence of parallel straight lines in space. Even at this initial level, non-Euclidean geometry posed a serious problem about the

“true” geometry of physical space. This problem rapidly became central in the philosophy of space. Indeed, Gauss and Riemann generalized the approach to geometry by assuming that Euclid’s geometry was true only at a *local* level, and determined invariant expressions for the *global* description of space; moreover, Klein constructed a classification of the possible geometries by making use of the concept of *group of transformations*. From the philosophical point of view, the last part of the XIX century was characterized by a progressive affirmation of the current of positivism, which tried to embrace all the advancements of science in a unitary interpretation.

In the first two decades of the XX century two important revolutions took place in physics; they led respectively to relativity and quantum mechanics. The theory of relativity was initially formulated by Poincaré and Einstein in 1905, and is known as *special relativity*. This theory organises the time and space representations of the events – and reformulates the laws of mechanics and electromagnetism – on the grounds of the principle of relativity. Such a principle implies that the speed of light is the same for all the inertial frames of reference, and its mathematical representation consists in an algebraic expression of the space-time coordinates which is invariant respect to the group of transformations between inertial frames of reference. The effort to extend the relativistic formulation to the law of gravitation led Einstein, in 1916, to reformulating the theory in a wider form which is known as *general relativity*. General relativity identifies the gravitational field with the geometry of space-time; since the gravitational field is determined by matter, then geometry assumes a dynamical role. The rise of the theory of relativity revived the interest in the traditional debate between the ontological and the relational interpretations of time and space. The demand of coherence, as well as of conformity to the experimental content of the asserts in physical theory, led philosophers to a new commitment to the problem of time and space in the theory of relativity. In the first half of the XX century a debate about this problem occurred between the exponents of positivism<sup>4</sup> and Cassirer,<sup>5</sup> the exponent of the neo-Kantian current who was mostly influenced by the new physical theories.

Another fundamental interpretation of time and space was contributed – in the first half of the XX century – by cognitive psychology, mainly in the work of Piaget. By means of rigorous experimental methods, he investigated the development of human cognitive apparatus in children. He pointed out the existence of deep connections between the concepts produced by this apparatus, as they are employed to represent concrete reality, and the abstract concepts – like time and space – employed in the formal scientific knowledge to represent physical reality.

<sup>4</sup> See H. Reichenbach, “Der gegenwärtige Stand der Relativitätsdiskussion”, *Logos* 10 (1921) 316-378; M. Schlick, *Raum und Zeit in der gegenwärtigen Physik*, Springer, Berlin 1922.

<sup>5</sup> See E. Cassirer, *Zur Einstein’schen Relativitätstheorie*, Bruno Cassirer Verlag, Berlin 1920.

### 3. Lonergan's Philosophy of Time and Space

Lonergan tackles the problem of time and space in chapter 5 of *Insight*. He brings this problem to the general framework of his philosophy with a constructive formulation based on the abstract and concrete intelligibility of time and space. Moreover he develops a criticism of Newton's conception of time and space as well as of Kant's organization of that conception into a transcendental gnoseology. The constructive formulation is carried out in the whole of the chapter, whereas the critiques are developed in part of section 3.

For Lonergan, knowledge embodied in natural sciences is formulated by means of abstract propositions. A distinctive property of abstract propositions is that any expression of them is *invariant*. That is, such expressions do not contain any term denoting places or times. Nevertheless, physics does not conform to this status, since it investigates motion of material bodies or dynamical evolution of fields. Thus, physics presents a problem and it needs some preliminary assumption on the role of time and space.

Accordingly, there arises a problem peculiar to physics. Just as ordinary language develops an invariant copula to express general truths, so too the physicist has to find spatial-temporal invariants if he is to employ the appropriate invariant expressions in stating laws of local motion. (*Insight*, p. 165)

Lonergan's program to include physics into his theory of knowledge agrees with that of Poincaré and Einstein for the formulation of physics itself on the grounds of the principle of relativity. This agreement is very deep and involves Lonergan's relational interpretation of time and space.

For Lonergan, knowledge is founded on the whole cognitive activity of the subject, rather than on the *perception* – as in classical empiricism – or on the *experimentation* and the *logical structure* of the system of assertions – as in logical positivism. However, such concrete activity leads to the *abstract* formulations employed in natural sciences, therefore the connection between concrete activity and abstract formulations has to be investigated. In physics such a connection concerns primarily the role of time and space.

For the abstract intelligibility of time and space, concrete descriptions are essential. The subject builds up such descriptions in three subsequent levels: (1) elementary experiences; (2) concrete definitions organized into frames of reference; (3) transformations between such frames. The peculiarity of Lonergan's relational approach to time and space is quite evident since the first level concerning what he calls the 'experiential conjugates':

There exist certain elementary and familiar experiences of looking, moving about, grasping, etc.

The experiences themselves have a duration. They occur, not all at once, but over time. [...] Descriptively, then, duration is either an immanent aspect or quality of an experience or a correlative aspect or quality of what is experienced.

While duration is commonly attributed both to the experience and to the experienced, extension is attributed only to the latter. [...] Descriptively, then, extensions are correlative to certain elementary and familiar experiences, but they are in the experienced and not in the experiencing. (*Insight*, p. 166)

At the second level such conjugates are patched together to form ‘ordered totalities’ of concrete durations and extensions. Lonergan denotes these totalities with capital letters: ‘Time’ and ‘Space’, and requires a criterion to distinguish them from the ‘imaginary’ time and space:

Within concrete Space there is some extension that is correlative to experience; all other extension in Space is related to that concrete extension; and in virtue of that relation all other extension in Space is concrete. Similarly, a notion of concrete Time is constructed about a nucleus of experienced duration. On the other hand, merely imaginary space or time contains no part that is correlative to actual experience. (*Insight*, p. 167)

Ordered totalities require the notion of frame of reference (FR). Lonergan’s interpretation of such notion is quite coherent with his relational approach:

Frames of reference are structures of relations employed to order totalities of extensions and/or durations. They fall into three main classes: the personal, the public, and the special. (*Insight*, p. 167)

Special reference frames may be mathematical or physical. They are mathematical if they order an imaginary space and time. They are physical if they order concrete Space and Time. (*Insight*, p. 168)

Both notions of concrete Time and Space and imaginary time and space play a role in Lonergan’s approach to the foundation of science. Indeed, concrete Time and Space concern the foundation of physics, while imaginary time and space concern the foundation of geometry.

The abstract intelligibility of physics as well as that of geometry starts from the third level, specifically from the transformations between special FR. Within a special FR, time and space are described by means of *coordinates*, that is, by real numbers which are: (1) results of measurements, in physical FR; (2) purely mathematical determinations, in mathematical FR.

The notion of measurement is fundamental for the passage from concrete descriptions to the abstract intelligibility. Lonergan carries out a detailed analysis of that notion – in section 4 – to resolve the paradoxical aspects of the Lorentz transformations of the

theory of relativity. Nevertheless, the notion of measurement is necessary to understand the most general role of transformations in physics as well as in geometry.

Empirical inquiry has been conceived as a process from description to explanation. [...]

Now the principal technique in effecting the transition from description to explanation is measurement. We move away from colors as seen, from sounds as heard, from heat and pressure as felt. In their place we determine the numbers named measurements. In virtue of this substitution we are able to turn from the relations of sensible terms, which are correlative to our senses, to the relations of numbers, which are correlative to one another. Such is the fundamental significance and function of measurement. (*Insight*, pp. 188-189)

Coordinates defined in a FR are a formal element within a concrete description. Indeed, any description of physical phenomena, such as of geometrical properties of (imaginary) space can be converted to equations relating the coordinates. Such equations are nothing but expressions that *formally* describe phenomena or geometrical properties in a given FR. But a completely formal level is not attained readily. Indeed, there are infinitely many FR, and thus infinitely many of such formal descriptions.

Nevertheless, transformations between FR provide the passage to the unique higher-order formal level of propositions on time and space, in physics as well as in geometry. A transformation between two physical FR is the system of equations which relates the different Time and Space coordinates attributed to the events. Similarly, a transformation between two mathematical FR is the system of equations which relate the different coordinates attributed to the points (of an imaginary space). Any statement expressed as an equation relating the coordinates in a FR can thus be transformed in a statement relating the coordinates in another FR, by means of the equations of the transformation. Hence *invariant expressions* can be differentiated by all other non-invariant expressions. An invariant expression maintains the same form – its *symbolic* or mathematical form – under any transformation. Thus, among all the expressions formulated within a FR, the former stands for the *abstract propositions* on Time and Space in physics, and on the properties of space in geometry.

For distinct reference frames assign different specifications to the same points and instants, and they assign the same specifications (numbers) to different points and instants. Accordingly, they must belong to different universes of logical discourse, else endless ambiguities would result. Now the relations between different universes of discourse can be stated only in a further, higher-order universe of discourse; in other words, the relations between different universes of discourse regard, not the things specified in those universes, but the specifications employed to denote the things.

Thus, a transformation equation does not relate points or instants, but it relate different ways of specifying the same points and instants. Similarly, such a property as invariance is a property, not of a geometrical entity, but of an expression regarding geometrical or other entities. (*Insight*, p. 171)

Loneragan's program to pursue the abstract intelligibility of Time and Space – both in physics as in geometry – reaches its goal with *the theorem* formulated at the beginning of section 3.1.

On the grounds of abstract propositions he first indicates the way for the differentiation of the various possible *geometries*. According to Klein's Erlangen program, many different *groups* of transformations are possible. Since the space of geometry is purely imaginary, the differentiation<sup>6</sup> of the various possible geometries relies on the purely mathematical notion of a *group of transformations*. Such a differentiation starts with the Euclidean geometry, and culminates with the various kinds of Riemannian – and non-Riemannian – structures on a general manifold.

Finally, such organisation of geometry as a formal science founded on the recognition of the invariants under groups of transformations, leads to the abstract intelligibility of Time and Space of physics.

The abstract formulation, then, of the intelligibility immanent in Space and in Time is, generically, a set of invariants under transformations of reference frames, and specifically, the set verified by physicists in establishing the invariant formulation of their principles and laws.

A corollary may be added. The intelligibility immanent in Space and in Time is identical with the intelligibility reached by physicists investigating objects as involved in spatial and temporal relations. Hence, to eliminate the concrete objects of physics would be to eliminate the intelligibility of Space and Time. Again, inasmuch as physical objects are involved differently in spatial and temporal relations, there result different intelligibilities of Space and Time. This conclusion may be illustrated by the possibility of different type of tensors being employed to secure the covariance of different sets of physical principles and laws. (*Insight*, p. 174)

To conclude this review, two important features of Lonergan's interpretation of Time and Space as foundational structures for physics must be pointed out. First, the last quotation clearly shows the achievement of Lonergan's relational interpretation. Indeed, such interpretation characterizes the concrete descriptions as well as the abstract intelligibility of Time and Space, and thus it is the foundation of the whole of knowledge attainable in physics. Second, since the recognition of the invariants is obtained by empirical investigations, no ultimate form can be asserted. Hence, physical knowledge cannot be restrained by any *a priori* structure.

<sup>6</sup> *Differentiation* is a scholastic term whose Klein's equivalent in his Erlangen program is *classification*.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

At last we give a brief account of Lonergan's criticism to Kant and Newton, and some other remarks about his relational interpretation of time and space.

Lonergan's criticism to the ontological approach of Newton consists of a list of arguments collected in section 3 (of chapter 5 of *Insight*). Such arguments depend on two main critical issues: (1) absolute time and space are not detectable; (2) the structure of time and space is improperly identified as that of a special FR. The first issue agrees with that of Berkeley, which was renewed by Mach and Einstein. On the contrary, the second issue is peculiar to Lonergan's theory of knowledge. Indeed, Lonergan notes that in Newton's approach the "true" structure of time and space is identified with that of a fixed FR, the *absolute FR*. According to Lonergan, such identification must be rejected, since the abstract intelligibility of time and space can only be reached through the recognition of the invariants with respect to FR transformations. This refutation can be extended, as Lonergan notes, to other interpretations – even relational – in which the "true" time and/or space are identified by means of a special FR. To illustrate his argument, Lonergan refers to the concept of time as was identified by Thomas Aquinas with the measure of the rotation of the last sphere of Aristotle's universe. We remark that another compelling example of such improper identification is the cosmic time in the fundamental FR of the Friedmann-Lemaître-Robertson-Walker standard model of relativistic cosmology.

Lonergan's argumentation against Kant's theory is embodied in the affirmation that time and space are nothing but a re-interpretation of Newton's absolute structures as *a priori* forms of the experience. However, some further remarks on this refutation are to be made. Indeed, for Lonergan time and space primarily consist in the experiential conjugates of duration and extension, then concrete descriptions of such conjugates are organised into FR, and finally, the abstract intelligibility of time and space is founded on the (experimental) recognition of the invariants under FR transformations. Such a (subject-based) relational interpretation must be compared to Kant's approach, which can be classified as subject-based, too. Since an *a priori* structure directly organising the experiential conjugates is necessarily independent from any further reference to the experience, then for Lonergan such a structure must be rejected. Indeed, the *a priori* of Kant obstructs the way to the abstraction at the more subtle level of the invariance under FR transformations.

Finally we remark that an approach to time and space which seems in agreement with Lonergan's one, is that of Piaget. But even if Piaget's approach is subject-based relational, it only accounts for the *cognitive side* of human activity. Piaget's theory is lacking on the *gnoseologic side*. Indeed, for Piaget the abstraction processes takes place in human activity and merely consist in "steps" in the development of the



cognitive apparatus, rather than in the realisation of deeper levels of comprehension of reality.

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# FREE WILL ACCORDING TO B. LONERGAN AND B. LIBET

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## 1. Lonergan and Free Will

In the present cultural context, theology is increasingly called to the dialogue with philosophy and science. If theology especially expresses something which is unique and subjective, and science investigates what is repeatable and objective, both of them, together with philosophy, may have to do with the world of the subject. The data of natural sciences themselves do not only represent an isolated set of information, but, on one hand, many of them are confronted with the data of human sciences, while, on the other hand, these two sets of data drive towards metaphysical interpretations, and even theological ones. At present, the theme of will is tackled in various fields of knowledge. It is studied both in the field of philosophy and in that of theology. It is part of all anthropological perspectives because it is tightly bound to freedom and ethics. It is also included in the neuroscience studies that today have much progressed in the experimental investigations.

Within the philosophical and theological field, Bernard Lonergan discusses will extensively in chapter 18 of *Insight*,<sup>1</sup> where he treats of the possibility of ethics. Lonergan considers, first, the will as a capacity (*will*), that is, in metaphysical terms, as a potency; then, as a habitual inclination or disposition (*willingness*), that is as a form; and finally, as a dynamic event (*willing*), that is as an act, which alone is revealed directly, and implies a deliberation, a choice, and a decision. When a person “decides”, s/he can perform free acts (*willing*) realizing him/herself. This is performed through the willing disposition (*willingness*), that makes habitual the capacity of willing (*will*): without willing disposition, one is not able to perform the right action instantly and without thinking about it. This notion of will is also

<sup>1</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 3, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992<sup>5</sup>, pp. 618-656 (first edition 1957).

fundamental for the «inventiveness of practical intelligence» that «can issue in practical results only if there exist the conjugate potency, form, and act of will, willingness, and willing, with the function of singling out some possibilities from the manifold and by that decision and choice initiating and grounding the transition from intellectual conception of a possible order to its concrete realization.»<sup>2</sup> For Lonergan, the act of willing is free, not in the sense that it is unguided or indeterminate, but in the sense that the reasons, given by a cognitive process that drives the choices, do not settle the choices themselves,<sup>3</sup> that is in the sense not of *libertas indifferentiae*, but of *libertas exercitii*.

## 2. Libet's Experiments on the Willing Process

In the neuroscience field, Benjamin Libet and colleagues have studied some fundamental aspects of the willing process related to the execution of a simple motor action, the flexion of a finger, in order to determine the temporal characteristics of the neural process correlated to the occurrence of the willing process itself.<sup>4</sup> Thus, they made experiments to determine, in such simple motor action, when the consciousness of the will to act arises in the subject of an experiment. Each subject, in accordance with the instructions received and freely accepted, at a moment *ad libitum*, when s/he spontaneously wants, a little bit before performing the simple motor action agreed upon, feels the conscious intention to perform that action. Through an adequate experimental technique, it is possible to detect, by means of a particular clock, the instant at which the subject begins to be consciously willing to perform the motor action: the subject associates the time of his/her intention to act with the position of a light spot revolving at constant speed on a large screen. Right after, within half a second, the subject executes the wanted motor action.

Every subject that was part of an experiment was before informed about the experimental protocol (that s/he had to manage in first person), and, after having accepted it, s/he began the test with the intention of adhering to experimentator's request. From the subject's point of view, in first person, the experimental protocol consists of:

<sup>2</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 621.

<sup>3</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, E.A. Morelli and M.D. Morelli, eds., CWL 5, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990, pp. 226-228 (lectures 1958; first edition 1980).

<sup>4</sup> See B. Libet, E.W. Wright Jr, and C.A. Gleason, "Readness-potential preceding unrestricted 'spontaneous' vs preplanned voluntary acts", *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology* 56 (1982) 367-372; B. Libet, E.W. Wright Jr, B. Feinstein, and D.K. Pearl, "Subjective referral of the timing for a conscious sensory experience. A functional role for the somatosensory specific projection system in man", *Brain* 102 (1979) 193-224; B. Libet, C.A. Gleason, E.W. Wright Jr, and D.K. Pearl, "Time of conscious intention to act in relation to onset of cerebral activities (Readiness-potential). The unconscious initiation of a freely voluntary act", *Brain* 106 (1983) 623-642.

- a) at a time *ad libitum*, when s/he wants, the subject can execute a motor action that consists in a simple flexion of a hand finger (or of a wrist);
- b) s/he pays attention to the time at which s/he feels the conscious intention to act;
- c) simultaneously s/he must associate the time of his/her intention to act to the position of a light spot revolving on a screen in an circular orbit at constant speed;
- d) after the execution of the motor action, s/he must report the position of the light spot.

In some tests, before the execution of the motion action, when the subject was already aware of the his/her intention to execute it, s/he could also operate a veto, blocking the execution of the future voluntary motor action. In this case, the subject had to associate the time of the veto to the position of the light spot, and then s/he had to report that position.

From the objective point of view, in third person, the process of performing the motor action consists of:

- a) a time period of about 500 ms of preparation to act, that corresponds to the start and growth of a compound cerebral potential, named “readiness potential”, that is electroencephalographically recorded, and decays immediately after the beginning of the action; the subject is never conscious of this potential;<sup>5</sup>

- b) the time of the conscious intention of the subject to perform the motor action, that is identified through the subject’s report, given after the test, about the position of the revolving light spot, simultaneous to the time of the subject’s conscious intention to act (about 300 ms *after* the start of the readiness potential);

- c) the time of the veto, reported by the subject in some tests, that is identified through the subject’s report, given after the test, about the position of the revolving light spot, simultaneous to the time of the subject’s veto (about 400 ms after the start of the readiness potential). In this case, the readiness potential decays soon after the veto;

- d) the execution of the motor action by the subject, that corresponds to the subject’s flexion of a hand finger or a wrist, that is electromiographically recorded.

In brief, in every test, during the willing process that ends in the subject’s muscular action, there is an initial part of the preparatory process of the movement performance which is unconscious for the subject and begins about 300 ms *before* of the surge of the subject’s conscious intention to act. After the beginning of the subject’s intention to act, it starts the conscious part of the preparatory process of

<sup>5</sup> The electroencephalographic technique used by Libet has a high power of temporal resolution, but a low power of spatial resolution. If we repeat today the experiments with brain imaging techniques we can reach more precise neuroanatomic correlations: see P. Haggard, and B. Libet, “Conscious intention and brain activity”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8/11 (2001) 47-63, in particular 62.

the movement. In this phase, the subject, before the execution of the motor action, can still operate a veto (Fig. 1).

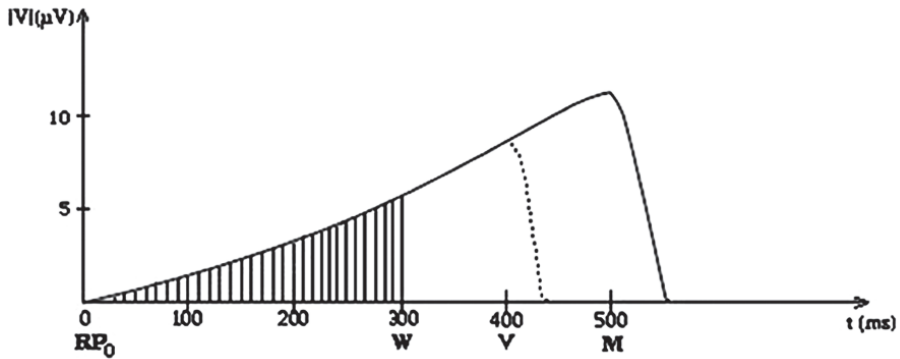


Figure 1. Qualitative graphic describing the average trend of the value ( $|V|$ ) of the cerebral compound potential named readiness potential (RP), measured in microvolts ( $\mu\text{V}$ ), as a function of the time ( $t$ ), measured in milliseconds (ms), recorded during the development of the willing process, and valued from the time 0 to the time just after the performance of the willed flexion.  $\text{RP}_0$  indicates the time at which it is possible to begin to record RP with a value different from zero. W (at about 300 ms *after*  $\text{RP}_0$ ) indicates the time at which the conscious intention to act, as reported by a subject, arises. M (at about 500 ms *after*  $\text{RP}_0$ ) indicates the time at which the motor action begins to be performed. Just after M, RP decays. V (at about 400 ms *after*  $\text{RP}_0$ ) indicates the time at which a subject, in some experimental tests, inhibits the previous conscious intention to act by a “veto” applied before the actual motor action performance, blocking it. The early decay of RP just after V (indicated by a series of dots) is the trend of the terminal part of RP in the case of the veto. The initial dashed part of the graph (in the range of about 0-300 ms) indicates the unconscious component of the willing process, while the following part (in the range of about 300-500 ms) indicates the conscious component of the willing process.

### 2.1. Discussion on Libet's Experiments

A brain activity, correlated to the preparation of a motor action, may be recorded a little before the motor performance by a subject. What resulted astounding is the fact that the brain activity, correlated to the preparation of the motor action, already began still *before* the subject's conscious intention of performing the motor action arose. This means that a voluntary movement, *already preset* by the central nervous system in a not conscious way, becomes object of conscious intention only at a certain moment of its preparation, before its execution.

The debate raised by Libet's experiments is significant. Several critics were made on the working hypothesis, the experimental results, and the interpretation of the

Libet's experiments. Many commentators are convinced that the consciousness of willing to perform a movement is only a mind trick, due to the fact that the preparation of the voluntary motor action *already began* at brain level, without any awareness of the subject.

Wegner,<sup>6</sup> starting from the results of Libet's experiments, in particular those on the part of RP before the conscious intention to act, claims that it is the brain that (through its neural processes recorded as RP) is the cause of both the motor action and the feeling of the conscious intention to act, making the subject believe to be, through his/her will, the cause of the action. Wegner proposes that the subject's feeling of the intention to act is only an illusion: according to a theory of apparent mental causation, such feeling arises before the action performance only as the result of the sending – to the brain areas the activity of which is correlated to the production of conscious thoughts – of a copy of the action program implemented by other brain areas outside of the conscious domain; the copy arrives and produces the conscious feeling before the execution of the motor action.

However, Wegner does not take into account the veto in his consideration of the Libet's experiment results, although the veto is an experimental datum of notable importance: the subject can, after beginning the conscious part of the willing process that ends in the motor action, block the process conclusion, in a way that, soon after the veto, the RP value falls to zero. Yet, on the basis of the theory of apparent mental causation, one should also expect that in the case of vetoed willing (with feeling of a negative command), as in the case of undisturbed willing (with feeling of a positive command), there arises a part of a brain potential linked to an unconscious preparation of the blocking veto; however, brain potentials associated to the veto conscious event have not been recorded up to now. Thus, the hypothesis that claims that the conscious will experience can be only a brain trick remains to be proved.

Fried and collaborators made some experiments, by stimulating the motor cerebral cortex of subjects, from which there resulted that the conscious experience of the intention to act can be felt before the effective execution of the muscular movement. This result provides the evidence of the fact that the conscious intent to act is not an illusion due to the copy of the unconscious causation program to act.<sup>7</sup>

Haggard uses the method of Libet in order to investigate the time at which the subjects thought they made a finger movement, or the time at which they perceived

<sup>6</sup> See D.M. Wegner, "Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will", *American Psychologist* 54/7 (1999) 480-492; Id., *The Illusion of Conscious Will*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 2002, in particular pp. 64-70; Id., "The mind's best trick: How we experience conscious will", *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7/2 (2003) 65-69.

<sup>7</sup> See I. Fried, A. Katz, G. McCarthy, K.J. Sass, P. Williamson, S.S. Spencer, and D.D. Spencer, "Functional organization of human supplementary motor cortex studied by electrical stimulation", *Journal of Neuroscience* 11 (1991) 3656-3666.

the onset of an auditory tone that followed 250 ms after their finger movement; he coined the term “intentional binding” to refer to this effect.<sup>8</sup>

Pockett is of the opinion that the subjects of Libet’s experiments, by interpreting the received instructions for the experiment, produced a pre-conscious brain activity; in other words, after the received instructions, the subjects wait for a random neural event to initiate each action, and *W* might be the time at which the subjects became aware of this random neural event.<sup>9</sup>

Also according to Zhu the subjects of Libet’s experiments, just after having received the instructions at the beginning of each experiment, formed a prior conscious intention to perform specific actions.<sup>10</sup>

The hypothesis of a pre-conscious state, that arises before the experimental tests, remains to be proved by other experiments to be performed in the phase before the first experiments, but the process can be iterated with a new pre-conscious phase before the new experiments, and even if this preceding conscious state exists, its influence on the intention and attention of the following experimental tests cannot be measured.

However, Libet denied this interpretation on the basis of the experiments in which the event of the veto was also introduced: «I propose that the conscious veto may not require, or be the direct result of, preceding unconscious processes. The conscious veto is a control function, different from simply becoming *aware* of the wish to act. There is no logical imperative in any mind-brain theory, even in identity theory, that requires specific neural activity to precede and determine the nature of a conscious control function. And there is no experimental evidence against the possibility that the control process may appear without specific development by prior unconscious processes.»<sup>11</sup> In other words, even if the neural activity correlated to the unconscious preparation of the motor action already began, no one can prove in advance that the voluntary motor action itself will really happen: in fact, the subject is able to either intentionally consent to, or inhibit, an already begun neural process that should end in the motor action.

In other experiments similar to those of Libet, Pockett and Miller investigated some factors which resulted fundamental for the precision of the experiments, such as the size of the clock screen on which the light spot revolves, the speed at

<sup>8</sup> See P. Haggard, “Conscious intention and motor cognition”, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 9/6 (2005) 289-295; P. Haggard, and H. Johnson, “Experience of voluntary action”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 10/9-10 (2003) 72-84; J. Moore, and P. Haggard, “Awareness of action: Inference and prediction”, *Consciousness and Cognition* 17 (2008) 136-144.

<sup>9</sup> See S. Pockett, “On subjective back-referral and how long it takes to become conscious of a stimulus: A reinterpretation of Libet’s data”, *Consciousness and Cognition* 11/2 (2002) 144-161; Ead., “Does consciousness cause behaviour?”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 11/2 (2004) 23-40.

<sup>10</sup> See J. Zhu, “Reclaiming volition: An alternative interpretation of Libet’s experiment”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 10/11 (2003) 61-77.

<sup>11</sup> B. Libet, *Mind Time. The temporal Factor in Consciousness*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 2004, p. 146.

which the spot revolves, and other factors for a total of seven, and proposed some indications to be considered for future experiments on the willing process.<sup>12</sup>

One may also mention other experiments which, through a different experimental setting and protocol, pointed out the top-down role of will in counterbalancing the effect of subliminal stimulation on the rate of continuous spontaneous alternance between two interpretations of an ambiguous visual pattern.<sup>13</sup>

The anatomical basis to top-down, hierarchically organized cognitive control of motor action has been experimentally demonstrated by Koechlin and collaborators:<sup>14</sup> at a first level (sensory control) stored motor programs are activated in response to innate or learned perceptual stimuli; at a second level (contextual control) the sensory information about the context in which the stimulus occurs has a top-down influence on the sensory control level; at a third level (episodic control) a top-down influence on the contextual control level is exerted according to the information of the current circumstances, the memory of past events, and the goals.

### 3. Conclusion

The whole of Libet's results suggests some key features of the willing process relative to the simple motor action that he studied, but his results have to be considered with caution when comparing them to more complex acts. However, the conclusions obtained from Libet's experiments on will are data to be considered also in a theory of the will that, as Lonergan did, explores more wide horizons. In such a way, one realizes cooperation among various fields of knowledge, which may be fruitfully confronted on the same interdisciplinary problem. In fact, Libet's conclusions on the willing process offer interesting hints for the fields of philosophy and theology, especially in connection with the relationship between will and freedom in ethics. According to Lonergan's perspective, the subjects of the Libet's experiments *exercise their will* when they *deliberate* to be subjects of such experiments and, after they *choose* to accept the experimenter's request, they *decide* to perform the requested motor action, during the experimental session, at an instant *wanted* by themselves.

<sup>12</sup> See S. Pockett, and A. Miller, "The rotating spot method of timing subjective events", *Consciousness and Cognition* 16 (2007) 241-254, particularly, 253.

<sup>13</sup> See C. Taddei-Ferretti, C. Musio, S. Santillo, and A. Cotugno, "Conscious and intentional access to unconscious decision-making module in ambiguous visual perception", in J. Mira and J.V. Sánchez-Andrés, eds., *Foundations and Tools for Neural Modeling*, Springer, Berlin 1999, pp. 765-775; C. Taddei-Ferretti, C. Musio, S. Santillo, and A. Cotugno, "Will: A vague idea or a testable event?", in K. Yasue, M. Jibu and T. Della Senta, eds., *No Matter, Never Mind*, Advances in Consciousness Research 33, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia 2002, pp. 155-165; C. Taddei-Ferretti, J. Radilova, C. Musio, S. Santillo, E. Cibelli, A. Cotugno, and T. Radil, "The effects of pattern shape, subliminal stimulation, and voluntary control on multistable visual perception", *Brain Research* 1225 (2008) 163-170.

<sup>14</sup> Cf E. Koechlin, C. Ody, and F. Kouneiher, "The architecture of cognitive control in the human prefrontal cortex", *Science* 302/5648 (2003) 1181-1185.



A conclusion derived from the study of both Lonergan and Libet is the relevance of the data. The scientific research begins from the incontestability of the data correctly collected. In the case of Libet's experiments, two sets of data are relevant: first, the preparation of even a simple voluntary movement is initiated in a not voluntary, not conscious way by the neural processing; second, this fact does not mean a deterministic framework in which the freedom of will is to be considered a pure illusion, because the subject is able of vetoing the neurally already driven process. The data have to be taken into account also by philosophical and theological reflections, which move forward to more wide conclusions than those offered by experimental sciences.

The experimental researches of Libet are an example of intersection between scientific and philosophical fields, while the studies of Lonergan are an example of intersection between philosophical and theological fields. Both authors bring in the spotlight the subject experience, according to the focus on the subject, which has characterized the last century thought. Libet, indeed, as working hypothesis deems as essential the personal report of the subject of the experiment, becoming a pioneer of the scientific research performed in the third person perspective, by investigating the phenomenal consciousness, directly accessible only in the first person perspective. Lonergan puts the investigating subject experience as the starting point of the knowledge process, that he deeply analyses and critically discusses in *Insight*, and takes as a methodological basic framework in *Method in Theology*.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, Lonergan, in *Grace and Freedom*,<sup>16</sup> reflects also on the supernatural field of grace, which can intervene on the natural field of will, without destroying it: grace perfects nature, in the sense that it adds a perfection over that of nature and confers to nature the real freedom to reach its perfection. This operation may be interpreted as a sublation. "To sublimate" does not only mean "to remove" or "to keep", but also "to raise": the grace is capable of raising the will, in the sense of driving it to new goals, to leading it to a much richer fruition, to completing it without decreasing it, but keeping its characteristics and properties. Lonergan affirms in *Method*: «Because intellectual, moral, and religious conversion all have to do with self-transcendence, it is possible, when all three occur within a single consciousness, to conceive their relations in terms of sublation. [...] what sublimes [...] puts everything on a new basis [...] So moral conversion [...] sets [the subject] on a new, existential level of consciousness and establishes him as an originating value. [...] religious conversion transforms the existential subject into a subject in

<sup>15</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1990<sup>5</sup> (first edition 1972).

<sup>16</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom. Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds., CWL 1, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2000 (first publication as papers 1941-1942; first book edition 1971).

love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so other-wordly love. [...] there now accrues to man the power of love to enable him to accept the suffering involved in undoing the effects of decline. [...] religious conversion sublates moral, and moral conversion sublates intellectual.»<sup>17</sup>

This may throw further light also on the significance of Libet's results dealing with both unconscious neural beginning and conscious consent or veto of the process ending in a motor action. Anyhow, the conclusions obtained from Libet's experiments on will – which deal with the temporal analysis of few hundreds of milliseconds – are one of the data to be also considered in a theory of the will that, as Lonergan did, explores more wide horizons, realizing a cooperation among various fields of knowledge which may be fruitfully confronted on the same interdisciplinary problem.

<sup>17</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, pp. 241-242.



## CONSCIOUS INTENTIONALITY AS FOUNDATION FOR A TRANSDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE

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My topic emerged in a Bernard Lonergan reading group that I have been conducting in the Universidad Católica del Maule in Chile since 2005. The group meets weekly to explore how Lonergan's study of conscious intentionality may orient collaboration among different fields of knowledge. Actual and past participants in the group represent disciplinary areas that include: information engineering, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, economics, education, philosophy and theology. My hypothesis is that Lonergan's study of the dynamic structure of cognitional activity offers foundations for a transdisciplinary science and an integral education to promote an understanding of diverse forms of cultural, scientific and religious knowledge. This also has practical implications for our university's educational project which seeks the integration of knowledge by discerning in dialogue to promote an integral human development that responds to the challenges of our times.

Reading Lonergan in collegial dialogue led to questions on how conscious intentionality is related to the following fields: phenomenological research and hermeneutics; educational proposals for the sustainable development of our habitat; systemic models for organizational learning; the foundations of a critical social science; a paradigm for responsible economic development. From the point of view of the prevailing disciplinary organization of academic knowledge, this diversity of topics may appear chaotic. However, those familiar with Lonergan will understand how the above issues have their common origin in conscious human intentionality. Drawing on discussions in the reading group, the paper will explore how Lonergan's generalized empirical method provides foundations for the development of three interrelated areas: (1) a transdisciplinary science that is critical and ethical; (2) a semantic model based upon this science to orient the integration of consciousness, communication and knowledge in learning; (3) an application of the model to organizational learning in relation to responsible economic development.

## 1. Transdisciplinarity and the Unity of Knowledge in Piaget and Lonergan

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984) were contemporaries who studied the dynamic structure of cognitive activity in the development of knowledge. Both were epistemologists who did empirical research and used systems theory to understand how cognitive activity constitutes and unifies fields of knowledge. Both contributed to our understanding of the relationships among intelligence, reasoning and moral decision. Piaget defined his approach as a genetic epistemology from which he began to study how cognitive activity develops in children. Lonergan defined his approach as a generalized empirical method that studies the dynamic structure of cognitional activity which underlies developments in all forms of knowing. The similarities and differences between the two thinkers can be explored employing the analogy of cutting with scissors, which Lonergan used to explain how knowledge emerges and descends. Knowledge emerges from the movement of the lower blade that analyzes data and knowledge descends from the movement of the upper blade which synthesizes intelligent systems.

Employing this analogy one can interpret Piaget as a biologist who first concentrated his attention upon the lower blade of empirical research, which he applied to study the development of intelligent behaviour in children. After he verified his epistemology of intelligence he then used this as the upper blade from which he sought to explain the relation among different fields of knowledge. From this perspective, Piaget proposed a transdisciplinarity approach that moves between, across and beyond the limits of different disciplines in order to promote learning that seeks a more integral understanding of the levels of reality involved in complex problems.<sup>1</sup>

Lonergan began with the upper blade of a unified view of knowledge, which oriented the movements of the lower blade of his scissors in relation to the specific historical problems he responded to in philosophy, education, theology and economics. Lonergan differs from Piaget in that his object of study is more proximate than the intelligent activity of children which Piaget observed. The object of Lonergan's study is the data of cognitive activity that is immediately present in all subjects in all forms of knowing: including common sense, practical technological activity, economic enterprise, aesthetic expression, religious revelation, scientific theory, political rights and philosophic reasoning.

Piaget's initial research describes how sensory-motor-cognitive operations evolve to consolidate articulated groups of structured and intelligible abilities that facilitate how children adapt to their environments. His investigations distinguish four stages of psychological development. In the first sensory-motor abilities

<sup>1</sup> B. Nicolescu (2007). *Transdisciplinarity as Methodological Framework for Going Beyond the Science-Religion Debate*, Metanexus Institute, Consulted May 20, 2008.  
<http://www.metanexus.net/magazine/tabid/68/id/10013/Default.aspx>.

predominate, the characteristics of the second preoperational stage are intuitive, while the third defines the capacity to realize concrete logical operations and the final one includes abilities to carry out formal and abstract operations. In the early phase of his empirical research, Piaget analyzed in children the formation of symbols, the genesis of language, logic and the notion of time, as well as the conception of numbers, representations of the world and the relationships among intelligence, affectivity, reasoning and moral judgment.

Piaget's empirical research verified that knowledge is the result of biological-psychological processes which regulate how humans adapt to their environment. In this view, although biological and cognitive processes are structurally different systems, these are articulated within a common orientation to how humans intelligibly adapt to their environments. Using this epistemological premise, in the later phase of his research Piaget sought to organize different fields of knowledge on the basis of the structure of human cognitional activity. From this perspective he explored patterns of explanation in the history of scientific method, the logic of meaning and the place that the human sciences occupy within the sciences. He also proposed a classification system based upon an operational theory of intelligence that articulates how different forms of knowledge emerge and interrelate.

What is particularly interesting in relation to Piaget's proposal for a transdisciplinary science is his view on meaning and the relation between the subject and the object in the process of knowing. Meanings results from how the cognitive operations of subjects assimilate objects, the properties of which are not just observable, because they also involve an interpretation of data. In the evolution of sensory-motor-cognitive operations, the meaning of an object is first of all "what can be done" with the object and later on it is also "what can be said of objects" when they are described, classified and explained.<sup>2</sup>

In his *Insight: A study of human understanding*,<sup>3</sup> one of the most important epistemological investigations of the twentieth century, Lonergan responds to three questions on the relation between consciousness and knowledge. He answers the question "what am I doing when I am knowing" with a theory of knowledge that is based upon an empirical description of cognitional activity. He responds to the question "why is doing that knowing" by outlining a heuristic epistemology that explains all forms of knowing as based upon the desire to know which questions in order to find answers. He responds to the question, "what do I know when I do that" by outlining a critical metaphysics of proportionate being.<sup>4</sup> Together these responses constitute a science of the subject, a science of objectification, and a science of the

<sup>2</sup> J. Piaget and R. Garcia, *Toward a Logic of Meanings*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ 1991, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1992.

<sup>4</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Herder and Herder, New York 1972, p. 25.

object.<sup>5</sup> We argue that they also define the basis for a transdisciplinary science that studies the conscious communication of knowledge.

Although Lonergan did not use the notion of transdisciplinarity, he in effect affirmed its possibility through his generalized empirical method that studies the data of cognitive activity as a dynamic unity that constitutes all forms of empirical, intelligible, rational, responsible and even religious knowledge. He explored its implications in his assertion that to the degree the sciences recognize their origin in cognitive activity; they will discover common norms and a secure basis on which to develop “a higher unity of vocabulary, thought and orientation” from which to make significant contributions towards the resolution of interdisciplinary problems.<sup>6</sup>

At the heart of Lonergan’s study of human understanding is the desire to know. This desire is heuristic in the measure that we raise questions and seek answers in relation to the objects or subjects we desire to know. This heuristic orientation leads to moments of understanding when we exclaim “ah-ha, now I understand!” This linguistic, cognitive and emotional expression of discovery synthesizes Lonergan’s notion of insight as the initial result of the desire to know. This desire awakens curiosity, which questions, formulates hypotheses and expresses intelligibly what is understood, and then confronts doubts in order to verify judgments of fact, of probability and of value which provide criteria to orient responsible subjects in the enterprise through which they know, decide and act.

On the basis of these concrete and reoccurring operations, Lonergan distinguishes four levels of conscious intentionality that are respectively sensible, intelligible, rational and responsible, that are necessary for the communication of all forms of knowledge. Through their cognitive operations human subjects observe, question, imagine, understand, conceive, doubt, verify, judge, deliberate and decide. At the same time, through their linguistic expressions they describe, interpret, explain, affirm, propose and thereby reveal what they know. Their knowledge is potential in empirical data, formal in intelligible ideas, actual in the affirmation of what is real, effective in decisions to do what is good, religious through faith in the revelation of divine love and integral to the degree that human subjects transcend authentically in relation to what or whom they know. Lonergan describes conscious intentionality as our potential to know being and affirms that this potential is realized through the love of truth, of God and of others.

For Lonergan, the dynamic structure of cognitional operations constitutes a generalized empirical or transcendental method. The method is empirical because it is founded upon the group of cognitive operations through which we observe and raise questions for intelligence, for critical reflection and for responsible

<sup>5</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight*, note f [16], p. 779.

<sup>6</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 23.

deliberation in all fields of knowledge. The method is generalized because the data necessary for the development of knowledge are not limited to the evidence of our five senses but also integrate the more inclusive data of our conscious intentionality through which we observe and raise questions, come to understand, judge, decide and love. The method is transcendental because our desire to know and the operations of our conscious intentionality constitute our capacity to transcend in relation to the objects or subjects we desire to know.

In the experience of understanding Lonergan identifies an isomorphic correspondence between the structures of cognitional activity, of what is known and of expression.<sup>7</sup> An isomorphic relation represents a structural correspondence, not an identity, between the properties and operations of different objects. An isomorphism assumes that a network of terms and relations in one domain is similar to and related to the network of terms and relations of another domain. This principle explains the relation between consciousness, communication and knowledge, in which the cognitive operations of consciousness and the corresponding linguistic expressions are isomorphic with what is known. For Lonergan these “[...] terms and relations are the substance of cognitional theory. They reveal the ground for epistemology. They are found to be isomorphic with the terms and relations denoting the ontological structure of any reality proportionate to human cognitional process.”<sup>8</sup> As we suggest, they also define the foundations for a transdisciplinary science that studies the conscious communication of knowledge.

## **2. Model of a Transdisciplinary Science Applied to Organizational Theory**

Lonergan suggests that the method of conscious intentionality can be taken as a model, not to be imitated or copied, but as a framework to facilitate dialogue and collaboration. He describes models as ideal-types that “[...] stand to the human sciences [...] much as mathematics stands to the natural sciences.” In this perspective, models are not descriptions of reality, but “[...] simply an intelligible, interlocking set of terms and relations” that facilitate communication in the formulation of hypothesis and in the description of complex realities.<sup>9</sup> We assume this notion of model to outline a semantic ecology for a transdisciplinary science that studies the heuristic design networks that come into play in the solution of specific problems.

In our proposal a semantic ecology refers to a group of notions that define an articulated and integrating system. Heuristics refers to the questions that orient learning in all systems that seek answers to problems. These questions may rise from the curiosity of children, the common sense doubts of daily living, the existential

<sup>7</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 523, 553, 576.

<sup>8</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xii, 284.



conflicts of youth, the economic, political and cultural problems of specific social contexts, the systematic inquiry of scientific disciplines and the experience of religious faith. Design refers to activities that are guided by the insights, concepts and criteria that emerge from heuristic questioning. Networks begin with the cognitive-linguistic operations that orient the conscious communication of practical, scientific and cultural forms of knowledge in all organizational contexts. Based upon these assumptions, the following model outlines the group of notions that constitute a semantic ecology of the heuristic design networks that articulate the development of all forms of knowledge.

<b>Semantic ecology of a transdisciplinary science applied to organizational theory.</b>			
The desire to know being develops heuristic design networks through which human subjects question, know, transcend and integrate.			
<b>Dimensions</b> of reality as	<b>Consciousness</b> as cognitive operations that	<b>Communication</b> as linguistic expressions that	<b>Knowledge</b> of objects or subjects as
potential	observe	describe	data (empirical)
formal	understand	interpret	idea (intelligible)
actual	judge	affirm	real (objective)
effective	decide	propose	good (ethical)
religious	believe	love	God (revealed)
<b>Organizational theory</b>	<b>Learning organization</b>	<b>Human capital</b>	<b>Knowledge management</b>

This semantic ecology articulates the empirical, intelligible, objective, ethical and even revealed dimensions of reality that are defined through the conscious communication of knowledge. In the model, the cognitive operations through which human subjects consciously observe, understand, judge, decide and believe are isomorphic with the structure of what is known as data, idea, real, good and God and which is communicated through linguistic expressions that describe, interpret, affirm, propose and love. This leads directly to our thesis that this group of cognitive-linguistic operations constitutes all forms of knowledge and defines the foundations of a transdisciplinary science. In what follows we illustrate how this science can be applied to organizational theory.

The study of organizational behaviour is a complex and multi-disciplinary enterprise that seeks to understand and orient the development of human learning in diverse institutional contexts. Our application of the proposed transdisciplinary model to organizational problems involves three steps. We begin by observing contemporary tendencies in the field of organizational theory and distinguish

three interrelated areas: organizational learning, human capital, and knowledge management.<sup>10</sup> Our second step, guided by our semantic model, assumes an isomorphic relation between these three areas of organizational theory and the corresponding dimensions of consciousness, communication and knowledge. In other words we affirm: (1) that all learning organizations are based upon the group of cognitive operations that constitute conscious human intentionality; (2) that human capital emerges in organizational contexts as competent communicative practices that result from the conscious and intentional interaction of humans with their environment; (3) that knowledge management develops strategies to orient this interaction towards the development of abilities that are necessary for the realization of institutional goals. Our third step confronts knowledge management with a problem that we conceive on the broadest possible scale as the responsible development of the economy to assure the sustainability of our habitat.

The proposal has several implications. It moves beyond tendencies in organizational theory that limit their goals to maximize the competitive advantage of particular corporate, political or national interests. It contains and goes beyond the boundaries of scientific and academic disciplines, to include practical common sense preoccupations, artistic insights and religious wisdom that shed light upon how responsible human collaboration may orient political economic policies to assure the sustainable development of our environment. It overcomes the positivistic and mechanistic study of entities as isolated parts by providing an integral approach to discover emergent patterns in human organizational systems that offer clues to orient responsible economic development. The proposal enters into the horizon of what Lonergan calls a cosmopolis that confronts the mystification and rationalization of the pragmatic interests of dominant groups through the consciousness of a higher viewpoint, “[...] a heightened grasp of historical origins, a discovery of historical responsibilities.”<sup>11</sup>

We conclude with observations on Lonergan’s appreciation of system theory. Throughout his work Lonergan focuses his attention on the methods that led to the discovery of systems in the development of mathematics, physics, the natural and human sciences and economics. However he points out that while “[g]eneral theory rejects reductionism in all its forms; [...] systems engineering involves a progressive mechanization that tends to reduce man’s role in the system to that of a robot, while systems can be employed for destructive as well as constructive ends.”<sup>12</sup> For Lonergan “the lower static systems of physics and chemistry are succeeded by the higher dynamic systems of biology, sensitive psychology, and

<sup>10</sup> BRINT Institute, *Knowledge Management*, <http://www.brint.com/OrgLrng.htm>, Consulted May 20, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 266.

<sup>12</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 248.

human intellectual activity.”<sup>13</sup> Within this horizon “man is the being in whom the highest level of integration is, not a static system, nor some dynamic system, but a variable manifold of dynamic systems. For the successive systems that express the development of human understanding are systems that regard the universe of being in all its departments.”<sup>14</sup>

In relation to organizational theory, I would interpret this to mean that our understanding of human organizations should not be limited to models of lower system such as binary codes, transmission-reception techniques or autopoietic biological self-production. While Lonergan would recognize the value of these systems in their specific domains, he would not limit or reduce our understanding of human consciousness, knowledge and communication to these levels. What he proposes is a broader, more inclusive, open and integrating system of conscious intentionality that emerges. This is the ground of self-appropriation, of self-knowledge and of self-transcendence that are the means and goals of authentic, meaningful and purposeful human living.

<sup>13</sup> B. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 719.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 532.

## CONCERT

performed by Drummond Petrie, cellist  
in memory of the interest of Bernard J. F. Lonergan in music

“Music is the image of experienced time”<sup>1</sup>

**Domenico Gabrielli** (Bologna 1659-Bologna 1690)

*Ricercare n. 1 for Violoncello Solo*

*Ricercare n. 2 for Violoncello Solo*

Cellist and composer, Domenico Gabrielli wrote twelve works for theatre in the grand Venetian style, cantatas and instrumental compositions, and was the first to compose music for *violoncello solo*, such as *ricercari* and sonatas.

**Johann Sebastian Bach** (Eisenach 1685-Leipzig 1750)

*Suite n. 1 in G Major for Violoncello Solo*

Prelude; Allemande; Courante; Sarabande; Menuet I; Menuet II; Gigue

The six *Suites for Violoncello Solo* were composed by Johann Sebastian Bach between 1717 and 1723, when Bach was *Kapellmeister* at Köten in Germany, at the court of Leopold, prince of Anhalt-Köten. During this period he also composed the first book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue for Harpsichord*, the six *Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo*, the *French Suites for Harpsichord*, and the six *Brandenburg Concertos*. At that time the violin, viola, violoncello, and double bass were newly invented instruments, constituting the violin family, and represented a new conceptual progress in the possibilities of music for strings compared to that offered by the viol family. It must be said that, despite the novelty of the violin family, no composer up till now had realized the potential of the violin family as has J. S. Bach. The framework of the *Suite n. 1 in G Major for Violoncello Solo* seems simple enough at first impact, but its daring

<sup>1</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Topics in Education. The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, R.M. Doran and F.E. Crowe, eds, CWL 10, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1993, p. 227.

polyphonic structure, in which various melodic lines and harmonies are expressed by a constant series of arpeggios as in all the other five *Suites*, is intrinsic to Bach's writing.

**Paul Hindemith** (Hanau 1895-Frankfurt am Main 1963)

*Sonata op. 25, n. 3 for Violoncello Solo*

Lebhaft, sehr markiert; Mäßig schnell, gemächlich; Langsam; Lebhaftes Viertel; Mäßig schnell

A fine violist and composer, Paul Hindemith wrote antiromantic, free and richly expressive music, using almost a Bach and pre-Bach style of counterpoint, fugue structures, and sonata forms, all being reinterpreted in modern style of melody and tonality, and in contrast with the dodecaphonic Viennese school with which he disagreed as an approach. In 1935 he was forced to leave the *Hochschule für Musik* of Berlin where he taught composition, due to difficulties with the Nazi regime which he had openly condemned. This regime had declared his music to be degenerate, and he left Germany taking refuge first in Turkey and Switzerland, and then in the United States of America, where he lived from 1939 to 1947. He wrote the *Sonata op. 25, n. 3 for Violoncello Solo* in 1923, along with other *Sonatas for solo instruments*, chamber music works among which the eight *Kammermusiken for solist and orchestra*, and concertos, lieder, symphonies, and theatrical works.

## Appendix

### LONERGAN AND MUSIC

CLOE TADDEI-FERRETTI

Music played a role in the family life of the very young Lonergan.<sup>1</sup> Lonergan himself made some autobiographical remarks, relating to music, during an interview and some conversations. In 1971 he affirmed «[...] even though you write a book like *Insight*, you may enjoy Beethoven.»<sup>2</sup> In 1981 he commented that music was one of his permanent artistic interests, while he also considered writing an art; music made the writing of *Insight* possible: listening to Beethoven gave him «a lift» to make his own «show»; he also mentioned the music records he could listen to at Kingston, and the piano music (e.g., a take-off from Beethoven) his mother played.<sup>3</sup> In 1982 he acknowledged the fact that a woman, while reading one of his works, put her hands in the position for playing the last of Beethoven's Sonatas, so as to fit the pattern in Lonergan's words with the pattern in music; he added that the last time he saw his mother (in 1933, before he went to Rome, while he came back to Canada only after his mother's death), he asked her to play piano, but she was no more able to, due to finger disease.<sup>4</sup>

Lonergan treated art from a philosophical point of view in several of his works, some of which points will be recalled here. He wrote that, apart from poetry<sup>5</sup> and dance,<sup>6</sup> art is concerned with space in the picture, the statue, the work of architecture,<sup>7</sup> while it is concerned with time in the music: «The basic time that is the 'now' of a being [that changes] has a nonspatial objectification in music. Music is the image of experienced time. It is not a movement in any spatial sense [... but]

<sup>1</sup> See F.E. Crowe, *Lonergan*, Geoffrey Chapman, London 1992, chapter 1, § 1.

<sup>2</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S. J." (of 1971), Ph. McShane, ed., in *A Second Collection*, W.F.J. Ryan and B.J. Tyrrell, eds, Darton, Longmans & Todd, London 1974, pp. 209-230, quotation of p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> See B. Lonergan, *Caring About Meaning. Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, P. Lambert, Ch. Tansey, and C. Going, eds, Thomas More Institute Papers, Montreal 1982, pp. 194-195.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>5</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, pp. 228-232.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 228, note 52.

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 223-227.

the movement within the music itself, the movement from one note to another. [... T]he 'now' of a being that changes is not a single dimension. [... T]he time that is the 'now' of the subject is a time in which many things are going forward at once. The music expresses this by taking one theme, and then another, and blending them. There are oppositions, tensions, resolutions. The life of feeling that is in that 'now', in its rhythms and turmoil and peace, is expressed in the music. [...].»<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, Lonergan clarified that art is symbolic, «but what is symbolized is obscure», and may be reached «not through science or philosophy, but through a participation, [...] a reenactment of the artist's inspiration and intention.»<sup>9</sup> He stated that the insight of an artist is an insight into particular situations or data, and is expressed concretely and communicated to the percipients not in a conceptualized way, general formulae and abstract terms, but simply in the work of art itself.<sup>10</sup> He also affirmed that, in order to grasp and appreciate an artistic meaning, which is on psychic level, one has to enter into it, reenact it and reproduce it in oneself: «[n]o conceptual account of a Bach sonata, a Beethoven quartet, a Brahms symphony is the equivalent of the sonata or the quartet or the symphony.»<sup>11</sup> It is because Lonergan told us that the work of art is an invitation to participate, to reenact the artist's inspiration and intention, that the concert has been held.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>9</sup> B.J.F. Lonergan, *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 3, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1992 (1957<sup>1</sup>), p. 208. In note 1 of that page, Lonergan quotes the description of the insight in musical composition by Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form. A Theory of Art Developed from 'Philosophy in a New Key'*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1953, pp. 120-132.

<sup>10</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being. The Halifax Lectures on Insight*, (lectures of 1958), E.A. Morelli and M.D. Morelli, eds, CWL 5, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1990<sup>2</sup>, pp. 38-39, 283.

<sup>11</sup> See B.J.F. Lonergan, "Exegesis and Dogma" (of 1963), in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, R.C. Crocken, F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, eds, CWL 6, Toronto University Press, Toronto 1996, pp. 142-159, quotation of p. 151.

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*“The New Alliance:  
the Role of the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies”*

Ten years after the publication of *La Nouvelle Alliance*, I can say that a rapprochement between physical sciences and the humanities has been facilitated thanks also to the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies. The Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies is an example of such rapprochement in the name of humanism. The Institute, in fact, studies the traditional problems of philosophy as well as the classical problems of science. In this sense, the Neapolitan Institute plays a very important role in Europe. Let me express a few words of admiration for Avv. Gerardo Marotta. I would like to say how impressed I am by the breadth of his work: seminars, publications, conferences, whose mere enumeration occupies volumes of thick books. It is also the variety of subjects that is so extraordinary: from history and philology to physics and mathematics. Thanks to your enthusiasm, and your generosity, dear Avv. Marotta, the Institute has set an example of what humanism can be today. Your Institute does no longer belong to Italy alone. It is also an intellectual treasure of Europe as a whole.

In the current process of rapprochement of natural sciences and the humanities, I believe Europe has a very special role to play. When I travel the world, whether to the United States or to Japan, I see much interest in science, although in science too often viewed as a technological, economic, or even military instrument.

I believe, instead, that what still distinguishes Europe is its philosophical interest in science, which remains very much alive today. In this sense, institutions such as the Italian Institute for Philosophical Studies sustain what I believe is a fundamental element. If we consider the work of great physicists such as Mach, Boltzmann, Einstein and Planck, we see that their scientific path was underpinned by philosophical visions and that at the height of their scientific creation was the union of science and philosophy and the arts themselves. Today, we clearly live in an age of transition fraught with grave dangers. But it remains undeniable that our century has witnessed a new form of society made possible by science, a form of organization that gives Man more responsibility and more independence than any other previous society. Let me express a utopia, a hope: that scientific advances enable us to envision a society in which the price of civilization is lower, where more people can accomplish themselves. We live in a form of proto-history: how many of us can accomplish themselves, demonstrate their talent? A handful. We still live in a form of organization dominated by economic pressures and technological needs. Science can play a decisive role in advancing towards a more human society.

ILYA PRIGOGINE  
(Nobel Prize for Chemistry)