

**FOUNDATIONS FOR THEOLOGY:**

**THE DISCOVERY**

**OF**

**BERNARD LONERGAN**

*A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of*

*St. John's Seminary  
Brighton, Massachusetts*

*in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Theology*

*Submitted by*

*Rev. Raymond A. Ball*

*April 1989*

This thesis has been approved by:

*J. L. J. Connelly*

Reverend John J Connelly, S.T.D.

*Matthew L. Lamb*

Reverend Matthew L. Lamb, D. Th.

*Frederick D. Lawrence*

Frederick Lawrence, Ph. D.

*Dec 15, 1989*

date

ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY  
127 LAKE STREET  
BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02135

December 19, 1989

Reverend Raymond A. Ball  
173 Main Street  
Keene, New Hampshire 03431

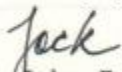
Dear Ray:

Congratulations! You have attained your Master of Arts in Theology Degree with all its privileges and responsibilities! The Academic Committee established to receive your thesis: FOUNDATIONS FOR THEOLOGY: THE DISCOVERY OF BERNARD LONERGAN: has accepted its presentation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Saint John's Seminary for this degree. Wear well our tassel!

Your diploma-parchment will presently be forwarded to you. In the meanwhile this letter will indicate that now your rank has been enriched with further academic achievement. Your record, in the archives of the Registrar, will carry notice to this effect.

With every good wish and prayer for you, I am

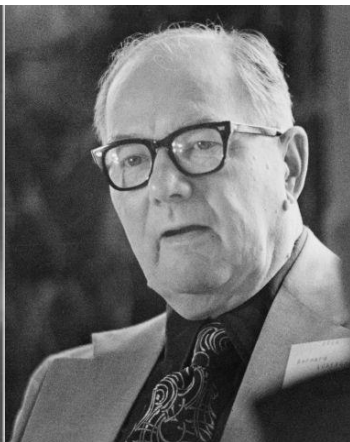
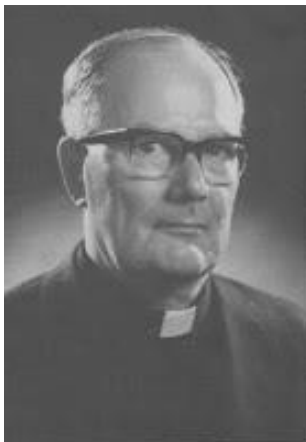
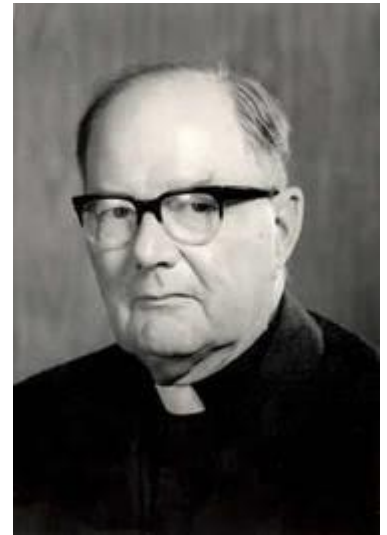
Gratefully yours,

  
Rev. John E. Farrell, S.T.D.  
Dean of Faculty

JEF:EE



**Bernard J. F. Lonergan**



In his grasp of the process of understanding that underlies every science, Lonergan is the twentieth century counterpart of a Renaissance man.

----Time Magazine

With that boldness characteristic of genius, Jesuit philosopher Bernard Lonergan has set out to do for the twentieth century what even Aquinas could not do for the thirteenth: provide an "understanding of understanding" that can illuminate not only the broad patterns of all accumulated knowledge but also reveal an "invariant pattern" for further developments in human understanding. Insight (by Lonergan) has become a philosophical classic comparable in scope to Hume's Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding.

----Newsweek Magazine

The key moments in the history of any culture or of any discipline come about not when a new answer is proposed, but when a radically new question is articulated. Such a question has been proposed in the work of Bernard Lonergan. . . . It is impossible to name a thinker who has worked so well with so many fields. Lonergan is the greatest Catholic theologian North America has ever produced.

----David Tracy (1939- )  
University of Chicago

Bernard Lonergan is The Christian Thinker of the twentieth century.

----Bernard Tyrrell (1933- )  
University of Notre Dame

Bernard Lonergan is unquestionably among the most significant thinkers of our time.

----Clergy Review

Lonergan is one of the most important theological thinkers of the twentieth century, as well as being a major, not yet fully appreciated philosopher with special importance for philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of history.

----Eugene Webb (1933- )  
University of Washington

No Catholic thinker of the twentieth century has shown a greater awareness of the demands of the present and the future on the tradition of the past than Bernard J.F. Lonergan; and no Catholic thinker of recent years, while shunning the fads and chimeras of a facile modernity, has responded more creatively and with greater intellectual rigor to the challenge of the age.

----Herder and Herder Publishing Co.

Bernard Lonergan's chief contribution was the creation of an organon - an investigative tool, an instrument of mind, heart, and spirit that will reveal its deepest worth only as future generations come to use it.

----Frederick Crowe (1915-2012)  
Regis College of Toronto

Along with his exact contemporary fellow Jesuit Karl Rahner, Lonergan was one of the century's theological giants but . . . his work will have its greatest influence in the years to come.

----National Catholic Reporter

(Insight is) a profoundly, incalculably nuanced book.

----Andrew J. Reck (1927- )  
Review of Metaphysics

Insight . . . is the first perfected philosophical product of the Leonine reconstruction. Insight might initiate a new era in scholastic theology.

----Germain G. Grisez (1929-2018)  
Mount St. Mary's Seminary

Insight is a masterly work whose importance reaches far beyond the boundaries of theology and Catholic philosophy. It has much to say of interest and significance to cognitive psychologists and to students of epistemology. Lonergan's careful scrutiny of the procedures by which we put our creative intelligence to work is precise, lucid, and fascinating.

----Stephen Toulmin (1922-2009)  
University of Chicago

Insight offers breath-taking liberation. Reminds one of the relentless questioning of Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1889-1951) Philosophical Investigations (1953) or the polymorphic self-critical inquiry carried on by Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855).

----David Burrell (1933- )  
University of Notre Dame

Of all contemporary philosophers of the very first rank, Bernard Lonergan has been up to now the most neglected. . . . In my opinion, Insight, the largest work Lonergan has written, is at a conservative estimate one of the half-dozen or so most important philosophical books to have appeared in the course of the present century. . . . (Method in Theology by Lonergan) is one of the outstanding achievements of our time.

----Hugo A. Meynell (1936- )  
University of Leeds

(Method in Theology is) a book that is having vast influence. . . . The implications are quite sweeping.

----The Christian Century

Outstanding. . . . (Method in Theology) presents an original and internally consistent theory, systematically constructed according to a fully articulated philosophy of human knowing.

----Avery Dulles (1918-2008)  
Catholic University

If there are . . . theological Everests and anthills, Method in Theology is an Everest.

----Charles C. Hefling, Jr. (1949- )  
Boston College

Here (in Philosophy of God and Theology by Lonergan) we may find the clearest exposition of Lonergan's delineation of the "new context" of theology and the first major application of his recent method to theology.

----Commonweal

Clear and concise, these nineteen articles (of Second Collection by Lonergan) bear the mark of Lonergan's broad and unswerving erudition. Protestant or Catholic, the reader is captured by the magnitude and precision of Lonergan's understanding of the challenge posed to theology today by science, history, and philosophy; he is forced to conclude, with Lonergan, that the answer lies in a critical realism. Whether the reader is familiar with Lonergan's works or not, he will find A Second Collection insightful, forceful, and extremely helpful in understanding the theological task ahead.

----Review and Expositor

Described by some as a modern-day Thomas Aquinas, Canadian Jesuit priest Bernard Lonergan was one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. The author of several theological textbooks and a raft of seminal essays exploring everything from macroeconomics to the architecture of the human mind, Lonergan held appointments at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Regis College, Boston College, and Harvard University. . . . distinguished scholars from a variety of disciplines unpack Lonergan's continuing significance, revealing how and why he devoted his life to reconciling science, history, and hermeneutic theory.

---University of Toronto Press

Bernard Lonergan, S.J., a man who knew more about love and has sacrificed more self-interest for love's sake than nearly anyone I know.

----Tad Dunne (1938- )  
Loyola University of Chicago

## BIOGRAPHY

### Father Bernard Joseph Francis Lonergan, S.J.

Dec 17 1904...born the eldest of three sons in Buckingham, Quebec, Canada.

1918-22...attends Loyola High School and Loyola Junior College in Montreal.

1922-26...enters and spends four years at the novitiate of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

1926-29...attends Heythrop College, a philosophy school for Jesuit seminarians in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, England.

1930....receives an external B.A. degree in humanities from the University of London.

1930-33...teaches three years at Loyola College, Montreal.

1933-37...studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

1936.....is ordained a Roman Catholic priest.

1937.....receives his Licentiate Degree in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.) at the Gregorian.

1937.....spends his tertianship year in Amiens, France.

1937-40...spends three years studying dogmatic theology at the Gregorian.

1940.....receives his Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.D.) at the Gregorian. His dissertation: "St. Thomas Aquinas' Thought on Gratia Operans" is later published in Theological Studies in 1941-42 and later as Grace and Freedom in 1971.

1940-47...teaches theology at L'Immaculee Conception Jesuit Seminary in Montreal.

1946-49..publication of "The Concept of Verbum in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas" in Theological Studies; later published as Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas in 1967.

1947....receives the Cardinal Spellman Award for Outstanding Theological Scholarship.



1947-53...is professor of dogmatic theology at Regis College, a Jesuit seminary in Willowdale, Toronto, Canada.

1949-53...he works on and completes Insight.

1953-64..is professor of dogmatic theology at the Gregorian.

1956.....publication of De Constitutione Christi.

1957.....publication of Divinarum Personarum Conceptio Analogica.

April 1957....publication of Insight: A Study of Human Understanding.

1959.....gives his "Philosophy of Education" lectures at Xavier College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1960.....publication of De Verbo Incarnato.

1961.....publication of De Deo Trino, the first part of which was later published as The Way to Nicea in 1976.

1965-75...is research professor at Regis College in Toronto.

1967....publication of Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J., consisting of unpublished writings and lectures given between 1943-65.

1968....publication of The Subject.

1969....appointed an original member of the International Theological Commission by Pope Paul VI.

1970....his work is the subject of "The First International Lonergan Congress" in Florida.

1970.....the Canadian government pays him its highest honor, naming him a Companion of the Order of Canada.

1971.....publication of Doctrinal Pluralism.

1971-72..is the Stillman professor at Harvard University Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

1972.....publication of Method in Theology.

1974.....publication of Philosophy of God and Theology.

1974.....publication of A Second Collection, consisting of unpublished writings and lectures given between 1966-72.

1976-83..is Visiting Distinguished Professor at Boston College.

Nov 26 1984.....dies three weeks short of his 80th birthday in Pickering, Ontario and is buried in his home town of Buckingham, Quebec.

1985.....posthumous publication of A Third Collection, consisting of unpublished writings and lectures given between 1974-81.

He was also recipient of:

--the Aquinas Medal of the American Catholic Philosophical Association.

--the John Courtney Murray Award of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

--more than twelve honorary doctorates at North American Universities.

He was a Consultor to the Secretariat for Non-Believers in Rome.

There are now Lonergan Research Centers in: Boston, Santa Clara, South Orange NJ, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Washington, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Dublin, Rome, Naples, Sidney, India, and Chile.

The University of Toronto Press is currently working on the publication of the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan in twenty-two volumes by the end of the century.

### History of this Master's Thesis

Entered St. John's Seminary.....	September 1983
Study of Lonergan begins.....	May 1984
Writing of thesis begins.....	December 1986
Writing of thesis ends.....	May 1987
Completed studies at St. John's Seminary.....	May 1987
Ordained a priest.....	June 6, 1987
Assigned to St. Bernard's Parish in Keene, NH.....	June 24, 1987
Typing of thesis begins.....	February 1989
Typing of thesis ends.....	April 1989
Thesis defended and accepted.....	December 18, 1989

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

*Preface*.....xiv

*Introduction*.....xviii

**PART ONE: BACKGROUND**.....1

**CHAPTER ONE: The Meaning of Culture**.....2

A. *Culture*.....4

B. *Traditional Culture*.....12

**CHAPTER TWO: Classical Cultural Foundations**.....18

A. *The Greek Discovery of Theory*.....18

B. *Common Sense*.....21

C. *Classical Science*.....28

D. *Conceptualism*.....43

**CHAPTER THREE: Theology in Classical Culture**.....48

A. *The Emergence of Christian  
Theology*.....48

B. *The Origins of Theology*.....48

C. *The Origins of Christian Realism*...54

D. *Medieval Theology*.....59

E. *The Mind of Aquinas*.....66

F. *The Origins of the Classicist  
Foundations of Scholastic Theology*.79

**CHAPTER FOUR: Modern Cultural Foundations**.....84

A. *The Turn to the Subject*.....85

B. *Modern Conceptualism*.....86

C. *The Advent of Modern Science*.....89

D. *Modern Theory and Common Sense*.....93

<b>E.</b>	<i>The Metaphysics of Modern Science</i> ..	97
<b>F.</b>	<i>The World of Emergent Probability</i> ..	108
<b>G.</b>	<i>The Third Stage of Meaning</i> .....	113
<b>H.</b>	<i>Objects and Operations</i> .....	117
<b>I.</b>	<i>Human Operations</i> .....	121
<b>J.</b>	<i>The Modern Development of Human and Historical Sciences</i> .....	129
<b>K.</b>	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	143

<b><u>CHAPTER FIVE:</u></b>	<b><u>Theology in Modern Culture</u></b> .....	<b>145</b>
<b>A.</b>	<i>The Origin of Classicist Theology</i> ..	146
<b>B.</b>	<i>Positive Theology</i> .....	150
<b>C.</b>	<i>Classicist Catholic Culture</i> .....	156

<b><u>PART TWO:</u></b>	<b><u>FOREGROUND</u></b> .....	<b>172</b>
-------------------------	--------------------------------	------------

<b><u>CHAPTER SIX:</u></b>	<b><u>The Foundations</u></b> .....	<b>173</b>
<b>A.</b>	<i>The Point of Departure</i> .....	173
<b>B.</b>	<i>Cognitional Analysis</i> .....	177
<b>C.</b>	<i>Experience</i> .....	180
<b>D.</b>	<i>Understanding</i> .....	189
<b>E.</b>	<i>Judgement</i> .....	193
<b>F.</b>	<i>Self-Affirmation</i> .....	200
<b>G.</b>	<i>Intentionality</i> .....	205
<b>H.</b>	<i>The Notion of Being</i> .....	208
<b>I.</b>	<i>Cognitional Structure, Counter- Positions and Objectivity</i> .....	214
<b>J.</b>	<i>Horizon Analysis</i> .....	224
<b>K.</b>	<i>The Method of Metaphysics</i> .....	227
<b>L.</b>	<i>The Universe of Proportionate Being</i> .....	233
<b>M.</b>	<i>Deliberation</i> .....	240
<b>N.</b>	<i>The God Question: Transcendent Knowledge</i> .....	256
<b>O.</b>	<i>Religious Conversion</i> .....	269

**CHAPTER SEVEN: The Method.....289**

<b>A.</b>	<i>The Situation</i> .....	289
<b>B.</b>	<i>The Task</i> .....	293
<b>C.</b>	<i>The Functional Specialties</i> .....	296
<b>1)</b>	<i>Research</i> .....	298
<b>2)</b>	<i>Interpretation</i> .....	299
<b>3)</b>	<i>History</i> .....	300
<b>4)</b>	<i>Dialectic</i> .....	301
<b>5)</b>	<i>Foundations</i> .....	304
<b>6)</b>	<i>Doctrines</i> .....	313
<b>7)</b>	<i>Systematics</i> .....	320
<b>8)</b>	<i>Communications</i> .....	323
<b>D.</b>	<i>Conclusion</i> .....	331

***Bibliography*.....334**

<b>Figure 1:</b>	<i>Generic Illustrations of Emergent Probability Among the Sciences</i> .....	111
<b>Figure 2:</b>	<i>The Basic Levels and Structures of Consciousness</i> ....	188
<b>Figure 3:</b>	<i>Interaction of the First Three Levels of Human Consciousness</i> .....	188
<b>Figure 4:</b>	<i>The Integrated and Transcendent Universe of Proportionate Being</i> .....	239
<b>Figure 5:</b>	<i>The Functional Specialties: Operations of the Theological Community</i> .....	298

**PREFACE**

Questioning is the condition that has made this thesis possible for this author. It is the only possible thing that will make it comprehensible, let alone interesting, to the reader. The questions which are posed in this thesis have to do with the very possibility, nature, and unity of theology itself. If theology is that which seeks to mediate the meanings and values of a religion to a culture, then it is necessary to find out what the basis or common ground is that allows this mediation to take place. This is necessary if the meanings and values of a religion are to be truly meaningful to all the areas of life and branches of knowledge of the culture it would seek to address. It was with such questions that I happened upon a book written by a Canadian Jesuit priest, philosopher, and theologian named Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984). Now, five years later, I once again pose these questions, this time with some answers.

This thesis, therefore, asks questions having to do with the foundations and method of all theology, and it seeks to answer them by way of an introduction to the thought of Lonergan.

Lonergan's thought is itself concerned with and oriented to answering these basic, fundamental questions not only for theology, but for all branches of knowledge. Such a task is, by nature, all embracing and

comprehensive. There are no short cuts and half measures are to no avail. To seek answers to the kind of questions posed by this thesis require the same kind of thoroughness which Lonergan has dedicated his life to, and has left to the world in his writings and lectures. While some might regard this task as irrelevant or too broad, my response is that the answers to more particular questions cannot be truly meaningful or adequately given apart from this broader framework.

While I intend to present the forest of Lonergan's thought, it may, in places, seem more like a jungle. If that is the case, it is because Lonergan's discoveries often lead into uncharted regions or areas, once explored, have been allowed to become overgrown through neglect and lack of interest. Excursions into these dense territories are necessary, even despite the all too brief treatment that can be afforded them here. While I cannot do them all justice, not to at least mention them would be a worse injustice. Not to do so in a work that needs and claims to be comprehensive would be especially fatal for, in the words of Lonergan, it is to leave intact a base from which a counterattack will promptly be made:

Probably I shall be told that I have tried to operate on too broad a front. But I was led to do so for two reasons. In constructing a ship or a philosophy one has to go the whole way; an effort that is in principle incomplete is equivalent to a failure. Moreover, against the flight from

understanding half measures are of no avail. Only a comprehensive strategy can be successful. To disregard any stronghold of the flight from understanding is to leave intact a base from which a counteroffensive promptly will be launched.<sup>1</sup>

Another title for this thesis could be: "An Outline for a Course in Fundamental Theology". By fundamental theology I mean not the fundamental theology that was taught in the manuals, nor the warmed over version that currently gets passed off as fundamental theology in seminaries and universities. Theology cannot continue to be content with building castles in the sky, especially castles that are composed of separate, isolated, self-contained compartments which house the various theological subjects.

If any practical good can come out of this thesis, perhaps it would be to make more accessible to some what currently is not readily available in education, and for which I had to search for in an out of the way place. This missing ingredient is something lacking not only in theological education, but in education as a whole, namely, a foundation for unification:

The problem with modern education is the fragmentation and isolation of subjects that has accompanied academic specialization. Professors leave to the students to put together what they cannot put together themselves. . . . what makes the crisis hopeless . . . is the fact that any attempt

---

1 Bernard Lonergan, SJ, Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, (London: Longman's Green, and Co. Ltd.: 1957), p. xiii



at unification is regarded as another specialization, one to which no other specialist need pay the slightest attention.<sup>2</sup>

It was Aristotle (384-322 BC) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who distinguished the expert from the wise person. They did so by stating that the former orders everything within a restricted domain while the latter orders everything. Even the cumulative knowledge of all the experts was regarded as less than the knowledge of the wise because the wise alone know the relations between the restricted domains and therefore knows the true meaning of what is in each domain. It is this universal viewpoint of the wise that Lonergan has discovered and invites us to discover within ourselves.

At this point I would like to thank those who have helped to lead me toward this unifying vantage point. In a special way I thank my mentor, Father John J. Connelly (1923- ) of St. John's Seminary, as well those professors at Boston College whose courses and writings, and involvement in the Lonergan Workshop, have been invaluable in directing and motivating me in the search for truth: Dr. Frederick G. Lawrence (1947- ), Father Matthew L. Lamb (1937-2018), Father Joseph F. Flanagan, S.J. (1926-2010), and Rev. Charles C. Hefling, Jr. (1949- ) And finally, thanks to mom and dad (Ray and Mary Ball) for everything.

---

<sup>2</sup> Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", (unpublished lectures given at Xavier College in Cincinnati in 1959), p. 12

## INTRODUCTION

Father Bernard J.F. Lonergan's, S.J., (1904-84) appearance on the philosophical and theological scenes through his major works: **Insight: A Study of Human Understanding** (1957) and **Method in Theology** (1972), has been likened by Father Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (1915-2012) to that of the appearance of Melchizedek in Genesis (Genesis 14:18-20), i.e. as one "without known ancestry".<sup>3</sup> There is much to suggest this description as the most adequate with respect to addressing the question: "Whom do you say Bernard Lonergan is?"

In answer to this question there are some who say that Lonergan should be classified as a modern philosopher since he has accepted the modern "turn to the subject" as the point of departure for his foundations and method. Others, however, quite to the contrary, classify him in more traditional terms as a neo- or transcendental Thomist in the tradition of Father Joseph Marechal, S.J. (1878-1944), Father Karl Rahner, S.J. (1904-84), and Father Emerich Coreth, S.J., (1919-2006).

While there may be some legitimate similarities to suggest certain comparisons to certain schools of thought, I believe that in the case of

---

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Crowe, SJ, "Creativity and Method: Index to a Movement – A Review Article", Science et Esprit, XXXIV, 1, (1982) p. 112

Lonergan they are more obscuring than helpful. In fact, attempts to peg Lonergan tend to reveal more about people who like to peg than they do about Lonergan. And perhaps this is the best place to begin not an introduction to Lonergan, but an invitation to Lonergan. In so doing people must be asked to accept Lonergan as Lonergan and at least to be open to the possibility that he could have something new and important to reveal. If one does so, I am confident that one will discover him to be a unique pioneer who transcends any existing categories expressive of the philosophical antinomies of classical versus modern, objectivist versus relativist and so forth.<sup>4</sup>

And so, who is Lonergan? No, the same reply of St. Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:16) would not do here, for he is not another messiah,

---

4 Just as normal and healthy development leads one from order to disorder to reorder, or from construction to deconstruction to reconstruction, or from synthesis to antithesis to thesis, or from Law to Prophets to Wisdom\*, or from Egypt to Desert to Promised Land, or from the mythical mind to the rational mind to the spiritual mind, or from potency to form to act, or from experiencing to understanding to judging, or from childhood to adolescence to adulthood, or from life to death to resurrection, so also the movement from the classical to the modern to the next stage of what Lonergan is pointing to is a journey we also need to be willing to make, for normal and healthy development. The temptation, however, when one is in the midst of the second stage, is simply to reactively try to return to the first stage, especially when one cannot envision the third.

\*-cf. Walter Brueggemann (1933- ), An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003)

nor did he seek out any disciples or even found a school of thought, let alone another religion. He has never claimed to have all the answers, nor has he offered some sure fire logical recipe to follow in order to reach them. So, what good is he? The answer to this question depends on whether and to what extent people are willing to accept his challenge. For what he ultimately offers is a challenge, not the artificial challenge of engaging us in some mental acrobatics or enamoring us with some new theory, but the personal and interpersonal challenge of confronting us with who we are and what we have in us to become. To accept this challenge means that one cannot take refuge in some theory by which one prejudges and classifies Lonergan, for if one truly accepts his challenge, one will end up accepting the universal standards implied in one's own attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. These standards, of course, are the unrevisable foundations which one utilizes in accepting or rejecting any and all theories or knowledge, including the work of Lonergan himself. Lonergan, therefore, should be considered the opposite of an arrogant, dogmatic, know-it-all when he makes the following remark, for his intent is to point away from himself and his work to you, the reader, and indeed to all people:

If the subject will be intelligent and reasonable, that is, if he will perform those operations, he will agree with conclusions reached in

Insight; and if he does not wish to agree with them, then he will have to find some way of building up a horizon that will close him off from his own intelligence and his own reasonableness.<sup>5</sup>

The reason that Lonergan refrained from collecting disciples about him and rejected the use of the term "Lonerganian" was because doing so would defeat the very intent of his work:

The word Lonerganian has come up in recent days. In a sense there is no such thing. Because what I am asking people is to discover themselves and be themselves. They can arrive at conclusions different from mine on the basis of what they find in themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Garrett Barden (1941- ) and Philip McShane (1932- ) make the following warning in this regard:

This coming to grips with oneself is no mean task, and there is the ever present danger of abandoning it in favor of a mastery of the language of the new science.<sup>7</sup>

Lonergan is not only refreshingly new and different, but practical, concrete, and desperately needed for our present and our future. This author would therefore like to unite himself with Lonergan in intending for readers to take from this thesis not merely a better understanding of Lonergan, but of themselves:

---

5 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 118

6 Lonergan, A Second Collection, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 213

7 Garrett Barden and Philip McShane, Towards Self-Meaning, (New York: Herder, 1969), p. 12

The crucial issue is an experimental issue, and the experiment will be performed not publicly but privately. It will consist in one's own rational self-consciousness clearly and distinctly taking possession of itself as rational self-consciousness. Up to that decisive achievement, all leads. From it, all follows. No one can do it for you. But though the act is private, both its achievement and its consequents have their public manifestations. There can be long series of marks on paper that communicate an invitation to know oneself . . . and among such series of marks with an invitatory meaning the present book would wish to be numbered. . . . the aim of the book is to issue an invitation to a personal decisive act. But the very nature of the act demands that it be understood in itself and in its implications.<sup>8</sup>

The intention of this thesis is similarly one of 1) issuing an invitation to the reader to an act of self-appropriation, 2) understanding the nature of that act, and 3) drawing out its implications with special reference to its providing a foundation for theology. After reading this Introduction, one might get the impression that Lonergan and his works are of secondary importance and are for that reason dispensable. This is true. Unfortunately, there is nothing else like them to lead one to what is primary and indispensable.

This thesis will begin with an altogether inadequate historical, cultural, philosophical, and theological contextualizing of Lonergan's thought. This will be done not to relativize or "date" him to the particular exigencies and particularities of the times in which he wrote and lived, but rather to more clearly heighten that which occasions its

---

<sup>8</sup> Lonergan, Insight, pp. xviii-xix

significance for us, for history, for culture, for philosophy, and for theology. This contextualizing is by no means de jure necessary, although perhaps de facto necessary for people to understand and grasp the significance of his thought. In other words, his work is not a "period piece", but is capable of standing on its own. This is not to say that it is ahistorical but, rather, (except for the way it is expressed) transhistorical in the same way that the invariant structure of the operations of human cognition and volition can be said to be transhistorical:

It stands independently of any historical positions. It depends only on the reader's own experience and intelligence to validate its conclusions.<sup>9</sup>

As transhistorical, Lonergan's work may be said to be intimately concerned with history insofar as it is concerned with the constitutive conditions of the possibility of history itself. It may therefore be said, and has been said, and I will say it and affirm it and hopefully be able to convince others in this thesis, that Lonergan has not invented but, rather, has discovered a foundation not only for theology and not only for all branches of knowledge, but for human life itself. And this foundation, while it may be better formulated, is itself fundamentally unrevisable, definitive, and everlasting.

---

<sup>9</sup> Germain G. Grisez, The Thomist, vol. 21, Oct. 1958, pp. 554-60

No one, so far as I know has ever done for theology what Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) did for physical science, and since I saw the announcement of your Essay I have been looking for its appearance with great curiosity and interest, for there are many passages in your writings which indicate that you had given very much thought to many of the questions which would be illustrated in a theological Novum Organum.

----Robert William Dale (1829-1895) to  
John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)  
March 13, 1870

You have truly said that we need a Novum Organum for theology - and I shall be truly glad if I shall be found to have made any suggestions which will aid the formation of such a calculus - but it must be the strong conception and the one work of a great genius, not the obiter attempt of a person like myself, who has already attempted many things, and is at the end of his days.

----Cardinal Newman's reply  
March 16, 1870  
The Letters and Diaries of  
John Henry Newman, vol.25  
(Oxford: Clarendon Press,  
1973), pp. 56-7

[taken from: Frederick Crowe, S.J., The Lonergan Enterprise,  
(Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1980), p. xxii]



P A R T   O N E

B A C K G R O U N D

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MEANING OF CULTURE

Because human consciousness is embedded within physical, chemical, biological, psychological, rational, intersubjective, social, economic, political, cultural, and religious contexts; its attention, interests, desires, questions, judgements, and decisions are influenced and conditioned (as opposed to caused) in numerous ways (more on this later). Lonergan was no exception to this. Being a Roman Catholic and a Jesuit priest, he was formed and educated in a cultural context which he has come to refer to as "classicist" and "conceptualist". Being also a man of the twentieth century and a theologian, Lonergan was aware of modernity and the need to understand and address it. This confluence would be brought out in his definition of theology: "A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."<sup>1</sup>

In order to fully appreciate the significance of Lonergan's foundations and methodology, *[at this point the term "foundation" can simply be understood to refer to that upon which anything can be built or based; and "method" as: "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, Method in Theology, (New York: Herder: 1972), p. xi

*yielding cumulative and progressive results"*<sup>2</sup>], it is first worthwhile to come to grips in at least a rudimentary way with the meaning of "culture" in general and of classical and modern cultures in particular. What has been articulated by Lonergan, with respect to distinguishing them, and what shall be articulated here, is by no means meant as an attempt to exhaustively categorize and conceptualize these rather complex and multiple historical, intellectual, social, and cultural processes. Lonergan would be the first to admit that simply imposing concepts does not generate understanding. Such concepts, however, can be used to express certain real insights and intelligible cultural distinctions and differences which exist over and above mere distinctions and differences in space and time. What shall be pointed out in this admittedly sketchy and altogether inadequate analysis will be some important differences in presuppositions and approaches to culture, science, and philosophy from ancient and medieval times (approximately fourth century B.C. to the seventeenth century) to modern and contemporary times (approximately seventeenth century to the present). A further important note: much of this preliminary cultural analysis, which is done for the purpose of setting forth more clearly the implications and significance of Lonergan's thought, is itself dependent upon and derived from tools provided by

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 4

Lonergan's foundations. For this analysis to be fully understood, therefore, will require that one grasp what will be provided in a later part of this thesis.

### **A. Culture**

By culture Lonergan does not mean "art, museums, and good manners". To understand what he means by culture, one must first understand what he means by "the social", which conditions and is presupposed by "the cultural". [*By "conditions" I mean that which exists as a potential occasion for and prerequisite for something else.*]

The social refers to a way of life, i.e. to patterns and conventions of human interaction and to human institutions which facilitate human cooperation in the recurrent procurement of goods, services, education, etc.:

. . . the social is conceived of as a way of life, a way in which men live together in some orderly and predictable fashion. Such orderliness is to be observed in the family and in manners, in society with its classes and elites, in education, in the state and its laws, in the economy and technology, in the churches and sects.<sup>3</sup>

The cultural, on the other hand, is intimately related to the social as "the soul to the body", i.e. as that which discovers, articulates,

---

3 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 102

evaluates, and criticizes the meanings and values which are intended in a peoples' way of life:

But besides a way of living, the social, there is also the cultural, and by the "cultural " I would denote the meaning we find in our present way of life, the value we place upon it, or again the things we find meaningless, stupid, atrocious, wicked, horrid, disastrous . . . for men not only do things . . . they wish to discover and to express the appropriateness, the meaning, the significance, the value, the use of their way of life as a whole and in its parts. Such discovery and expression constitute the cultural and, quite evidently, culture stands to social order as soul to body, for any element of social order will be rejected the moment it is widely judged inappropriate, meaningless, irrelevant, useless, just not worthwhile. . . . Just as words without sense are gibberish, so human living uninformed by human meaning is infantile.<sup>4</sup>

The fact and the significance of the fact of living in a world mediated and constituted by meaning and value is not generally acknowledged or reflected upon. People tend to regard the "world of immediacy," i.e. that aspect of the world of objects that is directly accessible to one's experiencing and/or understanding, and/or judging, and/or deciding and choosing, as the "real world". [*Throughout this thesis, by "object" is meant not merely something sensible or physical, but anything that is or can be in relation to a subject through the conscious cognitional and volitional operations of the human subject. The conscious operations are experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.*] For example, the

---

4 Ibid., pp. 91, 102, 51

infant or young child's world is made up only of objects which are immediately present to his or her immediate experience. Adults, however, do not tend to reflect on the fact that as they grew up and matured, they gradually moved into a much larger, mediated world. This is a world not only made up of objects which are present, near, actual, and directly and immediately accessible to one's conscious operations, but of objects that are absent, far away, past, future, possible, probable, ideal, normative, and fantastic. This mediated world includes not only objects as they are experienced by other people, but also objects which require the conscious operations of asking questions and understanding in order to be grasped, affirmed or denied, accepted or rejected:

This larger world mediated by meaning (and language), does not lie within anyone's immediate experience. It is not even the sum, the integral, of the totality of all worlds of immediate experience, for meaning is an act that does not merely repeat but goes beyond experiencing. For what is meant (what is intended in questioning and inquiry) is determined not only by experience but also by understanding and, commonly, by judgement as well. This addition of understanding and judgement is what makes possible the world mediated by meaning.<sup>5</sup>

For the world mediated by meaning is not just given. Over and above what is given is the universe that is intended by questions, that is organized by intelligence, that is described by language, that is enriched by tradition. . . . In the infant's world of immediacy the only objects to which we are related immediately are the objects of sensible intuition. But in the adult's world mediated by meaning the objects to which we are related immediately are the objects intended by our questioning and known

---

5 Lonergan, Method, p. 77

by correct answering. In more traditional language, the objects intended are beings: what is to be known by intending quid sit and an sit and by finding correct answers.<sup>6</sup>

The world mediated by human meaning and understanding is made up both of the world constituted by nature and the world constituted by human meaning itself. These two worlds of meanings distinguish the data of the natural scientist from the data of the human scientist:

The physicist, chemist, biologist verifies his hypotheses in what is given just as it is given. The human scientist can verify only in data that besides being given have a meaning. Physicist, chemists, engineers might enter a court of law, but after making all the measurements and calculations they could not declare that it was a court of law . . . The world of immediacy is not freely constituted; but the world constituted by meaning, the properly human world, the world of community is the product of freely self-constituting subjects. . . . the human setup, the family and mores, the state and religion, the economy and technology, the law and education. None of these are mere products of nature: they have a determination from meaning; to change the meaning is to change the concrete setup. Hence there is a radical difference between the data of natural science and the data of human science.<sup>7</sup>

What one comes to know of this larger "artificial" yet no less real world are those aspects of it which are intended and made. Not only the natural environment, but people themselves can be directed and constituted by human acts of meaning.

Implied in what has been stated are three distinct yet interrelated,

---

6 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 241, 243

7 Lonergan, Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, SJ, (New York: Herder, 1967), p. 244

integrated, and mutually conditioning levels of "the good", i.e. what is sought after through intending and acts of meaning. These will now be distinguished.

The three levels of the good include 1) "particular goods" that are needed and desired, e.g. food, clothing, procreation, education, etc., 2) social, economic, and political "goods of order" which procure not once, but recurrently the particular goods, e.g. systems of feudalism, capitalism, socialism, etc., or institutions such as schools, marriage, business, government, etc., and 3) "cultural goods" of meanings and values. Human acts of intending and constituting meaning and value occur on all three levels of the human good:

In the concrete physical, chemical, vital reality of human living, then, there also is meaning. It is at once inward and outward, inward as expressing, outward as expressed. It manifests needs and satisfactions. It responds to values. It intends goals. It orders means to ends. It constitutes social systems and endows them with cultural significance. It transforms environing nature.<sup>8</sup>

On the first level, the potentialities of the instinctual, biological needs and neural demands of the human subject are given over to human consciousness through the mediation of feelings, images, desires, and affects in order to be informed, refined, sublimated, and liberated by

---

8 Lonergan, Method, p. 211



intelligence, meaning, and value:

. . . these needs for intussusception and reproduction are humanly experienced as desires, not - as with other animals as instinct. Where other animals respond instinctually to needs for food and sex, humans experience these as desires eliciting intentional responses. Because they are intentional, there is an almost endless variety of skills which humans invent and learn to fulfill these desires. Feeding and mating skills vary from culture to culture and over time, but such variations in common sense skills all function relative to feeding and mating. . . . Lonergan designates the functions as transcultural. . . . Our embeddedness in nature and history are not merely extrinsic to how we act in the drama of living. Between the neural processes we biologically inherit and the patterns of experiencing we historically inherit functions what Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) termed the psychic censor. . . . The psychic censorship is normally not in conflict with the self-correcting process of learning. It is not determinative and repressive but cooperative and constructive, selecting the materials which form the matrix of insight and understanding, as it mediates between neural demands and the psyche.<sup>9</sup>

On the second level, that of the good of order, human intelligence, cooperatively operating within communities, is constitutive in that it informs the social, economic, and political orders. It seeks ways to specify, differentiate, assign, and institutionalize what is done by a community for the sake of acquiring and maintaining the various skills, roles, and tasks which are needed in order to effectively, recurrently, and cooperatively acquire the intended particular first level goods.

Finally, there is the third level of intended cultural (and religious)

---

9 Matthew L. Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Bernard Lonergan's Theology", The Desires of the Human Spirit: An Introduction to Bernard Lonergan's Theology, Vernon J. Gregson, SJ, (ed.), (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 3, 6

meanings and values. This level is not meant to be cut off from, margined, privatized or isolated away in some ivory tower or church building from the previous two levels. Rather, it is meant to enter into their very constitution, i.e. by being integrated with the psychological, practical, and common sense intelligence which constitute the first level, and the technological, social, economic, and political intelligence which constitutes the second. It is evident that cultural and religious meanings and values cannot be integrated and mediated within the first two levels without a proper understanding of their structure, i.e. without proper knowledge of psychology, common sense, sociology, economics, politics, etc.

For Lonergan, community does not refer simply to a group of individuals who live within a certain geographic and temporal area. Neither does it simply refer to those who are bound together by common intersubjective bonds of needs and desires [*"intersubjective" or "intersubjectivity" are terms used by Lonergan to refer to the natural, spontaneously generated bonds of mutuality which link people together. It refers to the prior "we" or prior primary, organic bonding of a community which exists among and between people and which are prior to, coequal with, and are the condition for the individual, for society, and for culture. Contrary to the claims of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), community exists prior to*

*any deliberate, intelligent or empathic choice for it is what survives when these collapse. In other words, community precedes society.]:*

. . . intersubjective community: Its basis is spontaneous tendency. Its manifestation is an elemental feeling of belonging together. Its nucleus is the family. Its expansion is the clan, the tribe, the nation.<sup>10</sup>

Community similarly is not to be identified with the common civil, social, economic, and political orders and relationships that link people:

. . . civil community: It is a complex product embracing and harmonizing material techniques, economic arrangements, and political structures. The measure of its development distinguishes primitive societies from civilizations.<sup>11</sup>

Rather than be identified with community, Lonergan refers to these ways in which people are bonded together as the conditions for community in its fullest sense, i.e. cultural community (the true meaning of the Greek polis, and the true object of political philosophy):

. . . the particular good, precisely because man is intelligent leads him on to the good of order. Human intelligence insists on some assurance of regularity, recurrence, security. Again for man as rational, as reflective, any order is bound to be considered, evaluated, criticized. It is a finite good, and if it is not to be erected into an idol, it is going to be criticized, found wanting. . . . It is the distinction between classicist and romanticist: classicists insist upon the value in the good of order, and the romanticist insists on the fact that this is not good enough for man. . . . In that evaluating and criticism there emerges

---

<sup>10</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 115

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

the notion of value. Is it worthwhile?<sup>12</sup>

At this point one may wonder why so much has been made of spelling out something which should be obvious to most cultural anthropologists. The reason is in order to articulate what is particular to the cultures referred to as classical and modern. This will eventually allow us to spell out the role of theology as it functions with respect to mediating religious meanings and values to a culture.

### **B. Traditional Culture**

All societies have what can be termed "primary" cultural meanings and values. They are not simply a set of words, but are a set of meanings which find resonance in the people, constitute them as a people, bring to life their potentialities, awaken and quicken virtues in them, call them to glory, and are what they are willing to live by and die for. These meanings and values are more or less spontaneously and organically felt, and are embodied, expressed, carried, exemplified, discovered, and passed down in the common human vehicles of: human intersubjectivity, actions, words, language, deeds, gestures, lives, heroes, villains, memories, priests, prophets, storytellers, beliefs, hopes, loves, fears,

---

12 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", pp. 32-3

architecture, monuments, documents, doctrines, dogmas, mores, customs, laws, art, rites, symbols, anecdotes, proverbs, myths, stories, epics, narratives, legends, taboos, religions, poetry, popular traditions, fiction, traditional histories, etc. With respect to this immediate level of the cultural, Lonergan states:

On all cultural levels there are rites and symbols, language and art. Their meaning is felt and intuited and acted out. It is like the meaning already in the dream before the therapist interprets it, the meaning of the work of art before the critic focuses on it and relates it to other works, the endlessly nuanced and elusive and intricate meanings of everyday speech, the intersubjective meanings of smiles and frowns, speech and silence, intonation and gesture, the passionate meanings of interpersonal relations, of high deeds and great achievements, of all we admire, praise, revere, adore, and all we dislike, condemn, loathe, abominate. Such is meaning for undifferentiated consciousness, and it would seem to constitute the spontaneous substance of every culture.<sup>13</sup>

Even though every community and society has cultural meanings and values, not every culture has made it an area of explicit and reflexive evaluation and criticism. Thus, while all cultures may have at least some of the following: art, literature, storytellers, sages, and religious; not all have critics, linguists, historians, philosophers, and theologians. The development of such reflexive techniques means that humans can come to operate immediately on the mediating operations themselves, i.e. on the words, language, symbols, music, culture, and religion which mediate,

---

13 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 102

represent, and embody meanings and values:

. . . alphabets replace vocal with visual signs, dictionaries fix the meaning of words, grammars control their inflections and combinations, logics promote the clarity, coherence, and rigor of discourse, hermeneutics studies the varying relationships between meaning and meant, and philosophies explore the more basic differences between worlds mediated by meaning.<sup>14</sup>

Lonergan thus holds, with Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in his Scienza Nuovo (1725), for the priority of poetry, symbol, figurative language, art, etc., over the literal and technical meanings of words and phrases set by human rationality, science, and logic. While the latter adds a needed clarity and coherence to human life - so that people can say what they mean and mean what they say - the former should not merely be considered an embellishment of the latter but the more elementary, vital, and spontaneous expression, source and ground of human intentionality. The latter is not meant to usurp or obscure, but to control, clarify, and guide the more originaive and dynamic. Hence, Lonergan prefers to call the human person a symbolic animal rather than a rational animal:

. . . it is only through uncounted centuries of development that the human mind eventually succeeds in liberating itself from myth and magic, in distinguishing the literal truth from figurative expression, in taking its stand on what literally is so and in rationalizing figures of speech by reducing them to the categories of classical rhetoric. But this achievement, if a necessary stage in the development of the human mind,

---

14 Lonergan, Method, p. 28

easily obscures man's nature, constricts his spontaneity, saps his vitality, limits his freedom. To proclaim with Vico the priority of poetry is to proclaim that the human mind expresses itself in symbols before it knows, if ever it knows, what its symbols literally mean. It is to open the way to setting aside the classical definition of man as a rational animal and, instead, defining man with the cultural phenomenologists as a symbolic animal or with the personalists as an incarnate spirit.<sup>15</sup>

Lonergan refers to this pre-critical and traditional stage as the first stage of meaning. In this stage meaning has several functions: it is communicative, constitutive, efficient, and cognitive. What often happens, however, is that these various functions intrude on each other. When efficient meaning intrudes into the realm of the communicative, the result is magic. When the constitutive function of meaning intrudes into the cognitive, the result is myth.

It is the reflexive component in culture that distinguishes classical and modern culture from other cultures. It is this component which Lonergan refers to as "the control of meaning". The times when this control emerged and when it changed are what mark off epochal periods in human historical development: "changes in the control of meaning are what mark off the great epochs in human history."<sup>16</sup> The terms "classical culture" and "modern culture" are thus to be understood in a technical, explanatory fashion as referring to two fundamentally different manners

---

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, Collection, pp. 262-3

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 256

in which such control over meaning was and is accomplished. This does not mean to exclude the fact that many changes and differences in such control can be distinguished within the classical or the modern era. Rather they refer to two basic, encompassing ways in which cultural control of meaning was accomplished:

. . . among high cultures one may distinguish classical and modern by the general type of their controls: the classical thinks of the control as a universal fixed for all time; the modern thinks of the controls themselves as involved in an ongoing process.<sup>17</sup>

Classical and modern culture both made appeals to certain non-arbitrary standards, foundations, or horizons by which they sought to ground their control of meaning and hence upon which to build their cultural and social superstructures. Both of these foundations have been analyzed and revealed, not only by Lonergan, but by many others and by history itself and both have been revealed to be seriously wanting and fatally flawed. Lonergan, however, is not a simple deconstructionist, but has uncovered and articulated the only unrevisable bedrock foundation upon which can be built and grounded the common sense, social, scientific, cultural, and religious meanings and values. And just as the classical and modern controls of meaning marked off two great epochs in human

---

17 Lonergan, Method, p. 29



history, so also can the control Lonergan has discovered. Because the control he has discovered is grounded in the unrevisable, dynamic foundations of the natural cognitional and volitional operations of the human subject, it offers the potential to become not only the third, but when fully embraced and appropriated, perhaps the greatest and final epoch in human history. **This** is why there is so much talk and excitement about the significance and achievement of Bernard Lonergan:

There is then a rock on which one can build. . . . Insofar as they find that, they will find something not open to radical revision . . . for that . . . is the condition of the possibility of any revision.<sup>18</sup>

Before discussing what Lonergan has discovered as a foundation for the control of meaning, mention will first be given to the nature of the foundations of classical and modern culture.

---

18 Ibid., pp. 20, xii

## CHAPTER TWO

### CLASSICAL CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

#### A. The Greek Discovery of Theory

The classical cultural control of meaning is said to have come to fruition in the Golden Age of 5th-4th century B.C. Athens, Greece, principally as a result of the achievements of Socrates (470-399 B.C.), Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). It is regarded as a major historical and evolutionary breakthrough in human, historical development:

So it is that in western culture, for the past twenty-four centuries, the movement associated with the name of Socrates and the achievement of fourth century Athens have been regarded as a high point, as a line of cleavage, as the breaking through of a radically new era in the history of man.<sup>1</sup>

Historian Eric Vogelin (1901-1985) refers to the period as a time when there occurred a "leap in being". Philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1968) refers to the time as an "axial period" in human history. In fact Lonergan, in referring to Jaspers, remarks that the period between 800-200 B.C. was an axial period not only in Greece but also in Israel, Persia, India, and China. It was a time when: "man became of age; he set aside the dreams and fancies of childhood; he began to face the world as perhaps it is."<sup>2</sup>

It was during this period that reason (nous) would begin to give

---

<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 258

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

control, directions, form, and value to human life and ways of living. It would be in addition to and in place of a control which although more spontaneous and traditional, was also more ambiguous, unreliable, and easily subject to distortion, bias, and sophistical manipulation. Prior to the control of reason, Hellenic culture, in ways parallel to other cultures, relied primarily on the memorial, oral, and written traditions of bards, poets, myths, symbols, and legends, especially those of Homer (c. 850 B.C.), to recount and pass on the heroic and exemplary deeds of heroes and gods. In such a way, certain meanings and values were embodied and enshrined as normative for directing, guiding, and constituting personal and communal life. The critiques of Homeric myth by men like Hesiod (c. 720 B.C.), the exploration of the soul by the tragedians, the speculations of the pre-Socratics, the freedom for public discourse in the Age of Pericles (459-430 B.C.) and the influx of new learning (math, natural science, politics) into Athens from itinerant teachers called "Sophists", all began to challenge the meanings and values of Athenian culture. This would set the stage for the emergence of a new form of control grounded on the foundations of real knowledge. It would be incorrect to say that reason began to be exercised in 5th-4th century B.C. Athens. It should rather be said that a new specialized dimension of human consciousness and human knowing began to be differentiated and exercised which opened up a whole new world accessible to human subjects. It would be in addition to the ordinary, everyday, practical world of common sense constituted by common sense knowing. That this theoretic

dimension was new and different is made evident by the new kind of questions which Socrates asked: What is justice? What is courage? What is a circle? And so forth. While everyone in Athens could give him a practical, common sense, nominal definition, (i.e. they knew what the word meant in relationship to themselves and their practical human living, and they knew how to use the word in a sentence) none of them could give him the kind of answers that the questions intended. Even Socrates admitted that he did not know the answers.

The kinds of answers that Socrates demanded were precise, unequivocal, universal, explanatory definitions, i.e. definitions which could apply to every instance of the defined and to no instance of anything else ("omni et soli" or "omni et nullo"<sup>3</sup>). Through his questions he also sought and intended to know what the terms meant in themselves and in relationship to their necessary causes, rather than in relationship to himself or others and their practical, common sense lives. In other words, the kind of meanings that Socrates demanded and intended were not the meanings the terms had in everyday usage (priora quod nos), but were the theoretic and explanatory meanings of scientific and philosophical usage (priora quod se). These theoretic definitions would result from the exercise of reason detached from practical everyday living and differentiated from the common sense operations of intelligence. They would provide the secondary, reflexive definitions and controls which would allow terms to convey theoretic meanings. This would allow for rational discourse that would

---

3 Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book M

not become bogged down in verbal disputes.

By "control", of course, it is not meant that reason is to dominate or do away with primary meanings, but, rather, it is meant to allow people to clearly mean what they say and say what they mean. Logic and grammar greatly assist in this. Logic and grammar, however, are a "second order" language. They do not supply their own terms and meanings but operate on the terms provided by the "first order" meanings of common, practical daily living in order to give expression to and mediate the theoretic meanings or objects. Through such control, Plato and Aristotle were able to critically determine and define the meaning of true knowledge and science and were thus able to 1) reveal the inadequacies and pretensions of the Sophists and 2) provide a new critical, theoretic foundation for the meanings and values of Athenian culture.

### **B. Common Sense**

Before explanation is given about this theoretic realm of knowledge, mention must first be given of what has been referred to as the "common sense" dimension of knowledge or the "common sense" differentiation of consciousness. "Common sense" is a technical expression used by Lonergan to distinguish a particular kind of knowing and world of knowledge. It is differentiated and distinguished from scientific or theoretic knowing. Common sense pertains to the broadest, largest, and primary field of knowledge insofar as it takes in all the practical and interpersonal areas and circumstances of human life where intelligence is exercised and

operative. It is not to be identified with ignorance or unintelligence that will someday be supplanted by or subsumed under some as yet unknown scientific theory or concept. This is because, unlike the scientific utilization of intelligence, the common sense operation of intelligence concerns itself with understanding and grasping the intelligibilities of objects not 1) in relation to other objects (modern science) or 2) in relation to their necessary causes (classical science), but in relation to the people and their practical everyday life and concerns. While both science and common sense begin from experience and sense description for their initial data, each has a different interest in the data with respect to their different intentions and questions. Lonergan distinguishes these as the difference between the common sense patterning of experience and the theoretic patterning of experience. Common sense, therefore, consists in an accumulation of related experiences and insights which have been taken from the data of experience insofar as one has had reason to inquire or seek understanding of the data due to the concerns of practical, everyday life which have impinged on one's consciousness:

Each and every human being who grows beyond infancy is such a subject. No one has to go to a school or get a diploma in order to develop some degree of common sense. Each and every human being to some degree experiences a spontaneous self-correcting process of learning in which ranges of skills as varied as each and every human life are learned. . . . The development of common sense indicates how insights and the process of learning are hardly esoteric activities confined to ivory towers or scientific laboratories. By showing how common sense is intellectual when it develops the practical skills needed for attaining concretely particular goods, Lonergan effectively counters the tendency since the Enlightenment to contrast the supposed skepticism of empirical science with the naivete of common sense. In both empirical science and common sense, self-correcting processes of learning are functioning. True they

function very different in each. But it is simply wrong to set the two in conflict and opposition as though common sense were rife with superstition eventually to be overcome by the clear and clean concepts of science, or as though science was intrinsically skeptical and to be controlled by an omniscient common sense.<sup>4</sup>

The Athenians, then, were not able to answer Socrates' questions, not because they were not intelligent, e.g. they all knew what it meant to be just as opposed to unjust, and they all knew enough to point out a circle and distinguish it from a square. They were not able to answer him, rather, because the object or intention of Socrates' questions pertained to an aspect of the world they had no practical need to bother asking about.

The disdain of scientists and philosophers like Socrates by pragmatic people is, of course, in response to what is perceived as an unnecessary obscuring of what seems plain and obvious. For the practical, the world of theory is simply unreal. This is because it is not accessible to their pragmatically and tangibly oriented and patterned operations of intelligence. One has only to recall Plato's recounting of the amusement and disdain which the Thracian milkmaid had for Thales of Miletus (624-546 B.C.) when he tumbled into the well while contemplating the heavens to appreciate the different worlds the two resided in.

Unlike theoretic meanings, common sense knowledge is not something that can be formulated into universally valid concepts. This is because its concern is for particular aspects of objects in relation to particular

---

4 Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Bernard Lonergan's Theology", pp. 3-4

places and times. Ordinary elliptical language, not technical language, is the expression of common sense intelligence. Ordinary language can thus never be obliterated by the theoretic as some have attempted. The theoretic seeks to clarify terms not for the sake of denying the ordinary elliptical expressions of meaning which the terms convey in everyday parlance, but for the sake of allowing language to mediate and give unambiguous expression to theoretic meanings:

Common sense, like grammar, is egocentric; it concerns the intelligibility of things for me. In grammar, time and tense relate to my time, my present, and the meaning of fundamental adverbs, like 'here' and 'there' is related to me. If one draws a map of a city, one is expressing a relation of things to one another; and when one looks at a map in a strange city, one can ask, 'Where am I? How do I correlate my 'here' with this map?' Similarly, when one asks, 'What time is it?' one is wanting to correlate one's 'now' with the public references obtained from a clock. The scientific procedure of relating things to one another builds up maps and clocks that leave the whole common-sense approach to things out of the picture.<sup>5</sup>

Common sense cannot be universalized since it deals with concrete situations. *[Throughout this thesis, "concrete" is used in a technical way to refer to an object or thing under all of its aspects. It is distinguished from the term "abstract" which refers to an object or thing with respect to one or several but not all of its aspects: "For the concrete is the real not under this or that aspect but under its every aspect in every instance."*<sup>6</sup>] Common sense knowledge is never able to be given adequate expression for it is always in need of additional insights

---

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 128

<sup>6</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 36



into the actual situations which a person confronts in order to be completed:

Common sense, unlike the sciences, is a specialization of intelligence in the particular and concrete. It is common without being general, for it consists in a set of insights into the situation in hand; and, once that situation is passed, the added insight is no longer relevant, so that common sense at once reverts to its normal state of incompleteness.<sup>7</sup>

An example of the incompleteness of the habitual insights of common sense can be given by comparing proverbs which express common sense insights. "Look before you leap" and "The one who hesitates is lost" are two proverbs whose contradictions help point out how common sense knowledge is always in need of additional insights into a given situation in order to be prudently exercised.

Common sense knowledge may not only be expressed in words and language, but also intersubjectively through one's tone, volume, facial expressions, gestures, beliefs, symbols, rites, etc. The meaning of such intersubjective expressions shifts and changes according to different relational and interpersonal situations and contexts, e.g. a smile in one interpersonal situation can express joy, while in another it can express contempt. Common sense meaning also shifts as the immediate, practical interests, concerns, and tasks of human living change. It thus varies from age to age and place to place. It also varies from field to field insofar as it becomes specialized in the performance of particular tasks. The common sense of the 1980's is thus not that of the 1960's, that of

---

<sup>7</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 175

Americans is not that of Russians, and that of a plumber is not that of a teacher:

Common sense is common not to all men of all places and times, but to the members of a community successfully in communication with one another. Among them one's common sense statements have a perfectly obvious meaning and stand in no need of any exegesis. But statements may be transported to other communities distant in place or in time. Horizons, values, interests, intellectual development, experience may differ. Expression may have intersubjective, artistic, symbolic components that appear strange. Then there is the question, what is meant . . .? Such in general is the problem of interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

It follows that the only interpreter of common sense utterances is common sense.<sup>9</sup>

As Hugo A. Meynell (1936- ) states:

Every society and every group within society has its fund of commonly accepted judgements of fact and value which constitutes its common sense. At a comparatively primitive state, observation and practice will provide criteria for testing of judgements in a large range of cases, but a capacity for comprehensive criterion is lacking. Thus general and overall accounts of humanity and the world which prevail in such a community are inevitably determined by its members' emotional and imaginative needs. This is the stage of "mythic consciousness" (undifferentiated consciousness), as Lonergan calls it, which does and must prevail before people have the leisure, the inclination, . . . the intellectual tools (or the theoretic differentiation of consciousness) necessary to embark on any comprehensive inquiry into human nature and of the world.<sup>10</sup>

The function of meanings also differs between common sense and theory. Common sense presupposes an interpersonal situation and gives cognitive and communicative expression to, as well as evokes, personal and communal

---

8 Lonergan, Method, p. 154

9 Lonergan, Insight, p. 177

10 Hugo A. Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p.8

feelings, desires, fears, loves, hopes, thoughts, intentions, etc. It is therefore very much integral to the constituting of a community, society, culture, and history. This is insofar as a community is bound together by intersubjectivity, common experience, common understanding, common judgements, common values, loyalties, decisions, and actions:

A community, is not just a number of men within a geographical frontier. It is an achievement of common meaning, and there are kinds and degrees of achievement. Common meaning is potential when there is a common field of experience . . . Common meaning is formal when there is common understanding . . . Common meaning is actual inasmuch as there are common judgements . . . Common meaning is realized by decisions and choices, especially by permanent dedication, in the love that makes families, in the loyalty that makes states, in the faith that makes religions. Community coheres or divides, begins or ends, just where the common field of experience, common understanding, . . . judgement, . . . commitments begin and end. So communities are of many kinds: linguistic, religious, cultural, social, political, domestic.<sup>11</sup>

Since it is only within particular and concrete psychological, intersubjective, and communal contexts that the common sense meanings of gestures, symbols, artwork, writings, rites, etc. can be interpreted, there have arisen various human sciences, and different schools within each, seeking and offering interpretive meanings for them, e.g. psychology with the different interpretative schools of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Carl Jung (1875-1961), and Alfred Adler (1870-1937); liturgists and anthropologists of religion such as Mircea Eliade (1907-1986); physiologists like Gilbert Durand (1921-2012); etc. They seek to understand the objects, meanings, and values which images, desires,

---

<sup>11</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 79

feelings, writings, art, rites, etc., either mediate or repress. This is also done less formally by each person insofar as 1) one's biological needs are expressed, felt, and mediated in consciousness as desires and images to be interpreted, formed, informed, refined, and integrated with one's intelligence, meanings, and values, 2) one spontaneously learns to interpret the various communal and social expressions of one's particular culture, and 3) one comes to accept or reject the meanings and values that are mediated to oneself through family, society, or church.

### **C. Classical Science**

The kind of question which Socrates could not answer would in short order be answered by Aristotle. In his **Nichomachean Ethics**, for example, he was able to give precise explanatory and theoretic definitions to the virtues and vices because of what had begun to be accomplished as a result of the specialized differentiation of consciousness which was prompted by Socrates' questioning and intending of theoretic meanings.

Aristotle was able to give expression to theoretic meanings by controlling the common sense meanings and references of terms. He did this by precisely relating and defining the terms relative to other terms, e.g. he would define the term "courage" by relating it to the terms "rashness" and "cowardice". He then gave all of these relationships conceptual and systematic expression:

In the basis of common-sense apprehension, satisfactory universal definitions cannot be produced. This was clear from the Socratic experiment, for every Athenian knew perfectly well the difference between

temperance and gluttony, between courage and cowardice, between knowledge and ignorance. . . . But it is one thing to know the meaning of words. It is quite another to define that meaning.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, with the Greeks, there was the discovery that theoretic insights could be expressed in universally valid form. Once the ability of having such universal definitions was discovered, the ability to have rigorous, logically deductive systems was made possible:

The discovery of an ideal of science, conceived in terms of definitions, axioms, postulates and problems was based upon that structure. It was a specific achievement of the human spirit that was novel to the Athenians.<sup>13</sup>

Obtaining knowledge of the "universals" or "ideal types" of the theoretic realm was accomplished by means of the process of asking questions. The data which was questioned was that which was already known in a common sense way. What one would intend in questioning would be knowledge of the objects in themselves or in relationship to their necessary causes. To give an example, Aristotle sought to arrive at knowledge of the best or ideal regime through questioning actually existing regimes and variously held opinions about regimes. Because the theoretically best regime was reached and ascended to through the dialogical (dialectical) process of asking questions about the concretely existing, he was also able to grasp the conditions which would have to be fulfilled (revealed by the questions) in order for it to become realized in the concrete. Human participation in nous was thus intimately related

---

12 Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Theology*, (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1973), pp. 4-5

13 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 107

to praxis, i.e. the practical, political, and cultural. High regard was given to theoretical knowledge as something that was able to give direction and guidance to concrete personal, social, and cultural life, i.e. to life in the cave. Human participation in nous was regarded as the means by which people could go beyond the ambiguous meanings of the common sense narrative forms of discourse (mythos) and the illusory shadows and contingencies of priora quod nos. Through theoretical reason one could know the "ideal forms", "universal intelligibilities", "eternal verities", and "true realities" of priora quod se. By knowing things in themselves or by their necessary causes one was said to participate in their source in the divine light or divine fire.

The "parable of the cave" in Plato's **Republic** (381 B.C.) provided the metaphor into which insights were had with respect to 1) the nature, purpose, and goal of reason, 2) the greatness of a life given over to the pursuit of the goal and 3) the confidence of being able to attain it. In terms of its nature, the Greeks first referred to the goal or ideal of reason and science as certain knowledge of things by their necessary causes (certa rerum per causas cognitio). They were also confident in their ability to obtain to such knowledge, i.e. to reach the eternal verities or ideal forms. Such a conception of the ideal and goal of science (episteme), and such confidence in the ability to attain to it were conditioned by various factors. Among these were 1) the necessary certitudes which were regarded as achieved in Euclidean geometry (c. 350-250 B.C.) , 2) the apparent immutability of the celestial spheres which

made it seem that there was a divine cosmologically grounded hierarchical order governing nature, the human psyche, and human society and culture, and 3) the negative influence of the unrest, uncertainties, and contingencies of life in 5th-4th century Athens - especially with respect to the disruption of traditional culture brought about as a result of the influx of new learning. All of this, in addition to the precariousness, ridicule, and social disparagement which those involved with the academy had to endure, would help to influence some individuals and groups to come together and seek the solid foundations of true, universal, unchanging, and necessary knowledge.

The theoretic knowledge or abstract ideal forms sought after were not anything that could be obtained by logic nor, once attained, applied logically. Rather, as has been noted, they were attained and applied dialogically, through the process of asking and answering questions with respect to the concretely given. Aristotle would come to know the forms and essences (causa essendi or quidditas) not by recollecting them or contemplating them in some Platonic heaven of abstract forms, nor by simply gazing at concrete sensible objects, but by questioning the concretely given. He realized that the "what" question was the same as the "why" question, e.g. "what is an eclipse?" means "why is the sun darkened as it is?"<sup>14</sup> and "what is a human?" means "why is this a human?".<sup>15</sup> Aristotle realized that one truly knows something when one knows its

---

<sup>14</sup> Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, II, 2

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, Metaphysics, VII, 17

cause.

Aristotle realized that knowledge of causes could be given appropriate expression through the structured terms and relationships of subjects and predicates, premises and conclusions. By being given such a logical structure, knowledge of causes was able to manifest its nature as a true science: "in his Posterior Analytics he conceived science as a deduction from first principles that expressed objective necessity".<sup>16</sup> The initial first premises or first principles upon which the whole logical system was to rest, however, were to be obtained not through logic nor through positing self-evident propositions, but through discovery brought about through questioning. In this discovery of first principles Aristotle uses the metaphor of a military rout which is followed by a rally. In the metaphor the rally occurs when those who are fleeing the rout come together one by one to make a stand:<sup>17</sup>

I think this military analogy is sound enough. For it represents the chance accumulation of clues that can combine into a discovery. But it is not at all clear that a necessary truth will be discovered and not a mere hypothesis.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, however, as a result of 1) a narrow reading of the Posterior Analytics and the logical ideal of true science expressed therein, 2) the influence of the medieval Arab commentators on Aristotle, and 3) the fact that Aristotle's logical works were, for a time, the only

---

16 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 6

17 Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, I, 2, 71b 8-12; II, 19, 100a 11ff.

18 Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge", Lonergan Workshop, vol. 1, (Missoula, MT: Scholar's Press, 1978), pp. 318-9



part of the Aristotelian corpus available in the West, there came to be held the mistaken notion that one could obtain one's basic terms and relations (first principles) through logic. Aristotle himself, however, only made use of logic as a second order operation to clarify and distinguish theoretic terms and meanings and to draw theoretic conclusions from them:<sup>19</sup> "the Posterior Analytics never were normative for Aristotle's own philosophical thinking or theoretic work."<sup>20</sup> What Aristotle failed to realize was that the intelligibilities he discovered were not necessarily necessary truths, but correlations that were de facto verified.

Lonergan sharply distinguishes decadent Aristotelianism from the actual operative performance, method, and achievement of Aristotle himself: "neither Aristotle himself nor his disciple, Thomas Aquinas, went out of their way to provide their work with necessary first principles; they were content to do what they could".<sup>21</sup>

An example of what Lonergan is referring to is found in the Ethics, where Aristotle refuses to speak of ethics - of what is right and wrong, of justice, of temperance, and of virtue - apart from the prudential judgement of people who are actually ethical, just, temperate, and virtuous:

Actions . . . are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just or temperate, but the man who does them as just and temperate men do them. . . . Virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a

---

19 Cf. also St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 14, a. 7; q. 79, a. 8

20 Lonergan, "Religious Knowledge", p. 317

21 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 6

rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it.<sup>22</sup>

While Aristotle may seem to be arguing circularly, the fact is that it is only circular from a logical perspective. It is not circular from the perspective of one actually and prudently knowing.

The most fundamental and significant aspect of classical culture was its notion of science. Since reason was regarded as capable of apprehending the necessary and eternal principles, truths, and causes, only this certain knowledge of the necessary causes of things was regarded as knowledge, science, and theory (episteme, theoria) in the true and proper sense. It was contrasted with mere opinion, belief or prudence (doxa, phronesis) which dealt with the contingent, changing, accidental, and incidental. Where Lonergan contrasts theory with common sense, Aristotle contrasted episteme with doxa, sophia with phronesis, necessity with contingency.<sup>23</sup> Plato similarly contrasted the transcendental world of ideal forms with the transient world of appearance. Lonergan refers to this contrast of the Greeks in the following way:

If the object of Greek science was necessary, it also was obvious to the Greeks that in this world of ours there is very much that is not necessary but contingent. The Greek universe, accordingly, was a split universe: partly it was necessary and partly it was contingent. Moreover, this split in the object involved a corresponding split in the development of the human mind. As the universe was partly necessary and partly contingent, the human mind was divided between science and opinion, theory and practice, wisdom and prudence. Insofar as the universe was necessary it could be known scientifically; but insofar as it was contingent, it could be known only by opinion. Again, in so far as the universe was

---

22 Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, II, iii, 4, 1105b 5-8; II, vi, 15, 1106b 36f.

23 Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, VI, E, Z 1027a 19f: Nichomachean Ethics, VI, 5, 1140a 24ff.

necessary, human operation could not change it; it could only contemplate it by theory; but insofar as the universe was contingent, there was a realm in which human operation could be effective; and that was the sphere of practice. Finally, insofar as the universe was necessary, it was possible for man to find ultimate and changeless foundations [emphasis added], and so philosophy was the pursuit of wisdom; but insofar as the universe was contingent, it was a realm of endless differences and variations that could be subsumed under hard and fast rules; and to navigate on that chartless sea there was needed all the astuteness of prudence.<sup>24</sup>

The Aristotelian notion of science<sup>25</sup> was of a discipline that sought: 1) necessity (what could not be otherwise), 2) certitude, and 3) causality (material, formal, efficient - exemplary, and final). For Aristotle, the basic science (first philosophy or wisdom) was metaphysics. It was the science that sought comprehensive knowledge of the whole. Plato and Aristotle were both true philosophers (lovers of wisdom) for they sought and quested after, but did not claim to possess, comprehensive knowledge of the whole by means of the process of questioning.

The science of metaphysics, then, set forth the basic terms and relations which encompassed all of being. For Aristotle the basic terms through which one was able to begin to understand the universe were potency (or matter) and form. These metaphysical terms and their relationship were not anything that were logically deduced or proven, but, rather, were presupposed and derived from Aristotle's own prudence and wisdom. For St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), such a selection of basic terms is in need of validation - a validation he attributed to the

---

<sup>24</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 260

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, I, 2, 71b 10-12, 16ff,

"judicial habit or virtue named wisdom."<sup>26</sup>

With reference to Aristotle, Aquinas would distinguish three intellectual virtues or habits of the speculative intellect and rank them in the following order: 1) wisdom, 2) intellect, and 3) science. The highest is wisdom because it selects the correct basic terms which are used by intelligence to construct the analytic principles from which science deduces its conclusions.<sup>27</sup> In other words, wisdom is highest because it is the virtue which selects the meaning of the term "being" from among alternative suggestions (e.g. those of Parmenides (c. 515 B.C.), Thales, Plato, Aristotle, etc.). Such a selection is clearly important for it will affect one's first principles and the scientific conclusions and notions deduced from them. While it is true that wisdom is first in determining one's basic metaphysical terms, it is also true that wisdom is not something one begins with but acquires through much study and insight into the world and into various philosophical systems. Just as the wise doctor is the one who has accumulated a comprehensive set of insights in order to make a basic judgement with respect to the nature of health, so also is the wise person or philosopher the one who has accumulated a comprehensive set of insights in order to make a basic judgement with respect to the nature of the universe:

Wisdom governs the selection of basic terms. . . . Preferring one notion of being to another is a strategically very important judgement, and it is a judgement of fact. Which notion of being is real? To select the notion of being that is the notion of real being as opposed to false

---

<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 407

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Aquinas, Summa, I-II, q. 66, a. 5, ad. 4; q. 57, a. 2, ad. 2

conceptions of being, is the fundamental wisdom of the philosopher.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, just as Aristotle leaves the determination of justice to the just person, so also is the determination of the basic terms of metaphysics - of one's notion of being and the nature of the universe - left to the wise person. Considering himself wise, Aristotle selected the basic terms of potency and form. Aquinas would add the "esse". Lonergan would find his terms in the habitual operations or acts of the wise themselves. In practice this foundation of Lonergan was implied by Aristotle and Aquinas insofar as they regarded the wisdom of the wise as the prior foundational precondition that would ground the selection of basic terms. They did not, however, explicitly spell this fact out. Hence, while they refer to metaphysics as the first science, Lonergan begins with an analysis of the cognitional operations of the wise as the ground, basis, and foundation for the science of metaphysics. It is, after all, the cognitional operations of the wise that actually seek and anticipate the whole universe: "What determines our view of the universe of being is our grounded anticipation of it."<sup>29</sup> But more on all this later.

With the correctness of his selection of the basic metaphysical terms and relations presumed and regarded as cosmologically and hierarchically fixed and self-evident, Aristotle was able to provide all of the sciences with their basic terms and relations:

---

28 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 145

29 Lonergan, Collection, p. 159

Aristotle's basic terms and relations are metaphysical. His physical concepts add further determinations to his metaphysical concepts, and his psychological concepts add still further determinations.<sup>30</sup>

In Aristotelian physics one ascended from the earth to the heavens and beyond the heavens to the first mover. There was no logical break between knowledge of this world and knowledge of ultimate causes.<sup>31</sup>

Since no break was regarded as existing between the basic metaphysical terms and relations and the universe, the universe was thought to be logically derived and thus able to be understood logically. The Aristotelian universe was thus a very static and fixed one:

. . . the static viewpoint is the ideal of deductivist logic. One determines one's basic terms and relations. One determines how further terms and relations may be derived from the basic terms and relations. One sets forth one's postulates. One determines rules for valid inference. From this starting point, as a fixed basis, one proceeds. But all that one can discover is what one has already settled implicitly, for any conclusion one reaches must already be implicit in one's premises or else the result of faulty reasoning. . . . Aristotle took for granted that each discipline had its field defined by a material object and its approach defined by a formal object.<sup>32</sup>

With meanings fixed by definitions, with presuppositions and implications fixed by the laws of logic, there resulted what used to be called eternal verities but today are known as static abstractions.<sup>33</sup>

Since scientific or real knowledge had to do with the necessary ontological causes of things (of things in relation to these causes), the resulting conceptual formulations were regarded as pertaining to the

---

30 Lonergan, "Bernard Lonergan Responds:", Language, Truth, and Meaning: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress, 1970, vol. 2, Philip McShane, SJ (ed.), (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), p. 307

31 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 95

32 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, pp. 45, 33

33 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 47; cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, H, 6, 1048a 25ff.

permanent, essential, unchanging, immutable substances or souls of things. Knowledge of the relationship between the unchanging substance of human nature and its components (essence, faculties or potencies, habits, accidents, acts or operations, objects) were to be derived from and formulated according to a metaphysical analysis of the soul, within the framework of an ontological causality. Hence, from knowledge of intended objects (i.e. efficient or final causes) one came to know correlative acts or operations. Different faculties or potencies were correlative to different kinds of souls or essences, e.g. the faculty "intellect" distinguished the human soul from an animal soul. Thus, from objects one could know acts or operations, from acts or operations one could know habits, from habits one could know potencies or faculties, and from potencies or faculties one could know the essence of the soul.<sup>34</sup>

Through such an analysis, one was able to know and to distinguish humans, animals, plants, etc., in a completely objective, universal, and metaphysically grounded way. "Human nature", along with other natures, thus came to be understood as unchanging, eternal, ever the same. This was true, of course, insofar as the definition prescinded from and abstracted from the changing, developing, accidental, particular, and contingent to focus only on those aspects of humans given to this metaphysical analysis:

Classically oriented science, from its very nature, concentrated on the essential to ignore the accidental, on the universal to ignore the particular, on the necessary to ignore the contingent. Man is a rational

---

34 Cf. Aristotle, De Anima, II, 4, 415a 16ff; Aquinas, In II De Anima, left. 6 304; Summa, I, q. 87, aa. 1-3, and loc. par.

animal, composed of body and immortal soul, endowed with vital, sensitive, and intellectual powers, in need of habits and able to acquire them, free and responsible in his deliberations and decision, subject to a natural law which, in accord with changing circumstances, is to be supplemented by positive laws enacted by duly constituted authority. I am very far from having exhausted the content of the classically oriented science of man, but enough has been said to indicate its style. It is limited to the essential, necessary, universal; it is so phrased as to hold for all men whether they are awake or asleep, infants or adults, morons or geniuses; it makes it abundantly plain that you can't change human nature; the multiplicity and variety, the developments and achievements, the breakdowns and catastrophes of human living, all have to be accidental, contingent, particular, and so have to lie outside the field of scientific interest as classically conceived.<sup>35</sup>

The classical concept of human nature, however, is rather minimal. Too much weight and emphasis would come to be placed on it as if it provided an exhaustive or complete understanding of the human person:

If one abstracts from all respects in which one man can differ from another, there is left a residue named human nature and the truism that human nature is always the same. One may fit out the eternal identity, human nature, with a natural law. One may complete it with the principles for the erection of positive law. . . . So one may work methodically from the abstract and universal towards the more concrete and particular, and the more one does so, the more one is involved in the casuistry of applying a variety of universals to concrete singularity. . . . It may be objected that substantially there are always the same things to be known and the same things to be done. But I am not sure that the word "substantially" means anything more than that things are the same insofar as you prescind from their differences.<sup>36</sup>

As a result of this conception of human nature, concrete ethical, social, and cultural questions pertaining to human perfection and fulfillment, e.g. what is the right way to live?, what is of value?, what is wrong?, and so forth, tended to result in answers as abstract, absolute, and standardized as the human nature they applied to. Lonergan refers to this standardization and solidification of classical culture as "classicist culture" or "classicism": Classicist culture was stable. It took its stand on what ought to be, and what ought to be is not to be

---

<sup>35</sup> Lonergan, Collection, pp. 261-2

<sup>36</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 3-4



refuted by what is. It legislated with its eye on the substance of things, on the unchanging essence of human living and, while it never doubted either that circumstances alter cases or that circumstances change, still it also was quite sure that essences did not change, that change affected only the accidental details that were of no great account. So its philosophy was perennial philosophy, its classics were immortal works of art, its religion and ethics enshrined the wisdom of the ages, its laws and its tribunals the prudence of mankind.<sup>37</sup>

Classical culture, in conceiving itself normatively, would end up standardizing many otherwise specific or arbitrary personal, social, and cultural variables. This standardization, of course, was something that was thought to be metaphysically and cosmologically grounded. Classicist culture therefore came to be endowed with an aura of necessity and permanence. As Patrick H. Byrne (1947- ) states it:

Any attempt to make the universality of human nature into the sole standard of human behavior, independently of practical wisdom's contribution (prudence, phronesis) leads to one of two dangers. There will result either a casuist attempt to deduce particulars from universals or a surreptitious masquerading of cultural particularities as metaphysical universals. Both were done with all too much frequency. . . . Norms for ethical behavior were based upon the various ways in which the potentialities of universal, unchanging human nature could be perfected. Its standards in eternal verities resulted in the inviolable laws, virtues, and standards of taste. Clearly, with such a conception, classicist culture alone could properly be called "culture", since no other culture was based upon real knowledge of the right and true.<sup>38</sup>

Those outside of classicist culture were regarded as uncultured or barbarians:

. . . classicist culture contrasted itself with barbarism. It was culture with a capital "C". Others might participate in it to a greater or lesser extent and, in the measure they did so, they ceased to be barbarians.<sup>39</sup>

---

37 Ibid., pp. 92-3

38 Patrick H. Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", Lonergan Workshop, vol. 6, (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1986), p. 13

39 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 92

This making normative Greek culture as a permanent achievement is regarded by Lonergan, as it is by historian Bruno Snell (1896-1986), as due primarily to the popularizers of Greek philosophy, i.e. to men such as Isocrates (436-338 B.C.), Cicero (106-43 B.C.), the Sophists, and the rhetoricians of the Greco-Roman world. In popularizing the content of the "classics" they failed to recover and pass on the dialogical and prudential character of classical reason. They instead presented a caricature of it and its achievement - as something that could be had by means of logically ordering and drawing conclusions from a few common sense perceptions of self-evident truths:

. . . the humanists, the orators, the school teachers, . . . the men who simplified and watered down philosophic thought and then peddled it to give the slow-witted an exaggerated opinion of their wisdom and knowledge.<sup>40</sup>

Their standardization of ethics, for example, would go contrary to Aristotle's insistence in the **Ethics** that the perfecting of human moral virtue is dependent upon prudence to discern the proportion of what is "right for one's self" and of doing "at the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason and in the right manner."

---

40 Ibid., p. 234

#### **D. Conceptualism**

Underlying "classicism" lies a misunderstanding of human knowing. Lonergan refers to this as "conceptualism". More will be said of it later, but for now it is important to mention it as a plague which has infected not only classical but modern thought as well. It is to be found wherever the human mind is thought of as that which "produces" concepts. This happens because "understanding" is taken to mean the grasping or intuiting of relationships between concepts, rather than that which generates the concepts themselves:

Conceptualists conceive human intellect only in terms of what it does; but their neglect of what intellect is, prior to what it does has a variety of causes. . . . Most commonly they do not advert to the act of understanding. . . . but the intellectualist knows and analyzes not only what intelligence in act does but also what it is.<sup>41</sup>

As Father Matthew L. Lamb (1934-2018) puts it:

Basically conceptualism can be defined as the tendency to place concepts and/or ideas prior to, and in a sense grounding, any and all understanding. Concepts and ideas come first, then understanding is the perception or intuition of relations or nexi between concepts (rather than grasping relations or nexi in data, sense, or phantasm). . . . But understanding precedes and grounds all concepts.<sup>42</sup>

"Conceptualism" is opposed to "intellectualism". In the latter, concepts are understood as formulations of understandings of or insights into data that was grasped through the process of questioning, cf.

---

41 Lonergan, Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, David Burrell, CSC (ed.), (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), pp. 156-7

42 Lamb, "Lonergan's Method and Postmodernity", an unpublished class handout, Nov. 5, 1985, p. 1

Aquinas: "Concepts proceed from acts of understanding"<sup>43</sup> or Aristotle: "the act of understanding grasps the forms in images".<sup>44</sup> Concepts, therefore, are intimately and intrinsically related to, conditioned by, and dependent upon the concrete particularities, historical contexts, and personal horizons of the subject. They are expressions of the subject's questioning, understanding, and ideas. In a word, concepts have dates:

Conceptualism, however, ignores human understanding and so it overlooks the concrete mode of understanding that grasps intelligibility in the sensible.<sup>45</sup>

What is closed conceptualism? Well, conclusions result from principles. In turn, principles result from their component terms. But whence come the terms? The conceptualist view is that they are had by an unconscious process of abstraction from sensible data. It follows that all science is a matter of comparing terms, discovering necessary nexus, and setting to work the cerebral logic-machine to grind out all the possible conclusions. It is the sort of science for which a symbolic logic is an essential tool. Moreover, it is the sort of science that is closed to real development: objectively there either exists or does not exist a necessary nexus between any two terms; on the subjective side either one sees what is there to be seen or else one is intellectually blind and had best give up trying.<sup>46</sup>

From what has been said of classicist culture, one can understand how it tended toward being conceptualist. First, real knowledge was considered to be obtained by grasping concepts. Second, concepts were grasped by abstracting the universal from the particular matter. Third, such knowledge was thought to be of the universal, eternal, necessary,

---

43 Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 27, a. 1c

44 Aristotle, De Anima, III, 7, 431b 2

45 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 74-5

46 Lonergan, Collection, p. 89

and unchanging. This was because: "universals do not change; they are just what they are defined to be; and to introduce a new definition is, not to change the old universal, but to place another new universal beside the old one."<sup>47</sup>

As a result of conceptualism, there came to exist a separation between the world of prefabricated universals (e.g. the Platonic heaven of ideal forms) and that of the concrete, particular, and changing. Even though in practice Aristotle exercised and referred to the need for exercising intelligent practical wisdom or prudence in order to understand the concrete, he was not able to let go of his notion of what is real knowledge or true science. He therefore was not able to admit that there could be a science of the changing or accidental.<sup>48</sup> Hence the dualism between the two realms.

This dualism would be paralleled in the modern era with the split between empiricists and idealists. The problem is the same conceptualist one of not being able to keep concepts and ideas together with sense experience, data, and matter:

In this sense David Hume (1711-1776) and John Locke (1632-1704) were every bit as conceptualist as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831). The dispute between empiricism and idealism is a minor dispute within conceptualism between how concepts and ideas relate to sense experience and data.<sup>49</sup>

The solution to this problem is to realize that it is understanding and

---

47 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 3

48 Aristotle, Metaphysics, VI, E, 2, 1027a, 19f.

49 Lamb, "Lonergan's Methodology and Post-Modernity", p. 1

insight which mediates sense experience and data with concepts and ideas. This is because understanding inquires into data and sense experience. What is understood is then formulated in concepts and ideas. This recovery of "intellectualism" by Lonergan, through his work on Aquinas, has thus been of great significance for philosophy. This also explains the title of his major work: **Insight: A Study of Human Understanding**.

With concepts understood as 1) expressions of insights into concrete data and 2) in need of verification in the data which conditions them and apart from which they do not exist, Lonergan is able to conclude:

Human understanding develops and, as it develops, it expresses itself in ever more precise and accurate concepts, hypotheses, theories, systems. But conceptualism, as it disregards insight, so it cannot account for the development of concepts. Of themselves, concepts are immobile. They ever remain just what they are defined to mean. They are abstract and so stand outside the spatio-temporal world of change.<sup>50</sup>

There are some, of course, who would be fearful of admitting that concepts have dates and can change. For them unchanging and logically systematized concepts, laws, and dogmas are their means of access to eternal, universal, unchanging foundations for science, philosophy, ethics, politics, and theology. What they do not realize, however, is that, as Aquinas reminds us, eternal truths exist only in the eternal and unchanging mind of God.<sup>51</sup> For it to be admitted 1) that there can be any real significance beyond an incidental significance in the changing, accidental, and concrete world for science, philosophy, ethics, politics,

---

<sup>50</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 74

<sup>51</sup> Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 16, a. 17

and theology and 2) that the concepts so formulated are themselves open to development upon further understanding, seems to suggest a loss of any kind of normative foundation or standard. For Lonergan, however, such foundations and standards are always to be found in the transcendental notions or transcendental precepts inherent in human cognitional and volitional consciousness, i.e. be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible (but more on this later). At this point we must first consider how it was that classical cultural foundations ever became related to the Christian religion in general and Christian theology in particular.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **THEOLOGY IN CLASSICAL CULTURE**

##### **A. The Emergence of Christian Theology**

Lonergan locates the beginning of Christian theology in the period of Byzantine and Medieval Scholasticism. Some may wonder whether Lonergan has forgotten about the many patristic and early medieval thinkers of the first millenium of the Christian era. The fact is that he has not. In fact he states that without these many previous thinkers and writers, the medieval achievement would not have been possible. This achievement was, namely, the differentiation and specialization of theology as a distinct academic discipline within the Christian religion, accompanied by its own experts, technical terms, and distinct method. In other words theology became: "a collaborative, ongoing, cumulative process of reflection and formulation that topically ordered and explanatorily developed the Christian tradition as a whole".<sup>1</sup> In order to understand this achievement of a "systematic" theology, it is first necessary to understand what preceded its development.<sup>2</sup>

##### **B. The Origins of Theology**

At the origins of Christianity, during the New Testament period, there were those who taught and preached the Gospel, and, as is evident from

---

1 Lonergan, "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation", The Journal of Religion, 55 (1975), p. 177

2 Cf. Lonergan, The Way to Nicea, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976)



the New Testament writings, did so with different nuance, emphasis, and vocabulary. It often depended upon the audience that was being addressed, e.g. whether Jews or Gentiles. Even as the terms teacher and preacher suggest, it is evident these people were very closely linked with and related to the communities they addressed. Hence, their writings on the Christian message tended to be done from and with basic practical, common sense perspectives and terminology. In other words, their communication was primarily functional, constitutive, and economic rather than technical, expository, and ontological. They were ministers rather than theologians.

By the second and third centuries, there came the need, not only for the sake of evangelization but for the sake of sheer survival, for Christians to address pagans, especially those who persecuted and misunderstood Christianity. As a result, different ways of reflecting upon and understanding the Christian message began to be developed. Since those they addressed did not share a common scriptural, traditional, or liturgical basis or horizon with them, these Christian "apologists" had to make an effort to discover a common basis by entering into and understanding the mindset and presumptions of their adversaries. They then proceeded to clarify and recast what it was that Christians really believed in terms understandable to and challenging of the horizons of their interlocutors.

As various sects, schools, and groups arose within Christianity, there also arose problems having to do with differing and erroneous beliefs and

interpretations of scripture. There thus arose the need for Christians to have clearer means and methods by which they could understand, articulate, and ground what it was they actually believed. One example of this was the work done by St. Clement of Alexandria (150-215). In response to the fantastic interpretations of scripture presented by the Gnostics, Clement devised a method for grounding interpretations of texts by: 1) ordering the questions asked of a text, 2) clearly defining each word, and 3) determining whether a real or allegorical reference corresponded to the words.<sup>3</sup> Clement, along with St. Irenaeus (138-202), Tertullian (160-220), and Origen (185-253), also had to contend with the questions of philosophers, especially questions having to do with how God was to be understood, given all the anthropomorphic references in the scriptures. With reference to this question of God, Clement would state: "Even though it is written, one must not so much think of the Father of all as having a shape, as moving, as standing or seated or in a place, as having a right hand or a left."<sup>4</sup>

At the first ecumenical council at Nicea in 325, the Church, through St. Athanasius (296-373), in response to the interpretation of Christ presented by Arius (289-336), found it necessary to invent a non-scriptural technical term, "homoousios". This was done in order to unambiguously state and give answer to a question which was not directly addressed by, but, nevertheless was considered to be a truth of the

---

3 St. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, VIII, 1ff.

4 Ibid., V, II, 71, 4; cf. II, 68, 3; and St. Irenaeus: Adversus Haereses, II, 30, 9

scriptures, namely the fact that Christ is fully God and fully human. In other words, the Church found it necessary, prompted by new questions, to turn away from the more ambiguous and elusive common sense terms, figures, and symbols of functional scriptural language in order to address certain specific audiences, problems, and questions, and to precisely state the true meaning of Christian beliefs and scripture. A "second order" level of reflection thus began to emerge with its accompanying technical vocabulary, terms, and propositions in order to "contain" certain specific Christian meanings.

The question asked by Arius about Christ may be compared to the question that was asked by Socrates. It was a question that asked about Christ in himself (quoad se) as distinguished from Christ in relation to Christians (quoad nos). The answer to this question would not, of course, be unrelated to how the Church would relate to him.

The answer given by Athanasius required a new theoretic manner of thinking and meaning, as well as a new technical vocabulary to express this meaning. Scriptural truth would come to be identified not with scriptural language, but with what was meant, intended, or implied in it and with what made such truth comprehensible, namely theoretic meaning. Hence, there gradually developed not only theoretic reformations of doctrine, known as dogmas, but a development and specialization of consciousness. Things and persons came to be understood not only in their practical or functional relation to the Christian community (e.g. Christ as Lord and Savior), but as they are in themselves, ontologically, and in

relation to other things and persons (e.g. Christ as God and human, and consubstantial with the Father). In reflecting on this development Lonergan would remark:

It makes . . . a transition from the word of God accommodated to particular people, at particular times, under particular circumstances to the word of God as it is to be proclaimed to all people, of all time, under whatever circumstances . . . from the Gospel as announced in Galilee . . . to Catholic dogma.<sup>5</sup>

While the second order language and the theoretical meanings which it expressed provided the Church with a clarity and precision it did not have previously, there was a price paid for this. This was because the theoretic meanings of the propositions demanded a kind of understanding which was not then and is not even now easily or commonly achieved. As Michael C. O'Callaghan (1940-1986) and David Tracy (1939- ) respectively have put it:

. . . such reflection is both difficult and precarious. All too easily one can slip back into a symbolic mentality that empties second-level propositions of all meaning because they are seen to be immobile, unrelated to religious experience or anything in the real world, mere academic inventions that separate us from the true meaning of Jesus Christ. . . . (it) is a move that easily will be misunderstood and deprecated by those who have not managed to get beyond common sense thinking.<sup>6</sup>

. . . the theologian who fails to understand this key differentiation between descriptive (quoad nos) and explanatory (quoad se) heuristic methods, simply cannot include within his horizon the theoretical enterprise called speculative theology. Moreover, he simply cannot understand the basically enriching character of the entry of the Hellenistic horizon into the Christian community's heuristic

---

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, The Way to Nicea, pp. 136-7

<sup>6</sup> Michael C. O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, (Washington: University Press, 1980), pp.88-89

understanding of its experience. Indeed, if the seemingly extrinsic cognitional factors considered here are overlooked, that oversight will deprive the theologian of the ability to understand the possibility, in fact, the legitimacy of the development of Christian thought from the quoad nos of the Scriptures to the quoad se of the conciliar, patristic, medieval, modern, or contemporary period.<sup>7</sup>

This development within Christianity occurred not because Christianity became Hellenized or adopted some Greek philosophy. Rather, it occurred simply because Christianity adopted a theoretic manner of thinking and expression, distinct and differentiated from ordinary common sense modes of thought and expression.

For the most part, the thinking of most of the patristic authors was the second order logical and doctrinal task of operating on propositions, i.e. of giving clarity and precision to Christian meanings and truths. Their task was not 1) the systematic or metaphysical task of working out the presuppositions and implications of Christian meanings and realities or 2) the communicative task of relating the abstract theoretical meanings and truths to the level of practical, common sense living (an exception would be some patristic homilists). In other words, the reflections of the Fathers tended to be more concerned with clarifying terms, relating them coherently in propositions, and drawing inferences from them, e.g. Athanasius' "explanation" of consubstantiality: "the Son is consubstantial with the Father, if and only if what is true of the Father also is true of the Son, except that only the Father is Father"<sup>8</sup> or St.

---

<sup>7</sup> David Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 111-112

<sup>8</sup> St. Athanasius, Oration III Against Arius

Augustine's (354-430) "explanation" of person: "person denotes what there are three of in the Trinity".<sup>9</sup> In fact, when the Fathers tried to give explanations of what they believed, the explanation would often end up contradicting what they were trying to explain. This was because they had not yet fully made the move into the world of theory. This must now be explained.

### **C. The Origins of Christian Realism**

In the New Testament and Patristic era, Lonergan finds great significance in the fact of what he refers to as the origins of Christian or dogmatic realism. By Christian or dogmatic realism or Christian philosophy, Lonergan means the epistemology and metaphysics which are implied and inherent in Christianity because of the adherence to and confession of faith on the part of Christians. This does not mean, however, that these philosophies, epistemologies, and metaphysics are themselves Christian or supernatural. Lonergan, in fact, insists that they are "natural sciences" and able to be arrived at and accepted by any human being, Christian or non-Christian. As Father Bernard Tyrrell, S.J., (1933- ) states it:

Lonergan indubitably maintains that there is an epistemology and a metaphysics implicit in Christian revelation. . . . Lonergan would never concede that epistemology or metaphysics are any more "supernatural" sciences than are physics or chemistry. They are . . . "natural sciences".<sup>10</sup>

---

9 St. Augustine, De Trinitate, VII, iv, 7

10 Bernard Tyrrell, SJ, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), pp. 16-7

In order to understand what Lonergan means by "Christian realism" or "Christian philosophy" it is first necessary to understand what he means by realism (this will be spelled out in more detail later). First, there are those whom Lonergan calls "naive or noncritical realists". These are those who hold that what is real is what is accessible to sense, especially sight. For them it is simply obvious that what is real is what is there to be seen or touched or picked up. To demand any other criteria is to them simply ridiculous and obscurantist.

Second, there are "uncritical idealists". These are those who recognize 1) that people do not know by sense alone and 2) that besides sensing there is understanding. This understanding, however, either in fact is, or is admitted by them to be merely speculative, synthetic, and hypothetical. What it "knows", however, are simply the subjective creations and constructions of the human mind. Such constructs do not refer to anything that is "real".

Thirdly, there are "critical realists" who insist that one knows what is real not just through sensation and understanding alone, but ultimately through a correct judgement: "it is".

Fourthly, there are "Christian or dogmatic realists". They are so named because what Christians hold as true is what they affirm to be so through faith. In other words Christians, even though they do not sense or understand or grasp the sufficient reasons and evidence of what they affirm or judge, nevertheless accept, through faith, what is affirmed or judged to be true and real (enough to even act upon it and live and die

for it). Because Christians accept reality through judgements, they are implicitly in agreement with critical realists who explicitly affirm judgement as the criterion of the real. Because it is implied, however, and not necessarily reflected upon or recognized as such, Christian realism may easily mix and blend with the naive realist's or uncritical idealist's notions of knowing and notions of the real:

. . . there is a difference . . . between existential fidelity to the revealed word and the exigencies it imposes on human rationality and, on the other hand, a thematized understanding of the type of exigence for the human spirit implicit in the word of God. Thus every Christian who is faithful to the word and the exigencies it imposes on the human spirit is a dogmatic realist.<sup>11</sup>

Naive realism has tinged and continues to tinge many Christian realists. It did so to many patristic writers when they went beyond their often otherwise impeccably orthodox professions of faith and belief to explain these beliefs. Their explanations would often contradict the professed beliefs they claimed to be explaining. For example, in trying to understand what was affirmed to be true through faith about God, Tertullian insisted that He had to have a body,<sup>12</sup> Irenaeus insisted that He had to be a container,<sup>13</sup> and Clement insisted that He had to have a shape because otherwise the angels of little children and the poor in spirit would not be able to behold His face.<sup>14</sup> These examples help to point out how what was affirmed to be true and real (God, Christ) became

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 27

<sup>12</sup> Tertullian, Treatise Against Praxeas, 7

<sup>13</sup> St. Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, II, 1, 5

<sup>14</sup> St. Clement, Excerpta ex Theodoto, II; cf. also XII and XIV



intermingled with a naive realist notion of the real as that which must be sensible and hence embodied. Even individuals like Origen who transcended naive realism through adherence to Platonism often fell prey to uncritical idealist accounts of reality that also ran counter to what was actually affirmed by them in faith.

The more the Fathers were forced to recognize the limitations of common sense scriptural language and imagery, and the more their intelligence cooperated with and assented to what was affirmed as true in faith, the more were they lead away from naive realism and uncritical idealism and closer to a critical realism. The first major step in this direction was taken at the Council of Nicea. There, through faith, Christians affirmed a reality expressed in non-imagined, explanatory terms and propositions. The affirmation was further judged not only as true and real, but as intelligible (though not able to be fully humanly understood), requiring not experience but theoretic understanding in order to be grasped. It must be said that experience, sense, and imagination still had a place in contributing to the theoretic understanding and affirmation. In fact, these provided the necessary aids, images, and phantasms which prompted, provoked, and suggested the theoretical understanding that was then expressed in non-imaginal terms and propositions, e.g. Athanasius' use of the image of the sun:

For a definitive step was taken from naive realism, beyond Platonism, to dogmatic realism and in the direction of critical realism. To the hermeneutical question, what is it that symbols symbolize, it was answered

that what they symbolize is that which is, that which is truly affirmed.<sup>15</sup>

These notions of the real, truth, and being which are reached through understanding (prompted by sense experience) and correct judgement, are regarded by Lonergan as stemming from the core of the Christian message itself. Lonergan refers to these notions not as merely arbitrary, imposed, or merely Christian notions but, rather, as notions which are basic and central to the human knowing process itself. Following such notions in one's knowing is thus said to be truly liberating of the human person in actualizing the fullness of human cognitive capabilities and potentialities. When it occurs this "intellectual conversion", as it is referred to by Lonergan, is usually a fruit of, but not solely nor necessarily a fruit of, "religious conversion". As Tyrrell puts it:

. . . when the human mind, open by nature to the possibility of a free revelation on the part of God, sincerely accepts this revelation it is impelled by its own innate dynamism, metamorphosed and empowered by the force and light of the revealed word, to rise above every form of empiricism and idealism toward a critical realism.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, while Lonergan states that: "There is no philosophy that sets up an exigence for God's gift of his love, or that constitutes sufficient preparation for that gift",<sup>17</sup> he also concludes: "There is a philosophy that is open to acceptance of Christian doctrine, that stands in harmony with it and that, if rejected, leads to a rejection of Christian

---

15 Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea*, pp. 136-7

16 Tyrrell, *Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God*, p. 28

17 Lonergan, "Bernard Lonergan Responds", p. 309

doctrine."<sup>18</sup>

It would be the movement of the patristic authors from concern for logical clarity and making logical distinctions to questions having to do with reality itself, that would eventually lead in the medieval period to the emergence of the science of metaphysics. There came to be the need at that point for a systematic thinking that could unify not only all Christian truth, reality, and being, but all truth, reality, and being. What moved this whole process forward was the human spirit of inquiry, ever continuing to ask more and more questions, and the need on the part of Christianity to mediate its meaning and message to all dimensions of human life and reality. The need for including all reality was made necessary insofar as the questions themselves lead people beyond the logically structured formulations of Christian doctrines offered by the Fathers:

. . . it was this development of metaphysical thinking that set up a theological context quite distinct from the context of church doctrines, and that lead to the development of an autonomous theological superstructure, with its own specialists and its own methods of inquiry.<sup>19</sup>

#### **D. Medieval Theology**

The method of inquiry employed by the medieval systematic thinkers was that of "lectio" and "quaestio". They first sought to consolidate their inherited tradition (lectio). They did so by researching, collecting,

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, p. 93

classifying, and organizing the answers of the past into anthologies and books of sentences. Questioning also became an organized discipline in the form of commentaries. The commentaries attempted to reconcile the hundreds of conflicting and contradictory propositions found in scripture, the fathers, the councils, authorities, and science. The works of Bishop Peter Abelard (1079-1142), especially his Sic et Non (1121), Gilbert de la Poree (1070-1154), Bishop Peter Lombard (1100-1160) and his Sentences (1150), and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his Quaestiones Desputatae (1256-1259) and Summa Theologica (1265-1274) are examples of this.

These men sought to reconcile contradictory statements by first listing arguments against a proposition (Videtur quod non . . .) and then arguments for a proposition (Sed contra est . . .). They would then proceed to give five reasons for their decision, one way or the other (Respondeo dicendum quod . . .). The reasons they would offer for their solutions were obviously very important, for the solutions could only be coherent with each other if the reasons themselves had some coherency or systematic unity to them. The greater the breadth of the attempted reconciliation, the greater became the need for a coherent, all embracing, comprehensive framework or system (Begrifflichkeit) to work from:

. . . a series of questions on a single topic . . . demanded a coherent set of principles for all solutions on that topic, while a Summa needed a single coherent set relevant to every question that might be raised. . . the development of medieval theology along the lines laid down by the technique of the quaestio created a need and an exigence for a coherent set of theoretical terms and relationships that would make possible coherent solutions to all the problems created by the apparent

inconsistencies in Scripture and in tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Medieval thinkers naturally sought to adopt and adapt systems that were already existing from the Arabs and the Greeks. These could provide them with the unified foundation from which reconciliations could be made in their pursuit of forging a systematic presentation of Christian doctrine, and in their pursuit of mediating Christian meanings to and through the new learning. This adopting and adapting was also done by Christians for the simple reason of wishing to become familiar with what was being presented as a systematic and comprehensive pagan alternative to Christianity and Christian culture (there are similar parallels here to the Sophist challenge to Athenian culture and the classical response to it). Among the systems adopted and adapted, by far the most important and influential would be the Aristotelian corpus.

Systems, of course, are theoretic by nature and thus require one to move beyond common sense thinking in order to comprehend them and what they systematize. *[Note: There can be no common sense systems. There can only be a multiplicity of interpretations given by and dependent upon particular individuals giving particular interpretations relative to particular concrete contexts.]* Along with the new theoretic way of thinking that was needed, there came into being not only a new technical language, but a new social group that was able to understand the language and do the theoretic thinking. These people were the theologians (at

---

<sup>20</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 46

that time, mostly Dominicans). At the same time there were also many still operating out of an undifferentiated, naive realist and common sense mode of thinking who regarded the new group of specialists with the incomprehension, disdain, and hostility which the Athenians displayed to Socrates (at the time, mostly Franciscans, Augustinians, and ecclesiastical authorities in Paris and Canterbury who repeatedly condemned the work of the theologians, in particular the work of Aquinas). As David Tracy remarks:

For at that period in Western intellectual history, a relatively small group of men, increasingly dissatisfied even with the brilliant images of as creative a mind as Augustine, attempted and with Aquinas succeeded in bringing theoria to bear on religious truth. . . . At first it may seem - as it did to the Augustinians of Aquinas' day "unreal", "strange", "pagan", even "repugnant" to one's religious sensibilities. . . . the symbolic mind . . . has always distrusted attempts at theoria. . . . That the theoretic attitude was first fully revealed by the original Greek expulsion of mythos by logos is common enough knowledge. That its second manifestation came into the West with the scientific theology of the medievals, to a world still attuned to Enlightenment propaganda, is largely unrecognized.<sup>21</sup>

In terms of Lonergan's eight functional specialties of theological method: research, interpretation, history, dialectics, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications<sup>22</sup> (these will be examined later) - the medieval method consisted of the following operations. [*This method, of course, while utilized by the medieval theologians was not explicitly known or formulated by them.*] They first collected data, i.e., statements and propositions from the past from scripture, tradition,

---

21 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 48, 46-7, 47-8

22 Cf. Lonergan, Method, esp. pp. 125-45

reason, etc. (research). They would then seek to understand or interpret these statements (interpretation). Historical mindedness, however, had not yet developed, so the statements were not critically understood with respect to their original meanings within their original literary and historical contexts. Because of this, there was no comprehension or appreciation of the changing and developing history of contexts, i.e. of different questions asked and different understandings and formulations given which the statements addressed and expressed (history):

There was an empirical basis in the Bible and the Fathers; there was a search for coherence and intelligibility; but there was not entertained the possibility that the relevant intelligibility was mediated by an ongoing historical process.<sup>23</sup>

Since the historical perspective was not sufficiently developed to reconcile differences, the listing of and the reconciliation of differences (dialectics) was done based almost exclusively upon the systematic, metaphysical framework one operated out of (foundations). In the case of the Aristotelian framework, of course, history was outside of its concern. Using the criteria which the metaphysical framework provided, reconciliations were thus made and truth ascertained and set forth (doctrines). Since use was made of the Aristotelian framework, these truths tended to be considered immutable, universal, and necessary.

Following this ascertainment of doctrines, they then proceeded to the task of attaining a unified and cohesive understanding of the truths of

---

23 Lonergan, Collection, p. 196

the faith in their relation to each other and to the truths of other sciences (systematics). The final step consisted in their translating and making applicable the findings of theoretical theology to concrete and common sense problems, issues, and peoples (communications). While medieval thinkers were aware of both the mysteries of faith and naturally discovered truths of reason, there was no unified manner of relating the two until the year 1230. Prior to then, some men, such as Peter Abelard and Gilbert de la Poree, sought to unify and relate the two through logic and reason. Others, such as St. Anselm (1033-1099) and Peter Lombard, sought the reconciliation of the created and divine orders by means of unifying them around the divine mystery and faith.<sup>24</sup>

Lonergan refers to what occurred in 1230 as tantamount to a "Copernican Revolution."<sup>25</sup> It was then that Philip the Chancellor (1160-1236) worked out a distinction in the realm of theory between the two orders of the supernatural and the natural. This distinction provided theologians with their own proper field of study and prepared the way for the independent study of nature and the independence of philosophy. Along with this distinction, there came the need to find a way to also unify the realms of faith and reason, grace and nature, and the supernatural and natural. It would be Aquinas who would, through his Summa Theologica, seek to forge this unity. By insisting on the distinction between these two orders of knowledge,<sup>26</sup> he was able to unify Aristotle's comprehensive philosophical

---

24 Cf. St. Anselm, Monologion

25 Lonergan, Grace and Freedom, J. Patout Burns (ed.), (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), p. 16

26 Aquinas, Summa, II-IIae, q. 1, a. 5



and scientific synthesis with a theological synthesis of the truths of faith. He was able to do so by taking over Aristotle for the natural world and extending him analogously to the supernatural. Theology was thus consolidated and also provided with a non-theological structure which included a metaphysics, physics, biology, psychology, ethics, and political philosophy.

The distinctions made between reason and faith, nature and grace, the natural and supernatural, and philosophy and theology, of course, were made within the context of a unified system which encompassed all of reality. The system was grounded in a science of being (metaphysics), and the constituent parts, namely the particular sciences (divided according to their material and formal objects), derived their basic terms from metaphysics. These particular sciences were thus further integrated determinations within the whole. Philosophy was able to be regarded as theology's handmaiden insofar as it was fully integrated within a theological synthesis.

While men such as St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), St. Albert the Great (1193-1280), and Aquinas realized the distinctiveness of philosophy and reason and their potential to exist independently of theology and faith (exampled by the work of Aristotle himself), it would be others who would exploit this distinction into a separation:

For once reason is acknowledged to be distinct from faith, there is issued an invitation to reason to grow in consciousness of its native power, to claim its proper field of inquiry, to work out its departments of investigation, to determine its own methods, to operate on the basis of its own principles and precepts. Such was the underlying significance of

the discovery of Aristotle by the medieval age of faith.<sup>27</sup>

### **E. The Mind of Aquinas**

The breakup of Aquinas' synthesis would begin even before his death and the end of the thirteenth century. The breakup was occasioned by the Augustinian - Aristotelian conflict. As a result, the Aristotelian corpus ended up being rejected as pagan except for his logical work the **Posterior Analytics**. With this work to principally guide them, men such as John Duns Scotus (1265-1308) and William of Ockham (1290-1349) quested for the scientific ideal of certain necessary truths which could be rigorously demonstrated through logical rules. While Aquinas' quest had been for developing a theoretical understanding of that which could be probable as well as certain, these men abandoned the pursuit of understanding for a logical pursuit of abstract, necessary principles. As a result, they 1) misunderstood understanding and replaced the intellectualism of Aquinas with a conceptualism and 2) arrived at a notion of being which ran counter to the standards of critical reflection and judgement utilized by Aquinas and set by critical and Christian realism. Aquinas' reflection on human understanding was done, following the lead of Augustine in **De Trinitate** (417), for the sake of providing an analogue for his trinitarian theory. The procession of the non or prelinguistic human inner word from human understanding was the analogue he used to understand the procession of the divine Word within the understanding of God. Aquinas, as with

---

27 Lonergan, Insight, p. 527

Augustine and Aristotle before him, necessarily had to do some introspection of his own knowing process in order to arrive at this discovery of 1) the prelinguistic inner word that lies behind linguistic expression and 2) the acts of knowing from which the prelinguistic inner word originates. While Augustine's treatment of this process was expressed literarily and symbolically, Aquinas' and Aristotle's objectifications would be couched in metaphysical terms. While Aristotle provided Aquinas with an approach to the soul expressed in terms of its objects, acts, potencies, and essence, both at least alluded to the fact, and definitely made use of the fact, that the most direct route to self-knowledge is by adverting directly to one's cognitional acts or operations themselves:

The human soul understands itself through its own act of understanding which is proper to itself, showing perfectly its power and nature.<sup>28</sup>

. . . the light of agent intellect is known per se ipsum.<sup>29</sup>

For Aquinas, therefore, one knows the human soul not by its essence or through its habits, but by reflecting on its acts of understanding:

. . . it is through a scrutiny of acts of understanding that the nature of the human mind and all its virtualities can be demonstrated perfectly.<sup>30</sup>

Lonergan remarks that Aquinas was attempting: ". . . to fuse

---

28 Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m; cf. q. 84, a. 7c

29 Aquinas, De Veritate, q. 10, a. 8, ad 10m, 2ae ser.

30 Lonergan, Collection, p. 149; cf. Aquinas: Summa, I, q. 87, aa. 1-3

together . . . a phenomenology of the subject with a psychology of the soul."<sup>31</sup> Since it was objectified in metaphysical terms, however, Aquinas' procedure of adverting to and understanding his own cognitional operations was capable of being missed and ignored, which it was for seven hundred years until Lonergan's recovery. Lonergan's recovery, then, was accomplished by his literally reaching up to the mind of Aquinas (ad mentem Divi Thomae):

A method tinged with positivism would not undertake, a method affected by conceptualist illusion could not conceive, the task of developing one's own understanding so as to understand Aquinas' comprehension of understanding and its intelligibly proceeding inner word. . . . if one desires to get beyond words and suppositions to meanings and facts, then one has to explore one's own mind and find out for oneself what there is to be meant; and until one does so, one is in the unhappy position of the blind man hearing about colors and the deaf man hearing about counterpoint.<sup>32</sup>

Aquinas held that there is a conscious and spontaneous active component to intelligence. This active component gets expressed in asking questions, wondering, inquiring, and desiring to know. It is this which "illuminates" (a metaphor) phantasm (images or sense data). As Aquinas states:

Anyone can experience this of himself that when he tries to understand something he forms certain phantasms to serve him by way of examples, in which as it were he examines what he is desirous of understanding.<sup>33</sup>

This is necessary insofar as "nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in

---

31 Lonergan, Verbum, p. vii

32 Ibid., p. 217, xii

33 Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 84, a. 7c; cf. Ia, q. 79, a. 4 and Summa Contra Gentiles, II, q. 77, a. 5

sensu" (there can be nothing in the intellect unless it is first in the senses). This active component of intelligence is referred to as agent intellect (intellectus agens). It is compared to the light of the sun for questioning must be present to illumine the data or phantasm in order for one to understand different objects - analogous to the way the light of the sun must be present in order for different objects to be seen by the eye. "Intellectual light" or questioning is thus not properly or usually the object of human intelligence, but is its medium.

The intelligibility or intelligible species (species intelligibilis) of the object so illuminated by inquiry is then grasped and understood by the passive component of intelligence, referred to as possible intellect (intellectus possibilis or intelligere). It is referred to as passive for one's intelligence is said to "receive" or "become" the intelligibility or intelligible species so grasped and understood. This is why knowing is said to be by identity according to Aquinas, Aristotle, and Lonergan: ". . . the act of the thing as sensible is the act of sensation; the act of the thing as intelligible is the act of understanding."<sup>34</sup> In other words:

. . . the species received in the passive act of understanding is one and the same as the intelligible form of the understood. We understand by becoming one with the understood. . . . Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) was at one with the orbit of Mars when he understood that it was elliptical. . . . the psychotherapist is at one with the patient when he understands the patient's problem. . . . Insight is, so to speak, like a young lover - so caught up in the union that it does not attend to the difference. . . . insight grasps the species of the phantasm because of what it has become. It has become an intelligent actuation of that

---

34 Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 14, a. 2c

species. But when it tends to itself as intelligent - which it does in trying to express what it understands itself to be - it recognizes that there is so much more to being intelligent than what it has achieved in this one act (cf. Summa Ia, q. 77, a. 4)<sup>35</sup>

. . . besides the knower in act and the known in act, there are also the knower in potency and the known in potency; and while the former are identical, still the latter are distinct. . . . it follows that in immaterial substances, as one negates potency, so also one negates distinctions: 'In his quae sunt sine materiae, idem est intelligens et intellectum' (Aristotle, De Anima III, 4, 430a 3ff.; Metaphysics L, 9, 1075a 3ff.).<sup>36</sup>

As grasped or understood, the intelligible species is referred to as the insight or inner word (verbum intus prolatum) which is said to proceed from the possible intellect:

Now every procession corresponds to some sort of activity; and as corresponding to activity directed towards something external there is an outward procession, so with an activity that remains within the agent we observe an inward procession. The best example of this appears in the intellect where the action of understanding remains in him who understands. Whenever anyone understands because of his very act of understanding, something comes forth within him, which is the concept of the known thing proceeding from his awareness of it (rei intellectae ex ejus noticia procedens). It is this concept which an utterance signifies: we call it 'the word in the heart' signified by the spoken word. . . . it should be taken like an issuing in the mind (emmanationem intelligibilem), for instance like an idea (verbi intelligibilis) which stays inside oneself (ipso) (cf. Aquinas, Summa Ia, q. 27 a.1).<sup>37</sup>

After the passive aspect of the act of understanding or insight, there is then the act of intelligence which expresses this grasped inner word or intelligible species. This is referred to as the procession or emanation

---

35 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", pp. 47-8

36 Lonergan, Verbum, p. 184

37 Ibid., p. 33

of the understood inner word (emanatio intelligibilis) or as the act of intelligence that conceives, conceptualizes, and defines the insight or inner word (intelligere as dicere).<sup>38</sup> This expression or objectification of the inner word occurs after one understands or has an insight. Unfortunately, some commentators on Aquinas combined the act of intellectus possibilis (intelligere) with that of intelligere as dicere.<sup>39</sup> As a result, for them, thinking came to refer to the production of universal concepts from sense data. Further, the concepts were regarded as resulting not consciously (emanatio intelligibilis) but unconsciously through the metaphysical machinery of the human mind. The result of neglecting the central role of insight would lead to the conceptualism which would plague scholastic, 'Thomistic', and modern philosophy and, through them, every other branch of knowledge and science.

The breakdown of the intellectualism of Aquinas occurred immediately with Scotus. For him, agent intellect and possible intellect are not distinguished. Rather, phantasm is said to impress upon intellect an intelligible species. This intelligible species, however, does not correspond to the understood intelligible species but to the inner word. Intellect is then said to take a look at this "intelligible species", and what it knows in that look is a concept. By looking at different concepts it then compares them to see whether they are compatible or not or necessarily connected. Knowing is thus not one of identity but of

---

38 Cf. Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 27, a. 1c

39 Cf. Lonergan, Verbum, p. 127

confrontation. Of course, since through this looking one reaches concepts and not the intelligible species of the phantasms, Scotus and others would have the difficulty of relating their concepts or universals to the particulars of phantasm and sense data. What intellect saw could not be particular, for then it would be sense, for sense knows particulars. Further, it could not be universal, for there can be no universal in the particular. From this dilemma there would arise the philosophies of Nominalism and Voluntarism.

Unfortunately, according to both Lonergan and theologian Yves Congar, O.P., (1904-1995) it would be the conceptualist Scotist understandings and expressions and the commentators' conceptualized version of Aquinas that would come to most influence and dominate subsequent scholastic thought. Scholastic philosophy would thus come to regard itself as perennial (philosophia perennis) not because it objectified the unalterable structure of human knowing, but because it regarded its concepts as valid, unchanging, eternal, and closed to any development:

Insofar as one attends merely to concepts, one can think of universals being applied to particulars. The universals would be the philosophy, and the particulars, that to which they are applied. But one must also think of understanding, insight as the ground of conception, an understanding that arises from sensible data. One then (grasps) a quite different relation between intelligence and sensible data. Intelligence, understanding as insight, as the ground of conception, has a quite different relationship with the particular and the concrete than the relationship found between the abstract concepts 'universal' and 'particular'. There are two ways of having a theoretical discipline connected with particulars: one through the subsumption of particulars under universals.<sup>40</sup>

---

40 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 14



The second important aspect of Aquinas' thought which was neglected and distorted was his own original contribution to metaphysics, namely his notion of being (esse). Aquinas referred to two types of intellectual processions and two subsequent expressions of each. As Aquinas states:

We must realize that, as the Philosopher says, the intellect has two operations: one called the 'understanding of indivisibles', by which it knows what a thing is; and another by which it joins and divides (compositio vel divisio), that is to say, by forming affirmative and negative statements.<sup>41</sup>

The first act of understanding has already been referred to. It is the direct act of understanding which asks, understands, and conceptualizes the answers to the questions 'what is it?' or 'why is it?' (quid sit?, cur ita sit?). The second act of understanding is an act of reflective or critical understanding. It asks the question 'is it?' (an sit?, utrum ita sit?). It results in a judgement of fact, truth, or reality, i.e. it results in the answer: yes or no. This second operation is not an act of synthesizing, distinguishing, or relating inner words or concepts, as philosophers from Scotus to Immanuel Kant (1724- 1804) and beyond have thought. Rather, it is concerned with the relationship between the synthesized inner words and the realities they denote. In other words, the act of reflective understanding and judgement have to do with questioning whether something exists or not, not with combining or relating it with other concepts, i.e. it has to do with assent not synthesis. Compositio vel divisio refers to the fact that an affirmative

---

41 Aquinas, Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius, q. 5, a. 3

or negative judgement joins or divides the components of subject and predicate:

. . . the object of judgement is not the mental synthesis or distinction, but something else which presupposes the mental synthesis as already accomplished. The object of judgement is not the synthesis as synthesis, but the veracity of the synthesis.<sup>42</sup>

This second act of intelligence is referred to as reflective understanding: ". . . the intelligere from which judgement proceed is a reflective and critical act of understanding not unlike the act of Newman's illative sense."<sup>43</sup> Reflective intelligence recognizes that the conditions for the existence of the intelligible species it has understood in the mind are different from the conditions intelligence require for its existence in objective reality. Hence the question: "'is it so?' or 'Is the intelligible species I have understood indeed the intelligible form of the sensible image I originally puzzled about?'"<sup>44</sup> What reflective questioning does is to figure out the given conditions (in sense data) which would need to be observed in order to verify the existence of the intelligible species. Reflection thus presupposes the two previous operations of experiencing and understanding: ". . . it is a grasp of the sufficiency of those sources to ground the inner word of judgement."<sup>45</sup>

For Aquinas, the activity of "resolution to principles" (reductio ad principia) allows one to ascertain certitude. This operation of

---

42 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", p. 50

43 Lonergan, Verbum, p. 47

44 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", p. 51

45 Michael L. Rende, The Development of Fr. Bernard Lonergan's Thought on the Notion of Conversion, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1983), p. 46

reflective understanding refers to the reduction or resolution of the grasped inner word to first principles in intelligence and to the sense data from which it was withdrawn. It is at this point that the second inner word (affirmation or negation) is able to be expressed. An example Lonergan offers of reduction to first principles is that involving the proposition: "the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles". This is able to be known with certitude once it is resolved to first principles: "There are truths that are naturally known; they form the touchstone of other truth; and judging is a matter of reducing other issues to naturally known first principles."<sup>46</sup>

A certain judgement then follows because: ". . . the mind is coerced by its own natural acceptance of the principles to accept the conclusions as well."<sup>47</sup> What Lonergan has recovered from Aquinas, however, is the fact that these first principles are not contained in any propositions from which guaranteed, certain conclusions can be drawn. Rather, the first principles refer to the human subject's own cognitional operations. Even when Aquinas made use of propositional first principles, these were themselves referred back to and supported by their foundations in the human subject:

Augustine had advanced that our knowledge of truth originated not from without but from within us yet not simply from within us but in some illumination in which we consulted the eternal grounds and norms of things. Aquinas explained that we consult the eternal grounds and norms, not by taking a look at them, but by having within us a light of intelligence that is a created participation of the eternal and created

---

46 Lonergan, Verbum, p. 62

47 Ibid., p. 63

light (Summa I, q. 84 a. 5).<sup>48</sup>

What was missed after Aquinas was his original contribution to metaphysics. His science of metaphysics was not of an essentialism consisting in the study of some prior realm of possible being which could be, but, rather, was of esse, i.e. of existents which are or can be affirmed in a correct judgement. This notion of being was not fully achieved by those before him, even Aristotle, and was neglected by those who followed him, even self-proclaimed Thomists. While Aristotle distinguished questions for direct understanding from questions for reflection and judgement of fact,<sup>49</sup> he did not unambiguously spell it out and differentiate it within his metaphysics or method.<sup>50</sup> While Aristotle, over against Parmenides and Plato, insisted that being must be identified with the concrete universe, he did not break away from the supposition that the notion of being was a conceptual content (a form) of an act of direct understanding. He assigned substantial form as the ground of being in things. A cognitional act of understanding could then grasp and formulate the conceptual content, being. However, forms are many, among which being is one. Hence the scholastic problem of the one and the many.

With Aquinas, however, being (the true and the real) is defined as all that is and all there is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation, i.e. it is defined by the dynamic anticipation or intention

---

48 Lonergan, Insight, p. 370

49 Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, II, 1, 89b, 22ff.

50 Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Z, 17; Lonergan, Insight, pp. 366-7

for being in the questioning of the human subject that generates and goes beyond (transcends) every determinate conceptual content. As Aquinas states it, humans are:

. . . convenire cum omni ente. . . because there is spirit, it is possible for the perfection of the whole of being to exist in one being.<sup>51</sup>

Every other being takes only a limited part in being whereas the spiritual being is capable of grasping the whole of being.<sup>52</sup>

As Tracy puts it:

Aquinas was able to transform Aristotle's somewhat ambiguous position on judgement into the Thomist doctrine that judgement alone is the cognitional act by means of which the mind reaches the true and, therefore, the real. . . . It is, for Aquinas, a created participation of the divine mind. It reveals its character as such by its ability to know: its ability, in short not to confront reality - not even the higher more spiritual confrontation of Augustine - but to be identical with it through its power to understand its truth, i.e. its reality.<sup>53</sup>

Aquinas' notion of "esse", of course, was developed as a result of his reflection upon and affirmation of God (the ipsum intelligere) and God's unrestricted act (purus actus) of understanding.<sup>54</sup> The content of this act is the idea of being which encompasses the universe. Because he understood human intellect to share in the divine intelligence,<sup>55</sup> being was thus able to be defined as that which is to be known by human intelligence.<sup>56</sup> Being cannot be unknowable,<sup>57</sup> and it can never be exhausted

---

51 Aquinas, Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate, q. 1, a. 1; q. 2, a. 2

52 Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, 3, 112

53 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 59, 61

54 Aquinas, Summa, Ia, q. 2, aa. 14-17

55 Ibid., Ia, qq. 79-81, 89; cf. I, q. 84, a. 5; q. 2, a. 1

56 Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, II, 83, 31

57 Aquinas, Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate, q. 11, a. 1, ad 3m

or fully known by anyone in any particular act of knowing. In other words, because human intelligence is "potens omnia facere et fieri" and "capax universi", its object is "ens".<sup>58</sup> In the words of Aristotle: "The soul is, fundamentally, everything that is (anima est quodammodo omnia)."<sup>59</sup>

The difference between divine and human knowledge of being is that God's knowledge of being is a priori: ". . . he is the act of understanding that grasps everything about everything."<sup>60</sup> Humans, meanwhile, advance to knowledge and ultimately to being: ". . . by asking the explanatory question, Quid sit?, and the factual question, An sit?".<sup>61</sup>

While Aquinas' reflections on being and human knowing were done in light of and subsequent to his reflections on God, for Lonergan this was not necessary. While he arrives at similar conclusions with respect to the notion of being and the nature of human knowing, Lonergan's analysis is done critically without begging any questions - such as by appealing to God (petitio principii). This, of course, echoes what was stated earlier, namely that for Lonergan the epistemology and metaphysics which Christian Revelation leads people to accept are themselves authentic and objective articulations of what human knowing truly is. They are thus de facto capable of being critically and naturally verified and affirmed.

---

58 Aquinas, Summa, I, q. 79, a. 7c; cf. Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate, q. 2, a. 2

59 Aristotle, De Anima, 3, 8, 431b

60 Lonergan, Insight, p. 370

61 Ibid.

## **F. The Origins of the Classicist Foundations of Scholastic Theology**

As has been stated, without any concrete act of understanding, logic does not have any contents or terms to clarify or operate on. For Scotus, the contents of the deductive, syllogistic, and synthetic machinery of the human mind were the universal concepts which were impressed on it from sense data. The human mind would take a look at these concepts, compare them, combine them, and make logical deductions from them. As a result, being came to be regarded not as that which was or could be affirmed in judgement, but came to refer to the infinite series of possible beings or essences which existed as thoughts in the mind of God (the Summum cogitabile), and could exist by the absolute will and power of God. The only restriction on what could not be was what was inherently contradictory (e.g. a square circle). In order to know what beings actually existed one needed to take another look, i.e. an intellectual intuition of existence. It was a look distinct from, in addition to, and consequent to the look which perceived the conceptual contents. Because his door to the real world was perception (no matter how intellectually "intuitive" it was described to be) and not correct judgement, Scotus' position was identical with the position of the naive realist.

It has been the Scotist rather than the Thomist conception of knowing and notion of being which held the field in philosophy in the proceeding centuries, even to our own day:

Five hundred years separate Hegel from Scotus. . . . that notable interval of time was largely devoted to working out in a variety of manners the

possibilities of the assumption that knowing consists in taking a look.<sup>62</sup>

This notion of knowing has been held not only by Scotists, scholastics, and moderns, but even by so-called and self-proclaimed Thomists and Aristotelians. Even someone as reputably Thomistic as Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) was revealed by Lonergan to be, along with Kant, very much holding to the Scotist or naive realist "view" of knowing:

Prof. Gilson's door to his real world is perception, and Kant's door to his world of appearances is Anschauung. . . . His (Gilson's) assertion is that over and above sensitive perceptions and intellectual abstractions there exist an intellectual vision of the concept of being in any sensible datum. . . . for Prof. Gilson being or the concept of being is 'seen' in the data of sense.<sup>63</sup>

Gilson himself states as much when he writes:

. . . the apprehension of being by intellect consists in a direct vision in any sensible datum whatever of the concept of being. When the concept of being is abstracted from a concrete existent perceived by the senses, the judgement predicating being of this existent attributes being to it . . . as 'seen' in the sensible datum from which the concept of being was abstracted. . . . Thus, no matter what way we may put the question to realism, no matter how profoundly we may inquire of it, How do you know a thing exists? Its answer will always be: By perceiving it.<sup>64</sup>

We will delay mentioning the impact which these classicist foundations would have on Christian theology until a later chapter. It will suffice for now to say that what was achieved in the middle ages in terms of providing theology with a theoretical and metaphysical framework and

---

62 Ibid.

63 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 208-9, 215

64 Ibid., pp. 209-10; cf. Etienne Gilson: Realisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1939), pp. 215, 225, 203



horizon from which it could mediate Christian religious meanings and values to classical culture, would soon solidify into a classicist Procrustean bed from which theology is only now freeing itself. Lonergan's recovery of Aquinas, then, has been a true recovery, for he has not simply mastered the metaphysically formulated terms and relations, concepts and theorems of Aquinas but has instead reappropriated the theoretic horizon, intellectualism, and notion of being of Thomas. As Tracy states it, what was needed was:

. . . a critical search, amidst the metaphysical expression of Aquinas' cognitional theories, for the psychological facts and epistemological implications - in a word, for the mind - which gave birth to that metaphysics. And then - but only then - for the metaphysics which brought that mind to self-expression. . . . Only such an account can hope to expose and thematize the grounding theoretic attitude of Aquinas. It might thereby mediate the metaphysical categories which thematized those cognitional facts for Aquinas and further mediate Thomist metaphysical expression to modern critical thought.<sup>65</sup>

We will delay mentioning the impact which these "new" foundations could have for theology until the final chapter.

Just as the metaphysical issues underlying patristic theology were brought to the fore in the medieval era, so also have the methodological issues underlying medieval metaphysics been brought to the fore in the current contemporary era by Lonergan. What this method consisted in, however, is not something one will find written in the Summa, but will find in the mind of the one who wrote it. To discover this method therefore requires much more than reading Aquinas or even Lonergan

---

65 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 51, 49

himself. Reading a thematization of the cognitional operations of wisdom does not necessarily mean that one will automatically appropriate them in oneself:

To penetrate to the mind of a medieval thinker is to go beyond his words and phrases. . . . It is to grasp questions as once they were grasped. It is to take the Opera Omnia of such a writer as St. Thomas Aquinas and to follow through successive works the variations and developments of his views. It is to study the concomitance of such variations and developments and to arrive at a grasp of their motives and causes. It is to discover for oneself that the intellect of Aquinas . . . reached a position of dynamic equilibrium without ever ceasing to drive towards fuller and more nuanced synthesis, without ever halting complacently in some finished mental edifice, as though his mind had become dull, or his brain exhausted, or his judgement had lapsed into the error of those that forget man to be potency in the realm of intelligence. Nor is this labour of penetration enough, for I have tried it. After spending years reaching up to the mind of Aquinas, I came to a two-fold conclusion. On the one hand, that reaching had changed me profoundly. On the other hand, that change was the essential benefit. . . . it is only through a personal appropriation of one's own rational self-consciousness that one can hope to reach the mind of Aquinas and, once that mind is reached, then it is difficult not to import his compelling genius to the problems of this later day.<sup>66</sup>

At this point a brief final note should be added with respect to Duns Scotus. It has not been intended to portray him as the man in the black hat or to make him the fall guy responsible for the philosophical fall of the human race. Scotus, rather, is one who just happened to articulate notions of thinking and being which are commonly held by most people and philosophers operating out of an undifferentiated consciousness. It must be remembered that Scotus lived in a time of great turmoil, confusion, and chaos - not only in intellectual, but in natural, social, political,

---

66 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 747-8

cultural, and ecclesiastical circles. (He was himself a victim of the Black Plague). In such times of unrest, it is not the typical person who will still have confidence in the notion that there exists intelligible and intelligent foundations that can ground and order human life. The often forcible and arbitrary imposition of clear and distinct universal and absolute concepts, laws, principles, and doctrines not only in philosophy, but in and on personal, social, cultural, and ecclesiastical life, has been a continuous human tendency and temptation that has all too often been actualized. In our own age we too must decide whether we shall be led to and lead others to the truth through wisdom or to other objectives through other means.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MODERN CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Late medieval scholastic theology, from the late thirteenth century onward, grounded itself in classicist cultural foundations. Theology pursued the logical scientific ideal and tended to consider its accomplishments as timeless, permanent, perennial, and closed to development. However, as shifts and separations occurred in philosophy and science, and as they became more interested in the subject, the contingent, the probable, and the historical, theology began to find itself estranged and cut off from this brave new modern world:

. . . as the medieval context gradually gave way to the modern, historical minded, "enlightened" world, theology failed to adapt adequately to its new surroundings and became instead a theology rooted in the classicist assumptions of Renaissance thought. Such theology eventually found itself in opposition to the new spirit of science, philosophy, and historical scholarship. . . . (Modernity) seemed often to destroy the very foundation upon which the classicist theology rested.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary at this point to come to an understanding of the new modern age and the foundations that are at the basis of its culture. We will then be in a position to appreciate the significance of Lonergan's discovery of foundations that will allow theology to fulfill its task of mediating religious meanings and values to the modern world.

---

1 O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, p. 67

### **A. The Turn to the Subject**

The chief strength of classical culture was its foundation upon what were considered to be non-arbitrary and unchanging standards. Its overestimation and overburdening of its own precepts and concepts, however, would prove to be its undoing. The insistence upon absolute certitude and necessity upon which the whole system was thought to be based easily gave way to its opposite, namely skepticism and universal doubt: "if one begins to doubt (given a classicist framework) one is likely to end up a complete skeptic."<sup>2</sup> This, of course, is exactly what did occur with the father of the modern age, the mathematician turned philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650).

Descartes fully and deliberately separated philosophy from theology by providing the former with its own certitudes. While he claimed to be inaugurating a fresh start over against the past, he nevertheless uncritically adopted the classical criteria of certitude in his search for an indubitable bedrock foundation: "We must find very certain means by which we can distinguish what is true from what is false."<sup>3</sup>

The undeniable bedrock foundation was to be obtained through the method of universal doubt and was to be found in the clear and distinct idea of the certain proposition: "Cogito ergo sum" ("*I think, therefore I am*"). In locating this foundation through advertence to the human subject, Descartes was reacting against the neglect and ignore-ance of the subject

---

<sup>2</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 72

<sup>3</sup> Rene Descartes, Discourse on Method, part 5

in classical philosophy. Classicist philosophy, of course, almost exclusively conceived itself as in possession of truths so necessary and logically self-evident that it could prescind from the subject. After all, what subject could possibly deny such obvious facts?

Descartes' method of universal doubt excluded all judgements, even certain ones, having to do with common sense and science. By his own standards, however, the method itself and the reasons and implications for following it are also dubitable, and therefore arbitrary. Since only grammatical propositions can be indubitable, the only world accessible to Descartes' method is a possible world of thoughts, and thus a world of his own conception. Through the method of universal doubt one cannot reach the concrete world that is only accessible to and through human experience, understanding, and judgement.

## **B. Modern Conceptualism**

In Descartes' thought, separated from (and not merely distinct from) the conceptual realm of thought and thoughts, was the realm of the res extensa, i.e. the realm of material bodies. While the realm of thought and the mind (res cogitans) was the domain of the philosopher, the realm of material bodies belonged to the new modern empirical science. Due to the influence of Aristotelian science, certitude was also sought after in this realm. Unlike Aristotle, however, it was concerned not with certain knowledge of the four necessary ontological causes, but with certain knowledge of necessary mechanical causes. While there occurred an

important shift in Descartes through his turn to the subject and through his concern for the material world, there nevertheless continued through him the conceptualist presuppositions of classicist thought. In the modern era, these presuppositions would be played out through the antinomies of materialism versus rationalism, individualism versus socialism, empiricism versus idealism, objectivism versus relativism, etc.

Modern conceptualism, as has been noted, is not without its own historical roots and context (in addition to its roots within the human "rational animal"). It tends to become more evident at those times when disorder and chaos are experienced by people - whether it be from nature, the academy, society, the Church, or all of them. The time preceding the Enlightenment (1715-89) was one in which the combination of all of these factors was experienced: e.g. from the chaos of nature from after the time of the Black Plague in the fourteenth century, from the rupture of the social and ecclesiastical fabric occasioned by the Protestant Reformation and Wars of Religion in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from authoritarian persecution in Church and State and the breakdown of community in both, etc. The result of these many and various factors helped to spawn a search for new and more effective foundations, controls, theories, concepts, laws, and doctrines for philosophy, science, society, culture, and the church. These new controls often came in over against and even in opposition to the seemingly failed controls and foundations of the past, whether it be those of Aristotle for science, of feudalism

and monarchy for society, and of tradition and obedience for the church. The new controls and concepts that would come to be imposed on nature, on society, and on people were thus derived from and grounded in ideas and things outside of and in opposition to the apparently chaotic domains of existing tradition, science, culture, and religion.

Beginning with Descartes, then, philosophy and science would seek their own autonomy, independent and separate from theology. Modern philosophy and science would come to enshrine and contain the new cultural meanings and values expressive of this autonomy. Human freedom, reason, democracy, and empirical science would come to be held in high esteem as the guarantors of authentic, meaningful, and prosperous human life. Prescientific norms, traditions, and authorities, whether in science, philosophy, community, society, or religion would be disdained and negated as relics from a benighted, ignorant, superstitious, and oppressive past.

All of these above factors helped to condition and occasion the rise of 1) modern science - with its search for externally imposed laws of nature and its intent to control and enslave it, cf. Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), 2) modern political philosophy - with its search for effective means, contracts, and methods to order and manipulate naturally hostile and autonomous individuals, cf. Nicolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), John Locke (1632-1704), and The Federalist Papers (1788), 3) Reformation religion and theology - with its appeal to the autonomy of the individual and emphasis on clear and distinct biblical solutions, cf. Martin Luther (1483-1546) et al., and 4) Counter-reformation religion and theology -



with its emphasis on a clearly defined and authorized Magisterial hierarchy providing clear and distinct doctrinal certitudes and ensuring ecclesiastical and liturgical uniformity, cf. The Council of Trent (1545-63). Unfortunately, these clear and distinct ideas, concepts, solutions, and answers were often provided and imposed to the neglect and at the expense of understanding what it was the answers referred to and what it was they were imposing the solutions on:

Theory is genuine to the extent that it is intellectualist; theory is dominative to the extent it is conceptualist. . . . Intellectualist theory is theory generated by acts of understanding; conceptualist theory is theory resulting from an understanding of words, terms, data, which are themselves not understood. In conceptualism the words, terms, data are correlated or interrelated in ways which do not foster or generate anything but an understanding of the ways in which the words, terms, data are used in particular authors. E.g., commentators who did not understand what Aquinas had written, nevertheless wrote long commentaries taking the words and terms as data which they then "understood" as words and terms. When this happens there is the need to impose the "conceptual order" on the "chaos of the data". The data do not generate the order. They do not reveal the order. When it comes to human society and history this distinction is extremely important. The natural universe is treated as a fearful chaos within which humans must impose some "law and order".<sup>4</sup>

### **C. The Advent of Modern Science**

Lonergan draws on historians Herbert Butterfield (1900-79) and Paul Hazard (1879-1944) to confirm what he regards to be the most important element in the shift from the classical to the modern cultural framework, namely the rise of modern science. The time of this "great beginning"<sup>5</sup> of

---

<sup>4</sup> Lamb, "Cities Within the Theory and Praxis of Self Knowledge in History", an unpublished class handout, Oct. 27, 1986, p. 1

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 55

modern science and the Enlightenment is located by Lonergan and these historians around the year 1680. In the words of Butterfield, the development of the modern notion of science:

. . . outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and the Reformation to the ranks of mere episodes, mere internal displacements within the system of medieval Christendom.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1680 may sound to many to be rather late to locate the origins of modern science. This date, however, like the year 1230 for theology, is not meant to deny the fact that there were many important and significant discoveries made before then, particularly since the fourteenth century. What it refers to, rather, is the fact that such discoveries were not able to be fully appreciated, understood, expressed, or revealed with respect to their true ramifications and implications. This was because they were still understood and expressed within the Aristotelian scientific and metaphysical context. By 1680, however, these discoveries and insights had sufficiently come together and coalesced to suggest and reveal a new horizon, context, paradigm, method, and system, i.e. a whole new theoretical-scientific framework providing its own basic set of terms and relations that could more adequately organize, explain, correlate, and express the new discoveries and their relevance. It was then in a position to challenge the Aristotelian framework as a whole, rather than in a piecemeal manner.

---

6 Herbert Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science 1300-1800, (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 7

The difference between classical and modern science is not simply a quantitative one, i.e. a knowledge of more things, but a formal and qualitative difference in the very way that science itself is conceived and utilized. In spelling out what the nature of modern science is, however, it is important and necessary to distinguish the actual normative achievements and method of modern science from its "cover story", i.e. what scientists have explained themselves as doing:

For the moment the scientist ceases to speak of the objects in his field and begins to speak of his science itself, he is subscribing to some account of human cognitional activity, to some view of the relation between such activity and its objects, to some opinion on the possible objects to be reached through that relation. Whether he knows it or not, whether he admits it or not, he is talking cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics. Moliere (1622-1673) depicted the medecin malgre lui, the doctor despite himself. The modern scientist with a claim to complete autonomy is the philosophe malgre lui.<sup>7</sup>

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) himself gives the same advice to philosophers of science: ". . . pay very little attention to what scientists say, and a great deal to what they do."<sup>8</sup> It is important to make this distinction for often very legitimate discoveries are couched within extra-scientific presuppositions and opinions (e.g. Sir Isaac Newton's (1642-1727) discovery of the functional relationship between mass and velocity was explained according to the extra-scientific presumption that space and time are absolutes and that the laws of nature are necessary). It has not been until this century, occasioned by Einstein's general relativity

---

<sup>7</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 106

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lonergan, Collection, p. 147

and Werner Heisenberg's (1901-76) quantum physics, that scientists have actually begun to pay proper attention to the method of scientific discovery itself.<sup>9</sup> Lonergan has himself made a unique contribution to this end. In fact it is regarded by some as the most important contribution in the history of science. As one noted scientist has put it:

. . . he became the first thinker to truly articulate the foundations of modern science. . . . He penetrated to the heart of the performances of modern scientists . . . and discovered acts and relations among those acts which had been overlooked for centuries.<sup>10</sup>

The reason modern science was not able to recognize its own method and achievement was because it was not adequately differentiated from philosophy (like philosophy was from theology). An example of this is given in Newton's work Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (1687). In it Newton thought he was philosophizing when he presented his theory of universal gravitation.

In distinguishing modern from classical science according to its actual performance, Lonergan makes the following distinctions:

1) Rather than seeking or providing certitude, modern science concerns itself with discovering and verifying hypothetical possibilities and probabilities.

2) Rather than concerning itself with what is necessary, modern science

---

9 Cf. Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), and Robert Augros and George Stanciu, The New Story of Science, (Lake Bluff IL: Rignery Gateway Inc., 1984)

10 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", p. 39

is concerned with what happens in fact to be the case.

3) Rather than claim to have reached definitive, immutable, timeless truths, the conclusions of modern science are regarded as ongoing, developing, emerging, and open to continuous revision and even revolution.

4) Rather than seeking to understand what is unchanging, modern science seeks to understand all phenomena and all changing processes.

5) Rather than deduce its basic terms and relations from metaphysical terms and relations, modern science seeks to determine its own basic terms and relations, e.g. the terms of mass and temperature, and the relations of mass and volume and the relations of the elements of the periodic table.

6) Rather than considering science and philosophy as one unified whole capable of being mastered by individuals, modern science is specialized. Each special field or department seeks out and determines its own basic terms and relations, methods of inquiry, technical vocabulary, etc. As Lonergan aptly puts it, specialization is "a concentration on one field to the neglect of others. . . . So one comes to know more and more about less and less."<sup>11</sup>

#### **D. Modern Theory and Common Sense**

One of the canons of modern science is that one begins from sense data and not from accepted opinions. Modern science therefore begins with the

---

<sup>11</sup> Lonergan, "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation", The Journal of Religion, 55 (1975), p. 166

same data that common sense knowing does. The difference comes in the fact that the former seeks a theoretical and not only a descriptive and practical experience and understanding of the data. In other words, while common sense knowing seeks to understand aspects of things in relationship to the person or group, scientific knowing seeks to understand aspects of things in relation to other aspects of things. Scientific knowing ultimately seeks an interlocking system which correlates all things, (e.g. the periodic table of chemical elements).

This distinction between the worlds of common sense and theory has, of course, been made before. Modern scientific theory, however, is different from its classical predecessor in terms of what is correlated and the hypothetical nature of those correlations. During the modern period, the worlds of common sense and theory became separated. While the moderns attained a theoretic differentiation of conscious knowing, they were not able to adequately relate it to the common sense mode of operating. This was because the movement from the otherwise ego-centric and spatially and temporally limited vantage point of the common sense perspective to that of the theoretic is not done through a mere logical or historical progression. It requires, rather, an "axial pivot" or horizon transformation. It is on the order of moving from a Ptolemaic [Ptolemy (100-170)] to a Copernican [Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)] world view. This modern period is thus referred to by Lonergan as a time

of "troubled consciousness".<sup>12</sup> For a popular illustration of it, Lonergan refers to the example of Sir Arthur Eddington's (1882-1944) "two tables":

. . . the bulky, solid colored desk at which he worked, and the scientific manifold of colorless "wavicles" so minute that the desk was mostly empty space.<sup>13</sup>

A fundamental problem with modern scientific theory has been its separation and not merely distinction between "ignorant, easily deceived, and unintelligent common sense" and "enlightened, theoretical and empirical science". This separation was prompted as a reaction against Aristotelians who failed to properly distinguish between the descriptive (quoad nos) and explanatory (quoad se) properties of things. The Aristotelians assumed that by simply adding the qualifier "as such" (quale, kath' hauto) to words they were somehow put in possession of an explanation of the nature of things. Explanatory or theoretic knowledge of the form or nature of something is not, however, something that is transparent, obvious, or immediately accessible to anyone. Such explanatory knowledge requires, rather, that one grasp a conjugate, i.e. a functional correlation (cf. Aristotle's equation of the "what" question with the "why" question). Aristotelians would often, for example, refer to the "nature of heat" or to "heat as such" without realizing that "nature" is an "x" to be theoretically understood not by relating it to its contrary, cold, but in relation to a thermometer as "temperature".

---

<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 84

<sup>13</sup> Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 128

Locke and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) were two men who were particularly aware of, as well as responsible for, the separation between the two realms of common sense and theory. They attempted to resolve the separation by simply negating the common sense realm in favor of the theoretic. Galileo, for example, made a distinction between the "primary" and "secondary" qualities of things. He did this in his pursuit of explaining the world geometrically and mathematically:

The fundamental assumption is that the scientist is seeking, and that there is to be known, an intelligibility that can be expressed mathematically.<sup>14</sup>

What he had to contend with, however, was the fact that not everything within the world is, or at least does not appear to be, geometrical and mathematical. He addressed this problem by simply denying the objective reality of all non-geometrical and non-mathematical features. As Father Joseph F. Flanagan, S.J. (1926-2010), puts it:

Aristotle's abstractive procedures led to the development of a classical, explanatory framework for systematic relations; however, he failed to clarify the difference in the way we verify descriptive and explanatory properties of things. Galileo's world order compounded the problem by simply denying the reality of descriptive relations.<sup>15</sup>

Even though he was unable to adequately relate the descriptive and common sense aspects of objects with their explanatory and theoretic

---

14 Ibid., p. 127

15 Joseph F. Flanagan, SJ, "Body to Thing", Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, SJ, Matthew Lamb (ed.), (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), p. 498



aspects, Galileo still had many correct insights into the functional relationships which exist between aspects (terms or conjugates) of objects (e.g. such as those between mass and distance). He also correctly realized that these correlations are something which can only be grasped and formulated through measurement and mathematics, and not through even the most thorough description, image, or sense experience. As Lonergan put it:

We all have had experience of weight and momentum, but neither of these experiences, nor any other, is precisely what is meant by mass: weight is  $mg$ , momentum is  $mv$ , but mass is just the  $m$ . We all have had experience of heat and cold, but that experience does not coincide with what is meant by temperature. . . . To move into the systematic differentiation of consciousness does not merely involve the employment of a new set of technical meanings. It involves a new method of inquiry, a new style of understanding, a different mode of conception, a more rigorous manner of verification, and a new type of social group that can speak to one another in the new way.<sup>16</sup>

### **E. The Metaphysics of Modern Science**

The theoretic correlations of modern empirical science are analagous in their theoretic nature to classical theory. Just as the classical philosophers and medieval theologians sought a systematic theoretical and metaphysical framework within which to contextualize, relate, and unify their correlations, so also did modern scientists. Galileo's law of falling bodies, for example, which correlated a falling mass with time and distance (and not with weight), was itself correlated within the context of a Euclidean geometric system. This system allowed for aspects

---

<sup>16</sup> Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 5

or components of objects, such as length, breadth, motion, mass, and weight, to be correlated. Newton later moved beyond a Euclidean geometric system to a more comprehensive system of mechanics which was contexted within a framework of absolute space and time. This new context did not alter any specific correlation discovered by Galileo, but rather gave them all a more comprehensive relationship with other correlations and other components (terms) of things.

Instead of regarding their functional correlations to be "enriching abstractions" which helped to refer and relate components of objects (i.e. understanding their insights to be "partial predications" of things), Galileo and other modern scientists thought of their correlations, along with the terms of objects they correlated, as the only real, objective, and primary qualities of things. They were to be contrasted with the merely apparent, non-geometrical, secondary qualities of things:

. . . color, sound, odor, taste, the feeling of hot, cold, wet, dry, smooth, heavy, light. All of these are not in the thing but in the subject. They are like tickling. . . . They result from an interaction between the real thing which is just geometrical and, on the other hand, the animal.<sup>17</sup>

These scientists suffered from two ailments, namely conceptualism and the possession of an inadequate notion of being or reality (metaphysics). In short, they were naive realists. In other words, their criteria for determining the real, i.e. that which gives meaning to the terms "real",

---

17 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", pp. 171-2

"true", and "objective", was what could be seen or imagined to be seen, rather than what could be understood and affirmed in a judgement. As a result the "real world" came to be imagined to be composed of discrete, imaginable, hard, massy particles or bodies in motion. This, of course, is the world that is real for animals, and for humans insofar as they are engaged in operations which they share in common with animals. When one is engaged in these operations one is operating out of the "biological pattern of experience". What is real comes to be identified with the localized, sensible, and visual components of objects which biologically extroverted and biologically based operations intend. These intended objects are referred to by Lonergan as "bodies" which are "already-out-there-now-real" from the standpoint of these operations. The operations which intend such objects are those associated with nutrition, reproduction, and self-preservation. These biological needs and instincts are given over to and mediated in consciousness for their fulfillment:

. . . by a "body" is meant a focal point of extroverted biological anticipation and attention. It is an "already-out-there-now-real", where the terms have their meaning fixed solely by elements within sensitive experience and so without any use of intelligence, reasonable questions and answers.<sup>18</sup>

It is a world quite apart from questions and answers. . . . In that world the object is . . . already, out, there, now, real. It is "already": it is given prior to any questions about it. It is "out": for it is the object of extroverted consciousness. It is "there": as sense organs, so too sensed objects are spatial. It is "now": for the time of sensing

---

18 Lonergan, Insight, p. 254

runs along with the time of what is sensed. It is "real": for it is bound up with one's living and acting and so must be just as real as they are.<sup>19</sup>

. . . extroversion is a basic characteristic of the biological pattern of experience. The bodily basis of the senses in sense organs, the functional correlation of sensations with the positions and movements of the organs, the imaginative, conative, emotive consequences of sensible presentations . . . all indicate that elementary experience is concerned, not with the immanent aspects of living, but with its external conditions and opportunities. Within the full pattern of living, there is a partial, intermittent, extroverted pattern of conscious living. It is this extroversion of function that underpins the confrontational element of consciousness itself. . . . The stimulating elements are the elementary object; the responding elements are the elementary subject.<sup>20</sup>

The real world, i.e. what is real for one operating out of the biologically extroverted operations in consciousness, is that which is able to be confronted, hit with a stick, bumped into, picked up, etc.

This "materialist view" of what is real that was held by Galileo and most other modern scientists may seem to contrast with 1) their disparagement of secondary qualities and 2) their movement to the world of theory. In fact, however, in order to arrive at their notion of primary qualities what they simply did was to abstract one sense from the five senses, namely ocular vision. They then abstracted away from their field of vision such things as color. Another way of saying it is that they abstracted the visual and geometrical components from the data given to sense. What they were left with after this abstraction was a world of discrete bodies (the res extensa) with extension, size, shape, and

---

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 263

<sup>20</sup> Lonergan, Insight, pp. 183-4

motion. Euclidean geometry for Galileo and mechanics for Newton provided them with ready-made workable and imaginable systems through which comparisons, correspondences, and correlations could be made of these and between these abstracted bodies. To them, however, this visual world of geometric bodies was not merely abstract, but "really real".

The project of modern philosophy was that of epistemology. It consisted in the attempt to ground objective knowing given the above conception of the world. It thus sought to somehow build a bridge between the thoughts and concepts of the subject (the res cogitans) and the objective primary qualities of the res extensa. Such bridge building, however, could never succeed due to the presuppositions that were begun with, namely, that a separation does exist between subjects and objects. A brief summary of this futile attempt follows.

In response to the views of Galileo, Locke, and other scientists, George Berkeley (1685-1753) pointed out that the so-called primary qualities are even more so in the subject (and thus "subjective") than the secondary qualities. This is because for him the secondary qualities are effects immediately produced in the subject, while the primary geometrical qualities are abstracted from these. David Hume (1711-76) responded that the causal relating and conceptualizing of these "bundles of perceptions" is due merely to subjective factors of custom and habit. For him, therefore, primary qualities are just as much constructions of the human mind as the secondary qualities are dependent upon sensations. The worlds of common sense and science were both regarded as human

constructs composed out of the raw materials of sensation. While Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) tried to maintain the existence of the extramental noumenal realm of primary qualities or "things in themselves", Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) regarded Kant's attempt as just another relic of a naive realism that was to be disposed of in his dialectical analysis. He regarded both common sense and science as mere stages in the development of the social product, of which the constructions of the human intellect are but a part:

If it is merely confusion of thought that interprets objectivity in terms of extroversion, Kant's Copernican revolution was a half-hearted affair. He pronounced both primary and secondary qualities to be phenomena. He made absolute space and time a priori forms of outer and inner sense. He regarded the things themselves of Newtonian thought to be unknowable. But he was unable to break cleanly from the basic conviction of animal extroversion that the "real" is the "already out there now". Though unknowable, Newton's things themselves were somehow known to produce impressions on our senses and to appear. The category of reality was to be employed by understanding when there occurred some filling in the empty form of time. The category of substance was identified with the permanence of the reality in time. However convinced Kant was that "taking a look" could not be valid human knowing, he devoted his energies to showing how it could seem to be knowing and in what sense it could be regarded as valid.<sup>21</sup>

Given this notion of being and the real, the intelligible relations or concepts seen by or produced by the intellect (the cogito) could not but be related to the bodies immediately, extrinsically, and universally. Galileo and Newton did not understand that their geometric laws were only expressive of functional relationships that are abstract and only possible

---

21 Ibid., pp. 413-4

in the concrete given the existence of certain conditions. Their laws and frequencies should have been understood "other things being equal". This, of course, is what was implied by them when they stated that their laws were formulated "in a vacuum":

The law of falling bodies is not a statement of what would happen in a perfect vacuum; it is the statement of an element in an abstract system.<sup>22</sup>

By directly and immediately attaching and imposing these "ideal cases" or functional correlations of the laws of nature onto the passive, imaginable geometric bodies which composed the universe, the universe came to be regarded as mechanistically determined. The fallacy of this conceptualist conclusion is to be found in its ignoring of the "other things" which are never equal, i.e. events do not directly conform to ideal cases such as those isolated in a laboratory. Laws, rather, refer to functional relations which are always operative. How they operate is dependent upon the conditions under which they operate. Instead of trying to understand these "other things", modern scientists ignored them in favor of trying to deduce the universe, using the abstract laws of nature as first premises:

. . . there follows the view of mechanist determinism; namely that physics is simply the correlation of the whole of reality to a set of ideal cases. . . . There is a whole series of these ideal cases, and by using them one can proceed to deal with concrete things. If one supposes that the structure of reality is simply the realization of ideal cases, one concludes to a determinism. . . . There do exist some ideal cases, but everything does not conform to ideal cases. Consequently, the scientist

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 101

has to adopt statistical procedures.<sup>23</sup>

The laws of modern science express how certain variables or terms function in relation to each other. Such laws or functions may be expressed as solutions to specified differential equations. Such equations, and the solutions to the equations, are formulated independently of specific times and places. For this reason they are relevant to all times and places as ideal cases. One discerns such ideal cases by selecting from all the variables of concrete data certain variables. In so doing one names the unknown functional relationship which one would like to know, e.g.  $f(x)$ . One seeks understanding of the unknown function (i.e. one seeks the intelligibility of the correlation in data) through measurement. One then gives expression to this function in a formula that one will then seek to verify in the concrete data through experimentation.

In experimenting, one controls other known variables (i.e. the other things that are not equal). Of course if one intends on a complete and comprehensive understanding of the concrete universe, and not merely an abstract one, then one must eventually come to understand these variables: "modern science aims at the complete explanation of all phenomena."<sup>24</sup> While some of the unequal conditions can be understood through functional correlations, others can only be understood 1) through statistical correlations which establish the norms and averages from which concrete

---

23 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p.129

24 Lonergan, Collection, p. 262



occurrences do not regularly diverge and 2) through specific or actual verifications of occurrences at specific times and places:

Empirical science gets its start by hitting off significant correlations. The correlations implicitly define abstract correlations. But precisely because they are abstract, the return to the concrete is greeted with further questions.<sup>25</sup>

An example of what is trying to be conveyed here may be given by considering the functional relations of falling bodies which correlate distance and time with a falling mass. A body, however, never falls at thirty-two feet per second squared as the law asserts. This is because there are other events and processes which are also occurring. While some of these occurrences and events can be covered by other functional correlations (e.g. by the law of aerodynamics), some of them cannot. These "other things that are not equal" can only be understood through statistical procedures and specific verifications. Galileo and the other scientists came to know what is hypothetically possible under ideal conditions, but not what is probable or what is actually occurring, let alone what is necessary or certain. As Sir Karl Popper (1902-1994) has stated it: "it is the business of scientific theory to predict events which are highly improbable."<sup>26</sup>

The "other things", i.e. the random, coincidental events, processes, or states within which functional correlations operate, are referred to

---

25 Lonergan, Insight, p. 301

26 Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, (New York: Basic Books, 1959), p. 87

by Lonergan as the "empirical residue". These are understood through statistical method which relate or define them according to their usual or probable occurrence in space and time. While functional relations reveal "how" things work, statistical relations reveal "how often". While the former grasps the intelligibility in the data covered by ideal systematic frequencies (i.e. it grasps possibly relevant intelligibilities that would be found given the existence of certain ideal conditions), the latter grasps the intelligibility in the data with respect to its average or probable divergence from the ideal norm (i.e. it grasps probably relevant intelligibilities which are in fact usually found):

Either the scientist anticipates the discovery of relations among the data which can be understood as elements within an abstract system, or the scientist anticipates the way in which the concrete situation will diverge from abstract formulations. . . . Statistical investigation is primarily interested, not in the actual number of times events occur in the concrete, but in the formulation of ideal frequencies from which actual events can diverge, although only at random.<sup>27</sup>

While these two procedures are opposite, they are complementary and necessary to follow if one hopes to understand the concrete order of the universe:

To give a causal account of how water falls from the clouds onto the earth, a scientist needs to know Galileo's law of falling bodies, but this law will be of little help in explaining why water rises up and forms clouds. Scientists, therefore, could not verify Galileo's law under ordinary, concrete circumstances; such classical correlations [it should be noted that the term "classical" is also used to refer to the procedures

---

27 Rende, The Development of Bernard Lonergan's Notion of Conversion, pp. 105-6

of modern science - specifically Galilean and Newtonian science - having to do with establishing and applying functional relations or laws] can be verified only under ideally or artificially constructed conditions, usually involving the building of special instruments. This does not mean that Galileo's law has no explanatory power with regard to the way that world-order concretely operates. What it does mean is that in verifying Galileo's law, scientists have verified not the actual nor probable ways that things accelerate and decelerate but rather the concretely possible ways that things will change if certain concrete conditions are fulfilled. Galileo was certainly aware that his spatio-temporal patterns were ideal but what he was not aware of, nor did he even suspect, was that the concrete pattern of interactions could vary from these idealized possibilities in irregular ways. . . . there are three concrete orderings that have to be taken into account in dealing with world order. These are the concretely, possible orderings between things, the concretely probable, and finally, the actual order. Classical scientists like Galileo, Newton, Antoine Lavoisier (1743-94) and Louis Pasteur (1822-95) were trying to discover how things interact with one another, but not how frequently they interacted. When they attempted to verify their correlations between things, they set up laboratory procedures that were not naturally or actually given, but were man-made, artificial conditions deliberately aimed at eliminating concrete conditions that would interfere with their proposed verifications. And so, what these scientists verified was not the way that world order concretely operates, nor the way it probably would operate, but the possible ways that it might actually or concretely operate. Verified classical laws, therefore, reveal not just possible orders but concretely possible orders.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to classical and statistical procedures and operations, there is also required those procedures and operations having to do with actually verifying what in fact occurs at or in relation to any given or specific space and time. This cannot be deduced or established from either or both classical and/or statistical procedures. This is because actualities may diverge from both standard ideal possibilities as well as from average probabilities. It was this third step that was neglected

---

28 Flanagan, "Body to Thing", pp. 498-9

by Charles Darwin (1809-82) in his conception of world order. Specifying this third operation was a unique and original contribution on the part of Lonergan to the philosophy of science:

It would seem, then, that this combination of classical and statistical procedures would provide the scientist with a completely concrete account of the events of world-order. But such a procedure does not give an account of each and every event but of only the average run of events. . . . Darwin's world-order, however, is especially interesting since he was one of the first scientists to develop an explanatory framework using statistical procedures, and since statistical procedures employ descriptive relations he was able to restore the objectivity of these relations. However, Lonergan makes the rather surprising assertion that both classical and statistical procedures are abstract and both fail to give a completely concrete account of world-order.<sup>29</sup>

#### **F. The World of Emergent Probability**

Lonergan was the first person who spelled out the characteristics of the concrete real world that is known as a result of integrating the three above-mentioned operations into one scientific method. He refers to this world as one of "emergent probability". It contrasts both with the closed, static, and fixed world of classicist Aristotelian science as well as the mechanistically determined world of classical modern empirical science. The Aristotelian world very much stressed the horizontal finality of essentially distinct and essentially unchanging grades of beings, e.g. minerals, plants, animals, and humans. The modern classical world, meanwhile, reduced all such grades of beings to one, namely that of discrete, geometric particles moved about by extrinsically imposed

---

29 Ibid.

laws. There was a neglect on the part of both worldviews to grasp the concrete and dynamic interactions of things. They assumed either 1) that the interactions, relationships, and orderings between and among things are extrinsic or at least have no conditioning effect on the already fixed essences (the Aristotelian view) or 2) that there simply are no different things (the modern classical view).

At this point a key distinction must be made between a "body" and a "thing". A "body" has previously been defined as the object of biologically extroverted consciousness. It is the basic component of all reality for the modern classical scientist. A "thing", on the other hand, is the object of intelligence. It refers to an object which is found as an intelligible unity, identity, and whole in data. It is composed of, conditioned by, dependent upon, related to, and existent within an interlocking system of laws or processes. A "scheme of recurrence" is the term used to refer to this interconnected system of classical laws and statistically determined processes and events which occur and recur to condition and help bring about the occurrence and recurrence of events or "things". One is only able to truly and fully understand any "thing" when one is able to understand the systems and conditions which have made its existence possible and within which it is intrinsically embedded, is related, and functions. For example, atoms, molecules, plants, animals, humans, meanings, artifacts, etc. are "things" which are only able to be understood when one understands them in and within the systems and schemes of recurrence which concretely and intrinsically help to condition and

constitute their nature and existence. Each of these "things" in turn further help to condition, order, and constitute the nature and existence of the scheme of recurrence and other "things". To attempt to understand individual things separate or apart from schemes or orders such as the ecological system, planetary system, economic system, community, social order, culture, religious tradition, etc., is a symptom of conceptualism:

The root of this confusion is conceptualism, which places conception before understanding and things before their orders; in sequence, it divides the order of things into two parts, of which the first is necessitated by the things that are ordered and the second is an arbitrary complement added by voluntaristically conceived divine will. . . . the conceptualist cannot argue from the intelligible unity of this world order, for he acknowledges no such unity but merely a compound of the necessary and the arbitrary. . . . (for) the intellectualist . . . it is within the orders that things are known.<sup>30</sup>

It is differences in the schemes of recurrence and systems which they seek to understand that vertically distinguish, even as they relate, the various sciences (**See Figure 1**). All of these fields seek to understand the recurring events and processes which condition and thus make intelligible the "things" in their various fields. As Tad Dunne, S.J., (1938- ) states it:

For scientists study intrinsic intelligibility, and unless they possess an a priori expectation that "things" are event conditioned and that event-conditioning processes will be a compound of classical and statistical intelligibility, they will fail to understand what makes for a genuine exploration.<sup>31</sup>

---

30 Lonergan, Insight, p. 695

31 Tad Dunne, SJ, Lonergan and Spirituality, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), p. 46



The various fields of science are said to be related "vertically" insofar as certain "higher" schemes or systems are dependent upon and conditioned by certain "lower" schemes to make them possible, probable, and actual:

The very fact that higher schemes exist says that the spatio-temporal situation from whence they sprung possessed a probability that the set of events that constitute the higher scheme would occur. The higher scheme, in other words, had a probability of emergence (emergent probability) . . . (and also) a probability of survival . . . since its constituent events may also grind to a halt.<sup>32</sup>

The universe of emergent probability may therefore be said to possess a dynamism towards increasing systematization. The progression, however, is not automatic, predetermined, or exclusive of "breakdowns and blind alleys". "Emergent" thus refers to the fact that prior things and systems are the potential conditions which allow for further systems, e.g. chemical schemes led to the emergence of biological. "Probability" refers to the fact that with the prior systems in place later schemes moved from the realm of possibility to probability and finally to actuality. Probability, of course also refers to the fact that the later schemes were not caused by but only allowed for by the previous ones being in place.

What this lengthy and detailed, yet concise explanation has hoped to achieve is to convey an understanding of the operations which are involved in scientific method. As has been noted, the scientists' notion of what

---

32 Ibid., pp. 44-5



is real is correlative to the operations which they are engaged in. As they have moved from classical to statistical operations, there has occurred a concomitant shift in their anticipatory notion of the real. This explains how the world of mechanist determinism anticipated by classical operations shifted to the evolutionary and developing world anticipated by the combination of classical and statistical procedures. The inclusion by Lonergan of the operation of actual verification is now anticipatory of a world of emergent probability:

. . . commitment to contemporary scientific methods commit one to such a world-view. . . . in its essentials, the same emergent world view is an implication of self-appropriation itself.<sup>33</sup>

### **G. The Third Stage of Meaning**

We began this discussion of modern scientific theory by referring to how it was contrasted by its practitioners with common sense description and understanding. By now it should be evident how advertence to the operations of scientific method effectively closes that gap.

Common sense experience and common sense description are operations which relate an object to a subject through one's senses. Theoretical explanations (as with common sense understandings) always take the data of sense as their point of departure - as that into which theoretical explanations are sought. Descriptive or sensible components or correlations of a thing and theoretical components or correlations of a

---

33 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", p. 68

thing are predicated with respect to the same thing or term. That which is sensed, described and understood in a common sense manner is the same thing that one also questions and seeks to know theoretically, i.e. one seeks to understand how it relates to other things or terms. Without any descriptive sense data there would be no data to be explained. Without advertence to this fact, one's real world will end up being either the idealist-Platonic world of pure forms or the empiricist world of primary qualities.

Since experience is what brings one to the threshold of theoretic understanding, it becomes the specialized operation of "observation" in the various sciences. Rather than conflict with theoretical understandings, experience and description are the very condition for the possibility of one attaining to a theoretic understanding. Rather than be negated by theory, experience is refined and specialized. Observation (specialized experience) is like scaffolding or tweezers which help to bring one closer to and focus more attentively on those more possibly relevant aspects or components of a thing which might more readily suggest or inspire one to a theoretical insight. Like images used in geometry, specialized observations can help to suggest and promote the occurrence of an understanding of the data. Observation also is needed to later verify one's theoretical hypothesis.

Similar to the way that observation is a specialization of common sense experience, so also is statistical understanding a specialization of common sense understanding. Common sense understanding, of course, is

the understanding of a thing in relation to oneself. Statistical understanding, meanwhile, is the understanding of ideal cases, things, events, and processes in relation to spaces and times. Both understandings are probable and general. They are both in need of additional insights into the concrete situation at a specific space and time for the sake of making an actual verification.

The integration of common sense and theoretical operations, like the integration of classical and statistical operations, is an integration that cannot be made from the perspective or from the operations of either common sense or theory. Rather, such an integration requires that one attend to and understand the source of both operations in the operating human subject:

Only through a positive accumulation of new insights can scientists be expected to grasp the difference between the methods of empirical science and the method that must be followed if . . . (they) are to attain an integrated view of the universe.<sup>34</sup>

Moving from the otherwise egocentric and spatially and temporally limited vantage point of common sense to the modern theoretic viewpoint requires not a mere logical or horizontal progression or development, but an "axial pivot" and horizon transformation. This theoretic shift and differentiation as it was historically achieved also brought with it, as has been spelled out, a split between the two realms. While ordinary people of undifferentiated common sense would resolve the split by simply

---

34 Lonergan, Insight, p. 425

dismissing the theoretic as an unreal obfuscation, those operating out of the theoretic differentiation of consciousness, namely scientists, would resolve it theoretically by denying the reality of the former. It has been Lonergan's unique contribution to have resolved it not by merely presenting another theory (for no theory can resolve a split of which it is one part), but through uncovering the very source, ground, and condition for the possibility of these two ways of knowing and meaning. Of course just as the move from the undifferentiated perspective of common sense to the differentiated perspective of theory requires an axial pivot and horizon transformation, so also does the entry into this third differentiation of consciousness. And just as the realm of theory seems strange and unreal from those operating from a common sense perspective, so also (and more so) does this third realm of meaning seem strange (as well as those operating out of it) to those operating out of the previous two realms. This third realm of meaning is referred to as the realm of interiority. The meaning it intends can be framed by the following question that it asks: "What are we doing when we are knowing?" Its intention is to objectify and distinguish human cognitional operations that operate consciously. Objectifying these operations of the human knowing process is regarded by Lonergan as the fundamental task of philosophy:

In a third stage the modes of common sense and theory remain, science asserts its autonomy from philosophy, and there occur philosophies that

leave theory to science and take their stand on interiority.<sup>35</sup>

Only through such a method can the integration of all the sciences with each other, with common sense, and with philosophy, history, and theology be achieved. It is not a unification that is imposed by some theory from without, but one that is discovered from their common source in the intentional, cognitional, and volitional operations of the human person.

#### **H. Objects and Operations**

How the various sciences have been defined and distinguished has differed from the ancient to the modern to the contemporary periods. They also have differed in terms of how they have related their sciences to the objects of those sciences. For the classical Greeks, the distinctness of a particular science was determined by its end, goal, or aim, i.e. its formal object. Such objects to be theoretically known were initially objects related to one through common sense experience and understanding (*quoad nos*). One could add "as such" to these common notions or material objects in order to specify that one sought or possessed a theoretic understanding of them (*quoad se*).

The objects sought after by modern science are the functional relations which define, generate, and relate the real, primary objects to one another. Statistical science takes as its object averages or probabilities.

---

35 Lonergan, Method, p. 85

The third approach which has only developed recently defines the sciences not by their intended object, but by 1) the operations or group of operations that are utilized in reaching the object (e.g. group theory in mathematics) or 2) the field of data in the universe that is to be mastered by the group of operations. This third approach has come about because, in fact, no one knows the object of a science before one engages in the operations of the science and seeks to discover it. This is further the case since the operations of a science are ongoing, never fully comprehending the totality of their objects. While one may not know the object of a science until one has actually engaged in the operations of that science, one can come to know the operations which the science utilizes to reach it. The object or components of the object intended to be known can thus be defined by the particular set of operations (or method) each utilizes in seeking to reach them:

. . . the problem peculiar to the scientist should not be misunderstood: he pins his faith not on any present system or set of axioms but rather on the scientific method itself. His problem is clear: how can he justify that method? If method be an ordering of means towards some end, how can the means be ordered to an end which is not yet known? The answer is not too hard to find: it is the scientist's ability to develop heuristic (anticipatory) methods which do not alter but specify the heuristic nature of intellect itself.<sup>36</sup>

An example of the above may be given by considering the classical definition of biology as the science of life. The formal object "life", however, is not theoretically known prior to one's engagement in the

---

36 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 110

operations of the science of biology. Prior to this engagement, one understands "life" in a descriptive, experiential, and common sense manner. Such common sense notions provide the initial data which one observes, questions, and seeks understanding of. In a similar way, modern science's definition of sciences such as biology by the functional relations grasped by the science's operations were not adequate definitions of the objects of the sciences:

When we ask why light refracts, we ask for an explanation of refraction. When we obtain that explanation, we are able to assign the nature and cause of refraction. Then and only then are we able state what refraction is. Until then, we can do no more than assign a nominal definition which tells, not what refraction is, but what we mean by the name, refraction. . . . as St. Thomas pointed out, the trouble is that in the question, "Why is this a man?", the "this" is ambiguous. For "this" may refer to the supposit that is a man and the reason why a supposit is of such a kind is an essence or quiddity. However, "this" may refer simply to a set of sensitively apprehended materials and the reason why materials have the being of a man is a causa essendi or form. . . . Just as the scientific problem leads to a scrutiny of sensible data that ultimately results in an hypothesis, so the Thomist question leads to a scrutiny of sensible data that ultimately results in a definition.<sup>37</sup>

. . . the nature of any "x" is what one will know when the data on "x" are understood. So by turning to the heuristic notions behind common sense, one finds the unifying principle of the successive meanings attributed to the name.<sup>38</sup>

It is the operations of scientists themselves which have come to the fore in recent study. They are what define and constitute any science, distinguish it from others, allow the objects of the science to become

---

37 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 85, 145

38 Lonergan, Method, p. 287

better known, and provide the basis from which an integration of all the sciences can be achieved. In fact, Lonergan identifies the operations engaged in by all scientists in the following way:

A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, where there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are, not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive. So in the natural sciences method inculcates a spirit of inquiry and inquiries recur. It insists on accurate observation and description: both observations and descriptions recur. Above all it praises discovery, and discoveries recur. It demands the formulation of discoveries in hypotheses, and hypotheses recur. It requires the deduction of the implications of hypotheses, and deductions recur. It keeps urging that experiments be devised and performed to check the implications of hypotheses against observable fact, and such processes of experimentation recur. These distinct and recurrent operations are related. Inquiry transforms mere experiencing into the scrutiny of observation. What is observed, is pinned down by description. Contrasting descriptions give rise to problems, and problems are solved by discoveries. What is discovered is expressed in a hypothesis. From the hypothesis are deduced its implications, and these suggest experiments to be performed. So the operations are related; the relations form a pattern; and the pattern defines the right way of going about a scientific investigation. Finally, the results of the investigations are cumulative and progressive. For the process of experimentation yields new data, new observations, new descriptions that may or may not confirm the hypothesis that is being tested. In so far as they are confirmatory, they reveal that the investigation is not altogether on the wrong track. In so far as they are not confirmatory, they lead to a modification of the hypothesis and, in the limit, to new discovery, new hypothesis, new deduction, and new experiments. The wheel of method not only turns but also rolls along. The field of observed data keeps broadening. New discoveries are added to the old. New hypotheses and theories express not only the new insights but also all that was valid in the old, to give method its cumulative character and to engender the conviction that, however remote may still be the goal of the complete explanation of all phenomena, at least we now are nearer to it than we were. Such, very summarily, is method in the natural sciences.<sup>39</sup>

---

39 Ibid., pp. 4-5



## **I. Human Operations**

Humans are both the objects as well as the subjects of science. What a human being is understood to be has shifted as the notion of science has shifted. Psychology, the ancient-medieval-scholastic classical science of the soul, was the classical science of humans. Its basic terms and relations were derived not from human operations, but from metaphysics. Early modern science, however, came to understand humans not as subjects knowing, but as objects defined by the functional relationships discovered by the natural sciences [cf. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)]. Later modern science, however would come to understand humans as historical, self-constituting, existentially responsible, and acting subjects [cf. Kant and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)]. The difficulty of these latter would be in their not understanding or sufficiently taking into consideration how the operations of human cognition and volition function and constitute not only the human sciences, but human living:

If a man learns to know man . . . he will have a basis for stepping into the human sciences that is much more useful than the immediate study of the human sciences.<sup>40</sup>

Insofar as operations are anticipatory of objects and what one will come to accept as real, true, and objective about the world and oneself,

---

40 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 194

it is very important and necessary to become familiar with the many and various operations that one is consciously engaged in. While Lonergan concerns himself with uncovering the cognitional and volitional operations of consciousness, he relies on the renowned child psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) to reveal others.

Piaget distinguished some very basic, rudimentary schemes or systems of developing operations operative in infants and young children. These systems of operations originally derive from a child's inherited sensory-motor structure. These operations allow the infant to spontaneously perform certain actions, e.g. sucking, holding the head erect, coordinating movement of arms and legs, etc. Operations which are developed later on in life are said to proceed from these previously operative operations which had intended other objects. As a person develops, these earlier operations were assimilated and generalized, i.e. the operations were applied in the same way to new data and then adapted and modified by the child insofar as the new data was in some way different and demanding of a different kind of treatment or response, e.g. there is an adaptation made in the operation of sucking as children move from sucking at their mother's breast to sucking their thumbs. When adaptations are made, differentiation is then said to have occurred:

. . . habits . . . are . . . acquired modes of activity developed out of previous modes. . . . When the child learns to close its fingers, it will grab anything it can get its fingers on; and it will do it again and again. This is cumulative repetition. It is the repetition of the operation for the sake of the operation. . . . There is the generalization, a differentiation of the scheme. The scheme that has been developed by

repetition is used upon new objects, and new activities are added because of differences in the object. When the scheme becomes differentiated there occurs a recognition of differences in the object.<sup>41</sup>

Oftentimes operations are performed sheerly for the sake of the operations and their development without concern that they do not address or refer to any objects in the real world, e.g. child's play or art. Objects of such operations will often have a symbolic or representational similarity to the kinds of objects they intend in the concrete. Language and symbols come to be the means through which one gives expression to the objects one intends operationally.

As operations develop, not only do one's activities and language develop, but one's world of objects and sense of self as a subject also develop concomitantly: "As the subject develops, his world changes."<sup>42</sup> Stages or levels in a child's capacity and a child's conception of the world, are marked off and distinguished by his or her ability to perform not single, but a certain group of operations. Such stages in a child's development are also said to run parallel with the development of humans historically:

According to Piaget the basic mode of development for the child is as follows: from an undifferentiated state to a differentiation of operations (e.g. hand and foot) to an integration of differentiated operations (e.g. walking) to grouping groups of integrated operations (e.g. walking back). Furthermore, as the child develops he learns to move beyond the world of immediacy (sense, taste, sight, etc.) to a world mediated by means of story, or language to a yet further world mediated by technical language (math, science) until, usually as an adult, he moves to the possibility

---

41 Ibid., p. 187

42 Lonergan, Collection, p. 243

of abstraction on the highest level - i.e. a critical analysis of all his operations. . . . In short he may become a philosopher.<sup>43</sup>

As one learns a certain group of operations, these operations order, relate, and define all the data or terms. The data is, of course, organized and systematized differently at different levels of development. The different organizations of data are what constitute the world for a person at a certain stage:

. . . the group of operations . . . orders all the objects. The fact that the operations are a group gives a dominance to the objects that come under the group. The objects become an organized whole on a certain level - on the level of the nursery, on the level of elementary childish talking, and so on. So as sensory motor schemes multiply, become coordinated, and are extended to ever greater ranges of objects, the world becomes a spatially and causally integrated set of objects. . . . Just as the mathematician, with different types of operations, has dominance over his objects because his operations form a group, similarly, the child, insofar as different sensory-motor schemes multiply and become differentiated and coordinated, commands the objects of his operations. And insofar as the totality of objects of the operations is commanded, the child has an ordered universe; he or she has a world, a horizon. The horizon corresponds to the group of operations mastered.<sup>44</sup>

As Piaget himself puts it:

The essential epistemological significance of the hypothesis of assimilation amounts to the supposition that objectivity is constructed through the coordination of operations or actions, and does not simply result from the play of perceptions and associations.<sup>45</sup>

When it is said that a child does not reach the age of reason until

---

43 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 15

44 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 191

45 Jean Piaget, Studies in Genetic Epistemology, (Boston: D. Reidel, 1977), p. 59

about seven, this means that prior to then the child has not developed or differentiated sufficiently the operations (of cognition) that would allow him or her to adequately arrive at and distinguish what is true and correct:

. . . development is a matter of increasing the number of things that one does for oneself, that one decides for oneself, that one finds out for oneself.<sup>46</sup>

The components of objects relative to a person's operations thus come to have particular relevance, meaning, and value at certain stages of one's development:

The real is what satisfies several sensory-motor or perceptual schemes of operations. To go beyond that notion of reality can be a grave philosophic block. Knowing operationally is what we can deal with, and that de facto is our criterion. . . . And quite clearly, if one holds that that is reality, then the operations of the mathematician and of the natural scientist - arising within the intellectual pattern of experience and forming the enormous structures that refer to a world quite different from the world for us - give rise to an unreal world.<sup>47</sup>

Note the difference between "his world" and "the world"; "the world" is what is there to be known and that is unchanged by its being known. But the subject's world is correlative to the subject: it may be a world that is mostly fantasy; it may be the real world; but its differentia is that it is the world in which the subject actually lives and develops.<sup>48</sup>

To give an example of how an object comes to be understood in a group of operations, we will consider the notion of space. One's understanding

---

46 Lonergan, Collection, p. 243

47 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 158

48 Lonergan, Collection, p. 243

of space and objects in space is developed out of a combination and unification of kinesthetic-tactile operations with visual operations. Through kinesthetic-tactile operations, the notion "space" is "built up" through operative feelings associated with one's spatially defined body, i.e. the feelings which accompany the bodily movements of going up and down, right and left, forward and backward. Through visual operations, meanwhile, one builds up one's notion of space through height, breadth, depth, and indefinite extension. With either or both of these notions of space, one's notion of space is centered on oneself. Even to shift from the egocentric, common sense notion of the world built up from one's kinesthetic-tactile operations to one built up through one's egocentric visual operations requires a not too easily achieved decentering of a person. Shifting from an egocentric and geocentric model of the solar system to a heliocentric model, for example, also requires such a transformation. Even this "Copernican Revolution", however, does not require as drastic a decentering and transformation of a person's axes and horizon as that required to shift from Newtonian mechanics and Euclidean geometry to Einsteinian relativity and Riemannian geometry [Bernhard Riemann (1826-86)]. This is because the first shift requires only a liberation of the operation of vision from its bodily basis, while the second requires one to liberate one's intelligence from sense entirely. This is in order to attain to a purely theoretic and explanatory understanding of space in relation to its components rather than in relation to oneself. To accept the reality of this theoretic notion of

space requires that one adopt and accept the operations of intelligence as the operations that have to do with attaining to objectivity, truth, and reality. Without adopting the relevant operations, the objects understood by the intellectual operations of an Einstein could not help but "appear" strange, unreal, subjective, foolish, and wrong. What is required is an intellectual conversion, i.e. an axial shift in one's notion of the real and true from strictly common sense understanding to theoretic understanding, from the biological patterning or ordering of experience to the intellectual understanding of experience, and from what is merely seen to what is understood and affirmed in a correct judgement.

What is real, objective, and true for people is relative to and constituted by the operations they are engaged in. What is "real" or "the world" for animals and humans operating out of the biological pattern of experience, for example, may be compared, in the words of biologist Jacob von Uexkull (1864-1944), to a "poorly furnished room".<sup>49</sup> This is insofar as only those objects that come within the operational horizon or environment (Umwelt) reached by the operations are or can be real for them. For example, only a moving fly and not an unmoving one is a real object in a frog's world or horizon or environment.<sup>50</sup>

This is so because all the operations of the organism: its attention, interest, memory, consciousness, etc., are patterned according to

---

49 Jacob von Uexkull, Der Unsterbliche Geist in der Natur, (1938), p. 76; cf. Josef Pieper: Leisure the Basis of Culture, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 111

50 Cf. von Uexkull, Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen, p. 40; cf. Pieper: Leisure, pp. 111-2

biocentric demands, instincts, and functions. Similarly, for some people who have not been decentered or converted according to the intellectual pattern of experience, what is real may have closer ties with objects in an animal's environment than with objects within the universe. While human consciousness services and mediates biologically based operations and the objects they intend, these are not the only operations that constitute human consciousness, nor are its objects the only ones it intends. In fact, there are other operations, as shall be revealed, that intend not objects in an environment but objects in the universe of being which they are correlative to.

When non-cognitional operations are used to determine and specify what is real or one's notion of the real, this is referred to by Lonergan as a "counterposition". It is contrasted with the "positions" on being, reality, and objectivity which correlate with one's cognitional operations. Human consciousness is referred to as polymorphic insofar as both cognitional and non-cognitional operations are serviced through it and, as a result, mix and blend:

In the concrete, the subjective pole is indeed the inquirer, but incarnate, liable to mythic consciousness, in need of a critique that reveals where the counterpositions come from.<sup>51</sup>

This is why it is important and necessary to ask the new question of the third stage of meaning: "What are we doing when we are knowing?" It is

---

51 Lonergan, Collection, p. 219



only by entering this new stage of meaning that one is able to discover the critical controls and foundations for any metaphysics, epistemology, and the meanings and values of any culture. It is only within the very basic operations of the converted human subject that one will discover the operations determinative of truth, objectivity, and being:

. . . it might also help to recall that the key moments in the history of any culture or of any discipline come about not when a new answer is proposed, but when a radically new question is articulated. Such a question has been proposed . . . in the work of Bernard Lonergan.<sup>52</sup>

#### **J. The Modern Development of Human and Historical Sciences**

Along with the natural sciences, another important development in and component of modern culture has been the advent of the human and historical sciences. As the modern world gained further control over nature, as worldly affairs became more important, as explorers discovered new civilizations and cultures, and as classical cultural meanings and values came under greater scrutiny and challenge, people came to regard cultural meanings and values not as absolutely normative and fixed like their classical predecessors, but as relative, particular, and changing human creations: "There were . . . acknowledged as many different cultures as there were different sets of meanings and values informing different ways of life."<sup>53</sup> Motivated by this realization, the new human sciences of phenomenology, psychology, anthropology, sociology,

---

<sup>52</sup> Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 5

<sup>53</sup> Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 13

hermeneutics, exegesis, and history (to name a few) were born in order to discern the different meanings and values that inform and have informed human life and how they have been expressed. "Scholarship" is the term used by Lonergan to refer to the sciences engaged in the task of:

. . . understanding . . . humanity's understanding of humanity; it seeks to study mankind as cultural, as expressing itself through acts of meaning, as historically conditioned. . . . contemporary scholarship is dedicated to the reconstruction of the constructions of the human spirit in all their diversity and plurality.<sup>54</sup>

The challenge of these sciences is to understand the common sense and cultures of peoples and authors of different places, times, and mentalities. Since meaning is always expressed in a context (and a context can be defined as a particular set of questions and answers), it is necessary for human scientists to understand 1) the objects which were intended in questions and acts of meaning, 2) the words and symbols used to express the meanings, 3) the author and what he or she intended or meant, 4) the audience being addressed, what it took for granted, and how it would have interpreted the author or symbol, and 5) oneself insofar as one can only understand a context of questions and answers by developing, expanding, and transforming one's own horizon of questions and answers.

In North America there has been a tendency to reduce the human sciences (referred to on this side of the Atlantic as behavioral sciences) to the

---

54 O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, p. 167

level of the more prestigious hard or natural sciences. This is not, however, the only or most adequate approach. In Germany, for example, where such sciences originated in the nineteenth century in reaction to Hegelian idealism, there has been a greater recognition of the distinctness of the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) over against the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften):

In the human sciences . . . there are of course data, but the data are data for a human science not simply inasmuch as they are given but only inasmuch as there attaches to them some common-sense meaning. Thus, one would send into a law-court as many physicists, chemists, and biologists as one pleased with as much equipment as they desired. They could count, measure, weigh, describe, record, analyze, dissect to their hearts' content. But it would be only by going beyond what is just given and by attending to the meaning of the proceedings that they could discover that they were dealing with a court of law; and it is only in so far as the court of law is recognized as such and the appropriate meanings are attached to the sounds and actions that the data for a human science emerge. . . . Precisely because everyday, common-sense meaning is constitutive of the data for a human science, phenomenology and hermeneutics and history assume basic importance. Phenomenology interprets our posture and movements, our acts and deeds. Hermeneutics interprets our words. History makes us aware that human meanings change with place and time. Clearly such an emphasis on meaning and such elaborate techniques for the study of meanings greatly reduce the relevance of counting, measuring, correlating, and so move the Geisteswissenschaften away from the ambit of natural science and towards a close connection with - or a strong reaction against - idealist, historicist, phenomenological, personalist, or existentialist thought.<sup>55</sup>

In classicist culture, human sciences did not concern themselves with what was referred to be merely contingent or incidental human historicity. Since it did not enter into or affect human nature, it was not considered a science. Classical human science was only concerned with what was

---

55 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 104-5

unchanging about human nature. With respect to one's logically defined essence, of course, one does not and cannot change or develop:

If one abstracts from all respects in which one man can differ from another, there is left a residue named human nature and the truism that human nature is always the same. . . . It may be objected that substantially there are always the same things to be known and the same things to be done. But I am not sure that the word "substantially" means anything more than that things are the same insofar as you prescind from their differences.<sup>56</sup>

Classical culture did refer to history and the past, but only functionally and traditionally, not critically, i.e. it had different interests, intentions, and questions to "ask" the past. For the classics history was a tradition and resource to be referred to in order to persuade and convince, reinforce and promote classical cultural norms and standards. Learning about the past was therefore done in order to give people a "proper appreciation of their heritage and proper devotion to its preservation, development, dissemination."<sup>57</sup> There is, of course, a very important and legitimate need and function that was and is fulfilled by traditional histories (e.g. the Bible, Homer) that pass on the meanings and values which constitute a people, a society, and a culture. Too often such functions were overlooked and trampled upon by rationalist exegetes and historians. They would often pronounce traditional histories "wrong" without recognizing the very different intentions these past histories had. They thus often took away what they were incapable

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4

<sup>57</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 185

of replacing. Despite the prejudices, personal agendas, and ideologies of many scholars, the critical science of scholarship gradually has come to distinguish and relate its own questions, concerns, methods, and intentions with the functional and constitutive meanings which such works had or still have. Critical history, then, is "concerned with setting forth the past as it was in fact, and not as just a model of perfection to be imitated slavishly by all generations."<sup>58</sup>

The metaphysical approach to humans by classical science is thus not the only approach. One can also study people as they are developing, maturing, and performing intentional acts of meaning. One can study people as "concrete aggregates developing over time."<sup>59</sup> When one begins here, one comes to realize that the meanings and values which constitute the personal and social living of people:

. . . are not some stock of ideal forms subsistent in some Platonic heaven. They are the hard-won fruit of man's advancing knowledge of nature, of the gradual evolution of his social forms and of his cultural achievements.<sup>60</sup>

With this latter approach:

. . . time enters into the essence of being a man. . . . it is this aspect of being a man that is relevant to our question of man as the developing subject.<sup>61</sup>

Historicity means - very briefly - that human living is informed by

---

58 O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, p. 174

59 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 5

60 Ibid., p. 4

61 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 70

meanings, that meanings are the product of intelligence, that human intelligence develops cumulatively over time, and that such cumulative development differs in different histories. Classicism itself is indeed a very notable and, indeed, very noble instance of such cumulative development. It is not mistaken in its assumption that there is something substantial and common to human nature and human activity. Its oversight is its failure to grasp that something substantial and common also is something quite open.<sup>62</sup>

Human nature was studied extensively in a metaphysical psychology, in an enormous and subtle catalogue of virtues and vices, in its native capacities and proneness to evil, in the laws natural, divine, and human to which it was subject, in the great things it could accomplish by God's grace. But such study was not part of some ongoing process; everything essential had been said long ago; the only urgent task was to find the telling mode of expression and illustration that would communicate to the uneducated of today the wisdom of the great men of the past. As the study of man was static, so, too, man was conceived in static fashion. There was no notion that man had existed on earth for hundreds of thousands of years; or that there had been, and still was going forward, an ascent from crude primitive cultures, through the ancient high civilizations, to the effective emergence of critical intelligence in the first millennium B.C., and to the triumph of scientific intelligence in the last few centuries.<sup>63</sup>

What has been occurring in this shift from classical to modern human science is referred to as a shift from "man as soul to man as subject". In other words, rather than seek to understand people "objectively" or second hand according to their metaphysical make-up, modern human sciences speak of people as the source and originator of meaning, i.e. as free and responsible incarnate subjects. The subject was a casualty of classicist culture's fascination with the "objectivity" of truth. This was in spite of the fact that it was the human subject who determined the truth and

---

62 Lonergan, Doctrinal Pluralism, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1969), pp. 7-8

63 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 48

objectivity of classical science, norms, and culture. Their objective truths were abstracted and conceptualized out from the intentional field of the human subject. This was done despite the fact that such truths were the fruit of the questioning and understanding of the human subject. Such truths or concepts thus came across as above and beyond space and time and therefore as eternal truths:

Aquinas was quite accurate on the matter of eternal truths. They exist, but only in the eternal and unchanging mind of God (Summa I, q. 16, a. 7). . . . Any statement presupposes a context within which the meaning and implications of the statements can be presented. The statement that is true at a given time and place, also will be true at other times and places, provided that the contexts are sufficiently similar. There exists then a further proviso and, it appears, there may be eternal truths in human minds only in the measure that proviso is eternally fulfilled. . . . Those that still cling to eternal truths may object that my position is relativist. They may argue a posteriori: hermeneutics and critical history did lead to the historicism of Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), which was just a thorough-going relativism. They may argue a priori: a truth that is not eternal is relative to some particular place and time. . . . (but) recall that . . . Troeltsch's relativism springs from a philosophical inadequacy . . . (and) note that truths that are not eternal are relative, not to a place and time, but to the context of a place and time; but such contexts are related to one another; history includes the study of such relations, in the light of history it becomes possible to transpose from one context to another; by such transpositions one reaches a truth that extends over places and times. . . . meaning is to be known not by a definition but by a history of questions asked and answers given. . . . In place of eternal truths, we now have differing apprehensions of the object . . . where the differences rise from the changing contexts within which the apprehensions occur.<sup>64</sup>

Truths about human beings formulated in a classical faculty psychology prescinded from the data of the conscious human subject. It derived its basic terms and relations not from the data of the conscious subject, but

---

64 Ibid., pp. 193-4, 207-8, 200, 206

as further determinations of metaphysical terms and relations. All human beings, whether awake or asleep, conscious or unconscious, genius or moron, adult or infant, sane or insane, sober or drunk, saint or sinner, were able to be included equally in such a study. Such distinctions were regarded as mere incidentals with no bearing on what is essential to being human. Such incidentals, however, are indispensable considerations for one concerned with the concretely performing human subject:

. . . from the viewpoint of substance, those differences are merely accidental. But they are not accidental to the subject, for the subject is not an abstraction; he is a concrete reality, all of him. There is nothing wrong with faculty psychology, but it is not enough for our present purpose because it does not take us near enough to the concrete. We have to be in the concrete if we wish to study development. Abstractions do not move, develop, change.<sup>65</sup>

. . . incarnate subject . . . refer to a dimension of human reality that has always existed, that has always been lived and experienced, that classicist thought standardized yet tended to overlook, that modern studies have brought to light, thematized, elaborated, illustrated, documented. That dimension is the constitutive role of meaning in human living. It is the fact that acts of meaning inform human living, that such acts proceed from a free and responsible subject incarnate, that meanings differ from nation to nation, from culture to culture. . . . On this view of intentionality, meaning is a constitutive component of human living; moreover this component is not fixed, static, immutable, but shifting, developing, going astray, capable of redemption; on this view there is . . . historicity. Subject and soul, then, are two quite different topics. To know one does not exclude the other in any way. But it very easily happens that the study of the soul leaves one with the feeling that one has no need to study the subject and, to that extent, leads to a neglect of the subject. The neglected subject does not know himself. The truncated subject not only does not know himself but also is unaware of his ignorance and so, in one way or another, concludes that what he does not know does not exist.<sup>66</sup>

---

65 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 72

66 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 61, 5, 73



As Tracy sums it up:

For as the classical mind knows perhaps too well, many true, interesting and important realities may be examined in man without examining his meaning. One may, for example, study man as subject to the laws of physics, of chemistry, or of biology. One may even study man in terms of a strictly metaphysical psychology, for metaphysically man is still a man whether he is asleep or awake, sober or drunk. . . . But one may also examine man from the viewpoint of his operations and worlds of meaning. For from his dream-state on through all the almost endless varieties of his conscious life - his imagining, his feeling, his knowing, his loving, his doing - man is fundamentally a creature and creator of that aspect of being called meaning. Indeed all man's highest achievements are achievements of meaning - his arts, symbols, literature, history, natural and human sciences, families, states, philosophies, religions and theologies. For though meaning be not the sole constituent of human potentiality . . . at the very least . . . meaning is a category demanding and today receiving careful and deliberate investigation.<sup>67</sup>

With the modern discovery of meaning as a constituent component in human living - and as a component that is not fixed but changing in human history and living, one might be able to understand how historicism, positivism, and relativism quickly became associated with these new human studies. Classical cultural standards and norms, however, were not able to give adequate answers to the concrete questions of modern humanity:

One cannot ground a concrete historical apprehension of man on abstract foundations. . . . the abstract apprehension of man provides itself with abstract ontological and ethical foundations in primitive propositions from which its doctrines, criteria, norms, etc., are deduced or somehow proved, so the more concrete and historical apprehension of man provides itself with its appropriately concrete foundations.<sup>68</sup>

---

67 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 210-1

68 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 6

The danger of nihilism is an ever present issue for there is the fear that "historical mindedness involves one in relativism and situation ethics."<sup>69</sup> As Fred Lawrence puts it: "What is at stake for the rational and humane control of history when humankind defers to nothing higher than itself . . . ?"<sup>70</sup>

Philosophy, therefore, just as it had done with the natural sciences, began to take cognizance of and seek an understanding of the method and meaning of the human sciences. The question of meaning, of course, is not merely an academic question but a personal and existential one. In addition to asking: "What are the meanings that have informed human living?", there is also the question: "What should be the meanings that inform my and my community's living?". While the former was the "objective" reaction to Hegel, the second was the "subjective" reaction:

Hegel's range of vision is enormous; indeed it is unrestricted in extent. But it is always restricted in content, for it views everything as it would be if there were no facts. It is a restricted viewpoint that can topple outwards into the factualness of Karl Marx (1818-1883) or inwards into the factualness of Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855).<sup>71</sup>

Philosophy in the modern era was no longer philosophia simpliciter, i.e. a separate autonomous discipline with its own primitive propositions and truths but, rather, one seeking to come to grips with the new methods and approaches to human knowing, doing, and living. Philosophy was thus

---

69 Ibid.

70 Fred Lawrence, Loneragan Workshop

71 Loneragan, Insight, pp. 373-4

"philosophy of . . . " As philosophy became more concerned with questions of meaning, it came to have a more particular, existential, personal, and social reference and relevance for people as intentional subjects. In reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, the human search for authenticity and meaning became a major theme of twentieth century philosophy:

The foregoing shift to interiority was essayed in various manners from Descartes through Kant to the nineteenth century German idealists. But there followed a still more emphatic shift from knowledge to faith, will, conscience, decision, action in Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Arthur Shopenhauer (1788-1860), John Henry Newman (1802-1890), Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), the personalists, the existentialists.<sup>72</sup>

Because of critical appraisals of classical cultural norms and traditions, these were no longer considered automatic and untarnished guarantors and carriers of what is good, true, and authentic. Of course even if they were good, true, and authentic, their objectification in metaphysical categories rendered them inadequate in addressing the modern questions of meaning in human living. For them to be relevant, the meanings would have to be recovered through reappropriation of their source in the acts of meaning and intention of the questioning subject (e.g. Lonergan's retrieval of the mind of Aquinas). The choice one had was thus clear: 1) one could either inauthentically (i.e. not being true to oneself) parrot the beliefs of one's tradition and pretend they adequately answer one's questions or 2) one could be true to the questions

---

72 Lonergan, Method, p. 316

and seek answers to them in the tradition. Only through following the latter course is one put in a position of being able to authentically appropriate one's tradition:

. . . the unauthenticity of individuals becomes the unauthenticity of a tradition. . . . the words are repeated but the meaning is gone. The chair was still the chair of Moses, but it was occupied by . . . Pharisees. The theology was still scholastic, but the scholasticism was decadent. The religious order still read out the rules, but one wonders whether the home fires were still burning. . . . Then in the measure a subject takes the tradition, as it exists for his standard, in that measure he can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity.<sup>73</sup>

This not being able to automatically presume or take for granted the authenticity of one's own tradition or assume that one will automatically become authentic through uncritically accepting the inculturation, socialization, theories, and beliefs of that tradition is referred to by Lonergan as marking the end of the "age of innocence":

So we come to the end of the age of innocence, the age that assumed that human authenticity could be taken for granted. I do not mean that human wickedness was denied. But it was felt that it could be evaded. Truth was supposed to consist in the necessary conclusions deduced from self-evident principles. Or it was thought that reality was already out there now, and that objectivity was the simple matter of taking a good look, seeing all that was there, and not seeing what was not there. Or there was admitted the real existence of a critical problem, but it was felt that a sound critical philosophy - such as Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) or Auguste Comte's (1798-1857) or some other - would solve it once for all. . . . It is only after the age of innocence that praxis becomes an academic subject. A faculty psychology will give intellect precedence over will and thereby it will liberate the academic world from concern with the irrational in human life. The speculative intellect of the Aristotelians, the pure reason of the rationalists, the automatic progress anticipated by the liberals, all provided shelter for academic serenity. But since the failure of the absolute idealists to encompass human history

---

73 Ibid., p. 80

within the embrace of speculative reason, the issue of praxis has repeatedly come to the fore. Schopenhauer conceived the world in terms of will and representation. Kierkegaard insisted on faith. Newman toasted conscience. Marx was concerned not merely to know but principally to make history. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) proclaimed the will to power. Blondel strove for a philosophy of action. Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) has not yet completed his many-volumed philosophy of will, and Jurgen Habermas (1929- ) has set forth the involvement of human knowledge in human interests. Along with them have marched in varying ways the pragmatists, personalists, and existentialists, while phenomenologists have supplanted faculty psychology with an intentionality analysis in which cognitional process is sublated by deliberation, decision, action.<sup>74</sup>

Late modern philosophy, along with other arts and sciences, sought to address people by appealing to them as self-constituting subjects whose potentialities had to be liberated from the previous static, rational molds, essences, and stereotypes they had been locked into. It was no longer sufficient for philosophy to inform people of who they are by explaining their metaphysical essence, but to invite people to recognize themselves as responsible, self-constituting subjects. In the nineteenth century, then, there was a recapturing of the priority of the artistic, symbolic, spontaneous, and practical for culture and human living over against the secondary rational, literal, scientific, and speculative controls which had for so long controlled human cultural meanings, values, and possibilities. Philosophy sought to give impetus to the unleashing of human creativity and inventiveness from often arbitrary cultural conventions, conformities, and constrictions. It would do so by appealing to the freedom, imagination, reason, and responsibility of people to

---

74 Lonergan, "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods", Studies in Religion, 6, (1976-7), pp. 348-9, 351

remake and reform themselves and their world:

. . . modern culture is culture on the move. It is historicist. Because human cultures are man-made, they can be changed by man. They not only can but also should be changed. Modern man is not concerned simply to perpetuate the wisdom of his ancestors. For him the past is just the springboard to the future and the future, if it is to be good, will improve on all that is good in the past and it will liquidate all that is evil. . . . So a contemporary humanism is dynamic. It holds forth not an ideal of fixity but a programme of change. It was or is the automatic progress of the liberal, the dialectical materialism of the Marxist. . . . Ours is a time that criticizes and debunks the past, that preaches an ideology, that looks forward to an utopia. . . . Modern man is fully aware that he has made his modern world. There are modern languages and literature. There are modern mathematics and modern science, and they differ not only in extent but also in their fundamental conceptions from the Greek achievement. There are modern technology and industry, modern commerce and finance, the modern city and the modern state, modern education and modern medicine, modern media and modern art, the modern idea of history and the modern idea of philosophy. In every case modernity means the desertion, if not the repudiation of the old models and methods, and the exercise of freedom, initiative, creativity. So to modern man it seems self-evident that he has made his own modern world and, no less, that other peoples at other times either have done the same or else have made do with a world fashioned by bolder ancestors and inertly handed on.<sup>75</sup>

In pulling the plug on classical foundations, norms, and standards, philosophers naturally began to address the question as to whether there still existed any non-arbitrary foundations for truth, goodness, and meaning for human personal and communal life: "Are human beings the sole arbiters of these matters?" "Are humans alone in the universe as the sole originating source of value, truth, and meaning?" These were some of the questions people in general and philosophers in particular were led to ask. If indeed people are alone, it was deemed important to inform them

---

<sup>75</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 93, 4-5

of this fact so that they could begin taking responsibility for themselves and their world. They had to cease leaving that which is their prerogative and the source of their personal dignity to myths and ideologies which alienated them from their true selves and mission. Secularism and the proclamation of the "death of God", for example were pushed by many in order to restore to humans something that was regarded as central to them that had been usurped and denied them for too long [cf. Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72), Karl Marx (1818-83), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Albert Camus (1913-60), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80)].

While Lonergan applauded the recovery of the subject, the personal and communal responsibility which this restored to and fostered in the human subject, and the broadened understanding that came to be possessed about what it means to be human, he also deplored its irrationalism, i.e. its neglect of the constitutive role which intelligence, rationality, and truth have to play in the authentic constitution of human life, society, and history, and its irreligion, i.e. its neglect of the constitutive role which religious faith, truth, and God have to play in human life and culture.

## **K. Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to spell out some of the major foundational shifts which occurred in the transition from classical to modern culture. The decadence of classicist thought; natural, social, political, and ecclesiastical upheavals; and the search for new and better standards and

ways to know and to live; helped to spawn a new age and culture. At the forefront of these efforts would be the natural and human sciences. The uncritical acceptance of classicist presuppositions, the inability to integrate the differentiations of common sense and theoretic consciousness, and naive realist notions of reality would hinder these efforts in the natural sciences and in philosophy. The reaction against the rationalism and objectivism of these efforts would lead in the later modern period to concern with the subject, meaning, value, will, and intentionality as foundational to human life. The inability to integrate human intelligence and religious meanings and values with such efforts, however, tended to leave such efforts very subjectivist, relativist, and arbitrary. Such critiques of modernity, of course, are more than merely academic, for the foundations of modern culture have also provided a foothold for the spawning of subjective ideologies that have taken hold of the technologies brought forth by modern science to create a world and culture that has often been more oppressive and dehumanizing as anything that has ever preceded it. The reaction of theology to these efforts will now be presented.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THEOLOGY IN MODERN CULTURE

As classicist culture was dissolving under the weight of modern natural and human sciences and philosophy in much of the West, there remained for it at least one last bastion in the Roman Catholic Church, at least up until the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65. Since the middle ages Catholic theology, like classicist scholastic philosophy, was regarded by many as a universal and permanent achievement. During the middle ages it was one within a unified and systematic philosophical and scientific world view. In the modern period, however, philosophy and science began to go their own ways and seek their own autonomy. Philosophy, once the handmaid of theology, "went in for woman's liberation", as Lonergan once remarked. While there were many good reasons that the Church and theologians were antagonistic towards modern science, philosophy, and scholarship, - not the least of which was because they were blatantly hostile to them - that the time had come for "catching up" with modern achievements was signaled by Pope John XXIII (1881-1963) and Pope Paul VI (1897-1978) in their call for "aggiornamento" (bringing things up to date) as they called the Council of Vatican II. As Lonergan stated it:

. . . aggiornamento is not some simpleminded rejection of all that is old and some breezy acceptance of everything new. Rather it is a disengagement from a culture that no longer exists and an involvement in a distinct

culture that has replaced it. . . . the fact of the matter is that the ancient Church set about transforming Greek and Roman culture, that the medieval Church was a principal agent in the formation of medieval culture, that the Renaissance Church was scandalously involved in Renaissance culture. If the modern Church has stood aloof from the modern world, the fact is not too hard to explain. On the one hand, the Church's involvement in classicist culture was an involvement in a very limited view that totally underestimated the possibilities of cultural change and so precluded advertence to the need for adaptation and zeal to effect it. On the other hand, modern culture with its many excellences and its unprecedented achievements nonetheless is not just a realm of sweetness and light. The suffering, the sins, the crimes, the destructive power, the sustained blindness of the twentieth century have disenchanted us with progress and made us suspicious of development and advance. Aggiornamento is not desertion of the past but only a discerning and discriminating disengagement from its limitations. Aggiornamento is not just acceptance of the present; it is acknowledgement of its evils as well as of its good; and, as acknowledgement alone is not enough, it also is, by the power of the cross, that meeting of evil with good which transforms evil into good.<sup>1</sup>

Any theology of renewal goes hand in hand with a renewal of theology. For "renewal" is being used in a novel sense. Usually in Catholic circles "renewal" has meant a return to the olden times of pristine virtue and deep wisdom. But good Pope John has made "renewal" mean "aggiornamento", "bringing things up to date." Obviously, if theology is to be brought up to date, it must have fallen behind the times. Again, if we are to know what is to be done to bring theology up to date, we must ascertain when it began to fall behind the times, in what respects it failed to meet the issues and effect the developments that long ago were due and now are long overdue.<sup>2</sup>

### **A. The Origins of Classicist Theology**

The "falling behind the times" occurred in Catholic theology, not

---

1 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 113

2 Ibid., p. 55

coincidentally, at the same time as the Enlightenment (1715-89) and modern science were coming of age, i.e. between 1680 and 1715. It was at this time, according to both Lonergan and theologian Yves Congar O.P. (1904-1995)<sup>3</sup> among others, that "dogmatic theology" began. While previously the term "dogmatic theology" had been used to distinguish what is now referred to as systematic theology from moral and historical theology, after the end of the seventeenth century dogmatic theology came to be associated with positive theology, as distinguished from scholastic theology and natural philosophy. Lonergan summarizes this distinction between the new dogmatic theology and what it had been before in the following way:

. . . theologians of the end of the seventeenth century . . . replaced the inquiry of the quaestio by the pedagogy of the thesis. It demoted the quest of faith for understanding to a desirable, but secondary, and indeed, optional goal. It gave basic and central significance to the certitudes of faith, their presuppositions, and their consequences. It owed its mode of proof to Melchior Cano (1509-60) and, as that theologian was also a bishop and inquisitor, so the new dogmatic theology not only proved its theses, but also was supported by the teaching authority and the sanctions of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The concern and quest for doctrinal certitudes and the proving of them through reason and revelation was not, of course, the method employed by

---

3 Cf. Yves Congar OP, "Theologie", DTC, 29 pp. 432f.

4 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 57

medievals such as Aquinas. For them, theology simply sought to foster and further an ever progressing and developing understanding (Glaubensverständnis) of doctrines that were established through faith (fides quarens intellectum).<sup>5</sup> This is why they would say, with Anselm: "believe that you may understand" (crede ut intelligas), not "believe that you may judge". This is because belief is already a judgement:

. . . one misses the whole point of the ordo doctrinae if one mistakenly expects its syllogisms to offer not expressions of limited understanding but evidence for indisputable certitudes. There exists certitude, but it is derived from the certitude of faith, and the derivation is exhibited in the via inventionis (the way of discovery). There is no additional certitude generated by understanding itself, for our understanding of the mysteries is imperfect. To convey that imperfect understanding is the function of the ordo doctrinae (the order of teaching), and one only betrays one's incomprehension if, on the one hand, one pretends to find evidence for certitude where such evidence does not exist or, on the other hand, one dismisses argumenta convenientiae (an argument intended to confirm an already established principle) as proofs that do not prove.<sup>6</sup>

The scholasticism beginning immediately after Aquinas, influenced by Scotus and later by Christian Wolff (1679-1754), had a more logical notion of reason. They were more concerned with establishing certain, universal, and necessary truths which could be worked into a logical system. The "reason" it sought to reconcile with faith was not the same as the one Aquinas sought to unite with faith:

---

5 Cf. Aquinas, Quodlibet, IV, q. 9, a. 3; Denzinger-Schoenmetzger (DS) 3016, 3019, 2828ff., 2908

6 Lonergan, Collection, p. 133

I am not proposing a novelty. I am proposing a return to the type of systematic theology illustrated by Aquinas' Summa Contra Gentiles and Summa Theologica. Both are systematic expressions of a wide ranging understanding of the truths concerning God and man.<sup>7</sup>

(Aquinas) is careful to add the profound analogies that yield some imperfect understanding of the truths of faith and so save the dogmas from being formulae that must be repeated, though no one need understand them. . . . (he) constantly quotes Scripture, but he usually does so, not to posit a premise from which conclusions are to be drawn, but to confirm a position for which many reasons already have been given, whether demonstrative reasons, when demonstration is possible, or rationes convenientiae, convergent probabilities, where human reason cannot demonstrate. . . . that older theology knew from its religious sources that faith was not a conclusion from premises but a gift from God, that the mysteries of faith could not be demonstrated but, at best, could be met with some analogous and imperfect understanding.<sup>8</sup>

When confronted with the Cartesian and Enlightenment quests for rational certitudes, clear and distinct ideas, and rigorously demonstrable and logical proofs, theologians, having been influenced more by theologians after Aquinas, uncritically accepted these notions of reason and methods for ascertaining truth. They deemed it necessary to address religious questions in the same manner and thus set about shoring up and making rationally acceptable the truths of faith:

Thomas' speculative theology is an Aristotelian metaphysical science whose necessary first principles come from revelation and, unlike philosophical first principles, cannot be justified by natural reason. .

---

7 Lonergan, Method, p. 340

8 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 45, 197

. . Revelation provides theology's first principles. Then a scientific speculative theology can link the principles together and draw conclusions from them . . . The rationalist scholastics of the eighteenth century no longer possessed a unified system of philosophy and theology. Their Wolffian epistemology undermined the coherence of their philosophy. Their deductive notion of science, based on intuitive first principles and modeled upon the Cartesian ideal of necessary certitude and apodictic evidence, was no longer the notion of science upon which St. Thomas had modeled his speculative theology.<sup>9</sup>

### **B. Positive Theology**

In the years following Aquinas, there were many theologians who wrote commentaries. They did so not on the original scriptural and patristic sources as the medievals did, but on the commentaries of the medievals, especially commentaries on Aquinas and his Summa, cf. those of Johannes Capreolus (1380-1440), Cardinal Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1480-1547), Domingo Banez (1528-1604), John of St. Thomas (1589-1644), Jean Gonet (1616-1681), the Salmanticenses (1637-1700), and Charles Billuart (1685-1757):

But for all the excellence of Aquinas and for all the erudition of these theologians, their procedure was unsound. Commentaries on a systematic work, such as was the Summa . . . are all related only indirectly to Christian sources.<sup>10</sup>

Was not theology painting itself into a corner?<sup>11</sup>

---

9 Gerald A. McCool, SJ, Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century, (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), p. 29

10 Lonergan, Method, p. 280

11 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 31

Bishop Melchior Cano, O.P. (1509-60), a humanist, in his book **Theological Places** (**De locis theologicis**) (1563) sought to counteract the theology of the commentaries by insisting that theologians needed to return to the sources (of which he located ten sources). At the time, however, historical consciousness and the science of scholarship were not developed. Further, Cano's positive theology was not as concerned with uniting positive theology with speculative and dogmatic theology as he was with providing the latter with premises or proof texts from history (scripture and tradition) from which it could justify through proof its preestablished theological doctrines and theses:

The Reformation (1517) demanded a return to the gospel, but the proper meaning of that demand could be grasped only through the emergence of the scholarly differentiation of consciousness. It is true, of course, that Melchior Cano in his **De locis theologicis** outlined a method of theology that involved direct study of all sources. But as the resulting manualist tradition reveals, direct study is not enough. There has to be discovered the historicity of human reality. There have to be worked out the techniques for reconstructing the diverging contexts presupposed by different persons, places, times. And when such techniques are mastered, it becomes apparent that the old-style treatise could be taught, not by any single professor, but only by a team.<sup>12</sup>

As Father Gerald A. McCool, S.J. (1918- ) puts it:

By the time of Melchior Cano, positive and speculative theology had already fallen apart . . . The effort which Cano and the post-Reformation

---

<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 281

scholastics made to hold these disciplines together by logical manipulation was heroic but it was doomed to ultimate failure.<sup>13</sup>

Since history was not a science, there was a need on the part of theology to appeal to a fixed foundation transcending history in order to "discern" historical truth. These were 1) the fixed and defined medieval theses, 2) scholastic philosophical terms, and 3) the premise, enunciated by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) in his 1622 work On The Truth of Religion, that Jesus is the divine legate sent to earth by God (the heavenly monarch). Once this last premise was proven - through miracles, the resurrection, and Old Testament prophecies - the truths Jesus stated and the authority he established were able to provide theologians with the certain premises that could ground their doctrinal certitudes. The Holy Spirit was regarded as the one who made sure the divine deposit of Revelation, consisting in the true concepts given by Christ, and the authority established in the Church by him, would always be preserved. It was the task of fundamental theology to set forth these first premises. The manualist tradition of proving theses from proof texts was thus born:

Cano's account of the guiding role of scholastic theology in his positive investigation of theology's historical sources was an accurate expression of the close relation between speculative theology and historical inquiry in scholastic positive theology. For, without the direction of scholasticism's clear and developed formulation of the truths of faith, the positive theologian lacked a clear goal in his historical research,

---

13 McCool, Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century, p. 203



and beginners in theology could easily be led into confusion and serious doctrinal error. . . . historical development . . . took the form of clarification and expansion of concepts or of deductive expansion of philosophical or theological principles. . . . (there was) no awareness of the role of cultural development or of different conceptual frameworks in the history of thought. . . . positive theology was simply engaged in "refinding" the developed, clear ideas of post-Reformation scholasticism in their scattered, confused, and less developed form in theology's historical sources. Clearly then, since the positive theologian who was guided in his work by scholastic theology knew what he was looking for, he was more likely to find it. . . . positive theology was simply to devise convincing controversial "proofs" for the existence of scholasticism's developed theological doctrines in the historical sources of theology. Positive theology could not lead to a revision of the conceptual framework through which the scholastic doctrines were expressed.<sup>14</sup>

Since truth was regarded as unchanging and eternal, i.e. "semper idem" - "always the same", the truths of faith were thought to be discoverable in all times and places ("quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus" - "what is always, what is everywhere, what is by everybody believed").<sup>15</sup> There was no need for specialists in various historical fields of research for one dogmatic theologian could "discover", i.e. have impressed on his mind, the same true universal concepts which were to be found in all times and places throughout the history of the faith:

. . . the old dogmatic theology had misconceived history on a classicist model, that it thought not in terms of evolution and development, but of universality and permanence. . . . On such assumptions it was quite legitimate to expect the theologian, if only he knew the faith of today,

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 186-7

<sup>15</sup> Cf. St. Vincent of Lerins, Commonitorium II

to be equally at home in the Old and New Testaments, in the Greek and Latin Fathers, in the writings of medieval, Renaissance, and more recent theologians. But today such an assumption appears fantastic and preposterous. In almost endless studies the writings of age after age have been examined minutely, and all along the line the notion of fixity has had to give way to the fact of development. . . . there gradually have been accepted and put into practice new techniques in investigating the course of history, new procedures in interpreting texts, new and more exacting requirements in the study of languages. The result of these investigations has been to eliminate the old style dogmatic theologian.<sup>16</sup>

Previously, theologians, following the classical ideal of science, sought to build a fixed logical framework within which to contain timeless theological truths. This procedure, however, has had to be abandoned with the advent of historical consciousness. Theologians now seek to understand doctrine not through one logical system, but through various historical contexts. By relating the contents of sets of questions asked and answers given on particular aspects of particular issues through history, they are able to understand the development of doctrine:

. . . the old foundations will no longer do. In saying this I do not mean that they are no longer true, for they are as true now as they ever were. I mean that they are no longer appropriate. I am simply recalling that one must not patch an old cloak with new cloth or put new wine into old wineskins. One type of foundation suits a theology that aims at being deductive, static, abstract, universal, equally applicable to all places and to all times. A quite different foundation is needed when theology turns from deductivism to an empirical approach, from the universal to the historical totality of particulars, from invariable rules to intelligent adjustment and adaptation. . . . Clarity demanded sharply defined terms, and these were abstract and so outside the realm where

---

16 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 59, 231

change occurs. Coherence demanded the absence of contradictions. Rigor demanded that conclusions follow necessarily from their premises. All three provided the appropriate home for eternal truths and defined the ideal that human imperfection in this life might aim at but not attain. Now it is this outlook, this assumption, this viewpoint that is incompatible with the new methods in hermeneutics and history and with the conclusions they reach. For the new methods are ongoing. . . . Not only are the methods ongoing but so too are the realities they progressively reveal whether they are doctrines of faith or theological views. . . . Their meaning is to be known not by a definition but by a history of questions asked and answers given. . . . When theology is seen as an ongoing process, its contextual structure accords not with the rules of deductive logic but with the continuous and cumulative process ruled by a method. It is a context in which similar questions are assigned successively different answers. It is a context in which incoherence is removed, not at a stroke, but only gradually . . . it is a context in which developments no less than aberrations are not historically necessitated but only historically conditioned. . . . Only a theology structured by method can assimilate the somewhat recently accepted hermeneutic and historical methods and it alone has room for developing doctrines and developing theologies. The key task, then, in contemporary theology is to replace the shattered thoughtforms associated with eternal truths and logical ideals with new thoughtforms that accord with the dynamics of development and the concrete style of method.<sup>17</sup>

The fixed theological truths of classical theology were also enshrined in and with the fixed conception of the universe and human nature that was held by classicist culture. As a result these notions would end up becoming an inseparable part of the Christian message. Theology came to be understood not as the mediator between the Christian religion and a culture, e.g. like the theology of Aquinas, but rather as the mediator of one standardized religious culture to all people:

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 63-4, 197-8, 200-2

In so far as one preaches the gospel as it has been developed within one's own culture, one is preaching not only the gospel but also one's own culture. . . . one is asking others not only to accept the gospel but also to renounce their own culture and accept one's own. Now the classicist would feel it was perfectly legitimate for him to impose his culture on others. For he conceives culture normatively, and he conceives his own to be the norm.<sup>18</sup>

### **C. Classicist Catholic Culture**

With modern science professedly materialistic and in no need of the "God hypothesis"; with modern economic, social, political, educational, and cultural institutions and norms becoming increasingly secularized, liberalized, and democratized; with modern philosophy human-centered and incapable of grounding objective, let alone religious, statements; with secular religious studies replacing theology in universities; with God considered not only absent from but also a meaningless, irrelevant, and harmful intruder into the superstructure of modern culture as well as into the "everyday familiar domain of feeling, insight, judgement, decision."<sup>19</sup>; with historical studies cutting the legs of positive theology out from under dogmatic theology; with the loss of the papal states (1870) and the Church's former social, political, and cultural status and influence; and with the relegation of religion in general,

---

<sup>18</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 363

<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 111

Christianity in particular, and Catholicism especially to the fringes and margins of intellectual, social, and cultural life, the Catholic Church, beginning after the French Revolution (1789-1799) to the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) would increasingly close ranks and circle the wagons around its own philosophical, social, cultural, and ecclesial norms and identity. To be a Catholic meant not merely belonging to a weekly religious congregation, but it meant belonging to a particular and peculiar subcultural and countercultural society. Increasingly throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - highlighted by Vatican I (1869-70), the Modernist crisis (1864-1960), and the first universal Code of Canon Law (1917) - the Church increasingly centralized, bureaucratized, and sacralized authority in the Church around the Pope and the curia. This was done by the Church in order to more effectively guarantee, guard, and maintain the Church's doctrinal, structural, and social-ecclesial integrity against what was perceived as an all pervasive, international threat against Catholic life:

. . . modern developments were covered over with a large amount of wickedness. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century Christianity had been under attack. Agnostic and atheistic philosophies have been developed and propagated. The development of the natural and human sciences was such that they appeared and often were said to support such movements. The emergence of the modern languages with their new literary forms was not easily acclaimed when they contributed so little to devotion and so much, it seemed, to worldliness and irreligion. The new industry spawned slums, the new politics revolutions, the new discoveries unbelief.

One may lament it but one can hardly be surprised that at the beginning of this century, when churchmen were greeted with a heresy that logically entailed all possible heresies, they named the new monster modernism. If their opposition to wickedness made churchmen unsympathetic to modern ways, their classicism blocked their vision. . . . classicist churchmen found that the natural scientists frequently were presented in a reductionist version that was materialistic and, if not atheistic, at least agnostic, while the historical sciences were the locus of continuous attacks on traditional views of the Church in its origins and throughout its development. In brief, so far were churchmen from acknowledging the distinctive character of modern culture that they regarded it as an aberration that had to be resisted and overcome.<sup>20</sup>

Through papal encyclicals, congregational instructions and interventions, and through liturgical, linguistic, canonical, devotional, philosophical, and theological uniformity, the Church was able to authoritatively control meanings, values, theories, and concepts. It was able to solidify, distinguish, and constitute itself over against the modern world. It thus provided Catholics with a "plausibility structure" and "legitimation" (to use phrases from the social sciences) for distinctively Catholic meanings and values. The fostering of the cult of the papacy and romantic evocations of the medieval golden age (the time when the Church enjoyed a cultural monopoly) helped to further maintain and foster a Catholic subculture which, in the modern age, was regarded as only one among many sets of meanings and values. These facets of pre-Vatican II Catholicism were, in the words of historian Fr. Joseph

---

20 Ibid., pp. 94, 112

Komonchak (1939- ):

. . . specifically nineteenth century developments and representing the Church's considerable adaptation to meet the challenge represented by the reduction of its cultural-social roles. In that respect, the antimodern Roman Catholicism I have described is a characteristically modern phenomenon. . . . Modern Roman Catholicism was constituted by its distinctive world view and by the distinctive organization and patterns of association which embodied that world view.<sup>21</sup>

In the words of theologian Louis Bouyer (1913-2004):

As for what is called "Catholicism" - a word which appeared only . . . in the 17th century - if by this is meant the artificial system fabricated by the Counter-Reformation (1545) and hardened by the repressive cudgeling of modernism, it may die. . . . The one, holy Catholic and apostolic Church . . . it has the promise of eternal life, and its faith will not be deceived.<sup>22</sup>

Pre-Vatican II theology was very much under the control and direction of the Roman Magisterium and confined to and developed in seminaries. Theology was very "ecclesially oriented" (in the narrow sense) insofar as it was specifically designed for and engaged in supporting and constituting the Catholic subculture:

It conceived the function of the theologian to be that of a propagandist for Church doctrines. He did his duty when he repeated, explained, defended just what had been said in church documents. He had no contribution of his own to make and so there could be no question of his

---

21 Fr. Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Ecclesial and Cultural Roles of Theology: An Essay in Grateful Memory of Bernard Lonergan", Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings, 40, (1985), pp. 20, 26

22 Louis Bouyer, The Decomposition of Catholicism, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969), p. 110

possessing any autonomy in making it.<sup>23</sup>

Theology was isolated within the security of the Church, its tradition, and its first premises. It had retreated, according to Lonergan, into a "dogmatic corner" or "ghetto" where theologians would "convince each other of their certitudes".<sup>24</sup> There was little attempt, except in a narrow apologetic way, to go outside the certitudes of the tradition in order to engage modern science, philosophy, society, and culture. Those who did so had to do so privately, were suspect, and often threatened with censure and excommunication.

Pope John's criticism of the "prophets of gloom" who could not find anything good in the modern world, and his rejection in 1960 of the first draft of issues for the Council (that had been prepared in the traditional manner by Cardinal Alfredo "Semper Idem" Ottaviani (1890-1978) and his Holy Office) would signal a reversal of the Church's polemical and apologetic anti-modern stance to one more positive and open to dialogue with the modern world. The Church no longer wished to define, identify, or constitute itself in the same coherent, uniform, secure, Eurocentric, counter-cultural ways it had for the previous 150 years. The theologians or periti who were most prepared and able to help the Church accomplish

---

23 Lonergan, Method, pp. 330-1

24 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 58



its goal of entering into dialogue with the modern world through the Council, of course, were not those who had been confined within the official theological system, but those who had been engaged with modernity, often under a cloud of suspicion, on their own.

After the Council, theologians were no longer able to practice theology according to the traditional manual style. This was due to their uncritical historical positivism and lack of consideration of the self-constituting and world-constituting human subject. Instead theologians began accepting the standards, findings, and methods of the contemporary sciences. Scripture and tradition, for example, were no longer able to supply the kind of premises that had been used to prove pre-established dogmatic theses. Instead scripture and tradition were recognized as supplying data that needed interpretation according to its own original literary and historical context. The connection between positive or historical theology and dogmatic or systematic theology would have to be made in a more sophisticated fashion:

. . . contemporary Catholic theology (is) in a feverish ferment. An old theology is being recognized as obsolete. There is a scattering of new theological fragments. But a new integration - and by this I mean, not another integration of the old type, but a new type of integration - is not yet plainly in sight. . . . the modern science or discipline of religious studies has undercut the assumptions and antiquated the methods of a theology structured by Melchior Cano's De locis theologicis.<sup>25</sup>

---

25 Ibid., pp. 108-9

With the loss of their previous anti-modern countercultural identity and distinctiveness, and the resulting changes in the liturgical and ecclesial forms and metaphors which had inculcated them, there resulted a Catholic identity crisis that involved much turmoil and unrest. Much of the unrest was and is due to what Lonergan refers to as an uprooting of beliefs. By belief (as distinguished from faith) Lonergan refers to knowledge or judgements which have been accepted from others. They are not, in other words, personally generated. People believe insofar as they are involved in the sociology of knowledge, i.e. in the common human group process of coming to know. Insofar as knowing is inherently a social enterprise, there are beliefs. In fact, the knowledge one has through believing is far vaster than what one personally arrives at oneself:

. . . the world that is mediated by meaning - the world that is most known through belief. Ninety-eight percent of what a genius knows he believes. It isn't personally independently acquired knowledge. Human knowledge is an acquisition that goes on over centuries and centuries, and if we want to accept nothing, that we don't find out for ourselves, we revert to the paleozoic age. At that period they found out for themselves everything they know.<sup>26</sup>

It is evident that beliefs are had not only by people of common sense

---

26 Ibid., p. 219

in practical living, but also by scientists and scholars as well. The only difference between common sense beliefs and scientific beliefs is that the latter's are more conscientiously and precisely controlled:

. . . scientists do not fritter away their lives repeating and checking the experiments performed by other scientists. On the contrary, each is eagerly endeavoring to make his modest contribution to the total fund and, to do so, each draws upon the whole of the common fund not solely through personally acquired knowledge but also through belief, taking another's word for it.<sup>27</sup>

. . . critically controlled belief is essential to the human good; it has its risks but it is unquestionably better than regression to primitivism. . . . this critical procedure does not attack belief in general; it does not ask you to believe that your beliefs are mistaken; it takes its start from a belief you have discovered to be mistaken and it proceeds along the lines that link beliefs together to determine how far the contagion has spread.<sup>28</sup>

In the Church, as well, there are beliefs. These are judgements of fact, meaning, and value that have been generated not by oneself but by and through the faith and reason of others. In times of intellectual, social, and cultural change, such as occurred after Vatican II, some meanings and values, and hence beliefs, were altered and even dropped entirely. Many of the beliefs, practices, traditions, and other carriers of Catholic culture which had for so long constituted and given identity

---

27 Ibid., p. 89

28 Lonergan, Method, pp. 46-7

to Catholics and shielded them from modernity were either discarded and replaced or given new meaning. Meanings and values were no longer being generated from or grounded in the fixed standards of classicist culture, the premises of the manuals, or even exclusively from the hierarchy. Rather they were more and more being generated from the findings and research of scholars and experts, and from the personally generated knowledge and experience of individual lay Catholics:

. . . a time of confusion . . . calls beliefs into question and because they are just beliefs, because they are not personally generated knowledge, answers are hard to come by. So to confusion there are easily added disorientation, disillusionment, crisis, surrender, unbelief. . . . from the present situation Catholics are suffering more keenly than others, not indeed because their plight is worse, but because up to Vatican II they were sheltered against the modern world and since Vatican II they have been exposed more and more to the chill winds of modernity.<sup>29</sup>

There is then a crisis situation which has arisen as a result of the shift from classicism to historical-mindedness and it is perhaps especially manifest among Christians and other theists. The secularist is to a large extent the creator of modern culture both in its basic thrusts and in the contextual ambience within which these thrusts occurred and is consequently to a greater or lesser extent at home in modern culture. The Christian, on the other hand, or, more accurately, the Catholic Church, has to a great extent remained aloof from the developments of modern culture until rather recently. "From that enormous development the church has held off: it could praise the ends; it could not accept the means; and so it could not authentically participate in the process that eliminated the standardised man of classicist thought and ushered in the historical consciousness of today." (Lonergan: **Collection**, p. 247). The Catholic Christian today then is caught in a crisis which the secularist does not experience in the same fashion because the Christian

---

29 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 93

must not only assimilate whatever is good in the cultural shift but also discern what is extraneous and unnecessary in this shift.<sup>30</sup>

With the loss of the sense that the Church's foundations have to do with its being unchanging and unmoving throughout the centuries, "the spirit of Vatican II" led many people to question and dissent from Catholic teaching, practice, and authority. It also led many to uncritically embrace the prevailing modern culture and science, and to seek culturally relevant realizations, expressions, and forms for the Church and for new meanings and values. The more Catholics became less distinct from non-Catholics, the more did they become more distinct from each other, especially as conservatives and liberals.

Similar to what took place in the previous century for others, Catholic culture began returning to the priority of the symbolic, biblical, patristic, common sense, literary, and liturgical languages, images, and metaphors of its tradition ("the return to the sources"). This allowed for more historical, personalist, phenomenological, and existential reflections and expressions which would be more vital, original, spontaneous, and often more authentic and practical expressions and mediations of Christian meanings and values. There was a break away from the secondary, literal, rational, logical, theological, authoritative and

---

30 Tyrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, pp. 10-1

doctrinal controls which had for so long been the exclusive controls, guides, expressions, models, and mediators of Catholic meanings, values, and identity. It is one of Lonergan's achievements that he is able to reintroduce these needed controls in a way that is non-dominative and non-conceptualist.

As theologians became less concerned with partisan "school fights" (e.g. the Dominicans versus the Jesuits) and less concerned with constituting the Church by simply passing on and repeating the latest hierarchical pronouncements, they increasingly became more adept and expert in various aspects of modern cultural and intellectual life. Insofar as they were the ones engaged in the task of mediating the meanings and values of the Catholic faith to the culture, they were the ones people came to increasingly turn to with their questions:

As long as classicist culture was accepted, it could be thought that there existed but a single culture and that the Gospel could be preached substantially through that culture, even though accidentally certain adaptations had to be made to reach the uncultured. Now that classicist culture is a thing of the past, we can no longer suppose that classicist assumptions could succeed in preaching the Gospel to all nations. We have to learn to express the Gospel message so that it can be grasped by the members of every class within each of the cultures of the world.<sup>31</sup>

Even Aquinas could no longer be appealed to as the ultimate theological

---

31 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 206

arbitrator:

. . . every act of meaning is embedded in a context, and . . . over time contexts change subtly, slowly, surely. A contemporary theology must take and has taken the fact of history into account. Inasmuch as it does so, St. Thomas ceases to be the arbiter to whom all can appeal for the solution of contemporary questions; for, by and large, contemporary questions are not the same as the questions he treated, and the contemporary context is not the context in which he treated them. But he remains a magnificent and venerable figure in the history of Catholic thought. He stands before us as a model, inviting us to do for our age what he did for his. . . . to follow Aquinas today is not to repeat Aquinas today, but to do for the twentieth century what he did for the thirteenth . . . namely, discovering, working out, thinking through a new mould for the Catholic mind, a mould in which it could remain fully Catholic and yet be at home with all the good things that might be drawn from the cultural heritage of Greeks and Arabs.<sup>32</sup>

The increasingly visible, autonomous, and authoritative role of theologians increasingly led to tensions between them and the Church hierarchy. The hierarchy has for its part come to accept and encourage this more "autonomous" role of theologians. One need only contrast the following remarks of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) with those of Pope Pius XII's (1876-1958) encyclical Humani Generis (1949) to get an appreciation of this shift:

I have no hesitation in viewing the science of faith within the horizon of a rationality so understood. The Church desires an autonomous theology, which is distinct from the Church's magisterium, but knows itself to be bound in a common service to the truth of faith and to the people of God. It is not to be excluded that tensions and even conflicts

---

32 Ibid., pp. 49, 138, 44

will arise; but neither can this ever be excluded in the relation between Church and science. . . . Theology is a science with all the potentialities of human knowledge. In the use of its methods and analyses it is free. . . . Love for the concrete Church, which includes also fidelity to the testimony of faith and to the Church's magisterium, does not alienate the theologian from his work nor does it deprive it of its unrenounceable autonomy. Magisterium and theology have each a distinct task. For that reason neither can be reduced to the other. And yet they serve a common purpose. Precisely because of this structure they must always remain in conversation with one another.<sup>33</sup>

The danger for the Church in this period of cultural changes that it could become absorbed by, identified with, capitulate to, or uncritically legitimate prevailing cultural meanings and values incompatible with authentic Christian meanings and values. This would be as bad, if not worse, than for the Church to consider itself incompatible with and aloof from the world. Of course even when it was considered incompatible, the Church never ceased to maintain its understanding of itself as having a redemptive task, function, and responsibility to fulfill vis-a-vis the transformation of the world and the "restoration of all things in Christ" (Acts 3:21). The question faced now by Catholics and theologians is how to proceed to identify and mediate that transforming presence in the world. If it is not to be through the negation and rejection of modern culture and the reimposition of a medieval Christendom, then how?:

Contemporary theology and especially contemporary Catholic theology are

---

33 Pope John Paul II, Ad Apostolica Sedis 73 (1981), pp. 56-7



in a feverish ferment. An old theology is being recognized as obsolete. There is a scattering of new theological fragments. But a new integration - and by this I mean, not another integration of the old type, but a new type of integration - is not plainly in sight.<sup>34</sup>

The challenge for theologians in the present modern-contemporary period is not unlike that which Aquinas faced and met in the medieval period. It was then that he mastered the prevailing "pagan" philosophical and scientific works of the Greeks and Arabs that were challenging and threatening Christian culture. He was then able to mediate and integrate Christian meanings and values with the new learning. For the past several hundred years there have been, as has only been briefly recounted, massive shifts in all facets of human life, science, and culture. While it has been a period of great achievement, it has also been a period of great turmoil, destruction, and alienation. Clearly a foundation and means by which the redemptive and transformative meanings and values of Christianity can be grounded, discerned, made comprehensible, and effectively allowed to impact the mentality and personal and social life of our age is a pressing need:

The more vital and efficacious religious activity is, the more it infiltrates, penetrates, purifies, transforms a people's symbols and rituals, its language, art, and literature, its social order, its cultural superstructure of science and philosophy, history and theology. So the early Christian Church set about transforming the Greco-Roman world. So

---

34 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 108-9

the medieval church was a principle agent in the formation of medieval society and culture. So the Renaissance Church took over the forms of a classicist culture. So today in a world whence classicist culture has vanished, we have before us the task of understanding, assimilating, penetrating, transforming modern culture. . . . When the natural and human sciences are on the move, when the social order is developing, when the everyday dimensions of culture are changing, what is needed is not a dam to block the stream but control of the river-bed through which the stream must flow. . . . the contemporary issue is not a new religion, not a new faith, but a belated social and cultural transition. . . . our disengagement from classicism and our involvement in modernity must be open-eyed, critical, coherent, sure footed. If we are not just to throw out what is good in classicism and replace it with contemporary trash, then we have to take the trouble, and it is enormous, to grasp the strength and weakness, the power and the limitations, the good points and the shortcomings of both classicism and modernity.<sup>35</sup>

There are many who are convinced that such a foundation and means have been discovered and articulated by Bernard Lonergan:

But I urge the necessity of a self-appropriation of the subject, of coming to know at first hand oneself and one's own operations both as a believer and as a theologian. It is there that one will find the foundations of method, there that one will find the invariants that enable one to steer a steady course, through theological theories and opinions that are subject to revision and change. Without such a base systematic theology will remain what it has too often been in the past, a morass of questions disputed endlessly and fruitlessly.<sup>36</sup>

The alternatives to accepting the above challenge are to either seek to live the Christian life in a world that no longer exists or to abandon the Christian life for the world as it exists. With either of these

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 43-4, 52, 99

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 51

latter, however, one is not meeting but escaping from the challenge:

The crisis, then, that I have been attempting to depict is a crisis not of faith but of culture. There has been no new revelation from on high to replace the revelation given through Christ Jesus. There has been written no new Bible and there has been founded no new church to link us with him. But Catholic philosophy and Catholic theology are matters, not merely of revelation and faith, but also of culture. Both have been fully and deeply involved in classical culture. The breakdown of classical culture and, at last in our day, the manifest comprehensiveness and exclusiveness of modern culture confront Catholic philosophy and Catholic theology with the gravest problems, impose upon them mountainous tasks, invite them to Herculean labors. Indeed, once philosophy became existential and historical, once it asks about man, not in the abstract, not as he would be in some state of pure nature, but as in fact he is here and now in all the concreteness of his living and dying, the very possibility of the old distinction between philosophy and theology vanishes. What is true of that distinction is true of others. What is true of distinctions, also is true of each of the other techniques that mark the style and fashion the fabric of our cultural heritage. Classical culture cannot be jettisoned without being replaced; and what replaces it, cannot but run counter to classical expectations. There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half-measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.<sup>37</sup>

---

37 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 266-7

P A R T      T W O

F O R E G R O U N D

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE FOUNDATIONS**

Up to this point, through the first five chapters of the first part, a brief analysis has been made of culture: classical, classicist, and modern; and how Catholic theology has functioned within each in terms of mediating (or failing to mediate) Christian meanings and values. In these next two chapters an analysis of what Lonergan has discovered as the transcultural bedrock foundation of any culture and the implications of such a discovery on theology's mediating role will be articulated.

#### **A. The Point of Departure**

At this point Lonergan's discovery of foundations will begin to be unfolded. "Discovery" is a term intentionally chosen. This is because what shall be presented is not any new invention or theory that Lonergan has devised, but, rather, is something he has found which is and always has been more or less existing and operative in the human subject, namely human cognitional (and volitional) operations. Only through an analysis of these operations is one able to know what knowing is. As Lonergan states it in **Insight**:

. . . all I can do is to clarify my intentions by stating my beliefs. I ask accordingly about the nature rather than about the existence of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, **Insight**, p. xvii

Some may regard this effort of Lonergan as impossible at best and deceptive at worst. This is because some may assume that what he will find in his cognitional analysis will simply be a confirmation of the arbitrary metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions he began with (quod gratis assertur, gratis negatur). Such views, however, entirely miss the point. What Lonergan is concerned with is the fact that what we refer to as "knowing" must itself be known. Otherwise one's notion of "knowing", "knowledge", "objectivity", "the reality known", and "the knowable", will be derived based either upon common sense presuppositions and assumptions, or upon theoretical assertions, or upon the analogy of the "knowings" of non-cognitional operations. Just as the science of biology cannot critically be defined as the science of "life" but instead must be defined by the operations which actually determine and constitute its object, so also must any science of knowing, knowledge, and being define itself by that which constitutes its object, namely by the cognitional operations of the knowing subject:

Presuppositionless metaphysics, accordingly, begins from questioning: not from the appearance of it, nor from the concept of it, nor from judgements about it, but from the performance, the Vollzug.<sup>2</sup>

For Lonergan, then, knowing what knowing is is a matter of distinguishing the cognitional operations from other operations which may presume to constitute the "real", e.g. the operations involved in the biological

---

2 Lonergan, Collection, p. 204

pattern of experience presume to "know" the "already-out-there-now-real" bodies:

Metaphysics is prior if you consider that what you're studying is fully known objects. In other words, it's dealing with objects. When you start out that way, you have no way of critically justifying your metaphysics. You can critically justify it if you derive it from a cognitional theory and an epistemology. And you can critically justify the cognitional theory by finding it in yourself: the terms of the theory are found in your own operations, of which you are conscious and which you are able to identify in your own experience, and the relations connecting the terms are to be found in the dynamism relating one operation to the other.<sup>3</sup>

Lonergan begins his cognitional analysis in response to the question: "What are we doing when we are knowing?" He then and only then is able to ask and answer the epistemological question: "Why is doing that knowing?" After answering these two he is then finally able to ask and answer the metaphysical question: "What do we know when we do that?" The modern concern with the question of epistemology, then, was premature. It was a reaction against the absolutist and unchanging conceptions of what was taken to be real in classical metaphysics. Classical philosophy, with its ideal of true knowledge, could not accept the full reality of the changing and developing. Hence, "knowing" such things was not considered knowing in the true sense, let alone knowledge. Modern epistemologists, however, were not able to know what true knowledge and knowing were either. This was because they tried to derive a theory of knowledge that could relate (i.e. build a bridge between) 1) a reality

---

3 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 60

they conceived and presumed to be made up of discrete imaginable geometric bodies and 2) a presumed conception of the human knower. They also presumed a notion of objectivity which they took from the analogy of ocular vision. The problem, to put it concisely, was that modern epistemological theories presumed they knew the knower and the known they were relating as well as the standard by which that relationship was to be judged.

Lonergan does not presume a notion of metaphysics, i.e. of what reality is. He does not, therefore, try to define what true knowledge is or what knowing is based upon such a notion (unlike classical and modern thinkers). He also does not seek to devise yet another theory of knowledge that will correlate presumptions of what objective knowing is with presumptions of what is real (unlike modern epistemologists). Finally, he does not resort to a naive realism based upon the uncritical presumptions of what knowing is from a common sense perspective. Lonergan, rather, seeks to uncover the prior conditions for the possibility of such attempts to formulate a metaphysics or epistemology. He therefore presumes neither one. He begins, then, with an analysis of the prior performative operations operative in human cognition. All human knowing presumes, implicitly or explicitly, a certain ideal of what human knowledge is. Modern epistemologists such as Kant criticized the ideal of certain, eternal, necessary knowledge that was sought by scholastic philosophers. Kant himself, meanwhile, defended the scientific ideals of Newtonian physics. He defended it by seeking to



articulate a hypothetical structure in human knowing that would be the necessary condition for such knowledge. His categorical forms of sensibility were the result of his attempt to build a bridge between the ideal of modern scientific knowing and the human subject. Hegel later sought to mediate an abstract ideal of human knowing dialectically. Rather than seek to devise some new theory based upon some ideal of human knowledge, Lonergan has sought simply to uncover the cognitional ideals implicit in cognitional operations themselves:

. . . although the scientific ideal anyone follows in seeking any unknown is either conceptually implicit or inadequately explicated in the actual history of that science, still this fact does not make the ideal non-existent or the scientific exigence any less exigent. For behind any ideal there is the inquiring subject himself, as intelligent, as raising questions, as seeking and sometimes finding answers. In essence, then, it is possible in Lonergan's view to move into an investigation of those fundamental tendencies involved in all scientific inquiry and get hold of, i.e. "self-appropriate", not some hypothetically necessary structures of inquiry but rather certain cognitional matters of fact which are invariant in all inquiry and thereby independent of the Hegelian objectives. Lonergan's suggestion, therefore, is that the intelligent inquirer take what might be called a "step backwards" - past all explicitations of the scientific ideal (in words, concepts, theorems, judgements, etc.) to the intelligent and rational subject himself as questioning, as having insights, forming concepts, weighing evidence, reflecting, judging and deciding. His concern, to employ the more familiar Heideggerian [Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)] vocabulary, must first be ontic before it becomes ontological. His concern, to use Lonergan's own vocabulary, must first be pre-conceptual, pre-predicative, pre-judicial, intentional.<sup>4</sup>

## **B. Cognitional Analysis**

What shall now be presented is not something that one has ever had any

---

4 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 98

experience of or, better, experience with. "What shall be presented" is not even the proper way of stating or introducing what follows. This is because what follows is not a presentation of something belonging to Lonergan but an invitation for people (and a personal invitation to you the reader) to heighten their presence to themselves and their conscious cognitional operations. Without this cooperation of personal self-appropriation on the part of people, what Lonergan is up to cannot make sense:

We cannot succeed without an exceptional amount of exertion and activity on the part of the reader. He will have to familiarize himself with our terminology. He will have to evoke the relevant operations in his own consciousness. He will have to discover in his own experience the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to the next. Otherwise he will find not merely this chapter but the whole book about as illuminating as a blind man finds a lecture on color.<sup>5</sup>

An analogy may be drawn between Lonergan's project and that of the phenomenologist philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). In order to help his students become more attentive and perceptive to various phenomena, he would have them describe in complete and precise detail everything within their perceptual field of vision. While many students gave quite thorough and comprehensive presentations, invariably even the most perceptive students would leave out from their presentations that which was closest to them, namely the tips of their noses. What Lonergan would have us attend to, understand, and affirm is similarly something which we

---

<sup>5</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 7

all already experience but which most of us never attend to or thematize (not even Husserl).

With Lonergan what we are asked to attend to is something even closer to us than the noses on our faces. Of course that is what makes it so difficult for our farsighted and extroverted consciousnesses to focus on. Lonergan, therefore, does not present or bring in something new from "outside" as it were for us to examine. Rather, he simply asks us to heighten our awareness of something we are already peripherally aware of. An example of what is meant by heightening a peripheral awareness may be given as follows: Presumably you, the reader, are attending and focusing at this moment on these words and seeking to understand the intelligibility that is trying to be conveyed through them. If you were now asked to attend to the pressure of the floor on the bottom of your right foot - and you were to do so - the experience of the pressure would not be experienced by you all of a sudden as if you had not been experiencing it. The experience, rather, would be heightened and brought to the center and focal point of your conscious awareness and interest. It should also be clear that these words written here inviting you to do so would not be the cause that produced the experience, but only that which produced the exigence, concern, interest, and motivation to heighten and attend to the experience. This is precisely the same task of Lonergan with respect to asking us to heighten our awareness of our cognitional operations. Fr. Matthew Lamb has stated "that humans are to experience as fish are to the ocean". This is insofar as each only attends to a

small fraction. The amount which people understand and affirm, of course, is even less. It is Lonergan's project to have us choose to attend to, understand, and affirm a little bit more of that experience.

### **C. Experience**

A few terminological clarifications must now be made in order to help us identify and name various aspects of our experience. First of all "experience" refers both to the subject's awareness of the "external" data of sense as well as to the "internal" data of consciousness. What is sensible is what is experienced by the five senses and what is conscious is what is experienced in consciousness. Being conscious of something, like sensing something, does not mean that one also understands or knows that thing. Rather it only means that one is aware of and more or less attentive to the data.

Experience is rarely "pure". In other words, it is practically never had by anyone without a retinue of accompanying associations, beliefs, and representations from prior knowledge, socialization, and acculturation. Aesthetics or the aesthetic patterning of experience refers to the practice of attending more exclusively to the experiential pattern or aspects of objects, e.g. to seeing "red" rather than seeing the stop sign or associating the color with stopping. As subjects we do not easily see just color, hear just sounds, smell just odors, taste just tastes, or feel just hot and cold, hard and soft, rough and smooth, and wet and dry. We claim, rather, to "see the sun", to "hear a whistle",

to "smell perfume", to "taste an apple", or "feel metal". We do this because the further operations of inquiring, understanding, and judging supervene upon our experience of data to transform it. They do so not by adding to our experience, but by grasping the intelligibility or form in the experienced data.

While people are accustomed to talking about the "externally experienced" data of the five senses, there is also the less familiar "internally experienced" data of consciousness. Whenever we see, hear, taste, smell, or feel, in addition to the sensitive experience of the aspects of objects (e.g. "I see red"), there is also the concomitant conscious experience of one's experiencing (e.g. "I am conscious of my experiencing, seeing, hearing, etc."). This conscious experience of one's operations can also be heightened, maximized, and brought to the forefront of consciousness. One can only experience these activities or operations, however, when one is engaged in them.

It must be warned that conscious experience is not like sense experience. It is therefore important to distinguish the two. One does not see, imagine, hear, taste, smell, or feel seeing, imagining, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, questioning, understanding, judging, and deciding. This is why Lonergan tries to avoid 1) using the term "introspection" to refer to this heightening of conscious experience for it suggests that we "look inside" ourselves, and 2) using the spatial-metaphoric terms "external" and "internal" to distinguish sensitive experience from conscious experience: ". . . consciousness is

not to be thought of as some sort of inward look."<sup>6</sup>

Lonergan distinguishes what he refers to as two "modes of presence".<sup>7</sup> The first mode of presence is referred to as material presence. In this mode no knowing is involved. It refers to the presence of a non-intelligent object (or unconscious subject) to another one, e.g. the presence of a statue in a courtyard. The second mode of presence is referred to as intentional presence. In this mode knowing is involved and is of two kinds: 1) the presence of an object to a conscious subject and 2) the presence of a conscious subject to himself or herself. In this intentional presence objects are present to subjects "by being attended to".<sup>8</sup> Correlative and concomitant with this presence, subjects are also present to themselves as subjects "not by being attended to but by attending".<sup>9</sup> As Lonergan says:

As the parade of objects marches by, spectators do not have to slip into the parade to become present to themselves; they have to be present to themselves for anything to be present to them; and they are present to themselves by the same watching that, as it were, at its other pole makes the parade present to them.<sup>10</sup>

Consciousness is the awareness which a subject has of himself or herself immanent within cognitional and volitional acts of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. Besides the contents one is aware of through these acts or operations, there is also at the same time an

---

6 Lonergan, Insight, p. 320

7 Lonergan, Collection, p. 226

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

awareness of the acts or operations themselves. One may contrast these acts or operations with nonconscious or unconscious activities or operations such as those of cell metabolism, digestion, or hair growth which do not require consciousness in order to be operative. Of course in addition to the awareness of the acts themselves, there is also an awareness of oneself as performer of the acts.

The operations reveal the subject to himself or herself. This is because the operations are not independent but are operations of an operator who operates consciously, i.e. the operations cannot be performed by one asleep or in a coma. The subject, rather, is aware and present to himself or herself operating, and this presence to oneself as subject is different from one's presence to any other object. The self of which one is aware also differs and becomes "fuller" as one engages in higher levels of operations:

. . . we are aware of ourselves, but, as we mount from level to level (from experiencing to understanding, to judging, to deciding), it is a fuller self of which we are aware and the awareness itself is different.<sup>11</sup>

Instead of simply responding to stimuli, whether of color or shape, the conscious human subject is aware of aspects such as color and shape. One is aware of them because one is aware that one is aware of them. Consciousness is not something that is present in addition to or over and above acts of seeing, hearing, understanding, judging, and deciding.

---

<sup>11</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 9

Consciousness, rather, is something that is one with and immanent in the acts themselves. If there were no contents to be aware of, one would not be able to be conscious of the acts or of oneself. In other words contents mediate the conscious presence of oneself to oneself and of oneself to one's conscious acts. If one, of course, were not conscious or aware of the acts one could not be aware of either the contents or oneself. In these conscious operations, then, one is aware of contents, the acts themselves, and of oneself as seer, hearer, understander, affirmer, chooser, etc.:

. . . the presence of the object is quite different from the presence of the subject. The object is present as what is gazed upon, attended to, intended. But the presence of the subject resides in the gazing, the attending, the intending. For this reason the subject can be conscious, as attending, and yet give his whole attention to the object as attended to.<sup>12</sup>

By the conscious act is not meant a deliberate act; we are conscious of acts without debating whether we will perform them. By the conscious act is not meant an act to which one attends; consciousness can be heightened by shifting attention from the content of the act; but consciousness is not constituted by that shift of attention, for it is a quality immanent in acts of certain kinds, and without it the acts would be unconscious as is the growth of one's beard. By the conscious act is not meant that the act is somehow isolated for inspection, nor that one grasps its function in cognitional process, nor that one can assign it a name, nor that one can distinguish it from other acts, nor that one is certain of its occurrence.<sup>13</sup>

Being conscious is the condition for one's performing cognitional and volitional acts, i.e. without one's ability to be conscious of acts - of

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 8

<sup>13</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 321



seeing, understanding, judging, deciding, etc., - one could not see, understand, judge, decide, etc. The unconscious, sleeping, or comatose patient's wide open eyes may respond to different intensities of light but is unable to see contents because seeing contents requires that one be aware or conscious of oneself as seeing. If this were not the case, i.e. if in seeing one were only aware of color and in hearing one were only aware of sound, then one would not be able to relate the two acts to each other and refer to them both as acts of awareness. What allows one to relate these two acts despite their different contents, and to contrast both of them with unconscious acts such as digestion and hair growth is the concurrent conscious awareness one also has of the acts and of oneself:

Consciousness . . . is a property or quality of acts of a given kind; sensitive and intellective; cognitive and appetitive. . . . operations are conscious inasmuch as they render the subject aware of himself and his operations. They are intentional inasmuch as they constitute an awareness of an object.<sup>14</sup>

One should be able to 1) distinguish one's conscious presence to objects (seeing, understanding, etc.) from one's unconscious presence to them (being next to, being a container of) and 2) distinguish the contents of objects that one is conscious of (e.g. one's finger, the sun) from those one is unconsciously present to (e.g. one's spleen, nitrogen, and one's finger or the sun when one is asleep or unconscious). In the

---

<sup>14</sup> Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 5

subject's presence to himself or herself as subject of acts, i.e. in one's attempt at attending to oneself, one is at the same time both an object of one's attention and attending as well as the subject attending to oneself. It is not the objectified self but the experience of oneself as an attending self that Lonergan would like for us to become familiar with:

I have been attempting to describe the subject's presence to himself. But the reader, if he tries to find himself as subject, to reach back and, as it were, uncover his subjectivity, cannot succeed. Any such effort is introspecting, attending to the subject; and what is found is, not the subject as subject, but only the subject as object; it is the subject as subject that does not introspect; one raises the level of one's activity. If one sleeps and dreams, one is present to oneself as the frightened dreamer. If one wakes, one becomes present to oneself, not as moved but as moving, not as felt but as feeling, not as seen but as seeing. If one is puzzled and wonders and inquires, the empirical subject becomes an intellectual subject as well. If one reflects and considers the evidence, the empirical and intellectual subject becomes a rational subject, an incarnate reasonableness. If one deliberates and chooses, one has moved to the level of the rationally conscious, free, responsible subject that by his choices makes himself what he is to be and his world what it is to be.<sup>15</sup>

It is clear that the self as subject is prior to, the unreviseable condition for, and that against which one must refer to check and test objectifications of oneself. There will necessarily occur a reduplication of one's self as subject when one attends to and objectifies oneself:

. . . if knowing is conjunction of experience, understanding, and judging, then knowing has to be a conjunction of 1) experiencing experience, understanding, and judging, 2) understanding one's experience

---

15 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 226-7

of experience, understanding, and judging, and 3) judging one's understanding of experience, understanding, and judging to be correct.<sup>16</sup>

While the latter is susceptible to better formulations, it is the former which is in possession of the unreviseable and foundational basic terms and relations of human knowing.

In addition to acts of experiencing, Lonergan has also objectified acts interrelated with it and each other, namely acts of understanding, judging, and deciding (**See Figures 2 & 3**). These are acts which also require one to be conscious of them in order for them to exist, and vice versa. Lonergan, however, warns one not to ask: "Am I really conscious of intelligence and reasonableness?" This is because such a question:

. . . suggests that there is a type of knowing in which intelligence and reasonableness come up for inspection. But what is asserted is not that you can uncover intelligence by introspection, as you can point to Calcutta on a map. The assertion is that you have conscious states and conscious acts that are intelligent and reasonable.<sup>17</sup>

The question one should ask oneself is instead:

Have I ever felt puzzled, or curious, or inquisitive? Have I ever operated in this way? And - if I did, was I awake and conscious and present to myself acting as such or was I in a dreamless sleep, unconscious, or in a coma?<sup>18</sup>

---

16 Ibid., p. 224

17 Lonergan, u, p. 323

18 Ibid.

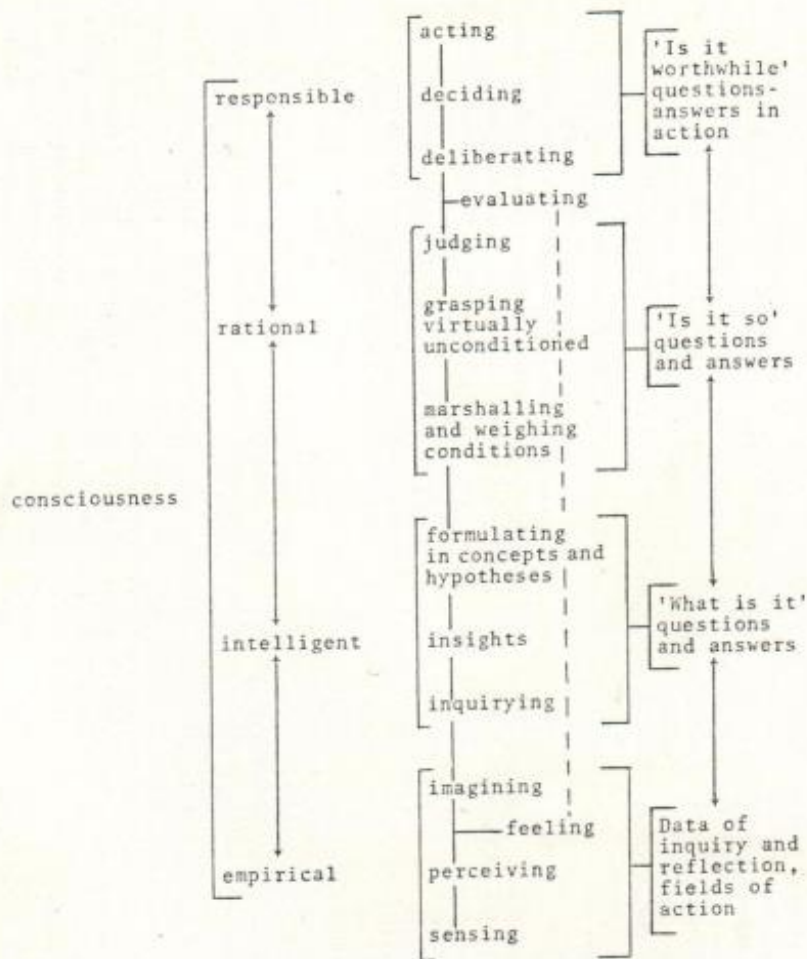


Figure Two: The Basic Levels and Structures of Consciousness

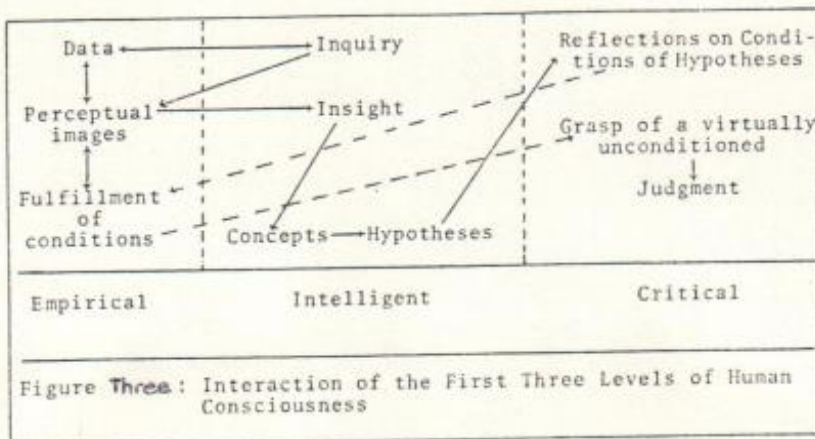


Figure Three: Interaction of the First Three Levels of Human Consciousness

**Taken From:**

Lamb, Matthew L.: "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology", Language, Truth, and Reason, Philip McShane, S.J., (ed.), (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), p. 164

If one answers these questions by stating that one was conscious, then these acts are conscious. To be conscious of them, however, does not mean that one necessarily focussed on the acts, let alone that one understood the acts. It means, rather, that one can at least distinguish between these different conscious experiences enough to give them different names.

#### **D. Understanding**

Supervening upon one's conscious experiencing of and attending to data there are also conscious acts of wondering, inquiring, curiosity, and questioning. These conscious acts can be thematized objectively in the form of a question: "What or why is it?":

By questions for intelligence and reflection are not meant utterances or even conceptual formulations; by the question is meant the attitude of the inquiring mind that effects the transitions from the first level to the second and, again, the attitude of the critical mind that effects the transition from the second level to the third.<sup>19</sup>

The questioning and inquiring is directed to, and "illuminates", the intelligibility of the data, experience, image, substratum, or phantasm. One's experience becomes affected by the questioning insofar as the questioning leads one to focus on and attend more intently on particular and more relevant aspects of what one experiences, e.g. the scientist's curiosity and questioning transforms his or her experiencing into

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 274

specialized experiencing, referred to as observation. Similarly do philosophers become more attentive to the data of conscious experience. The cooperation of one's imagination in generating images, symbols, diagrams, etc. can also be a help to one in fostering understanding. They do so by helping to focus one's questioning on relevant aspects of data.

When an insight, understanding, or idea occurs, there is a release from the tension of inquiry. It has been referred to as the "Aha!", "I've got it!", or "Eureka!" experience. What takes place is that one's questioning is answered or satisfied, i.e. one gets the point; catches on; grasps how the data is related, hangs together, and is caused. One grasps the intelligibility, form, organization, system, law, or correlation in the data or matter. In other words, one's intelligence in act becomes the intelligible in act, i.e. one's intelligence "locks onto" the wavelength or frequency of the intelligibility in the data. When one has an insight, one knows the reason, explanation, or cause of the data. What one grasps through the insight is not imaginable, and it is not simply additional experience or data that one accumulates. What is grasped, rather, is that which relates, unifies, and explains the data. An insight occurs, for example, when one understands a circle to be the locus of points equidistant from a point on the same plane, and not simply when one sees its shape and calls it a circle. It occurs when one understands acceleration to be  $d^2s/dt^2$  and not simply when one has the experience of "going faster":

Everyone is familiar with the common notion of going faster. Few understand what you mean when you explain that an acceleration is the second derivative of a continuous function of distance and time. . . . (it is) something to be known by understanding the data already apprehended and not something known by adding a new datum to the apprehension, something like the principle of work and not something like another lever, something like the discovery of gravitation and not something like the discovery of America.<sup>20</sup>

Insights come suddenly (not timewise but anticipatorily) and unexpectedly. Insights cannot be caused, commanded, or arrived at automatically by following rules. Their occurrence can, of course, be made more probable or likely because of other factors such as outside exigencies, better images, promptings, motivations, teachers, etc. The principle causes of insights are the inner conditions of inquiry and wonder. These inner conditions are what constitute the intellectual pattern of experience:

Deep within us all, emergent when the noise of other appetites is stilled, there is a drive to know, to understand, to see why, to discover the reason, to find the cause, to explain. Just what is wanted, has many names. In what precisely it consists, is a matter of dispute. But the fact of inquiry is beyond all doubt. It can absorb a man. It can keep him for hours, day after day, year after year, in the narrow prison of his study or his laboratory. . . . It can withdraw him from other interests, other pursuits, other pleasures, other achievements. It can fill his waking thoughts, hide from him the world of ordinary affairs, invade the fabric of his dreams. It can demand endless sacrifices that are made without regret though there is only the hope, never a certain promise, of success. . . . if the typical scientist's satisfaction in success is more sedate, his earnestness in inquiry can still exceed that of Archimedes.<sup>21</sup>

---

20 Lonergan, Grace and Freedom, p. 143

21 Lonergan, Insight, p. 4

Insights may be expressed, formulated, or conceptualized in concepts or hypotheses. A concept, hypothesis, or theory is the expression of an insight that one has from inquiry into the data of sense or consciousness. The formulation or conceptualization expresses the intelligible, essential, relevant, and explainable insight along with the relevant or significant "common matter" into which the insight was grasped. To conceptualize is to abstract. Abstraction means, first of all, that one selects some elements of the data and leaves others behind, e.g. Newton left behind or abstracted from constant velocity. Secondly it means that one only seeks and expresses an intelligible component of the selected data, e.g. Newton only sought for and expressed intelligibilities having to do with changes in velocity. Abstraction should not, therefore, be regarded as impoverishing but as enriching in that they give expression to a significant intelligibility grasped in data. This understanding of abstraction contrasts with the conceptualist view of abstraction referred to previously. This view regarded the concept as more important than the act of understanding that gave it expression:

So far from being a mere impoverishment of the data of sense, abstraction in all its essential moments is enriching. Its first moment is an enriching anticipation of an intelligibility to be added to sensible presentations; there is something to be known by insight. Its second moment is the erection of heuristic structures and the attainment of insight to reveal in the data what is variously named as the significant, the relevant, the important, the essential, the idea, the form. Its third moment is the formulation of the intelligibility that insight has revealed. Only in this third moment does there appear the negative aspect of abstraction, namely, the omission of the insignificant, the irrelevant, the negligible, the incidental, the merely empirical residue. Moreover, this omission is neither absolute nor definitive. For the empirical



residue possesses the universal property of being what intelligence abstracts from. Such a universal property provides the basis for a second set of heuristic procedures that take their stand on the simple premise that the non-systematic cannot be systematized.<sup>22</sup>

### **E. Judgement**

To stop here at this point with a formulated insight would be to fall prey to the idealist and conceptualist accounts of knowing. Such accounts ignore the third operation of knowing. This ignorance has plagued philosophers from the time of Plato. What they ignore in the knowing process is the operation of reflective understanding or reason, i.e. of returning with one's understanding or hypothesis to the data in order to ask the further relevant reflexive question: "Is it so?" While other philosophers did not correctly understand the role of judgement in knowing, nevertheless all of them performatively made judgements (even if it was to make the judgement that there is no such thing as judgement). This is why it is more important for us to understand their own and our own conscious cognitive performance rather than mistaken accounts or objectifications of it.

The answer to the question of judgement is either "yes" or "no". The question for judgement is to be distinguished from the question for understanding: "What is it?" The question for judgement is related to the question for understanding. This is because the hypotheses, theories, definitions, conceptions, relationships, or forms grasped in

---

22 Ibid., pp. 30-1

direct understanding are not grasped or formulated or judged as intelligibilities existing in their own right in some Platonic heaven of ideal forms, but are grasped in concrete data. One must, therefore, return to the concrete data in order to find out whether and how often the intelligibility is to be verified in act. Without asking this further question or including this rational operation in one's understanding, the insight or hypothesis will retain the status of being a mere bright idea or mental construct. The return to the data does not mean that one sees or experiences the facts. The return to the data is mediated by a reflective understanding which anticipates what the sensible ramifications will be if the hypothesis is to be affirmed to be true. It is sensitive fulfillment which is sensed, not "the facts", e.g. if the temperature is 100°, one should be able to verify that fact by seeing the arrow on the thermometer point to 100. This does not mean, however, that one sees temperature.

The operation of reflective inquiry is that which seeks to understand whether there is sufficient evidence in order for one to make either a probable or certain judgement. It is referred to as reflective or rational understanding (as distinguished from direct or intelligent understanding). While intelligent inquiry and questioning presupposes the raw materials of the presentations of sense and consciousness to be inquired into and understood, reflective inquiry presupposes intelligent understandings and formulations that it will affirm or deny, agree or

disagree with, assent to or dissent from, with certainty or probability. Probability here refers not to a frequency but to the quality of a judgement:

This probability of judgement differs from the probability investigated in studying statistical method. . . . the probable expectation answers a question for intelligence by assigning an ideal frequency from which actual events non-systematically diverge. But the probable judgement answers a question for reflection and, though it anticipates a divergence between the judgement and actual fact, still the ground of anticipation lies, not in a non-systematic element in the facts, but in the incompleteness of our knowledge. Hence, judgements about things, about correlations, and about probability expectations, may be certain and may be only probable.<sup>23</sup>

In order to attain a reflective understanding with respect to the sufficiency of the evidence for judging yes or no to an insight, i.e. in order to link the reflective question to the answer of yes or no, one must understand the conditions which would have to be fulfilled in the data for a yes or no to be made. This process is referred to as the marshalling and weighing of the evidence.

To grasp the evidence as sufficient for a judgement, the judgement must be grasped as unconditioned. By unconditioned is meant either 1) that which has no conditions (at least by definition only God: the formally unconditioned or de jure absolute) or 2) that which just so happens to have its conditions fulfilled (everything but God: the virtually unconditioned or de facto absolute). There are three elements which must be present in order to affirm something as virtually

---

23 Ibid., p. 299

unconditioned: 1) a conditioned (the insight or hypothesis), 2) a link between the conditioned and conditions which must be fulfilled for the conditioned to exist, and 3) the fulfillment of the conditions:

If A, then B.  
But A.  
Therefore B.

"If A, then B" expresses the grasp of the link between the conditioned insight "B" and its conditions "A". "But A" affirms the fulfillment of the conditions or the sufficiency of the evidence in the data of sense or consciousness. "Therefore B" expresses the making of an unconditioned judgement. A judgement will thus be virtually unconditioned if 1) it is conditioned, 2) its conditions are known, and 3) its conditions are fulfilled.

It must be made clear that despite the example given, the making of a judgement is not the result of following a logical syllogism. To make a judgement one needs, first of all, to affirm the link between the conditioned and its conditions. Secondly one needs to affirm the fact that the conditions are fulfilled. These non-logical judgements are presupposed by the syllogism, not affirmed through it. These affirmations are to be obtained not through logic, but as a result of following through the cognitional process itself, i.e. by one's actually having a reflective insight and making actual judgements with respect to the fulfillment of conditions. The principles of identity and non-contradiction are partial objectifications of components immanent in the operations of human judgement:

The principle of identity is the immutable and definitive validity of the true. The principle of contradiction is the exclusiveness of that validity. It is, and what is opposed to it, is not.<sup>24</sup>

Intelligent understanding and reflective understanding are linked very closely. "Invulnerable insights" refer to those understandings which "hit the bullseye",<sup>25</sup> i.e. they are those understandings which are had by a person who also understands that there are no further questions that are needed to be asked or inquiries that are needed to be made in order to affirm or judge the correctness of the understanding. It must be recalled that insights are answers to intelligent questions that are asked with respect to certain data. The reflective question is one that asks whether all the relevant questions that would affect the intelligent insight have been asked and answered. If they have been, then the insight is judged to be true and thus to be verified in the data. If the operation of reflective understanding grasps that there are further relevant questions to be asked and answered, the insight is then judged to be "vulnerable". Judging whether there are or are not any further relevant questions is a judgement that must be made. It is not to be made just because further questions do not happen to occur to one because of stifled intellectual curiosity, rashness, indecision, prejudices, biases, lack of experience with and understanding of conditions, etc.

If the virtually unconditioned is grasped, "by rational compulsion

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 378

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 284

there follows the judgement."<sup>26</sup> Judgement, however, is not a mechanical process. It is not a matter of following some set of rules, but it is a process which intimately involves the person as either rash and indecisive or as reasonable. In a word, judgement is a matter of prudence or wisdom: "To know whether or not there are in any case further relevant questions depends upon a view of the whole."<sup>27</sup> In other words, in order to make a judgement about a matter in a particular field, one needs some degree of mastery or familiarity with the relevant set of interlocking questions and answers that define the field and some degree of knowledge of relevant questions that still remain to be answered. Clearly there are no rules or laws to inform one when a matter is settled. Only a prudent person is capable of such a judgement i.e. a man or woman of good judgement. Good judgement, of course, is not something one begins with but only can acquire through the self-correcting process of asking questions, arriving at hypotheses, and revising them in light of further questions and new data:

In judgements of the correctness of insights, the link is that the insight is correct if there are no further pertinent questions, and the fulfillment lies in the self-correcting process of learning reaching its limit in familiarity and mastery.<sup>28</sup>

Having the habit of good judgement (i.e. knowing whether there are further relevant questions) is foundational for making correct judgements. True

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 281

<sup>27</sup> Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", p. 137

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 315

judgements, then, are made within the context of a given attainment of wisdom, i.e. within the context of a known set of questions and answers:

. . . context is the interweaving of questions and answers in limited groups. To answer any one question will give rise to further questions. To answer them will give rise to still more. But, while this process can recur a number of times, while it might go on indefinitely if one keeps changing the topic, still it does not go on indefinitely on one and the same topic. So context is a nest of interlocked or interwoven questions and answers; it is limited inasmuch as all the questions and answers have a bearing, direct or indirect, on a single topic; and because it is limited, there comes a point in an investigation when no further relevant questions arise, and then the possibility of judgement has emerged. When there are no further relevant questions, there are no further insights to complement, correct, qualify those that have been reached. Still, what is this single topic that limits the set of relevant questions and answers? . . . the single topic is something to be discovered in the course of the investigation. . . . The key to success is to keep adverting to what has not yet been understood, for that is the source of further questions, and to hit upon the questions directs attention to the parts or aspects of the text where answers may be found. . . . the eventual enclosure of the interrelated multiplicity (of interlocking questions and answers) enables one to recognize the task as completed and to pronounce one's interpretation as probable, highly probable, in some respects, perhaps, certain.<sup>29</sup>

From what has been stated, it should be clear that, especially in the empirical sciences, not all of the answers to all of the relevant questions will ever be known. This does not, however, do away with judgement or reduce the role of judgement to the status of a regulative ideal. It still remains the criterion of truth and reality. A probable judgement should not be equated with a guess. While they compare insofar as each one fails to grasp a virtually unconditioned, they differ in that with the former the relevant sets of further questions and answers are

---

29 Lonergan, Method, pp. 163-5

recognized and are being systematically and methodically converged upon based upon familiarity with sets of questions and answers already addressed:

. . . one moves from careful controlled data through insight to hypothesis to verification via experiment and, finally and secondarily, to logical deductions from the hypotheses. Often a further checking process uncovers unnoticed data, or insights, or experiments so that the whole process must begin anew: from new data to fresh insights to more refined (or different) hypotheses, to better methods of verification, to new deductions etc. At each stage of the procedure the scientist reaches an ever more probable rendering of the truth of the region under study. . . . the reflective grasp here is that, although the self-correcting process of learning has not yet reached its limit, still it is headed towards it in a critically approximate fashion which allows one to affirm it as truly probable (e.g. Einstein's relativity theorem is more truly probable an explanation of the phenomenon of gravitation than Newton's system - it answers more questions).<sup>30</sup>

This progression allows one to approximate what the relevant questions and answers will be and thus to formulate a probable judgement: "empirical science is no more than probable, still it truly is probable."<sup>31</sup>

#### **F. Self-Affirmation**

At this point the reader hopefully has been able to experience and understand the three different and interlocking levels of his or her cognitional operations. The reader hopefully has had an "insight into insight", i.e. an understanding of what knowing is and what it is not. It is a matter now for each person not only to understand but to affirm

---

30 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, pp. 88, 131

31 Lonergan, Insight, p. 303



oneself as a knower:

We have advanced from merely given operations and processes and unities to a basic system of terms and relations that distinguish and relate and name the operations and processes and unities and enable us to speak clearly, accurately, and explanatorily about them. . . . this heightening of consciousness proceeds to an objectification of the subject, to an intelligent and reasonable affirmation of the subject, and so to a transition from the subject as subject to the subject as object. Such a transition yields objective knowledge of the subject just as much as does any valid transition from the data of sense through inquiry and understanding, reflection and judgement.<sup>32</sup>

All the cognitional operations pertain to a single conscious subject - an "I" - which is the conscious unity within which all the operations function:

Indeed, 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 and draw a distinction between conscious acts occurring within the field and unconscious acts occurring outside it.<sup>33</sup>

While the operations have been separated in order to be distinguished, it would be an impoverishing abstraction and conceptualization to try to separate them out from their original concrete unity in the data of the conscious subject within which they are immediately given to experience, understanding, and affirmation, and for whom they function:

. . . a single agent is involved in many acts. . . . it is an abstraction to speak of the acts as conscious, . . . concretely, consciousness pertains to the acting agent. Seeing and hearing differ inasmuch as one

---

32 Lonergan, Method, pp. 260, 262

33 Lonergan, Insight, p. 325

is an awareness of colour and the other an awareness of sound. Seeing and hearing are similar inasmuch as each is an awareness. But the similarity between my seeing and your hearing is an abstract indication of consciousness which, as it is given, is primarily an identity uniting my seeing and my hearing or your seeing and your seeing.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, the condition for one to experience and relate (or separate, as the case may be) the operations is that they are given to one unified conscious subject:

. . . we do not experience the operations in isolation and then, by a process of inquiry and discovery, arrive at the pattern of relations that link them together. On the contrary, the unity of consciousness is itself given; the pattern of the operation is part of the experience of the operations; and inquiry and discovery are needed, not to effect the synthesis of a manifold that, as given, is unrelated, but to analyze a functional and functioning unity. Without analysis, it is true, we cannot discern and distinguish the several operations; and until the operations have been distinguished, we cannot formulate the relations that link them together. But the point to the statement that the pattern itself is conscious is that, once the relations are formulated, they are not found to express surprising novelties but simply prove to be objectifications of the routines of our conscious living and doing.<sup>35</sup>

Cognitive analysis, of course, rather than constituting the conscious acts, mediates what is otherwise given and operative immediately and spontaneously in every subject's consciousness. Knowing one's operations is a true illustration of what is meant when it is said that knowing is an identity rather than a confrontation. This is because what one knows is who one is as a knower. By knowing oneself one is said to appropriate oneself. Through self-appropriation one more fully and truly

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 326

<sup>35</sup> Lonergan, Method, pp. 17-8

becomes who one is.

The affirmation of oneself as a knower is not something one automatically intuitively or deductively arrives at. It is, rather, an intellectual achievement. One utilizes the same cognitional operations to know oneself as to know anything else:

Consciousness as given is neither formulated nor affirmed. Consciousness is given independently of its being formulated or affirmed. To formulate it does not make one more conscious, for the effect of formulation is to add to one's concepts. To affirm it does not make one more conscious, for the effect of affirmation is to add to one's judgements.<sup>36</sup>

. . . we are all conscious of our sensing and our feeling, our inquiring and our understanding, our deliberating and deciding. None of these activities occurs when one is in a coma or dreamless sleep. In that basic sense they are conscious. Still they are not yet properly known. They are just an infrastructure, a component within knowing that in large part remains merely potential. It is only when we heighten consciousness by adverting not only to objects but also to activities, when we begin to sort out the activities, to assign them their distinctive names, to distinguish and to relate, only then that we begin to move from the mere infrastructure that is consciousness to the compound of infra- and superstructure that is man's knowledge of his own cognitional operations.<sup>37</sup>

The question "Am I a knower?" is a question for reflection that every person must ask and answer yes or no to for themselves. One can only answer this question, however, if one has asked and answered the question for understanding: "What is a knower?" Of course one can only answer this question by inquiring into and having an insight into the data of

---

<sup>36</sup> Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 326

<sup>37</sup> Lonergan, "Religious Experience", *Trinification of the World*, Tad Dunne and J.-M. Laporte (eds.), (Toronto: Regis College Press, 1978), p. 73

one's own conscious cognitional operations.

The condition to which the conditional statement "I am a knower" is linked is the occurrence of the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging in one's own consciousness. The judgement "I am a knower" is thus not necessary or absolute but a virtually unconditioned matter of fact judgement that one makes because its conditions happen to be fulfilled. The very act of reflecting itself - of asking the question: "Am I a knower?" and seeking a virtually unconditioned - exposes oneself as an intelligently and rationally conscious inquirer and knower. This is because one must be engaged in the act of reflective understanding in order to ask the reflective question: "Am I a knower?" The very ability of one to consciously ask the question is sufficient fulfillment of the conditions necessary for one to give an affirmative answer. The alternative to affirming oneself as a knower would be to affirm oneself as an inattentive, unintelligent, non-responsible, unconscious somnambulist.<sup>38</sup> For one to deny that one is a knower would be an act of self-deception and self-rejection. There would result an incoherent and alienating inconsistency between cognitional performance and self-understanding. One's denial that one is a knower is sufficient reason for one to affirm that one has inquired, understood, and reflected. True denial could only be had by an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, or by someone unconscious. Skeptics automatically and performatively

---

38 Cf. Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 273

disqualify themselves by their reasoned denials:

. . . if I were as intelligent as Hume, my own keen, probing, demanding intelligent and rational performance would provide me with all the evidence I would need to know that . . . the Humean analysis is nonsense.<sup>39</sup>

Does consciousness supply the fulfillment for the other conditions? Do I see, or am I blind? Do I hear, or am I deaf? Do I try to understand or is the distinction between intelligence and stupidity no more applicable to me than to a stone? Have I any experience of insight, or is the story of Archimedes (288-212 B.C.) as strange to me as the account of Plotinus' (204-270) vision of the One? Do I conceive, think, consider, suppose, define, formulate, or is my talking like the talking parrot? I reflect, for I ask whether I am a knower. Do I grasp the unconditioned, if not in other instances, then in this one? If I grasped the unconditioned, would I not be under the rational compulsion of affirming that I am a knower and so, either affirm it, or else find some loop-hole, some weakness, some incoherence, in this account of the genesis of self-affirmation? As each has to ask these questions of himself, so too he has to answer them for himself. But the fact of the asking and the possibility of the answering are themselves the sufficient reason for the affirmative answer. . . . The contradiction of self-negation has been indicated. Behind that contradiction there have been discerned natural inevitabilities and spontaneities that constitute the possibility of knowing, not by demonstrating that one can know, but pragmatically by engaging one in the process. Nor in the last resort can one reach a deeper foundation than that pragmatic engagement. Even to seek it involves a vicious circle; for if one seeks such a foundation, one employs one's cognitional process; and the foundation to be reached will be no more secure or solid than the inquiry utilized to reach it. . . . The ultimate basis of our knowing is not necessity but contingent fact, and the fact is established, not prior to our engagement in knowing, but simultaneously with it. The skeptic, then, is not involved in a conflict with absolute necessity. He might not be; he might not be a knower. Contradiction arises when he utilizes cognitional process to deny it.<sup>40</sup>

### **G. Intentionality**

So far, emphasis has been placed on cognitional operations as

---

39 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 139

40 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 328, 332

conscious, as understood, and as affirmed. It is now necessary to spell out another important aspect of the operations taken individually and as a whole, namely their intentionality. Conscious cognitional operations do not just occur immanently but have an intentionality and transcendence to them, i.e. they are transitive and intend objects. Cognitional operations differ from one another not only in how they are experienced consciously but also in their intentionality. This difference in ends is complementary, however. The intending is not limited to the goal of each operation. The intending, rather, is conjoined and compounded into a single intending and knowing of a single object of which each operation cumulatively intends an aspect. What one experiences is what one inquires into, understands, affirms, and decides whether to choose or to act. The object known by the compounding of different yet interrelated operations is referred to as a compound object.

Lonergan distinguishes two interrelated modes of intending which are operative in each cognitional level and in the cognitional process as a whole. These two distinct ways of intending are referred to as categorical and transcendental. The former intending seeks particular determinant aspects, intelligibilities, and answers to particular inquiries and questions. The very condition for being able to intend such particular objects, however, is because one intends transcendently. With transcendental intentionality, one does not simply intend particular determinant answers to particular determinant questions. Transcendental intentionality is instead the a priori spirit

of inquiry and wonder itself (the desiderium sciendi) which is at the basis of and is the condition for all categorical intending, questioning, and knowing. Without transcendental intentionality no particular attending or inquiring would be possible. Transcendental intentionality is objectified not in any particular question ("what is this?" or "is this?") but in the dynamism of questioning itself ("what?" or "why?" or "what is?").

The dynamism of transcendental questioning or intentionality is manifested in the operations of cognition (and volition) taken separately and in the process as a whole. While it would not be correct to speak of it on the level of experience, one can refer to the operations of understanding, judging, and deciding as transcendental in their intentionality. On the level of understanding one seeks to understand not only particular things but everything, and on the level of judgment one seeks to know the truth not only of particular things but of everything. In other words, one seeks the transcendentals of "intelligibility" or "beauty" on the level of understanding, "truth" on the level of judgement, and "goodness" or "value" on the level of decision:

. . . if one wishes to transpose this analysis into metaphysical terms, then the active potencies are the transcendental notions revealed in questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation. The passive potencies are the lower levels as presupposed and complemented by the higher.<sup>41</sup>

---

41 Lonergan, Method, p. 120

The transcendental objects of transcendental intentionality must not be thought of as particular objects themselves separate from other particular objects. Transcendental objects, rather, are similar to the objects of science, i.e. they are to be reached only when one fully understands and knows everything. The transcendental objects are referred to as transcendental notions because they refer to what is intended rather than known. Transcendental notions are not abstractions but are comprehensive, i.e. they are concrete universals which are intended through one's attending to, understanding, affirming, and choosing the particular. They are to be reached only if one fully attends to, understands, affirms, and chooses the concrete (i.e. everything under all of its aspects). While one can choose to orient and dedicate oneself to the transcendental notions (a choice referred to as a fundamental option), they are not able to be intended apart from one's operating with respect to the concrete.

#### **H. The Notion of Being**

Cognitional and volitional operations are referred to as "successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit."<sup>42</sup> The self which one's cognitional operations objectify is but the tip of the iceberg when compared to that which initiates, underpins, penetrates, pervades, and constitutes these operations. What constitutes

---

42 Ibid., p. 13



them is referred to by Lonergan as the unrestricted or pure desire to know or as the universal intention to know being. One proceeds to this objective through the three levels of cognitional operations. They are all ultimately oriented to this one transcendental notion. Transcendence is manifested rudimentarily in the extroversion of animals and humans moving beyond themselves to that which is other. Its fullest expression is to be found in human cognition through which one consciously, intelligently, and reasonably intends to know being: "Being then is the objective of the pure desire to know."<sup>43</sup>

The process of knowing is oriented through its intent to knowing everything about everything. This is insofar as knowing is not content with partial insights and partial verifications of insights. The human drive to know manifested in the intellectual pattern of experience demands complete explanation, i.e. the unconditioned. Everything can be called into question or wondered about. This all or totality of what is known and remains to be known and which is intended in questioning is referred to and defined as "Being". Aquinas also held that the object of the natural desire of the intellect was being [the ens per essentiam (essential being), as opposed to simply the entia per participationem (beings through participation)]<sup>44</sup>. No one has ever known being, i.e. no one has ever had an "idea of being", for no one has ever known everything about everything. Consequently no one has ever had a "concept of being"

---

43 Lonergan, Insight, p. 378

44 Aquinas, Summa, I-II, q. 3, a. 8c; Summa Contra Gentiles, III, cc. 25-63

either, i.e. the expression of complete understanding. On the other hand insofar as there exists the immediate, conscious, and verifiable unrestricted drive or intent to know that is implied and present in all inquiry and reflection, then it is possible for one to know being not intuitively or innately but notionally. Even though one cannot know being by grasping its form in data, one can know it as the unknown "x" which one intends and heads for insofar as one is intelligently and rationally conscious:

. . . being is what is to be known by the totality of true judgements. . . It becomes determined only as correct judgements are made, and it reaches its full determination only when the totality of correct judgements are made. However, the making of judgements is a determinate process and one does not have to make all judgements to grasp the nature of that process. It is this fact that makes cognitional theory a base for operations for the determination of the general structure of the concrete universe.<sup>45</sup>

The desire or intention to know being is natural. It is as natural and spontaneous as asking questions. No one, not even a child, has to be taught to ask a question:

. . . it supposes no acquired habit. . . . Since, then, acts are specified by their objects, and the object of natural desire is the transcendental ens (being), we may say that the desire of our intellects is natural in origin and transcendental in its object.<sup>46</sup>

Categorical answers to categorical questions are only partial fulfillments of the universal intention for being. One has a notional

---

45 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 350, 361

46 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 84, 86

or "heuristic" grasp of being by correctly understanding the operations or method of human knowing. "Heuristic" is a term used to indicate the fact that we can anticipate an unknown content by understanding the cognitional acts or method through which it will become known:

A heuristic notion . . . is the notion of an unknown content and it is determined by anticipating the type of act through which the unknown would become known.<sup>47</sup>

Heuristic scientific method that seeks to know an unknown, then, is a particular example and expression of the more basic heuristic method of the human cognitional process itself.

Every methodical inquiry made up of operations is intentional insofar as the method seeks to transform an unknown into a known. While one who is in possession of a method is not in possession of knowledge of the object intended, neither is that person completely ignorant of the object either. While the object is not known, neither is it completely unknown. It is, rather, a known unknown.

The basic method of all human knowing which is constituted by the cognitional operations is referred to by Lonergan as transcendental method. The method is referred to as transcendental 1) in the scholastic sense: in that what the method intends is not confined to any particular categorical object, and 2) in the Kantian sense: as the necessary a priori condition of the possibility of knowing anything. The method is motivated

---

47 Lonergan, Insight, p. 392

by the intention to know being. This intention moves one beyond biological extroversion to be attentive, beyond attention to understanding, beyond understanding to affirmation, and beyond singular affirmations to the knowing of all that is:

It is the originating drive of human 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. It is the active principle that calls forth in turn our several cognitional activities and, as it assembles them into single instances of knowing, so it assembles their many partial objects into single total objects. By inquiry it moves us from sensing to understanding only to combine the sensed and understood into an object of thought through rationally compelling evidence to judgements about reality. From the partial knowledge we have reached it sends us back to fuller experiencing, fuller understanding, broader and deeper judgements, for what it intends includes far more than we succeed in knowing. It is all-inclusive, but the knowing we achieve is always limited.<sup>48</sup>

Being, therefore, is not some "already-out-there-now-real-body" to be known through some look or intuition. It is not to be known by only one cognitional operation or in one instance of knowing but through all the operations of the knowing process recurrently and continuously put into operation.

Being is a concrete universal. Since questioning is into every aspect of everything, its goal is the universe in all its concreteness. Being and the concrete are thus identical terms:

. . . being is completely concrete and completely universal. It is completely concrete, over and above the being of anything there is nothing

---

48 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 228-9

more of that thing. It is completely universal, apart from the realm of being there is simply nothing.<sup>49</sup>

To know the concrete in its concreteness is to know all there is to be known about each thing. To know all there is to be known about each thing is, precisely, to know being. . . . being and the concrete are identical terms. . . . this view of the concrete . . . presupposes that concepts express insights and that insights grasp forms immanent in sensible presentations. . . . It presupposes that the sensible has been intellectualized through schemes, sequences, processes, developments. On that supposition, human knowledge forms a single whole, and the totality of true judgements is necessarily knowledge of the concrete. On the other hand, if one ignores or neglects insight, then human knowledge splits into two parts. Concepts are related to sensible presentations only as universals to particulars. Of themselves, concepts and judgements are abstract and, to reach the concrete, there has to be added an unspecified series of internally unrelated sensible presentations. On this view, which wholeheartedly I reject, it is paradoxical to maintain that the totality of true judgements is knowledge of the concrete. On this view, knowledge of the concrete is reached by adding to knowledge of the abstract the humanly unattainable totality of sensitive perceptions.<sup>50</sup>

When it is said that the intention of human knowing is unrestricted and being, this means there is nothing that exists or can exist outside of its intent or method. In fact, one would contradict oneself if one were to try to maintain that there could be something existing apart from being and the range of human knowing. This is because one's own question implies that such things can be questioned and wondered about:

That intention is unrestricted, for there is nothing that we cannot at least question. . . . the intention is unrestricted, it is not restricted to the immanent content of knowing, to *Bewusstseinsinhalte*; at least, we can ask whether there is anything beyond that, and the mere fact that the question can be asked reveals that the intention, which the question manifests, is not limited by any principle of immanence.<sup>51</sup>

---

49 Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 350

50 Lonergan, *Collection*, pp. 158-9

51 *Ibid.*, pp. 228, 230

As has been mentioned, since questioning is into every aspect of everything, its goal is the universe in all its concreteness. Being, as the object of human knowing, is the totality of correct answers to every question. Being is therefore identical with what is real, i.e. every aspect of everything that exists:

. . . as apart from being there is nothing, so apart from reality there is nothing; as being embraces the concrete totality of everything, so too does reality.<sup>52</sup>

Human knowing is related to being and reality. It is related not primarily through contents, thoughts, principles, doctrines, or answers, i.e. through what is actually known, but through its unrestricted intentionality, transcendent orientation, and questioning:

This intrinsic relation of the dynamic structure of human knowing to being and so to reality primarily is not pensée pensée but pensée pensante, not intentio intenta but intentio intendens, not noema but noesis (not 'thought-thought but thought-thinking.').<sup>53</sup>

## **I. Cognitive Structure, Counter-Positions, and Objectivity**

One's cognitive operations are interrelated parts that stand within a process that is a unified, intelligently and intelligibly self-assembling, self-constituting, materially and formally structured whole:

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 228

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

. . . human knowing is . . . formally dynamic. It is self-assembling, self constituting. It puts itself together, one part summoning forth the next, till the whole is reached. And this occurs, not with the blindness of natural process, but consciously, intelligently, rationally. Experience stimulates inquiry, and inquiry is intelligence bringing itself to act; it leads from experience through imagination to insight, and from insight to the concepts that combine in single objects both what has been grasped by insight and what in experience or imagination is relevant to the insight. In turn, concepts stimulate reflection, and reflection is the conscious exigence of rationality; it marshals the evidence and weighs it either to judge or else to doubt and so renew inquiry.<sup>54</sup>

It happens, however, that people identify one or two of these parts of knowing with knowing as a whole. The other parts are then either reduced or eliminated. While some parts may be less obvious than others, all of them are nonetheless integral components. No one act by itself can be regarded as knowing except in a loose, borrowed, or metaphorical way. Seeing, for example, is not knowing but, rather, is a component which allows one to experience and be attentive to the data that one seeks a verified understanding of. Understanding also by itself is not knowing, for it requires prior experience to inquire into and verification. Similarly judgement by itself is not knowing:

To pass judgement on what one does not understand is, not human knowing, but human arrogance. To pass judgement independently of all experience is to set fact aside.<sup>55</sup>

While all the operations are related to each other, they are related functionally, not similarly, i.e. they are each different. Hence just

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 223

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

because one is familiar with seeing does not mean that one can presume to understand, even analogously, what is meant by understanding or judging:

. . . most people know what seeing is and most are mystified when asked what understanding is.<sup>56</sup>

If one conceives language as the expression of mental acts, one will conclude that philosophic problems have their source not only in linguistic expression but also in mental acts, and it could happen that one would devote more attention to the mental acts than to the linguistic expression. . . . one . . . accounts for the meaningfulness of language by appealing to its originating mental acts. . . . it puts mental acts at the basis of the meaningfulness of language.<sup>57</sup>

David Hume was thus quite right when he pointed out that sensitive perception does not grasp intelligible relations and causality but only notices succession. He did not recognize, however, the quite different operation of understanding which does grasp relations and causality. This was despite the fact that he made extensive use of this operation himself.

Lonergan has identified two accounts of knowing and objectivity which he says have underlain and have continued to underlie faulty epistemologies and metaphysics. The first is referred to as the counterposition of naive realism. The counterposition of empiricism is similar to it. People asserting this view hold to the validity of human knowing but mistakenly attribute the objectivity of human knowing to one component of knowing, namely seeing. Objectivity is regarded as

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 225

<sup>57</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 256



exemplified by ocular vision which ". . . sees what is there to be seen; it does not see what is not there to be seen. That is objectivity."<sup>58</sup> From this "obvious" notion of objectivity the naive realist concludes that only those cognitional activities that resemble ocular vision can be objective. Those that do not are regarded as immanent, subjective, and inessential. Even if no cognitional activity is discovered to meet this standard, such an operation is nonetheless posited (e.g. the operation of "intellectual intuition"):

The analogy of ocular vision reveals what intellectual activity must be like if it is objective; it must be like seeing. Even if introspection discovers no intellectual activity that resembles seeing, still some such activity really must exist; for if it did not, then our intellectual activity would be merely immanent, and idealism would be correct; but the conclusion is false, and therefore the premise must be false.<sup>59</sup>

The idealist correctly refutes the naive realist view by criticizing its attribution of objectivity to seeing. The idealist also recognizes other cognitional operations besides experience. The idealist holds, however, that human knowing cannot know reality but only manipulate appearances. The idealist distinguishes appearances from reality (the unseeable primary qualities or noumena). The idealist does not state that anything "is" (since no one can know the noumena) but only that things "seem to be". One cannot judge "things themselves" but only "appearances". Judgement is only considered a regulative ideal because

---

<sup>58</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 232

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 233

no cognitive act can get beyond the subjective appearances that are confronted in sense. Those who think they can know reality are said to suffer from a "transcendental illusion". While idealists recognize understanding, they regard it as only able to manipulate phenomenal appearances and to impose mental constructs and concepts derived from a priori categories. It is scholastic conceptualism in reverse.

Kantians, logical positivists, logical atomists, logical empiricists, analytical philosophers, and naive realists all believe that cognitional operations are related to objects immediately by Anschauung, i.e. a sensitive look or intuition. For them, the categories of understanding and the ideals of reason are empty and are only able to refer to objects mediately through sense or intuition:

. . . their world is a picture world; the original relationship of cognitional activity to the picture is the look; and so it is in looking that the naive realist finds revealed the essence of objectivity, and it is in Anschauung that the critical idealist places the immediate relation of cognitional activity to objects.<sup>60</sup>

Once picture thinking takes over, immanence is an inevitable consequence. What is intended in questioning, is not seen, intuited, perceived; it is as yet unknown; it is what we do not know but seek to know. It follows that the intention of questioning, the notion of being, is merely immanent, merely subjective. Again, what is grasped in understanding, is not some further datum added to the data of sense and of consciousness; on the contrary, it is quite unlike all data; it consists in an intelligible unity or pattern that is, not perceived, but understood; and it is understood, not as necessarily relevant to the data, but only as possibly relevant. Now the grasp of something that is possibly relevant is nothing like seeing, intuiting, perceiving, which regard only what is actually there. It follows that, for picture-thinking, understanding too must be merely immanent and merely subjective. What holds for

---

60 Ibid., p. 236

understanding also holds for concepts, for concepts express what has been grasped by understanding. What holds for concepts, holds no less for judgements, since judgements proceed from a reflective understanding, just as concepts proceed from a direct or inverse understanding. . . . Since our only cognitional activity immediately related to objects is intuition, it follows that the value of our judgements and our reasoning can be no more than the value of our intuitions. But our only intuitions are sensitive; sensitive intuition reveal not being but phenomena; and so our judgements and reasoning are confined to a merely phenomenal world. Such, substantially, seems to be the Kantian argument. It is a quite valid argument if one means by "object" what one can settle by picture thinking. "Object" is what one looks at; looking is sensitive intuition; it alone is immediately related to objects; understanding and reason can be related only mediately, only through sensitive intuition.<sup>61</sup>

Even phenomenologists such as Husserl, Max Scheler (1874-1928), and Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889-1978) are regarded by Lonergan as "highly purified empiricists".<sup>62</sup> Rather than advance from common sense descriptions of objects to theoretic explanations, phenomenologists abstract and generalize from the particular common sense relatedness of individual "lookers" and objects "looked at" to formulate universals and formal essences. Such universals, however, are merely the looked at products of sensitive extroversion:

. . . the whole enterprise (phenomenology) is under the shadow of the principle of immanence, and it fails to transcend the crippling influence of the extroversion that provides the model for the pure ego. . . . If it pretends to report the significant data, then it is deceived, for significance is not in data but accrues to them from the occurrence of insight. If it urges that it presents the insights that arise spontaneously, immediately, and inevitably from the data, one must remark that the data alone are never the sole determinants of the insights that arise in any but an infantile mind and that beyond the level of insight there is the level of critical reflection with its criteria of the virtually unconditioned. If it objects that at least one must begin by

---

61 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 77-8

62 Lonergan, Insight, p. 415

describing the facts that are accessible to all, one must insist that knowledge of fact rests on a grasp of the unconditioned and that a grasp of the unconditioned is not the starting-point but the end of inquiry. . . . if one hopes to reach this end . . . then one had better not begin with the assumption that knowing is "something there to be looked at and described".<sup>63</sup>

Lonergan counters the counterpositions of naive realism, empiricism, and idealism. He does so by pointing out that 1) objectivity is not achieved by one but several different cognitional operations and 2) objectivity need not be conceived according to the analogy of confrontational seeing:

. . . intellectual operations have their objectivity, not because they resemble ocular vision, but because they are what ocular vision never is, namely intelligent and rational.<sup>64</sup>

While naive realists assert that seeing reaches the real, idealists assert that one cannot know the real by seeing but only the appearance of the real. This is because they somehow already know or presuppose the nature of the real that exists. They know it exists not through a judgement but through a prior look or intuition. They are implicitly guilty of the same crime they accuse naive realist of:

It is just as much a matter of judgement to know that an object is not real but apparent, as it is to know that an object is not apparent but real. Sense does not know appearances, because sense alone is not human knowing, and because sense alone is not human knowing, and because sense alone does not possess the full objectivity of human knowing. By our senses we are given, not appearance, not reality, but data. By our consciousness, which is not an inner sense, we are given, not appearance,

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 235

not reality, but data. Further, while it is true enough that data of sense result in us from the action of external objects, it is not true that we know this by sense alone; we know it as we know anything else, by experiencing, understanding, and judging.<sup>65</sup>

The idealist notion of what is real is built up from ocular vision. The difference between naive realists and idealists is not with respect to the visual bodies they believe exist, but the ability of one to know them. Idealists assert that since reason cannot know the real (which they already somehow know exists), then knowing cannot be objective. Implicitly, however, their criteria of the real is ocular vision for they have assumed that what is really real is a noumenal world made up of the objects of extroverted looking. While naive realists and empiricists regard this world as knowable through looking, idealists do not:

The fundamental problem . . . in all bifurcations of the phenomena-noumena type . . . sprang from an intrusion of the extroversion proper to the bio-neurological pattern of experience into the intellectual pattern. Objectivity becomes a disguised extroversion or introversion, reality can only be either the already out there now or the in here now, while knowing becomes taking a noetic intuition of it. Truth is then either the approximation of an impoverished mental representation with that reality or remains on the generic level of the there-ness of experienced interiority.<sup>66</sup>

The point to the distinction between immanent and projected intelligibilities is . . . a distinction that is necessarily made by an empiricist or a naive realist. The immanent intelligibility is the one you know by taking a look at what really is there and the projected one is the one you think out in your mind, but do not see in the object. I . . . have no use for that distinction. For me the significant distinction is between intelligibilities that are affirmed in true

---

65 Ibid.

66 Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology", Language, Truth, and Meaning, Philip McShane (ed.), (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1972), p. 152

judgements and intelligibilities that are not affirmable. If your criterion of reality is a look, you have to distinguish between the immanent and the projected intelligibility entirely or say that all intelligibilities are subjective. . . . Accordingly, if one is going by the look, the logical position is to say that no intelligibility is objective. However, if you hold that the criterion of reality is truth, then you divide intelligibilities into those that enter into true judgements and those that do not.<sup>67</sup>

For Lonergan the basic problem with naive realists, empiricists, and idealists is that they all ignore the notion of being. What Lonergan has revealed through his cognitional analysis is that people are related not to a world of appearances through sense, but to a universe of being through questioning. In fact even the operation of sense is oriented to, summoned forth by, and united within the intention of being. Cognitional operations are not simply circular in terms of their occurrence - experience, understanding, and judgement - but are also cumulative and methodical in their progression to being. The operations of the knowing process are thus like a wheel on a car which not only continuously revolve but also allow the car to progress down the road to its objective - being.

Knowledge is reached when one makes a correct judgement, whether it be the being of a subject (namely oneself) or an object. Subject and object are thus defined first within the context of the notion of being and secondarily in relation to each other. Hence knowing consists "not in going beyond a known knower, but in heading for being within which there

---

67 Lonergan, "Insight Seminar Lecture", (unpublished), Lecture 8 Side 1, Discussion, St. Mary's, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1958

are positive differences and, among such differences, the difference between object and subject."<sup>68</sup> Objectivity is therefore reached when 1) distinct beings are affirmed: A is and B is, 2) they are distinguished: A is not B, and 3) one of the beings is affirmed to be a knower: A is a knower.

While questions and answers have the same object as each other, namely being, there is still a difference between the two. In questioning one intends being, while with answers one reaches the virtually unconditioned:

The objectivity of human knowing . . . rests upon an unrestricted intention and an unconditioned result. . . . true answers express an unconditioned.<sup>69</sup>

Correct answers (judgements) and objectivity rest on a grasp of the unconditioned. When this is grasped in reflective understanding, the operations of human knowing transcend the human subject. One grasps not what appears or seems relative to the subject's prejudices, fears, or desires, but what is in itself true:

When we seriously affirm that something really and truly is so, we are making the claim that we have got beyond ourselves in some absolute fashion, somehow have got hold of something that is independent of ourselves, somehow have reached beyond, transcended ourselves.<sup>70</sup>

Because human knowing reaches . . . an unconditioned, it transcends itself. For the unconditioned qua unconditioned cannot be restricted, qualified, limited; and so we all distinguish sharply between what is and, on the other hand, what appears, what seems to be, what is imagined

---

68 Lonergan, Insight, p. 377

69 Lonergan, Collection, p. 230

70 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 167

or thought or might possibly or probably be affirmed; in the latter cases the object is still tied down by relativity to the subject; in the former the self-transcendence of human knowing has come to its term; when we say that something is, we mean that its reality does not depend upon our cognitional activity.<sup>71</sup>

Still, you will ask, just where did existence come in? Was it some one of the data, or was it their totality? No, any and all the data are quite compatible with phenomenism, pragmatism, existentialism. . . . Did, then, existence come in with the insight, or with the concept, or with the particularized concept? No, idealists and relativists know all about insights, concepts, and their particularization; and to suppose that these activities yield more than an object of thought is simply essentialism in its radical form. But, then, what can be the origin of the notion of existence, if neither sense nor understanding suffice? I think that, if you will go back over the process just described, you will notice that the notion of existence emerged with the question whether the particularized concept, "this thing", was anything more than a mere object of thought. In other words, just as existence is the act of being (Aquinas' actus essendi), so the notion of existence is the crowning component in the notion of being. But the notion of being is our desire to know, our drive to ask questions. The crowning question is the question for reflection, An sit?, Is that so? An affirmative answer to that question posits a synthesis. Through the positing, the "Yes", the "Est", we know the existence and, more generally, fact (cf. Summa, I, q. 54, a. 1c).<sup>72</sup>

### **J. Horizon Analysis**

By "horizon" Lonergan means, like the term implies, the maximum field of vision from a given standpoint or from the use of certain operations. One's "world" is the sum total of all one's horizons:

. . . my world is the part of the universe determined by the horizon of my concern . . . The subject's concern determines his horizon, and his horizon selects his world.<sup>73</sup>

---

71 Lonergan, Collection, p. 230

72 Ibid., p. 162

73 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", pp. 74, 78



Anyone's horizon may be defined by what one intends or questions. One's horizon therefore includes both 1) those sets of questions one asks and can answer as well as 2) those questions one asks and finds interesting but cannot answer (the realm of docta ignorantia). Beyond one's horizon are 3) those questions one not only cannot answer but also do not even occur to or interest one enough to ask (the realm of indocta ignorantia). Between the second and third is the limit of anyone's horizon. What is beyond one's horizon thus pertains not principally to what one cannot answer, but to what one does not or cannot question. Horizon shifts of course occur not when one has a new answer, but when one has a new question.

For Lonergan being is the ultimate, comprehensive, unrestricted, unknown goal and basic horizon (the objective pole) from the standpoint of the unrestricted intention to know of the subject (the subjective pole):

. . . horizon is specified by two poles, one objective and the other subjective, with each pole conditioning the other . . . in the horizon of the wise man, the philosopher of the Aristotelian tradition, the objective pole is an unrestricted domain, and the subjective pole is the philosopher practicing transcendental method, namely, the method that determines the ultimate and so basic whole.<sup>74</sup>

While the horizon of an animal is a habitat determined by the animal's vital anticipation, the horizon of a human is the universe of being. This is insofar as one has allowed the intention of being to be at the

---

74 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 213-4

operative center of one's life. One's horizon is often less than this potential basic horizon due to other operational centers with their attendant concerns, interests, and criteria. These operations have more restricted horizons and notions of reality that need to be integrated into the basic universal horizon. One must decenter oneself from these horizons, not by negating or suppressing them, but by allowing them to become subsumed within the intention of being. It is within this universal horizon that the true objectivity and identity of things and the human subject is obtained:

To each of us his own private real world is very real indeed. Spontaneously it lays claim to being the one real world, the standard, the criterion, the absolute, by which everything is judged, measured, evaluated. That claim, I should insist, is not to be admitted. There is one standard, one criterion, one absolute, and that is true judgement. In so far as one's private real world does not meet that standard, it is some dubious product of animal faith and human error. On the other hand, in so far as one's private real world is submitted constantly and sedulously to the corrections made by true judgement, necessarily it is brought into conformity with the universe of being.<sup>75</sup>

The decentering and recentering of oneself within the universe of being is a rare and difficult occurrence:

. . . deliberate decision about one's horizon is high achievement. For the most part people merely drift into some contemporary horizon. They do not exercise their vertical liberty by migrating from the one they have inherited to another they have discovered to be better.<sup>76</sup>

Such decentering and entering into the universe of being is referred to

---

75 Ibid., p. 158

76 Lonergan, Method, p. 269

by Lonergan as an intellectual conversion. Entry into the universe of being is foundational for philosophy. This conversion involves: "moving out of a world of sense and of arriving, dazed and disoriented for a while into a universe of being."<sup>77</sup> Insofar as one continuously and habitually intends and gives oneself over to the demands of the dynamic orientation to being and the criterion of correct judgement rather than to one's own private concerns and prejudices one will find one's true center and source of authenticity, and be able to become who one most basically is.

Moving from one center and horizon to another can be a disorienting and possibly threatening occurrence. The recentering of oneself around the transcendent within oneself is what the process of conversion is all about. Through it one enters into a new world or universe of meaning which is accessible, meaningful, and comprehensible only to those who have also undergone such a conversion. Answers, beliefs, rules, doctrines, etc. are relative to the questions to which they are responses. It is only insofar as one appropriates the subjective pole of transcendental intentionality that one will be able to interpret, make sense of, and find them meaningful.

#### **K. The Method of Metaphysics**

As has been stated, first philosophy chooses the basic terms and relations which make up one's first principles (the primum in aliquo

---

<sup>77</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 79; cf. Plato, Republic VII

ordine). The thematization of transcendental method is thus first philosophy. Its basic terms are the operations of human cognition and its basic relations are their dynamic interrelationships. Their intended object is the universe of being.

The problem with choosing a metaphysics is that one tends to beg the question with respect to what is real. One then seeks to fashion a method to know what one has already presumed to be real:

A method can direct activity to a goal only by anticipating the general nature of the goal. But the only question to be settled in metaphysics is the general nature of the goal of knowledge, for all questions of detail have to be met by the sciences and by common sense. Accordingly it would seem that every method in metaphysics must be involved in the fallacy of begging the question. By the mere fact of settling upon a method, one presupposes as settled the very issue that metaphysics proposes to resolve. . . . Inasmuch as metaphysical inquiry aims at making latent metaphysics explicit, it proceeds not from arbitrary assumptions about the goal of knowledge, which would involve it in the fallacy of begging the question, but from matters of fact that only the inquirer can verify in his own empirical, intelligent, and rational consciousness.<sup>78</sup>

With Lonergan the decision is made to choose human cognitional operations as the dynamic first principles and method (the primum in aliquo ordine) through which all knowledge will be obtained. To choose anything else would be a contradiction insofar as one would utilize cognitional operations to make the choice.

Differences in metaphysics can be reduced to differences in knowledge and objectivity, and differences in objectivity or epistemology can be reduced to differences in cognitional analysis. By resolving this

---

78 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 401-2

latter, Lonergan has formulated not merely another theory, but has made explicit the performance and method of knowing itself. Lonergan is able to cut through various metaphysical, epistemological, and philosophical differences by objectifying the unrevisable rock foundational criteria and method for knowing reality. Such a foundation is not to be found in a theory, self-evident proposition, or authority. It is to be found, rather, in the conscious and intentional operations of the human knowing process. The unrevisability of transcendental method is not in terms of its thematization, but its performance. Even revised objectifications would still have to include the basic levels articulated by Lonergan:

. . . a fuller and more exact knowledge of human cognitional process is by no means excluded and, in the measure it is attained, there will follow a fuller and more exact determination of basic terms and relations. . . . for a revision to take place certain conditions must be fulfilled. For, in the first place, any possible revision will appeal to data which the opinion under review either overlooked or misapprehended, and so any possible revision must presuppose at least an empirical level of operations. Secondly, any possible revision will offer a better explanation of the data, and so any possible revision must presuppose an intellectual level of operation. Thirdly, any possible revision will claim that the better explanation is more probable, and so any possible revision must presuppose a rational level of operations. . . . It follows that there is a sense in which the objectifications of the normative pattern of our conscious and intentional operations does not admit revision. The sense in question is that the activity of revising consists in such operations in accord with such a pattern, so that a revision rejecting the pattern would be rejecting itself.<sup>79</sup>

To objectify and differentiate the basic structure of cognitional operations and the position on knowledge, being, and objectivity which

---

79 Lonergan, Method, pp. 21, 19

they imply, one must abstract the cognitional operations out from one's complex, undifferentiated, polymorphic consciousness. "Polymorphic" refers to the fact that there are other operations in consciousness with their own counterpositional notions of knowledge, being, and objectivity:

In the measure in which we have been successful, the reader will know what is meant by insight, what is meant by reasonableness, how both differ from the internal and external experience that they presuppose, how all three form a patterned orientation that differs from other orientations that commonly are more familiar and more frequent. In the measure that such self-knowledge has been reached, it is possible to . . . discuss method. . . . the goal of the method is the emergence of explicit metaphysics in the minds of particular men and women. It begins from them as they are, no matter what they may be. It makes explicit the pursuit of the goal that has been implicit in the pure desire to know.<sup>80</sup>

Lonergan begins his metaphysics not with a truth so objective and obvious that he can prescind from human subjects, but, rather, with concrete subjects as they are in all their complexity and existential bewilderment:

The initial problem of metaphysical method is not the establishment of self-evident principles, but the clarification of human consciousness to itself. No principle is self-evident to a consciousness bewildered by its own complexity.<sup>81</sup>

Just as metaphysics can exist only in a mind and can be produced only by the mind in which it is to be, so also metaphysics can begin only in minds that exist and it can proceed only from their actual texture and complexion. Bluntly, the starting point of metaphysics is people as they are. . . . Metaphysics, then, is not something in a book but something in a mind.<sup>82</sup>

---

80 Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 398, 401

81 Rende, *The Development of Bernard Lonergan's Thought on the Notion of Conversion*, p. 147

82 Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 397, 429

While one may give oneself over to the full wonder and intentionality of human knowing with its demands for attentiveness, wonder, inquiry, precision, and critical reflection, it is not usually something one is able to dedicate oneself to with sufficient leisure, impartiality, interest, and detachment. This is because there exist prior, concrete, existential concerns, interests, problems, passions, and exigencies within which one's intelligence is undifferentiatedly embedded and concerned with:

. . . the significance of moving into the intellectual pattern of experience is this: when concern is simply wonder, purely intellectual wonder, the correlative becomes the universe. As long as consciousness is directed by whatever concerns one may have, one is in one's world. But insofar as the intellectual pattern of experience is dominant, one is concerned not with any private world, but with the universe. It brings us to the traditional definition: intellect is everything. And an object that includes everything is not restricted to any genus of things. That object must be being. And so, while concern has as its correlative a private world, the intellectual pattern of experience has as its correlative the one universe, everything. . . . Insofar as each lives in his own world as settled by his concern, his Sorge, which is at the root of his flow of consciousness, each is in something of a private world; each is something of a sleepwalker, although his eyes are open and he goes through all the actions of ordinary human living. It is when the intellectual pattern of experience is realized that one ceases to be a sleepwalker and confronts being, the universe. And so the private world selected by the horizon of concern are all parts of a universe.<sup>83</sup>

Anything that is, or possibly can be, must be intelligible. This is because only that which is intelligible can be understood and affirmed to exist:

---

83 Lonergan, "Philosophy of Education", pp. 76-7

By intelligibility is meant what is to be known by understanding. By the intrinsic intelligibility of being is meant that being is neither beyond the intelligible nor apart from it nor different from it.<sup>84</sup>

For anyone to state or suggest that anything is or could be unintelligible is equivalent to one renouncing one's own intelligence. This is because one thereby assumes a criterion for knowing outside of knowing:

. . . being is intelligible. It is neither beyond nor apart nor different from the intelligible. It is what is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. It is the objective of the detached and disinterested desire to inquire intelligently and to reflect critically; and that desire is unrestricted. On the other hand, what is apart from being is nothing, and so what is apart from intelligibility is nothing. It follows that to talk about mere matters of fact that admit no explanation is to talk about nothing. If existence is mere matter of fact, it is nothing. If occurrence is mere matter of fact, it is nothing. If it is a mere matter of fact that we know . . . then both the knowing and the known are nothing. This is rude and harsh, and one may be tempted to take flight into the counter-position, to refuse to identify the real with being, confuse objectivity with extroversion, mistake mere experiencing for human knowing. But any such escape is only temporary. Despite their pullulating variety and perennial vitality, the counter-positions bring about their own reversal the moment they claim to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably. Since the claim cannot be avoided by an intelligent and reasonable subject, the reversal cannot be avoided; and since the reversal cannot be avoided, ultimately one will be back to affirm that being is intelligible and that the mere matter of fact without explanation is apart from being.<sup>85</sup>

It would be a contradiction in performance for one to suggest that the real is or could be something outside of what one wonders about or intends in questioning. This is because one in fact wonders about and questions that which one supposes to be outside the field of wondering

---

84 Lonergan, Insight, p. 499

85 Ibid., pp. 652-3



and questioning:

. . . to ask if there might be some horizon beyond which man cannot question is already to go beyond.<sup>86</sup>

It follows that our intending intends, not incomplete, but complete intelligibility. Otherwise there would be a point where further questions could arise but did not, where the half-answer appeared not a half-answer but as much an answer as human intelligence could dream of seeking. If the dynamism of human intellect intended no more than incomplete intelligibility, the horizon not merely of human knowledge but also of possible human inquiry would be bounded. Whether or not there were anything beyond that horizon, would be a question that could not even arise.<sup>87</sup>

#### **L. The Universe of Proportionate Being**

In making explicit the otherwise latent, normative "pure form" of cognitional process, Lonergan was able, like no one else, to grasp that which intelligibly orders, arranges, formulates, and integrates diverse material contents - be they the contents of science or common sense. He has grasped the cognitional operations which are the integral heuristic structure which are related to and anticipate all there is to be known:

. . . explicit metaphysics is the conception, affirmation, and implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being [proportionate being refers to that which is to be known by the acts of experiencing, understanding, and judging (i.e. quidditas rei materialis). It is distinguished from transcendent being, i.e. that which is to be known by understanding and judging but not experiencing]. . . . the only question to be settled in metaphysics is the general nature of knowledge, for all questions of detail have to be met by the sciences and by common sense. . . . Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant

---

86 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, p. 128

87 Lonergan, Insight, p. 259

pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.<sup>88</sup>

Through cognitional analysis Lonergan is able to formulate a metaphysics fully proportionate to the latent basic horizon of human knowing and not a problematic, counterpositional metaphysics proportionate to the presumptions of polymorphic human consciousness:

This heuristic structure (metaphysics) is immanent and operative in all human knowing, but initially it is latent and the polymorphism of human consciousness makes it problematic as well. None the less, it can be conceived, affirmed, and implemented, and from that "implementation" there follows a transformation and an integration of the sciences and the myriad instances of common sense.<sup>89</sup>

Since everything that is or can be known is or will be known through the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging, the basic structure of the universe can be said to have a similar or isomorphic structure with the knowing process:

Two sets of terms, say A, B, C . . . , and P, Q, R . . . , are said to be isomorphic if the relation of A to B is similar to the relation of P to Q, the relation of A to C is similar to the relation of P to R, the relation of B to C is similar to the relation of Q to R, etc. Isomorphism . . . asserts that the network of relations in one set of terms is similar to the network of relations in other sets.<sup>90</sup>

The structure between knowing and the known is similar because every act of knowing involves a unifying of 1) experiencing, understanding, and judging and 2) the contents of these acts:

---

88 Ibid., pp. 391, 401, xxviii

89 Ibid., pp. 395-6

90 Lonergan, Collection, p. 142

If the knowing consists of a related set of acts and the known is the related set of contents of these acts, then the pattern of the relations between the acts is similar in form to the pattern of the relations between the contents of the acts.<sup>91</sup>

The structure of the universe of proportionate being happens to be constituted by the same elements as articulated in the metaphysics of Aquinas: potency, form, and act. They are isomorphic with the structure of human knowing: experience, understanding, and judgement. While Aquinas' cognitional analysis was expressed in metaphysical terms and established by metaphysical principles, Lonergan's metaphysics is expressed in cognitional terms and established by cognitional principles. Hence it is verifiable. Unlike classical metaphysics, this metaphysics, since it is derived through a cognitional analysis, does not predetermine the special terms and relations of any particular science. All scientists, philosophers, and people of common sense utilize cognitional operations and all of their contents are found to have potential, formal, and actual components:

If the metaphysician must leave to the physicist the understanding of physics and to the chemist the understanding of chemistry, he has the task of working out for the physicist and the chemist, for the biologist and psychologist, the dynamic structure that initiates and controls their respective inquiries and, no less, the general characteristics of the goal toward which they head.<sup>92</sup>

The intelligibility of what is or can be is of different kinds: 1)

---

91 Lonergan, Insight, p. 399

92 Ibid., p. 498

potential (the data as given, what is systematized), 2) formal (the intelligibility that systematizes the data), and 3) actual (what conditionally occurs or exists): "For every difference in intelligibility there is a difference intrinsic to the reality of known proportionate being."<sup>93</sup> These different intelligibilities constitute all of proportionate being. To know proportionate being requires that the contents of the three cognitional operations be known: 1) experience - the data as given, 2) understanding - the intelligible unity or correlation, and 3) judgement - the virtually unconditioned:

Insofar as there is a theory there is that through which forma in rebus is known; insofar as there is verification there exists that through which esse in rebus is known; and insofar as there is a theory verified in many individual instances there is had that through which materia is known.<sup>94</sup>

As the subjective pole of the basic horizon coalesces into a unity of experience-understanding-judgement in the intention of knowing, so the objective pole of that horizon is a structured unity of material-formal-actual elements.<sup>95</sup>

As modern science has come to utilize and thematize more of the operations intrinsic to its method, so has it come to accept a more nuanced metaphysics:

. . . scientists will find the philosophy they seek by reflecting on their method and through its structure arriving at the corresponding isomorphic epistemology and metaphysics.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 501

<sup>94</sup> Lonergan, De Notione Structurae, (unpublished), Latin lecture delivered at the Aloisianum in Gallarte, Italy; Jan. 28, 1964, p. 8

<sup>95</sup> Lamb, "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology", p. 151

<sup>96</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 151

Science has come to know a universe of proportionate being not only composed of classical intelligibilities requiring classical methods, but one of potential intelligibilities requiring knowledge of preconditions, probable nonsystematic divergences requiring statistical intelligibility, and actual divergences requiring actual verification.

One should not imagine the potential, formal, and actual components of the universe to be like some kind of elementary building blocks or bodies. Rather one should recognize them as giving expression to a fundamental dimension of all that exists. It should further be pointed out that the actual component also becomes potential insofar as it sets the conditions for and gets taken up into a more complex system. Thus "actual limitations" can become invitations that allow for and give way to further developments and progress.

Not only do the universe and the knowing process have a similar structure, but they also share the same basic transcendent drive which allows for the knower to move from experience to understanding to judgement as well as allows for the universe to develop increasingly more complex and intelligible systems and schemes of recurrence. These systems (forms) correlate potential conditions (potencies) which result in actual occurrences, events, and things (acts). These occurrences, events, and things, because they are not completely controlled by these classical systems, become the potential conditions for yet more complex, although never completely exhaustive systems. Just as each of the

operations of human knowing is taken up into the intention of being by being further ordered by the next level, so also are proportionate beings with all their horizontal relationships taken up into the transcendent, vertical finality of the universe by being ordered by higher levels and systems. In other words, just as experience is ordered by understanding and understanding is given over to judgement, so also is the physical given over to the chemical, the chemical to the biological, the biological to the psychological, the psychological to the rational, the rational to the ethical and cultural, and all of these finally to the transcendent. One can thus refer to the human person as the realized summit of the universe insofar as all of these dimensions are and can be realized in people **(See Figure 4)**:

Just as intellectually patterned experience heads towards insights and judgements, so potency heads towards forms and acts. Just as cognitional activity mounts through accumulations of insights to higher viewpoints, so objective process involves the information and actuation of prime potency only to uncover a residue of coincidental manifolds and so mount through successive levels of higher systematization. . . . Indeed, since cognitional activity is itself but a part of this universe, so its heading to being is but the particular instance in which universal striving towards being becomes conscious and intelligent and reasonable.<sup>97</sup>

It is not systems, then, but human intelligence which is capable of encompassing the universe:

. . . commitment to contemporary scientific methods commits one to such a worldview (of emergent probability). . . . in its essentials, the same emergent worldview is an implication of self appropriation itself.<sup>98</sup>

---

97 Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 444-5

98 Byrne, "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", p. 68

**Figure 4**

**The Integrated and Transcendent Universe**  
**of Emergent Probability**

Vertical Pole\*

GOD  
(Act)  
(Omega)  
(Being)  
(Ultimate Horizon)  
(Transcendent Object)  
^

Horizontal Poles\*  
People-Community

(Human)

<--RELIGIOUS-->  
^

<--CULTURAL-ETHICAL-->  
^

Value-Good

<--SOCIAL-ECONOMIC-POLITICAL-->  
^

Order-Cooperation

<--RATIONAL-->

<--(Judging)-->

<--(Questioning)-->

<--(Experiencing)-->  
^

Truth

Beauty

Aesthetic

(Animal)

<--PSYCHOLOGICAL-->

<--(Feeling-Emotion)-->  
^

Desire

Satisfaction

Conscious

.....  
Unconscious

<--BIOLOGICAL-->

<--Ecological-->

<--Zoological-->

<--Botanical-->  
^

Needs-Bodies

(Plant)

<--CHEMICAL-->

<--Geological-->

<--Astronomical-->  
^

<--PHYSICAL-->  
^

ENERGY

(Alpha)

(Spirit)

(Potency)

(Transcendence)

(Love)

\*-The Vertical Pole refers to the ultimate transcendent orientation of the universe within which the particular horizontal relationships and particular transcendent orientations of the Horizontal Pole are integrated.

Once bodies have been eliminated from the universe by eliminating their ground in pre-existing spaces and times there is left a universe of existing things none of which can continue to exist unless the conditions for their existence continue to be provided. The very existence of such a universe, therefore, is completely contingent and cannot explain itself. Such a universe is full with the mystery of unanswered questions.<sup>99</sup>

### **M. Deliberation**

Up to this point the first three levels of consciousness have been identified, distinguished, and affirmed. There is still to be identified, understood, and affirmed a fourth moral, volitional, and responsible operational level of consciousness. This level is related to yet distinct from the previous three. The condition for there being a free volitional level is the world of emergent probability. The fact that there is no system that fully encompasses the universe leaves room for the possibility of free cognitional and volitional operations to occur, recur, contribute to, and constitute the universe by adding further systematization and intelligibility to it. In humans the evolutionary development and transcendence of the universe of emergent probability becomes conscious, reflective, and active in order to both know and direct nature and history. Progress is not automatic, however, for freedom is the condition for the possibility of both progress and decline. One can choose to accept or reject living in accord with the transcendental precepts inherent in one's intelligence and responsibility:

---

99 Flanagan, "Body to Thing", p. 507



. . . since finality is an upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism and since man is free, the real issue lies not in the many possibilities but in the few principles on which man may rely in working out his destiny.<sup>100</sup>

Another condition for the possibility of the responsible level of consciousness is the dynamism of self-transcendence itself. This expresses itself in and is achieved through the pure unrestricted desire or intention to know being. Just as truth is the transcendental notion of knowing, so is good or value the transcendental notion of intentionality. Just as transcendence underpins all questioning, wonder, inquiry, and reflection as their goal and motive, so is it also at the basis of one's conscious doing and the source of the demand for continuity and consistency between what one knows and what one does. It is that which leads one from knowing "what is" to knowing and doing "what can and ought to be". One will be led to ask what is potentially possible and probable in order to be informed as to what can and ought to be actualized (an honestum sit). One will not want to stop at knowing what exists if one is open to the further relevant questions that arise. What exists can be questioned and either approved of or disapproved of. This is the question of value:

So insight grasps the intelligibility of what sense perceives. Conception unites what separately sense perceives and intelligence grasps. Judgement pronounces on the truth of the conceiving and on the reality of the conceived. Decision acknowledges the value of actuating potentialities grasped by intelligence and judged to be real. So the

---

100 Lonergan, Insight, p.636

transcendentals, the intelligible, the true, the real, the good, apply to absolutely every object for the very good reason that they are grounded in the successive stages in our dealing with objects. But they are one in their root as well as in their application. For the intending subject intends, first of all, the good but to achieve it must know the real; to know the real he must know what is true; to know what is true he must grasp what is intelligible; and to grasp what is intelligible he must attend to the data of sense and to the data of consciousness.<sup>101</sup>

One who does not allow the intention for value its full scope accepts an ethical counterposition. This does not mean that one does not utilize the operations of volition (i.e. deliberation, decision, and action) but it means that one does so for reasons, motives, and intentions other than the good. In other words, one is not free not to deliberate, decide, and act, but one is more or less free with respect to motives and goals. Rationalization - bringing one's knowing into line with one's doing - is the attempt by some to rationally try to justify an ethical counterposition. It is a "playing fast and loose with the pure desire to know in its immediate domain of cognitional activity."<sup>102</sup>

Just as the dynamic structure of knowing grounds a metaphysics, so also does the structure of willing ground an ethics isomorphic with itself:

For the root of ethics, as the root of metaphysics, lies neither in sentences nor in propositions nor in judgements but in the dynamic structure of rational self-consciousness. Because that structure is latent and operative in everyone's choosing, it is universal on the side of the subject; because that structure can be dodged, it grounds a dialectical criticism of subjects. Again, because that structure is recurrent in every act of choice, it is universal on the side of the

---

101 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 127-8

102 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 599-600

object; and because its universality consists not in abstraction but in inevitable recurrence, it also is concrete. Accordingly, ethical method, as metaphysical, can take subjects as they are; it can correct any aberrations in their views by a dialectical criticism; and it can apply these corrected views to the totality of concrete objects of choice. Such a method not only sets forth precepts but also bases them on their real principles, which are not propositions or judgements but existing persons; it not only sets forth correct precepts but also provides a radical criticism for mistaken precepts; it is not content to appeal to logic for the application of precepts, for it can criticize situations as well as subjects and it can invoke dialectical analysis to reveal how situations are to be corrected; finally, because such a method clearly grasps an unchanging dynamic structure immanent in developing subjects that deal with changing situations in correspondingly changing manners, it can steer a sane course between the relativism of mere concreteness and the legalism of remote and static generalities; and it can do so not by good luck nor by vaguely postulating prudence but methodically because it takes its stand on the ever recurrent dynamic generality that is the structure of rational consciousness.<sup>103</sup>

This structure of rational consciousness that grounds ethics shall now be spelled out.

The operations of experience, understanding, and judgement are the constitutive conditions for the possibility of one's being related both cognitively and volitionally to aspects of the world. While one initially is oriented and related to the world through experience, one's experience is initially and spontaneously related to the world biologically and psychologically. This orientation is experienced consciously through intentional feelings and affectivity. While there are feelings which arise out of nonintentional states (e.g. the feeling of fatigue from lack of rest) and nonintentional trends (e.g. the feeling of hunger for food), there are also feelings which are the initial

---

103 Ibid., p. 604

movements and outward orientations of a person in response to various objects and aspects of objects. Neural and biological needs and desires do not automatically and immediately move one to their objects but, rather, are mediated to a person consciously through feelings, affective responses, images, desires, dreams, etc. The drives are what give direction and focus to conscious attention in mediating and relating a person to certain aspects of objects. Those aspects of objects sought or intended for fulfillment and satisfaction by these operations are referred to as particular goods (bonum particulare). What is good as mediated by the operations of feelings or affective responses is what meets or satisfies needs for nourishment, rest, sexuality, shelter, self-defense, comfort, and pleasure (id quod omnia appetunt).

Animal consciousness developed in order to more successfully systematize and order the procurement and fulfillment of biologically based needs and desires. Humans, however, do not respond instinctively and automatically to feelings. This is because needs and desires are not only given over to the mediation of affectivity and feeling but to the mediation of intelligence, reason, and responsibility.

Feelings mediate particular goods to consciousness by providing the images that lead one to understand the particular goods sought and the means to obtain them. The good intended by the operation of intelligence is the good of order. This good is intimately related to goods as mediated through affectivity, for one must seek to obtain them not once but recurrently. The further questions posed to the particular goods of

feelings lead one to seek these goods in an intelligently and systematically ordered way. Needless to say, particular goods are desired and sought for corporately. In fact such common needs and feelings are what contribute to the constitution and bonding of intersubjective community: "the . . . basis of society is community. . . . society does not survive without a large measure of community."<sup>104</sup> Intelligence is similarly corporate and contributes to the constitution and bonding of interdependent, social community. In other words people not only operate intelligently but co-operate for the corporate attainment of needs through the specialization and division of common sense and theoretic operational skills, tasks, and roles within technological, economic, social, and political institutions and systems.

The objects intended by feelings and given over to intelligence for discernment and order are also informed, often spontaneously, by meaning and value. Meanings and value enrich, direct, cultivate, educate, encourage, prune, refine, adjust, sublate, strengthen, dignify, harmonize, and transform the particular goods that are sought after with the orders which secure them. Just as intelligibilities inform data, so also do meanings and values inform, transform, and sublate feelings and social orders. Such enrichment and transformation is accomplished not by ignoring, denying, and repressing feelings and goods sought after, nor by imposing extrinsic norms or concepts of what is good on them. Hope

---

<sup>104</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 360

and despair, joy and sorrow, enthusiasm and indignation, esteem and contempt, trust and distrust, love and hatred, tenderness and wrath, admiration, veneration, reverence, dread, and terror, are, rather, expressions of feelings and affective responses that have been transformed from merely responding to immediate objects of sensation (particular goods) to orienting one "massively and dynamically"<sup>105</sup> to the mediated objects of meaning and value. Meanings and values thus can become goods sought after and responded to with feeling and intelligence, both personally and corporately.

The third reflective, critical, and evaluative level, namely judgement of value (and meaning), judges with respect to the value, worthwhileness, and priority of the meanings and values which inform one's intending and desiring of particular goods as well as those that inform the technological, economic, social, and political orders and institutions that secure them. While a judgement of fact is the answer to the question "Is it?", a judgement of value is the answer to the question "Is it truly or only apparently good or worthwhile?" A judgement of value results from one asking the further questions which assess, compare, and prioritize particular goods, the goods of order, and the cultural goods of meaning and value. A judgment of value is always concrete for it presupposes the goods mediated by feelings and intelligence that it evaluates. It does so with a view to informing one's deliberation in

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 31

order that one may make good decisions and actions.

The criteria of a judgement of value is parallel to the criteria of a judgement of fact. While the judgement of fact is made when the virtually unconditioned is reached, i.e. when there are no further relevant questions, the judgement of value is made when reflection reveals a good to be without criticism, i.e. when the value cannot be called into question. Needless to say there is no finite, particular, social, or cultural goods that can be chosen that cannot be called into question or found wanting or lacking in some way. All such limited goods are categorical and not exhaustive of human needs, orders, and aspirations. Of course just as one cannot know "being" in one judgement of fact, so also one cannot realize or actualize the "good" in one choice. Just as the ability to wonder about everything allows one to wonder about anything, so too the ability to reflect on, be critical of, and transcend all goods is what allows one to freely choose any good, i.e. it provides the standard or horizon from which all goods are related and from which they are chosen. Even though the standard and criterion of the "good" which one ultimately intends and seeks to realize transcends all goods, all deliberations, decisions, and actions are concrete:

Just as the notion of being functions in one's knowing and it is by reflecting on that functioning that one comes to know what the notion of being is, so also the notion or intention of the good functions within one's human acting and it is by reflection on that functioning that one comes to know what the notion of the good is. Again, just as the functioning of the notion of being brings about our limited knowledge of being, so too the functioning of the notion of the good brings about our limited achievements of the good. Finally, as our knowledge of being is,

not knowledge of essence, but only knowledge of this and that and other beings, so too the only good to which we have firsthand access is found in instances of the good realized in themselves or produced beyond themselves by good men.<sup>106</sup>

Just as cognitional counterpositions derive from making one aspect of knowing the sole criterion of knowledge, reality, and objectivity, so also do volitional-ethical counterpositions derive from making one aspect of volition the criterion for what is good. This is known as an ethical counterposition. Insofar as one makes one such operation the criterion, e.g. feeling, then the horizon from which one does all one's categorical deliberating, deciding, and acting will be based upon the extent to which they fulfill that criterion, e.g. sensitive satisfaction. While judgements of value cannot be made apart from the contents of the concrete goods that are mediated through feelings, intelligence, meanings, and values, it still provides the final criterion for discerning value and disvalue, right and wrong, and in guiding one's concrete deliberations, decisions, and actions. It follows that judgements of value cannot be spelled out in any concrete way apart from the concrete circumstances within which goods are at stake and moral choice is called for. It can at least be said that the structure of an ethical object will be a compound of the components of feeling, intelligible order, and value:

Ethics articulates the rationally self-conscious subject's attainment of that good through his authentic development from the manifold of experience to an ordering of his experiences by intelligence and, finally,

---

106 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 82-3



to a rational choice of the good as true good.<sup>107</sup>

Categorically written rules, laws, and commandments are abstract and possibly relevant intelligibilities or values, i.e. they are sets of specific answers to specific questions. They are like classical laws which relate certain specific aspects of things to certain others. Since they are not the only intelligibilities at stake in the concrete, however, they are true "other things being equal". Whether they are true or to be acted upon in the concrete can only be judged through prudence (cf. Aristotle's definition of the good as whatever any virtuous person would choose). This is a knowledge that one has per connaturalitatem not per cognitionem<sup>108</sup>:

. . . the judgement of value in a good person reveal the truth insofar as it occurs with a good conscience and reveals its weakness by the uneasy conscience. Objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. All along the line, insofar as you are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, you will also be objective. They are the criteria. If you want to have something else, you'll box yourself in some corner.<sup>109</sup>

. . . the only good to which we have firsthand access is found in instances of the good realized in themselves or produced beyond themselves by good men. . . . do not ask me to determine (specific instances), for their determination in each case is the work of the free and responsible subject producing the first and only edition of himself. It is because the determination of the good is the work of freedom that ethical systems can catalogue sins in almost endless genera and species yet always remain rather vague about the good. They urge us to do good as well as to avoid evil, but what it is to do good does not get much beyond the golden rule, the precept of universal charity, and the like.<sup>110</sup>

---

107 Tracy, The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, p. 166

108 Aquinas, Summa, II-II, q. 45, a. 2; I, q. 1, a. 6

109 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 44

110 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 83

Making one's ultimate criterion of the good not that which is good in relation to one's tastes, fears, and desires, i.e. not merely based upon the criterion of satisfaction or on what appears to be good, but on what is judged to be so requires an axial transformation and decentering (conversion) of the subject. The choice to constitute oneself in accord with the full range of the questioning dynamism of the human spirit and its criterion of the transcendental notion of the good is referred to as a vertical or transcendental choice or fundamental option. One chooses not simply a categorical good, but a transcendental notion or horizon. Through such a choice one chooses to habitually live and categorically choose from within the context of that transcendental horizon. Such a transcendental choice is distinguished from horizontal or categorical choices of goods made from within that horizon. Feelings, orders, meanings, and values become transformed in reinforcement of this orientation. This occurs when the horizon of the transcendental notion of the good becomes the standard by which one questions and evaluates particular goods, goods of order, meanings and values. It is a horizon which challenges and invites one to constant moral progress and perfection by ever promoting one's questioning spirit. One is never content and satisfied with present moral achievement until the transcendent goal is reached. It is thus more challenging and demanding than any written or categorical rule or law:

As children or minors we are persuaded, cajoled, ordered, compelled to do

what is right. As our knowledge of human reality increases, as our responses to human values are strengthened and refined, our mentors more and more leave us to ourselves so that our freedom may exercise its ever advancing thrust toward authenticity. So we move to the existential moment when we discover for ourselves that our choosing affects ourselves no less than the chosen nor rejected objects, and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make of himself. Then is the time for the exercise of vertical freedom and then moral conversion consists in opting for the truly good, even for value against satisfaction when value and satisfaction conflict.<sup>111</sup>

In the measure that one's living, one's aims, one's achievements are a response to values, in that measure self-transcendence is effected in the field of action. One has got beyond mere selfishness. One has become a principle of benevolence and beneficence (an originating value). One has become capable of genuine collaboration and of true love. In the measure that self-transcendence in the field of action characterizes the members of a society, in that measure their world not only is constructed by imagination and intelligence, mediated by words and meanings, based by and large on belief; it also is a world motivated and regulated not by self-seeking but by value, not by what is only apparently good but by what truly is good.<sup>112</sup>

The horizon of the transcendental notion of the good one chooses is the most basic horizon and choice of the human subject. This is because through it one chooses not merely objects, but one chooses to become a certain kind of subject. To choose value as one's horizon is to choose to become one's truest and most authentic self:

. . . moral self-transcendence is the possibility of benevolence and beneficence, of honest collaboration and of true love, of swinging completely out of the habitat of an animal and of becoming a person in a human society. . . . man is his true self inasmuch as he is self-transcending. Conversion is the way to self-transcendence. Inversely, man is alienated from his true self inasmuch as he refuses self-transcendence, and the basic form of ideology is the

---

111 Lonergan, Method, p. 240

112 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 169

self-justification of alienated man.<sup>113</sup>

One's criteria of the good, like one's criteria of the real, must be distinguished, understood, affirmed, and chosen within the polymorphism of human consciousness. Being morally converted becomes "second nature" for one insofar as one chooses to actualize and habituate oneself according to the operations of volition over others:

. . . a hedonistic way of life or any life-style which makes sensitive desire and fear normative for human action stands in an antithetical relationship to a way of life which makes value the criterion for human ethical activity. The hedonist stands in a relationship to a basic life orientation, but his stance is properly defined in terms of an absence of real self-transcendence or moral conversion. Like the materialist philosopher, the hedonist and all others whose lives are ruled by desire and fears remain locked within the confines of the sensory or aesthetic sphere. The ideologist, on the other hand, who opts for a specific good of order, e.g. laissez-faire individualism or totalitarianism, but without properly locating it within a hierarchy of values respecting both the individual and common good, does indeed transcend the aesthetic horizon of sensitive desire and fear and so in this sense is operating on a higher level of human intentionality. Yet, he fails to undergo a radical moral conversion in which the hierarchy of objective values as creatively grasped by the authentic subject becomes normative for action. The ideologist is within a basic horizon not unlike that of the idealist, but specified negatively in terms of the absence of an authentic conversion on the ethical level. The basic horizon of the authentic subject, in contradistinction to the horizons of the hedonist and ideologist, is defined precisely in terms of a moral conversion through which the horizon is properly fixed in the realm of value.<sup>114</sup>

If one is truly committed to the good and morally converted then one will also tend to be committed to truth and intellectual conversion as well. This latter, while less common and more difficult than the former,

---

113 Lonergan, Method, pp. 104, 357

114 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, pp. 54-5

is necessary if one's moral conversion is to be informed and truly effective and is not to remain simply in the realm of moral idealism. While the level of responsible action is the fourth level of consciousness that sublates the previous three, it usually is the first in terms of chronology and importance. In other words it is the grasp of a good which prompts and directs one's intellectual inquiry. Knowledge or science are not value-free (wertfrei) for they are chosen by people as goods to be pursued:

Not even the natural sciences can prescind from the question of value, for the very pursuit of science is the pursuit of a value, and the contention that science should be value-free, wertfrei, if taken literally, implies that science should be worthless.<sup>115</sup>

While one cannot choose to utilize or not utilize the operations of cognition, one does have the choice whether to accept and appropriate the normativity of these operations over others:

Man develops biologically to develop psychically, and he develops psychically to develop intellectually and rationally. The higher integrations suffer the disadvantage of emerging later. They are the demands of finality upon us before they are realities in us. They are manifested more commonly in aspiration and in dissatisfaction with oneself than in the rounded achievement of complete genuineness, perfect openness, universal willingness. Finally, even that rounded achievement is itself not a goal but a means to a goal; for genuineness and openness and willingness name, not acts, but conditions for acts of correct understanding and good willing. The concrete being of man, then, is in process. His existing lies in developing.<sup>116</sup>

---

115 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 143-4

116 Lonergan, Insight, p. 625

As a methodologist Lonergan's project has been to objectify the method who we are in order that we may become who we have in us to become. He does so by making explicit the choice posed to us in consciousness by the transcendental precepts (conscience). These precepts have been referred to as the "be-attitudes": be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible:

. . . human authenticity is a matter of following the built-in laws of the human spirit. Because we can understand, we should inquire. Because we can reach the truth, we should reflect and check. Because we can realize values in ourselves and promote them in others, we should deliberate. In the measure that we follow these precepts, in the measure we fulfill these conditions of being human persons, we also achieve self-transcendence both in the field of knowledge and in the field of action.<sup>117</sup>

The transcendental precepts are not extrinsically or arbitrarily imposed rules or laws which force people to conform to some peculiar cultural mold. Instead the transcendental precepts are the inbuilt laws and dynamism of the human spirit. To follow them is for one to be an authentically attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible human subject. To do so is to "master our natural bent or potential for virtue"<sup>118</sup> as Aquinas put it. Explicit objectifications of these precepts should never take precedence over the inbuilt precepts but, rather, should mediate their implications to people in concrete societies, cultures, and circumstances.

---

117 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 169-70

118 Aquinas, Summa, II-II, q. 108, a. 2

The constitution of personal and communal living in commitment to the transcendental precepts is not something done in ivory tower isolation but in the concrete in relation to a social and cultural matrix. Such commitment is something that is done inherently for the sake of concretely evaluating particular, social, and cultural goods, meanings, and values. The commitment to transcendental good involves one necessarily in the concrete and categorical realization and promotion of the good. It is through such commitment to the promotion of conversion in oneself and others and the promotion of progress and the reversal of decline in society and culture that the concrete liberation and redemption of humanity and the world is affected.

Lonergan regards moral conversion as the natural fulfillment of a natural human capacity:

. . . it is as natural for man to seek real or moral self-transcendence as it is to ask questions and to strive for cognitive self-transcendence . . . The active potentiality for real self-transcendence or moral conversion is de jure within man's natural capacity and flows out of the natural exigence which a man experiences of making his doing and loving consistent with his knowing.<sup>119</sup>

While moral theologian Father Charles E. Curran (1934- ) has stated that moral conversion should not be distinguished from religious conversion because the former is not possible without the latter,<sup>120</sup> Lonergan holds for the distinction. The inability of humans to habitually live in accord

---

119 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, pp. 60-1

120 Charles E. Curran, "Christian Conversion in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan", Foundations of Theology, pp. 41-59

with the transcendental precepts is referred to by Lonergan as moral impotence. For him religious conversion is de facto how moral conversion, the healing of moral impotence, and the extension of the range of one's effective freedom is achieved:

. . . although grace is de facto required for man to achieve a sustained radical moral conversion, the moral fulfillment man achieves with the help of grace is as such the fulfillment of a natural exigence and not of an obediential potency.<sup>121</sup>

. . . by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worth while. Then we can be principles of benevolence and beneficence, capable of genuine collaboration and of true love. But it is one thing to do this occasionally, by fits and starts. It is another to do it regularly, easily, spontaneously. It is, finally, only by reaching the sustained self-transcendence of the virtuous man that one becomes a good judge, not on this or that human act, but on the whole range of human goodness.<sup>122</sup>

#### **N. The God Question: Transcendent Knowledge**

Transcendence, as has been stated, is the matter of the subject raising ever more questions. In this way the subject goes beyond limits by intentionally anticipating and seeking that which is intelligible, true, and good. Such questioning is rational and spontaneous:

. . . reflection, grasp of the unconditioned, and judgement are not content with mere objects of supposing, defining, considering, but go beyond them to the universe of facts, of being, of what truly is affirmed and really is. Moreover, one cannot rest content with knowing things as related to one another. One can go beyond both common sense and present science, to grasp the dynamic structure of our rational knowing and doing, and then formulate a metaphysics and an ethics. Finally, one can ask whether human knowledge is confined to the universe of proportionate being

---

121 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, p. 60

122 Lonergan, Method, p. 35



or goes beyond it to the realm of transcendent being; and this transcendent realm may be conceived either relatively or absolutely, either as beyond man or as the ultimate in the whole process of going beyond. Clearly, despite the imposing name, transcendence is the elementary matter of raising further questions.<sup>123</sup>

To question or deliberate whether questioning and deliberating themselves are meaningful, worthwhile, and ultimately grounded and supported, is a further question which arises. This is a question about transcendence itself, i.e. it is a question that intends transcendental knowledge or being. In a word, it is the God question. The God question, the questioning of questioning, occurs on the level of intelligence, reason, and deliberation. One seeks to know whether there is an intelligent ground that is unconditioned and grounds the worthwhileness of human responsibility. Such questioning leads one beyond the incomplete intelligibility of the universe of proportionate being. Examples of the objectification of this level of questioning are given by Tyrrell as follows:

This fourth type of question asks about ultimate meaning, carries man beyond the realm of proportionate being into that of transcendent being, and is expressed in a rich variety of ways: "What is the ultimate meaning of reality?", "What is being?", "What is the ultimate explanation of the correspondence which exists between our knowing and the known?", "Why does anything exist?", "Why does anything occur?", "What is the explanation of the contingent, of the virtually unconditioned whose conditions happen to be fulfilled, of what simply happens to be the case?".<sup>124</sup>

---

123 Lonergan, Insight, p. 635

124 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, p. 173

As Lonergan puts it:

To deliberate about deliberating is to ask whether any deliberating is worth while. Has "worth while" any ultimate meaning? Is moral enterprise consonant with this world? We praise the developing subject ever more capable of attention, insight, reasonableness, responsibility. We praise progress and denounce every manifestation of decline. But is the universe on our side, or are we just gamblers and, if we are 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 there a 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? Such is the question of God. It is not a matter of image or feeling, of concept or judgement. They pertain to answers. It is a question. It rises out of our conscious intentionality, out of the a priori structured drive that promotes us from experiencing to the effort to understand, from understanding to the effort to judge truly, from judging to the effort to choose rightly. In the measure that we advert to our own questioning and proceed to question it, there arises the question of God.<sup>125</sup>

This transcendental questioning should not be mistakenly thought of as some abstract, ethereal activity that is confined to philosophers in ivory towers. To the contrary it is something that most often occurs in the concrete and existential level of ordinary human daily life. Questions having to do with groundedness, intelligibility, meaningfulness, and the value of the universe most often arise when one is faced with actual suffering, decline, evil, limitation, and death. Such questions are as spontaneous and natural as human questioning and intentionality. They are allowed to be raised by the intellectually

---

125 Lonergan, Method, pp. 102-3

honest person who allows the natural and inevitable orientation of questioning to question the very meaning, worth, and legitimacy of the pursuit itself. This, then, is the real meaning of the God question. Too often by "God" is meant a common sense notion rather than a transcendent and heuristic notion. For this reason the reflective question: "Does God exist?" is not often a proper objectification of the God question:

. . . just as the notion of nature can be misused by the gnostic and the magician yet, if used properly, provides the dynamic base on which the whole of scientific knowledge is erected, so too the notion of God can be corrupted by mythical consciousness and distorted by misplaced practicality yet, if used properly, it supplies the dynamic base on which rise not only the whole of intelligent and rational knowing but also the whole of intelligent and rational living. Finally, just as misuse of the notion of nature makes it ridiculous in the eyes of those most eager to know what is to be known by understanding, so too misconception and misuse of the notion of God lead to its rejection by the very men that are most insistent in denouncing obscurantism, in demanding judgements to rest on the unconditioned, and in calling for consistency between knowing and doing. But if one is eager to know what is to be known by understanding, one can ridicule the notion of . . . nature only because one does not know what the name means; and if one is genuine in denouncing obscurantism and in demanding the unconditioned, either one already adores God without naming him or else one has not far to go to reach him.<sup>126</sup>

It is important that "God" be heuristically and notionally understood and defined in relation to the questions regarding the ultimate and intelligible grounding, meaning, and value of the universe. Lonergan thus transposes the traditional existence of God question to its source in the transcending and questioning human subject:

---

126 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 683-4

God is not an object in the naïve realist sense of what is out there now, or already up there now, or already in here now. Further he is not an object if one retreats from naïve realism to an empiricism, a naturalism, a positivism, or an idealism. But if by object one means anything that is intended in questions and known through correct answers, anything within the world mediated by meaning, then a distinction has to be drawn. On what I have called the primary and fundamental meaning of the name God . . . that meaning is the term of an orientation to transcendent mystery.<sup>127</sup>

To ask the questions having to do with transcendence itself and not to avoid or ignore them is to be faithful to the spirit of inquiry and to be resistant to any partial or total obscurantism which may tempt one to rest content with the safer and less threatening knowledge of proportionate being:

. . . the rejection of total obscurantism is the demand that some questions, at least, are not to be met with an arbitrary exclamation, "Let's forget it." . . . the rejection of any and every partial obscurantism is the demand that no question is not to be submitted to the process of intelligent grasp and critical reflection.<sup>128</sup>

Hence, one will not out of hand dismiss transcendent questioning if one truly has an "unrestricted commitment to complete intelligibility."<sup>129</sup>

The answer to the question of whether the universe is completely intelligible, meaningful, and valuable is something that one will affirm if one is committed to knowing and the positions on knowledge, being, and objectivity which are inherent in the knowing process:

To accept the positions is to accept one's own intelligence and reasonableness and to stand by that acceptance. To reject the

---

127 Lonergan, Method, pp. 341-2

128 Lonergan, Insight, p. 638

129 Ibid., p. 689

counterpositions is to reject the interference of other desires with the proper functioning of the detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know. Hence, every counter-position leads to its own reversal; for it is involved in incoherence as soon as the claim is made that it is grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably; and an intelligent and reasonable subject cannot avoid making that claim.<sup>130</sup>

The intention of complete intelligibility is at the root of all our attempts to mean anything at all.<sup>131</sup>

If one truly holds to the positions, one will not accept the counter-position that being is not completely intelligible or that one's desire or intent to know is a desire for incomplete intelligibility:

It follows that our intending intends, not incomplete, but complete intelligibility. If it intended no more than an incomplete intelligibility, there would be a point where further questions could arise but did not, where the half-answer appeared not a half-answer but as much an answer as human intelligence could dream of seeking. If the dynamism of human intelligence intended no more than incomplete intelligibility, the horizon not merely of human knowledge but also of possible human inquiry would be bounded. Whether or not there were anything beyond that horizon, would be a question that could not even arise.<sup>132</sup>

. . . being is intelligible. It is neither beyond nor apart nor different from the intelligible. It is what is to be known by intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation. It is the objective of the detached and disinterested desire to inquire intelligently and to reflect critically; and that desire is unrestricted. On the other hand, what is apart from being is nothing, and so what is apart from intelligibility is nothing. It follows that to talk about mere matters of fact that admit no explanation is to talk about nothing. If existence is mere matter of fact, it is nothing. If occurrence is mere matter of fact, it is nothing. If it is a mere matter of fact that we know and that there are to be known classical and statistical laws, genetic operators and their dialectical perturbations, explanatory genera and species, emergent probability and upward finalistic dynamism, then both the knowing and the known are

---

130 Ibid., p. 673

131 Lonergan, "Response", Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, XLI, p. 258

132 Ibid., p. 259

nothing. This is rude and harsh, and one may be tempted to take flight into the counter-positions, to refuse to identify the real with being, confuse objectivity with extroversion, mistake mere experiencing for human knowing. But any such escape is only temporary. Despite their pullulating variety and perennial vitality, the counter-positions bring about their own reversal the moment they claim to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably. Since the claim cannot be avoided by an intelligent and reasonable subject, ultimately one will be back to affirm that being is intelligible and that the mere matter of fact without explanation is apart from being. In the second place, one cannot confine human knowledge within the domain of proportionate being without condemning it to mere matters of fact without explanation and so stripping it of knowledge not only of transcendent but also of proportionate being. In other words, every positivism is involved essentially in the counter-positions. For we do not know until we judge; our judgements rest on a grasp of the virtually unconditioned; and the virtually unconditioned is a conditioned that happens to have its conditions fulfilled. Thus, every judgement raises a further question; it reveals a conditioned to be virtually unconditioned and by that very stroke it reveals conditions that happen to be fulfilled; that happening is a matter of fact and, if it is not to be a mere matter of fact without explanation, a further question arises. But proportionate being is being proportionate to our knowing. As our judgements rest on a grasp of the virtually unconditioned, so every proportionate being in its every aspect is a virtually unconditioned. As a matter of fact, it is, and so it is unconditioned. But it is unconditioned, not formally in the sense that its conditions happen to be fulfilled. To regard that happening as ultimate is to affirm a mere matter of fact without any explanations. To account for one happening by appealing to another is to change the topic without meeting the issue, for if the other happening is regarded as mere matter of fact without any explanation then either it is not being or else being is not the intelligible.<sup>133</sup>

One is led to the affirmation of God, the source of complete intelligibility, not in an a priori manner like St. Anselm by arguing from the conception of God to his existence, but a posteriori through a concrete judgement following the grasp of a virtually unconditioned. To make such a judgement presupposes that one has affirmed oneself as a

---

133 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 652--3

knower, the world of proportionate being, and the positions on knowing.

It thereby follows that:

One cannot prove the existence of God to a Kantian without first breaking his allegiance to Kant. One cannot prove the existence of God to a positivist without first converting him from positivism. A valid proof has philosophic presuppositions, and the argument set forth in Insight is indicated in the antecedent the real is completely intelligible.<sup>134</sup>

Radical fidelity to the positions requires the affirmation of the existence of God. Refusal to affirm the existence of complete intelligibility (that is, God) means that one has slipped into some form of obscurantism and an implicit denial of the position which identifies being with the intelligible and the real with being.<sup>135</sup>

Since the universe of proportionate being is not completely intelligible, one can be led to affirm the existence of God:

. . . the five ways in which Aquinas proves the existence of God are so many particular cases of the general statement that the proportionate universe is incompletely intelligible and that complete intelligibility is demanded. . . . besides Aquinas' five ways, there are as many proofs of the existence of God as there are aspects of incomplete intelligibility in the universe of proportionate being. . . . such arguments . . . all of them . . . are included in the following general form. If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore God exists.<sup>136</sup>

The correct account (of the universe of proportionate being), when worked out and followed through, is not inimical to belief in God, and not even neutral towards it. It actually tends towards it when its full implications are realized, and once it has been purged of contamination by the erroneous conception of knowledge. To put it briefly and crudely, science when properly understood leads not to matter in motion as the term of explanation, but to an intelligible order ultimately to be

---

134 Lonergan, "The Natural Theology of Insight", (unpublished lecture), Chicago, 1967, p. 2

135 Tyrrell, Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, p. 128

136 Lonergan, Insight, pp. 678, 672

accounted for only as due to the activity of a creative intelligence.<sup>137</sup>

All "demonstrations" or "proofs" work out of a horizon of meaning which defines terms and relations. One cannot prove the existence of God to one operating out of a relative or counterpositional horizon. One must first accept the basic positional horizon which acceptance of the transcendental notions will lead one to. The "proofs" are thus not proofs at all but, rather, are objectifications of the full implications of the acceptance of the positions on being. Such objectifying does not "bring in anything from outside" or add anything that is not already implied in one's horizon and intentionality. The affirmation of God is thus "continuous with all that has (been said) before (about knowing) but also its culmination."<sup>138</sup> The "basic" horizon cannot be proven, it can only be accepted or rejected. One accepts it or rejects it by being faithful or unfaithful to who one is - to attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility. Hence, one must be intellectually converted as a de jure condition for one's acceptance of a demonstration of God's existence. Adequately objectifying this object of human questioning and intending tends to be even more difficult than objectifying human questioning. Despite Father Robert Sokolowski's (1934- ) claims to the contrary, it is not necessary that one must "exist in a Christian self-understanding"<sup>139</sup>

---

137 Meynell, The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, p. 19

138 Lonergan, Insight, p. 684

139 Robert Sokolowski, The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), pp. 108-9



in order to affirm God's existence. One need only be faithful to who one is as a knower. In other words, while de facto being religiously or Christianly converted provides one with the horizon from which the affirmation of God can be made and objectified, de jure one need "only" be intellectually converted to make that affirmation.

The form which Lonergan's affirmation of God takes, in terms of stating 1) the relationship between the conditioned and its conditions, 2) the fulfillment of the conditions, and 3) the affirmation of the conditioned, is as follows: "If the real is completely intelligible, God exists. But the real is completely intelligible. Therefore God exists."<sup>140</sup> The fulfillment of the conditions (the minor premise) is verified as follows. First, being is the objective of the pure desire to know. It is to be known through the totality of correct judgements and is completely intelligible, for what is not intelligible cannot be understood, not to mention affirmed to exist:

Being, then, is intelligible, for it is what is to be known by correct understanding; and it is completely intelligible, for being is known completely only when all intelligent questions are answered correctly.<sup>141</sup>

Secondly, by "real" is meant that which exists and is affirmed to exist by a correct judgement. It is distinct from the "intelligible" only insofar as the "intelligible" is reached in understanding. However, the "real" is intelligible, for only what is intelligible can be affirmed

---

<sup>140</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 672

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 673

to exist. Further, the real is completely intelligible, for everything that is affirmed to exist is intelligible:

. . . to affirm the complete intelligibility of the real is to affirm the complete intelligibility of all that is to be affirmed. But one cannot affirm the complete intelligibility of all that is to be affirmed without affirming complete intelligibility. And to affirm complete intelligibility is to know its existence. . . . (If the real is being,) the real is the objective of an unrestricted desire to understand correctly; to be such an objective, the real has to be completely intelligible, for what is not intelligible is not the objective of a desire to understand, and what is not completely intelligible is the objective, not of an unrestricted desire to understand another, but of such a desire judiciously blended with an obscurantist refusal to understand.<sup>142</sup>

Being is thus identical with the real, for being is all that is to be known by intelligible grasp and reasonable affirmation. Apart from being and apart from reality there is nothing, for each embraces the totality of everything: ". . . as apart from being there is nothing, as being embraces the concrete totality of everything, so too does reality."<sup>143</sup>

The link of the above conditions to the conditioned "God exists" (the major premise) is the following. First, as has been stated, one is able to formulate a heuristic notion of being. Such a notion, of course, naturally arises in questioning as that which is to be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed in the totality of correct judgements. The "idea of being" refers to the content of an unrestricted act of understanding that leaves nothing further to be understood and thus no

---

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., pp. 674, 676

<sup>143</sup> Lonergan, Collection, p. 228

further questions to be asked. In other words, the "idea of being" is "absolutely transcendent".<sup>144</sup> One makes this statement, of course, without ever actually having had an unrestricted act of understanding. Stating it only means that one has understood and affirmed one's own restricted act of understanding and the criteria by which intelligibility and truth is grasped and affirmed. One is then able to understand the idea of being by extrapolation and analogy.

The idea of being, like the content of any insight, would be one, immaterial, non-temporal, non-spatial, unimaginable, intelligible, and abstract. It would be abstracted from the many, material, temporal, spatial, imaginable, and concrete. As is known, the conditions for any insight are not solely or even primarily the material conditions, for these conditions are not unconditioned themselves, and it is "the unconditioned that intrinsically conditions a grasp of the unconditioned."<sup>145</sup>

The primary component of any idea or insight, rather, is the act of understanding itself. Further, one understands this fact insofar as one understands one's own understanding. The secondary, material component is understood insofar as the primary component is understood. For example, one's knowledge of one's knowing process allows one to know the basic heuristic structure of the universe of proportionate being. This understanding of understanding is not something one has by confrontation

---

<sup>144</sup> Lonergan, Insight, p. 644

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 518

but by identity. This is because in the act of understanding of one's understanding, the intellect in act is the intelligible in act:

. . . besides the knower in act and the known in act, there are also the knower in potency and the known in potency; and while the former are identical, still the latter are distinct.<sup>146</sup>

By extrapolation, the primary component of the idea of being would be the unrestricted act of understanding. In this case there would be the complete identity of the intelligible and intelligence in act. This is because:

. . . in immaterial substances, as one negates potency, so also one negates distinctions: *In his quae sunt sine materia, idem est intelligens et intellectum* (Aristotle: De Anima III, 4, 430a 3ff; Metaphysics L, 9, 107, 5a 3ff.) . . . Aristotle, because he conceived knowing as primarily not confrontation but identity in act, was able to affirm the intelligence in act of his immovable mover (νόησις νοήσεως = noeseos noesis = intelligentia intelligentiae = intelligent intelligible.).<sup>147</sup>

The de jure absolute or formally unconditioned condition of the idea of being is the unrestricted act of understanding which, as unrestricted, understands itself by identity as unconditioned and thus all the secondary components or intelligibilities which it conditions, constitutes, and causes:

For just as the infinite series of positive integers is understood inasmuch as the generative principle of the series is grasped, so the total range of beings is understood inasmuch as the one idea of being is grasped. . . . But besides the terms and their relations there is the generative principle of the series; the ground of an infinity of distinct concepts. Still, what is the generative principle? It is intelligible

---

146 Lonergan, Verbum, p. 184

147 Ibid., pp. 184, 188; Insight, p. 677

. . . It is a unique intelligible, for it is identical with the unique act of unrestricted understanding. On the other hand, the secondary intelligibles are what are also grasped inasmuch as the unrestricted act understands itself.<sup>148</sup>

Being is the content of and thus identical with an unrestricted act of understanding. An unrestricted act of understanding therefore exists and must exist if the exigence for complete intelligibility is to be met and the grounds and the conditions for the possibility of the positions on human knowledge are to be affirmed. It is "God" that is the name given to this unrestricted act of understanding. Insofar as one appropriates these operations of transcendence, one appropriates the operations which compose and constitute the universe. In effect, one appropriates and is one with God. God is the perfect identity of knowing and known:

. . . it is one and the same thing to understand what being is and to understand what God is. . . . if the idea of being exists, God exists. For if the idea of being exists, at least its primary component exists. But the primary component has been shown to possess all the attributes of God. . . . what is known by true understanding is being, and the being known by unrestricted understanding's self-knowledge is primary being, self-explanatory, unconditioned, necessary without any lack or defect. The good is intelligible, and so the primary being also is the primary good . . . not because the act of understanding is complemented by further acts, but by a single act that at once is understanding and intelligible, truth and affirming goodness and loving, being and omnipotence.<sup>149</sup>

## **O. Religious Conversion**

Lonergan would later admit that his affirmation of God, while legitimate, lacked sufficient contexting with respect to the human

---

148 Lonergan, *Insight*, pp. 646-8

149 Ibid., pp. 674, 684

subject: "It treated God's existence and attributes in a purely objective fashion. It made no effort to deal with the subject's religious horizon."<sup>150</sup> Because Lonergan holds that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, he also holds that it is necessary for philosophers to be concerned with the human subject and thus religious conversion "as a basis insofar as it gives you the horizon in which questions about God are significant."<sup>151</sup> Lonergan, in agreement with Vatican I's Dei Filius (DS 3026, 3004), states that the affirmation of God, while de jure possible, is not de facto made without moral and religious conversion. Attention will now be paid to this matter.

To be an authentic human subject means that one does not cut short or cover over one's self transcendence, i.e. one's "stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value".<sup>152</sup> The self-transcendence of one's conscious intentionality leads one beyond self to sensitivity to understanding to what is and to what ought to be. It obtains its fulfillment in being in love in an unrestricted way: "without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations".<sup>153</sup> Such a being in love is referred to as transcendent love. All other meanings of love are partial or rudimentary aspects of this most basic meaning. Such a being in love is referred to by Lonergan as the fifth level of consciousness. The questioning that occurs on this level may be

---

150 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 13

151 Ibid., p. 17

152 Lonergan, Method, p. 103

153 Ibid., p. 106

objectified in the explicitly religious question of God: "With whom are we in love?" This fifth level envelops and sublates the cognitive and moral levels.

One's capacity for self-transcendence is one's capacity to love in an unrestricted way:

Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the basic fulfillment of that capacity.<sup>154</sup>

This capacity is referred to by Lonergan as "openness as fact". When the human capacity for the unrestricted desire to know is objectified, acknowledged, self-appropriated and accepted, and its implications are realized for one's thinking, doing, and living (such as what we are attempting to do in this paper) it is referred to as "openness as achievement". Beyond these two there is also "openness as gift or grace". This refers to the actualization of one's basic capacity due to the love of another: "the gift itself is a dynamic state that fulfills the basic thrust of the human spirit to self-transcendence."<sup>155</sup> Even "openness as achievement" usually occurs de facto after and as a result of "openness as gift":

. . . openness as fact is for openness as gift; and openness as achievement rises from the fact and conditions and, at the same time, is conditioned by the gift.<sup>156</sup>

---

154 Ibid.

155 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 9

156 Lonergan, Collection, pp. 200-1

Such a dynamic state of being in love is not something one lives unconsciously for it is very much a conscious (as opposed to objectified or known) state:

To say that this dynamic state is conscious is not to say that it is known. What is conscious, indeed, is experienced. But human knowing is not just experiencing. Human experiencing includes experiencing but adds to it attention, scrutiny, inquiry, insight, conception, naming, reflecting, checking, judging. The whole problem of cognitional theory is to effect the transition from operations as experienced to operations as known. A great part of psychiatry is helping people to make the transition from conscious feelings to known feelings. In like manner the gift of God's love ordinarily is not objectified in knowledge, but remains within subjectivity as a dynamic vector, a mysterious undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness.<sup>157</sup>

Such a being in love, of course, does not mean that one knows or apprehends the object or instigator of the love beforehand. Rather, one is simply aware that one is in possession of a gratuity to which one cannot lay claim. Hence it is a content or orientation without a known object. It is what St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and Blaise Pascal (1623-62) refer to when they state: "You would not be seeking for me unless you had already found me."<sup>158</sup> Lonergan refers to it in the following way:

. . . an orientation to transcendent mystery illuminates negative or apophatic theology which is content to say what God is not. For such a theology is concerned to speak about a transcendent unknown, a transcendent mystery. Its positive nourishment is God's gift of his love. . . . God . . . is the term of an orientation to transcendent mystery. Such an orientation, while it is the climax of the self-transcending process of raising questions, none the less is not properly a matter of raising and answering questions. So far from lying within

---

<sup>157</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 172

<sup>158</sup> St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs: Sermon 84, 5; Blaise Pascal, Pensees, vii, p. 553



the world mediated by meaning, it is the principle that can draw people out of the world and into the cloud of unknowing. . . . God comes within the world mediated by meaning . . . (when) they objectify in images and concepts and words both what they have been doing and the God that has been their concern.<sup>159</sup>

Lonergan refers to the object of this transcendent love that is within one's horizon as: "a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness."<sup>160</sup> The content is a lived orientation or vocation to an unknown mystery. The object is thus the exception to the rule "nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum" (one cannot love what one does not first know). The exception may thus be formulated as "nihil vere cognitum nisi prius amatum" (one cannot truly know what one does not first love):

. . . the question of God . . . it is primarily a question of decision. Will I love him in return, or will I refuse? Will I live out the gift of his love, or will I hold back, turn away, withdraw? Only secondly do there arise the questions of God's existence and nature, and they are the questions either of the lover seeking to know him or of the unbeliever seeking to escape him. Such is the human option of the existential subject once called by God.<sup>161</sup>

The conscious experience of being in love is referred to as "religious experience" or "experience of Mystery". This "being in love" or transcendent orientation to mystery that is consciously experienced in the realm of interiority is referred to in the realm of theory as sanctifying grace:

To say that this dynamic state is conscious is not to say that it is

---

<sup>159</sup> Lonergan, Method, pp. 341-2

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 103

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 116

known. For consciousness is just experience, but knowledge is a compound of experience, understanding, and judging. Because the dynamic state is conscious without being known, it is an experience of mystery. Because it is being in love, the mystery is not merely attractive but fascinating; to it one belongs; by it one is possessed. Because it is an unmeasured love, the mystery evokes awe. Of itself, then, inasmuch as it is conscious without being known, the gift of God's love is an experience of the holy, of Rudolf Otto's (1869-1937) mysterium fascinans et tremendum. It is what Paul Tillich (1886-1965) named a being grasped by ultimate concern. It corresponds to St. Ignatius Loyola's (1491-1556) consolation that has no cause, as expounded by Karl Rahner (1904-1984).<sup>162</sup>

Because this love fulfills and allows one to be who one most authentically is, it 1) gives one a deepset joy, peace, and happiness "that the world cannot give (and) that can remain despite humiliation, failure, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion."<sup>163</sup> and 2) manifests itself through the four levels of consciousness. This love is a concrete universal which leads one to acts of kindness, goodness, patience, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control, i.e. the "fruits of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23):

. . . (one) is . . . ready to deliberate and judge and decide and act with the easy freedom of those that do all good because they are in love. . . . it is a surrender, not as an act, but a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. By conversion is understood a transformation of the subject and his world. Normally it is a prolonged process though its explicit acknowledgment may be concentrated in a few momentous judgements and decisions. . . . Conversion, as lived, affects all of a man's conscious and intentional operations. It directs his gaze, pervades his imagination, releases the symbols that penetrate to the depth of his psyche. It enriches his understanding, guides his judgement, reinforces his decisions.<sup>164</sup>

Being in love occurs "top down", i.e. it is not something produced or

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 106

<sup>163</sup> Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 9

<sup>164</sup> Lonergan, Method, pp. 107, 240, 130-1

earned by the four levels of consciousness by knowing or doing but, rather, orients them even as it completes them. It allows one to love without limits or restrictions or reservations, i.e. in an otherworldly fashion with one's whole heart, soul, mind, and strength (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4, Mark 12:29). It is thus spoken of as a gift or grace that concretely orients one to what is transcendent in loveliness. The source and object (Alpha and Omega) of such love is what or who is referred to as God:

We refer to the obscure yet very concrete object of transcendent love as "God". By this word we mean one whose value and goodness are absolutely beyond criticism. Since "personhood" is the highest value we know, we think of God as person. The very word God cannot have any meaning to us outside of our experience of this transcendent tug.<sup>165</sup>

To be in love is to be in love with someone. To be in love without qualifications or conditions or reservations or limits is to be in love with someone transcendent. When someone transcendent is my beloved, he is in my heart, real to me from within me. When that love is the fulfillment of my unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence through intelligence and truth and responsibility, the one that fulfils that thrust must be supreme in intelligence, truth, goodness. Since he chooses to come to me by a gift of love for him, he himself must be love. Since loving him is my transcending myself, it also is a denial of the self to be transcended. Since loving him means loving attention to him, it is prayer, meditation, contemplation. Since love of him is fruitful, it overflows into love of all those that he loves or might love. Finally, from an experience of love focused on mystery there wells forth a longing for knowledge, while love itself is a longing for union; so for the lover of the unknown beloved the concept of bliss is knowledge of him and union with him, however they may be achieved. . . . Being in love . . . is being in love with someone. It has a personal dimension. But this can be overlooked in a school of prayer and asceticism that stresses the orientation of religious experience to transcendent mystery. The transcendent is nothing in this world. Mystery is the unknown. Without a transcendental notion of being as the to-be-known, transcendent mystery can come to be named nothing at all . . . Then God can become remote, irrelevant, almost forgotten. Inversely, immanence can be

---

165 Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, pp. 108, 112

over-emphasized and transcendence overlooked. Then the loss of reference to the transcendent will rob symbol, ritual, recital of their proper meaning to leave them merely idol and magic and myth. Then too the divine may be identified with life as universal process, of which the individual and the group are part and in which they participate. I have conceived being in love with God as an ultimate fulfillment of man's capacity for self-transcendence; and this view of religion is sustained when God is conceived as the supreme fulfillment of the transcendental notions, as supreme intelligence, truth, reality, righteousness, goodness. Inversely, when the love of God is not strictly associated with self-transcendence, then easily indeed it is reinforced by the erotic, the sexual, the orgiastic. On the other hand, the love of God also is penetrated with awe. God's thoughts and God's ways are very different from man's and by that difference God is terrifying. Unless religion is totally directed to what is good, to genuine love of one's neighbor and to a self-denial that is subordinated to a fuller goodness in oneself, then the cult of a God that is terrifying can slip over into the demonic, into an exultant destructiveness of oneself and of others.<sup>166</sup>

The immediately conscious experience of the inward gift of being in love in an unrestricted way with God is what Lonergan refers to as the common and basic element of all genuine religions.<sup>167</sup> It is what they all seek, some better than others, to cultivate, objectify, mediate, and institutionalize. Just because it is not named or objectified does not mean, however, that the reality is not present:

. . . so many secularists avoid anything smacking of religion for no other reason than that their own fidelity to this inner drive towards honesty, reason, and responsibility. . . . Conversely, many self-styled religionists, who profess a love for "God", somehow manage to suppress their wonder, curiosity, and natural awe, replacing them with narrow opinions, dogmatic pronouncements, and high minded moralizing. Can this be love for God? In reality, we believe . . . it is the humble who shall see God, the meek who shall inherit the kingdom. In other words, it is those who trust that their inner makeup is tailor made for God who find God. To be religiously converted is to give oneself up to this love and

---

<sup>166</sup> Lonergan, Method, pp. 109-111

<sup>167</sup> Cf. also Friedrich Heiler, "The History of Religions as a Preparation for the Cooperation of Religions", The History of Religions, Mircea Eliade and J. Kitagawa (eds.), (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1959), pp. 142-3

subordinate everything to a love which is transcendent, but he or she has not asked the question of where this love comes from and to whom it is directed. Such a person is in love with God and does not know it. In an explicitly converted horizon, the person has objectified the term of his or her experienced orientation, usually thinking of it as Thou, and usually convinced that this Thou is responsible for planting the seed of love in the first place . . . The explicitly converted horizon gives . . . not a corner on the authenticity market. It simply gives a Thou, a Someone, a named and loved term of an orientation. And for those knowingly in love, it makes an enormous difference in how they ponder life's mysteries; it gives them a Thou to talk with. And yet we must admit that it does not make the struggle for authenticity a great deal easier. Once we recognize that at the core of our love for God lies this surprisingly familiar habit of wonder and longing, we find kinship with . . . the mystics.<sup>168</sup>

A person can be confused. If his negation of God's existence is that he cannot prove it, or that the notion of God presented to him is not a satisfying notion and he's rebelling against that unsatisfactory notion, he can be what Rahner would call an "anonymous Christian", a person who is in the state of grace but doesn't express himself the way people in the state of grace usually do. . . . God's gift of his love . . . leads to a transformation in life, but more on the order of practice than on the order of intellectual knowledge.<sup>169</sup>

. . . atheists . . . may love God in their hearts while not knowing him with their heads.<sup>170</sup>

. . . what distinguishes the Christian, then, is not God's grace, which he shares with others, but the mediation of God's grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>171</sup>

Faith, hope, and charity are "theological virtues" insofar as they are the threefold characteristics and first fruits which result from and are made possible by transcendent love. Faith, according to Lonergan,

---

168 Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, pp. 112-3

169 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 36

170 Lonergan, Method, p. 278

171 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 156

refers not to statements of beliefs or to a blind trusting but is "the knowledge born of religious love."<sup>172</sup> This knowledge is not one that results from the usual order of experience, understanding, and judgement, nor does it pertain to abstract truths from some celestial realm. It pertains, rather, to the recognition of transcendent values in the world, in daily life, in goods, people, orders, societies, laws, and cultures: "By our faith we discover where that Mystery has penetrated the human sphere."<sup>173</sup> Faith allows a person to appreciate, recognize, prefer, and make judgements of value not with regard to mere appearance, efficiency, etc., but with regard to their relationship to, serving of, and furthering of the transcendent good. Having such "eyes of faith" of course presupposes that one is in love or transcendent oneself. This is because it is only such a person who is in possession of the horizon within which such meanings and values are able to be grasped and sought after. Faith thus refers to the "reasons of the heart of which reason does not know".<sup>174</sup> Meanings and values are thus considered in a new light and reprioritized when they are considered from the perspective of one in love in an unrestricted manner. When this is habitual in a person, one can be said to be in possession of the theological virtue or habit of faith: ". . . in the light of faith, originating value is divine light and love, while terminal value is the whole universe."<sup>175</sup> Without such faith, the ultimate

---

<sup>172</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 115

<sup>173</sup> Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, p. 123

<sup>174</sup> Pascal, Pensees, x, 1

<sup>175</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 116

discerner of values is not God but truncated humans with limited horizons. To have the theological virtue of faith allows one to be in possession of the basic ends or goals of one's humanity:

. . . to be human is to be intelligent, and faith is an apprehension of what is absolute in intelligence and intelligibility: to be human is to be reasonable, and faith is an apprehension of what is absolute in Truth and reality: to be human is to be free and responsible, and faith is an apprehension of what is absolute in goodness and holiness. . . . (faith) opens man's horizon to what lies beyond death.<sup>176</sup>

The other two theological virtues are closely linked to faith and to one another. Hope is not based upon what is known or deliberated upon in the first four levels of consciousness, i.e. it is not a hope that is based upon a reasoned calculation of a probable outcome but, rather, often to the contrary, springs from one's discernment of the goals and outcomes which commitment to transcendent love and value lead one to intend and realize:

Hope is a confident desire born of religious love. . . . hope longs for the fullest good and the unadulterated truth. It pines for a glorious outcome to human history. It yearns to see the face of the Mystery that incessantly draws it.<sup>177</sup>

Through hope, then, one lives for something beyond oneself and one's own life: "the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave."<sup>178</sup>

The theological virtue of charity is the love of another that is based

---

176 O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, p. 252

177 Dunne, Loneragan and Spirituality, pp. 122-3

178 Lonergan, Method, p. 116

not upon satisfaction or calculation but upon another as a person of transcendent value:

Charity, along with faith and hope, is an overflow of transcendent love and . . . a direct link to divine Mystery. . . . our . . . love and care for that Mystery as it is embodied uniquely in individual persons and specific communities . . . draws not on human savvy but on transcendent Mystery to see a divine beauty where the world sees only ugliness. . . . That . . . can give the dreary part of love a divine meaning . . . To continue to care for another when our appreciation grows dim, we will fall back to faith, the eyes of the heart, which insists on seeing transcendent value even in the dark. Without faith, charity towards the neighbor washes away on the first rainy day.<sup>179</sup>

Religious conversion will be relevant by pointing out that regardless of what appears, human beings possess potentially infinite intellects, are constituted by freedom and dignity, and exist in a loving relationship with the origin and destiny of the universe.<sup>180</sup>

It is only within the context of transcendent love that self-sacrifice, dying to self, the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, etc. have meaning and value. They help to "refine our sensibilities to resonate with divine movements in the soul."<sup>181</sup> One can understand, then, what is meant by death being overcome by the religiously converted person (cf. Romans 8:38). This is because physical, ascetical, and sacrificial deaths do not have ultimate significance and concern. They instead become the occasions through which one can give oneself over and surrender to transcendent love and its object. This, of course, is the meaning of Baptismal death and being reborn to life in the Spirit.

---

179 Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, pp. 121-3

180 Rende, The Development of Bernard Lonergan's Thought on the Notion of Conversion, p. 310

181 Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, p. 129



The theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity that are inspired by religious love are further "systems" that can overcome moral impotence and can contribute to the concrete promotion of human progress and development and the reversal of human decline. This is insofar as the operations of the theological virtues sublate the operations of individuals and societies. By the promotion of religious conversion, then, human authenticity and the concrete liberation, redemption, and salvation of the world are accomplished:

The power of God's love brings forth a new energy and efficacy in all goodness . . . faith is linked with human progress and it has to meet the challenge of human decline. For faith and progress have a common root in man's cognitional and moral self-transcendence. To promote either is to promote the other indirectly. Faith places human efforts in a friendly universe; it reveals an ultimate significance in human achievement; it strengthens new undertakings with confidence . . . It is not propaganda and it is not argument but religious faith that will liberate human reasonableness from its ideological prisons. It is not the promise of men but religious hope that can enable men to resist the vast pressures of social decay. If passions are to quiet down, if wrongs are to be not exacerbated, not ignored, not merely palliated, but acknowledged and removed, then human possessiveness and human pride have to be replaced by religious charity, by the charity of the suffering servant, by self-sacrificing love.<sup>182</sup>

Lonergan continues to insist on the distinction - as opposed to the separation - between religious conversion and moral and intellectual conversion. These latter, of course, attain to their fulfillment only through being sublated by the former. Precisely because its goal and object is nothing particular in the world, the transcendent and

---

182 Lonergan, Method, pp. 116-7

otherworldly commitment inspired by religious conversion is able to be effective in the world. Lonergan, along with Aquinas, thus holds that grace principally orients one to the transcendent, i.e. to supernatural goods (gratia elevans) and secondarily to the healing of nature (gratia sanans).<sup>183</sup> This distinction allows Lonergan to maintain the distinction - as opposed to the separation - between the realm or horizon of the natural and the supernatural:

It is not to be thought, however, that religious conversion means no more than a new and more efficacious ground for the pursuit of intellectual and moral ends. Religious loving is without conditions, qualifications, reservations; it is with all one's heart and all one's soul and all one's mind and all one's strength. This lack of limitation, though it corresponds to the unrestricted character of human questioning, does not pertain to this world. Holiness abounds in truth and moral goodness, but it has a distinct dimension of its own. It is other-worldly fulfillment, joy, peace, bliss. In Christian experience these are the fruits of being in love with a mysterious, uncomprehended God. Sinfulness similarly is distinct from moral evil; it is the privation of total loving; it is a radical dimension of lovelessness. That dimension can be hidden by sustained superficiality, by evading ultimate questions, by absorption in all that the world offers to challenge our resourcefulness, to relax our bodies, to distract our minds. But escape may not be permanent and then the absence of fulfillment reveals itself in unrest, the absence of joy in the pursuit of fun, the absence of peace in disgust - a depressive disgust with oneself or a manic, hostile, even violent disgust with mankind. Though religious conversion sublates moral, and moral conversion sublates intellectual, one is not to infer that intellectual comes first and then moral and finally religious. On the contrary, from a causal viewpoint, one would say that first there is God's gift of his love. Next, the eye of this love reveals values in their splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization, and that is moral conversion. . . . religious conversion goes beyond moral. Questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation reveal the eros of the human spirit, its capacity and its desire for self-transcendence. But that capacity meets fulfillment, that desire turns to joy, when religious conversion transforms the existential subject into a subject in love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an

---

183 Cf. Aquinas, Summa, I-II, q. 109, a. 2c

other-worldly love. Then there is a new basis for all valuing and all doing good. In no way are fruits of intellectual or moral conversion negated or diminished. On the contrary, all human pursuits of the true and the good is included within and furthered by a cosmic context and purpose and, as well, there now accrues to man the power of love to enable him to accept the suffering involved in undoing the effects of decline.<sup>184</sup>

While the immediate inner word of God's love flooding one's heart is experienced and responded to personally and communally, it is the outer word seeking to give expression to and to draw out the implications of the inner word that constitutes a religious community and a religious tradition, i.e. a religious community in its lived historical expression. The outward expressions that are given to mediate the offer, response, and ramifications of the immediate inner word, religious experience, and transcendent other worldly drawing of the love of God are made symbolically, liturgically, incarnately, artistically, linguistically, intersubjectively, narratively, doctrinally, etc. Through such means: "religion enters the world mediated by meaning and regulated by value."<sup>185</sup> The outer word of a tradition articulates the call and offer of God's love, its response, and the transcendent values that such a call leads people to embrace:

The religious leader, the prophet, the Christ, the apostle, the priest, the preacher announces in signs and symbols what is congruent with the gift of love that God works within us. The word, too, is social: it brings into a single fold . . . (those) that belong together because at the depth of their hearts they respond to the same mystery of love and awe.<sup>186</sup>

---

184 Lonergan, Method, pp. 242-3

185 Ibid., p. 112

186 Ibid., p. 113

In Christianity the perfect expression of the inner word of God's love (the Spirit) that is given and offered to all was incarnately embodied and lived in the outer Word Jesus Christ. It has also been given expression in the outer words of scripture, sacraments, art, ministers, doctrines, saints, etc:

The Christian tradition makes explicit our implicit intending of God in all our intending by speaking of the Spirit that is given to us, of the Son who redeemed us, of the Father who sent the Son and with the Son sends the Spirit, and of our future destiny when we shall know, not as in a glass darkly, but face to face.<sup>187</sup>

Christianity involves not only the inward gift of being in love with God but also the outward expression of God's love in Christ Jesus dying and rising again. In the paschal mystery the love that is given inwardly is focused and inflamed, and that focusing unites Christians not only with Christ but also with one another.<sup>188</sup>

It is through a religious community and tradition that God's inner word or Spirit is awakened, cultivated, and incarnated in the world mediated by meaning and regulated by value:

The divine initiative is not just creation. It is not just God's gift of his love. There is a personal entrance of God himself into history, a communication of God to his people, the advent of God's word into the world of religious expression. Such was the religion of Israel. Such has been Christianity. Before it enters the world mediated by meaning, religion is the prior word (non-conceptual inner word) God speaks to us by flooding our hearts with his love. That prior word pertains, not to the world mediated by meaning, but to the world of immediacy, to the unmediated experience of the mystery of love and awe. The outwardly spoken word is historically conditioned: its meaning depends upon the

---

187 Ibid., p. 291

188 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 10

human context in which it is uttered, and such contexts vary from place to place and from one generation to another. But the prior word in its immediacy, though it differs in intensity, though it resonates differently in different temperaments and in different stages of religious development, withdraws man from the diversity of history by moving out of the world mediated by meaning and towards a world of immediacy in which image and symbol, thought and word, lose their relevance and even disappear. One must not conclude that the outward word is something incidental. For it has a constitutive role. When a man and a woman love each other but do not avow their love, they are not yet in love. Their very silence means that their love has not reached the point of self-surrender and self-donation. It is the love that each freely and fully reveals to the other that brings about the radically new situation of being in love and that begins the unfolding of its life-long implications. What holds for the love of a man and a woman, also holds in its own way for the love of God and man. Ordinarily the experience of the mystery of love and awe is not objectified. It remains within subjectivity as a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness. Perhaps after years of sustained prayerfulness and self-denial, immersion in the world mediated by meaning will become less total and experience of the mystery become clear and distinct enough to awaken attention, wonder, inquiry. Even then in the individual case there are not certain answers. All one can do is let be what is, let happen what in any case keeps recurring. But then, as much as ever, one needs the word - the word of tradition that has accumulated religious wisdom, the word of fellowship that unites those that share the gift of God's love, the word of the gospel that announces that God has loved us first and, in the fulness of time, has revealed that love in Christ crucified, dead, and risen. The word, then, is personal. Cor ad cor loquitur: love speaks to love, and its speech is powerful. The religious leader, the prophet, the Christ, the apostle, the priest, the preacher announces in signs and symbols what is congruent with the gift of love that God works within us. The word, too, is social: it brings into a single fold the scattered sheep that belong together because at the depth of their hearts they respond to the same mystery of love and awe. Their word, finally, is historical. It is meaning outwardly expressed. It has to find its place in the context of other, non-religious meanings. It has to borrow and adapt a language that more easily speaks of this world than of transcendence. But such language and contexts vary with time and place to give words changing meanings and statements changing implications.<sup>189</sup>

One can see in Lonergan the same distinction that St. Thomas Aquinas

---

189 Lonergan, Method, p. 119

makes between "cognitive knowing" (what Duns Scotus calls "analytic knowing") and "connatural knowing" (what Duns Scotus calls "intuitive knowing" or what is also called knowing by identity or knowing by affinity or biblical knowing or spiritual knowing or unitive knowing or contemplative knowing). The first is knowing something as an object (object to subject) by comparing and contrasting it to something else. The second is knowing something because you are also that something (subject to subject), and you participate in it. This is the way one knows God - not as an object or as a separate being, but as being itself - in whom one participates, and in whom one "lives, and moves and has one's being" (Acts 17:28). It's knowing by connecting what is in you to what is around you. It is when what is in you recognizes itself in the other, because in reality you are one. You recognize and connect with peace because there is peace in you, you recognize stillness because there is stillness in you, you recognize joy because there is joy in you. You recognize the mystery, beauty, and goodness of life and reality - because the mystery, beauty and goodness of life within you connects and resonates with it. You can recognize love - because there is love in you. You can recognize God because there is God in you - or rather God in you sees, recognizes and loves the God around you.

Earlier, the nature and role of belief and believing was spelled out. Belief functions in religious communities and traditions in ways similar to that of common sense and scientific communities. In a religious community, beliefs are the judgements of meaning and value that have been

made and given expression in one form or another, inspired by religious faith:

For beliefs result from judgements of value, and the judgements of value relevant for religious belief come from faith, the eye of religious love, an eye that can discern God's self-disclosures.<sup>190</sup>

One of the values which religious faith leads one to accept is the value of believing the outer word of one's religious tradition and thus of accepting its judgements of fact and value:

Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious tradition, and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. For the word, spoken and heard, proceeds from and penetrates to all four levels of intentional consciousness. Its content is not just a content of experience but a content of experience and understanding and judging and deciding. The analogy of sight yields the cognitional myth. But fidelity to the word engages the whole man.<sup>191</sup>

In the past a religion only had to mediate the inner word of God's love to undifferentiated consciousness. Before the differentiations of consciousness into common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence, religious meanings and values were intermingled with other meanings and values. They all had meaning within one sacral universe of discourse. Hence in primitive societies no real distinction was made between the sacred and the profane (the secular). Myth and magic were the result of this intermingling. As new questions arose, there arose the need to make

---

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 243

further distinctions. There came to be differentiations in conscious operations and specialized realms of meaning. The classical theoretic differentiation of consciousness arose first. During the Medieval period Christianity would mediate itself to the classical theoretic and metaphysical realms of meaning. In so doing the religious-transcendent differentiation of consciousness and its horizon of discourse and meaning came to be distinguished. There would then arise the distinction and separation between the realms of the sacred and secular. After the scientific theoretic differentiation of consciousness from common sense in the modern era, there would result the separation and eventually the eclipsing of the transcendent from the theoretic as well as the common sense realms. This, of course, is the modern day dilemma of religion. The problem is the inability of theology to mediate religion and of religion to mediate itself or speak meaningfully to modern culture with its new differentiations of consciousness and horizons of meaning. It is this problem that Lonergan has sought to address as a theologian, i.e. as one who seeks to mediate a religion to a new cultural context. The foundations for accomplishing such a mediation have now been discovered. In the chapter that follows the method for making this mediation will be set forth.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE METHOD

#### A. The Situation

Religion is something which must be intimately linked to a society and culture. This is because it's judgements of facts and values that are born of religious love are judgements that pertain to and are at stake with respect to the meanings and values of personal, intersubjective, social, and cultural communities. With the advent of modern science and history, however, and the differentiations of consciousness that accompanied them, the rearticulation of Christian religious meanings and values was not done. Instead, theologians were assigned the task of merely maintaining the normativity of the classical cultural context within which and for which past doctrinal articulations of Christian meanings and values were made. The apparent static fixity and immutability of such formulations could not delay the inevitable deterioration and isolation of manualist theology. As theology painted itself into its dogmatic corner, as tradition became traditionalism, as authority became authoritarian, and as religious beliefs replaced faith, Christian religion increasingly failed to meet the challenge and fulfill its redemptive task and mission vis-a-vis the modern world:

The Church has always felt called to herald the Gospel to all men of all cultures and all classes. But the full implications of this mission were hidden by the classicist notion of culture.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 140-1

The concern of the theologian is not just a set of propositions but a concrete religion as it has been lived, as it is being lived, and as it is to be lived.<sup>2</sup>

It has been this inability of the institutional Church and theologians to effectively and meaningfully mediate the horizon, reality, meanings, and values of religious faith in the modern cultural context that has resulted in the secularism and absence of God in modern life, society, and culture. Lonergan thus refers to the problem of secularism not as a crisis of faith but one of culture. It is not that there has not been religiously self-transcending people, but, rather, there has been a failure to attend to, conceive of, articulate, and make normative and effective religious meanings, values, and intentionality to differentiated and specialized modern adult consciousness. In other words, there has been a failure to make religion "cognitively accessible"<sup>3</sup>:

. . . for undifferentiated consciousness all that is academic is essentially alien, and any effort to impose it not only is an intolerable and deadening intrusion but also is doomed to failure. . . . For once consciousness is differentiated, corresponding development in the expression and presentation of religion becomes necessary. So in an educated and alert consciousness a childish apprehension of religious truth either must be sublated within an educated apprehension or else it will simply be dropped as outmoded and outworn. . . . If concern is expressed for the real life of primitives and other instances of undifferentiated consciousness, then manifestly an academic theology is utterly irrelevant. But if concern is for the real life of differentiated consciousness, then in the measure that consciousness is differentiated an academic theology is a necessity. . . . the further any movement spreads and the longer it lasts, the more it is forced to reflect on its own proper meaning, to distinguish itself from other meanings, to guard

---

2 Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Theology*, p. 56

3 Tracy, *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*, p. 260

itself against aberration. . . . What is true of movements generally also is true of Christianity. The mirror in which it reflects itself is theology. So religion and theology become distinct and separate in the . . . very measure that religion itself develops and adherents to religion move easily from one pattern of consciousness to another. . . . To identify theology with religion, with liturgy, with prayer, with preaching, no doubt is to revert to the earliest period of Christianity. But it is also to overlook the fact that the conditions of the earliest period have long since ceased to exist. There are real theological problems, real issues that, if bucked threaten the very existence of Christianity. There are real problems of communication in the twentieth century, and they are not solved by preaching to ancient Antioch, Corinth, or Rome.<sup>4</sup>

. . . the Church . . . has to operate on the basis of the social order and cultural achievements of each time and place . . . consequently its operation has to change with changes in its social and cultural context. . . . at present we have the task of disengagement from classicist thought forms and viewpoints and a new involvement in modern culture. In brief, the contemporary issue is, not a new religion, not a new faith, but a belated social and cultural transition.<sup>5</sup>

While religion, religious terminology, religious beliefs, and religious people have continued to exist in modern times, they have tended to exist alongside modern culture as private, extrinsically related, otherworldly, sacral entities. Religion and God have come to be regarded not only as irrelevant and childish relics, but also as anti-human and alienating obstacles to human self-understanding, development, and progress. This is because the knowledge born of religious love failed to integrally enter into and become a part of the acts of meaning which effectively, cognitively, and constitutively formed and informed personal, social, and cultural life. It did not "penetrate . . . into

---

4 Lonergan, Method, pp. 139-40

5 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 98

the manifold fabric of everyday meaning and feeling that directs and propels the lives of men."<sup>6</sup> As Lonergan has pointed out, however, the religious horizon is not a mere optional extra that may be tacked onto an already complete human life, but is an integral and intrinsic dimension of the human horizon and the fulfillment of human authenticity and genuineness:

. . . the basic question is, what is authentic or genuine realization of human potentiality? In a word my answer is a self-transcending realization. . . . human authenticity is a matter of following the built in law of the human spirit . . . an authentic humanism is profoundly religious.<sup>7</sup>

. . . man is for God . . . in theology theocentrism and anthropocentrism coincide.<sup>8</sup>

As Lonergan states more comprehensively:

Man's development is a matter of getting beyond himself, of transcending himself, of ceasing to be an animal in a habitat and of becoming a genuine person in a community. The first stage of this development lies in the sensibility that enables him to perceive his surroundings and to respond to what he perceives. But man not only perceives but also wonders, inquires, seeks to understand. He unifies and relates, constructs and extrapolates, serializes and generalizes. He moves out of his immediate surroundings into a universe put together by the symbols and stories of mythic consciousness, or by the speculations of philosophers, or by the investigations of scientists. But besides such cognitional self-transcendence, there is also a real self-transcendence. Men ask not only about facts but also about values. They are not content with satisfaction. They distinguish between what truly is good and what only apparently is good. They are stopped by the question: Is what I have achieved really worthwhile? Is what I hope for really worthwhile? Because men can raise such questions, and answer them, and live by the

---

6 Ibid., p. 141

7 Ibid., pp. 166, 169, 144, 148

8 Lonergan, Method, p. 357

answers, they can be principles of benevolence and beneficence, of genuine co-operation, of true love. . . . All authentic being-in-love is a total self surrender . . . it is also something in itself, something personal, intimate, and profoundly attuned to the deepest yearnings of the human heart. It constitutes a basic fulfilment of man's being. Because it is such a fulfilment, it is the source of a great peace, the peace that the world cannot give. It is a wellspring of joy that can endure despite the sorrow of failure, humiliation, privation, pain, desertion. Because it is such a fulfilment, it removes the temptation of all that is shallow, hollow, empty, and degrading without handing man over to the fanaticism that arises when man's . . . capacity for God is misdirected to finite goals. . . . There exists, then, in man a capacity for holiness, a capacity for love that, in its immediacy, regards not the ever-passing shape of this world but the mysterious reality, immanent and transcendent, that we name God. . . . For the fulfilment that is the love of God is not the fulfilment of any appetite or desire or wish or dream impulse, but the fulfilment of getting beyond one's appetites and desires and wishes and impulses, the fulfilment of self-transcendence, the fulfilment of human authenticity, the fulfilment that overflows into a love of one's neighbor as oneself. . . . The very being of man is not static but dynamic; it never is a state of achieved perfection; it always is at best a striving. The striving of the religious man is to give himself to God in something nearer the way in which God has given himself to us. Such a goal is always distant, but it is not inhuman, for it corresponds to the dynamic structure of man's being, to the restlessness that is ours till we rest in God.<sup>9</sup>

## **B. The Task**

Insofar as self-transcendence is the basic dynamism and ground of the human subject, falling in love in an unrestricted way with God allows one to most perfectly "be oneself" and "be all that one can be". It allows one to move beyond oneself to know the truth, do the good, and unite with others for the promotion of human authenticity and the liberation and redemption of personal and social living. The nihilism, self-destruction, disintegration, restlessness, aimlessness, immaturity, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 144-7

alienation of the modern world is due in no small measure to this lack of a religious horizon:

. . . inauthenticity . . . is the fruit of a refusal to follow the built in dynamism of the human spirit, a decision to remain closed-in on ourselves. . . . being human is the constant struggle between the self who is transcending and the self to be transcended. Incessantly we know ourselves to be called to leave the security of our nest, our present surroundings, our present horizons, our present selves, and to reach beyond whom we are to the person we would become. Lonergan acknowledges it is a different task, and even its achievements in coming to truth, values, and love is our achievement that is never secure or permanent. . . Lonergan insists that the conviction of authenticity, in one who is authentic is both normative and unmistakable, while those who are evading the issue of self-realization are busy concealing the fact from themselves. . . . the inner conviction of the fullness of authenticity in religious commitment is so very much the inner dynamism of human reality itself that one cannot but be aware of its authenticity and of its vital role in human development, just as one cannot but hide the absence of such commitment when one is busy evading the abiding imperatives of what it is to be human.<sup>10</sup>

The promotion of human authenticity through religious conversion is the task of a religious tradition and institution:

Though God's grace is given to all (i.e. the call and drive to transcendence), still the experience of resting in God ordinarily needs a religious tradition for it to be encouraged, fostered, integrated, guided, developed.<sup>11</sup>

Hence, a person within the Christian tradition and community:

. . . knows God not only through the grace in (his or her) heart but also through the revelation of God's love in Christ Jesus and the witness to that revelation down the ages through the church. Christian love of God is not just a state of mind and heart; essential to it is the intersubjective interpersonal component in which God reveals his love and

---

10 O'Callaghan, Unity in Theology, pp. 249-50

11 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 147

asks ours in return.<sup>12</sup>

Lonergan holds that there is a deeper crisis in belief than in faith, i.e. there is more of a controversy concerning the judgements of fact and value proposed by a religious tradition and community to express, interpret, and live out the implications of religious faith and commitment in the world. The challenge that the church faces is the continuous challenge of recasting and transposing its message of faith so as to bring religious faith to bear on all aspects of human living. Theology has the specialized intellectual task within the religious community of reflecting on and mediating religious faith, meaning, and values to new cultural contexts. In order to fulfill this goal theology must 1) uncover and recover the religion in its traditional and historical expression, 2) be familiar with the contemporary culture, and 3) have a critical basis from which to evaluate the tradition and decide what is to be mediated. The basic terms and relations that are able to provide such a foundation and critical basis are not the terms and relations of classically formulated propositional first principles, doctrines, authorities, or theological theses of the sort that were provided in manualist course of studies: de vera religione, de legato divino, de ecclesia, de inspiratione scripturae, de locis theologicis. In other words, one can no longer begin from the premises of a "Denzinger Theology", e.g.:

---

<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, Doctrinal Pluralism, pp. 27-8

One must believe and accept whatever the bible or the true church or both believe and accept. But "x" is the bible or the true church or both. Therefore, one must believe and accept whatever "x" believes and accepts. Moreover, "x" believes and accepts a, b, c, d . . . Therefore, one must believe and accept a, b, c, d . . .<sup>13</sup>

Instead of such a basis, theology must begin from the basic terms and relations of the operations of the self-transcendent (i.e. inspired) human subject and the corresponding horizon. It is only within such a horizon or field of meaning that the transcendent meaning of theological statements can be comprehended. Instead of such a basis, theology must begin from the basic and invariant, related and recurring, transcultural and transhistorical, conscious terms and relations of the religiously, morally, and intellectually self-transcending human subject. It is only from such a basis and the accompanying corresponding horizon and field of meaning of such a subject that the true transcendent meaning of religious statements can be made meaningful and be meaningfully made. As Lonergan states, in agreement with Rahner:

. . . the dogmatic theology of the past has to become a theological anthropology. By this is meant that all theological questions and answers have to be matched by the transcendent questions and answers that reveal in the human subject the conditions of the possibility of the theological answers. (This) excludes a modernist interpretation . . . namely, that theological doctrines are to be taken as statements about merely human reality.<sup>14</sup>

It is only from such a foundation that one will be able to relate and

---

13 Lonergan, Method, p. 270

14 Lonergan, Second Collection, pp. 147-8



unify religious or transcendent meanings with those resulting from the various differentiations of contemporary consciousness:

. . . the worthy successor to thirteenth century achievement will be the fruit of a fourfold differentiated consciousness, in which the workings of common sense, science, scholarship, intentionality analysis, and the life of prayer have been integrated.<sup>15</sup>

However, "the only way to understand another's differentiation of consciousness is to bring about that differentiation in oneself."<sup>16</sup>

In the past, theology defined and distinguishes itself from other sciences in the Aristotelian manner, namely by the material object to be studied (i.e. God and everything in relation to God, and divinely revealed truths) and the formal object through which the material object is studied (i.e. the light of Revelation, faith, and logic). Such a distinction, however, is no longer tenable. This is because the approach begged the question by assuming that its subject matter was somehow already known in an eternally valid concept, a concept which could be found to exist throughout the history of the Church and could be applied to any particular time and place.

### **C. The Functional Specialties**

For his part Lonergan distinguished theology, like the other sciences, by its method of operation. The question for him is: "What are we doing

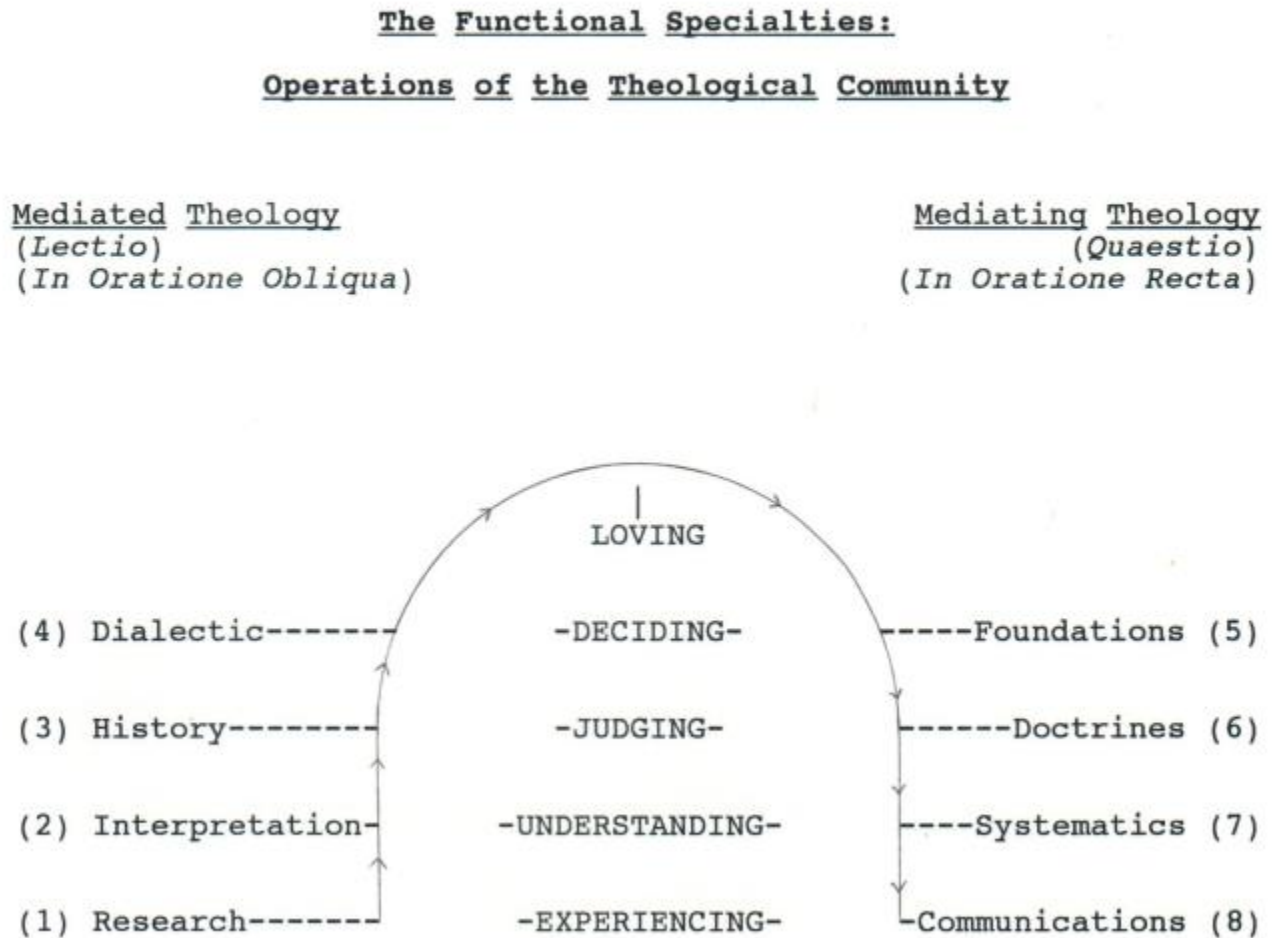
---

<sup>15</sup> Lonergan, Doctrinal Pluralism, p. 33

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 61

when we are doing theology?" What one would expect to discover (and what one in fact discovers) are divisions in theology which would parallel the unrevisable structure of the fourfold operations of consciousness that make up any method: experience, understanding, judgement, and decision. In order to mediate a religion to a culture theology must first recover the religion. Hence there are two phases: the mediating phase (lectio, in oratione obliqua) and the mediated phase (quaestiones, in oratione recta). Because there are two phases in theology, this means there should be (and are) eight distinct specialized operations. They are referred to as the eight functional specialties: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications (**See Figure 5**). While one can already find these eight specialties actually operative in theology, Lonergan alone has objectified the process in order to promote greater unity among the distinct specialties. This is in order that each might understand its own distinct task in the unified, interrelated, interdependent, and collaborative theological enterprise and not presume, as for example naïve realists and idealists presume in cognition, that their own operation is the whole of theology or autonomous from the other disciplines. It must be noted that while each specialty corresponds to an operation of consciousness, all four operations of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding are involved in reaching the goal of each specialty.

Figure 5



### **1) Research**

The first functional specialty, research, uncovers and makes available the relevant data from the past for interpretation and theological investigation. It includes the work of archaeologists and textual critics who determine the authenticity, authorship, and dates of texts and artifacts. This specialty prepares critical editions of texts. This specialty corresponds to the operation of experience for it makes

available data for understanding.

## **2) Interpretation**

The second specialty, interpretation, presupposes the data from the first specialty. Its goal is to understand meanings, i.e. what was meant in the writings, symbols, and deeds of the past uncovered by the archaeologist or textual critic. It accomplishes its task by uncovering the sets of questions which the statements, symbols, and deeds sought to give expression to and address. This is possible insofar as statements and symbols intend or represent objects and are expressions of intentional acts of meaning. One cannot, therefore, simply pick up a text and literally "read all that is there in the text and read nothing that is not there" and thus assume one objectively knows what the concepts or text as a whole meant or means. In order to know what was meant one must first come to understand the common sense context of the author, time, place, and culture and thus the relative intentional horizon of interest which provoked the attention, interest, and questions which the text or symbol sought to give expression to and answer. One must also come to know the literary context of the whole text within which any particular statement, paragraph, or chapter is situated. It is only insofar as an exegete is able to authentically recover the horizon of the particular period, author, and audience that he or she is able to come to know the true meaning of a text. Intellectual, moral, and/or religious conversion may thus be required on the part of interpreters if they are going to be

able to understand the horizon of questioning and intentionality of the authors. This is what makes some literature so enduring, challenging, and edifying, for they force their readers to become different with new horizons of questioning and intending in order for them to be properly understood:

The major texts, the classics, in religion, letters, philosophy, theology, not only are beyond the initial horizon of their interpreter but also demand an intellectual, moral, religious conversion of the interpreter over and above the broadening of his horizon.<sup>17</sup>

### **3) History**

The third specialty, history, presupposes knowledge of texts discerned by exegetes. With this knowledge they seek to know the actual events which lay behind the writing of the text, production of the artifact, etc., or which resulted from it. They also seek to know what was "going forward" in particular times and places, i.e. what changes were taking place in contexts and horizons with respect to questions asked, meanings intended, and answers given. History is thus the integration of basic history, i.e. "telling where and when who did what to enjoy what success, suffer what reverses, exert what influence", and special history, i.e. "telling of movements whether cultural, institutional or doctrinal".<sup>18</sup> Thus, while interpreters seek to know the understandings (meanings) that were had in the past, historians seek to know what these meanings actually

---

<sup>17</sup> Lonergan, Method, p. 161

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 128

meant historically with respect to the occurrences of events and changes in historical contexts. The specialty of history thus corresponds to the level of judgement.

#### **4) Dialectic**

Human sciences and religious studies only make use of the first three specialties. Theology, however, does not and cannot rest content at this point if it is to fulfill its function and role within a religious community to mediate religious meanings and values to a particular culture. Theology must proceed beyond determinations and judgements of historical religious facts to the fourth level of evaluation, deliberation, decision, and action. Human sciences and religious studies, of course, claim to be value free and non-evaluative. This, of course, is a false presumption for values cannot help but enter into these disciplines, e.g. values influence the selection of data and the ability of recovering the horizon that defines a text. Even the very decision to pursue such studies presupposes that one considers it worthwhile and a value to do so. The theologian, meanwhile, not only pursues a value, namely the promotion of conversion, but also seeks to make the value explicit. It is this explicit value which the theologian pursues as an integral member of the religious community that gives to him or her a criteria by which to evaluate the meanings and values of the religious tradition:

In a word, empirical human science can become practical only through theology, and the relentless modern drift to social engineering and totalitarian controls is the fruit of man's effort to make human science practical though he prescind from God and from the solution God provides for man's problem.<sup>19</sup>

As Lamb puts it:

Religious conversion is not a merely extrinsic process which may or may not occur with little or no difference to human histories. Religious conversion is intrinsically related to intellectual and moral conversions. Intelligence, goodness, and holiness are integral with each other, not in terms of some classical ideal but in the ongoing practice of striving for ever fuller attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, love. The fully humanist position, if it gives full scope to the eros of intelligence and the desires of the human heart, "loses its primacy, not by some extrinsicist invasion, but by submitting to its own immanent necessities". If the human . . . sciences are going to become genuinely practical, expanding effective human freedom, then a methodologically transformed theology has to become a creative collaborator in this project.<sup>20</sup>

Religion and theology are and must be intimately linked with authentic personal, social, and cultural development. The findings of the human sciences cannot simply be left to be implemented through the manipulation and imposition of totalitarian controls. The horizon which religious, moral, and intellectual conversion open up allow the "divine solution" to the human incapacity for sustained development to become effective, operative, and incarnate in the world mediated by meaning and intentionality so as to overcome the irrational in human living:

. . . the scientific age of innocence has come to an end: human authenticity (and progress) can no longer be taken for granted . . . It

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 128

<sup>20</sup> Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Bernard Lonergan's Theology", p. 24

is only after the age of innocence that praxis becomes an academic subject.<sup>21</sup>

The fourth functional specialty, dialectics, articulates and orders divergences and conflicts that have occurred within the Christian tradition, e.g. differences in the selections of relevant data (scripture or tradition or both), interpretation, histories, meanings, facts, values, etc. This is done with a view towards evaluating and responsibly accepting or rejecting various alternatives. Some differences can be resolved genetically, i.e. differences which are only apparent insofar as each reflects simply a different stage of development:

It is not in some vacuum of pure spirit but under concrete historical conditions and circumstances that developments occur, and a knowledge of such conditions and circumstances is not irrelevant in the evaluational history that decides on the legitimacy of developments.<sup>22</sup>

There are other differences, however, that are mutually opposed and contradictory due to differences that derive from the human heart itself. It is these differences that dialectic sets forth in order to evaluate:

. . . dialectic . . . like an x-ray sets certain key issues in high relief to concentrate on their opposition and interplay.<sup>23</sup>

Dialectics moves beyond the aims of historical reconstruction. A reflectively dialectical orthopraxis takes seriously the need to thematize value conflicts within the heuristic of discerning values and disvalues, which is capable of distinguishing genuine historical progress

---

21 Lonergan, "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods", Studies in Religion, 6/4 (1977), pp. 341, 355

22 Lonergan, Method, p. 320

23 Lonergan, The Way to Nicea, pp. vii-viii



toward freedom and humanization from dehumanizing decline.<sup>24</sup>

In the past this phase of theology was referred to as apologetics. It sought to resolve differences by appealing to authority or to already presupposed and formulated concepts and first premises from which could be deduced what is true or false and right or wrong. Dialectic seeks to resolve differences to the prior foundational level of the operations of the converted and self-transcending or unconverted and biased human subject.

## **5) Foundations**

The fifth functional specialty, foundations (fundamental theology), is the specialty which seeks to objectify the horizon or criteria that is the basis from which the evaluational decisions are made in the fourth specialty, dialectics. This horizon, of course, is that of the religiously converted human subject. It is the only horizon within which religious meanings and values can be genuinely comprehended. This horizon also happens to transcend confessional barriers. The evaluations and decisions made with respect to differences in the religious tradition set forth in dialectics thus need not simply be reduced to a mere polemical and apologetic bantering:

By dialectic, then, is understood a generalized apologetic conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and

---

24 Matthew L. Lamb, Solidarity With Victims: Toward A Theology of Social Transformation, (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Co., 1982), p. 137

proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds, real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions. As conversion is basic to Christian living, so an objectification of conversion provides theology with its foundations.<sup>25</sup>

While the specialty of foundations or fundamental theology objectifies this basic horizon of conversion and the operations of the self-transcending subject in love with God (in the terms or categories available from the particular religious tradition) it is not conversion as objectified but as lived and operative that is really foundational, i.e. the specialty foundations does not provide us with a few easy propositions that we can then merely use or deduce from in order to make evaluations and decisions:

It is not knowledge of religious conversion, awareness of religious conversion, interpretation of psychological phenomena of conversion, propositions concerning conversion. It is simply the reality of the transformation named conversion.<sup>26</sup>

Lonergan certainly makes very clear in his formulation of theological method the tremendous responsibility and personal challenge that is made to those who are or would be theologians. It is not possible for them to operate in a vacuum. They cannot separate their theological reflection from their religious living, i.e. from intellectual, moral, and religious authenticity, and continue to carry out their task as theologians. As Father Harvey D. Egan, S.J. (1937- ), states it:

---

25 Lonergan, Method, p. 320

26 Lonergan, "Bernard Lonergan Responds", Foundations of Theology, p. 277

Lonergeran distinguishes between a theologian's spirituality and theological reflection. He refuses, however, to separate them. The theologian sees only as far as his personal horizon of faith allows him to see. Moreover, his living faith forms the matrix in which he interprets reality. It likewise forms the horizon in which his value judgements are made. In theology, as in the rest of human living, we ultimately know only what we love. . . . Only when this unrestricted love that occupies the core of the highest level of consciousness breaks forth, seizes the theologian, and converts him religiously, morally, and intellectually do we have "the efficacious ground for all self-transcendence" (Lonergeran: Method, p. 241). These conversions transform the theologian, his living, values, horizon, and knowledge. The more he surrenders to the transcendental precepts, the more he surrenders to the basic dynamism of his being. In so doing, he must fully and consciously decide about his way of life, values, horizon, knowledge, and way of looking at reality. Therefore, only when theologians allow themselves to be converted by the deepest aspirations of their spirits can the perfect marriage between living faith and theological reflection occur. When the Church's deepest thinkers are also its holiest members, then and only then will theology attain its authenticity.<sup>27</sup>

As Lonergan puts it:

. . . the threefold conversion is not foundational in the sense that it offers the premises from which all desirable conclusions are to be drawn. The threefold conversion is, not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the reality that a theologian is. . . . Conversion is a matter of moving from one set of roots to another. It is a process that does not occur in the marketplace. It is a process that may be occasioned by scientific inquiry. But it occurs only inasmuch as a man discovers what is unauthentic in himself and turns away from it, inasmuch as he discovers what the fulness of human authenticity can be and embraces it with his whole being.<sup>28</sup>

To many these foundations may seem to be too ambiguous and fuzzy. Because of this some may be tempted to try to appeal to other more apparently clear, distinct, obvious, and objective foundations and

---

27 Harvey D. Egan, SJ, Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition, (New York: Pueblo Co., 1984), pp. 378-9

28 Lonergan, Method, pp. 270-1

standards which somehow bypass the need for having authentic, self-transcending subjects. One may seek to do so by appealing to some ultimate, external authority, universal concepts, rules, propositions, etc. The standard and horizon of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, however, is only ambiguous to those who have not attained it: "those who are unspiritual refuse what belongs to the spirit of God; it is folly to them, they cannot grasp it" (1 Corinthians 2:14). To try to appeal to a standard of objectivity apart from the self-transcending subject is to try to appeal to a standard of objectivity presumed by and based on the biologically extroverted subject who's notion of the real is somehow already-out-there-now-real. To suggest that such standards are to be reached through some direct pipeline, shortcutting and apart from the attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving human subject, is alienating and destructive of the very temples and fonts of truth, goodness, and love which are the real foundations within the human person. It is the cultivation of these sources that is the purpose of religion:

. . . the basic idea of the method we are trying to develop takes its stand on discovering what human authenticity is and showing how to appeal to it. It is not an infallible method, for men easily are unauthentic, but it is a powerful method, for man's deepest need and most prized achievement is authenticity. . . . the elimination of the unauthentic - is prepared by the functional specialty, . . . dialectic, and it is effected in the measure that theologians attain authenticity through religious, moral, and intellectual conversion. Nor may one expect the discovery of some "objective" criterion or test control. For that meaning of the "objective" is mere delusion. **Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.** To seek and employ some alternative prop or crutch invariably leads to some measure of reductionism . . . there are

no satisfactory methodological criteria that prescind from the criteria of truth. . . . It is a normativeness distinct from that attributed to the opinions of theologians because of their personal eminence or because of the high esteem in which they are held in the Church or among its officials. . . . a Christian theologian should be an authentic human being and an authentic Christian and so will be second to none in his acceptance of revelation, scripture, and his church doctrine. . . . each theologian will judge the authenticity of the authors of views, and he will do so by the touchstone of his own authenticity. This, of course, is far from a foolproof method. But it will tend to bring the authentic together; it will also tend to bring the inauthentic together and, indeed to heighten their inauthenticity. The contrast between the two will not be lost on men of good will. There is much to be gained by recognizing autonomy and pointing out that it implies responsibility. For responsibility leads to method, and method if effective makes police work superfluous. Church officials have the duty to protect the religion on which theologians reflect, but it is up to the theologians themselves to carry the burden of making theological doctrine as much a matter of consensus as any other longstanding academic discipline. Basically the issue is a transition from the abstract logic of classicism to the concreteness of method. On the former view what is basic is proof. On the latter view what is basic is conversion. Proof appeals to an abstraction named right reason. Conversion transforms the concrete individual to make him capable of grasping not merely conclusion but principles as well. Again, the issue is one's notion of objectivity. If one considers logical proof to be basic, one wants an objectivity that is independent of the concrete existing subject. But while objectivity reaches what is independent of the concrete existing subject, objectivity itself is not reached by what is independent of the concrete existing subject. On the contrary, objectivity is reached through the self-transcendence of the concrete existing subject, and the fundamental forms of self-transcendence are intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. To attempt to ensure objectivity apart from self-transcendence only generates illusions.<sup>29</sup>

Method cannot be thought of as a set of recipes that can be observed by a blockhead yet lead infallibly to outstanding discoveries. Such a notion of method I consider sheer illusion. . . . For the man that knows his logic and does not think of method, objectivity is apt to be conceived as the fruit of immediate experience, of self-evident and necessary truths, and of rigorous inferences. When method is added to the picture, one may succeed in discovering that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity, of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.<sup>30</sup>

---

29 Ibid., pp. 254, 292, 331-2, 338

30 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, pp. 48-9

The foundations of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion not only evaluate the past tradition, but are also the inspired, promoted, and authentic fruits of the tradition. This is the case insofar as what is truly authentic from the tradition has been assimilated and appropriated. There is, then, a certain reciprocal "going back and forth" and reinforcement between dialectics and foundations, i.e. between receiving from the tradition (by undergoing conversion in order to appropriate the horizons of the past) and evaluating it based upon the conversion it helped to engender. To evaluate one's tradition is to fulfill the tradition's call to self-transcendence and to take a stand vis-a-vis the tradition based not on what the tradition seems or appears to say or imply or has inauthentically been made out to be, but on what it actually is:

What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian is is another, and I am unaware of the difference. My unawareness is unexpressed, indeed, I have no language to express what I really am, so I use the language of the tradition I unauthentically appropriate, and thereby I devalue, distort, water down, corrupt that language. The problem is not tradition but inauthenticity in the formulation and transmission of tradition. The cure is not the undoing of tradition but the undoing of inauthenticity.<sup>31</sup>

That which is positional within the tradition, i.e. that which results from acceptance of the positions on knowledge, values, and religion, is to be accepted as authentic while that which is counterpositional is to be rejected as a decadent aberration that resulted from withdrawals from

---

31 Lonergan, Third Collection, pp. 121-2

authenticity and the acceptance of one or all of the counterpositions on knowledge, values, and religion.

The second phase of theology is referred to as the mediated phase. The fifth functional specialty, foundations, objectifies the stance one chooses to take and the accompanying horizon from which one will proceed to mediate the Christian religion to many and diverse, differentiated and undifferentiated cultures and peoples, i.e. to the "endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and tastes of mankind".<sup>32</sup> The foundation Lonergan has articulated that provides a critical methodological control for theology is referred to as a transcultural and a priori "upper blade" of operations. This upper blade is objectified and distinguished by 1) general theological categories, i.e. categories or sets of terms and relations which give expression to the natural, dynamic, transcending operations of the human subject (e.g. experiencing, understanding, judging, etc.) and 2) special theological categories, i.e. categories or sets of terms and relations which give expression to distinctly religious operations having to do with being in love with God in an unrestricted way (e.g. grace, faith, the supernatural, etc.).

Having a transcultural and transhistorical base or foundation is necessary for Christian theology insofar as it seeks to mediate Christianity to people of all times and places:

. . . a theology that is . . . to direct its efforts at universal communication must have a transcultural base. . . . God's gift of his

---

32 Lonergan, Method, p. 142

love (Romans 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 manifestation is transcultural. . . . It is not conditioned by human knowledge; rather it is the cause that leads man to seek knowledge of God. It is not restricted to any stage or section of human culture but rather is the principle that introduces a dimension of otherworldliness into any culture. . . . that reality is transcultural because it is not the product of any culture but rather the principle that begets and develops cultures that flourish, as it is also the principle that is violated when cultures crumble and decay. . . . theological categories will be transcultural only insofar as they refer to that inner core. In their actual formulation they will be historically conditioned and so subject to correction, modification, complementation . . . these . . . will be built up from basic terms and relations that refer to transcultural components in human living and operations and . . . at their roots possess quite exceptional validity.<sup>33</sup>

Along with the a priori upper blade of general and special theological categories, there is also the a posteriori "lower blade" that consists in the data that is peculiar and unique to Christianity. This lower blade, when conjoined with the upper blade, adds further specification and derivation to the general and specific theological categories (e.g. the Trinity, Christ, the Church, Scripture, Sacraments, etc.). These categories possess a universal significance (thus overcoming the "scandal of particularity") insofar as they are the outer word which reveal the transcultural component. Being joined to the upper blade allows theology to universalize and give clarity and precision to the terms specific to Christianity:

The derivation of the categories is a matter of the human and the Christian subject effecting self-appropriation and employing the heightened

---

33 Ibid., pp. 282-5



consciousness both as a basis for methodical control in doing theology and, as well, as an a priori whence he can understand other men, their social relations, their history, their religion, their rituals, their destiny.<sup>34</sup>

Theologian Karl Rahner, S.J., is in substantial agreement with Lonergan with respect to the matter of foundations. He defines foundational reality as the human subject experiencing divine mystery. Foundational theology seeks to objectify and interpret this experience through the available a posteriori categories of the particular religious tradition. The difference between Rahner and Lonergan is that Rahner does not formulate the general categories as does Lonergan but rather specifically religious and theological ones. Rahner's work has been more the work of a theologian concerned with deriving the categories relevant to a specifically Christian theology, while Lonergan's has been more the work of a methodologist concerned with indicating the source and the qualities of those categories:

Thus Lonergan has articulated a generalized empirical method applicable not only to theology but to a whole series of basic issues in the sciences and scholarly disciplines. Rahner's first level of reflection tends to concentrate upon formulating specifically Christian (and indeed, specifically Roman Catholic) theological categories. Thus many find his works more helpful in their own efforts to articulate the special foundational categories relevant to religious conversion and spirituality. Rahner is preeminently a mystagogic theologian. On the other hand, those interested in more general theological categories, i.e., categories operative not only in theologizing on the Christian mysteries but also operative in the sciences and other forms of noetic praxis, often find Lonergan's works more helpful. Lonergan is preeminently a methodological theologian. His life-long work has transformed method from its empiricist and idealist reification as sets of axioms,

---

34 Ibid., p. 292

principles, or systems into its concrete embodiments in the related and recurrent activities of ongoing communities of knowers and doers in history. Because of this, Lonergan cannot be accused of trying to immunize theology from critical human sciences and studies. Rahner leaves the intrinsic relationships between his first and second levels of reflection rather vague, to say the least. Lonergan has initiated a framework for a reflectively dialectical orthopraxis critically open to the ongoing procedures and results of empirical and dialectical human sciences and scholarly disciplines. The intrinsic relationships between religious conversion processes and intellectual conversion processes which he has articulated challenge us to work out the constitutive interchangeability and overlapping of praxis as practical reason yet to be realized in history and the transcendental imperatives of human questing and questioning for the divine.<sup>35</sup>

The transcendental notions are our capacity for seeking and, when found, for recognizing instances of the intelligible, the true, the real, the good. It follows that they are relevant to every object that we come to know by asking and answering questions. While the transcendental notions make questions and answers possible, categories make them determinate. Theological categories are either general or special. General categories regard objects that come within the purview of other disciplines as well as theology. Special categories regard the objects proper to theology. The task of working out general and special categories pertains, not to the methodologist, but to the theologian engaged in this functional specialty. The methodologist's task is the preliminary one of indicating what qualities are desirable in theological categories, what measure of validity is to be demanded of them, and how categories with the desired qualities and validity are to be obtained.<sup>36</sup>

## **6) Doctrines**

The sixth functional specialty, doctrines (dogmatic theology), is involved with determining and affirming - from the standpoint of the foundations set forth in the previous specialty - the true and authentic, as well as the false and inauthentic, judgements of facts, meanings, and

---

35 Lamb, Solidarity With Victims, p. 142

36 Lonergan, Method, p. 282

values (i.e. beliefs) which were set forth in dialectics (after they were initially set forth, interpreted, and historically contexted and verified in and from the Christian tradition in the first three specialties). Such judgements, beliefs, and doctrines are the "outer word" of the Christian religious tradition that have been affirmed as 1) authentically manifesting the inner word of the love and spirit of God and revealing its implications, consequences, and meaning to the personal and social living of Christians and 2) authentically explaining and defending the authenticity of the different outer words of the Church's witness with respect to the revelation of the inner word in The Word: Christ.

The outer word of doctrines include not only Church dogmas, i.e. doctrines that have been declared by the Church to be true and permanent, but also the "deeds and words"<sup>37</sup> of scripture, councils, theologians, religious communities, saints, liturgies, art, the people, etc. Doctrines have various functions. They seek to inspire, inform, clarify, constitute, communicate, prohibit, counsel, command, dissuade, persuade, etc. They are authoritative and normative insofar as they authentically articulate what it means to be an authentic, converted Christian in the world. Doctrines are thus meant to be the challenging and inviting expressions of the inner word of the spirit and love of God and the Christian response and reflection on that grace throughout history:

---

37 Cf. Vatican II, The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Renovation (Dei Verbum), I, 2

Accordingly, while the unconverted may have no real apprehension of what it is to be converted, at least they have in doctrines the evidence both that there is something lacking in themselves and that they need to pray for illumination and to seek instruction.<sup>38</sup>

The true meanings of doctrines can, of course, become obscured or watered down and lose their cutting edge in later generations. This makes the recovery of the message and meanings of doctrines an important task and responsibility of theologians in the Church.

All doctrines arose in history as particular judgements in response to particular questions. In fact, the more meaningful a doctrine, the more will it reveal its historical character:

Doctrines that really are assimilated bear the stamp of those that assimilate them, and the absence of such an imprint would point to a merely perfunctory assimilation.<sup>39</sup>

It follows from what has been stated that the meaning of any doctrine is relative to a particular context. This does not mean, however, that the meanings and values of doctrines are not permanent or relevant outside of a particular time and place. On the contrary, it only means that in order to know the actual permanent meaning of any doctrine or dogma one must know the context and the question(s) it sought to address. Otherwise without this knowledge one is susceptible of imposing upon or reinterpreting the meaning of a doctrine by relating it not to the questions it addressed, but to oneself and one's own questions. Doing

---

38 Lonergan, Method, p. 299

39 Ibid., pp. 300-1

this, of course, is no easy task. It requires a differentiation of consciousness not only into the realm of theory but into the realm of interiority. Only when one is fully mindful of one's own processes of thought will one be in possession of the basis from which one can identify and comprehend all the differentiations of consciousness in history and the meanings attendant upon and within each one. Lonergan is thus in agreement with Vatican I's Dei Filius (DS 3020, 3043) in maintaining that:

. . . what permanently is true is the meaning of the dogma in the context in which it was defined. . . . The meaning of such a declaration lies beyond the vicissitudes of human historical process. But the contexts within which such meaning is grasped, and so the manner in which such meaning is expressed, vary both with cultural differences and with the measure in which human consciousness is differentiated.<sup>40</sup>

This need to understand the literary conventions, artistic expressions, and cultural conditions of a time and place in order to determine the meaning intended by a biblical writer was also affirmed at Vatican II.<sup>41</sup>

While the meanings of doctrines are permanent, this does not mean that they are necessarily immediately relevant to later questions, issues, or situations. They function, rather, like classical laws do in science, i.e. as possibly relevant abstracted intelligibilities expressive of a functional relationship which may be applicable given certain conditions and questions:

What human intelligence grasps in data and expresses in concepts is, not a necessarily relevant intelligibility, but only a possibly relevant

---

40 Ibid., pp. 325, 327

41 Cf. Vatican II, Dei Verbum, III, 12

intelligibility. Such intelligibility is intrinsically hypothetical and so always in need of a further process of checking and verifying before it can be asserted to as de facto relevant to the data in hand.<sup>42</sup>

Not only knowledge of doctrines, therefore, but knowledge of contemporary questions, issues, and situations is required if one is to apply the values and meanings expressed in doctrines. One may thus be impeccably orthodox in one's repeating doctrines or scripture passages to the problems and questions of a given age without thereby communicating the Christian message. This, of course, runs counter to the classicist assumptions of previous dogmatic theology which assumed that "on each issue there is one and only one true proposition".<sup>43</sup> As Lonergan, however, states it:

. . . our conclusions will not rest on classicist assumptions . . . 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. . . . For human concepts and human courses of action are products and expressions of acts of understanding, human understanding develops over time, such development is cumulative, and each cumulative development responds to the human and environmental conditions of its place and time.<sup>44</sup>

Concepts, actions, and symbols, then, are expressions of acts of understanding. As understanding develops, so too do the concepts, actions, and symbols which give it expression. In the case of dogmas,

---

42 Lonergan, Method, p. 317

43 Ibid., p. 333

44 Ibid., p. 302

the concept is a formulation of a particular judgement on the understanding of a particular relationship, the fuller understanding of which does not change that concept as it was defined and declared. Hence, while there has been greater understandings had of the dogmas of Nicea, for example, the truth defined then and there still possesses the same meaning:

(The historicity of dogmas) results from the fact that 1) statements have meanings only in their contexts and 2) contexts are ongoing and ongoing contexts are multiple. What is opposed to the historicity of the dogmas is, not their permanence, but classicist assumptions and achievements. Classicism assumed that culture was to be conceived not empirically but normatively, and it did all it could to bring about one, universal, permanent culture. What ended classicist assumptions was critical history. What builds the bridges between the many expression of the faith is a methodical theology. . . . There are two ways in which the unity of faith may be conceived. On classicist assumptions there is just one culture. . . . Within this set-up the unity of faith is a matter of everyone subscribing to the correct formulae. Such classicism, however, was never more than the shabby shell of Catholicism. The real root and ground of unity is being in love with God - the fact that God has flooded our inmost hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Romans 5:5). The acceptance of this gift both constitutes religious conversion and leads to moral and even intellectual conversion. . . . the function of church doctrines lies within the function of Christian witness. For the witness is to the mysteries revealed by God and, for Catholics, infallibly declared by the church. The meaning of such declaration lies beyond the vicissitudes of human historical process. But the contexts, within which such meaning is grasped, and so the manner, in which such meaning is expressed, vary both with cultural differences and with the measure in which human consciousness is differentiated. . . . Currently in the church there is quietly disappearing the old classicist insistence on worldwide uniformity, and there is emerging a pluralism of manners in which Christian meaning and Christian values are communicated. . . . the real menace to unity of faith does not lie either in the many brands of common sense or the many differentiations of human consciousness. It lies in the absence of intellectual or moral or religious conversion.<sup>45</sup>

---

45 Ibid., pp. 326-8, 330

The "development of doctrine", then, refers to the history of a doctrine insofar as at different periods and different places different questions were asked and answers given with respect to understanding either a common set of data or an already accepted truth:

The possibility of a development in doctrine arises whenever there occurs a new differentiation of consciousness, for with every differentiation of consciousness the same object becomes apprehended in a different and more adequate fashion.<sup>46</sup>

By tracing the history of this reflection - of questions asked and answers given - one is able to understand the development of the meaning of a doctrine:

. . . there is not some one manner or even some limited set of manners in which doctrines develop. In other words the intelligibility proper to developing doctrines is the intelligibility immanent in historical process. One knows it, not by a priori theorizing, but by a posteriori research, interpretation, history, dialectics, and the decision of foundations.<sup>47</sup>

Not only the past but also the present and the future pose questions to the data and to the meanings and values of the Christian tradition. There are many and various brands of common sense, differentiated and undifferentiated consciousness, converted and unconverted people, specialized and systematic sciences, etc., which the Christian religion will continue to seek to address, be made comprehensible and meaningful for, and challenge. New questions and new understandings will not do

---

46 Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, pp. 57-8

47 Lonergan, Method, p. 319



away with the meanings of the past but rather will allow them to truly become integral and relevant parts of a larger whole -similar to the way in which all the questions answered by Newtonian science were retained yet contained within the broader context of new questions answered by Einsteinian science:

. . . doctrines have meanings within contexts, the ongoing discovery of mind (the ongoing differentiation of consciousness) changes the contexts, and so, if the doctrines are to retain their meaning within the new contexts, they have to be recast.<sup>48</sup>

How to effectively recast past doctrinal meanings and values to present and future times and places is thus a further question that needs to be addressed after one has recaptured the past.

## **7) Systematics**

The seventh functional specialty, systematics (speculative theology), is that discipline that seeks a coherent understanding of the facts and values which have been affirmed as doctrines in the previous specialty. The task may be summed up by the phrase "crede ut intelligas - believe that you may understand". This specialty does not seek to prove doctrines established in faith, but seeks, as Vatican I declared (**DS** 3016), an ever greater understanding of the mysteries:

. . . the first Vatican council retrieved the notion of understanding. It taught that reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, piously, soberly, can with God's help attain a highly fruitful

---

48 Ibid., p. 305

understanding of the mysteries of faith both from the analogy of what it naturally knows and from the interconnections of the mysteries with one another and with man's last end . . . The aim of systematics is not to increase certitude but to promote understanding. It does not seek to establish the facts. It strives for some inkling of how it could possibly be that the facts are what they are. Its task is to take over the facts, established in doctrines, and to attempt to work them into an assimilable whole.<sup>49</sup>

Much of what this understanding entails has already been included in the last section on doctrines. This was done not because it belongs to that specialty, but only to clarify what was meant by doctrinal development. Systematics, while not separated from doctrines, is nevertheless distinct from it. The understanding that is sought for by systematics is much broader than the more catechetical-historical understanding that is sought by the previous specialty.

The understanding that is sought for by systematics is sought for by the four operations of consciousness - which includes affirmation. In other words, the understanding that is sought for is not merely some convenient way of organizing doctrines, but an understanding or system that truly integrates them. There can be true and false systems. The true understanding that is sought for is of two kinds. First there is the understanding that unifies and integrates all the doctrines as well as explains why and how they are or can be as they are. This is usually accomplished by relating them all to their common source in faith or religious love of which they are all meant to be expressions. By relating

---

49 Ibid., p. 336

them all to faith, and by relating other similarities, one helps to integrate the doctrines with the general and special theological categories of foundations. Hence so called "natural" philosophy and "natural" theology are employed by systematics as that which can systematize, relate, and offer some comprehension, however imperfect, probable, and analogical it may be. An example of this may be given by the theological understanding of the Trinity. Lonergan holds that natural philosophy and natural theology (which includes the philosophy of God) should be included as part of the specialty systematics.<sup>50</sup>

While systematics seeks a coherent and cohesive understanding of doctrines, this is done not as an end in itself, but in order to impact and effect one's culture. Hence, systematics also seeks to make intelligible and intelligibly relate Christian judgements of fact and value to the various brands of common sense, specialized and differentiated consciousness, and people in various stages of religious conversion. In order to effectively accomplish this task of demonstrating how doctrines can contribute meaningfully to life in a particular cultural context, systematics must show forth the relationship of religious faith and Christianity with the natural sciences and the human sciences, not to mention the more specific and concrete areas, issues, and problems of the day. This task, of course, parallels the kind of integration which Aquinas worked out between Christian meanings

---

50 Cf. Lonergan, Philosophy of God and Theology, p. 50

and values and Aristotelian science. Of course it is only one who thoroughly understands these various fields who can effectively accomplish this theological mediation:

. . . the functional specialty, systematics, is concerned not only with the strictly supernatural but also with the effect of God's gift of his love on man's life and history in this world; hence the functional specialty not only has its own special and strictly religious categories but also the categories it shares with other fields and notably the ones it shares with philosophy. I have pointed out the havoc wrought on people's faith when their philosophy is jettisoned without being replaced.<sup>51</sup>

. . . theology is not the full science of man . . . theology illuminates only certain aspects of human reality. . . . the church can become a fully conscious process of self-constitution only when theology unites itself with all other relevant branches of human studies.<sup>52</sup>

## **8) Communications**

The eighth functional specialty, communications (pastoral theology, practical theology, political theology, orthopraxis, catechetics, homiletics), is the specialty towards which the whole theological task is directed and within which it bears fruit. This last stage is not one that can be fruitfully entered into without the reflection of the previous seven. Without them there would not be anything to communicate:

Without the first seven stages, of course there is no fruit to be borne. But without the last the first seven are in vain, for they fail to mature.<sup>53</sup>

---

51 Ibid., p. 58

52 Lonergan, Method, p. 364

53 Ibid., p. 355

Too often theologians attempt to make the jump from one stage to this last stage. The result is usually one of incomprehension, misunderstanding, and confusion, e.g. biblical interpreters who preach about what was meant in a passage (stage two) without making the necessary transpositions which the intermediate stages provide.

It is this last phase of theology where it may be said that the wheels of the theological enterprise "hit the road". This is where the cutting edge of religion is reflectively brought to bear on concrete human lives and human affairs. This eighth specialty tends to be the most massive in terms of the various amounts of transpositions that are needed to be made in order for theology to allow religion to become effective in human life. It is in this last stage that God enters the world mediated by meaning in all its diversity.

The Christian meanings and values that are affirmed in doctrines and understood in systematics are not merely repeated in this stage of theology but are transposed into the many, diverse, and particular personal, social, and cultural contexts and situations of human life. The four conscious operations engaged in this specialty are oriented to the task of being attentive to the signs of the times as well as to imaginative and creative ways that conversion can be promoted and religious meanings and values instilled through available resources and methods.

The whole second mediated phase of theology may be referred to as oriented to practice (praxis). This is insofar as the decisions made in

foundations lead one to accept judgements of value which prompt understandings about how to transform the data of sense (the world) and the data of consciousness (oneself and others). It is in communications, then, that orthodoxy becomes orthopraxis: "Orthodoxy as 'speaking the truth' is grounded in, and oriented toward, orthopraxis as 'doing the truth'".<sup>54</sup> By orthodoxy, of course, is meant the assent in faith to sets of meanings and values which inform and constitute, or at least are meant to inform and constitute, human living. Orthopraxis, or praxis for short, is therefore not an imposition of or a deduction from doctrinal concepts upon contingent persons, circumstances, and situations. It is instead the concrete application and living out of these meanings and values in the various situations and circumstances of personal and communal living:

Dogmas are expressions of a knowledge born of transformative religious love - a "love that is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active", a love "only by which we can be certain that we belong to the realm of the truth"(1 John 3:18f.). Insofar as dogmas are such a knowledge and we fail to live by them, our experience will be anathema. . . . orthodoxies can be expressions of the orthopraxis of religious communities at particular times and places. This is the concrete realization in history of religious conversion as an ongoing withdrawal from sinful hate and indifference. As genuine . . . it can never be simply taken for granted or automatically guaranteed in any religious tradition. It is the fruit of God's grace and free, human, communal response. Such orthopraxis is foundational to the ongoing religious traditions in history. . . . The contributions of Lonergan to orthopraxis and theological methods . . . indicate the importance of complementing and correcting the historical-critical methods by engaging in the development of dialectical, foundational, and critically practical methods attuned to the transformation of values revealed in biblical narratives and the praxis of religious conversion. To the degree that the scriptures and church doctrines expressed genuine (ortho-) religious praxis of communities in the process of conversion or metanoia as an

---

<sup>54</sup> Lamb, Solidarity With Victims, p. 111

ongoing withdrawal from dehumanizing and depersonalizing sin, to that degree we need today a reflectively dialectical orthopraxis methodologically capable of articulating the dialectic of values and disvalues unknown but consciously operative in scriptural and doctrinal orthodoxies.<sup>55</sup>

This stage of the theological enterprise may be referred to as the one where theology "reenters the cave" in order to lead others to the same conversion and to promote the meanings and values which the renewed horizon leads one to acknowledge and accept. At this point we are reminded about that which the reflections of this thesis began, namely how and from what basis are the meanings and values of a culture which inform and constitute a way of living to be evaluated and normed. Just as the Greek discovery of the theoretic differentiation of consciousness provided classical culture with its normative foundation, so also does the Christian religious differentiation of consciousness seek to provide and promote the foundations of religious conversion that can purify and transform the horizons, meanings, and values of personal, social, and cultural living throughout history.

Lonergan's concern with cognitional and volitional operations is by no means meant to be left outside the cave as an end in itself without relevance to human life. It is done, rather, precisely for the sake of enabling cognitional and volitional performance to be constituted according to the immanent norms of the transcendental precepts. When one's conscious living is liberated and redeemed from irrationality, moral

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 112, 134, 139-40

impotence, alienation, and sin through religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, the normative horizon of conscious intentionality will enshrine meanings and values consistent with such living. One is then able to join with others to work on constituting the ongoing operations of their shared communal and social living. This "praxis" is understood by Lonergan as:

. . . conscious human conduct or performance constituted by imperative orientations to truth and freedom. Such an understanding of praxis, if realized individually and communally, provides religious and intellectual foundations for an understanding of church doctrines as sets of meanings and values which should inform Christian living and heal the biases distorting history and society.<sup>56</sup>

As Lamb articulates it:

Lonergan . . . outlines a methodological control of meaning and value in terms of the critical experiment of self-appropriation, which verifies the related and recurrent operations of conscious intentionality (and) . . . he has initiated a series of further determinations which relate those self-transformative and self disclosive structures of freedom to the noetic praxis of the natural and human sciences, hermeneutical and historical scholarship, and a generalized method for doing theology. Since authentic praxis can never be solved by theories qua theories, Lonergan has articulated a radical cognitive therapy aimed at a basic liberation of human subjects through a heightening of their awareness whereby they appropriate the imperatives of human freedom as dynamic orientation to be attentive, to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible, and to be loving.<sup>57</sup>

For Lonergan, faith and reason are very much integrated. This is insofar as knowing is an act of self-transcendence whereby the person says yes to the orientation to mystery. That saying of yes is an act of faith and hope, i.e. an affirmation of the value of such a pursuit born

---

<sup>56</sup> Lonergan, on the back cover of Solidarity With Victims by Lamb

<sup>57</sup> Lamb, Solidarity With Victims, p. 85



of self-transcendent love:

Lonergan once remarked that faith is indeed a leap, but not a leap into irrationality; faith is a leap into reason away from the biased irrationalities of dehumanizing and depersonalizing social and historical bias. The emergence of practical reason as reason yet to be realized in history . . . should be retrieved theologically by showing how religious faith, hope, and love are constitutive elements of this reason not yet realized in human social living.<sup>58</sup>

In drawing out the implications of the foundations discovered by Lonergan for human living, Lamb further states:

(Lonergan's) attunement to the related and recurrent operations of conscious intentionality . . . shifts attention from logic to method and acknowledges the coherent but radically incomplete (and so ongoing) character of the human spirit's (Geist) quest for meaning and value. . . . the operations of conscious intentionality are indeed factual ("is") and normative ("ought"). Yet this fusion of the factual and the normative is not the indicative ("always already") possession of Geist within the world of theory but is the imperative ("not yet") beckoning of concrete human striving toward attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsible love. The fusion is a project not a possession. The foundations of praxis in transcendental method are not some set of theories, however brilliant, but questioning human beings living within the multiple and changing patterns of natural historical processes.<sup>59</sup>

The Church is understood by Lonergan to be that community of people living in the world who seek conversion for themselves, their Church, and their world:

There are needed, then, individuals and groups and, in the modern world, organizations that labor to persuade people to intellectual, moral, and religious conversion and that work systematically to undo the mischief brought about by alienation and ideology. Among such bodies should be

---

58 Ibid., pp. 85, 140

59 Ibid., pp. 127-8

the Christian church.<sup>60</sup>

Redemptive praxis (or agapic praxis) is the mission and task of the Church, understood as aspiring to become a creatively transformative and healing presence down the centuries of history. . . . redemptive praxis informed by faith, hope, and love is required since the absolutely supernatural solution to it is primarily a solution to be practiced and lived and only through that living begin to understand.<sup>61</sup>

The constitution of the Church is something which takes place along with the constitution of the society and culture, for constitutive of the Church are the social and cultural orders it is embedded in. The Church is:

. . . an ongoing process of self realization, as ongoing process in which the constitutive, the effective, and the cognitive meaning of Christianity is continuously realized in ever changing situations.<sup>62</sup>

The Church . . . exists not just for itself but for mankind. Its aim is the realization of the kingdom of God not only within its own organization but in the whole of human society and not only in the afterlife but also in this life. . . . The aim of integration is to generate well informed and continuously revised policies and plans for promoting good and undoing evil both in the Church and in human society generally. . . . But to meet this contemporary exigence will also set the church on a course of continual renewal. It will remove from its action the widespread impression of complacent irrelevance and futility. It will bring theologians into close contact with experts in very many different fields. It will bring scientists and scholars into close contact with policy makers and planners and, through them, with clerical and lay workers engaged in applying solutions to the problems and finding ways to meet the needs both of Christians and of all mankind.<sup>63</sup>

The Church institutionalizes God's gift of love and the human

---

60 Lonergan, Method, p. 361

61 Lamb, Solidarity With Victims

62 Lonergan, Second Collection, p. 234

63 Lonergan, Method, pp. 363-4, 366-7

acceptance of it as it was offered, accepted, and lived in Christ in and through its ordered communal life. The love is a transcendent love, a love that is self-transcending and thus self-sacrificing. But it is only in and through such complete self-transcendence and death to the transcended self that one finds the eternal divine life that transcends time and space and which one is called upon to live in order to become who one most authentically is as a child of God (cf. John 12:24-5):

. . . the dialectical tensions are transcended as one moves into the integrating horizon of other worldly love. . . . we can discern in Jesus Christ an acceptance of the sins and evils of the world in order to transcend them and transform them in a loving openness and obedience to transcendent Mystery. . . . Lonergan locates . . . the synthetic principle which integrates and unifies theological operations in the paschal mystery immanent in the minds, souls, and the hearts of theologians.<sup>64</sup>

Evil is not the world order that allows for blind alleys, slow development, mistaken judgements, and so on . . . world order is intelligible and good, albeit painful and demanding. . . . Fundamentally, human evil is disobedience of the transcendental precepts, just as the fundamental moral action is to obey them. Redemption, therefore, will not be a release from a world in which we must learn through our mistakes and suffer pulls and counterpulls in consciousness. Nor will redemption be primarily an end to behavior we deem immoral. Primarily, redemption will be a liberation within consciousness which, far from taking its stand on prohibitions, will take its stand on continual creativity. It will be eager to attend to what is going on, to ask why and how, to test ideas and proposals against reality, to invent ways to enlarge the common good, and to love and worship divine Mystery. Once we let divine Mystery into the picture we see that disobedience within is the same thing as hatred for God. There is no getting around it. If God comes to us through the gift of transcendent love, and if that love operates through the transcendental precepts, then to suppress them is to reject God's gift of the divine self. It is a double rejection, as we might expect, since to reject the movements of the soul within us will mean that we will also fail to realize the potentialities, intelligibilities, realities, and values available from without. Fenced around as we are by divine love,

---

64 Rende, The Development of Fr. Bernard Lonergan's Thought on the Notion of Conversion, pp. 319-20

we realize that the smallest inner disobedience is also an interpersonal rejection of God - something all the great mystics have come to know. Is it outrageous to suggest that when we resist the movements of self-transcendence in the soul we thereby hate God? If God were nothing but some almighty and invisible friend in the sky, yes, it would be outrageous. God's reaction to our inner disobedience could be at most some kind of pity as that divine onlooker watched us destroy ourselves. But God is the love that moves every man, woman, and child within consciousness. So it is not outrageous to call inner disobedience hatred of God. It is a rejection of the divine One for whom everything in us longs. Fundamentally, therefore, the essence of human evil is simultaneously the disobedience of the transcendental precepts and a rejection of the divine Mystery being offered as an interpersonal gift. We have hinted that redemption of this evil will consist in obedience to the transcendental precept, Be in love, and an acceptance of the redeeming movements of faith, charity, and hope which follow.<sup>65</sup>

#### **D. Conclusion**

By this time it should be obvious that theology is not and never will be a complete or closed system. The work of theologians is therefore not one of safeguarding and keeping under lock and key some readymade and perennial system that can spew forth for all time pure eternally valid propositions. Theology, rather, like other sciences, must be ongoing, collaborative, and in a continuous process of achievement throughout history. That which is semper idem are the related and recurrent operations of the self-transcendent human subject which define, unify, and integrate theology with all other methods and branches of knowledge.

Lonergan has not set forth some magnificent theory, creation, invention, or convention of his own but has helped to uncover something which is already present and at work - although unnoticed and implicit - in

---

65 Dunne, Lonergan and Spirituality, pp. 135-6

the human subject. Through this project Lonergan has enabled and challenged us to identify, take hold of, and appropriate in order to more effectively utilize the cognitional and volitional operations of the self-transcendent human subject. This is in order to more successfully accomplish the aims and mission of human life. While we can and should be grateful for the achievement of Lonergan, we must be mindful that it is not an end but rather only the threshold and beginning of something greater. It is something neither more nor less than the foundation from which and upon which the Kingdom of God in human life, human history, and the world is built.

Lonergan's task has not been that of a theologian but rather the prior task of a methodologist reflecting on what it is that theologians do. What he has discovered is that it is the same human person who reflects on the significance and meaning of religion in one's life and world who is also attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, loving, practical, theoretical, scientific, artistic, philosophical, and religious. Without a methodological foundation theology would become the slave rather than the servant of a culture - a servant that seeks to transform all things through the transcultural, transhistorical, and transcendent gift of God's love:

. . . being in Christ Jesus may be the being of substance or of subject. Inasmuch as it is just the being of substance, it is known only through faith, through affirming true propositions, meditating upon them, concluding from them, making resolutions on the basis of them, winning over our psyches, our sensitive souls, to carrying out the resolutions through the cultivation of pious imagination and pious affects, and multiplying individual effort and strength through liturgical union.

Inasmuch as it is just the being of substance, it is being in love with God without awareness of being in love. Without any experience of just how and why, one is in the state of grace or one recovers it, one leaves all things to follow Christ, one binds oneself by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, one gets through one's daily heavy dose of prayer, one longs for the priesthood and later lives by it. Quietly, imperceptibly there goes forward the transformation operated by the Kurios, but the delicacy, the gentleness, the deftness of his continual operation in us hides the operation from us. But inasmuch as being in Christ Jesus is the being of subject, the hand of the Lord ceases to be hidden. In ways you all have experienced, in ways some have experienced more frequently or more intensely than others, in ways you still have to experience, and in ways none of us in this life will ever experience, the substance in Christ Jesus becomes the subject in Christ Jesus. For the love of God, being in love with God, can be as full and as dominant, as overwhelming and as lasting, an experience as human love. Being in Christ Jesus is not tied down to place or time, culture or epoch. It is catholic with the catholicity of the Spirit of the Lord. Neither is it an abstraction that dwells apart from every place and time, every culture and epoch. It is identical with personal living, and personal living is always here and now, in a contemporary world of immediacy, a contemporary world mediated by meaning, a contemporary world not only mediated but also constituted by meaning. In personal living the questions abstractly asked about the relations between nature and grace emerge concretely in one's concern, one's interests, one's hopes, one's plans, one's daring and timidity, one's taking risks and playing safe. And as they emerge concretely, so too they are solved concretely. Such concrete solutions, whether doing a job or exercising a personal role, divided from the viewpoint of the challenge to which Pope John XXIII initiated a response, may be solutions thought out in Christ Jesus for an archaic world that no longer exists or for a futurist world that never will exist; that may be thought out for the world that is now but only at the price of not being thought out in Christ Jesus; that may be for the world that is now and thought out in Christ Jesus. Our time is a time for profound and far-reaching creativity. The Lord be with us all - ad maiorem Dei gloriam - and, as I have said, God's own glory, in part, is you.<sup>66</sup>

#### THE BEGINNING

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. **Aquinas, St. Thomas.** Basic Writing of St. Thomas Aquinas, vols. 1 and 2, Anton C. Pegis (ed.) New York: Random House, 1945
2. **Aristotle.** The Basic Works of Aristotle, Richard McKeon (ed.), New York: Random House, 1941
3. **Augros, Robert and Stanciu, George.** The New Story of Science, Lake Bluff IL: Rignery Gateway Inc., 1984
4. **Barden, Garrett and McShane, Philip.** Towards Self-Meaning, New York: Herder, 1969
5. **Bouyer, Louis.** The Decomposition of Catholicism, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969
6. **Butterfield, Herbert.** The Origins of Modern Science, New York: Macmillan, 1966
7. **Byrne, Patrick H.** "The Fabric of Lonergan's Thought", Lonergan Workshop, vol. 6, Fred Lawrence (ed.), Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1986 pp. 1-84
8. **Congar, Fr. Yves OP,** "Theologie", Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, 1950
9. **Crowe, Fr. Frederick, SJ.** "Creativity and Method: Index to a Movement - A Review Article", Science et Esprit, XXXIV, 1, (1982), p.112
10. \_\_\_\_\_, The Lonergan Enterprise, Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1980
11. **Dunne, Fr. Tad, SJ.** Lonergan and Spirituality, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985
12. **Egan, Fr. Harvey, SJ.** Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition, New York: Pueblo, CO, 1984
13. **Flanagan, Fr. Joseph F., SJ.** "Body to Thing", Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, SJ, Fr. Matthew L. Lamb (ed.), Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981
14. **Flannery, Austin OP (ed.).** Vatican II Documents, 1974
15. **Gilson, Etienne.** Realisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, Paris: J. Vrin, 1939
16. **Grisez, Germaine G.** The Thomist, vol. 21, Oct. 1958
17. **John Paul II, Pope.** Acta Apostolica Sedis, 73, 1981, pp. 56-7, 103-4
18. **Komonchak, Fr. Joseph A.** "The Ecclesial and Cultural Roles of Theology: Essays in Grateful Memory of Bernard Lonergan", Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings, vol. 40, 1985
19. **Kuhn, Thomas S.** The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962
20. **Lamb, Fr. Matthew L.** "The Social and Political Dimensions of Bernard Lonergan's Theology", The Desires of the Human Heart, Vernon Gregson (ed.), New York: Paulist Press, 1987

21. \_\_\_\_\_. Solidarity With Victims, New York: Crossroads, 1982
22. \_\_\_\_\_. "Cities Within the Theory and Praxis of Self Knowledge in History", (unpublished class handout), Oct. 27, 1986
23. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Dialectic of Theory and Praxis Within Paradigm Analysis", Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, c. 1980
24. \_\_\_\_\_. "Lonergan's Method and Postmodernity", (an unpublished class handout), Nov. 5, 1985
25. \_\_\_\_\_. "Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology", 1978
26. **Lawrence, Frederick G.** (ed.). Lonergan Workshop, vols. 1-6, Scholars Press, 1981-6
27. **Lonergan, Fr. Bernard, SJ.** A Second Collection, William F. J. Ryan, SJ. And Bernard Tyrell (eds.), Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974
28. \_\_\_\_\_. A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, SJ. Frederick Crowe (ed.), New York: Herder and Herder, 1967
29. \_\_\_\_\_. "Bernard Lonergan Responds", Language, Truth, and Meaning: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress, 1970, vol.2, Philip McShane, SJ, (ed.) Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972
30. \_\_\_\_\_. Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, SJ. Frederick Crowe (ed.), New York: Herder and Herder, 1967
31. \_\_\_\_\_. De Notione Structurae, (unpublished), Latin lecture delivered at the Aloisianum in Gallarte, Italy; Jan. 28, 1964, p. 8
32. \_\_\_\_\_. Doctrinal Pluralism, Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1971
33. \_\_\_\_\_. Grace and Freedom, J. Patout Burns (ed.), New York: Herder and Herder, 1971
34. \_\_\_\_\_. Insight: A Study of Human Understanding, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957
35. \_\_\_\_\_. "Insight Seminar Lecture", (unpublished), Lecture 8 Side 1, Disussion, St. Mary's, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1958
36. \_\_\_\_\_. "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation", The Journal of Religion, 55, 1975, pp. 165-80
37. \_\_\_\_\_. Method in Theology, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972
38. \_\_\_\_\_. Philosophy of God and Theology, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973
39. \_\_\_\_\_. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods", Studies in Religion, 6, 1976-7, pp. 341-9, 351
40. \_\_\_\_\_. "Religious Experience", Trinification of the World, Tad Dunne and J.-M. Laporte (eds.), Toronto: Regis College Press, 1978
41. \_\_\_\_\_. "Religious Knowledge", Lonergan Workshop, vol. 1, Missoula MT: Scholar's Press, 1978
42. \_\_\_\_\_. Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, David B. Burrell, CSC, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967



43. \_\_\_\_\_. The Way to Nicea, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976
44. \_\_\_\_\_. "Lectures on the Philosophy of Education", (unpublished), given at Xavier College, Cincinnati, 1959
45. **McShane, Fr. Philip, SJ** (ed.). Foundations of Theology: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, vol. 1, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971
46. \_\_\_\_\_. Language, Truth, and Meaning: Papers: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970, Vol. 2, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972
47. **McCool, Fr. Gerald A., SJ**. Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method, New York: Seabury Press, 1977
48. **Meynell, Hugo A.** An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan, London: MacMillan, 1976
49. \_\_\_\_\_. The Theology of Bernard Lonergan, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986
50. **O'Callaghan, Michael C.** Unity in Theology, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1980
51. **Pieper, Josef.** Leisure the Basis of Culture, New York: Pantheon Books, 1952
52. **Popper, Karl**, The Logic of Scientific Discovery, New York: Basic Books, 1959
53. **Rende, Michael L.** The Development of Fr. Bernard Lonergan's Thought on the Notion of Conversion, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms Inc., 1983
54. **Sala, Fr. Giovanni B., SJ.** "The A priori in Human Knowledge: Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Lonergan's Insight", The Thomist, vol. 40, April 2, 1976, pp. 179-221
55. **Sokolowski, Fr. Robert.** The God of Faith and Reason, Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1981
56. **Tracy, Fr. David.** The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan, New York: Herder and Herder, 1970
57. **Tyrrell, Fr. Bernard, SJ.** Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy of God, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974
58. **Von Uexkull, Jacob**, Der Unsterbliche Geist in der Natur, 1938
59. \_\_\_\_\_. Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen, 1934