

PERSONAL APPROPRIATION OF THE DESIRE

TO KNOW AND LOVE GOD:

**A Study of Natural and Religious Interiority
in the Writings of Bernard Lonergan S.J.**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how we might better recognize, understand, affirm and appropriate the God-given desire to know and love God operative within all human consciousness. Not a simple task, as this desire is often experienced only as an undertow, a hidden vector in human consciousness. Only by exploring both natural and religious interiority is it possible to make a distinction between the desires we have and the desire we are.

There is a direction in human life. It can be identified firstly by our insistent questioning as an insatiable desire to know, to know everything about everything, up to and including our mysterious origin and destiny; and secondly by our need to give and receive love, as a yearning for goodness beyond measure. Both the desire to know and the desire to love can be observed and understood, affirmed for what they really are and then gradually appropriated, making possible a fuller human development and life more abundant in community. Transitory longings can be contextualized by the study of religious experience, the surfacing into conscious awareness of the love of God poured out in human hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This discovery, of spirit as inquiry and of love actualizing potentiality, was made progressively by Bernard Lonergan S.J. in his life and work as a philosopher and methodological theologian. It is possible to trace this moving viewpoint in his writings, from *Verbum: Word and idea in Aquinas* (1946-49) through to the post-*Method* articles up to the late 1970s. He thematizes self-appropriation and presents it pedagogically in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. Self-appropriation is heightened to reach the existential level by *Method in Theology*, where Lonergan makes religious conversion, complete being-in-love with God as a gift of grace, foundational for the theological enterprise. The securer openness to truth and goodness which comes with this redemptive gift enlarges human horizons and heals faltering achievement so that we can more consistently live out of the desire we are. Consideration is given on the one hand to obstacles to development, and on the other to ways of becoming more at home with our own desire and of cooperating freely with the action of grace. This study demonstrates the relevance of appropriating the *eros* of the human spirit to both the work of theologians and the faith journey of Christian believers.

Statement of Originality

I, Elizabeth J Snedden, hereby certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirm that to the best of my knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

3rd September, 2012.

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And there is still more to learn! Praise God.

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes human attraction to the divine presents a very unattractive face. We shrink from doctrinaire fanaticism, fear our own fascination with the spooky numinous, and can be buffeted by the enthusiasm of those who claim to know exactly what we need in matters religious. Investigation of the God-thing can intensify feelings of inadequacy, yet it keeps drawing us. Are we seekers or are we the sought? And how can the Wholly Other take any cognizance of us? Is our preoccupation with another dimension of reality altogether healthy? Does it in fact dehumanize us, to the extent that atheistic humanists who ridicule ‘God-botherers’ are actually on to something? Does organized religion exploit this preoccupation with an afterlife to reinforce infantile dependency and self-abasement in the interests of control?

On the other hand, some churchly voices down through the years have assured us that our desires are suspect, unruly at best, disordered and diabolic at their root; resulting from original sin, the flesh and the devil and clear signs of their ongoing influence in human lives. Desire is better called concupiscence, they say, and our safest course will be to repress desires in general and endeavor to fix our yearning on to a strictly next life well-being, with fear of failure and preemptive self-condemnation as protective allies in this one. Is this God’s plan for godly living here on earth?

These seemingly bleak questions would appear to presage little hope of a positive response. Still we might begin to address them in the context of a reflection on the classic festival film *Babette’s Feast*¹. It introduces us to a barren, wind-swept coastal community in Jutland in which religion plays a dominant role in the social order. An inspiring preacher, now dead, has founded a strict sect which is no longer attracting new adherents. A small group of aging disciples attempt to follow his teachings, in the afterglow of his memory, but without too much warmth reaching their hearts. The

¹ The Danish film *Babettes gæstebud*, was made in 1987 by Gabriel Axel on the basis of a story by Isak Dinesen, also writing as Karen Blixen. It won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in that year. The Norwegian village of Berlevaag where Dinesen set his story turned out to be too picture-book pretty for the film-maker who moved it to a Danish setting.

preacher's daughters, also aging, live together in a celibacy imposed on them earlier by their father's rather selfish estimate of their indispensable role in his life's work, and continue to provide his little flock with a regular gathering place and kindnesses in the form of simple food and good counsel. The essence of his message, as they recollect it, is that self-denial and ascetic living in this world are necessary to prepare them for a joyful afterlife in the longed-for New Jerusalem. This seems to make sense of their drab and frugal existence, dependent as it is on naturally freeze-dried cod prepared with coarse bread and beer in certain unappetizing combinations. They sing of their hopes for eternity, but they also bicker and suspect each other and hold long rancorous grudges over past wrongs. Only the two sisters, Martine and Philippa, are consistently gentle and forbearing.

They have each glimpsed something of human love. In their youth their widower father derided marriage and had turned away many suitors for their hands. Two remained in their memory, however, and the circumstances are shown in flashback by the film-maker. For Martine it was Loren, a young Swedish cavalry officer sent to rusticate for a summer with an elderly aunt because of his youthful misconduct. Watching Martine made him envisage for himself "a higher and purer life without creditors' letters or parental lectures and with a gentle angel at his side."² He attended a number of meetings, tongue tied in the father's presence, and then judged himself unworthy of her. In the case of Philippa it was the famous French baritone Achille Papin, who heard her sing in church and dreamed of making her a star. He courted her during singing lessons until she was discomfited and asked to discontinue them. Both suitors left Jutland disappointed, but Papin never forgot Philippa.

Thirty five years later, when he wished to help Babette Hersant escape counter-revolutionary bloodshed in Paris he sent her to the sisters as a penniless widow with a letter explaining that she would be a good housekeeper. They took her in and she worked for them for the next fourteen years in exchange for her board, gradually easing their circumstances and, with shrewd bargaining and skillful use of local herbs, making slight improvements in the taste and appearance of the food she prepared for them and the needy of the village. Babette was a puzzle to them:

² Isak Dinesen, "Babette's Feast", *Babette's Feast and Other Anecdotes of Destiny*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 6.

And it happened when Martine or Philippa spoke to Babette that they would get no answers, and would wonder if she had even heard what they said. Or she would sit immovable on the three-legged kitchen chair, her strong hands in her lap and her dark eyes wide open, as enigmatical and fatal as a Pythia upon her tripod. At such moments, they realised that Babette was deep, and that in the soundings of her being there were passions, there were memories and longings of which they knew nothing at all.³

Yet hers became over time an unassuming and welcome presence. Her only connection back to her former life was a lottery ticket renewed for her annually by a friend.

When Babette learns that she has won 10,000 francs in this lottery, everyone sadly assumes that she will return to Paris. She does not. Instead she asks permission of the two sisters to plan and cook a 'real French dinner' for the hundredth anniversary of the founding pastor's birth and pay for it herself. It is, as she insists, the only time she has ever made any request of them. Martine and Philippa acquiesce reluctantly and hesitantly give their housekeeper a week's leave to visit Paris and make the necessary arrangements. As the ingredients she has ordered begin to arrive in multiple packages, a turtle, poussins, bottles, Martine and Philippa become very fearful. Surely such luxurious things will lead to serious sin, expose the flock to devilish influence and undo all the founder's good work. They gather the congregation and confess what they have unleashed. It is agreed between them that they will eat the dinner, but by keeping their thoughts on memories of their founder they will protect themselves against taking any pleasure in it, and certainly will never speak of what they are eating.

The whole film begins to fill with colour as Babette uses her gifts as a creative culinary artist and recreates for a little group of twelve the marvels of a feast she once used to prepare for wealthy patrons of the Café Anglais in Paris. Prodigious in her generosity, Babette has purchased appropriately fine table linens, place settings, crystal glasses and candles and wines to match each course. Now an important general, Martine's Loren has returned to visit his aunt and is invited with her to the feast. He had frequented the Café Anglais in its heyday, and all during the meal he reminisces about its legendary chef as he admires and wonders at each bite, each drop. His uncertainty about the lasting impact his memories of this group had had in his

³ Isak Dinesen, *Babette's Feast*, 18.

career is resolved in amazement and delight. The other guests maintain their promised silence on the subject of food, but their faces soften and express a growing wonder and joy. The setting is beautiful, the surprising food a work of art; Babette's loving provision is the grace note. There happens a real transformation in attitudes, a spiritual change in which each member of the stern preacher's flock lets drop old resentments and remembers early loves. They confess and forgive each other and in their song about the New Jerusalem this night there is evidence of its new, anticipated reality in their midst.

Martine is really distressed when she discovers that nothing remains of Babette's windfall, and that in 'giving the whole substance of her house for love'⁴ she has in fact lost her last chance of escaping poverty. In reply Babette speaks of an artist never being poor, and in truth there has been joy and gift for herself as an artist in the preparation and service of this extraordinary meal. As Achille Papin had once explained to Philippa:

It is terrible and unbearable to an artist, . . . to be encouraged to do, to be applauded for doing his second best. Through all the world there goes one long cry from the heart of the artist: Give me leave to do my utmost!⁵

Her feast, in this lonely backwater, is a tribute to the goodness of creation, an expression of gratitude and love to these timid sisters who have been generous to Babette according to their lights, and at last a worthy expression of who Babette really is. In love and generosity she has entered into God's plan for human flourishing and her loving and self-aware offering of her creative best is the occasion of life-giving grace in her adoptive world.

Babette's puzzling silence undoubtedly reflected grief and memories of loved ones lost, but Martine and Philippa were not wrong in sensing the depth of longings in her of which they had understood nothing at all. If they had, their formation would perhaps have made them shrink from them as dangerous Papist aberrations. For these two their father still spoke more loudly than their own desires, and even where their desire was life affirming – Martine let Loren know before he departed the second time that their earlier encounter had been very significant for her too, and Philippa still day

⁴ Song of Solomon 8:7

⁵ Isak Dinesen, *Babette's Feast*, 48.

dreamed of the training which would have developed and supported her voice, and the musical world it might have opened to her – both had assented not unwillingly to its suppression. It was God's will, and for their good, they believed.

What has this story to say to us in the light of my opening questions? It is not counseling the unbridled pursuit of sensuous pleasure as preferable to the faithful following of any religious tradition, nor is it proposing one form of religious practice, for example Babette's Catholicism, be substituted for the evangelical practice of this little sect. But it is celebrating human goodness as such. It is a parable challenging narrow and fearful views of religion. It speaks of delight in beauty and the goodness of creation and skillful human achievement. It tells of creative gifts and generous love as expressions of the human spirit, as openings for the work of the Divine Spirit in human community. Self-restraint for love's sake can help to bring about God's plan for human flourishing, in a way self-denial for its own sake cannot, and Babette's self-transcendence is at its most loving and most liberating when it enables her, as an artist, to 'do her utmost.' God is the utmost in love, a prodigal giver, and has chosen to create images of these traits in us. God's desire for us is life more abundant (Jn 10:10).

The writer's own lived response to the challenge of religion was to stake everything on one identified thirst for God and to mistrust the rest. To the extent that I entered an enclosed religious order and submitted to an ascetical life within the restrictions of a rule of life and the dictates of obedience, poverty and chastity, I rather protected myself against my desiring self and came to disregard and devalue much that was human and creative in my makeup. Fortunately grace had steered me to a religious congregation where, in the course of years, in prayer and as learner and teacher, I was opened to the wider possibilities of Love's plan for my life. In studying theology I encountered the Canadian philosopher theologian, Bernard Joseph Francis Lonergan, (1904 – 1984), and, with him, astounding new horizons of understanding and acceptance. Lonergan as a Jesuit may have had his own skirmishes with the eddies of human desiring, but he was able to recognize and name the more significant vector, the strong undertow in his own consciousness of loving desire drawing him to know and to love the God of his life. In so doing he not only tempted me to do the same but showed me how.

This study proposes to enter into God's desire for us, as evidenced in the way human beings are created. It discovers desire as integral to human living, and human capacity to search for truth, beauty, goodness and love as rooted in the desire which moves us towards self-transcendence both in knowing and in loving. Human consciousness is intentional, as we will see, and its innate direction is towards total truth and utter goodness, the value beyond questioning. Questioning is, however, the dynamism by which spirit moves within us towards the true and the good of value. Our mind works by way of a self-assembling pattern or sequence of operations and its recurrent activity leads by inquiry to cumulative and progressive results. We are created with 'method' built in.

The pattern of this method can be discovered. We can appropriate, make our own, the steps to real knowing and life-giving choices. Biases as blocks to significant questions can be unmasked. Rapid and erroneous assumptions can be avoided. Desire can be welcomed and embraced as the life-giving, joy enhancing reality it is meant to be. The fulfilment of human potentiality and the growth of reasonable, responsible, caring human cooperation in a friendly universe advance in tandem. The parable of *Babette's Feast* spoke so strongly to the writer because its contrasts spoke of a journey into gladness which my own self-appropriation as desiring and desired has made possible – gradually, and with the help of the life and writings of Bernard Lonergan. My moving viewpoint has shown that insight into what self-transcendence really means is the 'leave to do my utmost' for which my being too has cried out all my life.

It is, therefore, proposed to consider desire and its appropriation throughout the experiences and writings of Lonergan so that the moving viewpoint of his understanding and explanation can furnish a clearer exposition of this contention. In the early years we can follow his transition from faculty psychology to intentionality analysis, and the startling findings he made a teaching tool in his first major philosophical work. It is not possible to short circuit the painstaking work of self-appropriation as a knower, but the 'pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know' of which he writes is a strong motivating factor, and the outcome well worth the effort. He holds out the possibility of an increasingly authentic intellectual

integrity in the pursuit of truth, and we investigate the significance of this in the first two chapters.

Then we turn our attention in chapter three, as he did in the period between *Insight* and *Method*, to the fourth level of conscious intentionality and reflective questions concerning practical and moral choices and decisions to which intelligence and reasonableness spontaneously lead us. This entails a consideration of the notions of value, and effective freedom within horizons, the current limits of an individual's vision and aspiration. To change horizons in a vertical exercise of freedom is to be converted, and moral conversion involves a systematic choice of value over the satisfaction of fleeting desires or the avoidance of discomfort. The failure of human beings to be consistently attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible according to the promise inherent in their being is the fact of sin in individuals and of decline in human society. We will look in chapter four at God's response to human impotence, the salvific gift of God's Love poured out in human hearts by the Spirit.

In religious experience we may come to know the infinite love which affirms our being, and the responsive love with which we are gifted. The most life-enhancing of all the conversions is the horizon shift involved in religious conversion. In Chapter four we see this experiential encounter with God as an invitation to appropriate fully the desire which has been operative in us since the beginning of our lives. Self-appropriation becomes foundational for the work of theology in the development of this thesis, as it is in the Lonergan methodological framework.

To know ourselves as truth-seekers, capable of love and goodness and called by the deepest drives within us to ongoing self-transcendence is a joyful discovery for many, even most of us. That some do not make this discovery or, having heard of it, discount the reality in favour of a more fearful and restrictive life-scripting triggered the writing of this thesis and is the problematic most directly addressed in chapter five. How can we understand and deal with difficulties encountered in appropriating the "love without restriction" which is received as gift in religious conversion; how do we find healing and effective freedom to live the demands of intellectual and moral conversion in a way commensurate with our desire for goodness and truth? So it is that we investigate the "way down" of so much given to us in heritage and belief, and made our own within the context of human affectivity and the saving gift of God's

love. We will ask whether a fourth conversion may be required, and, in the work of former students of Lonergan also writing in this period, look for their expansion of the notion of desire and its appropriation. We will then consider how the authenticity of the individual is involved in concern for the major authenticity of the tradition which nurtures communities, and note the need for commitment and ongoing development in natural and religious interiority.

Martine and Philippa's preacher father in *Babette's Feast* used to say portentously, "God's paths run across the sea and the snowy mountains, where man's eye sees no track." The invitation of this thesis is to follow God's paths through the life of our chosen guide, and to discern some outlines of a track in our own comparable experience. The outlook is far from bleak.

Chapter 1 To Know Oneself as Desirer and Knower

Human beings are unique among the species on the earth because, in their capacity for reflective self-awareness, they are a lifelong problem to themselves. *Homo sapiens* is *homo interrogans*, from infancy puzzled by their own restless yearnings, moved by insistent questioning about meaning and destiny. Humankind is questioning, yes, but also desirous, wanting to be and have more, and consistently disappointed when attainment leaves one still dissatisfied, moving on to desire something further. It is not easy to distinguish the desires we have from the desire we are. Making this distinction requires us to identify urges to act in certain ways as related to but distinct from the deeper currents within, in comparison with which these transitory impulses are just eddies spinning off into backwaters.

I am confidently grounding my exploration of desire and its appropriation by the human subject in a study of the experiences and writings of the Canadian Jesuit, Bernard J. F. Lonergan, who, throughout a life of philosophical and theological inquiry, teaching and writing, grew in ability to identify the pull of the golden cord⁶ drawing him towards understanding and love. At many stages an encounter with his mind has brought significant clarification in my own search; he is preeminently an explanatory clarifier and enabler. At this point we begin to tap into his ability to understand and appropriate the powerful desire that moves human beings to question; we examine his initial and developing insights into the mystery of our never completely satisfied yearnings for truth, for ultimate meaning and we do so in the context of his life experiences, the making of these discoveries.

I begin in this chapter by tracing through his early experiences the outworking of the powerful desire to know. Of this he was increasingly aware and as he read the philosophical and theological thinkers presented in his Jesuit formation, he was

⁶ Pierrot Lambert, Charlotte Tansey and Cathleen Going eds, *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1982), 22-23. In recorded conversations Lonergan quotes more than once Voegelin's use of this image from the puppeteer in Plato's *The Laws*.

seeking to find an adequate account of knowledge, one which accorded with his own developing understanding of cognitional process and methodology. Newman's insight into judgment as assent, Plato's reaching for answers anticipated in questions and Augustine's introspective acuity gave his inquiring mind encouragement and stimulus, but it was in "reaching up to the mind of Aquinas" during ten years of doctoral studies that he reached the certainties he expressed in the *Verbum* articles. He concurs with Aquinas that we are by nature oriented into mystery and the mystery of God is to be the end of all our searching.

In these early stages Lonergan is focused on the dynamism of questioning, the longing to understand, correctly, all that can be understood; the wonder of inquiry and the critical wonder leading to real assent. But in his own vocation to the Society of Jesus there is an experience of the drawing power of the attraction of love which he will objectify only later. The question of his own motivation was to remain obscured until he could reach an adequate understanding of grace. The 'highest in us and in God the most like us' is for Lonergan initially the light of intellect leading to wisdom. This he develops in the philosophical/theological paper *The Natural Desire to See God*. It is in *Finality, Love and Marriage* that we see his first extended treatment of the centrality of love in the God-given direction of human life. All of world process is moved by the desire for ultimate good: God attracts all things to respond to love by who or what they are.

We will be concerned with Lonergan's early experiences of desire and appropriation insofar as these throw light on his writings concerning both. Initially he was in touch with his strong, compelling desire to know, and following it led him to the philosophical breakthroughs of *Insight*.⁷ Later he was to recognize the importance of appropriating also the movement of his heart towards ultimate goodness and unrestricted love.

⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWL Vol. 3, Frederick E. Crowe S.J. and Robert M. Doran S.J. eds, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.) First published in London, 1957, by Longmans, Green & Co. Hereinafter references will be made to *Insight*, and page numbers for both editions will be given.

Though reticent about his spiritual life, Lonergan agreed in 1980 to be interviewed by a team of editors/interviewers at the Thomas More Institute in Montreal about the patterns of meaning he discerned in his intellectual life, and relaxed gradually into a welcome openness about himself as a person. These conversations, published after the final one was completed in 1982,⁸ reveal something of the mind and heart of the thinker and the mystic, Bernard Lonergan.

More explicitly biographical studies of his early development have been made by Richard Liddy and William Mathews, S.J. Liddy⁹ has made a thorough study of the influences preparing Lonergan for the “startling strangeness” of his intellectual conversion in 1936 and its expression in writings over the next twenty years. William Mathews¹⁰ has recently published an intellectual biography of Lonergan entitled *Lonergan’s Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight*¹¹. Papers and articles he has produced while working on it have been available for study over a number of years. Both have drawn on Lonergan’s own recollections in *Caring About Meaning* and this introduction is informed by all three resources, to ground a study of desire as he appropriated it in his living.

Early Years

Born in 1904 to English speaking parents in Québec, Bernard was sufficiently gifted to value the rigour of the elementary school education he received: “... in the ungraded school you kept working.”¹² He remembers listening in to the work being done in the higher grades and growing in understanding, having his own insights in advance of level-appropriate instruction. He says he was “always learning.” English composition was problematic until he felt he had something to say, but:

⁸ Subsequently this work will be referred to as *Caring About Meaning*.

⁹ Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

¹⁰ William Mathews, “Lonergan’s Apprenticeship,” *Lonergan Workshop 9*, ed. Fred Lawrence, Boston College, 1993: “On Becoming Oneself in the World,” unpublished paper presented at Boston College, June 2003.

¹¹ William Mathews, *Lonergan’s Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of Insight*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

¹² *Caring About Meaning*, 132-3

I liked math because you knew what you were doing and could get an answer¹³ ... I remember in algebra doing a problem and getting a minus answer. I was sure I was wrong and I asked, but I was told, 'Oh no, that's right.' It was the revelation of negative numbers.¹⁴

In elementary religious education the Brothers impressed upon him that he was not going to understand the Trinity. "It was explained to us how Augustine, walking by the sea-shore, saw a little boy trying to pour the sea into a hole he had dug, and that trying to understand the Trinity is like that."¹⁵ Rather than an excuse not to try to understand, this was for Lonergan a hint about the superabundance of what is to be understood: "As Vatican I says, *aliqua intelligentia eaque fructuosissima*. Most fruitful, provided you get there."¹⁶

His ability and the thorough grounding he had received enabled him to complete a four year high school course in under three, even with time out for serious illness. The curriculum at Loyola offered a sound foundation in the Latin and Greek classics, English and French literature, history and mathematics, as well as religion. He found "the Jesuits ... the best-educated people I had met,"¹⁷ and his insight into understanding deepened: "I acquired a great respect for intelligence."¹⁸ He came early to expectations that the universe was intelligible, and was attracted to the mystery of the divine.

His decision to become a Jesuit was a clear sign of the drawing power of the desire for ultimate truth and goodness, a recognition of the pearl for which one would sell everything.¹⁹ It was not explicitly so in awareness, however. Lonergan reports having been 'troubled' by a sense of calling to religious life as an adolescent, and the only interesting thing about the story of his vocation, he told his interviewers in 1980, was the fact that he persevered. Initially it presented as a choice between the men's congregations he had known. Invited by one of the Brothers, Bernard seems to have

¹³ *ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 133.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 141.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 141.

¹⁷ Lonergan was to comment on his disappointment that they didn't 'know how to make one work, that working was unnecessary to pass exams...' in a letter to his provincial, John L. Swain, May 5, 1946, quoted by Frederick E. Crowe S. J. in *Lonergan*, (Collegeville, Minn.:The Liturgical Press, 1992) 5.

¹⁸ *Caring About Meaning*, 142.

¹⁹ Mat 13:46

been deterred from entering with them by his father; later asked to consider the Jesuits, he offered as an excuse the ill health which, to his mind, eliminated him as a candidate. Assured that there was nothing organically wrong with him, he found the question raised again, and the trepidation returned. On leaving Loyola in 1922, he recalls responding to the question without drama or any strong sense of affect, without waiting to work through the structured discernment process the Society of Jesus would have recommended:

...that I went to the Jesuits – there was really nothing exciting about that. I went out to the Sault to make a retreat, an election, and I decided in the street-car on the way out. (It was a two-hour trip on the tram.)²⁰

This may be seen as an off-hand statement, made by someone reticent about his interior life,²¹ and there was an acknowledgement later in his life²² that he had been powerfully drawn, that grace was operative in attraction, decision and follow through. At the time, however, the experience of love and awe does not seem to have been objectified for Lonergan; though in consciousness, the experience was not adverted to, understood, named and verified. “It remain[ed] within subjectivity as a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness.”²³ He had been in love with God without awareness of being in love, he concluded in a paper he presented to confreres and students of Regis College in 1965.²⁴ To this recognition we will return in exploring the question of self-appropriation.

His four years in the novitiate at Guelph in Ontario were designed to form mind and character: a training in prayer and the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, and an ordered way of life involving asceticism, work and study. Formal studies in philosophy and theology were still in the future. The spiritual life was the focus of these ‘monastic’ years. He was later to be critical of the interpretation of Ignatian spirituality made current in the Society of that time by the General, Father Roothaan:

²⁰ *Caring About Meaning*, 131.

²¹ William Mathews, “Lonergan’s Apprenticeship,” *Lonergan Workshop 9*, ed. Fred Lawrence, Boston College, 1993. Mathews writes of this decision in terms of ‘ambiguities’.

²² See Ref. 18 below.

²³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 113. First published in Great Britain by Darton Longman & Todd, 1971. Further references will be to *Method*.

²⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” *Collection*, CWL 4, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 230.

...it was applying the three powers of the soul: the memory, the intellect and the will, the intellect being the faculty of reasoning. It was a rather big block in the spiritual life. It was the reduction of St. Ignatius to decadent conceptualist scholasticism.²⁵

He referred to this emphasis as the stone he was offered when he asked for bread, but notes, “not that I thought of it that way.”²⁶ As a novice he spent a lot of time in structured prayer along those lines and following the directive: “Try to find out what your motives are,” an effort he came to consider as futile. Spiritual maturity was not to be anticipated before the age of thirty, he suggested, and the introspection asked of novices had yielded mostly puzzlement:

I’m saying that the fundamental thing in the spiritual life is God’s grace and until you get an adequate account of that, which is entirely concerned with motives, talk about motives is mistaken. You just don’t know what the fundamental motivations in you are...²⁷

When he wrote in 1965 of the action of God in the life of a Jesuit, the ‘adequate account’ of grace he had come to is nuanced, in touch with the desire that moves him, shot through with love:

Without any experience of just how and why, one is in a 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.²⁸

His jocular way of talking about it in 1980 was simply, “When you learn about divine grace you stop worrying about your motives; somebody else is running the ship. You don’t look for reasons why you are doing thus and so”²⁹

Jesuit students were encouraged to do an external degree at the University of London concurrently with the philosophy and tutorials taught at Heythrop, and Lonergan was drawn to a course on Methodology, because he felt there was absolutely no method to the philosophy he was being taught; “it wasn’t going anywhere,”³⁰ in spite of the intellectual honesty and competence of his professors. The Suarezian Thomism they were required to present was not satisfying to the young Lonergan, who “shared the

²⁵ *Caring About Meaning*, 145.

²⁶ *Caring About Meaning*, 145.

²⁷ *Caring About Meaning*, 146.

²⁸ Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” 230-231.

²⁹ *Caring About Meaning*, 145.

³⁰ *Caring About Meaning*, 10.

common view that held the manuals in little esteem.”³¹ Liddy believes that even then the source of his disillusionment with Suarezian Thomism lay in a theory of knowledge that did not cohere with his own self-knowledge.³² He experienced the same lack of methodology in subsequent theological courses, but ultimately did not regret being denied the chance to study methodology in London, because he felt, with reason, that his own work on the subject was better than anything on offer in the late 1920s.

In the third year of philosophy Lonergan picked up Newman’s *Grammar of Assent* and read it – or at least the analytical parts – five or six times. It was a break-through. The young independent thinker had found an interlocutor:

I was looking for someone who had some common sense and knew what he was talking about. And what was Newman talking about? About judgment as assent; about real apprehension and notional apprehension, notional assent and real assent. He was answering the liberal view that all judgments are more or less probable but nothing is certain. And he could give examples.³³

Newman was addressing the same issue that preoccupied Lonergan, the nature of the human mind, and he found that Newman’s method fitted in well with the way he himself knew things. Though there is no sign at this stage of his later interest in Aquinas, Lonergan’s interest in philosophy is by now strongly marked, and it was particularly the theory of knowledge which piqued his curiosity, his drive to understand correctly. Newman directs attention to “the concrete, the interior, the facts of consciousness, as of primary importance, as distinct from what philosophers or scientists ‘say’ about knowledge.”³⁴ So does Lonergan, and he guides his readers to do the same.

This path of inquiry is not abandoned by Lonergan during his Regency between 1930 and 1933, a period of teaching at Loyola in Montreal. Two classic writers take him further in his quest for understanding. First he finds time to track down and read

³¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., “Theories of Inquiry,” *A Second Collection*, William F. J. Ryan, S.J. and Bernard Tyrrell, S.J. eds. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 38.

³² Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 12.

³³ *Caring About Meaning*, 14.

³⁴ Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 38.

Plato's Doctrine of Ideas by John Alexander Stewart,³⁵ which he had already encountered in England. Stewart focusses attention on the psychological experience of arriving at the Ideas which underlies Plato's theory. Later Lonergan explains why this brought such a sense of release:

I believed in intelligence and I thought concepts were overrated. When I found ... that an idea, for Plato, was like Descartes' equation for the circle, I was home. You get the equation of the circle just by understanding.³⁶

Lonergan delighted in the early dialogues, discovering Plato as a questioner, a methodologist, a philosopher reaching towards answers anticipated in questions. "My idea of Plato is that he is the perfect introduction to philosophy. I don't think he has the answers but certainly he can build up interest and start one into serious questions."³⁷ Lonergan was teaching adolescents by day and following his own serious questioning as best he could in his own time.

The second influence of this period was Augustine, and again mainly through his earlier works. Lonergan read the *Cassiciacum Dialogues* in the summer of 1933 and there encountered the Neo-Platonist Augustine in the process of integrating into an intelligible whole his intellectual conversion and the religious conversion experience of the *Confessions* in the August of 386 C.E.. Valuing his liberal education, as Lonergan did his, honestly seeking truth in his exploration of the philosophical schools of his day, and allowing all relevant questions to arise in a mind healed and enlightened by religious experience, Augustine had discovered that he was trying to 'picture' imaginatively realities which cannot be so imagined; spirits were not another kind of body. He wrote in the *Dialogues* of his insight into the incorporeal nature of God and the human soul.³⁸

Augustine's method was to reach for understanding through question and answer, and in so doing he demonstrated a considerable introspective acuity which Lonergan appreciated. "Augustine was not a technical theologian, a theoretical theologian", but "[h]e was a person who knew the human soul in an extraordinary way. He knows

³⁵ Stewart, John Alexander, *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*, (Oxford, 1909) See *Second Collection*, William J. F. Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell eds., (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974) 264-65.

³⁶ *Caring About Meaning*, 44.

³⁷ *Caring About Meaning*, 49.

³⁸ Augustine, *De Beata Vita*, Translation from *The Fathers of the Church, Writings of St Augustine* 1, ed. Ludwig Schopp (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1948) 4.

more about consciousness than Thomas does.”³⁹ Augustine sought to understand, *intelligere*, and the heartfelt commitment to Truth and Wisdom arising out of his religious conversion found a real resonance in Lonergan. “Augustine was so concerned with understanding, so unmindful of universal concepts, that I began a long period of trying to write an intelligible account of my convictions.”⁴⁰ Only fragments remain of a twenty-five thousand word paper on the nature of faith Lonergan wrote in the summer of 1933, before his departure for theological studies in Rome, and sent to his friend Henry Smeaton S.J., but in his obituary for Lonergan Father Crowe remembers that summer:

The area was marshy, the mosquitos bad, so lights did not go on in the evening. But Bernie could be heard night after night typing through the twilight and into the dark – a trivial little fact that acquires enormous interest in the light of later information.⁴¹

This glimpse of Lonergan as a student on holiday shows the capacity for total absorption in the intellectual quest that he would later describe in *Insight* as the outworking of the desire to know:

...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 send him on dangerous voyages of exploration. 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 very 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.⁴²

The quest continued during the next four years in Rome. Crowe notes that Lonergan interpreted his call there as a mark of confidence from his religious superiors after a troubled regency period: “...his hope of an academic career [had] been clarified and given substance, and so he mapped out in considerable detail his ideas for the integral renewal of Catholic thought.”⁴³

It was during a course in Christology given by Bernard Leeming S.J. in 1935-36 that Lonergan had what he was to describe as the key moment in his own intellectual conversion. He was engaged in a painstaking search for an understanding of faith

³⁹ Interview with Bernard Lonergan in *Curiosity at the Center of One's Life* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1987) 403-404.

⁴⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., “Insight Revisited,” *Second Collection*, 265.

⁴¹ Frederick E Crowe, S.J., “Obituary for Fr. Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.,” *Newsletter of the Upper Canada Jesuit Province*, 60 (May-June 1985) 16.

⁴² Lonergan, *Insight*, 4/28.

⁴³ Frederick E Crowe, S.J., *Lonergan*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 19.

statements about Christ which he could also affirm as true. His experience of the tension of enquiry is well described in a passage from *Insight*:

In the theorist, intent upon a problem, even the subconscious goes to work to yield at unexpected moments the suggestive images of clues and missing links, of patterns and perspectives, that evoke the desiderated insight and the delighted cry, 'Eureka!' In reflection, there arises a passionless calm. Memory ferrets out instances that would run counter to the prospective judgment. Imagination anticipates the shape of possibilities that would prove the judgment wrong. So deep is the penetration, so firm the dominance, so strange the transformation of sensitive spontaneity, that memories and anticipations rise above the threshold of consciousness only if they possess at least a plausible relevance to the decision to be made.⁴⁴

It is significant that this breakthrough occurred while he was intent upon a problem, and came as a release of the tension of enquiry.⁴⁵ Lonergan maintained that faith is often a catalyst in intellectual conversion and for him the disciplined and rigorous thought of these years had been sustained by the judgments of faith:

So there was considerable room for development after Aristotle and you get it in St. Thomas when he distinguishes existence from essence ... and to make them distinct really you have to have something equivalent to an intellectual conversion, even if you don't know what is meant by an intellectual conversion. I had the intellectual conversion myself when in doing theology I saw that you can't have one person in two natures in Christ unless there is a real distinction between the natures and something else that is one. But that is the long way round.⁴⁶

Lonergan had been moving nearer to this moment of coalescing insights for ten years or more.⁴⁷ When he was convinced that there could not be a hypostatic union without a real distinction between essence and existence, it was a rounding out of all the intellectual influences of his life to date: "This, of course, was all the more acceptable, since Aquinas' *esse* corresponded to Augustine's *veritas* and both harmonized with Maréchal's view of judgment."⁴⁸ It was thus the final clarification of one important element in the appropriation of his own knowing: essence and existence as really distinct were the objective correlatives of understanding and judgment in his heuristic framework. Lonergan now knew that he knew, and this certainty instilled in him a

⁴⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 185/209.

⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 4/28.

⁴⁶ Transcript by Nicholas Graham of discussions at the Lonergan Workshop, June 13, 1978.

⁴⁷ Liddy, in *Transforming Light*, 118, suggests that Lonergan tries in *Insight* to mediate for readers a shorter way round. Liddy gives an extended and more adequate account of the intellectual content of this breakthrough than is given here.

⁴⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J., "Insight Revisited", *Second Collection*, William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell eds. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974) 265.

joyful confidence that he had found here a significant gift to offer the community of scholars and the world.⁴⁹

This giving was not to happen immediately, however. After his ordination in Rome, Lonergan had a tertianship year of ascetical training and reflection in Amiens before he returned to the Gregorian University to do a doctorate, not in philosophy as he might have expected, but in theology, as decided by his superiors. With his abiding interests in epistemology, sociology and economics placed on hold, he pursued now his equally keen interest in historical consciousness, following a suggestion from his chosen director, that he might “shed some light” on a difficult article in the *Summa*⁵⁰ by studying the *loca parallela* and the historical sources: his dissertation topic was approved as “A History of St. Thomas’s Thought on Operative Grace.”⁵¹ Historical scholarship for Lonergan was:

... a long journey through variant readings, shifts in vocabulary, enriching perspectives – all duly documented – that establish as definitively as can be expected what the great man thought on some minor topic within the horizon of his time and place and with no great relevance to other times and places. Only from a long series of such dissertations can the full picture be constructed—a picture as accurate as it is intricate, broad indeed but with endless detail, rich in implications for other times if only one has the time to sort them out, discern the precise import of each, and infer exactly what does and does not follow.⁵²

Bringing to the task what Liddy sees as the key expression of his intellectual conversion, his ongoing reflections on methodology, namely intellectually creative ways of asking and answering questions,⁵³ Lonergan was able to retrieve Thomas’s actual position on grace by tracing his intellectual development on the subject. He had come late to the appreciation of Thomas, but this doctoral research marked the

⁴⁹ The confident energy and enthusiasm engendered in Lonergan are expressed in a personal letter to his Jesuit superior

⁵⁰ Charles Boyer pointed him towards the article on *gratia operans*, *Summa la Ilae*, saying that neither he nor those he consulted were able to interpret it

⁵¹ Completed in 1940 as *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin*, it was subsequently published as four articles in *Theological Studies* (1941 – 42) and later in book form as *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. J. Patout Burns (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, and New York, Herder and Herder, 1971). Quotations below are taken from the CWL edition of the same name, edited by F.E. Crowe and R. M. Doran, republished in 2000 by the University of Toronto Press.

⁵² Taken from an unpublished lecture, “The Scope of Renewal,” The Larkin-Stuart lectures at Trinity College in the University of Toronto, 1973, 2. Cited by Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 125.

⁵³ Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 124.

beginning of an apprenticeship which changed him profoundly, eleven years “reaching up to the mind of Aquinas.”⁵⁴ He recognized that

... 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.⁵⁵

His apprenticeship to this compelling genius, begun in 1938, continued through to 1949. Having discovered and appreciated, as Crowe testifies⁵⁶, the way Aquinas worked and questioned and thought and understood and thought again and judged and wrote, even so for Lonergan the greatest single benefit of his doctoral research was the reinforcement of his sense of God as mystery. “Lonergan never lost what Thomas above all theologians could teach, that theology can be done, must be done, that when it is done, we are confronted with mystery and bow our heads in adoration.”⁵⁷ He knew from experience, as Thomas did, that the scope of human questioning far exceeds our capacity for finding correct answers and that every small answer provokes further questioning. The field of mystery may be contracted by the advance of knowledge but it cannot be eliminated from human living. Lonergan knew well that we are by nature oriented into mystery and the mystery of God is to be the end of all our searching.

Early Writings – Pre-Insight

For the rest of his life Lonergan would devote himself to the Leonine purpose, *vetera novis augere et perficere*:⁵⁸ to enlarge and complete the old by addition of the new, but during the 1940s his main concern was to establish exactly what the *vetera* were. He is very clearly doing this in two writings of this period: the *Verbum* articles (1946 – 49); and “The Natural Desire to See God,” (1949). An opening to the *nova*, “problems of this later day,” is made in “Finality, Love, Marriage” (1943). We are now to trace in these articles the development of Lonergan’s insights into desire and his practice and theory of self-appropriation in all three.

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 748/770. We are indebted to Fr Crowe for the number, referring to the years 1938 – 1949, from the beginning of this study until the completion of the *verbum* articles.

⁵⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 748/770.

⁵⁶ Crowe, *Lonergan*, 47.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁸ Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical letter of 1879, *Aeterni Patris*, had recommended a return to Aristotelian Thomism for philosophical and theological formation in seminaries.

“Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas,” 1946 – 49.

*Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*⁵⁹ comprises five articles which appeared in *Theological Studies* between 1946 and 1949 and were gathered together and published in book form in 1967 with a new introduction by Lonergan. For three years he had been collecting materials for an account of Aquinas’ views on understanding and the inner word,⁶⁰ and in *Verbum* he begins with the core of psychological fact. The first article was a whole year in production, because Lonergan had to come to terms with the change that he had effected in his thinking from faculty psychology to intentionality analysis.⁶¹ He would later recast metaphysics explicitly in accord with his own intentionality analysis; even at this stage, he can no longer work in the scholastic categories:

I have begun, not from the metaphysical framework, but from the psychological content of Thomist theory of intellect: logic might favor the opposite procedure but, after attempting it in a variety of ways, I found it unmanageable.⁶²

However Lonergan is writing more than a study of cognitional theory; he is interested, as Aquinas was, in an exploration of the analogies used in trinitarian theology for the procession of Word and Spirit, and in these articles takes Thomist scholarship into a rediscovery of the beautiful clarity of Thomas:

[Thomas’s] thought on *verbum* was, in the main, a statement for his technically minded age of the psychological analogy of the trinitarian processions. Its simplicity, its profundity, and its brilliance have long been obscured by interpreters unaware of the relevant psychological facts and unequal to the task of handling merely linguistic problems.⁶³

Lonergan recognized in Aquinas what he describes as “an experimental knowledge of his own soul,”⁶⁴ and the highly nuanced, deeply penetrating, firmly outlined theory of

⁵⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, CWL 2, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁶⁰ Lonergan, “Insight Revisited”, *Second Collection*, 266-7, and *Caring About Meaning*, 51, 98.

⁶¹ Following Aristotle and Aquinas scholasticism acknowledged intellect and will as the highest faculties of the rational human soul. Intellect presided over the external activities of the senses, the internal work of memory and imagination in cognitional processes to arrive at truth. In the appetitive dimension, will as rational appetite directed choice to the recognized truth or desired goodness. Lonergan’s intentionality analysis involves understanding of the cognitional and existential process: from experiencing to understanding, from verifying insight to rational assent and thence to responsible decision making and action based on love; less concerned with faculties than with a dynamic, self assembling process of conscious, intentional operations which is the way human beings function spontaneously.

⁶² Bernard J. F. Lonergan S. J., “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974) 266-7.

⁶³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 11.

⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 105.

the nature of human knowledge he had reached. Once the intellect perceives the intelligibility in the data presented in phantasm – an insight occurs – there is an *emanatio intelligibilis*, what Augustine refers to as a *verbum intus prolatum*⁶⁵, a word proceeding interiorly. This is a procession from the act of insight, by way of the elements of the phantasm relevant to the act of understanding, to the act expressing in concept, language or image what has been understood. In this procession, purely of spirit, act from act, Aquinas saw the most appropriate analogy available to the human mind for the infinite mystery of the procession of the Word within the Trinity. Then Lonergan makes clear that, for Aquinas, the second procession grounding a real relation of origin in the Trinity is not the procession of the act of love from the will ... but the procession in the will, as rational appetite, of the act of love from the inner word in the intellect.⁶⁶

The most suitable place to look for an analogical knowledge of the mystery of God is in humankind, the image of God, and specifically in rational consciousness, illuminated by the light which is “a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light of God.”⁶⁷

Theologically, the [*verbum*] articles are a study of the life of God in its internal dynamism and movement. But philosophically, they are a study of human life in its internal dynamism and movement on the level of spirit, that is, in the twofold procession of inner word and love, and so ... in the image of God.⁶⁸

Lonergan appreciates “the light that naturally is within us” as a participation in uncreated light, and “constitutive of our very power of understanding. It is the principle of inquiry and discourse.”⁶⁹ So integral is the search for understanding and truth in human consciousness to our being as willed by God, that the action of God in human life is always, for Lonergan, to be recognized in the full enabling of this dynamism.

⁶⁵ ‘For then a word is most like the known thing from which it is brought forth and most an image of that thing, since from the vision of knowledge a vision of thought arises, which is a word of no language, a true word of a true thing, having nothing of its own, but everything from that knowledge from which it is born,’ Augustine, *De trinitate*, XV, xii, 22.

⁶⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 109.

⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 85. Lonergan cites Aquinas: ‘*ipsum enim lumen intellectuale quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo luminis increati.*’ *Summa theologiae*, 1,q.84,a.5c.

⁶⁸ Crowe, *Lonergan*, 49.

⁶⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 92.

In the *Verbum* articles, Lonergan refers to **desire** most frequently as wonder and inquiry, or the wonder of inquiry. We have shown ‘inquiry’ to have been the main activity of his life thus far; ‘wonder’ renders its affective nuance. The activity of inquiry is tinged with awe and love, is a response to an attraction. Though faith makes the search especially loving and worshipful for Lonergan, not only philosophers and theologians exhibit this response:

... let active intelligence intervene: there is a care for the why and the wherefore; there is wonder and inquiry; there is the alertness of the scientist or technician, the mathematician or philosopher, for whom the imagined object no longer is merely given but also a something-to-be-understood.⁷⁰

The desired understanding may be reached in the inner word, and expressed, but human desire is not content with just any explanation. Wonder and inquiry are only satisfied when further reflection reaches some certainty that the explanation accords with truth. This is the act of judgment-assent.

... insight is the goal to which the wonder of inquiry tends. The inner word of judgment is the expression of a reflective act of understanding and that reflective act is the goal toward which critical wonder tends.⁷¹

Both the *verbum* of insight/understanding and the *verbum* of truth do proceed within us and are within the scope of our introspective attentiveness.

The wonder of inquiry can be called ‘critical’ because it needs to reach what really is, what Aquinas and Lonergan call ‘actual contingent being.’ Thomistic thought stresses the native infinity of intellect: he also showed that, because of its infinite range, “the object of intellect must be *ens* (being); that this object cannot be unknown; it is known per se and naturally.”⁷² We do have a notion of being and not-being; we instinctively recognize that contradictory statements about the same aspect of the same thing cannot both be true, and that the whole is greater than its parts, but our knowledge of the real develops. Lonergan indicates that we learn to discriminate, differentiate, categorize the details of a scheme that somehow we possessed from the start. All our learning is predominantly heuristic: we desire to know the unknown we are already stretching towards.

⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 185.

⁷¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 104.

⁷² Aquinas quoted ‘endlessly’ according to Lonergan, the Aristotelian commonplace that intellect as active is *potens omnia facere* and as passive *potens omnia fieri*, (able to make or become all things.) *Verbum*, 96.

The whole of each thing is real, and by reality Lonergan means, at first, “nothing less than the universe in the multiplicity of its members, in the totality and individuality of each, in the interrelations of all.”⁷³ This is the being that our minds can compass with some adequacy. However we sense, through the range of our questioning, that there is more to reality than the material universe in which we are at home. In *Verbum*, Lonergan affirms the Thomist dictum that there are different modes of knowing being: “Since understanding is by identity and *ens* includes all reality, only infinite understanding can be the direct and immediate apprehension of the proper object of intellect, *ens intelligibile*.”⁷⁴ Only God is infinite act of understanding. Though our desire for understanding is unlimited, the achievement of this desire is not proper to us as finite. What we desire so intensely can come only as gift:

The specific drive of our nature is to understand, and indeed to understand everything, neither confusing the trees with the forest nor content to contemplate the forest without seeing all the trees. For the spirit of inquiry within us never calls a halt, never can be satisfied, until our intellects, united to God as body to soul, know *ipsum intelligere* and through that vision, though then knowing aught else is a trifle, contemplate the universe as well.⁷⁵

For Augustine, Thomas and Lonergan, this drive is a God-given attraction, a desire which is sign of divine intention to grant the gift.

In *Verbum* there is, therefore, also an advance in Lonergan’s explanation of what he will come to call **self-appropriation**, and precisely in relation to the desire that moves us. For him, “the native infinity of intellect as intellect is a datum of rational consciousness. It appears in that restless spirit of inquiry, that endless search for causes which, as Aquinas argued, can rest and end only in a supernatural vision of God.”⁷⁶ He offers evidence for the belief that the Thomist theory of intellect had an empirical and introspective basis,⁷⁷ and shows that we can and must explore this doubling back on itself⁷⁸ of awareness if we are to understand the image of God that

⁷³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 98.

⁷⁴ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 104.

⁷⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 66.

⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 97. *Summa theologiae*, 1-2 q.3, a. 8c.

⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 87.

⁷⁸ “We know by what we are; we know we know by knowing what we are; and since even the knowing in ‘knowing what we are’ is by what we are, rational reflection on ourselves is a duplication of ourselves.” Lonergan, *Verbum*, 99. This reduplication is spelt out in *Insight* 274-275/299-300, and even more explicitly in *Method*, 14-15.

we are, an image that alone grounds an adequate analogical insight into the mystery of the triune God. “To follow Aquinas here, one must practise introspective rational psychology; without that, one can no more know the created image of the Blessed Trinity, as Aquinas conceived it, than a blind man can know colors.”⁷⁹ Lonergan quoted Augustine’s exhortation to his readers to look within themselves:

Naturally enough, as Augustine’s discovery was part and parcel of his own mind’s knowledge of itself, so he begged his readers to look within themselves and there to discover the speech of spirit within spirit, an inner *verbum* prior to any use of language, yet distinct from the mind itself and from its memory or its present apprehension of objects.⁸⁰

Augustine’s practice of psychological introspection and the uncannily accurate introspective skill of Aquinas were commended by Lonergan in the Introduction to *Verbum*. However, neither could thematize its use. Lonergan can do so and he gives an explanatory account of the intellectual operations of understanding and definition in Chapter One, and of reflection and judgment in Chapter Two. By careful reading of these chapters a student well versed in Thomist metaphysics might come to a better understanding of human knowing than generations of scholastic philosophers had been presenting, but *Verbum* is not yet a step by step process inviting the reader to such self-appropriation. For this we must wait for *Insight*.

In the *Verbum* articles Lonergan is clearly evaluating his sources and their writings in terms of their self knowledge and his own insight into cognitional processes. He recommends “introspective rational psychology” as key to understanding them. “The wonder of inquiry” is, at this stage, his best description of the desire, the powerful attraction that is drawing him to seek ultimate truth. God’s uncreated Light, after which we grope and strain, is ontologically first, but what is first *quoad nos* is our own immanent intellectual light which we can access, since it grounds all intelligibility in our knowing.

Known with this qualified immediacy, it justifies itself as the potentially boundless base whence we can posit, and through our positing know, the universe: and as the principle of our knowledge of reality, it also is the most convincing sample in us of the stuff of which the author of the universe and of our minds consists. Between these poles, the highest in us and in God the most like us, our wisdom moves to knowledge of itself and of its source ... and is acquired gradually.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 24.

⁸⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 6.

⁸¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 90.

After noting with relish the vivid but uncharacteristic use here of the word ‘stuff’ by Lonergan, he who had recorded with compassion Augustine’s struggle to reach the insight that God was not any sort of stuff⁸² – even ‘infinite white light’ is an imaginable ‘body’ – we are left wondering whether this strongly intellectualist position would still be whole heartedly endorsed by the later Lonergan. It could well be that loving came to replace knowing as the ‘highest in us and in God the most like us’.

“The Natural Desire to See God,” 1949.

In *Verbum* Lonergan commented that Aquinas knew perfectly well what Aristotle meant by the wonder that is the source of all science and philosophy, and by insight into phantasm; “he can take these positions, fuse and transform them, and come forth with a natural desire for the beatific vision; a position which is notoriously unintelligible to people who do not grasp just what understanding is.”⁸³ Lonergan had traced the historical development of Aquinas’ proposal that it is human to desire knowledge of God by his essence, even though such knowledge is beyond our natural capacity, and in a paper he presented in 1949 to the Jesuit Philosophical Association,⁸⁴ Lonergan uses his grasp of what understanding is to assert the intelligibility of this desire. His paper delineates the proper roles of philosophy and theology in the quest for clarification.

Lonergan begins with the thesis that the **desires** of the human intellect are manifested in questions, and that all questions can be reduced to two, *quid sit*, ‘what is it?’ (what it is) and *an sit*, ‘is it?’, (whether it is).⁸⁵ “There exists then a desire that is natural to intellect, that arises from the mere fact that we possess intellects, that is defined by the

⁸² Cf. the stage depicted at *Conf.* 7.9.13-15.

⁸³ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 48.

⁸⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan S. J., “The Natural Desire to See God,” *Collection*, CWL 4, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 81-91. The paper was first published in the *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Jesuit Philosophical Association*, Boston College, 1949, 31-43.

⁸⁵ Lonergan, “The Natural Desire to See God,” *Collection*, 81. An editorial note comments that this pair of questions had been referred to in *Verbum* but there the main concern was to transform ‘what’ questions into ‘why’ questions: ‘What is refraction?’ is reducible to ‘Why does light refract?’

questions, *an sit* and *quid sit*.⁸⁶ We seek understanding of what we experience and then assurance that what we understand really is so. To ask why light refracts, is to ask for an explanation of refraction. When we obtain an adequate explanation,

Then and only then are we able to 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 term, refraction.⁸⁷

The need for explanatory rather than nominal definition characterized Lonergan's desire for understanding and will receive further attention in *Insight*. Both forms of definition require an insight, but a nominal definition requires no more than an insight into the proper use of language while an explanatory one supposes an insight into the objects to which language refers.⁸⁸

Lonergan is careful to distinguish two kinds of natural fulfillment for the desire to know: proper and analogical. Proper fulfillment of the desire involves the appropriate knowledge of created reality only.⁸⁹ Beyond that we can only seek a resemblance in an imaginable, created reality that may yield some understanding of mystery, and use the traditional methods of the *via affirmationis*, the *via negationis* and the *via eminentiae*⁹⁰ to reach towards a glimpse of its meaning. A limited understanding of the revealed mysteries of faith is to be reached through analogy with nature and through the connection of the mysteries one with another. However Lonergan reminds his readers that the analogy of the mysteries with nature is not fully natural – nor is the desire it fulfills either simply natural or really satisfied.⁹¹

...analogical fulfillment is fulfillment only in an improper sense. It does not satisfy our intellects. It goes part of the way but not the whole way. It answers some questions but raises others. Fulfilment by analogy is a matter of decreasing returns, for the further one pushes the issue, the clearer it becomes that there is much we do not know.⁹²

⁸⁶ Lonergan, "The Natural Desire to See God," *Collection*, 81. Later, as Crowe remarks, Lonergan will recognize a third, the operator for fourth level evaluation and choice.

⁸⁷ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 82.

⁸⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 10-11/35-36. In this Lonergan's affinity with Newman is evident.

⁸⁹ Crowe sees in the distinction Lonergan makes in this article between the proportionate object of intellect ((specifying the essence of a material being) and the adequate object, which is being, a clarification of notions already appearing in *Verbum*. Editorial note d., *Collection*, 270.

⁹⁰ The three ways involve first transferring to the divinity created perfections, then denying created imperfections, then understanding that these perfections are attributed to God only in an analogous and eminent sense.

⁹¹ Humanity does not exist in a vacuum, separate from the grace which opens understanding to ultimate questions and to grasp the truth of mysteries beyond proportionate human understanding.

⁹² Lonergan, "The Natural Desire to See God," *Collection*, 82.

What **is**, in the material order, is the proportionate object of human knowing, but the adequate object of intellect is being itself, the transcendental *ens*. We may distinguish proportionate (imaginable) and adequate (transcendental –*ens*) objects of the human intellect, but our desire is for both: “We keep on asking why, and we desist ultimately not because we do not desire but because we recognize our impotence to satisfy our desire.”⁹³ That we should be moved so powerfully by the desire of our intellects, natural in origin but transcendental in its object, is a paradox for philosophers.

Lonergan is clear. The question *quid sit Deus*, asking what God is, occurs naturally as soon as we hear of God’s existence. This question is expressive of the desire to see God, to know what God is, and what Aquinas calls *videre Deum per essentiam*, to see God by his essence.⁹⁴ The desire to understand God is both natural and transcendental, but, for Lonergan, as for Aquinas, the fulfilment of this desire is strictly supernatural, the immediate vision of God in heaven. Lonergan’s conclusion is not philosophical but theological.

Such, then, is the thesis. There exists a natural desire to understand. Its range is set by the adequate object of intellect. Its proper fulfilment is obtained by the reception of a form proportionate to the object understood. This natural desire extends to understanding God. In that case its fulfilment is the beatific vision. Still, only the theologian can affirm a natural desire to see God; a philosopher has to be content with paradox.⁹⁵

In this paper Lonergan goes on to refute static essentialist and closed conceptualist ideas⁹⁶ on the subject of the natural desire to see God: his presuppositions are dynamic and existential intellectualist ones, according to which “the world-order is an intelligible unity mirroring forth the glory of God.” This intelligible unity is knowable imperfectly by philosophy, less imperfectly by theology, but satisfactorily only as a result of the beatific vision.⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that while Lonergan refers, at this stage, to the thought of Thomas on the question of whether full human happiness consists in seeing the divine essence, and whether there is a natural desire to know what God is, he does so without

⁹³ Lonergan, “The Natural Desire to See God,” *Collection*, 83.

⁹⁴ Synonymous terms, as Crowe points out in editorial note f, *Collection*, 270.

⁹⁵ Lonergan, “The Natural Desire to See God,” *Collection*, 84.

⁹⁶ On the objective side, static essentialism precludes the possibility of natural aspiration to a supernatural goal. On the subjective, closed conceptualism precludes the possibility of philosophy being confronted with paradoxes which theology can solve. *Collection*, 84.

⁹⁷ Lonergan, “The Natural Desire to See God,” *Collection*, 84-85.

actually citing the principal passage treating this question, *Summa theologiae*, 1-2, q.3, a. 8, which was to become a leitmotiv in his work through the 1950s. In “The Natural Desire to See God,” Lonergan states his own theoretical position on the question with the cogency of a man of faith in touch with his own desire and possessing the philosophical and theological clarity called for by the debate of that time⁹⁸

Lonergan elaborates in this article his certainty that the desire manifested in questioning is integral to being human, but that its scope transcends created realities to seek the total intelligibility of Being Itself. He invites us to understand our questioning, its natural origins and its transcendental object, in the light of faith.

“Finality, Love, Marriage,” 1943.

The sense of an intelligible world-order expressed in “The Natural Desire to See God,” in which lower orders are intrinsically subordinated to higher ones, Lonergan had earlier developed in a more nuanced way in an article entitled “Finality, Love, Marriage” (*Theological Studies* 4, 1943)⁹⁹. We treat this paper here, out of sequence, because it moves beyond the *vetera* – Lonergan’s reaching up to the mind of Aquinas in the preceding articles – and represents an early attempt to address the *nova* in theology.¹⁰⁰ Significantly for our investigation into Lonergan’s appropriation of desire, it also gives an insight into his understanding, at the age of thirty nine, of the centrality of love in the God-given direction of human life, and foreshadows his more developed extension, in later years, of the dynamism of intellect into the responsible and affective spheres.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Lonergan enters here, though indirectly, into the controversy around Blondel’s conservative response to Henri de Lubac’s new approach to the relation of natural and supernatural in *Surnaturel*,

⁹⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, CWL 4, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 17-52.

¹⁰⁰ Lonergan had reviewed an article on marriage by von Hildebrand in *The Canadian Register*, 1942, and in this article takes up, in depth, issues related to the ends of marriage which had emerged in the ensuing correspondence. Lonergan’s invitation at the end of the 1943 article to an ongoing discussion could not be followed up because the Holy Office ruled in 1944 against the suggestion that secondary ends were not essentially subordinate to the primary end of marriage, the generation and education of children.

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 3 “Heightening Self-Appropriation to the Existential Level” and ff.

In “Finality, Love, Marriage” Lonergan was addressing a question concerning the ends of marriage, which he was lecturing on in Montreal at the time, and doing so in terms of different levels of the person (physical, chemical, biological, sensitive psychological and intellectual), and ascending orders of human love (sexual attraction, friendship, human and divine love). In the ends of marriage, he identifies a horizontal or essential priority of lower levels, but also a vertical finality of lower levels towards higher realizations to which he accords a priority of excellence.

Integral to Lonergan’s understanding of **desire**, in this paper, is the concept of final causality.¹⁰² Finality is commonly described as the response of appetite to motive¹⁰³, and the orientation of processes to terms. The human sex drive is a capacity to respond to the attractiveness of another person and coupling is the way in which the continuation of our species is assured. However Lonergan invites the reader to move beyond obvious instances and conceive things generally. The mere fact of response or orientation does not constitute finality. “If appetite responds because motive moves, if process is oriented because an intelligent agent envisages and intends a term, there is causality indeed; but it is efficient and not final.”¹⁰⁴

... rigorously one must maintain that there is final causality if, and only if, appetite responds because the motive is good; if, and only if, process is oriented because the term is good.¹⁰⁵

Our capacity for response can be derailed by the apparently desirable, such as power to coerce and dominate, but we are made for the goodness to be realized in inclusive relationships. Eating and drinking, delightful in themselves and necessary for the sustaining of healthy life, become destructive when overindulgence makes them ends in themselves. “Final causality has to do with relationship to the end, that is, relationship to the good that matters utterly.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Commonly, when scholastic philosophy was staple diet in Catholic formation, intelligibility was sought in terms of causality: anything could be understood in terms of material cause (what it is made of), efficient cause (how it comes to be made), formal cause (what makes it the sort of thing it is) and final cause (that for which it is made.) In a world of faith, created by God, the formal cause of human beings was understood to be the spiritual soul, and the final cause union with God.

¹⁰³ ‘Appetition’ is, for Lonergan, the capacity to respond.

¹⁰⁴ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 19.

¹⁰⁵ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ As Kathleen M. Williams points out in an unpublished paper given at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston 2004, and Lonergan stressed in *Mission and Spirit*, 1976.

The final cause is the good as cause, because finality is *cuius gratia*, the end for which something is, that for which it is made. For Thomas, the whole created universe is in love with God: *omnia appetunt Deum*,¹⁰⁷ *omnia intendunt assimilari Deo*.¹⁰⁸ In the existing universe all reality responds to God as absolute motive and tends to God as absolute term; but on each level it does so differently, according to the mode of response, of orientation. Lonergan distinguishes, in terms of a hierarchy of horizontal strata of being, the different modes of appetition and process: “it is essence that limits, that ties things down to a given grade of being, that makes them respond to motives of a given type, that assigns them their proper and proportionate ends.”¹⁰⁹ If the Psalms invite the trees of the forest to exult before the Lord, there is an understanding that they do so by processes natural to their species: in growth, in photosynthesis, in seed production, in the beauty of their proper form. Human eyes are wondrously formed to respond to light, are oriented to seeing the material world, but uncreated light is beyond their sight, although the human mind is made also for that. There are, therefore, “two distinct types of finality: the absolute finality of all things to God in his intrinsic goodness; the horizontal finality of limiting essence to limited mode of appetition and process.”¹¹⁰ Accordingly, in the context of the question of the ends of marriage, Lonergan can say that human fecundity, the procreation and education of children, i.e. horizontal finality, is the more essential end of the institution of marriage.

However Lonergan recognizes a third type of finality, within the absolute finality of all things to the goodness of God, “the finality of any lower level of appetition and process to any higher level.”¹¹¹ This concept, recognized but scarcely attended to before Lonergan, is vertical finality. Chemical elements such as hydrogen and oxygen have their own horizontal finality, but they enter into compounds, are taken into the higher systems of living organisms, contribute to animal flourishing. In many ways “vertical finality is of the very idea of a hierarchical universe, of the ordination

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 22, a.2.

¹⁰⁸ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 3, c. 19

¹⁰⁹ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 20.

¹¹⁰ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 20.

¹¹¹ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 20.

of things devised and exploited by the divine Artisan.”¹¹² Whereas horizontal finality holds even for isolated objects, vertical finality results from “the fertility of concrete plurality:” great variation in species, large numbers, long times and multiple opportunities for interaction, change and development. Later, Lonergan will more directly address the huge implications of creation reaching self-consciousness in humanity, with its possibility of communal response to ultimate desire.¹¹³ Already here he signals a multifaceted interdependence, with an upwards thrust, evident in the whole of creation.

On finality is affirmed, besides the absolute reference of all things to God and the horizontal reference of each thing to its commensurate motives and ends, a vertical dynamism and tendency, an upthrust from lower to higher levels of appetite and process...¹¹⁴

Lonergan will also move away from the hierarchical, spatial concept of levels in theological discourse, but even here we note a significant anticipation of his mature use of the concept of sublation which will nuance it:¹¹⁵

For the cosmos is not an aggregate of isolated objects hierarchically arranged on isolated levels, but a dynamic whole in which instrumentally, dispositively, materially, obedientially, one level of being or activity subserves another. The interconnections are endless and manifest.¹¹⁶

It is within this understanding of vertical finality, that Lonergan sees the integration of human sexuality with the processes of reason and grace to yield the incorporation of lower level activities within the higher: a dynamic upthrust from sexual attraction to the love of friendship, to divine charity, to an advance together in Christian perfection, ultimately to the beatific vision. In this way, while the more essential end of marriage is the procreation and education of children, he concludes that the more excellent end of marriage is to be found in the expansion of the love of the couple into “a common consciousness and conscience in the pursuit of life, the good life, and eternal life.”¹¹⁷ The vertical end of marriage is more excellent only relatively,

¹¹² Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 22.

¹¹³ Notably in *Insight*, 237-242; *Method*, 50-55, 359-361; “Healing and Creating in History”, *A Third Colloction*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1985) 100-109.

¹¹⁴ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 22.

¹¹⁵ Lonergan’s developed understanding of sublation is expressed in *Method in Theology*, (Great Britain: Darton Longman & Todd Ltd, 1972): “what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.” 241.

¹¹⁶ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 22.

¹¹⁷ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 49.

however: all finality is to the absolute good. For Lonergan vertical and horizontal finalities are not alternatives and “the vertical emerges all the more strongly as the horizontal is realized the more fully.”¹¹⁸ The more generous and sensitively expressive sex is for a couple, the stronger the chance of a true friendship developing out of initial romantic love; the better the committed companionship, the greater the opening to unselfish sharing in God-given charity, which in turn is preparation for the longed-for consummation of human love in the beatific vision.

Having established this, he goes on to analyse the concept of love, giving with concision the most extensive treatment of love anywhere in his collected works.¹¹⁹ Lonergan treats of love both in terms of the human will as rational appetite, and of the human subject who loves. Love is firstly the basic form of willing, seen under two aspects. One is active: essentially a matter of desire, movement, striving for the good; the other is more passive: a matter of completion, delight, resting in the good. As the pure response of appetite to the good, love delights in the sheer goodness of the beloved for his or her own sake, *nihil aliud ... quam complacentia boni*,¹²⁰ “while active desire, hope, joy, hatred, aversion, fear, sadness are consequents of the basic response and reflect objective modifications in the circumstances of the motive good.”¹²¹ Desire is for the beloved as not fully attained; hope is desire confident of reaching union; sadness responds to absence or estrangement from the one desired. Besides being the basic form of appetition, love “is the first principle of process to the end loved, and the whole of the process is thus but the self-expression of the love that is its first principle.”¹²²

From the point of view of the loving human subject, Lonergan sees love as the principle of union between different subjects; love uniting them in pursuit of a common goal or as the ground of their exultation together in the attainment of the

¹¹⁸ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 46.

¹¹⁹ This analysis is expressed in terms of the faculty psychology of the day, language Lonergan will continue to use into the 60s, even when his actual method has become intentionality analysis.

¹²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1-2, q. 25, a. 2c.

¹²¹ Aquinas’ understanding of these first two modes of love is comprehensively treated by Crowe in “Complacency and Concern,” a three part study which appeared initially in *Theological Studies* 20, and is currently available as chs 3-6 in *Three Thomist Studies*, Frederick E. Crowe, a supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop*, Vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence, 2000.

¹²² Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 23-24.

good which is love's end. The love that is friendship is key in this paper: true friendship has its basis neither in pleasure nor in advantage, according to Aristotle's thought in the *Nichomachean Ethics*,¹²³ but only in the objective lovable-ness of the virtuous person. Becoming knowledgeable and virtuous is to be a true friend to oneself and only thus can one be a true friend to another. The excellence recognized in the friend, or the potential for it which leads one friend to desire it for the other, and the individual's own lovable-ness in pursuit of such excellence are all examples of finality towards the ultimate goodness of God, whose love draws all into cooperation in the divine plan for a friendly universe. Lonergan is here following Aquinas' refinement¹²⁴ of Aristotle's treatment of friendship as paradigmatic for the consideration of love:

... for it is only in a tendency to an absolute that one can transcend both egoism and altruism; and such transcendence is implicit in the Aristotelian notion of true friendship with its basis not in pleasure nor in advantage but in the objective lovable-ness of the virtuous man.¹²⁵

God is absolute motive and absolute term, the one who activates our capacity to respond to the good, and so draws us on beyond any limited desire we currently have for ourselves or others.

Lonergan does not ignore the tensions that are generated in the human person by the multiplicity of specialized appetites tending towards their appropriate end and spontaneous loves for a variety of goods. "In this tension the rational part of man is at a disadvantage, for natural spontaneity takes care of itself while knowledge and virtue have to be acquired."¹²⁶ However, his treatment of the dialectical and social obstacles to the ascent of love, and the possibility of their progressive overcoming through redemption and "the divine solidarity in grace which is the mystical body of Christ,"¹²⁷ goes beyond our present purpose.

These obstacles and their overcoming are, however, the setting for his model of the ascent of love towards its true good. "...one has to set the complex nature of love in

¹²³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII, 3-7; esp. 4, 1157a 16-19; IX, 4, 1166b 2-29; IX, 8, 1169a 12-15.

¹²⁴ Aquinas was able to see, as Aristotle was not, that objective lovable-ness involves an absolute good. *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, q. 109, a. 3 c.

¹²⁵ Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection*, 25.

¹²⁶ Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection*, 26.

¹²⁷ Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection*, 27.

the empty category of vertical finality; one has to study the ascent of love from the level of nature to the level of the beatific vision.”¹²⁸ On every level, love has a passive aspect inasmuch as it is response to motive good, an immanent aspect inasmuch as it is a perfection of the lover, and an active aspect inasmuch as it is productive of further instances of the good. The whole is interpenetrated in fully human living by rational love examining and selecting its motives, deliberately willing its own perfection and freely proceeding to effect further instances of the good. The lower level of natural spontaneity is obviously the work of God “who implants in nature its proper mode of response and orientation.”¹²⁹ At the level of reason there is already an antecedent spontaneity to truth and goodness, and on the highest level of grace, there is an elevating transformation of this antecedent spontaneity: “... so that the truth through which God rules man’s autonomy is the truth God reveals beyond reason’s reach, and the good that is motive is the divine goodness that is motive of infused charity.”¹³⁰ As the higher levels perfect the lower, so the lower predispose towards the higher, since all come from and return to God, and it is precisely in this predisposition that Lonergan finds the ascent of love that gives marriage its finality to Christian charity and perfection:

Now towards this high goal of charity it is no small beginning in the weak and imperfect heart of fallen man to be startled by a beauty that shifts the center of appetite out of self; and such a shift is effected on the level of sensitive spontaneity by *erôs* leaping in through delighted eyes and establishing itself as unrest in absence and an imperious demand for company. Next, company may reveal deeper qualities of mind and character to shift again the center from the merely organic tendencies of nature to the rational level of friendship with its enduring basis in the excellence of a good person. Finally grace inserts into charity the love that nature gives and reason approves.¹³¹

In this beautiful description of development within a loving relationship, Lonergan demonstrates for the passive aspect of love, a dispositive upward tendency from *erôs* to friendship, and from friendship to a special order of charity.

He is able to do the same with love as immanent perfection in the lover. By loving in accord with a right order, (first God absolutely, then creatures “according to the measure of their excellence, which also is measure of their proximity to God by

¹²⁸ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 29.

¹²⁹ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 30.

¹³⁰ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 30.

¹³¹ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 32.

assimilation,”¹³²) human persons make themselves good, and thence lovable. When love is habitual and reciprocated, it unites lovers in a larger unit, “with each to the other as another self, a *dimidium animae suae*.¹³³ Not only on the levels of spontaneity and reason, but also on the level of grace, he argues, marriage is “the real apprehension, the intense appetition, the full expression of union with another self,”¹³⁴ and the bringing together of a couple extends to children and the community in which they are raised. The ascending finalistic drive of the sacrament is to “the very summit of Christian perfection, in which... all members of the mystical body are known and loved as other selves.”¹³⁵

The third and active aspect of love is one of activity and production. The person who loves will try to grow in love by focussing on the desired good; will seek to express love in ways that resemble the desired goodness; separated from the desired good, the lover will seek to possess it; and if the motive good is merely a project, love will use every endeavour to produce it.

For just as habitual and reciprocated love has the formal effect of constituting a union, of setting up mutual other selves, so a common end, defined by a common motive and sought in the common effort of friends sharing a common life, actuates the common consciousness of mutual other selves.¹³⁶

In Lonergan’s vision of the ascent of love, it is this aspect which most clearly leads to development, in the individual and the group. He makes it clear that this ascent is an integrative influence:

... granted several levels of activity and love, then there is an intensification of the higher by the lower, a stability resulting not from mere absence of tension but from positive harmony between different levels, and, most dynamic, the integration by which the lower in its expansion involves a development in the higher.¹³⁷

Attractive as this perspective is, Lonergan is not unaware of the ways in which “the reason and rational appetite of fallen man limp in the disequilibrium of high aspiration and poor performance.”¹³⁸ Human ignorance and frailty can too readily tend to center an infinite craving, St Augustine’s *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum est cor*

¹³² Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 31.

¹³³ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 32.

¹³⁴ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 33.

¹³⁵ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 33-34.

¹³⁶ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 35.

¹³⁷ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 36.

¹³⁸ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” *Collection*, 39.

nostrum donec requiescat in te,¹³⁹ on a finite object or release. Subsequent rationalization leads to the deforming of knowledge into harmony with disorderly loves. Lonergan's hope, and ours, is in the gratuitous action of God.

To pierce the darkness of such ideology the divine Logos came into the world; to sap its root in weak human will he sent his Spirit of Love into our hearts; and in this redemption we are justified, rectified, renewed, yet never in this life to the point that further justification, rectification, renewal ceases to be possible.¹⁴⁰

In a world where God is absolute motive and absolute term of all things, it is God who activates our appetite, our capacity to respond to the good. The redeeming action of God in Christ continues in human history through the Spirit's healing of the selfishness which blocks the ascent of love.

In "Finality, Love, Marriage," we have seen Lonergan's early insight into the desire for ultimate good which moves all of world process as the way in which God attracts all things to respond to love through who or what they are. In the second part of his life he will give further clarification of the fulfillment of desire involved in "what we are doing when we are loving,"¹⁴¹ and to that we will come in Chapter Five. In the *Verbum* articles and "The Natural Desire to See God," Lonergan has made clear the significance he places on our recognition of the desire to know which moves us in our questioning. His certainty of this was instrumental in the writer's own self-discovery. Though I had long sensed my call to love and be loved and had been drawn to Lonergan precisely by his account of religious experience, to discover myself also as a questioner, drawn to the fullness of truth, has motivated my theological journey. Now my quest is to facilitate for others the appropriation of desire. Lonergan became my interlocutor in a search for self appropriation, self acceptance and encounter with Mystery in the fullness of human authenticity in a way that parallels his early years of dialogue with himself and the great thinkers of the past.

We are now approaching in the next chapter a study of his first masterpiece, his explanatory and pedagogical account in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, of

¹³⁹ St Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, Book 1, Chapter 1: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in you."

¹⁴⁰ Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection*, 39.

¹⁴¹ Fred Lawrence, "The Human Good and Christian Conversation", *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*, Thomas J. Farrell & Paul A. Soukup (eds) (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1993), 267.

response to the desire to know, namely what we are doing when we are knowing and what it is we know when we do so. This will yield a fuller account both of the desire to know and the possibility of its appropriation.

Chapter 2 Self Affirmation as a Knower in *Insight*

To appropriate our desire for the fullness of truth and discover our capacity to attain objective knowledge we need to consider how the human mind works. In this chapter we are looking for a method of coming to know our own knowing which is accessible to ordinary human attentiveness and understanding, which offers insight into an invariant pattern, valid across cultures and epochs, and that can be affirmed as true by anyone willing and able to make the effort. Such a method, we maintain, is given in Lonergan's intentionality analysis in his major philosophical work, *Insight*. The intention then is to show the relationship of this pattern to our deepest desires and to optimal human functioning and suggest how, in a faith perspective, we recognize it to be significant in the divine plan and desire for human living. It is presented as a key to the personal appropriation of desire, a particularly effective one, open to all who have the questions.

As soon as Lonergan finished the *Verbum* articles which we considered in the previous chapter, he began writing *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*¹⁴², and devoted to it the years from 1949 to 1953. During the first three years his intention was "an exploration of methods generally in preparation for a study of the method of theology,"¹⁴³ a desire which had been growing through his years of study. When he found that he had to go back to Rome to teach in 1953 he rounded off what he had done to that point and published it. Significantly, *Insight* does show all method as based in the invariant pattern of cognitional operations and systematizes the personal discovery of oneself as a knower. It further represents a development of his thinking about the desire to know as the *eros* of the human mind, and anticipates a future

¹⁴² Bernard J. F. Lonergan S. J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 2nd edition, (London: Longmans, 1978). First published in 1958 and most recently in the fully annotated critical edition by Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto, by University of Toronto Press in 1992. Page numbers will be given for both editions.

¹⁴³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, William F.J.Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell eds. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 269.

exploration of the good as a universal subsuming in human authenticity of the intelligible, the true, the one.¹⁴⁴

Really knowing what it is to know

With the publication of *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* in 1957, Lonergan has thematized and systematized cognitional and moral self-appropriation and presented it pedagogically. The startling change which he had experienced in 1935 – 6 and which he later came to refer to as ‘intellectual conversion’ was foundational for all his subsequent work. Though this term was frequently used in Lonergan’s notes on “Intelligence and Reality” he never uses it in *Insight*. Richard M. Liddy, a student of Lonergan’s, suggests in *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*¹⁴⁵, that Lonergan was concerned to avoid what might be perceived as its ‘religious overtones’ in a work written not just for believers but for “any sufficiently cultured consciousness.” Most notably, it is in *Insight* that he sets out to mediate self-appropriation as a knower to his readers: “So it is that my detailed investigations of the thought of Aquinas on *gratia operans*¹⁴⁶ and on *verbum* have been followed by the present essay in aid of a personal appropriation of one’s own rational self-consciousness.”¹⁴⁷ Readers are invited to follow the step by step pedagogy of the book and so reach an understanding of the pattern of their own ways of coming to know:

The aim is not to set forth a list of the abstract properties of human knowledge but to assist the reader in effecting a personal appropriation of the concrete dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in his own cognitional activities.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ In scholastic philosophy, transcendentals are those qualities that are common to all things whatsoever, and to all differences between things. They are not restricted to any category, class, or individual. The classic transcendentals are thing (res), being (ens), something (aliquid), the one (unum), the true (verum), the good (bonum), and, according to some philosophers, the beautiful (pulchrum).

¹⁴⁵ Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 179.

¹⁴⁶ See their most recent publication in translation in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Vol.1, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). Part 1 of this volume comprises four articles written in 1941-42, and Part 2 is Lonergan’s doctoral dissertation, *Gratia Operans*, submitted to the Gregorian University in 1940. He maintained that commentators on Aquinas from the sixteenth century onwards lacked historical consciousness, raising questions which Aquinas had never considered and generally obnubilating the issues. Lonergan reconstructed Thomas’s intellectual development on grace and added a unique diagnosis of the mistakes made by modern scholastic authors on this subject.

¹⁴⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 744/769.

¹⁴⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, xvii/11. Lonergan wrote before the concern about inclusive language was in vogue: all humanity could be safely subsumed under the label ‘man’ and the third person singular could be routinely ‘he/him/his’ without giving offence to half

As will be shown, Lonergan's invitation to self-appropriation is a call to do more than heighten the consciousness which is already present in all the cognitional activities of a person awake: it is to reach a self understanding that can be verified by attention to inner experience.

The first eight chapters of *Insight* are a series of five-finger exercises inviting the reader to discover in himself and for himself just what happens when he understands. My aim is to help people experience themselves understanding, advert to the experience, distinguish it from other experiences, name and identify it, and recognize it when it recurs.¹⁴⁹

Though Lonergan can state it so simply, he recognizes that this learning will take time and considerable effort, even with the help of the methodological process he provides: "the process of self-appropriation occurs only slowly, and, usually, only through a struggle with some such book as *Insight*."¹⁵⁰ It involves clearly identifying in one's own consciousness the central act of understanding, and then distinguishing it from all the cognitive activities that precede and follow from it.

The central act of understanding, the insight which gives the book its name, differs from the operation of the senses in its instantaneous nature. We can be conscious of ourselves as hearing for the duration of a sound that captures our attention. Seeing is an operation we are aware of whenever our eyes are open, and we can alternate seeing and not seeing. So vivid an experience is this, that for many it comes to represent the quintessence of knowing.¹⁵¹ Hearing and seeing with eyes open are continuous operations. However the flash of understanding whereby we discern a pattern, an explanation, a solution in the data our mind is playing with, comes as a sudden

the English speaking world. I have not sought to alter it in direct quotes even though Lonergan had himself become sensitive to the issue before his death in 1984.

¹⁴⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, William F.J.Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell eds. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 269.

¹⁵⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 7. This is a characteristically respectful statement. Though Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* was published in 1960 and also aimed to uncover the nature of human understanding, his emphasis is more concerned to critique approaches to the human sciences and demonstrate that human consciousness is affected by ambient culture in the historical period, is 'historically affected consciousness', *Wirkungsgeschichtlichesbewußtsein*. Gadamer was 'incapable of thematizing with full accuracy the idea of consciousness as experience over against the mistaken idea of consciousness as perception', according to one of his doctoral students who knew both his work and Lonergan's, Fred Lawrence, "The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other" in *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*, Farrell & Soukup, eds.

¹⁵¹ For naïve realists, knowing is a matter of taking a good look; objectivity is a matter of seeing just what is there to be seen. This is what Lonergan was to call "the myth of the eyeball."

discovery which is both surprising and unimaginable. Insight into intelligibility replaces puzzlement and we can neither compel nor predict it. “It is insight that makes the difference between the tantalizing problem and the evident solution.”¹⁵² To attend to understanding we can only confront real problems and puzzle over them until insight comes and we catch it breaking through.

To this end Lonergan turns to scientific method to find: “the fields of intellectual endeavor in which the greatest care is devoted to exactitude and, in fact, the greatest exactitude is attained.”¹⁵³ In the first chapter it was mathematics; the second to fifth draw on physics for illustrations. The clarity and exactitude of modern scientific thinking is a key advantage for Lonergan, the criterion of the real implicit in scientific questions another. “It has taken modern science four centuries to make the discovery that the objects of its inquiry need not be imaginable entities moving through imaginable processes in an imaginable space-time.”¹⁵⁴ He systematizes for the reader the distinction between imagination and insight, between ‘taking a look’ inwardly or outwardly, and knowing as the result of experiencing, understanding and judging correctly. Asked by a Harper & Row book editor preparing a blurb for a new reprint in 1977, “What might the reader experience in pursuing this book?” he wrote:

Examples of insight are drawn from mathematics, physics, common sense and philosophy. The temptation will be to think of such objects and neglect his own operations with respect to the objects. This is missing the whole point. The various objects are mentioned only to invite the reader to heighten his consciousness of the operations he is performing in dealing with the objects. Once this pitfall is avoided, and the avoidance is not easy, there can emerge a growing illumination that leads the reader no longer to need Lonergan because he has found out for himself and can work on his own.¹⁵⁵

The wide field of examples provided is designed to ensure that those not at home in either mathematics or science, and in fact more baffled by the examples given than by anything in Lonergan’s concise explanatory text, will still be able to find a context in which the illuminating experience of meaning breaking through the fog may occur, and be noticed. Lonergan shows parallels between commonsense and empirical science – both are developments of intelligence and involve observation, the self correcting processes of trial and error and coalescing insights yielding further answers

¹⁵² Lonergan, *Insight*, xi/4.

¹⁵³ Lonergan, *Insight*, xx/14.

¹⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, xx-xxi/15.

¹⁵⁵ Lonergan, unpublished notes in the possession of the Toronto Lonergan Research Institutes archives and cited by Frederick E. Crowe S.J. in *Lonergan*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 75.

and yet more questions.¹⁵⁶ Both employ the same inbuilt method of human intentional consciousness, though whereas common sense is mainly concerned with making and doing, the relationships and transformation of human beings and their environment, pure science aims to come closer to the natural world and relationships within it as it is in itself. Chapters 6 (Common Sense and Its Subject) and 7 (Common Sense as Object) are rich in practical insights. For some readers it may even be the appreciation of a good joke that is an instance of what they are seeking – why is everyone laughing? The breakthrough into understanding is pleasurable whenever it happens, though the sooner the better in the case of a joke.

It was the mark of Lonergan's pedagogical purpose that he wrote *Insight* from a moving viewpoint.¹⁵⁷ The whole vision is not revealed at once: he begins with the simplest elements, then extends, building step by step on what has been learned in a series of higher viewpoints. The Table of Contents shows a two part division: chapters 1 to 10, "Insight as Activity," in which he explains the structure of knowing, and justifies his insistence on the need for reflective insight and the act of judgment¹⁵⁸; and chapters 11 to 20, "Insight as Knowledge," with the pivotal chapter 11 as the first time the reader is called to make a significant judgment, to affirm their own knowing.¹⁵⁹ This self-affirmation goes well beyond any assumption we may have made hitherto about our own and others' ability to know. Successful negotiation of this step means the breaking of the duality of our knowing: with the rest of the animal kingdom we share an extroverted consciousness oriented towards biological ends which recognizes and responds to "the already out there now real"; our ability to question and reach a correct understanding is the form of knowing which is fully human. The discovery of the difference – and Lonergan holds that "one has not made it yet if one has no clear memory of its startling strangeness"¹⁶⁰ – is integral to self-knowledge and so to self-appropriation as a knower and becomes for the reader a

¹⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 242/267.

¹⁵⁷ In this study we are following the same pattern, by following the moving viewpoint of Lonergan's own life discoveries as mediated for us in his writings and the writer's own gradual appropriation of the desire we are.

¹⁵⁸ See following page for an expansion on this.

¹⁵⁹ Terry J. Tekippe, *Bernard Lonergan's Insight: A Comprehensive Commentary* (Lanham, Maryland: University of America Press, 2003) xiii – xxiv. Later in his life Lonergan used the epistemological questions: What do I do when I know? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do it?

¹⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, xxviii/22.

criterion of the real. Lonergan the teacher is firm: “To say it all with the greatest brevity: one has not only to read *Insight* but also to discover oneself in oneself.”¹⁶¹

The work is demanding, but it establishes a foundation for a growth in authentic response to the desire to know:

The labor of self-appropriation cannot occur at a single leap. Essentially it is a development of the subject and in the subject and, like all development, it can be solid and fruitful only by being painstaking and slow.¹⁶²

Though Lonergan is not making it explicit, this development may be seen as an opening to advances in self-understanding, beyond the cognitional and moral levels, to the fully existential level where the self-constituting subject seeks the values revealed in intentional feelings¹⁶³. He admits that his promise “has the ring of a slogan” but sums up as follows the positive content of this work:

Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad line of all that there is to be understood, but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.¹⁶⁴

To do this requires identifying the operations by which we come to know, and then showing how they are dynamically structured, each operation presupposing and completing the activity which precedes it. In cognitional consciousness, experience forms the first level, that of the data of sense and the data of inner experience or our own awareness of ourselves as seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and imagining. It is questioning what we experience (questions for intelligence – where, what, how, why, when, who, what for? – rising in us spontaneously) which promotes us to the next level. Insight or direct understanding is this second level which grasps the unity presented in data, the *Aha-erlebnis* or eureka moment. However not every bright idea is the right idea. We want to understand correctly, so there arise questions for reflection (Is that really so? Could there be any other explanation to account for the data? Does this explanation account for all the data?) The third and final level of this cognitional structure is that of judgment or reflective understanding, by which we affirm or deny the understanding achieved at the second level, or defer so doing until further evidence can be obtained. As his readers, we are invited to apply this transcendental method which is the dynamic structure of our consciousness to our

¹⁶¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 260.

¹⁶² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, xxiii/17.

¹⁶³ See *Method in Theology*, 38, 66.

¹⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, xxviii/22.

own conscious, cognitive activity,¹⁶⁵ and thus to come to know ourselves as knowers. Chapter 11 confronts the reader with the realization that self affirmation as a knower is recognition of a fact. Only by use of these disputed operations could one argue against the fact, “but the fact of the asking and the possibility of the answering are themselves the sufficient reason for the answer.”¹⁶⁶ We then recognize in our insistent questioning the desire for truth which is the God-given action of spirit within us. We can then confirm as fact the openness that constitutes us as human.

The Pure, Detached, Disinterested, Unrestricted Desire to Know

We are integrally desirous creatures. In the purely biological pattern of experience there are drives which operate intermittently, “sequences which converge upon terminal activities of intussusception or reproduction, or, when negative in scope, self-preservation.”¹⁶⁷ We desire safety, food, warmth, freedom of movement, companionship and positive stroking almost as much as the social animals that are our domestic pets, as a result of the animal life we share with them. But over and above “the biological account books of pleasure and pain” human life knows the “spontaneous, self-justifying joy” of liberation from biological purposiveness in play and creativity, in artistic expression of the “deep-set wonder in which all questions have their source and ground.”¹⁶⁸ This is the aesthetic pattern of experience and the desire moving in it goes beyond survival and reproduction: it is desire for the beautiful as much as for the true, the good.

The third pattern of experience treated in *Insight* is the intellectual pattern and there Lonergan is completely at home. As a result of his painstaking self-appropriation, Lonergan can describe and explain the desire and the response which have brought him to this stage of his intellectual journey. He identifies at the core of human cognitional structure ‘the pure desire to know’ as the dynamism orienting it to the universe of being, to what is real, to the true. This desire is the spirit of inquiry to be

¹⁶⁵ Lonergan’s transcendental philosophy as applied to cognitional theory is comprehensively covered in Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*, pp. 3-25, as well as in *Insight*.

¹⁶⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 333/358.

¹⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 183/206.

¹⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 185/208. Lonergan maintains that art (musical, graphic, kinesthetic, poetic etc.) is an expression of the human spirit that seeks to mean, to convey, to impart something that is to be reached, not through science or philosophy, but through a participation, and in some fashion a reenactment of the artist’s inspiration and intention.

recognized in questions for understanding; it is a drive to seek an adequate understanding and then to identify what it is to act in accordance with the realm of fact. Whether appropriated or not, it operates spontaneously in consciousness:

We are committed, not by knowing what it is and that it is worthwhile, but by an inability to avoid experience, by the subtle conquest in us of the eros that would understand, by the inevitable aftermath of that sweet adventure when a rationality identical with us demands the absolute, refuses unreserved assent to less than the unconditioned, and when that is attained, imposes upon us a commitment in which we bow to an immanent Anankê.¹⁶⁹

The dynamic orientation operative deep within ourselves, which Lonergan invites his readers to discover, the “drive to understand” which emerges “when the noise of other appetites is stilled,” which has the power to withdraw humans from “other interests, other pleasures, other achievements,” send us on “dangerous voyages of exploration,” and “demand endless sacrifices,”¹⁷⁰ this is what he calls the **pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.**

Lonergan characterizes it as **pure**, because of its integrity, not because it is disconnected from all that makes us ‘a little lower than the angels’ (Ps. 8:5). It is essentially human, an *eros* of the mind which human beings can no more divest themselves of than they can their sensuality. “To inquire and understand, to reflect and judge, to deliberate and choose are as much an exigence of human nature as waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, talking and loving.”¹⁷¹ The primordial drive of the human being is the pure question. We might call it alertness of mind, intellectual curiosity, the spirit of inquiry, the drive to wonder about experiences and images. “It is prior to any insights, any concepts, any words; for insights, concepts, words have to do with answers, and before we look for answers we want them; such wanting is the pure question.”¹⁷² It makes us open to experience, raises relevant questions about it, requires us to affirm any insight which meets the conditions for reality but prevents us from giving too ready an assent to those which do not fulfil the conditions, and so keeps us engaged in the ongoing search for solutions. The pure desire to know is:

¹⁶⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 331/355-6.

¹⁷⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 4 (old) 28 (new) quoted by Beth Beshear, “The Problem of Desire in Human Knowing and Living,” *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Fall 2002, 155-173.

¹⁷¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 474/498.

¹⁷² Lonergan, *Insight*, 9/34.

the absorption of investigation, the joy of discovery, the assurance of judgment, the modesty of limited knowledge. It is the relentless serenity, the unhurried determination, the imperturbable drive of question following appositely on question in the genesis of truth.”¹⁷³

There is a pure desire to know which follows up questions with further questions, involving us in a self-correcting process of learning and leaving us unsatisfied until we know all that remains to be known about what engages us.

This pure desire to know is **disinterested**. Insights are pleasurable and we desire the satisfaction to be had in acts of understanding, understanding fully, understanding correctly. However, mistaken understanding is equally pleasurable as long as we fail to recognize it as such, and yet the pure desire despises it. The disinterested desire to know is not desire for satisfaction, but for the correctness of the content. It will not settle for mistakes or half truths but “heads beyond one’s own joy in one’s own insight to the further question [of] whether one’s own insight is correct.”¹⁷⁴

It is also **detached**: it will not countenance the inhibitions of cognitional process that arise from other human desires and drives, nor the twisting of processes in favour of one or other outcome particularly sought,¹⁷⁵ “the attached and interested desires of man’s sensitivity and intersubjectivity...”¹⁷⁶ When the flow of our dynamic conscious intentionality is impeded, by conscious or unconscious blocking of the questions which would generate unwanted answers, our judgements and decisions based on them are biased and unreliable. To the term ‘bias’ Lonergan gives a precise meaning in *Insight*: aberrations of human understanding which exclude and repress insights, along with the further relevant questions they would have engendered. Bias can be operative in us as individuals and in the social groups to which we belong.

As individuals we may be affected by a preconscious aberrant censorship, blind spots, repression, inhibitions, arising from the psychological depths and commonly marked by sexual overtones.¹⁷⁷ The bias of unconscious motivation distorts the dramatic, active pattern of our living. We may not appreciate, without professional help, the

¹⁷³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 349/373.

¹⁷⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 596/619.

¹⁷⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 380/404. The questions of bias and the dialectical nature of human development are given fuller treatment in *Insight* 214-227.

¹⁷⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 701/723.

¹⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 218/244.

extent to which we are avoiding the light in order to avoid pain, though even in these cases of dramatic or neurotic bias, we are left suspicious and disquieted.

In individual bias, elementary passions such as fear or desire can block the insights which would give us a rounded and balanced view of our situation, and thus skew our understanding of both personal and group matters. Egoistically we can seek our own advantage and deny the inner dynamism that urges us to extend to others in responsible benevolence, the satisfying solution we have come to for ourselves. Further questions that might lead to unwanted insights are ignored or repressed and the development of our practical intelligence is hindered. However, we do not thus disregard our inner, God-seeking truth without damage to our inner integrity, damage of which we cannot but be aware. Our disjointed consciousness becomes bad conscience:

The egoist's uneasy conscience is his awareness of his sin against the light. Operative within him, there is the *eros* of the mind, the desire and the drive to understand; he knows its value, for he gives it free rein where his own interests are concerned; yet he also repudiates its mastery, for he will not grant serious consideration to its further relevant questions.¹⁷⁸

Egoistic or individual bias, as refusal to understand and hence to choose the world of value because of a prior choice for self-interest and personal satisfaction, leads to an isolation of oneself from others, a hindrance to achievement of the openness to which human beings are called.

Group bias is equally a refusal of the further questions that might lead to unwanted insights, but in this case it is supported by others, at least those of our own group, and it leads us to choose the group's interest when it is in conflict with the good of society. "The group is prone to have a blind spot for the insights which reveal its well-being to be excessive or its usefulness at an end."¹⁷⁹ Groups, just as truly as individuals, are open to knowing what really is the case, and open to change for the better. They achieve this only when they follow the transcendental precepts, defined by Lonergan at this stage as: Be attentive. Be intelligent. Be reasonable. Be responsible. This is the inbuilt method of human consciousness that needs to be given free rein in each member of each group. When a number of members or even one

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 221-222/247.

¹⁷⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 223/248.

individual holds out against the truth to which the majority has assented, there cannot be full collaboration or the best outcomes in achieving concrete instances of the human good. Progress in society, the general good, requires that groups work together, attentively, intelligently, reasonably and responsibly. Groups that work against one another in an effort to keep from themselves and from everyone else whatever might call in question their own particular status, are contributing to social decline and the results are all too obvious in group egoisms of wealth, race or ethnic origin. Our culture is “marred and distorted by sin.”¹⁸⁰

The irrational bias that arises from individual and group egoism restricts the whole domain of truth and value to the confines of our need for self-gratification and self-promotion. Truth is sacrificed to rationalization. This bias opens a gap between the essential freedom of human persons and the effective freedom that they actually exercise.¹⁸¹ Though human beings can make choices, their choice can be constrained by factors such as narrow group-think or fear suppressing questions leading to insight:

Effective freedom itself has to be won. The key point is to reach a willingness to persuade oneself and to submit to the persuasion of others. For then one can be persuaded to a universal willingness; so one becomes antecedently willing to learn all there is to be learnt about ... the enlargement of one's freedom from external constraints and psychoneural interferences.¹⁸²

Concrete situations resulting from human sin, “infected with the social surd,” seem to provide evidence in their apparent intractability “that only in an increasingly limited fashion can intelligence and reasonableness and good will have any real bearing on the conduct of human affairs.”¹⁸³ Individuals rationalize, societies create ideologies and the whole process of decline becomes entrenched.

At the root of all these forms of bias¹⁸⁴ there is a tendency to choose the immediacy of the tangibly satisfying over what is the truly valuable. In lieu of the slow acquiring of

¹⁸⁰ Lonergan, “Mission and Spirit,” *A Third Collection.: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan*, ed. F. E. Crowe, S.J., (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press 1985), 31.

¹⁸¹ Kathleen M. Williams, “Lonergan and the Transforming Immanence of the Transcendent: Towards a Theology of Grace as the Dynamic State of Being-In-Love with God.” (Doctoral Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1998), 126.

¹⁸² Lonergan, *Insight*, 623-4/646-7

¹⁸³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 693/715.

¹⁸⁴ Lonergan speaks of one further form of bias, ‘general bias,’ which privileges common sense (concerned with the immediate, concrete situation) to the point of disregarding larger issues, theoretical insights and long-term results. *Insight*, 225/251.

understanding and willingness to live rightly, and then the adaptation that makes right living habitual, there is self-surrender to the human plight,¹⁸⁵ choosing the easy way out when avoiding sin by adequate reflection becomes burdensome. This is a shortsighted¹⁸⁶ gratification of our desire to avoid pain or to achieve pleasure, power or dramatic effect¹⁸⁷ on others.

Disoriented self-seeking runs counter to our true self-interest, the finality of our being, that love which is in us drawing us to absolute goodness and the knowledge of all truth, and it cannot but leave us with the taste of ashes in our mouth – at least initially. It is unfortunately true that persistent denial of the call to transcend self will ultimately lead to a dulling of this disquiet. Then it will perhaps take the shattering of our ‘peace at any price’ by some crisis, to allow the underlying longing for the true and the good to resurface and be again welcomed as our guide to a fully human way of living. In subsequent writings Lonergan will treat of the redemptive action of grace in this experience of shattering.¹⁸⁸ Bias affects the free operation of transcendental consciousness by determining not only which questions will be allowed to surface but what we are inclined to notice, how we will reach conclusions and where we will seek support within a narrowed horizon.

To give free rein to the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know is to admit all its questions for intelligence and reflection because the pure, detached, disinterested desire to know is **unrestricted**. Human capacity to understand is not unrestricted, but the desire is prior to understanding and simply as desire it is orientation to the totality of being. We want to understand completely, to know everything about everything. When one question is answered, the answer may well give rise to a whole new set of questions. Not all questions are equally significant and just as the pure desire is the

¹⁸⁵ “The reign of sin is the expectation of sin.” *Insight*, 693.

¹⁸⁶ It is shortsighted because, as Aristotle understood, “the wicked are true friends neither to themselves nor to others.” *Ethics*, VIII, 5, 1157a 16ff. What is implicit in Aristotle’s assertion that being a true friend to oneself requires choosing the best, namely knowledge and virtue, is made explicit by Aquinas’ affirmation that human beings and, as well, all creatures according to their mode, naturally love God above all things. Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, 1-2, q.109, a 3c; *Qodl.* 1a. 8c.& ad 3m.

¹⁸⁷ The dramatic pattern of experience and its relevance to the constitution of self and one’s own world view will be treated in the following chapter.

¹⁸⁸ Notably in “Healing and Creating in History” and “Mission and Spirit,” *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S. J.*, ed Frederick E. Crowe, S. J., (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985,) though it pervades his writings from *Method in Theology* onwards as we will show in Chapters 4 and 5.

intelligent and rational basis from which we can discern between correct and incorrect answers, so it helps distinguish between valid and mistaken questions.¹⁸⁹ None are to be rejected unintelligently, uncritically. However the existence of this unrestricted desire as the wellspring of our questioning is beyond doubt. “Neither centuries of inquiry nor enormous libraries of answers have revealed any tendency for the stream of further questions to diminish.”¹⁹⁰

The pure desire to know is unrestricted in that it reaches out insistently even to the mystery of God to which our human capacity for understanding is not proportionate in and of itself.¹⁹¹ The pure desire moves us to question, heads us towards an objective that becomes known only through its own unfolding in understanding and judgment. The dynamism of consciousness is directed towards all that can be known, but “Man’s unrestricted desire to know is mated to a limited capacity to attain knowledge.”¹⁹² There is a clear possibility of the human community eventually coming to understand the workings of the natural universe and to this end, we are told but have no way of confirming, there are more scientists doing research now than the total number who have ever done so in history. This is horizontal finality within the universe of proportionate knowledge, human intelligence directed to its natural goals.

However we are also capable of asking questions that transcend this universe and can conceive of possibilities beyond it. The questions arise and we seem to be instinctively aware of vertical finality. We are oriented by unquenchable desire for more, for a destiny properly speaking supernatural and meaning that fully satisfies. ‘Being’ is whatever can be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably, and the possibility of transcendent knowledge is the possibility of grasping intelligently and affirming reasonably the existence of a transcendent being, being itself.¹⁹³ It is towards this that the pure desire is drawing us. The proof of the possibility, Lonergan claims,¹⁹⁴ is the fact that such intelligent grasp and reasonable affirmation do happen and, we suggest, to a remarkable degree throughout human history and the great

¹⁸⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 352/376.

¹⁹⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 638/661.

¹⁹¹ As we noted in the preceding chapter, p. 23. The distinction is between proportionate and adequate attainment of the desired understanding. We desire more than we can attain on earth.

¹⁹² Lonergan, *Insight*, 639/662.

¹⁹³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 640/663.

¹⁹⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 640/663.

majority of cultures. As the notion of being, the pure desire is all-pervasive and it underpins and penetrates all cognitional contents, constituting them as such:

Self-affirmation is the affirmation of the knower, conscious empirically, intelligently, rationally. The pure desire to know is a constituent element both of the affirming and of the self that is affirmed. But the pure desire to know is the notion of being as it is spontaneously operative in cognitional process, and being itself is the to-be-known towards which the process heads.¹⁹⁵

Desire will lead us towards the totality to be known through all correct answers, and, as the moving viewpoint brings us towards the end of *Insight's* pedagogical presentation, we recognize that such a totality would utterly transcend human achievement. It can be encompassed only by an unrestricted act of understanding. Our desire is drawing us towards being itself, the mysterious source of all that is, God as “the transcendent idea of being and the transcendent reality of being.”¹⁹⁶

In *Insight* Lonergan further clarifies what he means by vertical finality: initially he shows that in this concrete universe, “besides the tendencies and desires confined to any given level, there are the tendencies and desires that go beyond any given level; they are the reality of finality conceived as an upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism;”¹⁹⁷ subsequently the moving viewpoint goes beyond this position in the final chapter of *Insight* to see how “every tendency and force, every movement and change, every desire and striving is designed to bring about the order of the universe in the manner in which they contribute to it” and that order to the perfection and excellence that is its primary source and ground.¹⁹⁸

At this stage Lonergan sees the pure desire to know as the chief operator in all human development, but he makes it clear that it does not operate consistently in all human endeavours. At any stage of our development each of us is an individual existing unity, differentiated by physical, chemical, organic, psychic and intellectual conjugates¹⁹⁹. Development initiated at one level by the dynamism of finality operative there, needs to be integrated at others; there is tension between the development achieved and the scheme of recurrence which threatens again to disrupt

¹⁹⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 374/398.

¹⁹⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 701/723.

¹⁹⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 637-638/661.

¹⁹⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 665/688.

¹⁹⁹ Conjugates - a term used by Lonergan with a specific meaning: Terms are conjugate when they are fixed by their relations. He draws here on mathematics where the term is used in this sense.

the inertia. It is difficult enough for us even in knowing to be dominated simply by the detached and disinterested desire. It is far more difficult to permit that detachment and disinterestedness to dominate our whole lives in a fully moral, fully relational personal integrity.

Lonergan is aware of the further desires which may appear to impede the functioning of the pure, detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know. His remedy, at least in part, is self-appropriation:

...the point here, as elsewhere, is appropriation: the point is to discover, to identify, to become familiar with the activities of one's own intelligence; the point is to become able to discriminate with ease and from personal conviction between one's purely intellectual activities and the manifold of other, 'existential' concerns that invade and mix and blend with the operations of intellect to render it ambivalent and its pronunciations ambiguous.²⁰⁰

Our deepest, God-given desire, proportionate to us as human beings, is for truth and the rational good. Therefore normative objectivity is opposed to the false subjectivity of wishful thinking, of rash or excessively cautious judgments, of allowing joy or sadness, hope or fear, love or detestation, to interfere with the proper march of cognitional process.²⁰¹ *Insight* aims to show that:

[theology] ... is relevant to the scientist as a scientist inasmuch as the untrammelled unfolding of his detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to understand his own field correctly is open to a variety of interferences that ultimately can be surmounted only by accepting the ultimate implications of the unrestricted desire.²⁰²

If one turns from outward behavior to inner experience, Lonergan maintains, one finds that consciousness shifts into quite different patterns as one engages in different types of activity: absorption in intellectual issues tends to eliminate sensitive emotions and conations, and inversely, mystical absorption tends to eliminate the flow of sensitive presentations and imaginative representations...²⁰³ But persons of common sense must also learn to discriminate: the core of habitual practical understanding, built up and adjusted by further learning in new situations, is not adequate to all domains, and

Above all they know that they must master their own hearts, that the pull of desire, the push of fear, the deeper currents of passion are poor counselors, for they rob a

²⁰⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, xix/13-14.

²⁰¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, 380/404.

²⁰² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight*, 745/766.

²⁰³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 470/495.

man of that full, untroubled, unhurried view demanded by sure and balanced judgment.²⁰⁴

The range of our desire to know is inclusive, encompassing the whole universe of being to which our minds are proportionate, its practical possibilities as well as its facts. The self-conscious subject is not only a knower, but also a doer, and one for whom there is a dynamic exigence for self-consistency in knowing and doing:²⁰⁵ “the penetrating, honest, complete consistency that alone meets the requirements of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.”²⁰⁶ That desire reaches beyond our knowing to seek intelligent transformations of the environment in which we live and our own spontaneous ways of living: for it invites us to guide our actions by referring them, not as an animal to a habitat, but as intelligent beings “to the intelligible context of some universal order that is or is to be.”²⁰⁷

Desire in an Evolutionary Perspective

In *Insight* Lonergan demonstrates his understanding of this order of the universe as an intelligible one, but not because all natural processes invariably follow classical laws – more often events and developments occur in keeping with statistical laws of probability, and continue according to probabilities of survival²⁰⁸. The heuristic anticipations of classical and statistical procedures are complementary, for they involve both systematically and nonsystematically related data – witness the often heard proviso, ‘other things being equal’. Classical laws, Lonergan writes, tell what would happen if conditions were fulfilled; statistical laws tell how often conditions are fulfilled. He appeals to our experience of schemes of recurrence operating in the world²⁰⁹ and sees that it is possible to attribute a probability to the emergence and to the survival of a scheme of recurrence. Scientists may well operate in this way to account for the frequency and variety of marsupial species²¹⁰ surviving on the

²⁰⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 297/322.

²⁰⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 599/622.

²⁰⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 602/625.

²⁰⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 473/498.

²⁰⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, Chapter 4 (The Complementarity of Classical and Statistical Investigation), 103-139/126-162

²⁰⁹ When acts occur in sequence with a certain predictable regularity, such as the rotation of the planets, the return of the shearwaters from their annual migration north, or an irritated reaction to “I told you so”, we can speak of a scheme of recurrence.

²¹⁰ In Australia, terrestrial placental mammals disappeared early in the [Cenozoic](#) (their most recent known fossils being 55 million year old teeth resembling those of [condylarths](#)) for reasons that are not

Australian continent. A universe in which both classical and statistical laws are verified will be characterized by a process of emergent probability.

Emergent probability is the successive realization of the possibilities of concrete situations in accord with their probabilities. ...concrete extensions and concrete durations are the field or matter or potency in which emergent probability is the immanent form or intelligibility.²¹¹

Thus we see Lonergan espousing an evolutionary process of development as part of a world order which, because it is the actual world order, originating from God conceived as infinite act of understanding and total goodness, is also inherently good and immanently intelligible in itself, though not effortlessly so for us, as generations of scientists, researchers and philosophers will attest. This conviction grounds an acceptance of slow progress. It calls out compassion and patience with human failures in attentiveness, adequate understanding and consistently reasonable decision making, in ourselves and in others, because we believe that God is patient and omniscient in these matters too and that God has a solution for the problem of evil. This solution Lonergan demonstrates to be a rationally suitable one²¹², both wise and good, and though it requires the eyes of faith to discern its actuality, he leaves until later works its theological elaboration. At this stage the moving viewpoint is clear: our desire for total truth and goodness is within and for the universe as it is:

Again, the order of the universe is its intelligibility to be grasped by following the appropriate classical or statistical or genetic or dialectical method.²¹³ Hence, to will the order of the universe is not to will the clockwork perfection of mechanistic thought but the emergent probability of the universe that exists. It is not to demand that all things be perfect in their inception but to expect and will that they grow and develop. It is not to exclude from man's world the social surd²¹⁴, nor to ignore it (for it is a fact), nor to mistake it for an intelligibility and so systematize and perpetuate it, but to acknowledge it as a problem and to embrace its solution.²¹⁵

Human progress and development is also subject to emergent probability, though not in exactly the same way as chemical, physical, biological realities are. God's solution for the problem of evil involves admitting the reality of this problem – an

clear, allowing marsupials to dominate the Australian [ecosystem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsupial). Wikipedia, accessed 7/10.2011, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsupial>.

²¹¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, (Space and Time,) 171/195.

²¹² Lonergan, *Insight*, 693-696/716 – 725. In the section “The Heuristic Structure of the Solution” he proceeds step by step to deduce the reasonableness of a suitable solution.

²¹³ Genetic method concerns the sequences in which correlations and regularities change and sequential development over time. Dialectic methods concern linked but opposing principles of change. *Insight* 486. 509, 708.

²¹⁴ A surd is an instance of the absence of intelligibility. For Lonergan sin is a surd. A social surd is a situation in human affairs which makes no sense at all.

²¹⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 698/721.

appropriation task – and accepting the grace which works with human and divine love to promote the better functioning of our human consciousness in accord with the pure desire.

Still, if human affairs fall under the dominion of emergent probability, they do so in their own way. ... there are human schemes that emerge and function automatically once there occurs an appropriate conjunction of abstract laws and concrete circumstances. But as human intelligence develops, there is a significant change of roles. Less and less importance attaches to the probabilities of appropriate constellations of circumstances. More and more importance attaches to the probabilities of the occurrence of insight, communication, persuasion, agreement, decision. Man does not have to wait for his environment to make him.²¹⁶

Human beings are essentially free²¹⁷ and they are self-constituting but “the difference between essential and effective freedom is the difference between a dynamic structure and its operational range.”²¹⁸ Existential human freedom, its extent and limitations, are further explored in Lonergan’s later writings, and will be examined in the following chapter.

In *Insight* Lonergan invites us to recognize and affirm in our own conscious experience the pure, detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know. It not only desires, he tells us, it desires intelligently and reasonably; it desires to understand because it is intelligent and it desires to grasp the understood as unconditioned because it desires to be reasonable. As human we are conscious empirically, intelligently, rationally, and the pure desire to know is a constituent element both of our affirming and of the self that is affirmed.

In conclusion, the desire to know which we have hitherto shown to be central to Lonergan’s life and study is treated more fully in this chapter. It is shown to be integral to the authentic functioning of human consciousness, the empirical method in which the action of the Spirit moves in accord with the dynamism of our questioning to enable human flourishing, both for individuals and the groups they form. This *eros* of the human spirit, our God-given desire to understand, to reflect further and assent

²¹⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 210/235-6.

²¹⁷ Faculty psychology and common parlance both speak of “having free will”. So does Lonergan on occasion for though he has made the transition to intentionality analysis and facilitated this for us, old habits die hard.

²¹⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 619/643.

to truth in the measure that it is attained, Lonergan shows to be essentially pure, detached, disinterested and unrestricted.

This does not mean that its optimal functioning will be the case in every person, every social group, at all times. When the flow of our dynamic conscious intentionality is impeded by conscious or unconscious blocking of the questions which would generate unwanted answers, our judgments and decisions based on them are biased and unreliable. However in the pedagogical presentation of *Insight* we are offered, step by step according to the moving viewpoint favoured by Lonergan the teacher, a way to understand and affirm our own knowing and appropriate at this level the desire we are.

For a person of faith, to grasp the intelligibility of the universe is to see in it an evolutionary order willed by the Creator where natural processes, events and developments occur in keeping not only with classical laws but more frequently with statistical laws of probability and survival. This conviction grounds an acceptance of slow progress: our desire for total truth and goodness is within and for the universe as it is and each human person as they are – as elements within emergent probability. This enables us to touch into the patience and benevolent purposes of God.

To know ourselves as knowers is not an easy task. But learning to recognize and affirm in our own conscious experience the outworking of the desire to know is perhaps the first and best way for a theologian to learn how to appropriate desire, and come to learn how all other yearnings and attractions fit within the broader vertical finality of our orientation into divine mystery – though it is not the only way, as we will consider in subsequent chapters.

As Lonergan turned to the completion of his self-chosen task, which as we have seen was to develop a method for theology, his self appropriation was to take him more deeply into the existential level where our decisions and choices make us who we are to become, and where he identifies love and Love itself as the most significant end of all our desiring. To this realization and to the period between the publication of *Insight* and that of *Method in Theology* we turn in the chapter to follow.

Chapter 3 Heightening Self Appropriation to the Existential Level

The Appropriation of Desire between Insight and Method

Beyond the all-embracing desire to know things by their essence which we have been considering, but continuous with it, we find ourselves moved to desire by the attraction of the good and the beautiful and above all by love. It has been very strongly so for the writer who still finds in Lonergan's writings of this period a mirror for her longings and stimulus for further growth. We turn now to the loving desire impelling us to self-transcendence, desire moving in the operations of evaluation, choice and decision-making and revealed in feelings and values. It is the intention of the writer to shift the focus in this chapter to the fourth level of conscious intentionality and as our viewpoint shifts, we note Lonergan's growing interest in the existential concerns of human living and development. *Method in Theology* is taking shape in his mind.²¹⁹ We are to examine the concept of the authentic subject, progressively constituting her or his self by existential choices, and in effect establishing the world view or horizon within which freedom will be exercised. Our God-given conscious intentionality interacts with the human formation available to us in our efforts to live authentically as responsible, moral beings. However it is the life-changing discovery of God's love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which crowns this chapter. God's love can so establish itself at the fourth and highest level of our conscious intentionality that it gradually frees us to follow our desire for goodness and the fullness of love – and to make it our own in some way appropriate to the nature of this wondrous, ongoing gift..

The Desiring Subject

Lonergan continues to write of the desire to know things by their essence in articles of the immediate post-*Insight* period; the desire that can be known, for “the pure,

²¹⁹ This classic was finished in haste and published in 1972, but key themes appear in papers before that date. The moving viewpoint of this study follows that of Lonergan.

detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know, when it is functioning, is no less immediate than the levels of consciousness when they are functioning.”²²⁰

However when, in 1964, he offered a clear and succinct overview of his cognitional structure in response to some daunted by the demands of *Insight*, there are clear signs that he was deepening his attention to the interpersonal, the existential, the world of values. Knowing reality is subsumed by choosing the good:

Though being and the good are coextensive, the subject moves to a further dimension of consciousness as his concern shifts from knowing being to realizing the good.²²¹

In the context of *Insight*, the subject was “any object, say A, where it is true that A affirms himself as a knower,”²²² as one conscious empirically, intelligently, rationally. Ten years later in the Aquinas Lecture titled “The Subject,” he is still asking for self-appropriation as a knower: the study of the subject is “the study of oneself inasmuch as one is conscious...”²²³ He invites close attention to the data of one’s own consciousness, to discern the different levels of consciousness: from the dreaming to the waking subject, to oneself as intelligently inquiring subject, rationally reflecting subject and now particularly as responsibly deliberating subject. For the subject is a knower, but also a doer, “one that deliberates, evaluates, chooses, acts.”²²⁴ According to the measure of his/her freedom and responsibility in the choices made and acts performed, the subject develops personality or fails to, builds or destroys character, constituting him/herself as the person s/he is to be. “Then the existential subject exists and his character, his personal essence is at stake.”²²⁵ This is human consciousness at its fullest, the existential subject, the human person as self-completing.

To read correctly the metaphor of ‘levels’ of consciousness, where Lonergan has the existential subject standing, as it were, on the top level, it is helpful to look at these levels as our becoming subjects by degrees, as successive instances of sublation and as “the unfolding of a single transcendental intending of plural, interchangeable

²²⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection*, CWL 4, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 186.

²²¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” *Collection*, CWL 4, 219.

²²² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (San Francisco: Harper, reprinted in paperback 1978), 375.

²²³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject,” *Collection*, 73.

²²⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 79.

²²⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 80.

objectives, (approximately the Scholastic transcendentals, *ens, unum, verum, bonum.*)”²²⁶

Firstly we are, as it were, subjects by degrees. Comatose or in deep, dreamless sleep, the human being is only potentially a subject. “Next, we have a minimal degree of consciousness and subjectivity when we are the helpless subjects of our dreams.”²²⁷ Awake, even if only just, we are already **experiential subjects**, operating on the empirical level, aware of dawn light or darkness, warmth or chill, perhaps even the smell of coffee. Lucid perceptions and imaginative anticipations of the day’s activities may rouse in us feelings of delight or dread.

Secondly, the levels of consciousness are to be seen as successive instances of sublation. Lonergan chooses to use Karl Rahner’s understanding of this category rather than Hegel’s:

...what sublates goes beyond what is sublated, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublated or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.²²⁸

The **intelligent subject**, operating on the intellectual level, sublates the experiential, that is, it retains, preserves, completes and goes beyond the experiential, when we ask questions about our experience, investigate, for example, who is making the coffee and how much of it, grow in understanding, interrogate those spontaneous feelings, express the insights and answers we come to. As **rational subjects**, we go beyond the experiential and the intelligent, sublating their contributions as we “question our own understanding, check our formulations and expressions, ask whether we have got things right, marshal the evidence *pro* and *con*, judge this to be so and that not to be so.”²²⁹ The Yes or No reached, rational consciousness is in turn sublated in the **existential or responsible subject**, when we deliberate and evaluate our options, reaching a decision about action based on what we have determined to be true and

²²⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 81.

²²⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 80.

²²⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971, reprinted in paperback 1996), 241.

²²⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 80.

worthwhile, and carrying it out, (or failing to do so.) The levels of consciousness are thus distinct but related.

Human intelligence goes beyond human sensitivity, yet it cannot get along without sensitivity. Human judgment goes beyond sensitivity and intelligence yet cannot function except in conjunction with them. Human action finally, must in similar fashion both presuppose and complete human sensitivity, intelligence and judgment.²³⁰

On all four levels we are operating in a conscious and intentional manner, and so can be aware of ourselves operating as subjects. However, “as we mount from level to level, it is a fuller self of which we are aware and the awareness itself is different.”²³¹ Just as we can appropriate ourselves as capable of intelligent and responsible activity in our world, so too can we own the desire that moves us to do good in the situations we attend to. Knowing ourselves at this level is not merely interesting fact but call.

Thirdly, as we have seen, we can look at the human subject as called by the innate pattern of human consciousness to be self-transcendent. Questioning the data of sense, asking what, why, how and what for, we are moved by the desire to understand, “we intend the idea or form, the intelligible unity or relatedness that organizes data into intelligible wholes.”²³² We transcend ourselves as merely experiential by this inquiry, by seeking insight, accumulating insights, intending intelligibility. Self-transcendence is at work when we are reflective and critical in the face of even our brightest insights, questioning whether the understanding we have reached is reality, and so transcend ourselves as intelligent in intending truth.

Responsibility goes beyond fact and desire and possibility to discern what is truly worth while and not just apparently so and so we transcend ourselves as rational by intending the good:

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. One has become capable of genuine collaboration and true love.²³³

²³⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Subject”, 81.

²³¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 9.

²³² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 10.

²³³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit”, *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan*, S. J., ed. William F. J. Ryan, S. J. and Bernard Tyrrell, S. J., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 169.

Human authenticity results from following the built-in law of the human spirit. Being totally open to all questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence and this self-transcendence achieved is the sign of authentic subjectivity but now Lonergan is recognizing more explicitly than he did in *Insight* “the relations between the dynamic structure of objective knowing and the larger dynamic structure that is human living.”²³⁴ In each case the dynamism is desire, but here love is key.

Human authenticity is never a once-and-for-all achievement. Lonergan constantly reminds us that it is “always precarious, always a withdrawal from unauthenticity, always in danger of slipping back into unauthenticity.”²³⁵ Human beings manage to transcend themselves with any consistency only when they fall in love. Many are astonished to find themselves more generous in their judgments and responses, less self-centered and more alive than they can ever remember being before, when all their thoughts and feelings are moved to respond to the “love object”, the beloved person they have miraculously encountered – or given birth to! The true wellbeing of the other is sought, and one’s best is spontaneously on offer. “Then their being becomes being-in-love.”²³⁶ Being in love is the proper fulfilment of the human capacity for self-transcendence.

Lonergan noted in a later commentary on *Insight* that the high aspirations but poor performance of human beings made the realization of the authenticity to which they are called problematic, and saw the answer in God’s redemptive action:

In my rather theological analysis of human history, my first approximation was the assumption that men always do what is intelligent and reasonable, and its implication was an ever-increasing progress. The second approximation was the radical inverse insight that men can be biased, and so unintelligent and unreasonable in their choices and decisions. The third approximation was the redemptive process resulting from God’s gift of his grace to individuals and from the manifestation of his love in Christ Jesus.²³⁷

He explains this encounter with grace, specifically religious experience, in terms of the human being as called to authentic self-transcendence by the dynamic operations

²³⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Cognitive Structure,” *Collection*, CWL 4, 221. Lonergan had commented to Philip McShane that in *Insight*, “My purpose was not a study of human life but a study of human understanding.” *Language, Truth and Meaning* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972), 310.

²³⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit”, 170.

²³⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit”, 170.

²³⁷ Lonergan, “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 271-272.

of consciousness and as intrinsic openness to God seeking to be in communion with humankind. This outline is given succinctly in a little paper called “Openness and Religious Experience”²³⁸ which Lonergan wrote for a congress of philosophers in 1960.

Openness as Fact, Achievement and Gift

We can consider the openness that is an intrinsic component in the make-up of human beings as **fact, achievement and gift**. Lonergan is concerned to show that the openness of human intentional consciousness is openness to everything, up to and including the yet unknown divine, and that God’s action in human lives addresses this openness. The essential impulse of the inquiring, searching human being that moves us to wonder and question, and leaves us dissatisfied until we truly know, and then act accordingly, is the first dimension of openness. It has been shown to be the way we are made. Lonergan calls it **openness as fact** and we too have been invited in the previous chapter to confirm as fact the openness that constitutes us as human.

As fact, openness is the inner self, the self as ground of all aspiration. Obviously, however, “as fact it does not consistently and completely dominate human consciousness.”²³⁹ When we have adverted to this call in our being, acknowledged and accepted it, its implications for all our thinking and acting have still to be worked out and successfully applied to actual thinking and actual acting. Lonergan spells out the call to live the self-transcendence of authenticity:

To be authentically human is to follow the built-in law of the human spirit. Because we can experience, we should attend. 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 others, we should deliberate. In the measure that we follow these precepts, in the measure that 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.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, S. J., ed. F. E. Crowe, S. J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 198-201.

²³⁹ Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection*, 199.

²⁴⁰ Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit”, *A Second Collection*, 170.

Openness as achievement is reached only when we follow the pure desire which moves in our conscious intentionality and to be an authentic human subject is to be intelligently aware, rationally aware, responsibly and morally aware and self-transcending with some consistency. However human authenticity is never a once-and-for-all achievement. Lonergan constantly reminds us that it is “always precarious, always a withdrawal from unauthenticity, always in danger of slipping back into unauthenticity.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, as well as authenticity there can be unauthenticity. “Do you realize,” asks Fred Lawrence, “that people’s inability *consistently* to be intelligent, reasonable and responsible in history is what is meant by sin?”²⁴² The actual orientation of consciousness does not always coincide with the exigencies of the pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. The primordial fact of openness and orientation to the divine “is no more than a principle of possible achievement, a definition of the ultimate horizon that is to be reached only through successive enlargements of the actual horizon.”²⁴³ Lonergan remarks wryly that such successive enlargements only too clearly lie under some law of diminishing returns.²⁴⁴

The human being is essentially a creature of time; at birth our higher powers are “the spiritual counterpart of *materia prima*, and their indeterminate potentiality points at once in all directions.”²⁴⁵ As children we need to be “persuaded, cajoled, ordered, compelled to do what is right,”²⁴⁶ and our first, fairly undeveloped moral sense emerges only between the ages of three and seven. We begin as a self which is the centre of the universe and only gradually do we come to perceive another self which we could, and know we should, become.²⁴⁷ When we are said ‘to reach the age of reason’ at about seven, the reason we reach is still far from maturity. There is an intellectual lag; we are physically developed beyond our intellectual development, so that in the turmoil of puberty, our desire to do, decide and discover more and more for ourselves quickly outruns our ability for reasonable judgment and thus responsible

²⁴¹ Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit”, 14.

²⁴² Frederick Lawrence, *On Being Catholic*. Unpublished Talk, Boston College, 4. Italics mine.

²⁴³ Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection*, 200.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 200.

²⁴⁵ Aquinas, I Sent., d.39 q.2, a.2, ad 4m.

²⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

²⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 473/501.

deciding. This fact is responsible for a good measure of the tragic quality of human existence for, as Lonergan puts it in *Insight*:

...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.²⁴⁸

In this period, well before the existential moment of moral conversion when we discover that we are self-constituting, that it is up to us to choose who and what we will become as a person, our youthful judgments and choices are already beginning to shape us. ‘Indiscretions on Facebook will impact on your future’, people are telling children today, but other early experiments in the dramatic pattern of experience can have more serious consequences. For as well as functioning biologically, aesthetically and intellectually, “one man in his life plays many parts”²⁴⁹ and the way in which we take our place on the various stages as well as in the stages of our life has to do with this pattern of experience. In the direction of our life stories there is a dramatic component:

Not only, then, is man capable of aesthetic liberation and artistic creation, but his first work of art is his own living. The fair, the beautiful, the admirable is embodied by man in his own body and actions before it is given a still freer realization in painting and sculpture, in music and poetry. Style is the man before it appears in the artistic product.²⁵⁰

We live in the presence of others and innate is the desire to dignify our living and present ourselves well and thus a concern to win approval for good performance, to avoid ridicule, embarrassment and shame. Early experiences and interactions have influence, so in childhood and adolescence does the powerful peer group, and the results are a pattern which “penetrates below the surface of consciousness to exercise its own domination and control, and to effect, prior to conscious discrimination, its own selections and arrangements.”²⁵¹ We may well ask ourselves sometimes, “Why on earth did I do/say that?”

²⁴⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 625/648.

²⁴⁹ From the much quoted monologue in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*.

²⁵⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 187/210.

²⁵¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 191/214. This is the area familiar to us as Freud’s censor, which excludes some insights and the further questions which would help give us a comprehensive viewpoint.

With time our knowledge of human reality does increase, educative processes and human relationships strengthen and refine our responses to human values, and increasingly mentors step back leaving us to ourselves, “so that our freedom may exercise its ever advancing thrust towards authenticity.”²⁵² We experience an inner need to be true to our deepest selves and to achieve integrity. Though this drives us to understand in accordance with the data, judge according to the evidence, and then choose, decide and act in accordance with what we have determined to be the right and reasonable course of conduct, sometimes a given way of acting is so far outside the mindset of our culture or environment, our personal tastes and experience, as to be beyond the range of our “antecedent willingness,”²⁵³ and we are simply not ready for it. As the human person grows, “one has to live and make decisions in the light of one’s undeveloped intelligence and under the guidance of one’s incomplete willingness.”²⁵⁴ Thus we find that our attention too often remains on illicit proposals:

...the incompleteness of their intelligibility and the incoherence of their apparent reasonableness are disregarded; and in this contraction of consciousness, which is the basic sin, there occurs wrong action, which is more conspicuous but really derivative.²⁵⁵

In fact, “since the good is ever unique and evil manifold, the odds always are that man will do what is wrong.”²⁵⁶ Furthermore, ‘the law of psychological continuity’ means that we are inclined to act as we have acted before. An act of sinning begets a spontaneous inclination to do so again and this can harden over time into an entrenched orientation to evil, a bad habit or a “contraction of consciousness”, which we may be able to resist, with great effort, but which statistically we probably will not – if left to ourselves! Openness as achievement would appear to be beyond us, whatever we may say about our desire for total goodness and total love. How, then, are we to understand “the redemptive process resulting from God’s gift of his grace to individuals”?

²⁵² Lonergan, *Method*, 121, 240.

²⁵³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 623/646. Lonergan says that, for human beings to live a fully successful, authentic life, the ‘universal antecedent willingness’ which leaves us open to embrace the good wherever it may reveal itself must complement the pure and unrestricted desire to know.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 627/650.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 666/689.

²⁵⁶ Aquinas, I Sent., d.39 q.2, a.2, ad 4m. Lonergan endorses Aquinas on this point.

Lonergan writes in “Openness and Religious Experience,” that openness as achievement rises from openness as fact but that it conditions, and is conditioned by, openness as gift. He distinguishes a third facet of human openness, **openness as gift**:

Openness as fact is the pure desire to know ... [Openness as] achievement itself arises when the actual orientation of consciousness coincides with the exigences of the pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know...But there is also openness as gift, as an effect of divine grace. Man’s natural openness is complete. The pure desire is unrestricted.²⁵⁷

Openness as gift, he says simply, is the self entering into personal relationship with God. It is an effect of grace. If we are to grasp this mystery, we need to see in grace both continuity and a radical discontinuity. On the one hand grace comes to heal and perfect our wounded humanity, completing and actualizing our capacity for self-transcendence, open as it is by nature to an infinite intelligibility, all truth, absolute goodness. On the other hand, “it is not the gift of something created, but the self-bestowal of God himself.”²⁵⁸ It introduces into our story a new relationship with the Holy, the mystery of love and awe,²⁵⁹ which fascinates and possesses us, in which we know ourselves as accepted and loved.

There is a way of coming to understand something about religious experience, and therefore grace, Lonergan suggests, by looking at the experience of human love and friendship. This is where continuity is most apparent and where often God comes to find us. Our redeeming God is the same Infinite Act of Understanding Love²⁶⁰ that set the universe on its evolutionary path and created in us the pure desire to know and to love. God has so ordained human existence that we are transformed through our experience of being-in-love into a dynamic state in which self-transcending feelings prevail and orient us to the good of the beloved other:

²⁵⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection*, CWL 4, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran eds (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 186.

²⁵⁸ Anthony Kelly, *The Trinity of Love: A Theology of the Christian God* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 104.

²⁵⁹ Rudolf Otto’s *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*, in *The Idea of the Holy*. Cited by Lonergan, *Method*, 106.

²⁶⁰ This expression is Fred Lawrence’s expansion of Lonergan’s “infinite act of understanding” as a way of naming God in chapter 20 of *Insight*, p.684. According to verbal reports received from those who had known both Lonergan and Professor Lawrence, (during a year spent by the writer at Boston College in 2003,) Lonergan accepted that Lawrence truly represented his later thought in so speaking and writing.

...there also is development from above downwards. There is the transformation of falling in love: the domestic love of the family; the human love of one's tribe, one's city, one's country, mankind; the divine love that orientates man in his cosmos and expresses itself in his worship.²⁶¹

Far from love making us blind, Lonergan writes, "where hatred sees only evil, love reveals values. At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved."²⁶² It has the power to dissolve bias, of whatever kind. "Where hatred plods around in ever narrower vicious circles, love breaks the bonds of psychological and social determinisms."²⁶³ Charles Hefling writes of the love that Dante encountered, the sort of love that goes beyond the gratification of a need:

...a love that transforms, releases new energy, frees those who experience it by pulling them out of their self-enclosed desires and fears and launches them in a new direction...Beatrice was the occasion of Dante's love, and therefore the *Comedy* portrays her as the guide and the way to abundant life. Yet in the poem as in the experience that inspired it, she is incidental...Dante was truly in love **with** Beatrice, but he was even more truly in love **through** Beatrice.²⁶⁴

When our being becomes being-in-love, this becomes the foundation and first principle of our living, and all our desires and fears, our joys and sorrows, our discernment of values, our decisions and deeds are under its sway. As long as it lasts, the isolation of the individual is broken and we spontaneously function not just for ourselves but for others as well. The enlargement of our horizon that occurs when we are in love "with" our Beatrice is the gateway to a new and more loving and lovable way of being in the world, so we are also in love "through" her: our being has become being-in-love. This is not to say that no set-backs or lack of generosity, no muddled thinking or failure of willingness will ever occur, for Lonergan makes it clear that human self-transcendence is always dialectical, that is it always has to contend with its opposite. Even where affective self-transcendence is enabling an individual to grow in responsibility and generosity, there remains "tension between the self as transcending and the self as transcended."²⁶⁵ But human love is an initial and significant shift in the probabilities.

²⁶¹ Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 106.

²⁶² *ibid.*, 106.

²⁶³ *ibid.*, 106.

²⁶⁴ Charles C. Hefling, Jr. *Why Doctrines?* (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1984), 18. Emphasis added.

²⁶⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 32.

We will leave to the following chapter a fuller treatment of Being-in-Love with God for the elaboration of this concept is a key contribution of *Method in Theology*. Here we note that the gift of grace comes to heal and perfect the loving desire for God, for goodness and for human authenticity, implanted in our humanness and experienced in all our loving, and focuses it in the operations of consciousness. Its fulfillment is to be in the beatific vision of God:

...there is also an ultimate enlargement, beyond the resources of every finite consciousness, where there enters into clear view God as unknown, when the subject knows God face to face, knows as he is known. This ultimate enlargement alone approximates to the possibility of openness defined by the pure desire; as well, it is an openness as gift, as an effect of grace and indeed, of grace not as merely *sanans* but as *elevans*, as *lumen gloriae*.²⁶⁶

This recognition Lonergan takes further in “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” (1965). There he sees implicit in all human choice of values, the absolute good that is God,²⁶⁷ and invites the reader to a faith-based *Besinnung*, a becoming aware of ourselves as part of a community in Christ oriented to the Father:

In Christ Jesus we are not only referred to God, as to some omega point, but we are on our way to God. The fount of our living is not *erôs* but *agapê*, not desire of an end that uses means but love of an end that overflows. As God did not create the world to obtain something for himself but rather overflowed from love of the infinite to loving even the finite ... as Christ in his humanity did not will means to reach an end, but possessed the end, the vision of God, and overflowed in love to loving us, so too those in Christ participate in the charity of Christ: they love God *super omnia* and so can love their neighbours as themselves...²⁶⁸

Operative in us by grace there is a dynamism that Lonergan refers to here for the first time as “being in love with God.” We may be in love with God without being aware of it, which Lonergan calls the being in Christ of substance rather than of subject. This was perhaps the case at the time of his early response to vocation where he moved rather bleakly towards the life of total dedication to which he sensed he was being drawn. However this love can also surface in awareness, be adverted to, understood and known, which is the being in Christ of subject:

... inasmuch as being in Christ 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 have still 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. The love of God, being in love with God, can be

²⁶⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Openness and Religious Experience,” *Collection*, 187.

²⁶⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” *Collection*, 230.

²⁶⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” *Collection*, 230.

as full and as dominant, as overwhelming and as lasting an experience as human love.”²⁶⁹

Lonergan is to recognize the centrality of this “being in love” increasingly in his subsequent theological work and will later add ‘Be in love’ to the transcendental imperatives he lists for the first time in this paper as: Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible.²⁷⁰

Being in love with God is religious conversion. Lonergan writes in “Theology in its New Context,” 1968, of its effects in changing the horizon of individuals and orienting their relationships:

...conversion occurs in the lives of individuals. It is not merely a change or even a development; rather, it is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, an interlocked series of changes and developments. What hitherto was unnoticed becomes vivid and present. What had been of no concern becomes a matter of high import. So great a change in one’s apprehensions and one’s values accompanies no less a change in oneself, in one’s relations to other persons, and in one’s relations to God.²⁷¹

When we fall in love, the love into which we fall is not some single act or series of acts, “but a dynamic state that prompts and molds all our thoughts and feelings, all our judgments and decisions.”²⁷²

We are moved, by desire, to transcend ourselves in the dynamism of our intentionality, from experiencing through questioning and insight to understanding, from understanding through questions of reflection to verification, from correct judgment to right action. In “The Future of Christianity,” (1969), Lonergan writes that God’s gift of his love to us is the crowning point of our self-transcendence:

St. Augustine wrote: “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.” But that resting in God is something, not that we achieve, but that we receive, accept, ratify. It comes quietly, secretly, unobtrusively. We know about it when we notice its fruits in our lives. It is the profoundest fulfilment of the human spirit. Because it is fulfilment, it gives us peace, the peace that the world cannot give. Because it is fulfilment, it gives us joy, a joy that can endure despite the sorrows of failure, humiliation, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. Because it is fulfilment, its absence is revealed, now in the trivialization of human life

²⁶⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” *Collection*, 231.

²⁷⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “*Existenz and Aggiornamento*,” *Collection*, 230. This list also omits what was to become the first imperative, corresponding to the level of experience: Be attentive.

²⁷¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Theology in a New Context,” *A Second Collection*, 65-66.

²⁷² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” *A Second Collection*, 153.

in debauchery, now in the fanaticism with which limited goals are pursued violently and recklessly, now in the despair that condemns man and his world as absurd.²⁷³

He speaks of desire now as “our massive thrust to self-transcendence.” We transcend ourselves by seeking the intelligible, the true, the real, the good, love. What fulfills that seeking, the God in whom we rest, must be the summit of intelligibility, truth, reality, goodness, love.²⁷⁴

Where before knowledge preceded, founded, and justified loving, now falling-in-love and being-in-love culminate and complete the process of self-transcendence, which begins with knowledge but goes beyond it, as Blaise Pascal saw when he remarked that the heart has reasons which reason does not know.²⁷⁵

We have noted the predilection²⁷⁶ of Lonergan, in the period before the writing of *Insight*, for the passage in St Thomas which treats the desire of intellect for understanding of what God is. In the eighteen years between *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, (1954 – 1972), there is a significant shift from the appropriation of cognitional operations to existential questions of value on the fourth level of consciousness, and these years are marked by a similar predilection: the passage in question is in St Paul and it speaks of the love of God that floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us (Rom. 5:5).

In 1970 Lonergan shared with an in-house audience²⁷⁷ the developed understanding of the way “the gift of God’s love takes over the ground and root of the fourth and highest level of man’s waking consciousness”²⁷⁸ which was to be foundational in *Method*. He distinguishes the being-in-love of human intimacy in the pair bond and family, and the love of one’s fellowmen in society, and then refers to Romans 5:5 to speak of the love of God with one’s whole heart and whole soul, with all one’s mind and all one’s strength (Mk. 12:30) which results from God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us. Lonergan had described the pure desire to know as unrestricted. He chooses the same word to describe this powerful attraction which

²⁷³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” *A Second Collection*, 153-154.

²⁷⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” *A Second Collection*, 156.

²⁷⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Future of Christianity,” *A Second Collection*, 161-162.

²⁷⁶ See above Chapter 1. The word belongs to Frederick E. Crowe S.J. who noted this key difference between the ‘early Lonergan’ and the later one in “Early Jottings on Bernard Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*,” *Science et Esprit*, 1973, 121.

²⁷⁷ At the Jesuit Institute at Fusz Memorial, St Louis. Published as “The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” in *A Second Collection*, William F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell eds (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1974), 165-187.

²⁷⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit,” *A Second Collection*, 173.

is at the same time an overflowing of benevolence: “Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations.”²⁷⁹ This love establishes a new horizon, that of a complete self-transcendence grounded “in the divine lover whose love makes those he loves in love with him, and so with one another.”²⁸⁰ Those whose desire finds its spring in such immense love find that their hearts grow towards the concerns – and the dimensions – of God’s own.

Appropriating the Making of Existential Choices

It is possible to identify a three-fold focus in the appropriation of desire discerned in Lonergan’s practice and recommended in his published writings of this period between *Insight* and *Method*: self-knowledge mediated by introspection, here extended to include the fourth level of conscious intentionality; self-knowledge mediated by our interactions in the human community; and thirdly a self-knowledge mediated by prayer and religious experience.

Lonergan deepened his insight into existentialist and phenomenological philosophy during a period of theological teaching at the Gregorian in Rome, 1953 –65.²⁸¹ As a professor of theology Lonergan sought to bring second and third year students to the “limited but most fruitful understanding of the mysteries through analogy with nature and the inner coherence of the mysteries among themselves” which is possible for human intelligence,²⁸² in courses on the Trinity and the Incarnation. With doctoral

²⁷⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” *A Second Collection*, 171.

²⁸⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Horizons,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 – 1980*, CWL 17, 22-23. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Horizons,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 – 1980*, CWL 17, 12.

²⁸¹ As well as critical history and hermeneutics through extended contact with European *Geisteswissenschaften*.

²⁸² According to Vatican I, *Constitutio dogmatica ‘Dei Filius’ de fide catholica*, cap. 4. Lonergan’s former students attest to his frequent use of this article.

students he was able to pursue his interest in methodology²⁸³, and we can see elements of his thought reaching clarity in published articles of that period.

The operations of consciousness, which Lonergan has taught us to discern in our knowing, include those of evaluation, deliberation and choice, which are similarly available to observation. In the years following the publication of *Insight*, Lonergan explored further the idea of horizon: each person's horizon represents the current limits of their view, the interests and concerns, the scope of matters experienced and understood or deemed relevant for inquiry. "To each of us his own private 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." In *Insight*,²⁸⁴ he was concerned that this private 'real world' be open to the corrections to be made by true judgment so that it could be brought into conformity with the universe of being.²⁸⁵ By his work on *Insight*, Lonergan has achieved the 'turn to the subject' at the cognitional level. Now he extends the horizons of self-appropriation to address more explicitly the affective, the existential fourth level of consciousness where the human subject is constituting him or herself.

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. ... There exist subjects that are empirically, intellectually, morally conscious. Not all know themselves as such, for consciousness is not human knowing but only a potential component in the structured whole that is human knowing. But all can know themselves as such, for they have only to attend to what they are already conscious of, and understand what they attend to, and pass judgment on the correctness of their understanding.²⁸⁶

This reduplication of the processes of knowing, which Lonergan is still referring to as introspection²⁸⁷, is not the only way of coming to self-knowledge as we will see in this and the following chapter, but it remains a key one.

²⁸³ Lonergan offered doctoral courses: *De intellectu et methodo*, *De systemate et historia*, *De methodo theologiae*.

²⁸⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 639/662.

²⁸⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Collection*, CWL 4, 148.

²⁸⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, CWL 4, 210-211.

²⁸⁷ Lonergan defines introspection in 1964 as adverting to the data of consciousness, a shift of attention from the object to the subject. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 – 1980*, CWL 17, 222-3.

The drive of human desire moves us beyond the cognitional to seek true value, the good, without abandoning anything of the pure desire to know. Just as intelligence had been shown to sublate sense, and reasonableness sublates intelligence, “so deliberation sublates and thereby unifies knowing and feeling.”²⁸⁸ By self appropriation, this desire can be known also in its operations at the fourth level, though Lonergan did not systematize the process in a comparable way.

By 1968, Lonergan has come to pay more positive attention to the role of feelings in our conscious intentionality: “such feeling gives our intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without our feelings, our knowing and deciding would be paper thin.”²⁸⁹ He recognizes that it is by our feelings that “we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning,” and invites us to an Ignatian awareness that our feelings respond to values in accord with some scale of preference.²⁹⁰ These feelings may be momentary or deep and lasting, but they are more than just revelatory of values: they “give us the power and momentum to rise above ourselves and accomplish what objectively is good.” As we learn to know our feelings we can choose to follow the desire that we identify as the action of the Spirit in our hearts:

But there also are feelings so deep and strong, *especially when deliberately reinforced*, that they channel attention, shape one’s horizon, direct one’s life. Here the supreme illustration is loving. A man or woman that falls in love is engaged in loving not only when attending to the beloved but at all times. Besides particular acts of loving, there is a prior state of being in love, and that prior state is, as it were, the fount of all one’s actions.²⁹¹

This love is not the product of our own knowing and choosing, but it is not unconscious. Lonergan regards it as a conscious, dynamic state, “manifesting itself in the harvest of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control.(Gal. 5:22).”²⁹² Authentic human love has these effects in large measure and we are aware of them in ourselves and others: divine love helps to make them

²⁸⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Cognitional Structure,” *Collection*, 277.

²⁸⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Horizons,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 – 1980*, CWL 17, 14.

²⁹⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Horizons,” 14. Much work on feelings and the *ordo amoris* has been done by Dr Patrick Byrne. I note especially here “What is *Our Scale of Value Preference?*” in *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 21: “*...and God’s Own Glory, in Part, Is You*”: *What Aspect of the Lonergan Legacy Needs To Be Stressed Right Now?*” Ed. Fred Lawrence. Boston, MA: Boston College, 2009, 43-64.

²⁹¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Horizons,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965 – 1980*, CWL 17, 15. Italics mine.

²⁹² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” 172.

habitual, anchors them in our living. With Paul we call them the fruits of the Spirit of Love.

The second dimension to be explored is that of human community. The existential self is also known in reflection on choices made or actions taken and the response of others to our living:

To say what one knows presupposes the labor of coming to know. But to show what one is, it is enough to be it; showing will follow; every movement, every word, every deed reveal what the subject is. They reveal it to others, and the others, in the self-revelation that is their response, obliquely reveal to the intelligent subject what he is. In the main it is not by introspection but by reflecting on our living in common with others that we come to know ourselves.²⁹³

This is a further way of coming to appropriate our desiring selves and some would say a safer and more reliable one, but its measure of success depends on the quality of interactions in the communities to which we belong and our receptivity to feedback. We can be confronted with ourselves more effectively by being confronted with others than by solitary introspection. As we are drawn to admire values incarnated in those we meet we can recognize the power these values also have in ourselves. What the desire is that is effectively moving us may be a first revelation of the action of grace.

It is one thing to be in love, and another to discover that what has happened to you is that you have fallen in love. Being oneself is prior to knowing oneself. St Ignatius said that love shows itself more in deeds than in words; but being in love is neither deeds nor words; it is the prior conscious reality that words and, more securely, deeds reveal.²⁹⁴

Lonergan's own realization, in retrospect, of the depth of the love moving him as a young man to commit his life to the service of God, he had somewhat shyly communicated in the *Besinnungen* of this period to which we have referred earlier.²⁹⁵ The meaning of his own response to vocation had become clearer throughout his time in the Company of Jesus. In 1962 Lonergan is writing of self-appropriation, the aim of *Insight*, as a movement to the world of interiority.²⁹⁶ Interiority is to be distinguished from the world of commonsense – the world of community, of the visible world

²⁹³ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Cognitive Structure," *Collection*, 220.

²⁹⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection*, 229.

²⁹⁵ He does so in both "Existenz and Aggiornamento" and "The Response of the Jesuit".

²⁹⁶ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958 – 1964*, CWL 6, Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert Doran eds, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 114.

familiar to us – and the world of theory – of philosophy and science – in which our intelligence is concerned with an exact understanding of things as they are in themselves. Interiority is a third world, one that regards immediate internal experience:

... the questions raised by the existentialists are questions that regard interiority: Do you know what that means? Do you know what it means to have a mind of your own? Is that just a phrase? Do you know what it means to respect others? Or to be in love with them? Do you know what it is to suffer? Do you really know? Do you know what it is to pray? Do you know what it is to die? Do you know what it is to live in the presence of God? These are questions about interiority.²⁹⁷

These three worlds are distinct but related. Differentiations of consciousness enable us to move between them: in the world of theory a scientist is absorbed in testing his hypothesis during working hours but still needs to be able to respond with common sense to the practical and relational needs of his family outside them; it is interiority which will enable him to distinguish these two worlds and make choices appropriately between them. Lonergan uses the word mediation to describe the interrelatedness of these worlds. “There is that much more meaning to one’s speaking [in the world of common sense] in the measure that one’s interiority has developed.”²⁹⁸ A familiarity with the things of the mind and heart gives depth to communication and makes a person more intuitively aware of what is really happening in interactions with others, more able to respond instead of just reacting.

Knowledge of God, Lonergan maintains, is never immediate in this life. It can be mediated by our knowledge of the created world; it is often mediated by the world of community in which a tradition of revelation is transmitted; it may be mediated by theory in a natural philosophy of religion; or it may be mediated by one’s interiority:

... and the outstanding example in that field is of course the life of the mystic, in which interiority develops and constitutes, as it were, a means through which God’s presence ceases to be an unidentified undertow in one’s living.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” 114.

²⁹⁸ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” 115.

²⁹⁹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Time and Meaning,” 116. In a note on p.48 of *Bernard Lonergan: 3 Lectures*, Fr Eric O’Connor comments on the significant change Lonergan has made here when preparing the paper for publication in 1975. It had originally read: “a means through which God is present to one *in an exceptional manner*.” Italics mine.

Lonergan, in touch with his own interiority, is paying increasing attention to this undertow which is the action of God drawing human beings by a desire they often don't name, but could come to know. He had become aware, in himself, of a deep but obscure conviction that he could not get out of trying to be holy and knew that he had been nurturing this directedness in his life of prayer. In the immediacy of our experience of self, he writes in 1963,

...there are supernatural realities that do not pertain to our nature, that result from the communication to us of Christ's life. ...it is ours essentially by a gift. Still, in the concrete, it is part of our concrete reality, and in that sense it proceeds through the mediation of prayer from being a sort of vegetative living to a conscious living.³⁰⁰

This conscious living of the graced desire which is our sharing in Trinitarian love can develop in us over time and become habitual in the sense that we revert to it easily:

Just as we are immediate to ourselves by consciousness without any self-knowledge, and through our consciousness by philosophic study and self-appropriation we can come to a fuller knowledge of ourselves, so also what we are by the grace of God, by the gift of God, can have an objectification within us. What is immediate can be mediated by our acts, and gradually reveal to us in ever fuller fashion, in a more conscious and more pressing fashion, the fundamental fact about us: the great gift and grace that Jesus Christ brought to us.³⁰¹

In this grace, Lonergan the theologian knew that he was becoming himself, "not just by experiences, insights, judgments, by choices, decisions, conversion, not just freely and deliberately, not just deeply and strongly, but as one who is carried along."³⁰²

He did not assume that his self-appropriation was complete or that human cooperation with grace would always be adequate, but he had come to a large measure of trust in the 'someone else who was running the ship'.³⁰³

But I must not misrepresent. We do not know ourselves very well; we cannot chart the future; we cannot control our environment completely or the influences that work on us; we cannot explore our unconscious and preconscious mechanisms. Our course is in the night; our control is only rough and approximate; we have to believe and trust, to risk and dare.³⁰⁴

To speak of *Existenz*, on being oneself ...is what the Germans call a *Besinnung*, a becoming aware, a growth in self-consciousness, a heightening of one's self-appropriation, that is possible because our separate, unrevealed, hidden cores have a

³⁰⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958 – 1964*, CWL 6, 178-9.

³⁰¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," 179-180.

³⁰² Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "The Mediation of Christ in Prayer," 180.

³⁰³ See above, *Caring About Meaning*, 145.

³⁰⁴ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "*Existenz* and *Aggiornamento*," *Collection*, CWL 4, 224.

common circle of reference, the human community, and an ultimate point of reference, which is God, who is all in all, τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν θεός.³⁰⁵

In conclusion, we have considered three ways to appropriate our own desiring: firstly by paying further attention to the inner movements of our minds and hearts, with particular reference to the fourth level of deliberation, choice and the pursuit of true value where we are forming personality and character; secondly by openness to learning about ourselves through interactions with others in the communities to which we belong – others whose responses can enlighten or give us feedback and whose generous living of incarnate values draws us powerfully to want to do likewise; and thirdly by perseverance in prayerful search for union with God and reflection on the received tradition which enshrines so much wisdom.

The desire we come to know and choose to live out of is the drive which moves us to follow whole heartedly the God-given bent of our conscious intentionality. It is at depth the desire for utter goodness, for the fullness of love, and it most readily finds expression in thought and action when we fall in love. Love for another human being or one's country or the cosmos, already increases the probabilities of making self-transcending choices in keeping with the desire that moves us. The openness to all truth, all goodness, even God, which is the fact of how we are made, becomes openness as achievement when we follow it and live accordingly. We see however that this could be more than problematic were it not for the self-giving of God which Lonergan calls openness as gift. Grace heals and completes the capacity for self-transcendence which constitutes fully human living. We come to see how Being-in-Love with God dismantles and abolishes the horizon within which our knowing and choosing goes on, and sets up a new horizon within which the love of God transvalues our values and the eyes of that love transform our knowing.

In February 1965, during the period covered by this chapter, Lonergan had a most significant personal break through. His great desire for many years had been to write a methodology for theology, to which *Insight* was just the prologue, but clarity was

³⁰⁵ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," *Collection*, CWL 4, 222.

proving elusive. Release from the tension of inquiry came suddenly and, as it often does, in a moment of complete relaxation.³⁰⁶ Lonergan was coming out of a movie with a group of friends when the insight towards which he had been groping came in a flash. Theology should be done as a creative collaborative exercise in which functional specialities would follow the movement of generalized empirical method given in transcendental consciousness and conversion would have a foundational place. He affirmed and developed this insight in his second classic work, *Method in Theology* (1972), which gives us also his most developed thinking on meaning, the human good and Being-in-Love with God in an unrestricted manner as experienced and known. A clearer perspective on this foundational reality is our aim in the following chapter.

³⁰⁶ For Diogenes the *Eureka* moment was in a hot bath.

Chapter 4 *Recognizing one's Being as "Being-in-Love":*

The Appropriation of Desire in *Method in Theology*

The gift to the Church and the human community represented by the publication of *Method in Theology* in 1972 would be difficult to overestimate. In this classic work, we have the culmination and summary of over two decades of search for an adequate methodology for theology based on the cognitional theory of his earlier masterpiece, *Insight*. During the gestation of this book Lonergan had had a series of original insights into the relation between the pattern of operations in human learning and the steps to be followed in any human science based on the past and oriented to the future, and here presents them as his generalized empirical method. *Method in Theology* was the writer's first contact with the mind and heart of Lonergan, holding out to me and to others both insight into the real meaning of desire and hope of reaching a fuller humanity in the pursuit of authentic holiness. Lonergan's vital contribution to the study of theology merits the serious attention we accord it here.

Method was to be a costly gift, the product of his mind and heart working together as we will show, but it was finished under pressure. He had to endure painful surgery for lung cancer which put an end in 1965 to his theology teaching at the Gregorian in Rome. His recovery was slow, and he felt an urgency about the completion of *Method*, based on the trust he placed in his nurse, Sister Florian,³⁰⁷ and an erroneous belief that she had assessed his life expectancy at a maximum of five years. This accounts for the summary nature of this work, "maddeningly dense, allusive and elliptical all at the same time;"³⁰⁸ but parts are lyrical and expressive too. For this we may also have Sister Florian to thank; she seems to have helped him come to a deeper appreciation of the beauty and

³⁰⁷ William Matthews, "A Biographical Perspective on Conversion and the Functional Specialties in Lonergan," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol. 16, II, Spring, 1998, 133 ff.

³⁰⁸ According to one of his ablest students, Frederick Lawrence, "'Cor ad Cor Loquitur': Bernard Lonergan S.J.," *Compass: A Jesuit Journal*, Spring 1985, 19-20.

transforming power of human love during long months of skilful and nurturing care. Finished in some haste, therefore, it nevertheless sets theology in the 21st century on a new and life-giving pathway of creative collaboration and dialogue. It makes the appropriation of desire a key task for theologians. It asks them to know the nature of the love that is moving them forward in their search for God.

The procedures of the human mind, as we have already seen, are themselves a method in the sense that Lonergan uses the term: “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.”³⁰⁹ The pattern of our consciousness differs from a pavlova recipe, for example, where we may think we have the normative recipe³¹⁰, but recurrent operations, (adding ingredients, whisking, baking), are presumed to yield in each case the same perfect dessert, meringue-like on the outside, risen and marshmallowy on the inside. By contrast, the essence both of our learning ability and of Lonergan’s meaning of method is that results build on what has gone before and keep developing towards a goal:

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.³¹¹

There need to be ongoing discoveries and each needs to be integrated with the others before the conditions for that ‘cumulative and progressive’ can claim to be achieved. In this method of doing theology Lonergan acknowledges the diversity of work being done by specialists in many areas, field specialists and subject specialists, but envisages a collaborative and interdependent system of eight functional specialties dividing and clarifying the process from data to results.

³⁰⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 4.

³¹⁰ And yet there are many of these, differing in a variety of ways!

³¹¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., *Method in Theology*, (Great Britain: Darton Longman & Todd Ltd.), 1972, reprinted 2003 by University of Toronto Press for the Lonergan Research Institute, p.4.

The eight functional specialties are intrinsically related to transcendental method³¹²:the person performing each is a knower, preferably one who has appropriated the dynamic structure of his/her own consciousness; each of the functional specialties seeks the end proper to one of the operations; their sequence follows, in an ascending and descending order, the order of the operations; the method proper to each of the functional specialties itself follows the dynamic structure of human consciousness.

Theology is done by theologians, and they come to know what they know by following the steps Lonergan identifies as, “the native spontaneities and inevitabilities of our consciousness which assembles its own constituent parts and unites them in a rounded whole.”³¹³ His contention in *Method in Theology* is that, by ‘self-appropriation,’ theologians can reach an ever-expanding awareness of their own knowing, choosing and loving and of how they operate in and through the operations of conscious intentionality to achieve certain goals. This intellectual conversion is essential to the proper functioning of his method.

(I)n a sense everyone knows and observes transcendental method. Everyone does so, precisely in the measure that he is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible. But in another sense it is quite difficult to be at home in transcendental method...It is a matter of heightening one’s consciousness by objectifying it, and that is something that each one, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself.³¹⁴

“In the proceedings of the human mind we ... discern a transcendental method , that is a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise.”³¹⁵ This basic pattern gives Lonergan’s theological method its unity and relatedness. Each of the functional specialties seeks the end proper to one of the operations of transcendental method. The first four, the mediated phase by which theology appropriates what others have said and done in the past, (*discens*),³¹⁶ follow the operations in ascending order. **Research** seeks the end proper to *experiencing*, the

³¹² Transcendental method is the basic pattern of conscious and intentional operations involved in all human knowing, the dynamic functioning of our questioning moving us from experiencing, to understanding, to judgment, to decision...ultimately to response in love to the love God pours out in our hearts.

³¹³ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 18.

³¹⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 14.

³¹⁵ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 4.

³¹⁶ The first 4 specialties involve the theologian in learning, “the theologian listens”. Lonergan also refers to this first phase of theology as being *in oratione obliqua*.

apprehension of data, by making available information relevant to theology in forms such as maps, dictionaries, critical editions of texts, ancient languages. **Interpretation** seeks the end proper to *understanding*, insight into the meaning of the data, grasping “the meaning in its proper historical context, in accord with its proper mode and level of thought and expression.”³¹⁷ **History** seeks the end proper to *judging*, acceptance or rejection of hypotheses or theories put forward to account for the past, seeking to grasp “what was going forward in particular groups at particular places and times.”³¹⁸ **Dialectic** seeks the end proper to *deciding*, acknowledgment of value and selection of methods or means leading to their realization. It is concerned to explore conflicts arising in research, interpretation and the history of religious thinking and community structures based on this, with a view to determining which are irreconcilables, and which are genetic, just different stages of development of the ideas in question.

In the second, mediating phase, (*docens*),³¹⁹ where theology addresses its own times and culture, transmitting the tradition into the future, the functional specialties follow in descending order. **Foundations** also relates to *deciding*. It presents the horizon within which the meaning of doctrines can or cannot be apprehended and thematizes conversion, out of which the theologian takes his or her stand in relationship to God and the issues treated in the other fourth level specialty, dialectic. **Doctrines** relates to *judging*, expressing judgments of fact and judgments of value concerning the “negations and affirmations not only of dogmatic theology but also of moral, ascetical, mystical, pastoral and any similar branch.”³²⁰ **Systematics** relates to *understanding*. It attempts to meet questions raised in Doctrines in a gradual process of reconciling all we hold to be true. Theologians working in this specialty are “concerned to work out appropriate systems of conceptualization, to remove apparent inconsistencies, to move towards some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience.”³²¹

³¹⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 127.

³¹⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 178.

³¹⁹ In the second phase the listening theologian speaks, teaching, *in oratio recta*.

³²⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 132.

³²¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 132.

Communications relates to *experiencing*. It makes the work of the other seven functional specialties accessible to particular people in current times through various carriers of meaning³²², producing data for the present and the future.

The functional specialties are thus successive parts of one process from data to results, and their clarity and interrelatedness derive from their relationship to the levels of conscious intentionality. Each of the functional specialties, however, employs not just one but all four levels of conscious and intentional operations. For example, within the functional specialty research:

The textual critic will select the method (level of decision) that he feels will lead to the discovery (level of understanding) of what one may reasonably affirm (level of judgment) was written in the original text (level of experience.) The textual critic, then, operates on all four levels, but his goal is the end proper to the first level, namely to ascertain the data.³²³

The same is true in each specialty according to its proper tasks. Lonergan's method thus makes specific for theology the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible, "Transcendental method adds considerable light and precision to the performance of theological tasks."³²⁴ Each specialty has its proper excellence, but none is isolated from the other seven – they are functionally related to each other in a cumulative process.

Experience is open to further data. Understanding to a fuller and more penetrating grasp. Judgment to acknowledgment of new and more adequate perspectives, of more nuanced pronouncements, of more detailed information. Decision, finally, is reached only partially by dialectic, which tends to eliminate evidently foolish oppositions and so narrows down issues, but it is not to be expected to go to the roots of all conflict for, ultimately, conflicts have their ground in the heart of man.³²⁵

This reference to the heart is significant. The two fourth level specialties Dialectics and Foundations, with which I am particularly concerned, are an original contribution, and indicative of the distinctly new emphasis Lonergan

³²² Lonergan holds that meaning is embodied or carried in human intersubjectivity (e.g. a smile, wink, hug), in art, in symbols, in language and in the lives and deeds of persons. He devotes chapter 3 in *Method* to a study of these carriers and the elements, functions, realms and stages of meaning. 57 - 99

³²³ Lonergan, *Method*, 134.

³²⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 24.

³²⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 141.

brings to theological method. They form a pivot or transition between the investigation of the cultural past and the committed stance of theology *in oratione recta*, during the second phase:

What mediates between past and future is personal decision. One accepts what one has studied in order to make it part of one's own stand, position, message; or, alternatively, one rejects it and will make that rejection a more or less important part of one's message.³²⁶

In Dialectic the theologian considers the significance of what the past has to offer and determines, when there are conflicting views of the significance of the past, which is the most accurate and valuable. This moves away from the pre-Vatican II emphasis within Apologetics on proving certain doctrinal propositions, refuting others, convincing the undecided.

By dialectic, then, is understood a generalized apologetic conducted in an ecumenical spirit, aiming ultimately at a comprehensive viewpoint, and proceeding towards that goal by acknowledging differences, seeking their grounds, real and apparent, and eliminating superfluous oppositions.³²⁷

Dialectic follows the functional specialties of research, interpretation and history and completes the stage of indirect discourse, the process of appropriating what others have said and done in the past. The past does not present a unified picture: there are internal and external conflicts in the history of Christian movements, and many diverging viewpoints which give rise to them. So dialectic involves evaluation of differing orientations in research, differing interpretations, differing accounts of the past and the present, conflicting pronouncements of theologians and authorities, an evaluation of the relative worth of different viewpoints. Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians may offer divergent interpretations of the same New Testament data and there is a whole history of past and present differing interpretations behind each, and an entire series of prophetic witnesses to the Christian fact.

³²⁶ Frederick E Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, Cambridge MA: Crowley Publications, 1980, 58.

³²⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 130.

In such a context, the only way that the historically conscious contemporary theologian can remain faithful to the demands of his discipline is to operate within a genuinely dialectic context.³²⁸

To do so is to recognize that some differences will be resolved with consideration of fresh data, others are merely perspectival, due to the complexity of historical realities, and could be brought together into a larger whole. However going to the roots of conflict may reveal more fundamental dialectical differences in religious outlook, ethical stance or cognitional theory which profoundly modify one's mentality. These can be overcome only through a conversion, religious, moral or intellectual. "The function of dialectic will be to bring such conflicts to light and to provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion."³²⁹

Our field of vision, the scope of our knowledge and the range of our interests are bounded according to when and where we live, our personal development and the education we receive. The contexts which result from past achievement and in turn condition future learning are what Lonergan refers to as horizons. Differences in horizon may be complementary when people recognize their need for each other's motivation and knowledge for the functioning of a communal world; they may be genetic, related as successive stages in some process of development. Neither of these is a dialectic difference. For Lonergan it is situations where what is intelligible, true or good for one is unintelligible, false or evil for another, and in which the horizon of the other is interpreted as wishful thinking, ignorance, fallacy, backwardness or infidelity – in other words real dialectical differences – which call for conversion.

Theologians doing dialectic and discovering the root causes of conflict are brought face to face with questions of authenticity, their own and others', and become aware of their own need for conversion. Crowe warns readers of Kierkegaard:

If he (Kierkegaard) does not haunt your theology, then I would say quite bluntly that you are not yet ready for Lonergan's dialectic and foundations. Kierkegaard

³²⁸ Philip McShane, Ed, *Foundations of Theology: Papers from the International Lonergan Congress 1970*, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd, 1971, 209.

³²⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 235.

has an unparalleled talent for forcing us out of the neutral stance of, say, the student of religions, and challenging us to our own personal commitment – which is just where Lonergan’s dialectic directs us, and what his second phase of the theological tasks would have us realize.³³⁰

In *Foundations* theologians reflect on the new horizons – intellectual, moral and religious – arrived at and chosen through encounter with the truths and values discovered in research, interpretation, history and dialectic. “The evaluative decisions we make determine more than just the matter in hand. They establish our own character.”³³¹ Whereas before Vatican II, Fundamental or Foundational Theology was seen as a series of basic propositions from which conclusions could be deduced, Lonergan finds theological foundations not in propositions but in persons, freely valuing and deciding within new horizons, which they experience as a gift from the Divine, what their personal stance will be:

The threefold conversion (religious, moral, intellectual) is not a set of propositions that a theologian utters, but a fundamental and momentous change in the human reality that a theologian is.³³²

The term ‘conversion’ refers to a vertical exercise of freedom, whereby one moves from one horizon to another, an about-turn, a significant change in which characteristic features of the old have to be discarded in favour of a “new sequence which can keep revealing ever greater depth, breadth and wealth.”³³³ It marks a new beginning, a movement into the horizon of the transcendental notions. *Insight* invited the reader to a clarification and reflective self-appropriation of the self-transcendence proper to the human process of coming to know. By the time Lonergan wrote *Method*, he had come to see conversion as threefold: intellectual, moral and religious.

Intellectual conversion is “the discovery of the significance of the pure desire to know ... the principle which underpins, penetrates, and promotes forward all of our cognitional operations. It is the principle which awakes questioning.”³³⁴

³³⁰ Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, 90.

³³¹ Vernon Gregson, “Theological Method and Collaboration II”, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, ed. Vernon Gregson, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1988, 100.

³³² Lonergan, *Method*, 270.

³³³ Lonergan, *Method*, 238.

³³⁴ Michael L Rende, *Lonergan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion*, Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1991, 183.

One who is intellectually converted will not be inclined to mistake the process of ‘taking a look’ for knowing. Observing the data or hearing the words is only the first stage in knowing. Then the intellectually converted recognize in their first insight into something, or even the clustering of insights, not what they intend to know, but the intelligibility which may be relevant to what they intend to know. They are alerted to the natural and active criteria of their own minds: ‘Why do you say that? Are you sure you have all the relevant data? What is the evidence for that assertion? What is the quality of that evidence? Is that in fact the case? Is that the only conclusion you can draw?’ Knowing involves not just experiencing but also the capacity and willingness to understand and to try to affirm that understanding in judgment. It may be said that awareness and sensitivity to what is involved in knowing constitute intellectual conversion. “Intellectual conversion is a grasp of our potential to understand what an object means and to judge whether that understanding is correct.”³³⁵ Lonergan goes further by asserting that the only certain way of gaining that awareness and sensitivity is the slow and difficult process of self-appropriation whereby we discover in our own consciousness the dynamic relationships leading from one operation to another.

... to discover the self-transcendence proper to the human process of coming to know, is to break often long-ingrained habits of thought and speech. It is to acquire the mastery in one’s own house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing. It is a conversion, a new beginning, a fresh start. It opens the way to ever further clarifications and developments.³³⁶

Habitual awareness of the elements of intellectual conversion is one key way in which the dialectician is able to evaluate various competing propositions. Many of the issues dividing Christianity need to be tackled at the cognitional level. The way in which dialecticians are recommended to work, however, is not by head-butting. The way is dialogue in a discernment that appreciates “all that has been intelligent, true and good in the past, even in the lives and thoughts of opponents.”³³⁷ It also recognizes deficiencies in oneself and those with whom one is allied, and then the action can become reciprocal.

³³⁵ Rende, *Lonergan on Conversion*, 187.

³³⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

³³⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 252. This attitude towards opponents is Ignatian, and exemplified in Lonergan’s own approach. See also the published work of Fred Lawrence who resembles his teacher in this. I instance “The Fragility of Consciousness: Lonergan and the Postmodern Concern for the Other.” *Theological Studies* 54 (1993) 55-94 as a case in point.

...the theologian's strategy will be, not to prove his own position, not to refute counter-positions, but to exhibit diversity and to point to the evidence for its roots. In this manner he will be attractive to those that appreciate full human authenticity and he will convince those that attain it. Indeed, 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.³³⁸

This is usually an effective way to operate because authenticity is actually our deepest need and most prized achievement – to this our desires are drawing us strongly. Moral conversion favours this openness in dialogue.

Moral conversion is also an exercise in vertical freedom, where one opts for the truly good, for value over satisfaction. It is the change from using the seeking of pleasure and avoiding of pain as the basis of choice, as children might want to do, to the preference for what is truly worthwhile, even if somewhat arduous, of the mature adult. Because human beings can ask questions about objective value, and answer them, and live by the answers,

We can effect in our living a moral self-transcendence. That moral self-transcendence is the possibility of benevolence and beneficence, of honest collaboration and true love, of swinging completely out of the habitat of an animal and becoming a person in a human society.³³⁹

Still, as Lonergan points out, “such conversion, of course, falls far short of moral perfection. Deciding is one thing, doing is another.”³⁴⁰ There is a long process to be undertaken before anyone can claim to be a virtuous person: of tackling bias in all its forms, evaluating one's own intentional responses to values and their implied preferences, developing moral knowledge and learning from the example and criticism of others. Authenticity is never a permanent acquisition in this sphere as in any other: “It is ever a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal brings to light the need for still further withdrawals.”³⁴¹ Sin and repentance are realities in the life of a theologian *qua* theologian.

However the criterion of moral conversion can also help to resolve the disputes confronting the theologian doing dialectic. It will call into question any

³³⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 254.

³³⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 104.

³⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

³⁴¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 110.

theoretical view of human motivation which is exclusively materialist or exclusively value-related. Human beings are not just ‘sophisticated stimulus-response mechanisms’ as some behaviourists, economic materialists or scientific determinists might allege, but neither are they likely to be totally free of individual and group bias and other weaknesses human flesh is heir to. “Sin is alienation from man’s authentic being, which is self-transcendence, and sin justifies itself by ideology.”³⁴² Moral conversion will bring to the task of dialectic insight into competing theories offering solutions to the problems of society.

There is a still further dimension to being human, and there we emerge as persons, meet one another in a common concern for values, seek to abolish the organization of human living on the basis of competing egoisms and to replace it by an organization on the basis of man’s perceptiveness and intelligence, his reasonableness, and his responsible exercise of freedom.³⁴³

Equally significantly, however, moral conversion as lived brings to the work of dialectic the possibility of the requisite humility and ecumenical openness in the theologian doing it. Crowe has written persuasively of his hope for this:

We have daily experience ... of how much in theology is the reflection, not to say rationalization, of one’s life choices. We may have similar experiences of how blind other theologians often seem to be to this feature of their work. And, observing this, we may feel led on, by grace or natural honesty, to ask: am I also blind? Is my own theology the reflection or the rationalization of my life choices? With such questions we are at the heart of dialectic and foundations; we are questioning our personal authenticity and entertaining the possibility of the need for our own conversion.³⁴⁴

Crowe goes on to ask whether an Augustinian confession of what we have been, of the past that has made us what we are, may not be required as an integral part of theology when we enter upon the tasks of dialectics and foundations.

For Lonergan in *Method*³⁴⁵, the question of God emerges when we inquire about the possibility of fruitful inquiry, reflect on the nature of reflection, and deliberate on the worth of deliberation.³⁴⁶

³⁴² Lonergan, *Method*, 364.

³⁴³ Lonergan, *Method*, 10.

³⁴⁴ Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, 90.

³⁴⁵ In *Insight* Lonergan essayed to show that the proofs for the existence of God were not unreasonable. Now he is more inclined to look at the existence of the question as more significant. “In the measure that we advert to our own questioning and question it, there arises the question of God.” *Method*, 103.

³⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 101-103.

Man's transcendental subjectivity is mutilated or abolished, unless he is stretching forth towards the intelligible, the unconditioned, the good of value. The reach, not of his attainment, but of his intending is unrestricted. There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise. But their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.³⁴⁷

God is part and parcel of human authenticity, because human authenticity requires constant self-transcendence and if "specific loves, such as friendship or the love of marriage, actualize important parts of our capacity for self-transcendence, the love of God actualizes its ultimate basis, the unlimited potential of our knowledge and love."³⁴⁸ The prior word God speaks by pouring out his love in our hearts enables us to experience an other-worldly falling in love, being in love in an unrestricted manner. "Religious conversion is being grasped by ultimate concern."³⁴⁹ In religious conversion, therefore, is the fulfillment of our fourth level of human consciousness, of the choosing and loving that complete what our prior experiencing, understanding and judging have sought. It sets up a new horizon, resets our values and alters our knowing.

It gives you the horizon in which questions about God are significant. There are people to whom you can talk about God and they listen eagerly. There are others who just react: 'What on earth is he talking about? How on earth could I be interested in that?' Conversion is in Ezekiel: God plucking out the heart of stone. The heart of stone doesn't want to get rid of its stoniness. And that's the fundamental thing about religious conversion. I don't say there is nothing else happening, but I am saying that's what the key point is.³⁵⁰

For the theologian engaged in dialectic, religious conversion becomes a criterion for evaluation by enlarging his or her perspective beyond the finite realities of this world to matters of ultimate meaning and value. Religious viewpoints can be evaluated in terms of the attentiveness, understanding, judgment and responsibility they encourage among their adherents, the way they foster more trust, more hope and more love in action and attitude. Evil can be faced with

³⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 103.

³⁴⁸ Denise Lardner Carmody, "The Desire for Transcendence: Religious Conversion," *The Desires of the Human Heart* ed. Vernon Gregson, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1988. 59.

³⁴⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, Method 240.

³⁵⁰ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Religion: The Relationship Between Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty, Systematics*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973, 17.

courage and determination because it will not have the final word. Religious conversion enables the dialectician to recognize the action of the Spirit where this occurs, because it is coherent with his or her knowledge of it in experience.

(Religious conversion is)... the ultimate stage in a person's self-transcendence. It's God's free gift. It involves a transvaluation of value in your living, but it is not something produced by knowing. It's going beyond your present horizon; it's taking you beyond your present horizon.³⁵¹

In *Method* the three conversions are treated by Lonergan in the chapter on Dialectic although he maintains that conversion is a prerequisite only in the functional specialties of the second phase, where it constitutes "an explicit, established, universally recognized criterion of proper procedure."³⁵² Conversion operates implicitly in the confrontation of dialectic, and Crowe draws attention to Lonergan's complex position on this question by putting together two quotations. On the one hand, "anyone can do research, interpret, write history, line up opposed positions", but on the other, "though believers and agnostics follow the same methods, they will not obtain the same results."³⁵³ The conversions are in fact operative in dialectic, and

... the degree of their presence or absence both in ourselves as we evaluate and in the views which we evaluate is of immense significance. To the extent that we lack the attitude of openness which characterizes each of the conversions we cannot recognize their lack in the views and positions we are evaluating.³⁵⁴

Only what the theologian has been able to appropriate of his or her own loving desire for authenticity in the field of knowledge and of action is available for use in the 'scissor-like'³⁵⁵ way of operating which Lonergan recommends for dialectic.

³⁵¹ Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Religion*, 38.

³⁵² Lonergan, *Method*, 268.

³⁵³ Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, 116. In a footnote Crowe quotes from "Bernard Lonergan Responds," *Foundations of Theology*, ed. Philip Mc Shane, 227.

³⁵⁴ Vernon Gregson, "Theological Method and Collaboration II", *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 99.

³⁵⁵ In the metaphor of the scissors which Lonergan uses quite frequently he sees two blades: "with an upper blade in the categories and a lower blade in the data" is one formulation of this. In this case the upper blade is in the two laws of developing positions and reversing counterpositions, the lower in the various matters to be evaluated.

The method proposed involves two levels: on one are the ‘operators,’ the developing of positions and the reversing of counterpositions; on the second are the materials to be operated on. Once these materials are assembled and completed with an evaluative appreciation, they are compared. The dialectician looks for affinities and oppositions in them, and finding the same affinities and oppositions in a number of manifestations, seeks their underlying root, determines which ones result from dialectically opposed horizons and concentrates on those. Theologians proceed to apply the operators by developing those positions they judge to be positions, (authentic though not necessarily complete judgments of fact or value,) and reversing counterpositions (statements not compatible with intellectual, moral or religious conversion.)

Positions ... head for development, while counterpositions head for their own overturn. Positions develop. Man asks questions, seeks the right answers, and because positions are not full, definitive and explicit accounts, they need further development: further questions always arise. On the other hand, counterpositions tend to their own reversal: when the content of the utterance is contrasted with its fundamental implicit claim, there is a manifest contradiction, and the counterposition will collapse.³⁵⁶

Those who know from their own experience just what the three conversions are, at least partially, will have no great difficulty in distinguishing positions from counterpositions, whereas those who have only a notional apprehension of conversion “will find dialectic a foggy procedure;”³⁵⁷ even if they can recognize radically opposed statements they will muddle up which to develop and which to attempt to reverse.

Human authenticity, the result of intellectual, moral and religious self-transcendence, does not guarantee freedom from oversights, misunderstandings, mistakes and sin; but it does lead theologians to the uncovering of still more oversights, the acknowledgment of still further failures to understand, the correcting of still more mistakes and to repentance for more and more deeply hidden sins. In the measure of their own growth in self-transcendence theologians come to discern the ambivalence in others, the intelligent, the true

³⁵⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 5 Eds Elizabeth and Mark Morelli, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 189.

³⁵⁷ Fred Lawrence, quoted from lecture notes taken by the writer.

and the good as well as the mistakes, the misinformation and the evil in opponents and in their own tradition.

Foundations is the functional specialty which follows Dialectic, the first in the committed, second phase of theology, “where the listening subject speaks”³⁵⁸ and takes responsibility for speaking. Dialectic has prepared for this by bringing conflicts to light, eliminating evidently foolish oppositions, narrowing down issues, objectifying and revealing them in their fundamental options so that the choices to be made in foundations will be clear. But decision, finally, is reached only partially by dialectic. It does not take sides – the person does, and this stance becomes the foundational reality for the direct discourse of theology; “Foundations takes sides; it selects as its stand some coherent set out of the array of opposing positions, and in so far as it is guided by authentic conversion, its selection will be an implicit objectification of what conversion is.”³⁵⁹

Foundations begins “a new and creative phase of theology, with the self-involvement of the theologian and with a Spirit-guided process.”³⁶⁰ As a fourth level specialty it involves a decision that selects one horizon and rejects others. “It is a fully conscious decision about one’s horizon, one’s outlook, one’s world view. It deliberately sets the framework, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective.”³⁶¹ This will not be done arbitrarily. It will be done in keeping with the demands of the human spirit that we be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and in love, otherwise it is without authenticity. Such a clear choice about horizon is not self-evident in a world where many just drift – Lonergan calls it a high achievement – and though intensely personal it is not purely private. Conversion means more than a change of horizon, it means beginning to belong to a new social group, or at least belonging in a new way.

Discovery of our interiority, of the Spirit who abides there, of our correspondence or lack of it with the Spirit, is not a solo flight. Laying the foundations for doctrines is not a solo task. It is the work of a community in the faith, a work in which I challenge others and invite them to self-scrutiny, but inexorably am myself challenged by them and invited to my own self-scrutiny. In each

³⁵⁸ Fred Lawrence, quoted in lecture notes.

³⁵⁹ Lonergan, “Bernard Lonergan Responds,” *Foundations of Theology*, Philip McShane ed., 229.

³⁶⁰ Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, 88.

³⁶¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 268.

encounter there is need of extreme openness and sincere efforts to break down the wall between private faith and the public enterprise of theology.³⁶²

It is clear that the theologian has a personal contribution to make in the second, committed phase of theology, and therefore a certain autonomy; authentic conversion provides the horizon within which doctrines are to be apprehended, and understanding of their content sought, and appropriate ways to transmit these within given cultural mixes.³⁶³ “Each theologian will judge the authenticity of the authors of views, and he will do so by the touchstone of his own authenticity.”³⁶⁴ This is to be the criterion of the autonomy of the theologian and hence the vital importance of self-appropriation, familiarity with his or her natural and religious interiority. We need to be able to discover what in ourselves is inauthentic to be able to turn away from it with the grace of God; to discover what the fullness of human authenticity might be and embrace it wholeheartedly.

We have seen that Dialectic and Foundations are linked by their pivotal position in the ascending descending order of the functional specialties, their sharing of the fourth level mode of conscious intentionality and their integral role in Lonergan’s view of theology as a “dialogue of disciplines.”³⁶⁵ The fourth level – at which Lonergan places religious experience – is the level of responsibility, “on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide and carry out our decisions.”³⁶⁶ At each level there has been a fuller self to be aware of, and at this existential level “the intention of the intelligible, the true, the real, becomes also the intention of the good, the question of value, of what is worthwhile, when the already acting subject confronts his world and adverts to his own acting in it.”³⁶⁷ The existential level involves the theologian in evaluation and deliberation, in responsible decision-making and the notion of value and the good; this is the level of personal, communal and historical self constitution. At this stage the person is discovering his or herself as a moral being, choosing

³⁶² Crowe, *The Lonergan Enterprise*, 93.

³⁶³ That is, in doctrines, systematics and communications.

³⁶⁴ *Method*, 331.

³⁶⁵ Vernon Gregson, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 117.

³⁶⁶ *Method*, 9.

³⁶⁷ Lonergan, “The Subject”, op.cit.,

between courses of action, at the same time making him or herself an authentic human being or an inauthentic one. When the theologian has become convinced that something is true and good, he or she is faced with a personal decision. To be authentic as a theologian means the steady application of the inquiring mind in accord with the *eros* of the pure, unrestricted desire to know all truth; desire's loving search for complete union with the Beloved will be the sustaining impetus for this undertaking.

Desire Directing the Dynamism of Open-Ended Consciousness

In *Method* Lonergan treats of feelings, values and conversions; religious experience and the summit of human development as 'being-in-love with God'. Now the pure and unrestricted desire to know of *Insight* has been "swept up into ... the passionateness of being."³⁶⁸ He shows that the dynamism of consciousness leads, in a spontaneous, self-assembling pattern of operations, of sublation and transcendence, beyond the ongoing discovery and affirmation of truth to the pursuit of value and absolute goodness, and he invites the reader to verify this too in attention to the data of consciousness. Our being, all being, is oriented in vertical finality towards the One who is transcendent in lovable³⁶⁹, and to this end "the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." (Rom 5:5) This finality, in consciousness, is the desire examined in *Method*. Ways for the theologian, for anyone with a sufficiently cultured background, to appropriate the love without restriction or qualification or reserve which best expresses this desire will next be considered in the light of the wisdom embodied in *Method* and in terms of the categorical imperatives this work is based on: Be attentive; Be intelligent; Be reasonable; Be responsible; Be in love.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Fred Lawrence, 'Cor ad Cor Loquitur,' 20.

³⁶⁹ Bernard Lonergan, "Religious Experience," *Trinification of the World: A Festschrift in Honor of Frederick E. Crowe*, eds. Thomas A Dunne and Jean-Marc Laporte, (Toronto: Regis College Press, 1978).

³⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972) 55. 231. Lonergan lists only the first four at this juncture but it is clear that in making religious conversion foundational for the study of theology he has effectively joined Be in love to the earlier four transcendental precepts and he does so explicitly on p.268.

If we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate religious experience with the rest of our living, Lonergan maintains, we have to inquire, investigate, take counsel, so that we come to understand, affirm and live out of this gift.³⁷¹ As pure experience religious experience is not something that we can know and understand quite as readily as we have come to work out the meanings and realities of what is encountered in sense data, by the self-correcting process of learning. However, the data of consciousness trigger an equally developmental process, involving, in this case, attention to inner experience, inquiry, insight into the intelligibility of the experience, reflection and testing this understanding for indications of compatibility with truth as one knows it. Finally our questioning can lead us to operate in the light of the meaning we have found in these inner events.

Be attentive!

This developmental process will operate in us whether or not we have fully achieved the self-appropriation as a knower of which Lonergan writes in *Insight*, and in *Method*.³⁷² However interiorly differentiated consciousness³⁷³ not only heightens awareness of these operations, but can achieve knowledge of them and so enable an individual to follow deliberately the norms immanent in the God-given pattern of intentional consciousness. The data of consciousness to which we are called to attend in religious experience, are the effects of the powerful love which comes into our lives as the fourth level fulfilment of all that our efforts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and in love have been seeking.

³⁷¹ *ibid.*, 122-3.

³⁷² Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 14-15. Self-appropriation involves the objectification of transcendental method: i.e. attending to, inquiring about, understanding, conceiving and affirming one's attending, inquiring, understanding, conceiving and affirming.

³⁷³ For Lonergan, interiority is a third realm of meaning, going beyond the realms of commonsense and theory. "The aim of *Insight*, self-appropriation, is a movement to the world of interiority. One wants to know just what it is that happens when one understands, and all the different ways in which one understands. The exigence of critical philosophy is this: one should not talk about what one does not know, and still less should one talk about what one cannot know." "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958 - 1964*, 114-15.

Just as the operations of both intentional consciousness and theological method begin with data, so does the appropriation of desire. In order to understand the passionateness of our own being: firstly we can attend to what is going on in our own conscious awareness; secondly we can notice patterns emerging in our actions and attitudes over time; thirdly we are called to be open to the experience and feedback of others in the human and especially the Christian community; and fourthly we should pay attention to knowledge born of religious love, assented to and deepened in a life of prayer.

The first of these sources of data is consciousness itself. As we have seen in earlier chapters³⁷⁴, human beings have a direction before they know it. Being precedes knowing and our ceaseless questioning is the result of our being a problem to ourselves as we strive to make sense of that inner directedness. Beyond attention to the processes involved in coming to know, Lonergan is now inviting the reader of *Method* to advert to his or her feelings and the existential choices made at the level of evaluation, choice and decision. Throughout a lifetime's practice of attentiveness to the quality and movement of his own feelings in order to be responsive to the action of the Spirit moving him to choose the good³⁷⁵, Lonergan had developed a familiarity with his own interiority at this level. Already in *Insight* he has recognized feelings and emotions as elements within experience, as data to be understood and even guarded against as potentially skewing the clear functioning of intellectual light. In 1972 he goes further, maintaining that it is by our feelings that we are "massively and dynamically oriented"³⁷⁶ in the world mediated by meaning. Feelings give intentional consciousness "its mass, momentum, drive, power,"³⁷⁷ and it is advisable to take full cognizance of them, whether we consider them to be admirable, deplorable or indifferent, rather than to brush them aside, overrule them, ignore them.

³⁷⁴ cf Chapter One, p. 9.

³⁷⁵ In the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, retreatants learn the rules for the discernment of spirits: in those earnestly seeking to serve God, assenting to a proposal that will advance them in the spiritual life leads to feelings of peace and joy, whereas choosing what is not truly good leads to heaviness and sadness. They are encouraged to make an election and then observe the feelings that arise. A Jesuit learns to pray for the feeling responses appropriate to passages or texts chosen for meditation and to distinguish, in himself and those he directs, 'consolation and desolation.'

³⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 31.

³⁷⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 30.

Familiar as his own feelings were, perhaps Lonergan felt he had not reached his own high standards for attaining explanatory theory on the subject of feelings, because in writing *Method* he draws heavily on the work of two ethicists who studied the phenomenology of affectivity: Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hildebrand.³⁷⁸ They did help to clarify his thinking and provided terms and relations he could use to develop seminal insights from his earlier work, but he developed their contribution in a way which is distinctively his own, particularly by correcting their differing misunderstandings of the nexus between feelings and cognition.³⁷⁹ Without feelings, he maintains, “our knowing and deciding would be paper thin.”³⁸⁰

From von Hildebrand he took the distinction between, on the one hand, non-intentional states and trends³⁸¹ and on the other intentional responses. Feelings that are intentional responses relate us to what is intended, apprehended, represented. They do this in two ways, relating us to objects either in terms of personal or group satisfaction and dissatisfaction, (what is perceived as agreeable or disagreeable,) or in terms of values:

... whether the ontic value of persons or the qualitative value of beauty, understanding, truth, virtuous acts, noble deeds. In general, response to value both carries us towards self-transcendence and selects an object for the sake of whom or of which we transcend ourselves. In contrast, response to the agreeable or disagreeable is ambiguous.³⁸²

The attractive object of desire may be objectively good as well as personally satisfying but the true good can equally be something difficult, even unpleasant, and then our choice of value over our own comfort is manifestly an act of self-transcendence.

³⁷⁸ Manfred Frings, *Max Scheler*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1965) and Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, (New York: David McKay, 1953.) Lonergan directs his reader to the wealth of analysis of feelings in this work.

³⁷⁹ This influence is comprehensively treated by Mark J. Doorley in *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics: The Role of Feelings in the Ethical Intentionality Analysis of Bernard Lonergan*, (Lanham, New York, London: University of London Press, 1996.)

³⁸⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 30–31.

³⁸¹ States, such as fatigue or irritability, have causes; trends, such as hunger or sexual arousal, have goals. Neither category relates a person directly to an object as do intentional responses such as fear, trust or desire.

³⁸² Lonergan, *Method*, 30–31.

It was from Scheler that Lonergan derived the concept of the *ordo amoris*, the individual scale of preferences according to which each person's feelings respond to values. Objectively in Lonergan's view there is an ascending order from vital values such as health and fitness, through social values such as systematized education or the organs of civil society, to the cultural values which give meaning to human lives. Personal value ranks higher again, "the person in his self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise."³⁸³ Religious values stand highest in themselves, though some individuals may not acknowledge this in practice. The personal *ordo amoris* is linked to personal horizons, and these may vary widely, according to the quality of the formation received, the love and security within which they have developed and the extent to which the person has dealt with the transformational conversion encounters of their lives³⁸⁴, but what we desire in practice is available to attentive scrutiny. We can experience ourselves comparing and choosing. We can grow in awareness that our existential decisions are constituting the person we are becoming and that this person is increasingly in love with God.

In an earlier study³⁸⁵ the writer followed the efforts of William James (1842 – 1910) the American philosopher and academic psychologist, and Rudolph Otto (1869 – 1937) the German Professor of comparative religions, to be attentive to religious experience and to convey its essential character. They each produced a taxonomy of the varieties of religious experience. Where they differ is on the question of whether or not there is a single and distinctively religious moment of consciousness. For James, the religious feelings and conduct of saintly Christians, Stoics and Buddhists are remarkably similar, though their thoughts might differ widely. He identifies a "faith state" which he regarded as a

³⁸³ Lonergan, *Method*, 32. Values have been of ongoing interest to Professor Patrick H Byrne at Boston College. See for example "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour", *METHOD Journal of Lonergan Studies*, Vol II, Fall 1993, 103 – 136.

³⁸⁴ This question is comprehensively treated by Rosemary Haughton in *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*, (Springfield, Illinois; Templegate Publishers, 1967, 1980). See below, p. 107 – 113

³⁸⁵ Elizabeth J. Snedden, *An Approach to Understanding Religious Experience in the Light of Bernard Lonergan's Account of Religious Interiority*, Minor Thesis for TheolM, Melbourne College of Divinity 2001.

biological as well as a psychological condition, marking religious experiences across cultures:

...an excitement of the cheerful, expansive, 'dynamogenic' order which, like any tonic, freshens our vital powers...this emotion overcomes temperamental melancholy and imparts endurance to the Subject, or a zest, or a meaning, or an enchantment and glory to the common objects of life.³⁸⁶

"This readiness for great things and this sense that the world by its importance, wonderfulness, etc., is apt for their production," which James sees as "the undifferentiated germ of all the higher faiths,"³⁸⁷ is clearly related to the openness as gift of which Lonergan spoke. There is joy and energy in the experience of the unrestricted love of God transvaluing our values, broadening our horizon to encompass God's beneficent plan for the universe, and working within fourth level consciousness to make human authenticity realizable. Who it is we love is neither given nor as yet understood, but we sense the lack of restriction in this loving, and our capacity for moral self-transcendence finds a fulfilment that brings deep joy and profound peace.³⁸⁸ In James's study the initial occurrence of this religious experience is most frequently the 'being born again' experience of his own New England Protestant culture. It comes suddenly, unexpectedly, and will subsequently provide a memorable point from which to 'date' faith.

In Otto's writings, the awe and attraction aroused in the creature by the numinous, drawing towards an ideal good known only in presentiment and yearning, are feelings awakened from the spirit, "and this spirit, this inborn capacity to receive and understand, is the essential thing."³⁸⁹ He would perhaps recognize this innate capacity in Lonergan's "successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the *eros* of the human spirit,"³⁹⁰ This can be a more gradual surfacing in awareness of the powerful attraction of the Divine.

³⁸⁶ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 397-398. James acknowledges his debt to Professor Leuba for the term 'faith state'.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*, Note 16, 398

³⁸⁸ Pure experience can be 'without content and structure'. What Lonergan is talking of is the *prior* word God addresses to us by the Spirit, before any interpretation.

³⁸⁹ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 61.

³⁹⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 13.

The second way of attending to our own desire is to reflect on our development over time and to notice patterns of actions and shifts in attitudes that have occurred. The love of God poured out in our hearts may be operative in consciousness without being known, because never adverted to, queried and understood and thus never before accorded significance in any system of meaning by which our lives are interpreted.

... a person can be religiously mature yet have to recall to mind his past life and study it in its religious moments and features before he can discern in it a direction, a pattern, a thrust, a call to unworldliness. Even then his difficulties may not be at an end: he may be unable to associate any precise meaning with the words I have used; he may be too familiar with the reality of which I speak to connect it with what I say; he may be looking for something with a label on it, when he should simply be heightening his consciousness of the power working within him and adverting to its long-term effects.³⁹¹

Like Moses on the mountain, we may be able “to see God from behind” (Exod 33:23). Unable to identify what God is doing in us in the present moment, we may more readily see what God has accomplished in us in the past. We notice only what is within our horizon, but it is possible that we will discover desire for value as the *eros* of the human spirit where we find attitudinal changes occurring within. Changes in our way of acting will alert us to the significance of the quiet pull drawing us to attentiveness, to courageous pursuit of truth, to actions for the good of others. With enlightenment from the Spirit, we can come to recognize even the inner suffering of dryness and darkness we have been going through as a real God-experience. Journaling has been found by many to be one way of observing the movements of our thoughts and feelings over time, and discovering there patterns and leadings, though the unstructured diary method is somewhat less effective than the intensive writing advocated by Progoff.³⁹²

For this recognition we may need guidance from a spiritual companion or mentor, or at least the fellowship of those who have shared the experience, and the third

³⁹¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 290.

³⁹² A theorist in this matter, Ira Progoff, developed and refined the Intensive Journal Method in the mid-1960's and 1970's to provide a way to mirror the processes by which people find healing and personal growth. Lonergan was interested in his work and the workshops he was conducting throughout the United States and Canada. *At a Journal Workshop: The Basic Text and Guide for Using the Intensive Journal Process*, (New York, Dialogue House. 1975).

way of attending in order to appropriate the desire that we are is available to us in community.

For however personal and intimate is religious experience, still it is not solitary. The same gift can be given to many, and the many can recognize in one another a common orientation in their living and feeling, in their criteria and their goals. From a common communion with God, there springs a religious community.³⁹³

We receive from others feedback that draws attention to aspects of our own focus, our own development. Others can so incarnate values in their way of life, their words, their deeds, their whole meaning, that we can become aware of the inner stirring of our own desire for goodness beyond criticism. Those whose hearts are also taken can teach us to attend to our own heart's longing.

This is data and our exploration produces further data. Christians may find it in the "quickening of the Word", the familiar experience of finding a passage of Scripture more tinglingly alive and speaking right into the heart of our situation in a way it never has before. The Psalms of longing which were and are the prayers of Israel³⁹⁴ now form part of the official prayer of the Catholic Church in the Office of the Hours and these often find new resonance in the religiously converted who use them for prayer. To this data and other passages in Scripture which speak of God's desire for us engendering and meeting our own desire for God we find ourselves drawn.

The fourth dimension of the imperative, Be attentive, is that of attending to the outer word of faith. We have seen how human love within family or friendship has the power to enlarge horizons, to engender trust and to motivate generous self transcendence for the sake of the beloved.

The transcendental notions, that is, our questions for intelligence, for reflection, and for deliberation, constitute our capacity for self-transcendence. That capacity becomes an actuality when one falls in love. Then one's being becomes being-in-love. Such being-in-love has its antecedents, its causes, its conditions, its occasions. But once it has blossomed forth and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It is the first principle. From it flow one's desires and fears, one's joys and sorrows, one's discernment of values, one's decisions and deeds.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Lonergan, *Method*, 118.

³⁹⁴ Cf. for example Psalms 42, 43, 63, 107, 119.

³⁹⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 105.

The love of God working within us as a result of religious conversion has similar effects. We are invited also to attend to “knowledge born of religious love,”³⁹⁶ the data of religious experience as interpreted by others, and as opening to us in a life of prayer and reflection.

Before it enters the world mediated by meaning, religion is the prior 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 human context in which it is uttered, and such contexts vary from place to place and from one generation to another.³⁹⁷

The prior word which God speaks to us by flooding our hearts with his love is preparing us for the word of faith transmitted within the tradition that nurtures us. This tradition is the one in which we recognize the proclamation of the ‘outer word’ which enables us to make sense of our inner experience. This outer word within Christianity is preeminently the incarnate value of Christians living in the Spirit, the living tradition, and the written word of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, and teaching authority within the church family:

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.³⁹⁸

Loneragan points out, however,³⁹⁹ that it extends also to the “word” enfleshed in art: painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry and liturgy, which are all expressions, transmitted within a culture, of the prior word received through the Spirit. These may speak to us of the new meaning into which we are invited. The attraction they hold for us has significance and is to be attended to. Within the Christian faith view we come to know ourselves as members of the family of God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved ... “called out of darkness into God’s wonderful light”⁴⁰⁰, as called to be ministers of the reconciliation we have ourselves known,⁴⁰¹ and sharers in the unconditional love of Christ for the world.

³⁹⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 115. This is Lonergan’s definition of faith.

³⁹⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 112.

³⁹⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 113.

³⁹⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 112 – 114.

⁴⁰⁰ 1 Peter 2:9

⁴⁰¹ 2 Cor. 5:18-19

To welcome the newness of the horizon opened to us by this love and the world of faith into which we are invited, we need to attend to it – and to remain open to the further questions which will arise. This is to transcend ourselves-as-attending by inquiring, following the second transcendental precept: Be intelligent!

Be intelligent!

Few will not have experienced the appreciative response common in Western cultures on receiving a significant material gift. A person will open it, admire it, look at it from all angles, be interested to learn how it was the donor discovered it and thought of them, and then see how it works, try it out, express gratitude to the giver, before showing how greatly it is valued by regular and appropriate use. We are drawn to understand both the nature of the gift and the loving intentions of the donor.

As we have seen Lonergan noting in *Openness and Religious Experience* when he spoke of religious experience as **openness as gift**, there is joy and energy in the experience of the unrestricted love of God transvaluing our values, broadening our horizon to encompass God's beneficent plan for the universe, and working within fourth level consciousness to make human authenticity realizable. Who it is we love is neither given nor as yet understood, but we sense the lack of restriction in this loving, and our capacity for moral self-transcendence finds a fulfilment that brings deep joy and profound peace.

Our love reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, or repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, take counsel. So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace.⁴⁰²

Religious experience as experienced is ineffable, though we can and do seek understanding. Lonergan draws a contrast between the infrastructure denoted by the word experience, an infrastructure "that easily is unnoticed until it is rounded

⁴⁰² Lonergan, *Method*, 122-123.

off in combination with a manifold of further elements,”⁴⁰³ and the suprastructure which is built on it by subsequent inquiries. The infrastructure is pure experience, the data before it is named, classified, appealed to in support of a hypothesis. It provides, in every instance, the given:

Its defining characteristic is the fact that it is presupposed and complemented by the level of intelligence, that it supplies, as it were, the raw materials on which intelligence operates, that, in a word, it is empirical, given indeed but merely given, open to understanding and formulation but by itself not understood and in itself ineffable.⁴⁰⁴

The empirical level is the first level of consciousness, the one on which ordinary experience occurs, but the basic orientation of human knowing is dynamic, and experience is addressed, engaged, interrogated by intelligence, the second way in which consciousness functions. Questions arise, moving us to ask what and why, how and what for, and to look for some pattern of intelligibility in the data presented to us in experience. “Observing lets intelligence be puzzled and we inquire.”⁴⁰⁵ We imagine possibilities and seek “the idea or form, the intelligible unity or relatedness that organizes data into intelligible wholes,”⁴⁰⁶ the desired insight or flash of understanding. We may then have a concept, which we can formulate and probably need to, lest the insight get lost again. Insight is the fruit of inquiry, which promotes us from attention to experience to intelligent understanding.

After a transforming experience of the love of God breaking through into awareness, nothing can ever be quite the same again. However it is not always attended to or understood because it is not looked for in the ordinary encounters of life, which is where the Spirit works incarnationally. In some cultures religious experience leading to conversion is held in high esteem and anticipated as the entry requirement for full adult membership of a given faith community⁴⁰⁷. This is close

⁴⁰³ Lonergan, “Religious Experience,” *A Third Collection*, 127.

⁴⁰⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 273.

⁴⁰⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 13.

⁴⁰⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 10.

⁴⁰⁷ For the Amish in Pennsylvania, youth are accorded a period of freedom known as the “rum springa” (from the German *herumspringen* – to jump around), during which wild oats can be sown, and only after a conversion “rebirth” do they make an adult commitment to the exacting “living plain” of the *Ordnung*. In the Baptist tradition and most of the evangelical and Pentecostal churches, it is the experience of being born again, or baptized in the Spirit (or both) which are deemed to constitute full membership of a denominational gathering.

to our contention here too, since it may be considered prerequisite for the theologian, and we have accordingly considered some ways of owning this experience, and developing its possibilities for a full human flowering. In the following chapter we will see deprivational neurosis, the scotosis resulting from deep trauma and guilt as blockages affecting to some extent these possibilities. At this stage it seems helpful to consider human formation as the nurturing ground for transformation or as being either too poor to be an adequate basis for change or too strong and thus stifling humanizing transformation.

There are different understandings of the role played by formation and by transformation in the salvation experiences of humankind. Since the Reformation, these two elements that have a different but complementary role, have been separated and only recently has a valuable dialectic between them begun. Where the Reformed tradition placed high value on the transformative conversion experience which has enabled many Christians to be ‘born again’ and live by faith, in total trust that they are saved, Catholicism placed excessively high reliance on formation, education and socialization into the faith community after Baptism to produce high principled, moral citizens living the sacramental life. For the Reformed tradition the expectation that those who had been converted were thereafter saints and to be recognized by their saintly behaviour has led in the past to separatist movements of various kinds and made the achievement of community hazardous. There was the temptation in a culture in which formation was irrelevant and ‘works’ held in low esteem, for individuals to try desperately to prove that they were among the elect by rigorous attention to the law and judgmental surveillance of others in the church to the detriment of both personal development and community.⁴⁰⁸ Within Catholicism overreliance on formation through the centuries led to dogmatism and hierarchical structures of control allowing insufficient room for the action of the Spirit in charismatic and more everyday paths to holiness; the church was described as a ‘perfect community’ though it lacked elements of interpersonal engagement and the expectation seems to have been that human effort to follow precept and doctrine, supplemented by sacramental grace working in ways that left feelings unaffected, would suffice.

⁴⁰⁸ Something akin to this was operating in the Jutland community of *Babette's Feast*.

An English theologian and mother of ten, Rosemary Haughton, has made a challenging study of these issues in her book, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*.⁴⁰⁹ She was held in high regard by Lonergan for her insights into the action of God's Spirit in human experience and spoken of by him with some reverence as 'a mystic.' This work develops its terms and relations in the light of recognizable human encounters, and witnesses to the incarnational presence of the Spirit where good human formation breaks down and transformation occurs:

The theological categories studied here grow directly and verifiably out of actual and common human experiences. Everyone has them in some way, so that anyone who is searching for ways to understand God's love affair with human kind can recognize its words and actions in his or her (and also their) experience.⁴¹⁰

Not every conversion is on the scale of Paul's blinding encounter on the Damascus Road, Augustine's "Late have I loved Thee", or Wesley's "heart strangely warmed". The breakthroughs of grace which Rosemary Haughton uses in order to ground in readily recognizable human experience what she teaches in her seminal work, are those of a children's quarrel, a lovers' first sexual encounter and the change in a family man's social and religious consciousness. In each situation there is 'transgression', the breakdown of human formation, but in each she sees the power of the same spirit acting through self-giving love to effect a humanizing – and saving – transformation.

In the first situation a boy of twelve, "imaginative, touchy, withdrawn" has an angry quarrel with his little sister, "aged eight, obstinate, impulsive, generous."⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ Haughton, Rosemary, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*, (Springfield, Illinois; Templegate Publishers, 1967, 1980). In a prefatory statement to the second edition she describes the significance of this work in her own journey as a theologian: '...it was the "place" where I discovered a whole new set of concepts which helped me to understand what Christianity is all about: a language for human experience, and therefore a community of people using it and changing it, but the language of word, symbol, relationship, itself growing from the community, yet shaping the community as it does so, in a kind of dialectic progression through the centuries. The language identifies for people what is going on in their lives as they try to learn in themselves God's presence and work. It helps, therefore, to find out how to cooperate with that work in ways fuller and faster and more far-reaching than they could discover without it. They need to understand it accurately and live it obediently. Most of us don't.'

⁴¹⁰ Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community*, Prefatory statement to the new edition, 1967. Subsequently referred to only as *The Transformation of Man*.

⁴¹¹ Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 15.

She has helped herself, in his absence, to the precious brushes and paints on which he had depended for a peaceful time of solitude finishing a picture. The blast of his disappointment and anger opens up many doors in the boy's mind and releases much that he doesn't understand. The girl is half prepared for his attack – she knows the importance this activity has for him and is irritated by it since it excludes her. She also sensed that he would have refused had she asked to borrow these objects – but she is obscurely moved by a housewifely responsibility for her run down doll's house, half understood guilt for past neglect, and so she defends herself. The anger is fierce, insults fly: each sees the other as the aggressor, the enemy. "To each, the other symbolizes the destructive power of the unknown world – not merely the outside world of baffling other people, but the inner world of the unknown and terrifying self."⁴¹² Donald Winnicott (1896–1971), an English pediatrician and psychoanalyst with whose theories Haughton was familiar, held that parents did not need to be perfectly attuned, but just "ordinarily devoted" or "good enough" to protect their little ones from often experiencing overwhelming extremes of discomfort and distress, emotional or physical.⁴¹³ In this case however, the mother doesn't just suppress the disturbance and separate her furious offspring so that she can continue dinner preparations. That would have been an intervention and bought temporary peace but "the fears and desires and needs that blew up into a quarrel will be unaffected."⁴¹⁴ In this case the intervention is that of someone with a feel for the quality of human relationships and the children are helped by the loving quality of their mother's peace-making to repentance and reconciliation, to new insight into their own individual gifts and needs and into the demands of love in their relationship:

Real knowledge of oneself is something people can only dare to accept when love has broken through. Without love, self-knowledge must be rejected because it weakens the defences against the outside world...in the light of love self-knowledge is bearable, even welcome. So one of the effects of reconciliation is greater individuation, a more complete awareness of oneself as distinct, yet not cut off.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Simon Grolnick, *The Work & Play of Winnicott*. New Jersey: Aronson, 1990, p. 44.

¹⁰⁸ Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 22.

¹⁰⁹ Rosemary Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 38.

Within the security of the mother's love there was established in each child new self-understanding, new appreciation of each other's distinctiveness and value, and a new 'community' within the family. The episode was salvific. The Spirit was present, grace involved, a transformation effected where each child grew in capacity for love, received and given. Haughton attended to the strong desire for belonging and self realization in each child and invites us into her understanding. She is appropriating their desire for them, and for her readers.

The second new community of which Haughton writes is established in the sexual encounter of a young doctor and a dutiful single woman who has given up all thoughts of marriage. Haughton invites us to reach out for the intelligibility to be found in their desire for love. The woman has hitherto unquestioningly devoted her life and wages to the care and support of her more attractive younger siblings and their needy mother, who subordinates the older sister's prospects to theirs. The doctor has been repelled by the cosy domesticity of his parents' marriage and in serving his patients with all his heart has rejected any thought of a committed romantic relationship for himself. When the two meet at an office party both are initially attracted by this apparent indifference in the other. As they continue to see each other their discovery of their own growing attraction is resisted, but they go on meeting regularly, feeling it if they miss out. One day they are drawn to give themselves to each other in a sexual encounter which for each was a disruption, not the way they had previously foreseen their personal futures since each is seriously limited by their inner entanglements. Their genuinely loving mutual gift of self brings about a transformation which enlarges and completes what has begun in their formation. Though they don't quite realize the significance of their encounter it is an experience of love and grace, the existential appropriation of their own desire. It is transformational, bringing out in each a new sense of themselves as loving and beloved, a new awareness of their own capacity for love and sacrifice, a new ability to make changes in their way of living. Each has mediated Christ to the other. Both have fears and habits to overcome, and a distance to travel before they can follow through completely, but they are on the way. Their previous formation had made of them individuals capable of the change love called for, though this represented a clear discontinuity in each case;

Just as the children's mother in the first example was able, by her real love, to provide the conditions for a decision of love in her children, so, in the lives of the lovers, their own realized love can provide the conditions for formation towards their own further decisions.⁴¹⁶

They could not name their change as Haughton does, but they may well come to be able to. Their ongoing love-making provides a type of celebration, liturgy, for expression.

The third situation is that of a middle aged research scientist whose first conversion remained unexplained in any language which did justice to it and was lost to some extent in that its good effects faded and yet he was left with a 'bad conscience'. It began when he picked up and began to read the pacifist, communist pamphlets left around by his intensely irritating sixteen year old daughter. He did this with some sense of atoning for his inability to do anything but clash with her and gradually some of his assumptions are challenged as he reads. One day he goes so far as to ask her about her political opinions and "since she is generous as well as enthusiastic she conquers a desire to crow over this apparently sudden change in his attitude, and answers his questions with sense and an unaccustomed humility."⁴¹⁷ He learns about a practical initiative she and others are involved in, offering a drop in club in a squalid area for people with nowhere to go in the evenings. It is the initiative of a young man who has bought the premises for this purpose and himself lives there in poverty, offering the needy of the neighbourhood a loving welcome and tender interest. The father is moved by her sharing and his relationship with her is changed for the better. He accepts her invitation to visit the club and is shaken by his confrontation with the place, the helpers and most particularly the "ugly and intense" young founder, who is passionate and brusque with his followers but "gentle, infinitely adaptable and undemanding" towards a suspicious old tramp, "with an apparently infallible sense of when to speak and when to be silent."⁴¹⁸ As the man leaves with his daughter, he receives a smile and a simple, "Come back. We need you." This encounter with committed love and vital concern for human beings is life changing. The father sees his life as a futile succession of evasions of reality, drifting, avoiding

⁴¹⁶ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 70.

⁴¹⁷ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 91.

⁴¹⁸ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 94.

the sharp edges of decision. He is able to see this and not run away from the knowledge of it, because of the young man who ran the place, the challenge his being presented, and a decision made during that first visit as a result of which he becomes a regular there.

The kind of self that he has discovered is realized gradually, later on, but it is in this moment that he actually sees, and seeing, repents, and repenting, is reconciled. He reconciled to *himself*, to this newly stripped and worthless and unlovely self, for it is in realizing the complete worthlessness of all that he had thought worthwhile ... that he discovers his real value. And this value is not something he *has*, not a possession – great or little – but precisely something that is given, and is only realized in being given.⁴¹⁹

There was joy in his new self-awareness. The change manifested itself in his efforts to see his wife and children more as people than as adjuncts to himself ; he had more physical energy, more sexual adventurousness with his wife; he became less of a ‘featherbed’ to his work colleagues when they discussed issues with him. “In these early days he is carried on by the sheer power of his new experience of life. Everything seems easy and delightful; he does not ask himself what he ought to do but just does it.”⁴²⁰ In the light of the preceding chapters the reader will find the transforming action of the Spirit clearly recognizable in his changed feelings and ways of acting.

It is not so recognizable to the man himself, however, and he has no guide other than his transformed conscience to assist him, no language in which to express his conversion except that of political realities such as ‘poverty’, ‘working class’, ‘self-sacrifice’ and these words do have new colour and life for him within the group of helpers he meets regularly once a week. The young founder has no real interest in his helpers, only in the poor they serve, so the group has no corporate sense, no explicit self-awareness. The man has a feeling which he can’t express that something more ought to change in his life, but it doesn’t, and finally the decision to accept a social invitation which entails missing his weekly commitment marks the beginning of a real let down, a loss which has a deleterious effect on self, family and work relationships. For transformation when it happens cannot be undone.

⁴¹⁹ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 97.

⁴²⁰ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 98.

It seems important to realize that when the personality has been transformed it stays transformed. Whatever happens, the definition of personality thus achieved continues. It can be refused admittance, refused acknowledgement, but it is still there. ... So the repentant awareness becomes a remorseful awareness, and the unbearable knowledge of what one is like is faced not in love, but in hatred and despair and rejection of what cannot be rejected because it is oneself.⁴²¹

Later, after an accident, lonely and in pain, he responds to the evangelizing material provided by a night nurse and his felt need for love recognizes the love offered by Christ. “And the self-awareness with which he responds to this invitation is so total and so peaceful that the agony often indicated by the word ‘repentance’ is almost unnoticed.... his self-discovery is primarily a discovery of himself as loved”⁴²² In the light of his new self-discovery he knows what he has to do and determines to do it. He is alone but will be able to find a Christian fellowship – or draw others into one by the power of his love – and there he will find a ‘liturgy’ in which to celebrate his conversion and the love he discovered in Christ. He can find a name for what has happened and that is significant because even without a community and a liturgy, if he has a language for his conversion he has begun to understand and that is a key step towards appropriation. It helped that the language of his conversion used words which already had meaning in his surrounding world and recalled the Christian teachings and stories of a well-loved nanny, although for him this meaning was irradiated by the new love he has found.

The focus of the desire Haughton is inviting us to appropriate in each story is different because each represents a different stage in coming to be ourselves. The desire is clear, but its realization is purely existential. Haughton sees more clearly than can any of her characters what is really afoot. The language the two children could put on their conversion would be actions and words to do with being a family and individual giftedness; “the two lovers used a language which also, because of the way they thought of themselves as related to others, included and affected their other human relationships, not merely the all-important community between the two of them”,⁴²³ formation affects transformation not only in giving some grounding in love, but in providing the basis of this language in which it can

⁴²¹ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 105.

⁴²² Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 110.

⁴²³ Haughton, *The Transformation of Man*, 136-137.

become intelligible. In each transformative event it is the whole personality in so far as it is aware of itself that is transformed. The decision for love makes further formation more likely to be fruitful.

The goal of questions for intelligence is to reach an insight that confers intelligibility on experience – in the case of desire and love for God, religious experience. When we fully advert to what is happening, when we become aware of “the unlimited, infinite goodness that whispers in our limitless questioning,”⁴²⁴ many struggle to do justice to the experience and can only resort to figurative language, using the imagery of light, warmth, of abundant and overflowing life, or of an overwhelming sense of beauty and wonder. As Lonergan wrote, surely about his own experience of being-in-love with God:

It is as though a room were filled with music though one can have no sure knowledge of its source. There is in the world, as it were, a charged field of love and meaning; here and there it reaches a notable intensity; but it is ever unobtrusive, hidden, inviting each of us to join. And join we must if we are to perceive it, for our perceiving is through our own loving.⁴²⁵

However the community of faith helps us to find a ‘liturgy’ in which to express, celebrate, re-enact what has happened to us, the outer word of God’s revelation to put words on it, and the fellowship of others who call it by the same name.

Be reasonable!

That the insight into what has happened in religious experience be affirmed is essential if it is to be truly known and appropriated: “...experience and understanding taken together yield not knowledge but only thought.”⁴²⁶ Yet how can we truly give rational assent to an interpretation of our religious experience which posits more than natural and physiological reasons for our new outlook on this world and our place in it; which requires us to rely on the outer word of a received wisdom in order to plumb the depths of our own loving desire; which re-expresses our sense of self-worth in terms of a wondrous divine predilection beyond imagining and a destiny out of this world! Assent, after all, requires a virtually unconditioned where there remain no unanswered questions and we

⁴²⁴ Denise Lardner Carmody, “The Desire for Transcendence: Religious Conversion,” *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 61.

⁴²⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 290.

⁴²⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 213.

transcend ourselves in affirming that this understanding of what has happened is more than just what we might hope or see as possibly true; it truly **is** the case.

Lonergan invites us, in following the dynamism of conscious intending, to rely at this juncture on belief and the self-correcting process of learning. We choose to believe what is speaking to us through the demands of the human spirit, to advance towards moral maturity by giving our assent to what the eyes of religious love have revealed to us; and allow subsequent growth and development to refine and adjust where we are not quite there yet.

As our knowledge... *increases*, our responses ... *are strengthened*...our freedom may exercise its *ever increasing thrust* toward authenticity. *So we move to the existential moment...* Then is the time for the exercise of vertical freedom.⁴²⁷

It is not unreasonable to believe the truths of faith, since for Lonergan belief involves five steps. We are not in a position to be the one immanently generating the knowledge of supernatural realities: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Cor. 2:9) However the first step in belief is taken not by the person believing but by the authentic subjects whom we believe. What they truly know they transmit. The second step is a general judgment of value: it is appropriate that there be a division of labour in acquiring knowledge, both in the historical and the social dimension⁴²⁸. As we trust the map or GPS system that gets us around town, though ourselves technologically challenged, we can find the periodic table reliable though we did not develop it ourselves. Renaissance man may have aspired to a truly general knowledge of all reality, but in our age of specialization we have prudently given up that ambition and agree to be experts in our own fields of competence, learning from others in theirs. The third step is also a value judgment, this time a particular rather than a general one. It regards the trustworthiness of the source of the information, the competence of the expert, or the sound judgment of the authority. We are to decide whether they merit our

⁴²⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 240. Italics mine. I am indebted to Frederick E. Crowe S.J., long time friend, editor and interpreter of Lonergan's works for these insights into the significance of the self-correcting process of learning as a key concept in both *Insight* and *Method*. . *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, Michael Vertin ed., (Washington, D.C.:Catholic University of America Press, 1989),62.

⁴²⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 41-47.

reliance and then be self-aware enough to admit that it could be true even if it seems counter intuitive:

Finally, when everything favors belief except the intrinsic probability of the statement to be believed, one can ask oneself whether the fault is not in oneself, whether it is not the limitations of one's own horizon that prevents one from grasping the intrinsic probability of the statement in question.

The fourth step is precisely this decision to believe, and the fifth the act of believing.

Where the authority revealing is God, and the Son who alone knows the Father and makes him known; where the witnesses are faithful in transmitting his message and the community develops, on this base, genuine expressions of the love that unites its members, it is not unreasonable to believe, even if it seems "too good to be true."⁴²⁹ Furthermore the self-correcting process of learning is still functioning through the 'passionateness of being', the *eros* of the human spirit, and can gradually help us sort out distortions. Father Frederick E. Crowe S.J. says that Lonergan is in agreement with Newman in holding that it is more constructive in general to believe than to doubt:

Of the two, I would rather have to maintain that we ought to begin with believing everything that is offered to our acceptance, than that it is our duty to doubt of everything. The former, indeed, seems the true way of learning. In that case, we soon discover and discard what is contradictory to itself, and error having always some portion of truth in it, and truth having a reality which error does not, we may expect, that when there is an honest purpose and fair talents, we shall somehow make our way forward, the error falling off from the mind, and the truth developing and occupying it.⁴³⁰

This assumes steps one to three in the process of believing, these being implied in the 'honest purpose and fair talents' which Lonergan requires of us. Tad Dunne⁴³¹ tells us that he has never had an overwhelming sense of God's love for him; yet for

⁴²⁹ Lonergan acknowledges in *Method* that as well as the authenticity of the subject there is also the need for the authenticity of the tradition which nurtures him/her, and this is not guaranteed. However the same process of questioning, the same self-correcting process of learning can challenge and correct the major inauthenticity of institutions where subjects remain open. *Method* 80, 162, 299.

⁴³⁰ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1930,[1870]0, 337, cited by Frederick E.Crowe S.J. in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, Michael Vertin ed. (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press,1980), 60.

⁴³¹ Tad Dunne is a former student of Lonergan, certainly religiously converted, and now Associate Professor of Philosophy at Siena Heights University.

him believing that God loves us is a judgment worth embracing with all one's heart. It is an act of faith, a judgment of value born of religious love.

As it happened, it was Lonergan who helped me understand the remarkable character of the evidence on God's love for me. The word of love from God is everything that the word of a friend is, plus a very different kind of word. A friend uses words, gestures, gifts; a friend shows up in time of need. God too, in Christ Jesus, uses words, gestures, gifts; Jesus showed up in our time of need. But God also takes up residence in the heart and loves from there. Lonergan calls this the "inner word" in hearts matched by the "outer word" of Jesus in history. Most poignantly, I realized that my love for God is the quintessential evidence that God must love me too.⁴³²

Dunne has attended to the reality of his own loving experience, understood and affirmed it. To affirm these beliefs means accepting the self-knowledge that the new light has made possible in a repentance that is not destructive but rather constructive of the new self. This means also assenting to a change that has happened, accepting the new values, the new horizon, in a self-surrender that is able to appreciate its enlargement. The eyes of religious love open us to the possibility of belief in revealed truth as transmitted by our faith community, and Christians assent to its word: "For God so loved us that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Phil.2:5) With this understanding of the reasonable way in which belief can function, we can affirm our self understanding as forgiven sinners, beloved in ourselves and in Christ, sent with his exemplary mission to build a friendlier world and become ourselves a word of hope and love.

Be responsible!

The gracious gift of God's love is operative in us at the level which controls by its choices what we will attend to, understand, and verify, so we are able to move into the realms of interiority and transcendence, and return with new insight and commitment to the service of God and neighbour. As we come to know our own

⁴³² Tad Dunne, "Being-in –Love", Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies 13/2 (Fall 1995) 161-175.

religious experience and affirm our own being-in-love, we are more likely to ‘seek the One who calls us by this gift of desire.’⁴³³

...it also gives rise to man’s quest for the otherworldly loveableness with which he is in love, and the fruits of that quest vary greatly as one moves from earlier to later stages of human meaning.⁴³⁴

Religious experience, surfacing within consciousness, has always this invitational dimension.

The invitation is to a subject to subject relationship with God. God honours the autonomy and full human functioning of human beings, creating them with the capacity to seek and find the divine fullness of Being to which they are oriented, but fully respecting their freedom. The very restlessness of the human heart in face of anything less than complete understanding, truth, reality, value and love is a cry for completion. The unease of conscience resulting from unauthenticity in thought and action calls to repentance and redemption. But God does not coerce. In religious experience we may come to know the infinite love which affirms our being, and the responsive love for God with which we are gifted, but nothing compels us. The invitation as formulated for the Christian is to be beloved, to love in return, and to honour the sovereign freedom and goodness of the God who calls us into the conversational heart of God’s own inner life.⁴³⁵ Being-in-love is a participation in the Trinitarian relations.

The outward expression of love is not incidental, Lonergan reminds us: 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 they have not yet reached the point

⁴³³ Tad Dunne, “Experience,” *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Michael Downey ed., (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 368.

⁴³⁴ Lonergan, “Religious Commitment”, *The Pilgrim People: A Vision with Hope*, Joseph Papin ed., (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1970), 60.

⁴³⁵ A treatment of Lonergan’s understanding of the Trinitarian life as intrinsically conversational is to be found in Frederick Lawrence’s “Grace and Friendship: Political and Educational Propaedeutic to God as Conversational”, *Il Teologo e la Storia: Lonergan’s Centenary (1904 – 2004)*, eds. Paul Gilbert and Natalino Spaccapelo, (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2006), 123 – 151, and “The Human Good and Christian Conversation”, *Communication and Lonergan: Common Ground for Forging the New Age*. ed. Thomas J. Farrell & Paul A. Soukup, (Kansas City MO: Sheed & Ward, 1993), 249-268; Philip McShane’s *Music That is Soundless: Introduction to God for the Graduate*, (Washington: University of America Press, 1977); and Kathleen William’s *Lonergan and the Transforming Immanence of the Transcendent: Towards a Theology of Grace as the Dynamic State of Being-In-Love with God*, (Doctoral Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 1998), 228-253.

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.⁴³⁶

It is the mutual acknowledgement of love received and love welcomed and returned that constitutes the joyous and liberating ‘change of state’ which is being-in-love. As long as it lasts there is glad subordination of one’s own selfish inclinations to the well being and joy of the other, a total willingness to be and do the best one can for the beloved’s sake. Self-transcendence becomes not only possible but desirable. “Loved, forgiven, and with their subjectivity restored to its native capacity for self-transcendence, human beings can be ‘origins of value’ in themselves, and in their relationships with others.”⁴³⁷ There is a strong likelihood of their treating all other human beings as subjects also, as loved and accepted, and as invited into the same intimacy within the conversation of the Holy Three. Their transformed subjectivity helps to transform the world.

However Lonergan writes not just of interiorly differentiated consciousness, but of religiously differentiated consciousness. This begins with religious experience and authentic human response to the transcendent invitation received in religious experience, religious conversion, but it seems that it can go further. Lonergan seems to be suggesting a continuum in this matter, which we may see as relating to the stages of the mystic way. Religiously differentiated consciousness, he says, is approached by the ascetic and reached by the mystic:

In the latter there are two quite different modes of apprehension, of being related, of consciously existing, namely, (1) the commonsense mode operating in the world mediated by meaning and (2) the mystical mode withdrawing from the world mediated by meaning into a silent and all-absorbing self-surrender in response to God’s gift of his love.⁴³⁸

Like St Teresa, following the mystic path in contemplative prayer while attending to the governance of her reform and the practicalities of administration, the mystic lives in two worlds. Both worlds are grounded in the love flooding the inmost

⁴³⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 113.

⁴³⁷ K Williams, *Lonergan and the Transforming Immanence of the Transcendent*, 251.

⁴³⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 273.

heart. The world of common sense is suffused with God's values. But in the second world:

...it can also set up a different type of consciousness by withdrawing one from the world mediated by meaning into a cloud of unknowing. Then one is for God, belongs to him, gives oneself to him, not by using words, images, concepts, but in a silent, joyous, peaceful surrender to his initiative.⁴³⁹

This is a development in religiously differentiated consciousness: all gift, gathering up and sublating the lower levels of the human person in such a way that they are active rather than passive, yet enabling a progressive transcendence of self, and content with the negations of an apophatic theology, with the recognition that God is not anything we can conceive. For it is in love, and on its love there are no reservations or conditions or qualifications:

By such love it is oriented positively to what is transcendent in lovableness. Such a positive orientation and the consequent self-surrender, as long as they are operative, enable one to dispense with any intellectually apprehended object. And when they cease to be operative, the memory of them enables one to be content with enumerations of what God is not.⁴⁴⁰

How one may grow in religiously differentiated consciousness, in ever deepening intimacy with the Holy Three, is the matter of Benedict XVI's encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, 2005. He tells us that the command to love is less a command, and hence extrinsic to us, than something intrinsic to us. We are made for love and to fulfill ourselves is ultimately to give ourselves to another.

Yet *eros* and *agape*—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized... The element of *agape* thus enters into this love, for otherwise *eros* is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf. *Jn* 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf. *Jn* 19:34).⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 266.

⁴⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 273.

⁴⁴¹ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 2005, Section 7, accessed from the Vatican website.

Fred Crowe writing in *Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St Thomas*⁴⁴² sees love in us, as in the Trinity, as a term before it is a principle of motion towards the good; looking back to its source before it looks ahead to a goal. His description of the state of being in love is as resting in God's love, *complacentia boni*, "consent to being, harmony with all that is, peace with the universe."⁴⁴³ The Holy Spirit in this context is to be thought of

"as an activity which is a state like joy and happiness, as an eternal, restful joy-ing that corresponds to the divine is-ing by which I have heard a philosopher describe God's being. Something analogous is true of God's image, in the successive stages of earthly affection and heavenly beatitude."⁴⁴⁴

Human capacity for self-transcendence meets its fulfilment, human 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 other-worldly love."⁴⁴⁵ Then there is a new basis for doing the good, seeking the true, sharing whatever understanding of the mysteries can be reached in a painstaking search. We are given a context which is the cosmos and a purpose which is the reign of God on earth, "righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17)

We have now considered how Lonergan fulfilled his lifetime desire in producing *Method in Theology* and gave it as a costly gift to the Church: a method in which the various fields and special interests of the theological enterprise could be brought together in a creative and collaborative project patterned on the generalized empirical method discovered in human transcendental consciousness. Eight functional specialties would follow in ascending and descending order the levels of our mind's intending, each with a particular goal appropriate to one level but using all four in its attainment. There would be the exchange of questions and discoveries between the eight in an active interdependence.

⁴⁴² Frederick E. Crowe S.J., "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St Thomas", *Theological Studies*, March, June, September 1959, 1-39, 198-230, 343-395. Father Crowe was a long-standing and trusted friend of Lonergan who asked him to be an executor of the Lonergan Estate. His work of editing and establishing annotated final texts of Lonergan's writing for the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan series and unfailing support and resourcing for Lonergan scholars all round the world from the Toronto Centre for Lonergan Studies came to an end on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012, when he entered into the joy of his Lord.

⁴⁴³ Crowe, "Complacency and Concern" 3, 347.

⁴⁴⁴ Crowe, "Complacency and Concern" 3, 347.

⁴⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 242.

Particularly the two functional specialties on the existential fourth level of evaluation, decision and choice, Dialectic and Foundations, are Lonergan's distinctively new contribution. Dialectic evaluates and works on conflicts in research findings, interpretation and historical accounts, thus offering a choice for Foundations. Intellectual, moral and religious conversions are of key importance for such an evaluation and in the life of those doing it. Rather than certain doctrinal propositions the converted theologian becomes the foundation for the work of passing on what has been gleaned from the past in Research, Interpretations, History and Dialectic and then is formulated, explored and proclaimed in Doctrines, Systematics and Communications.

Foundations thematizes conversion, and the self-appropriation of the converted theologian is a prerequisite for work in the second phase specializations.

Rosemary Haughton enables us to value also the ongoing work of the Spirit of love in smaller 'ordinary' transformational conversion events, and to see the roles played by good formation and its breakdowns in our growth towards love.

In *Method* Lonergan treats of feelings, values and conversions; religious experience and the summit of human development as 'being-in-love with God'. Now the pure and unrestricted desire to know has been swept up into the passionateness of being. If we are to appropriate this love without restriction and move towards authenticity in knowing and loving, it is important that we do it in the authentic way we have learned: by attending, trying to reach understanding, checking and affirming what we have understood, and then following through responsibly on what we affirm. We follow the transcendental precepts: Be attentive; Be intelligent; Be reasonable; Be responsible – in order to appropriate being-in-love.

Lonergan had nineteen more years of life rather than the five he thought he was to expect, and he continued to teach and to develop his thought on matters theological and methodological. He sometimes gave papers at the annual Lonergan Workshops held in the summer at Boston College and listened with his heart as

well as his keen mind to those presented by his students. The consummate dialectician himself, he appreciated their considerable achievements and was willing at times to ask the apposite developing question. He was free also in these later years to follow a second consuming interest—economics. He wanted to contribute further to the good of human society by finding a new economic model “so that the widows and orphans can eat.”⁴⁴⁶ We will not be able to follow him there⁴⁴⁷ because it is beyond the scope of this study, but in the following chapter we will seek further insight into his mature reflection on the affective dimension of intentionality; affective conversion in his writings and those of some former students by now teaching others; and interiority as a realm or stage of meaning. We will look further at how vertical finality as evolutionary enters into human consciousness in the experience of grace and the role of interiority, natural and religious, in the appropriation of desire.

⁴⁴⁶ As Lonergan remarked to an interviewer in Montreal when asked why he was giving so much thought to the matter.

⁴⁴⁷ For further information see *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 15 Macroeconomic Dynamics: An Essay on Circulation Analysis*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). Michael Shute has written in *Lonergan's Discovery of the Science of Economics*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) : “It is a central claim of this present work that Lonergan discovered the fundamental set of significant variables for economic science in 1942. It is my belief that if economists were to recognize what Lonergan discovered, the so far delayed scientific revolution in economics would be under way. Such a revolution would certainly have significant positive influence on the welfare of humankind.”

Chapter 5 Development in Religious Interiority

In this chapter it is our concern to examine difficulties that can be encountered in appropriating the “love without restriction” which is received as gift in religious conversion, and finding healing and effective freedom to live the demands of intellectual and moral conversion in a way commensurate with our desire for goodness and truth. We will take further the question of the interrelatedness of the ‘way up’ and the ‘way down’ in the later writings of Lonergan and ask whether a fourth conversion may be required in order to live in the third stage of meaning⁴⁴⁸. In the work of former students of Lonergan also writing in this period we can find a helpful expansion of the notion of desire and its appropriation. We will then consider how the authenticity of the individual is involved in concern for the major authenticity of the tradition which nurtures communities, and note the need for commitment and ongoing development for the sake of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility and loving kindness in the building of a friendlier world.

In the years after the publication of *Method*, Lonergan continued to teach, often in response to invitations and questions from his readers. In lectures and papers of this period he regularly uses phrases already familiar from that work, but at times he goes further in response to questions asked for elucidation of its key ideas, and that deepening and expanding on themes continued for nearly a decade. In an interview at the First International Lonergan Congress held in Florida during Easter 1970, Lonergan gives a clear and succinct statement on the extent and significance of the self-appropriation he is advocating. Asked whether his generalized empirical method is a way or a theory, he suggests that it is a way, though that way can be clarified theoretically:

But that self-appropriation can be objectified. It’s a heightening of consciousness – as one moves from attention to intelligence, to reasonableness, to responsibility, **to religious experience**. These modalities of consciousness, the *a priori* that they constitute, *that* can be objectified. Not in the sense of subject-object – in here now,

⁴⁴⁸ This term refers to a stage where differentiated consciousness is able to distinguish from commonsense not only the theoretical, the scientific, the scholarly, but also the realm of interiority. Lonergan’s intentionality analysis places his work in this stage of meaning.

out there now – but in the sense that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. That self-appropriation can be objectified and its objectification is theory.⁴⁴⁹

Self-appropriation is coming to understand and affirm and act out of, not only one's experiencing, understanding and knowing, but also one's existential decision-making. Together these are for us the way to live a fully human life. In this personal appropriation of the way we are made, Lonergan now includes really owning the saving experiences which have opened up new horizons for human persons in the realm of grace and religious faith. These are at work in us to extend and support our authentic living and are to be welcomed because they give us a better sense of where we are heading, as he says:

The exercise of self-appropriation gives you the structure that generates horizons. And because you have the structure that's generating horizon, because that structure is heuristic, you're anticipating. If the intelligible, being, the good – what you mean by those terms – is what is correlative to the desire to understand, to be reasonable, to be responsible; then, in yourself, you have the subjective pole of an objective field. You have also, in intelligent reasonable responsibility, norms, built-in norms, that are yourself. They are not propositions about yourself; but yourself, in your spiritual reality, to guide you in working out what that objective horizon is, the objective pole of the horizon. It's normative, it's potential. Not absolute, in the sense that you have it all tucked away.⁴⁵⁰ But you have the machinery for going at it, and you know what happens when you do.⁴⁵¹

We are not guaranteed that any self-knowledge we attain will be free of illusion, even delusion, but we do have the wherewith to “go at it.” Lonergan acknowledges that some individual “may get caught in some sort of cul-de-sac and that's his misfortune” but since what he is talking about is a way, a dynamism, he identifies the way out of such an apparently dead-end as the dynamic of asking further questions or, even more significantly, of really listening to and accepting the questions that stir one within.

⁴⁴⁹ “An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J.” ed. Philip McShane, *A Second Collection*, 214. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁵⁰ Note here the telling expression used by Fred Lawrence in the title of his article, “The **Fragility Of Consciousness**: Lonergan And The Postmodern Concern For The Other,” *Theological Studies* 54, (1993). In the article he comments: “Consciousness however as an internal self-presence or awareness has to itself not only a dimension of explicit, foreground awareness, but a tacit or background dimension—namely, the most radical presence of ourselves to ourselves—that can never be made explicit exhaustively”, 59.

⁴⁵¹ “An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J.”, 214.

Beyond our Horizons

Questioners were interested in the horizon set up in us by God's gift of love which grounds religious conversion – did it transcend the horizon of being?⁴⁵² Lonergan said no – the good goes beyond, is more comprehensive than the intelligible, the true and the real, just as religious conversion takes you beyond both intellectual and moral conversion:

But it's not beyond being, if this being in love, total commitment ...is the full actuation of the movement towards the intelligible, towards the true, towards the real, towards the good. This is the ultimate step in it. It's what you are *a priori*, what your authentic subjectivity is open to. It occurs, insofar as it does, through God's grace.⁴⁵³

In this interview Lonergan does not go on to speak of God in this context as Being itself, but he has always contended that human intending, human questioning, human desire is up to and including God. The new horizon of religious conversion clearly is even more open to a goodness beyond criticism, which is wholly transcendent beauty and truth. We come to know ourselves as longing for this. The text which Lonergan likes to use from this time on to demonstrate the undeserved, unexpected nature of this horizon shift is Ezekiel 11:19. As Lonergan puts it: "God plucking out the heart of stone which has no desire whatever to be a heart of flesh and putting in the heart of flesh, totally beyond the deserts, ambitions even, of the heart of stone."⁴⁵⁴

Once the gifted change has happened, however,

being in love is a fact, and it's what you are, it's existential. And your living flows from it. It's the first principle, as long as it lasts, and ...it's the source of all one's desires and fears, all the good one can see...⁴⁵⁵

The good now within the scope of our desiring is the ultimate in goodness, the truly worthwhile. As clarified by the outer word of the Christian faith community, it is to "let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus," (Phil.2:5) where we follow the gaze of the Son to the Father, and in the Spirit embrace the Father's comprehensive plan for human flourishing in a friendly universe. Lonergan sets out clearly some of the issues raised by this appropriation task in "Mission and the Spirit" (1976) which

⁴⁵²Being, for Lonergan, is "the universe, the world mediated by meaning. It's the answer to what you know when you answer questions that regard everything about everything." "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J." 218.

⁴⁵³ "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J.", 228.

⁴⁵⁴ "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J.", 229.

⁴⁵⁵ "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan S.J.", 228.

was written for a Concilium *Festschrift* in honour of Edward Schillebeeckx on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday⁴⁵⁶.

In this article Lonergan brings together in a compendious way key themes from *Insight* and *Method* to address the question: What in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural? He also revisits vertical finality as another name for self-transcendence, and the human subject in the context of human community and the divine self-communication of the Son and the Spirit. We are invited to consider the experiential dimension of grace and the way in which, through faith-filled reflection, we can affirm the redemptive action of God within a life of flawed and inconsistent response to the *eros* of the human spirit.

The self-appropriation advocated here is grounded in the reality of an evolutionary view of the universe; “As man’s being is being-in-the-world, his self-understanding has to be not only of himself but also of his world.”⁴⁵⁷ This includes a more developed understanding of the roles vertical finality, probability/Providence⁴⁵⁸ and the absolutely supernatural play in human and social progress when the evolutionary process is within the comprehensive design of the omniscient and omnipotent cause of the whole universe.

We see a new relevance in Lonergan’s concept of emergent probability, which he was later to characterize casually as “not as the way God knows, but as what God’s knowledge causes. It’s the intelligibility to us of Divine Providence.”⁴⁵⁹ In the physical universe any higher order of being is beyond the proportion of lower orders and can be regarded as relatively supernatural to them, but “the divine order is beyond the proportion of any possible creature and so is absolutely supernatural.”⁴⁶⁰ Yet we affirm within the Christian faith community that for the human person vertical finality

⁴⁵⁶ Peter Huizing and William Bassett (eds.) *Experience of the Spirit: To Edward Schillebeeckx on his sixtieth birthday*, (Concilium, Vol. IX, no. 10, 1976), pp. 69 – 78.

⁴⁵⁷ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, Frederick E. Crowe, S. J. ed., (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 23.

⁴⁵⁸ Lonergan notes that while a theologian may think of divine providence as the key to evolution, he is in accord with a scientist such as Darwin in thinking of providence in terms of probabilities, probabilities of emergence and survival requiring, as noted here and in *Insight*, “very large numbers and very long intervals of time.” 25.

⁴⁵⁹ Lonergan in *Caring about Meaning: patterns in the life of Bernard Lonergan*, 253.

⁴⁶⁰ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 26.

is to God: “so that man is not merely subordinate to God but also enters into the divine life and participates in it.”⁴⁶¹ In the perspective of Roublev’s icon of the Trinity, we are invited to take our place at the divine table and be at home there. What is fully human in us is subsumed into the communion of love at the heart of the Trinity, losing nothing of its humanness. But that humanness is enriched, transformed; through the Spirit it is God’s life and love that empowers our self-transcendent operations in the world. This vertical finality does not operate inevitably. Lonergan points out that its ends may or may not be reached, and it remains multivalent and obscure. Its obscurity largely lies in the fact that it is only in the measure that it has been attained that it can be recognized. At the outset there are intimations of it, perhaps aspirations, but many questions remain. Only as God’s self-revelation is progressively recognized, the meaning of our strivings and groanings interpreted, can these intimations be known as announcing “a new and higher birth.”⁴⁶²

Vertical finality enters into evolutionary perspective. It does so inasmuch as emergence, unfolding, development, maturity follow the analogy of evolutionary process. Such process is to be understood in accord with emergent probabilities and under divine planning and action. By the analogy of that process is meant, not some basis for *a priori* prediction, but only a basis for *a posteriori* interpretation. Here as elsewhere, things are known insofar as they are in act.⁴⁶³

Our capacity for self-transcendence and its unrestricted openness to all that is intelligible, true and good, our orientation to divine mystery, can be known to some extent as we reflect back on our own living out of what it means to be authentically human and ‘in Christ’⁴⁶⁴. The qualification is necessary. Lonergan had noted earlier that it can be difficult for a theologian to discern the patterns operative in mature religious living because he or she is too close to it. Even in recalling and studying their past a theologian may find that:

... even then his difficulties may not be at an end: he may be unable to associate any precise meaning with the words I have used; he may be too familiar with the reality

⁴⁶¹ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 26. Aquinas held that the gift of God’s love is the cause of our knowledge of God by connaturality. *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q.45, a. 2c.

⁴⁶² Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 26.

⁴⁶³ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 27.

⁴⁶⁴ As noted earlier Lonergan here regards vertical finality as another name for self-transcendence: “We experience to have the materials for understanding; and understanding, so far from cramping experience, organizes it, enlarges its range, refines its content, and directs it to a higher goal. We understand and formulate to be able to judge, but judgment calls for ever fuller experience and better understanding...” “Mission and Spirit”, 29. As vertical finality is always a relationship to the end rather than to just stages in self-transcendence, vertical finality for us is to the ultimate end and fulfilment of the universe in God and our own beatitude.

of which I speak to connect it with what I say; he may be looking for something with a label on it, when he should simply be heightening his consciousness of the power working within him and adverting to its long-term effects.⁴⁶⁵

The tendency to look for something ‘with a label on it’ is understandable, but grace, as the love with which God floods our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us, is operative long before it is recognized.⁴⁶⁶ Our own loving has much to teach us of the wonderful works of God.

It can also be known in our experience “of a twofold frustration of that capacity: the objective frustration of life in a world distorted by sin; the subjective frustration of one’s incapacity to break with one’s own evil ways.”⁴⁶⁷ As we encounter the egoism of ourselves and others, and what Lonergan tellingly calls “the securer egoisms of groups,”⁴⁶⁸ shortsighted failure to attend to expert advice and to see past immediate satisfactions, sophisticated rationalizations of situational and personal impotence, we can be moved to seek the deliverance, redemption, salvation we need. The awareness of this need is an important part of self appropriation, and we know ourselves and the plan of God better when we realize that salvation, when it comes, always comes,

“as the charity that dissolves the hostility and the divisions of past injustice and present hatred; it comes as the hope that withstands psychological, economic, political, social cultural determinisms; it comes with the faith that can liberate reason from the rationalizations that blinded it.”⁴⁶⁹

This experience of healing and growth can bring further insight into the compassion and patience of God’s evolutionary plan for the universe and for each of us; as an invitation to accept our own and each other’s slow development with similar patience and compassion. There is a gradual change effected in us by grace for which we can take no credit, but which is experienced as a deeper sense of our orientation to the divine and to the divine purposes for the universe of which we are part. We come to see things differently, want to love as we are ourselves beloved, and can accept the pain involved in accepting the consequences of sin, our own and others’, walking the

⁴⁶⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 290.

⁴⁶⁶ Lonergan sees here as in *Method* ‘the exception’ to the old tag *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*. p268. Increasingly, during the period we are concerned with in this chapter, he is coming to realize how insecure is learning outside the ambit of love. We derive many of our convictions from our being-in-love.

⁴⁶⁷ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 32-33.

⁴⁶⁸ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 31.

⁴⁶⁹ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit”, 31-32.

pathway of sacrificial love which the Son has recommended by his own exemplary living. Increasingly we can know ourselves to be incorporated in this movement of the Spirit, in spite of occasional relapses:

It is experience of a transformation one did not bring about but rather underwent, as divine providence let evil take its course and vertical finality be heightened, as it let one's circumstances shift, one's dispositions change, new encounters occur, and – so gently and quietly – one's heart be touched.⁴⁷⁰

In his treatment of vertical finality at his stage, Lonergan speaks frequently of the passionateness of being, as a way to envisage the whole extent of the working of the *eros* of the human spirit. We have learned that he sees the dynamism of human intentionality resting on operators that promote activity from one level to the next. These operators⁴⁷¹ are questions, for intelligence with respect to data, for reflection with respect to our guesses, insights, inventions and discoveries, and for deliberation asking whether proposed courses of action resulting from them are feasible and worthwhile. In each case the lower level, preparing for the next which sublates it, is an instance of vertical finality, which is realized when the higher levels function.

Desire: The Passionateness of Being

The new dimension of the *eros* of the human spirit which he is treating of by 1976, the passionateness of being, he names a 'quasi-operator'. It is akin to the powerful dynamism of questioning but it has a further dimension of its own: "it underpins and accompanies and reaches beyond the subject as experientially, intelligently, rationally, morally conscious."⁴⁷² When we recollect the 'dreams of the morning' which can show in symbolism and metaphorical scenarios the truth of some of our deepest fears and desires, and our own better judgment on courses of action we are engaged on or may be planning, we may be moved to admire the 'inner film director' who is so skillfully on the side of our health and flourishing⁴⁷³. This is an example of the

⁴⁷⁰ Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit", 33.

⁴⁷¹ Particularly in *Insight* the "operator," the force moving us from one level to another, is the pure desire to know expressed in questioning. In *Method in Theology* he often refers to the whole subject in the dynamism of conscious intentionality as the operator, p. 7.

⁴⁷² Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit", 29.

⁴⁷³ The writer acknowledges her debt to Margaret Bowater for insights shared in dream workshops and her work, *Dreams and Visions – Language of the Spirit*, published 1997 by Tandem Press, Auckland. Lonergan treats of the function of dreaming in *Insight*, notably pp.218-220 and 482. He distinguishes

transition from the neural to the psychic, which “ushers into consciousness not only the exigencies of unconscious vitality but also the exigencies of vertical finality.”

When a person is self-actualising, this ‘underpinning’ will bring deficiency needs to awareness, but it goes further:

it shapes the images that release insight; it recalls evidence that is being overlooked; it may embarrass wakefulness, as it disturbs sleep, with the spectre, the shock, the shame of misdeeds. As it channels into consciousness the feedback of our aberrations and our unfulfilled strivings, so for the Jungians it manifests its archetypes through symbols to preside over the genesis of the ego and to guide the individuation process from the ego to the self.⁴⁷⁴

We will find this quasi-operator not just **underpinning** our conscious and intentional operations, but also **accompanying** them, providing “the mass and momentum of our lives, the color and tone and power of feeling,”⁴⁷⁵ as we have considered earlier.⁴⁷⁶ It also **overarches**:

There it is the topmost quasi-operator that by intersubjectivity prepares, by solidarity entices, by falling in love establishes us as members of community. Within each individual, vertical finality heads for self-transcendence. In an aggregation of self-transcending individuals there is the significant coincidental manifold⁴⁷⁷ in which can emerge a new creation.⁴⁷⁸

Vertical finality is natural to us as human beings, and it is natural for us to love not only our families, our affective partners, our friends and our country but even to love God above all else. In fact, however, we also live under the reign of sin and redemption lies “not in what is possible to nature but in what is effected by the grace of Christ.”⁴⁷⁹ Lonergan maintains that vertical finality is heightened for us precisely by our own “revulsion from the objective reign of sin”⁴⁸⁰ and our experience of our personal impotence, our inability consistently to live as we are called to by our anticipation of a goodness beyond criticism.

‘dreams of the night’ which allow for the appropriate release of unmet neural demands, and ‘dreams of the morning’ which orient us to the new day. In so doing he is following the thought of Ludwig Binswanger, *Le rêve et l’existence*, Introduction and notes by Michael Foucault, (Tournai: Desclée, 1954).

⁴⁷⁴ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 29-30.

⁴⁷⁵ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 30.

⁴⁷⁶ See Chapter 4, p. 98.

⁴⁷⁷ See Chapter 2, p.55.

⁴⁷⁸ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 30.

⁴⁷⁹ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 30.

⁴⁸⁰ Lonergan, “Mission and the Spirit,” 32.

In his evolutionary perspective, he sees this as moving us to seek deliverance, opening us to the outer word of the economy of grace and salvation that comes with the sending of the Word and the mission of the Spirit.

So the self-communication of the Son and the Spirit proceeds through history by a communication that at once is cognitive, constitutive and redemptive: it is cognitive, for it discloses in whom we are to believe; it is constitutive, for it crystallizes the inner gift of the love of God into overt Christian fellowship; it is redemptive, for it liberates human liberty from thralldom to sin, and it guides those it liberates to the kingdom of the Father.⁴⁸¹

In this, the underpinning, accompanying action of this quasi-operator cooperates with the influence of grace and increases the possibility and probability of its overarching building of the reign of Christ in human communities. The experience of grace...

.. is the experience of a new community, in which faith and hope and charity dissolve rationalizations, break determinisms, and reconcile the estranged and the alienated, and there is reaped the harvest of the Spirit that is "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal.5:22)⁴⁸²

In this way we may see grace healing faltering achievement and giving a new impetus to authentic living out of our full human potential. The desire within us, the passionateness of being, is the quasi-operator drawing us into communion with the very life of the Trinity, our greatest joy now, our future beatitude and all gift.

What has come to be called, none too felicitously, "the way up and the way down," is formulated explicitly in several papers given in the years 1974 to 1980. The dynamism of the upward movement as the *eros* of the questioning human subject is complemented and completed by the new 'downward' direction where the dynamism is not simply subjective, it is intersubjective; the intersubjective in its full range from spontaneous intersubjectivity to persons in community.⁴⁸³

Healing and Creating

In "Healing and Creating in History," 1975,⁴⁸⁴ Lonergan clarified his key idea of the healing action of the 'development from above downwards' as complementing the

⁴⁸¹ Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 32.

⁴⁸² Lonergan, "Mission and the Spirit," 33.

⁴⁸³ I am indebted to Frederick E Crowe, S. J. in "An Expansion of Lonergan's Notion of Value", *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989) 334-359, for his study of the development of Lonergan's thinking during the period covered by this chapter.

⁴⁸⁴ Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 100-109.

upward trajectory of human creativity in all human living. Progress happens in human societies and economies as the result of an ongoing learning process:

The creative task is to find the answers. It is a matter of insight, not of one insight but of many, not of isolated insights but of insights that coalesce, that complement and correct one another, that influence policies and programs, that reveal their shortcomings in their concrete results, that give rise to further correcting insights, corrected policies, corrected programs, that gradually accumulate into the all-round, balanced, smoothly functioning system that from the start was needed but at the start was not yet known.⁴⁸⁵

However if the flow of fresh insights dries up, and circumstances continue to change, the initially successful system can well become a frustrating and unworkable imposition enforced by a dominant minority in thrall to the bias of group egoism, “blind to the fact that the group no longer fulfills its once useful function and that it is merely clinging to power by all the maneuvers that in one way or another block development and impede progress.”⁴⁸⁶ The advance of progress is halted and decline sets in as a result of the distortions of bias.

Increasingly the situation becomes, not the cumulative project of coherent and complementary insights, but the dump in which are heaped up the amorphous and incompatible products of all the biases of self-centered and shortsighted individuals and groups. Finally, the more the objective situation becomes a mere dump, the less is there any possibility of human intelligence gathering from the situation anything more than a lengthy catalogue of the aberrations and the follies of the past.⁴⁸⁷

Just as an individual can get stuck in a rut, resisting any further challenge, settling for a personal status quo become familiar and manageable in spite of its obvious anomalies because that individual is no longer open to the inquiring spirit of the “passionateness of being,” the way we have always done things becomes for groups the enemy of the call to serve others by recognizing the needs of the times.

But human development is of two quite different kinds, Lonergan insists. The way to the fore in *Insight* and to a lesser degree also in *Method*, and here called **creating**, he characterizes as ‘from below upwards’ and it proceeds “from experience to growing

⁴⁸⁵ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 103. Lonergan finds this creative process well-expressed by Jane Jacobs in her *The Economy of Cities* as “repeatedly finding new uses for existing resources” and by Arnold Toynbee in his *Study of History* “where the flow of fresh insights takes its rise from a creative minority, and the success of their implementation wins the devoted allegiance of the rank and file.” In the last 4 volumes of this 10 volume work Toynbee sees the world religions and a new style of human development emerging from frustration and disgust amongst the internal proletariat. So does Lonergan.

⁴⁸⁶ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 105

⁴⁸⁷ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 105.

understanding, from growing understanding to balanced judgment, from balanced judgment to fruitful courses of action, and from fruitful action to the new situations that call forth further understanding, profounder judgment, richer courses of action.”⁴⁸⁸

It is complemented by the **healing** trajectory. There is a second way, “a development from above downwards,”⁴⁸⁹ also implicit in *Method* as the guiding principle of the last four functional specialties, and actually prior in the life of a human being. At birth we are all potential, plasticity⁴⁹⁰ in its most remarkable form, and able, in the measure of the love which surrounds us, to learn an amazing amount – language, ideas, facts, skills, attitudes and values. This is the childhood learning that occurs in the ambiance of parental love and guidance, the warmth and friction of family relationships, in schooling and by gradual socialization into culture and faith community. The major part of all human knowledge is transmitted in these ways, and held as beliefs long before they are tested in the field of human trial and error. It is in this heritage of traditional learning and in this context of affective development that the ability to function intellectually and morally is progressively developed. It flowers when an individual falls in love: “the domestic love of family, the human love of one’s tribe, one’s city, one’s country, mankind; the divine love that orients man in his cosmos and expresses itself in his worship.”⁴⁹¹ Just as in the life of individuals so also in the life of societies and economies there is a need for the love that reveals values:

At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved. Where hatred reinforces bias, love dissolves it, whether it be the bias of unconscious motivation, the bias of individual or group egoism, or the bias of omniscient, shortsighted common sense. Where hatred plods around in ever narrower vicious circles, love breaks the bonds of psychological and social determinisms with the conviction of faith and the power of hope.”⁴⁹²

Lonergan affirms here the working out in human affairs of the principle he expressed in *Insight*: “A man or woman knows that he or she is in love by making the discovery

⁴⁸⁸ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 106.

⁴⁸⁹ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 106.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778, writing in *Emile: Or, On Education*, rather miscalculated our ability to shape this plasticity in his educational theory. A child preserved from temptation as he tried to ensure, has no way of developing self-control. See translation, introduction and notes by Alan Bloom, (U.S.A.:Basic Books, 1979).

⁴⁹¹ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 106.

⁴⁹² Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection*, 106.

that all spontaneous and deliberate tendencies and actions regard the beloved.”⁴⁹³ The healing trajectory is at its most evident in “other-worldly falling in love” which, as we saw in *Method*, is “total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, qualifications, reservations.”⁴⁹⁴

... it is being-in-love with God ... the basic fulfilment of our conscious intentionality. That fulfilment brings a deep-set joy that can remain despite humiliation, failure, privation, pain, betrayal, desertion. That fulfilment brings a radical peace, the peace that the world cannot give. That fulfilment bears fruit in a love of one’s neighbour that strives mightily to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.⁴⁹⁵

It is perhaps only in the personal appropriation of the love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that we come anywhere near to living out the potential for the fullness of humanity which is made visible in the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth.

We may take from a superficial reading of such passages in Lonergan that self-appropriation at the level of feelings is a fairly straightforward affair, as accessible to our attention, understanding and naming as are the cognitive operations, but there are passages which show that he can also envisage complications. Unrecognized and unacknowledged feelings sometimes cloud the judgment and skew decision-making. There may be need for skilled therapeutic treatment where confusion and distress are beyond the capacity of an individual or their friends within the community to lift, and Lonergan instances Carl Roger’s client centered therapy as one way of coming to know ourselves at the feeling level:

What can be done for insights, can also be done for feelings. Feelings as simply felt pertain to an infrastructure. But as merely felt, so far from being integrated into an equable flow of consciousness, they may become a source of disturbance, upset, inner turmoil. Then a cure or part of a cure would seem to be had from the client-centered therapist who provides the patient with an ambiance in which he is at ease, can permit feelings to emerge without being engulfed by them, come to distinguish them from other inner events, differentiate among them, add recognition, bestow names, gradually manage to encapsulate within a superstructure of knowledge and language, of assurance and confidence, what had been an occasion for disorientation, dismay, disorganization.⁴⁹⁶

The hitherto unrecognizable feelings are thus less able subsequently to shape conduct in undesirable ways and to skew our self-understanding. However there is also a gap,

⁴⁹³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 698/720-721.

⁴⁹⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

⁴⁹⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 105.

⁴⁹⁶ Lonergan, “Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time,” *A Third Collection*, 58. See also *Method*, 33-34.

even after religious conversion, between aspiration and actual achievement of existential authenticity, for “human authenticity is never some serene and secure possession. It is ever a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal only brings to light the need for further withdrawals.”⁴⁹⁷ This is not, in and of itself, a barrier to growth. Just as our growth towards truth involves the elimination of oversights and mistakes in the self-correcting process of learning, so our moral development is through recognition of failure and repentance, and religious development is likewise open to aberration: “Of itself, self-transcendence involves tension between the self as transcending and the self as transcended.”⁴⁹⁸ However, this dialectical development in our being in love in an unrestricted manner with someone transcendent in loveliness can be rendered more than normally problematic for some, and those whose human affective development is less than adequate can find themselves in difficulties.

In these years after the publication of *Method in Theology*, some of Lonergan’s former students were already trying to integrate his thinking into current psychological systems: relevant here are Professor Robert Doran S.J. who wrote on ‘psychic conversion,’ bringing Jungian dream analysis and depth psychology into dialogue with Lonergan’s intentionality analysis, and Bernard Tyrrell with his treatment of neurosis, both deprivational and repressive, by means of twofold ‘affectional conversion’. Lonergan spoke and wrote respectfully⁴⁹⁹ of their efforts to understand the difficulties experienced by those with emotional and psychological problems in entering fully into the effective freedom to which love is calling them. In *Insight* dramatic bias had been identified as a flight from understanding caused by a “psychic wound”⁵⁰⁰ resulting in the suppression of questions which would expose it and therefore leading to irrational behaviour. In *Method* he commented,

Besides the immediate world of the infant and the adult’s world mediated by meaning, there is the mediation of immediacy by meaning when one objectifies

⁴⁹⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 110. As Lonergan and the writer keep acknowledging.

⁴⁹⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 110.

⁴⁹⁹ For example, in a letter to a publisher in support of a book proposal by Robert Doran he wrote “Intellectual, Moral, and Religious conversion of the theologian are foundational in my book on method in theology. To these Doran has added a psychic conversion in his book on *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations*. He has thought the matter through very thoroughly and it fits very adroitly and snugly into my own efforts.” A2280(File 490.1/6), Archives, Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto. Cited with permission by John D.Dadosky of Regis College in his article “Healing the Psychological Subject”, *Theoforum*, 35(2004). P.73-91.

⁵⁰⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 214-217.

cognitional process in transcendental method and when one discovers, identifies, accepts one's submerged feelings in psychotherapy."⁵⁰¹

Lonergan recognized the value of advances in the human, psychological and social sciences⁵⁰² and as he began to speak of 'development in the way down' as complementary to his cognitional process from below upwards, he acknowledged the key significance of human affectivity in human growth:

The handing on of development ... works from above downwards: it begins in the affectivity of the infant, the child, the son, the pupil, the follower. On affectivity rests the apprehension of values. On the apprehension of values rests belief. On belief follows the growth in understanding of one who has found a genuine teacher and has been initiated into the study of masters of the past. Then to confirm one's growth in understanding comes experience made mature and perceptive by one's developed understanding.⁵⁰³

This is the desirable progression: love is the key factor and experiences of safety and "good enough parenting" during the first three years of a child's life have definite impacts on subsequent ability to recognize and respond to nurture.⁵⁰⁴ Lonergan was also aware of the damage that can occur to developing affectivity, and its consequences, which can be severe:

One's affectivity can have things go wrong with it before you even know what affectivity is, and it keeps getting worse. There is an affective conversion and there is affective liberation.⁵⁰⁵

Lonergan uses the term "affective conversion" in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," an address to the American Catholic Philosophers Association in 1977: "But in the contemporary context it is such self-transcendence as includes an intellectual, a moral, and an affective conversion." Here he continues, after speaking of the other two: "Finally, as affective, it is commitment to love in the home, loyalty in the community, faith in the destiny of man."⁵⁰⁶ It would seem here, however, to be

⁵⁰¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 77.

⁵⁰² Lonergan, "Theology in a New Context", *Second Collection*, 62-63. Though well read in Freud at the time of writing *Insight*, and more inclined to quote Jung at the time of *Method*, Lonergan claimed no particular competence in therapeutic psychology.

⁵⁰³ Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan S. J.*, 181.

⁵⁰⁴ Donald Woods Winnicott, 1896—1971, an English psychoanalyst and paediatrician, wrote of "the ordinary, devoted mother's attentive holding of her child" as creating a holding environment, laying down foundations of health, and needing to be replicated in healing by the psychotherapist. His best known work is *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971).

⁵⁰⁵ From a verbatim transcript of a question and answer session from the 1978 Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, File #885 Archives, Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto, p.9.

⁵⁰⁶ Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, 179.

almost synonymous with or in place of the term “religious conversion,” since the formulation is very close to that used in *Method* for being-in-love.⁵⁰⁷ In general Lonergan’s own preferred manner of tackling imperfection was that of the traditional purgative and illuminative way:

We have no choice but to follow the advice of John Henry Newman – to accept ourselves as we are and by dint of constant and persevering attention, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility, strive to expand what is true and force out what is mistaken in views that we have inherited or spontaneously developed.⁵⁰⁸

It is the constant turning away from unauthenticity as it is recognized that is the nearest human beings come to authenticity for Lonergan, though this recognition comes more readily, more reliably to some than others. The study of the healing of psychic wounds he left to others such as Robert Doran S. J. whose doctoral study was first published in 1977 as *Subject and Psyche*.⁵⁰⁹

One of Professor Doran’s main concerns in developing his insights into the need for further ‘conversion’ at the affective, psychic level – what he called “psychic conversion” – was to generate explanatory categories connecting psychotherapy with the self-appropriation of the existential subject, as a dimension of theological foundations.⁵¹⁰ He saw depth psychology as able to bring about the identification of affective aberration by the study of symbolic images evoked by or evoking feelings, and then the needed “transformation of the psychic component of what Freud calls ‘the censor’ from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person’s development.”⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁷ Cf Lonergan, *Method*, 105.

⁵⁰⁸ Lonergan, “Merging Horizons: Systems, Common Sense, Scholarship,” *Cultural Hermeneutics* [Boston College] 1 (1973) *Method*, 159, 208-209.

⁵⁰⁹ Robert Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, second edition, (Milwaukee Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1994). Originally published in 1977 by University Press of America. Of it Lonergan wrote in ‘Questions on Philosophy’, (*Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2:2, 1984, p.31) “Following the method ... is not a matter of deduction but of creativity; such creativity may enrich the thematization of experiencing, judgment, deliberation that has already been achieved; it may also add quite new dimensions to it, as has Robert Doran S.J. in his doctoral dissertation.” Doran was appointed by Lonergan, with Frederick E Crowe S. J., to be a trustee of the Bernard Lonergan Estate, and in that role he has co-edited the collected works and made a great deal of material available to scholars through the website www.bernardlonergan.com He is currently Professor of Systematic Theology at Marquette University.

⁵¹⁰ Doran maintains that “depth psychology is neither philosophy nor theology but methodologically related to both in the context of foundational subjectivity.” *Subject and Psyche*, (Milwaukee Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1994), 14.

⁵¹¹ Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 59. The constructive censor works to sort relevant from irrelevant data so that the images necessary for insight are admitted, others screened. When it is repressive however it blocks images that would allow needed insights to occur. This may be occasioned by trauma, victimization, abuse or neglect.

Where feelings have become dissociated from repressed images, skilled therapists enable clients to attend to symbolism in language and analysis of dreams “to mediate a capacity to disengage the symbolic or imaginal constitution of the feelings in which values are apprehended.”⁵¹² This makes depth psychology a way of addressing at another level the neglect or truncation of the subject with which Lonergan was dealing at this period in writings such as “The Subject”⁵¹³. Doran writes:

It is with respect to the existential subject that we may turn to reflection on the body, on image and feeling, on symbol and story, on intersubjectivity, companionship, collaboration, friendship and love. It is also the existential subject who brings into being, maintains, and transforms the world mediated by meaning.⁵¹⁴

We become normal human beings, Lonergan suggests, “only by mastering vast systems of symbols and adapting our muscles, our nerves, our cerebral cortex, to respond to them accurately and precisely.”⁵¹⁵ Human beings are the subjects of symbolic systems that mediate the world by meaning. “What happens”, Doran asks, “when self-appropriating subjectivity, carefully tutored by Lonergan’s intentionality analysis, becomes psychically self-appropriating subjectivity?”⁵¹⁶ He envisages a time when there will emerge a new unity-differentiation of philosophy, depth-psychology and theology through our knowledge of the transcendental infrastructure of human subjectivity:

Psychotherapy as we have known it is clearly a transitional stage, not only in the life of individuals but also in the evolution of Western culture. It must be relativized, not only by method, but also by the ‘soul beyond psychology’, the soul in dialogue and concert with the God of love, the soul that is the life to which both method in its entirety and psychotherapy in particular point and which both method and psychotherapy mediate in a new way.⁵¹⁷

Doran reports that in 1974 he saw the aim of his psychic conversion as ‘the healing of a psychic rift,’ and by psychic rift he meant

not only dramatic bias from below but also something very like what Heidegger is perhaps naming when he speaks of the forgetfulness of Being, at least if he means the forgetfulness of an already given, temporally and historically conditioned facticity that is mediated by meaning ‘from above’.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹² Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, 115.

⁵¹³ Lonergan, “The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 69 – 86.

⁵¹⁴ Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, 51.

⁵¹⁵ Lonergan, “Religious Experience”, 127.

⁵¹⁶ Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, 98.

⁵¹⁷ Doran, *Subject and Psyche*, 99.

⁵¹⁸ Robert Doran *Reception and Elemental Meaning: An Expansion of the Notion of Psychic Conversion*. Paper presented at a Lonergan Workshop, Boston College in 2003 and accessed through the Lonergan Centre at Boston College in that same year. p 33.

In 2003 the form this healing takes in his thinking and writing is “a habitual being-at-home with, not being alienated from, the stream of an empirical consciousness that receives data mediated by meaning,”⁵¹⁹ the retrieval or re-establishing of a link between the inquiring and critical spirit and the mediated immediacy of that empirical consciousness. To be healed is to be at ease with the true functioning of one’s spiritual being in its God-given openness, a condition that would greatly facilitate appropriation of the desiring self.

Bernard Tyrrell developed his teaching on **affectional conversion** as a way of addressing the problem of neurosis encountered regularly in clinical practice. He distinguished two kinds, deprivation neurosis and repressive neurosis, because neurosis consisted in either one of two states:

(1) a person's deeply felt sense of being unlovable and worthless, and (2) severe repression in a person and/or other destructive effects and expressions of miseducation which cause great psychic discomfort, and impair the ability to function well in the give and take of everyday life.⁵²⁰

Though he acknowledged that deprivation neurosis at its worst can be severe enough to lead to repressive neurosis,⁵²¹ Tyrrell focused mainly on the love deprivation of the first state described in the above definition and what he saw as the conversion process that is the core of its healing.

Primal affectional conversion consists in a shift on the level of sensitive awareness from the felt sense of frustration of the pleasure/love/desire appetite to a felt sense of fulfilment of this appetite. It is a shift from a felt sense of affectional deprivation to a felt sense of affectional acceptance and fulfillment. Primal affectional conversion occurs on the first level of consciousness, which Lonergan designates as the level of experiencing. Upper level affectional conversion consists in a healing transformation of a consolidated, on-going affective-deprivation insofar as this deprivation is at work and negatively impacting the individual on the levels of understanding, judging, deciding, loving in Lonergan’s model of consciousness.⁵²²

Clearly therapeutic intervention can help to free an individual from the distortion that prevents them from knowing themselves to be deeply loved and desired by the God

⁵¹⁹ Doran *Reception and Elemental Meaning*, 33.

⁵²⁰ Bernard Tyrrell S.J. *Christotherapy II*, 55

⁵²¹ Bernard Tyrrell S. J. “ Affectional Conversion: A Distinct Conversion or Potential Differentiation in the Spheres of Sensitive Psychic and/or Affective Conversion?” p.16 in *Method: journal of Lonergan Studies*, 14 (1996), pp. 1-35; henceforth referred to as Affectional Conversion.

⁵²² Bernard Tyrrell S. J. Affectional Conversion 18.

they long for, the God whose love is surfacing in their religious experience, and thus their capacity to be fully themselves in loving service to others. Depth psychology may be the only way to unmask deeper dissociations and work to heal the wounds of trauma. Affectional conversion is either sought for its own sake or to be expected as a byproduct of successful analysis and skilful depth psychology. Either way it can provide the availability for love to be acknowledged and welcomed as empowerment for self-transcendence.

John D. Dadosky of Regis College, Toronto, is appreciative of both Doran and Tyrrell, and their call for the integration of the theological and the psychological aspects of conversion:

An integral theological and psychological understanding of conversion offers the promise of preserving psychology from the blind alleys of reductionism while simultaneously challenging theologians and philosophers to “wrestle with their own demons” which can flow from the fourfold bias: dramatic, egoistic, group or general.⁵²³

However he has sought to apply Occam’s Razor to the multiplying “conversions”⁵²⁴ and suggests as a working hypothesis that psychic conversion and affectional conversion with their acknowledged overlap could be subsumed under a more generic term -- using ‘psychological conversion’ to cover both. We must be prepared to admit as Dadosky does, that “perhaps we are all in need to some degree of psychic and/or affectional conversion.”⁵²⁵ The world has known two major world wars in the last hundred years and there are evident scars of intergenerational dysfunction underlying the psychological woundedness of our time. For the writer gradual empowerment to live as beloved and loving has been experienced as healing, however we may leave to others to pursue the question whether conversion or healing is the more appropriate explanatory term for this step towards authentic living out of the desire that moves us to appropriate our fullest human possibilities.

⁵²³ John D. Dadosky, “Healing the Psychological Subject: Towards a Fourfold Notion of Conversion?” *Theoforum*, 35 (2004), 75-76.

⁵²⁴ Others working within a Lonergan frame of reference to explore the concept of conversion include Walter Conn in *Christian Conversion*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), “Affective Conversion: The Transformation of Desire,” in *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) and *The Desiring Self: Rooting Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction in Self-Transcendence*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998); and Donald Gelpi, *Experiencing God*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), pp. 179-181.

⁵²⁵ Dadosky, “Healing the Psychological Subject” 81.

Desiring Because Desired

At this point it would be profitable to see both the nature of desire and other obstacles to its flourishing, from the viewpoint of another good “non-disciple” of Lonergan⁵²⁶, Dom Sebastian Moore O. S. B. Understanding that theology is “the sustained attempt to understand religious experience”⁵²⁷, “the story of the real self in all people,”⁵²⁸ he learned from Lonergan, and in turn teaches his students, to attend to themselves as desiring beings. Desire defines us, he claims. It is who we are, created into a mystery towards which we yearn.

What I have from Lonergan is a haunting, persistent and systematic conviction that the movement of my heart to the unknown God, a movement of which I am more certain than I am of anything else in my life, can be understood as felt-after by all my other desires as their fundamental direction: and therefore to help students to understand themselves as desiring beings is to move them towards the point where this fundamental direction of consciousness can show itself.⁵²⁹

In writing his classic *The Fire and the Rose are One*, in 1980, he set himself the task of identifying and naming “one universal human desire without some satisfaction of which our life would be unendurable, and total satisfaction of which would be perfect bliss.”⁵³⁰ Ernest Becker had made him aware of “the passionate sense of self-worth which characterizes human existence everywhere.”⁵³¹ Traditionally philosophers have claimed that we all desire to be happy, however when he explored the notion of happiness, he found it usually defined by his students in terms of the absence of what

⁵²⁶ Tom Halloran reminds us in his paper “Finality, *Insight* and Method: My Stand on Lonergan’s Contribution to Philosophy and Theology” in *Fifty Years of Insight*, eds Neil Ormerod, Robert Koning, David Braithwaite, (Hindmarsh, SA: ATF Theology, 2011), 206, that “Lonergan did not intend to found a school of ‘Lonerganians’; and he would not rejoice at such founding. .. I recall Lonergan’s *parting words* at the first Lonergan Workshop at Boston College in 1974: ‘Be good non-disciples’”. Sebastian Moore was in attendance at that workshop and annually thereafter until 2003 when his health prevented it.

⁵²⁷ Sebastian Moore O.S.B., *The Fire and the Rose are One*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980), 3.

⁵²⁸ Sebastian Moore O.S.B., *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 4.

⁵²⁹ Sebastian Moore O.S.B., “For Bernard Lonergan,” *Compass: A Jesuit Journal*, Spring 1985, 9.

⁵³⁰ For Moore this endeavor formed a continuation of his lifelong quest to understand the depths of the mystery of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, which he had written about in “*The Crucified Jesus is No Stranger*”, Seabury Press, 1981, and which he amended /developed further in this work. I find it very endearing that this life-long learner and thinker, whose insights sparkle like firework showers, is deeply honest in his writings and each published work features a ‘retraction’ or two as he continues to think things through.

⁵³¹ Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*, (New York: Free Press, 1973 and Collier-Macmillan) cited by Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, xii.

threatens it or “the suspension of snags”⁵³² The feeling state more deeply desirable would be something that could sustain us even in a world beset by snags, and he found it in the feeling that whatever happens to me I am significant; I do have worth. I matter to someone who matters to me. The positive aspect of human self-absorption is, he claims, the one uncontested human proposition: “That we all desire to be desired by one we desire.”⁵³³ This is more than the cliché that we all need to be needed. It is the one on whom our desire is fixed, he would maintain, who alone can fulfill our desire by reciprocating.

We are invited to discover in ourselves the truth of that one uncontested proposition – that our overwhelming desire is to be significant and beloved in the eyes of the one our being longs for. The presence or fact of a need is known by its non-fulfilment, and the distress of the neglected child or ostracized adolescent or unrequited lover is a clear sign of our human need to be significant for an important other, to be fully ourselves for that other and enhance their lives. But the full meaning of a need is recognized only in its fulfilment, “only reveals where it is going when the eyes of the beloved light up for the lover.”⁵³⁴ The eyes of the beloved light up in joy at the other’s longed for presence, and equally as a result of the new value he or she finds in themselves⁵³⁵, and that too delights and validates the lover.

In other words, the elemental thrust of life in the human being, the need to feel significant, the essential appetite of self-aware being, finds its full meaning and satisfaction as an act of love which creates happiness in another.⁵³⁶

“The need which is the mainspring of the individual only shows its real meaning when the two come together in love and thus form the nucleus of the human community,”⁵³⁷ and does so even more fully when groups of like-hearted people fashion an authentically human way of living together.

⁵³² Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 6.

⁵³³ Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, xii.

⁵³⁴ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 8-9.

⁵³⁵ I have already cited Charles Hefling’s comment about Dante being in love not only with but through Beatrice. He also claims that in and through this experience of loving her “Dante has to become the thing he has seen in Beatrice, and has, for the moment, seen in himself.” *Why Doctrines*, 14. The transforming effect of love and religious experience makes the person aware of the values possible for his self-constitution.

⁵³⁶ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 9.

⁵³⁷ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 10. Moore privileges human sexual love, as does Rosemary Haughton and for the same reason – because it is so easily recognizable there – but it is operative also in the way we come to be ourselves for our friends.

Moore suggests further the possibility that our self-absorption and passionate pursuit of meaningfulness are at root our inner dialogue with our unknown origin:

...and if our experience with each other shows that self-absorption finds its meaning and release in knowing that I am significant for someone else, might it not be that my self-absorption is ultimately to find its meaning and release *in knowing that I am significant for the unknown reality that is my origin?*⁵³⁸

Our sense of dependence and hunger for meaning are two key realities of our human existence. In this way the question of God becomes the question to God: “Is human self-awareness, when it finds its fulfilment in love, resonating, albeit faintly, with an origin that ‘behaves’, infinitely and all-constitutingly, as love behaves?”⁵³⁹ Our human experience of attraction, desire, joy in love returned, does it become revelatory of the truth that religion has been asserting and we are hesitant to believe – did we invent the story that God loves us? Moore suggests that today the God-question⁵⁴⁰ is inviting us to seek God with what is most intimately ourselves, “to use as probe our very selves.”⁵⁴¹

The strange thing about the question to God is that it seems at first to be markedly less real than the question to the beloved, but on further reflection appears much more real. Of the beloved I ask more life, more meaning, more being in the eyes of another, while of this mysterious deeper other I am asking whether I have *any* meaning in his/her/its scheme of things. It is not easy to catch yourself asking this question, but I think you do.⁵⁴²

It is because all our quest for human love and recognition is at base an expression of our longing to find that the ground of our being, our mysterious origin and destiny, is in love with us, that religious conversion comes as the joyous release of the tension of desire: faith is hearing the answer of the beloved, accepting God’s ‘Yes’ to the question we are, believing the good news that changes one’s whole life.⁵⁴³ If Moore

⁵³⁸ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 13. Italics in the original.

⁵³⁹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 15.

⁵⁴⁰ Anne Henderson writes in her Thesis for the MTheol, M.C.D, 2002, *Reclaiming the Question of God in a Contemporary Context: Bernard Lonergan’s Transcendental Method and the Transforming Power of the Poetic Word*, “The question of God is at the heart of our deepest longings and desires, and as we struggle to name and live their truth we struggle to return to the heart, to the invitation that it extends to us to celebrate the place where the human and the transcendent meet in the experience of being-in-love. Until we arrive at this place, God must remain a question that we seek to answer in our living.”115.

⁵⁴¹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 16.

⁵⁴² Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 17. Italics in the original.

⁵⁴³ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 36.

is to be helpful to us in our quest for the full appropriation of our desiring self, it is precisely because he sees so clearly that:

...the religious question nowadays has to conceive of the making, constitutive nature of God as some unimaginable, possible, bliss-giving 'Yes' to a question which the self-aware person increasingly learns himself to be. The religious question today is, quite simply, mystical. Religion as a decency is out. It is either transforming or it is nothing. It is a question of the availability or non-availability of a permanently transformed existence.⁵⁴⁴

We feel a growth in our worth when we know we are significant to our significant others because we are "psychically wedded", of our very nature, to the significant Other who gives us our being. "Other-grounded, we are other-oriented."⁵⁴⁵

Humankind has a pre-religious orientation to mystery, to our origin in God who desires our love and created us within the context of "an erotic (desire-shaped) dependence which is pre-religious, universal, conscious at the deepest level, and shaping of all we think and do."⁵⁴⁶

Only if man is in his self-awareness God-questioning as the lover questions the beloved can religious conversion, the received answer of the beloved, be the radical fulfilment of man, the release of all his energies... The power and glory of the Gospel, as the proclamation that God loved us before we loved him, consists precisely in liberating our pre-religious God-hunger.⁵⁴⁷

Moore had found his own way to write of desire as the *eros* of the human spirit, and so the completion of his first task: to discover the one universal desire without which human life would be unbearable, and the fulfilment of which leads to supreme happiness.

His second task set him to work until he had discovered the universal trait that acts as the counter pull to this desire and then to 'write the story of the liberation of desire from its crippling and interwoven companion'⁵⁴⁸. He thought first about guilt, "our

⁵⁴⁴ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 16. For Rosemary Haughton also religion as a decency is out; it means transformation or it means nothing..

⁵⁴⁵ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 23. Further to this Moore writes in *Let This Mind Be in You: The Quest for Identity from Oedipus to Christ*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc, 1986), "We only live by desire. We only desire out of a sense of being desirable. We only feel desirable absolutely because we are absolutely desired." xi.

⁵⁴⁶ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 34.

⁵⁴⁷ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 34-35.

⁵⁴⁸ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, xii.

most important negative feeling”⁵⁴⁹ which had been preoccupying him for some time – distinguishing infantile from adult guilt:

Infantile guilt is the shadow of the joyous infant eros, of the child ‘grasping at kisses and toys’ (Eliot): the sudden stab of loneliness, of being left out, abandoned, of a power-cut in the generous adult current of love. It is the passive sense of being unloved. Adult guilt is the shadow of adult love. It is the active sense of being unloving.⁵⁵⁰

Guilt that comes from not meeting the expectations of others is a remnant of infantile guilt, not genuine adult guilt which accepts responsibility for wrongdoing, particularly in failure to be ourselves, lovingly, for others. We are not able simply to opt out of this desire without being out of synch with our deepest drive, without it making us miserable. Guilt is ‘unhappy unlove’.⁵⁵¹ However Moore realizes that for our self appropriation ‘guilt is a slippery fish’ and so offers some hooks for catching hold of it, including these:

Guilt is the sense of failing another. It is the most personal sense of failure I experience, because my very feeling of personal worth is ‘in another’s eyes’. As my sense of worth is ‘worth to’, so my sense of unworthiness is of ‘unworth to.’ ...If love is feeling good in the presence of another, guilt is feeling bad in the presence of another... Guilt is an emotional impotence ... Guilt is when all that is left of another’s calling on me is the ‘ought’, the ‘should’. ‘Should’ plus ‘can’t’ equals guilt.⁵⁵²

There is a ring of truth, verifiable in experience, in these pointers, and especially in his next conclusion: “one very important aspect of the feeling of guilt is that the other, the person I am failing, appears strangely unattractive.” He instances the character in Dostoevsky’s novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, who says of someone: “I did him a bad turn years ago and I’ve had a grudge against him ever since.”⁵⁵³ The acrimony of many divorce proceedings witnesses to the fact that this sense of the ugliness of the other is particularly strong when it is an intimate relationship that goes wrong. The hatefulness of the other is due to the sudden failure of a normal love-current – they have become alien. Moore continues this line of thought:

Is there an ‘other’ in our life who is *the* other to which our whole being looks for meaning, and whose becoming unlovable to us would thus constitute the most radical and universal form of guilt? ... This guilt is the crippling in us of that in-love-ness with the all-powerful mystery which belongs to our very constitution as self-aware,

⁵⁴⁹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 58.

⁵⁵⁰ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 58.

⁵⁵¹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 58.

⁵⁵² Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 60.

⁵⁵³ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 61.

self-fascinated, questing, questioning beings. It is an original cosmic love-affair gone sour. It is the all-embracing mystery experienced not as presence but as pressure.⁵⁵⁴

In this way religion has all too often come to be associated with law, not love, and mankind has talked itself into perceiving divinities as ugly, alien, demanding all sorts of payment and self abasement from human kind. Nowhere is the definition of guilt as 'the inflated currency of love' more clearly evident than in the history of religion. Moore thus shows that the shadow cast over humanity has come from the denial, repression, derailment of the desire that we are. Shame and guilt, hopelessness and desolation are the outcome, rather than the cause, of our loss of contact with the mystery on which or on whom our being and becoming depends.

In *The Fire and the Rose are One*, and in subsequent publications such as *The Inner Loneliness*, 1982,⁵⁵⁵ and *Jesus, Liberator of Desire*, 1989⁵⁵⁶, Moore's existential Christology goes on to show how God intervened in Jesus to liberate our desire from its 'crippling and interwoven companion,' initially in his disciples, and then through their witness and the therapy of the Spirit, in us. Jesus shows us what our existence would be without guilt. Able to hear unimpeded the voice of the Beloved: 'You are my beloved in whom I am well pleased' (Mt 3:17, 17:5, Lk. 3:22, Mk 1:11), Jesus showed in his way of being with his disciples what it was to live in intimate communion with the Father.

With this secret, which shapes his whole way of being in the world, Jesus lifts people up to hear in their hearts, in their fellowship and in the whole world of nature the Yes of the Beloved. With the failure of his mission, and in its bitter conclusion on a cross, he plunges them from this height into the original emptiness, the death of God. Coming to them again, *then*, in that awful gap in time, he is God, he is life, he is the unlocking of the Spirit, he is that Yes of the Beloved over which death, the great human pretext of guilt, has no more power.⁵⁵⁷

Their desolation after his death was an experience which in its starkness prepared them for the joyous discovery of Jesus' divinity and the meaning of their salvation in a risen life of friendship with self, God and one another. God's solution to the problem of alienation, guilt and sin, Moore makes clear in the psychological perspicacity of all his later writings, is Jesus and his modeling of the son who knows

⁵⁵⁴ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 64-65.

⁵⁵⁵ Sebastian Moore, *The Inner Loneliness*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982).

⁵⁵⁶ Sebastian Moore, *Jesus, the Liberator of Desire*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989).

⁵⁵⁷ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, xiii.

the heart of the Father and whose desire, whose food and drink, is to do the Father's will⁵⁵⁸.

Jesus comes to be the liberator of our desire, the one enabling us to be who we really are: desire destined for a knowing, loving fulfillment. Jesus is free at the deepest level, his intimacy with ultimate mystery total and unimpeded, as might ours be also in the full human flourishing God desires for human kind:

There would be no guilt in the relationship, no holding back and rendering the other fearsome and threatening. The self would flourish in its ultimate companionship with the infinite, in a total, grateful and joyful acceptance of one's being from the mystery, on which in consequence one casts no 'shadow'. There is a consciousness of the self as beloved of the mystery and of the mystery as unshadowed love and beauty. The sense of 'I am not alone' would be overpowering.⁵⁵⁹

Jesus was fully open to other persons because no sense of unworth 'snarled up' his relationships and he saw as actually achievable, God's plan for a new order of relationships on earth, and with the earth, towards the full revelation of the reign of God in the *eschaton*. His disciples caught from him that sense of the beauty and goodness of nature, of the world, of life, of people, which is part of an open and guilt-free relationship with the mystery. "The God of Jesus promotes human flourishing and is evidenced by human flourishing."⁵⁶⁰ Moore saw this understanding as the way of living into the effective freedom and increased self-appropriation as desiring lover to which Lonergan points.

This is the place for me to acknowledge Bernard Lonergan as the master in whose school I have known something of this priceless awareness, as undeniable by him who has it as is the enjoyment of Mozart. We should surely expect that the transformation of the person in Christ would show up in the intellect as well as in the heart, and especially in the intellect's enlarged capacity to name what is in the heart.⁵⁶¹

For many, including the writer, Sebastian Moore's threefold inquiry into desire, guilt and appropriation of our being-in-love with God as Christians has made Lonergan's contribution to spiritual theology more accessible. His insights into the 'shadow'

⁵⁵⁸ See John 10:15, 4:34, Matthew 11:27.

⁵⁵⁹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, 78.

⁵⁶⁰ Sebastian Moore, *The Inner Loneliness*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 82.

⁵⁶¹ Sebastian Moore, *The Fire and the Rose are One*, xiv.

have helped to make sense of one factor affecting the probabilities of consistent and progressive human development for individuals and the communities they form.⁵⁶²

Lonergan's good non-disciples continued during this period to explore other rich lines of questioning his methodology opened for them, and he was spending more time exploring methods for the apparently random and pseudo-scientific area of macro-economics – but our moving viewpoint on the question of the appropriation of desire notes three further developments during the post-*Method* years. They are not new insights, rather expansions on existing ones. One concerns authenticity, the authenticity of the theologian in face of the possible unauthenticity of a nurturing tradition; another the interdependent and developing nature of the conversions; and the third, which is linked to both, is the issue of commitment.

Authenticity and Commitment

Lonergan continues to reflect on how God's love flooding our inmost heart is a human experience and how it fits into human consciousness.⁵⁶³ He says again that consciousness is like a polyphony, or like a concerto that blends many themes in different ways:

So too religious experience within consciousness may be a leading voice or a middle one or a low one; it may be dominant and ever recurrent; it may be intermittently audible; it may be weak and low and barely noticeable. Again, religious experience may fit in perfect harmony with the rest of consciousness; it may be a recurrent dissonance that in time increases or fades away; it may vanish altogether, or, at the opposite extreme, it may clash violently with the rest of experience to threaten disruption and breakdown.⁵⁶⁴

And just as there is a wide register of religious experience in the lives of individuals, it may develop in different ways over time in the experience of different people. Lonergan speaks of cultivating religious experience, whereby we bring the whole of our personal symbolic system into harmony with our loving desire for God, love

⁵⁶² Moore expands further on the maxim "Desire is love trying to happen" in his most recent book, *The Contagion of Jesus: Doing Theology As If It Mattered*, ed. Stephen McCarthy, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007), 120 – 141.

⁵⁶³ Notably in three lectures given as The Donald Mathers Memorial Lectures 1976 at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario: "Religious Experience", "Religious Knowledge" and "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods" all now available in *A Third Collection: Papers by B. J. F. Lonergan S. J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S. J., 113 – 165.

⁵⁶⁴ Lonergan, "Religious Experience", op. cit., 125.

increasingly “reconciling us, by committing us, to the obscure purposes of our universe, to what Christians name the love of God in Christ Jesus.”⁵⁶⁵ Commitment is the opposite of ‘just drifting through life’,⁵⁶⁶

... content to do what everyone else is doing, to say what everyone else is saying, to think what everyone else is thinking, where the “everyone else” in question is just drifting too. Out of that company of drifters one steps when one faces the problem of personal existence, that is, when one finds out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is to do with oneself, with one’s life, with one’s five talents or two or lonely one.⁵⁶⁷

Specifically it becomes a question of what it means for being-in-love to become the first and dominant principle in the way we live our intimate relationships, our membership of a faith community and our civic responsibilities. Appropriation of this Love’s desires and purposes invites and facilitates our complete surrender to the values of the Reign of God. “The experience of being-in-love is an experience of complete integration, of a self-actualization that is an unbounded source of good will and good deeds.”⁵⁶⁸ When fully realized in authentic commitment, such self-actualization is very attractive.

Authenticity, however, is twofold, and the converted theologian becomes aware that apart from the minor authenticity resulting from his or her faithful adherence to the truths, ideals and practices of the nurturing tradition there is the question of the major authenticity of the tradition itself. To authentically appropriate a tradition rendered unauthentic by ‘devaluation, distortion, corruption’ and not just in a few scattered individuals but over time and in the many, is a tragedy indeed.

...the words are repeated but the meaning is gone. The chair is still the chair of Moses, but it is occupied by scribes and Pharisees. The theology is still Scholastic, but the Scholasticism is decadent. The religious order still reads out the rules and studies the constitutions, but one may doubt whether the home fires are still burning.⁵⁶⁹

Thus theologians may have a double price to pay. Not only do they have to undo their own falls from grace, but they have to “discover what is wrong in the tradition they

⁵⁶⁵ Lonergan, “Religious Experience”, 127.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. *Method*, 40 “...drifting on to an ever less authentic self-hood.” See also “A Post –Hegelian Philosophy of Religion”, *A Third Collection*, 208.

⁵⁶⁷ Lonergan, “Religious Experience”, 123.

⁵⁶⁸ Lonergan, “Religious Knowledge”, 133.

⁵⁶⁹ Lonergan, “Religious Experience”, 121.

have inherited and they have to struggle against the massive undertow it sets up.”⁵⁷⁰ It is heartening to note, however, that Lonergan is convinced that those who genuinely set themselves to achieve self-transcendence are usually aware of shortcomings, “while those that are evading the issue of self-realization are kept busy concealing the fact from themselves.”⁵⁷¹ This results from the fact that the inner dynamism of human reality, the passionateness of being, is so strongly drawing human beings into self-transcendence that, in general,

one cannot but be aware when one is moving towards it and, on the other hand, one cannot but feel constrained to conceal the fact when one is evading the abiding imperative of what it is to be human.⁵⁷²

The greater problem with unauthenticity in the formation and transmission of tradition is that we have been socialized into one and share many of its biases. Even if we come to recognize where the unauthenticity lies as we follow the insistent questioning of our own conversions, large scale change is difficult to effect because transformation will only be in single individuals, one at a time, and “However much we may react, criticize, endeavor to bring about change, the change itself will always be just another stage of the tradition, at most a new era, but one whose motives and whose goals – for all their novelty – will bear the imprint of their past.”⁵⁷³ Fred Lawrence advises us not to underestimate the extent to which we are shaped in our understanding of ourselves by the culture and world view of our milieu, or to overestimate our effectiveness in contributing to transformation in others:

As a language-animal, the human being exists only rarely in the world of immediacy. Instead human beings inhabit worlds mediated by meaning and value. That is, concretely, we experience our world as worded: our world is always foregrounded for us through interpretations. As a result, in almost all human lived experience, our self-understanding is mediated by the self-understandings of others. In this manner we participate in something moving in and through us which, however conscious of it we may be, can never be adequately explicitated, thematized, and explained. Hence, from the standpoint of linguistic (or hermeneutic) philosophy, to be human is to share in a conversation which constitutes the human race as a whole. This conversation which we are (Hölderlin's *das Gespräch wir sind*) is irreducible to the perspective or the explicit knowledge of any single human person.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁰ For a recent fine study of this reality see the doctoral dissertation of Alan Wade, *The Theologian as Authentic Subject: Lonergan and the Centrality of Method*, MCD University of Divinity, 2012, particularly 253-258.

⁵⁷¹ Lonergan, “Religious Knowledge”, 133.

⁵⁷² Lonergan, “Religious Knowledge”, 133 – 134.

⁵⁷³ Lonergan, “Religious Experience”, 122.

⁵⁷⁴ Fred Lawrence, “The Fragility of Consciousness,” 65.

Our self-appropriation and our struggle for authenticity will necessarily be affected by upbringing, education and human community, as we have seen, and sometimes authenticity requires, when problems are intractable, that we seek out a more fruitful place to grow and make a contribution. There is hope, however. Whenever we can move from a conflict of positions to an encounter of persons we discover, as Lonergan reminds us, that

...every person is an embodiment of natural right. Every person can reveal to any other his natural propensity to seek understanding, to judge reasonably, to evaluate fairly, to be open to friendship. While the dialectic of history coldly relates our conflicts, dialogue adds the principle that prompts us to cure them, the natural right that is the inmost core of our being.⁵⁷⁵

The more we can be in touch with our own being-in-love, the more we will be apt to look for and find the same desire moving others towards truth and goodness. “Only through one’s own experience of that dynamism can one advert to its working in others.”⁵⁷⁶ The more we live out the reality of our own conversion, the more clearly we can walk in newness of life.

Two years before his death Lonergan told those gathered at the ninth annual Lonergan Workshop at Boston College in 1982,⁵⁷⁷ that conversion involves a new understanding of oneself because, more fundamentally, it brings about a new self to be understood. A new mode of developing has begun too. The orientation of the three dimensions of conversion differs -- intellectual conversion to the intelligible and the true; moral conversion to the good; religious conversion to God – so that conversion may occur in one or more dimension but not in another. “At the same time the three dimensions are solidary. Conversion in one leads to conversion in the others and relapse from one prepares for relapse in the others”.⁵⁷⁸ It is not to the initial stages of one or other that we are called, but to the ongoing development of all three, to the love of God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds and with all our strength (*Mark* 12: 30):

The authentic Christian strives for the fullness of intellectual, moral and religious conversion. Without intellectual conversion he tends to misapprehend not only the

⁵⁷⁵ Lonergan, “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness”, *A Third Collection*, 182.

⁵⁷⁶ Bernard Lonergan S. J., “Theology and Praxis,” *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S. J.* Ed Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (NY/ Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 195.

⁵⁷⁷ In a paper entitled “Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth,” subsequently published in *A Third Collection*, 239 – 249. The 40th Lonergan Workshop will be held in 2013.

⁵⁷⁸ Lonergan, “Unity and Plurality”, 247.

world mediated by meaning but also the word God has spoken within that world. Without moral conversion he tends to pursue not what truly is good but what only apparently is good. Without religious conversion he is radically desolate: in the world without hope and without God. (*Eph. 2:12*).⁵⁷⁹

And yet it is not exclusively or even predominantly as the result of intense personal effort that we can hope to reach the desired authenticity, fullness of loving union with Christ in the Spirit. Called to this fullness, welcoming this destiny and cooperating with grace in the measure of our possibilities, we must recognize that its realization will remain gift and blessing to be received rather than won by right of conquest. It will come in a deepening relationship of intimacy and friendship with God and with other human beings.

In this chapter we have followed the moving viewpoint of Lonergan's thought through his own writings and those of some of his 'good non-disciples' up to the time of his death in Pickering, Ontario, on 26 November, 1984. He was never slow to recognize that his generalized empirical method of conscious intentionality, discovered through assiduous attention to the way our human consciousness operates optimally, is not always easy to come to terms with: "And of the few that attempt this, even fewer succeed in mapping the interior of the 'black box' in which the input is sensations and the output is talk."⁵⁸⁰ Yet I believe his insights are a Spirit gift to the church and the theological enterprise, to human development generally. The self-assembling creative process of "the way up" which was the major discovery of *Insight*, is complemented by the healing trajectory of "the way down" which *Method in Theology* shows to the fore in the divine gift of redemption and the undoing of decline, and in the transmission and expansion of the tradition in the functional specialties of the second, mediating phase of theology. The way down is also seen to be prior in time, involving the affective development of the child in the nurturing love of family, society and education as well as in the reception and development of faith traditions. It has been possible to estimate the significance of affectivity in human capacity to live the demands of intellectual and moral conversion and to appropriate the love without restriction which is poured into the human heart by the Holy Spirit and received in religious conversion.

⁵⁷⁹ Lonergan, "Unity and Plurality," 248.

⁵⁸⁰ Bernard Lonergan S. J., "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S. J.* Ed Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (NY/ Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985), 197.

Conclusions

I have sought to know, for myself and others, what is involved in the personal appropriation of our human desire to know and love God. It has required me to take full cognizance of the yearnings of my own being and to make value decisions about their provenance and their demands. My guide has been Bernard J. F. Lonergan S.J., whose lifelong quest to follow the movement of the Holy Spirit in and through his own questioning has been invitation, resource and springboard for my theological journey. This search begins in the first chapter with his early discoveries and follows the moving viewpoint of his growth in understanding, and my own, through a study of his writings on natural and religious interiority.

The young Bernard was intelligent and curious, eager to learn and to understand the worlds of nature, culture and faith. At this early stage it was the powerful desire to know, obvious in his insistent questioning, which was most readily recognized and embedded in his early writings. His respect for the Society of Jesus during his college years at Loyola grew out of his encounter with the intelligence and trained minds of the Jesuits who taught him there. Yet it was with reluctance and a certain dread that he followed a call to join them in a life of celibate consecration to God, his response to the drawing power of love not yet fully comprehensible and certainly not objectified. His motivation remained a puzzle to him in the noviceship, his heart clearly more mysterious than his mind until he could reach an adequate understanding of grace. Throughout the formation years of philosophy and theology, his enquiring mind remained dissatisfied unless he could identify elements of a theory of knowledge which were in accord with his own developing understanding of cognitional process and methodology: Plato reaching for answers anticipated in questions, “ideas” being akin to the definitions reached by understanding; the introspective perspicacity of Augustine; Newman’s insight into judgment as assent to truth. Yet it was in “reaching up to the mind of Aquinas” during his doctoral studies in Rome that Lonergan reached the certainties he was to publish in the *Verbum* articles. These ten years represent on the one hand an example of engagement in what he will later call the functional specialties of Research, Interpretation and History and on the other provide a recognizable example of the scholarly differentiation of

consciousness. Lonergan was able to trace the development of Aquinas's thought and language with reference to a hitherto obscure article on operative grace in the *Summa Theologica* and bring new clarity to its interpretation.

In the *Verbum* articles Lonergan explores the created participation in divine light that constitutes us as image of God, and explains the procession within the human intellect of the inner word of understanding as the best available analogy for the procession of the Word within the Trinity. Our longing is to understand all reality, created and uncreated, and to reach truth in so doing. The wonder of inquiry, the very restlessness of our unbounded questioning, is the sign and promise of a supernatural fulfilment awaiting us. We are oriented by our very nature into mystery, and the end of all our searching is to be knowledge of our origin, in beholding face to face the mystery of God. At this stage Lonergan is clear: the light of intellect leading to wisdom is the 'highest in us and in God the most like us.'⁵⁸¹ The heuristic quality of our learning is that questioning brings us nearer to the desired unknown to which we are tending. In the introduction to *Verbum*, Lonergan encourages us to follow Augustine's practice of psychological introspection and highlights the uncannily accurate introspective skill of Aquinas. Lonergan can thematize this self-appropriation in a way neither Augustine nor Aquinas was able to, and in *Verbum* he gives his first explanatory account of the intellectual operations of understanding and definition and of reflection and judgment.

However, for Lonergan as for Aquinas, the second procession grounding a real relation of origin in the Trinity is the procession in the will, as rational appetite, of the act of love from the inner word in the intellect. As early as 1943 he is writing of love as key to the God-given direction of human life in *Finality, Love and Marriage*. Vertical finality is at work in all world processes, moving all things according to their nature, towards the ultimate in goodness. God draws our minds by the desire to know, but draws all things, by everything they are, to respond to love as ultimate good. This became a central focus in his later theological work.

⁵⁸¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 90.

We then moved to consider the way we can discover our own desire and capacity for objective truth, by exploring the way human consciousness works. Lonergan demonstrated in his classic philosophical work *Insight* that there is a way for ordinary human attentiveness and understanding to come to a true knowledge of our own knowing. Sustained effort is required but the data of consciousness are available to scrutiny – we can be aware of ourselves attending to data, having the flash of insight which renders it intelligible, testing this explanation to ensure that it accounts fully for what we have observed and leaves no conditions for reality unmet, and finally according it a status: our insight is possible, probable, relatively certain, true – or not. When we have observed these processes recurring within our own minds, we can come to an understanding of them as an invariant pattern, innate in human beings, essential for optimal human functioning, valid across cultures and historical periods. With the help of Lonergan's step by step pedagogy, and following his moving viewpoint, we are able to affirm ourselves as knowers and this pattern as a method. Intentionality analysis explains this self-assembling pattern, given in consciousness, as one that recurs constantly, yielding results that are cumulative and progressive. It provides a key to all Lonergan's subsequent work, and the foundation of his *Method in Theology*.

The desire which is celebrated in *Insight* is the *eros* of the human spirit, the pure, detached, disinterested and unrestricted desire to know. Lonergan invites us to recognize and affirm it in our lives, and to see it as part of the divine plan for optimal human functioning, not only for individuals, but also for human society. We desire, and God desires for us, that we should operate, and collaborate, intelligently and reasonably. The pure desire to know is a constitutive part of our affirming and of the self that is affirmed.

Optimal human functioning does not seem to be the norm, however. The flow of our dynamic conscious intentionality can be blocked. Consciously or unconsciously we can stem the flow of questions to avoid unwanted answers and then our judgments and subsequent decisions are affected by bias of various kinds. The perspective of *Insight* is to grasp the overall intelligibility of the universe in terms of an evolutionary process where all natural processes, events and developments will follow not only the classical laws of science and morality, but more frequently statistical laws of

probability and survival. This reflection enables us to see slow progress in perspective: we desire total truth and total reasonableness within and for the universe as it is, and equally for each person as they are, but necessarily in the context of emergent probability. We are called to appreciate the long patience of God and the slow outworking of God's benevolent purposes. So we recognize in the call to discover ourselves as knowers, and the powerful inner pull of the desire to know, the first steps in the appropriation of desire. From that point all other longings and attractions we discover in ourselves can gradually be brought into focus in the light of the vertical finality which orients us towards the divine mystery.

We followed Lonergan into the project for which his investigation of cognitional theory was preparing, the formulation of a methodology for the study of theology. In the years between *Insight* and *Method in Theology* key articles show the direction of his enquiries, and take us deeper into existential questions on the fourth level of conscious intentionality. When the human person has reached the third level assurance of judgment about what really is the case, the next step is to allow further questions to arise, to deepen reflection. We deliberate and question what the outcome in word or deed needs to be if we are to act responsibly in the light of what we know. We transcend ourselves as empirically aware by the questioning which promotes us to understanding. We transcend ourselves as understanding by our careful checking of assumptions and proceeding calmly to affirming that our interpretation of the data is correct, if it is. Now the focus is on the self-transcendence revealed in feelings and values and involved in making responsible and moral decisions about how to proceed in the light of what we know. It is at this level that the person is self-constituting, by their choices and actions making themselves into who they will be.

The desire for genuine value, for total goodness, goes beyond the desire to know things by their essence, though it is continuous with it. We are attracted to the good, the beautiful, to the best expressions of love. Desire moves us to transcend ourselves in the operations of evaluation, choice and decision-making and to act in a way which realizes the general good. Lonergan invites us to consider the question of authenticity

in the subject who will progressively constitute his or herself by existential choices, and establish the personal horizon, the worldview within which freedom will be exercised. If our God-given conscious intentionality and the more or less adequate human formation we receive conspire together to draw us to live as responsible moral beings, it is still in the experience of love that our best hope of authenticity lies. Love of another human being, partner or child, the domestic love within families or patriotic love of our homeland, all these increase our chances of transcending ourselves with some consistency. When we discover that God's love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we taste a new and joyous freedom at the fourth and highest level of our being to follow our desire for truth, for goodness and for the fullness of love. The securer openness to truth and goodness which comes as a redemptive gift from God enlarges our horizon and heals faltering achievement so that we can live out of the desire we are.

Desire as a massive thrust towards self-transcendence is available in some measure for our appropriation. In order to live authentically in the light of it, we need to pay attention to the inner movement of our mind and heart at the level of deliberation, choice and pursuit of what is truly worthwhile, where we are forging personality and character. Others in our communities can assist us to better grasp what is driving us by their responses to our actions and inactions, and often their generous living of true values can draw us to incarnate these in our own lives. In our fidelity to practices of prayer it is possible to grow in discernment of the action of the Spirit who moves in our deepest desires.

In considering *Method in Theology* we discovered how the appropriation of desire is operative in the three conversions required for theology to be a fully collaborative and creative exercise. Functional specialties would follow the pattern of generalized empirical method given in transcendental consciousness, four in receptive and four in transmission modes, and foundational in the enterprise is the threefold conversion of the authentic subjects doing theology. Vitally important is that theologians welcome their own being-in-love with God in an unrestricted manner, religious conversion, and in the light of that embrace moral conversion to true value, and work with, not against, the pattern of human consciousness in the search for truth as revealed in intellectual conversion. A genuine interdependence of exchange and mutual

enrichment would then be facilitated among the theologians working in the eight functional specialties.

The two functional specialties on the existential fourth level of evaluation, decision and choice are Lonergan's distinctive contribution to theology. As specialists in Research, Interpretation and History mine the meanings and traditions of the past there have always been disagreements about research findings, variant meanings identified, and historical conflicts over what was going forward at a given time. Dialectic evaluates and works on such conflicts, thus offering a deeper understanding of the issues presented and a choice for the theologian in the transforming light of the three conversions. Foundations, in this new way of doing theology, makes these conversions thematic, and the foundation of the theological enterprise is no longer certain key doctrinal propositions, but rather the authentic believer, the converted theologian passing on in intellectual honesty and moral integrity what has been gleaned from the past. This treasure is then formulated in Doctrines, explored in Systematics and proclaimed in Communications.

It is clear that a large degree of self-knowledge is required for these tasks, so the self-appropriation of the religiously converted person doing theology is prerequisite for fruitful work, particularly in the specialties of the second phase. Conversion is not a once and for all phenomenon. Though it effects a significant change in the reality of who the theologian is, all three conversions will be progressively deepened and extended over a person's lifetime. Objectivity is not sacrificed in the joyful personal response of a theologian to God's love. Objectivity is the result of authentically following the inbuilt truth-seeking method of our inmost being, the method we are, and being in love with God is the best situation for attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility to be exercised freely. However, as we have reiterated, authenticity is never a serenely secure possession. It requires continual withdrawal from unauthenticity as this is uncovered, continual repentance and growth, to ensure active cooperation with the Lord who is Spirit and who whispers in our persistent questioning. When our questions dry up, so do we.

The pure and unrestricted desire to know, which we have recognized in ourselves, has been swept up into the passionateness of being in the perspective of *Method*. With Lonergan's help and using the attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness,

responsibility and love which are the mark of God's image in us, we seek to appropriate the love without restriction which is moving us to authenticity in knowing and loving, to involvement in God's plan for human flourishing in a friendly universe.

In the years following the publication of *Method*, Lonergan continued to teach and expand on themes already contained in that remarkably dense and allusive work, notably, for our purposes, further consideration of the affective dimensions of intentionality and the conversions. In their explorations of this topic some of his former students saw its relevance to depth psychology and other therapeutic interventions to heal psychic wounds which block full human functioning and the experience of God's loving invitation into the fellowship of the Trinity. I am particularly indebted to Sebastian Moore O.S.B. for his insightful unpacking of the relationship between the desires we have and the desire we are. He could name incisively some of the defences we put up against the intimacy with God to which we are called by divine longing, and shows Jesus as the liberator of our desire. We are desirous, precisely because our destiny is to recognize God's love of predilection in the need we have to be desired by a significant other. We are created this way in order to discover our deepest fulfilment in the Yes of the Beloved Other to the question we are.

Interiority is a key differentiation of consciousness for theologians and closely linked to the appropriation of desire. Commonsense enables us to interact with our environment and cultural setting, learning by precept and example or even more vividly by trial and error and adding insight to insight to build up a competence in work situations and an ease in getting along with others within human systems of commerce and leisure, and this is a satisfyingly rich domain for many human beings. Theirs is called undifferentiated consciousness in a Lonergan framework. Still this provides the rock on which human well-being can be built, "the subject in his conscious, *unobjectified* attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility. The point to the labor of objectifying the subject and his conscious operations is that thereby one begins to learn what these are and that they are."⁵⁸² Lonergan has done

⁵⁸² Lonergan, *Method*, 20. The italics are mine here, but this word is frequently emphasized by Dr. Kathleen Williams in her lectures on *Method*, lest this keen observation by Lonergan float past her students. People do not have to be able to name the operations of their consciousness in order to live authentically as attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible human beings, particularly if they are in love. It just helps sometimes!

this objectifying and so brought consciousness into the realm of theory where we can write of an invariant pattern of operations, but first he discovered it in his interiority.

Sufficient psychological interest to question and get in touch with the movements of our feelings and thought patterns is the entry point for the realm of interiority, and those are most at home there who have taken the trouble to appropriate their own conscious intentionality. It is not the exclusive domain of philosophers and theologians. Lonergan holds that the most common differentiation of consciousness across the planet and down the ages has been the combination of commonsense with the realm of transcendence. The reach of our intending, if not that of our attainment, is unrestricted. Human beings are by nature worshippers, however varied the objects of that worship. The love drawing them to their mysterious and numinous Other will move many to enquire and discover the action of spirit in their being. Hence interiority, both natural and religious, proves to be of particular interest and of central importance in the search for the appropriation of desire.

Lonergan has often been categorized as an intellectualist, though he would claim rather to be a critical realist. Certainly he placed very high value on the power of human reason to pursue truth and attain considerable knowledge of reality as it is. His was a formidably acute mind and one honed by education and wide ranging enquiry. Yet Lonergan's moving viewpoint brought him to the point where he regarded love as the key criterion for a true understanding of all reality, especially within the world of faith. In his teaching love came to replace reason as 'that which is highest in us and in God the most like us.'⁵⁸³ The viewpoint moved because he was faithful over his life time to the insistent drive of his own desire and questioning. In his life of prayer he drew upon the 'love without restriction for Someone transcendent in lovableness' which he found had been poured out into his own heart by the Holy Spirit. To this love he invites each of us to attend.

If Lonergan's most significant contribution was initially in the world of philosophy, with his transposition of Aristotelian metaphysics and Thomist faculty psychology into generalized empirical method based on intentionality analysis, his greatest achievement overall, in the writer's opinion, is his specifically methodological vision

⁵⁸³ Whereas the younger Lonergan was completely in accord with Aquinas as to the primacy of intellect, by this stage he is expressing a more Augustinian awareness of love as uniquely constitutive of God's likeness in us and the chief work of grace.

of the way theology is to be done – one day – for the glory of God and the coming of the reign of God on earth. When theologians can appropriate their own desire for truth, and gradually take the measure of the love that is drawing them to seek God in a study of their faith tradition, they will want to engage in this enterprise wholeheartedly in a spirit of cooperation and ecumenical collaboration. Wonder and awe, longing and gratitude, are good equipment for a theological journey. These attitudes can only intensify along the way and through their living, writing and teaching, particularly in the functional specialty Communications, theologians will touch the lives of many self-aware believers leading them also to appropriate the desire they are.

Lonergan had been sure as a young man that *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, knowledge precedes love. Faculty psychology maintained it is the intellect which pronounces something reasonable/good, (and the two were at one stage synonymous for Lonergan,) and commends it as such to the rational appetite or will which is then moved to pursue it. His discovery of the God-given dynamism involved in coming to experience, understand, know and decide, completed by his experience of falling in love with God, taught Lonergan that we only know truly what we love and when we love, particularly but not exclusively in religious matters.

But the major exception to the Latin tag is God's gift of his love flooding our hearts. Then we are in the dynamic state of being in love. But who it is we love, is neither given nor as yet understood. Our capacity for moral self-transcendence has found a fulfilment that brings deep joy and profound peace. Our love reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, of repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel. So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace.⁵⁸⁴

As we have seen in this study, human beings are created with a capacity for and drive towards transcendence. Because God desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2), God's gift of his love flooding human hearts is a universal experience, offered to all human beings though not always adverted to or recognized, and issuing in adherence to many world religions when it surfaces into full awareness. It underlies and supports the fervour and generous self-transcendence of many faithful Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist and other believers, and

⁵⁸⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 122.

it proves to be the bond between them when in interfaith dialogue they are able to share their deepest desires and religious experience. This dialogue would be greatly enriched and so would their personal faith journey if they would enquire, investigate, seek counsel as Lonergan suggests and so learn “what is going on within them.’

To know what is going on within us is the task of self- appropriation, the key to the world of interiority. It is the contention of this thesis that human beings can come to appreciate their own desire to know, and understand the steps by which reality is known; can be encouraged to recognize religious experience and to value the lack of restriction in God’s love received, returned and expressed. For theologians it is particularly significant that they do appropriate their own desiring, but it is not their exclusive prerogative. For everyone it is good news that human beings are desirous, desiring to be and to become, to know and to love, enhancing the lives of those they love.

That human beings are desired by their God, the Significant Other, is a reality assented to in faith. Our destiny is, in some mysterious way, to enter into the communion of love within the Trinity, to hear, even now, the affirming response of the mystery our whole being yearns for, telling us that we are desired, loved beyond measure by the creator of our desiring selves. This is something we can come to understand and live – in joy and ever increasing freedom.

This conviction that desire is life-enhancing and able to be personally appropriated by many people is shared by others, as my bibliography attests. I single out at this point two recent works: firstly the Fellows of the Woodstock Theological Centre, Georgetown University, who also chose Lonergan as their guide in a collaborative revision of the living practice of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. They show in their 2006 publication *The Dynamism of Desire*, just how Lonergan’s writings illuminate the Ignatian “exercises of self-awareness, the dialectic between good and evil, conversion to a Christian ‘horizon,’ loving choice as determinative of a responsible life and service of others as the continuing fruition of Christian mysticism.”⁵⁸⁵ The writers see that self-appropriation is one of the key fruits of a retreatant’s following through the steps of the Exercises, and self-transcendence its whole meaning; the

⁵⁸⁵ James L. Connor S.J., *The Dynamism of Desire: Bernard J.F. Lonergan S.J. on The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources) 2006, vii.

primary role of the retreat is to foster the dynamism of desire. The founder of the Society of Jesus, a man of desire himself, saw the presence of a great desire as the unmistakable sign that a retreatant would profit much from the Exercises. This is a rich and insightful handbook for retreatants and directors, but its key focus is the four weeks of the thirty day retreat, not the extended study of desire and its appropriation to which I have been drawn.

Another Jesuit, Ravi Michael Louis S.J. submitted a Master's Thesis at Regis College in Toronto in 2006 entitled *Appropriating Human Desiring: The Fate of Historical Transcendence* which brought Lonergan's perceptive writing on desire and self-transcendence into dialogue with Indian philosophy as well as that of Heidegger, and Levinas and the European post-modernists. A complex and culturally rich study, Louis' paper brings together and relates the operations of human imagination, of human affectivity, of human morality, and human historicity, and the attunement into altereity fostered by being in love. He thus sets a wider compass and, with the help of Professor Doran, explores more fully than I the ontological role played by *psychic conversion* in the appropriation of the transcendental-historical mechanisms of human desiring; its position at the very heart of the relationality between the sciences, philosophy and theology; and its relevance for the much needed grounded dialogue between *philosophia* and *dar'sana*.

By contrast, the writing of my thesis has been the comparatively straightforward task of showing the personal self-appropriation of the human desire to know and love God as it unfolded in the life and writings of Bernard Lonergan S.J. and offer it as a source of hope and spiritual growth for others as it has been for me. We **can** know ourselves as questioning, persistent seekers of truth and Truth itself. We **can** recognize the desires which move us in feelings and motivations and evaluate them in terms of the greatest desire of all which exerts its steady pull within us towards transcendence. As human even before we are Christian, we are called to nothing less.

To the seemingly bleak world of questions with which we began we can offer something like a *Babette's Feast* of possibilities: the realization that human creativity and artistry, human love and collaboration in society are the out workings of the same desire that moves us to be dissatisfied with anything but the best and to want to do our utmost. By exploring natural and religious interiority we can discover the power and

passionateness of being at work in this universe in which the Infinite Act of Understanding Love has placed us. The same Spirit that moves in the emergent probabilities of our evolutionary world, moves in our desires, and will meet us there.

AFTERWORD

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.⁵⁸⁶

When I embarked on my theological journey, I could identify only longing as a key component. That my longing was the ‘the drawing of this Love’ I can no longer doubt, though I have not yet ceased from exploration. I valued the longing, seeing it as ‘a thirst for God’ and praying anxiously not to be deprived of it, sensing that my desire for God was my one redeeming feature. I manifestly did not understand it even so, much less appropriate it.

If I had, I would have realized that this desire is no transitory, haphazard acquisition but rather an integral part of my humanness, the deepest drive of my being. It is Truth that I thirsted for, and pursued in my eldest child’s persistent search for answers, and in the world of knowledge opened for me by formal education. This is why I read everything I could lay my hands on, age appropriate or not, and why I had spent hours on the floor of the boarding school library reading the entire McHardy family Bible from cover to cover before I was fifteen – making startling discoveries which were certainly not age-appropriate as the reader will imagine. The Walter Farrell commentary on the *Summa Theologica*⁵⁸⁷ caught and held me during my secondary school years as I tried to understand the being of God, the meaning of life and why each angel was, necessarily, a separate species. I did not know then that this insistent drive to find out ‘everything about everything’ was the way all human beings are

⁵⁸⁶ T.S.Eliot, *Four Quartets: Little Gidding*, 1942, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) 59.

⁵⁸⁷ Walter Farrell “My Way of Life” was the short version, corresponding to *The Companion to the Summa*, IIIA and Supplement. The longer ones were available in the Library and to these I progressed.

made, and that unless the questions are knocked out of the child or stifled by deadening forces over which the child has little or no control, that is the way each person will come to know the world, and be able to make a contribution in it. Learning has always been deeply satisfying for me. In the course of this research I have come to understand not only that it is, but that it is meant to be an engrossing, challenging, life-long activity. The reason for this wellspring of questions is that we are created into mystery, and our longing is to know God even as we are ourselves known by God.

That it is not so for some, but was for me, relates to the context in which learning occurs best. At the age of eight I moved from a punitive and fearful State School classroom in which spelling was taught with the strap, to a school where the mission of the teachers was “to make known the Love of the Heart of Jesus by the work of education.” The contrast between these two schools was also something I sought to understand, and seeds of a vocation to religious life were sown. In the affirming security of being loved a child is open to learn and grow. In the expansion of loving one is moved to learn and grow even more.

So it was providential rather than accidental, and quite understandable in hindsight, that the religious congregation I asked to enter was the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with its educative charism, and a spirituality of seeking to know the heart of God by studying in the Gospels the heart of God made man, “in order to unite and conform ourselves to him.”⁵⁸⁸ A blessing then and since, and one for which I will always be grateful.

The writing of this thesis has brought me into conversation with many individuals whose spiritual and theological journeys demonstrate a genuine and growing intimacy with the desire that moves them to love God and to develop as thinkers. The wise counsel of spiritual advisors and personal therapy has aided affective healing, and brought a gradual opening on to the joy of self-discovery – reconciliation with a desirous and incomplete self-hood and the loving patience of our evolutionary God who does not ‘fix everything on the spot’ even though so entreated. Desire can be an integrating force in our lives. Welcomed for what it really is, the impulse of God’s Spirit reinforcing sweetly and powerfully the image of God that moves in our human

⁵⁸⁸ Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart, # 17.

consciousness, it enables us to love ourselves and everyone else in the love of God. These years of research have been a time of deep learning and real joy, and it is the possibility of owning one's deepest desires that the writer has sought to mediate in this dissertation.

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