

Healing the Psychological Subject

Towards a Fourfold Notion of Conversion?

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Abstract

This paper addresses some of the developments in the theoretical reflection on conversion following Lonergan's threefold differentiation of conversion as intellectual, moral, and religious, and it also addresses the issues arising from this development. Specifically, the paper begins by focusing on the contributions of Robert Doran (psychic conversion) and Bernard Tyrrell (affectional conversion). Each has made significant contributions to integrate further Lonergan's theories into psychology. There follows an attempt to situate these developments in light of Lonergan's comments concerning "affective" conversion in an attempt to bring some clarity and succinctness to the discussion.

1. Introduction

In contemporary theological reflection, theologians continue to come to terms with the complexities involved in understanding the human subject brought about by the advancements in the natural, human, and social sciences.¹ In light of this new context, our understanding of *conversion*, among other things, must continue to be transposed in light of the developments in these various disciplines.

¹ See Bernard LONERGAN, "Theology in its New Context," in *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1974, reprint Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 55-67.

Contemporary scholarship on conversion continues to identify and clarify the various aspects of personal transformation. One can distinguish between, on the one hand, the aspect of conversion that pertains to the interior transformation of the subject, and, on the other hand, the understanding of conversion in nominal terms as it pertains to a change in one's explicit religious affiliation or religious status. The interior transformation of the subject is reflected in biblical theology as *metanoia* to connote a dramatic "about face" or "turn around" which is more than just repenting for one's sins. Rather, it is as Dom Marc-François Lacan states, "an interior transformation which blossoms out in a change of conduct, in a new orientation of life."²

Conversion can also refer to the transition from one belief system or institution to another belief system or institution. Religious scholars refer to such changes in the outward expression of religious identity as *tradition transition* and *institutional transition*.³ When speaking of conversion strictly in these latter terms, some scholars have ceased to use the term *conversion* at all in favour of terminology that more accurately expresses the historical-social dimension of religious affiliation and identity. For example, in his text *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, James Russell refers to the mass transition of the Germanic people to institutional Christianity as *christianization* rather than "conversion."⁴ Russell's work identifies the need for a terminology that will help clarify the distinction between the sociological aspect of conversion that includes the explicit religious identity and institutional affiliation, on the one hand, and the inner process of conversion as it pertains to the subject's interiority in striving for authenticity and self-transcendence, on the other hand. However, suggesting a distinction between "inner" and "outer" conversion is not to bifurcate the two aspects but rather to clarify the various aspects of conversion. Obviously, one can undergo a conversion without changing one's religious affiliation.

² Dom Marc-François LACAN, "Conversion and Kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels," in Walter E. CONN (ed.), *Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation* (New York: Alba House, 1978), p. 100.

³ John S. STRONG, "Conversion: Perspectives on Personal and Social Transformation" in Mircea ELIADE (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 14 (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 74. Obviously it goes without saying that one can undergo a conversion without changing one's explicit religious identity or religious affiliation.

⁴ See James C. RUSSELL, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), especially chap. 2: "Conversion, Christianization, and Germanization."

To invoke an idea from Eric Voegelin, the shift in our understanding of conversion has gone from one of *compactness* to a more differentiated notion, that is, one that considers the personal, moral, religious, social, and psychological aspects of conversion. However, *compactness* implies that these latter differentiations of conversion are at least to some extent implicit in earlier notions. Bernard Lonergan's threefold differentiation of conversion as *intellectual*, *moral*, and *religious* represents a provocative contribution towards a contemporary understanding of conversion.⁵ His explication of a threefold notion of conversion constitutes a development in our understanding of conversion from a more compact notion to one differentiated in terms of its moral, intellectual, and religious aspects. One can apply the threefold distinction as a hermeneutic tool that can enrich our understanding of various aspects of personal transformation as exemplified, for example, in Augustine's *Confessions*.⁶

In addition to Lonergan's formulations of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, the exigencies of our modern context call for an 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

⁵ *Intellectual conversion* involves a "radical clarification" regarding knowledge and reality. Specifically, this necessitates the elimination of a false assumption that knowing involves "taking a good look." This involves the fuller realization that human knowing entails the compound of operations of experience, understanding, and judgment – that the content of these operations constitutes the world mediated by meaning. *Moral conversion* "changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions to values." This conversion occurs to the extent that one is able to choose the "truly good" over immediate gratification, or sensitive satisfaction, especially when value and satisfaction conflict. *Religious conversion* concerns a transformation such that one's being becomes a dynamic state of being-in-love with the Ultimate being or God. There follows a desire to surrender and commit to that love which has content but no apprehended object. Bernard LONERGAN, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 238-41.

⁶ Walter CONN applies Lonergan's threefold notion of conversion to the life of Thomas Merton, which he believes offers concrete examples of religious and moral conversion. See his *Christian Conversion* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), esp. Chapters 5 and 6. In a more summary fashion see his *The Desiring Self: Rooting Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction in Self-Transcendence* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), Chapter 7. Similarly, Elena MALITS, C.S.C. applies Lonergan's threefold notion of conversion to a study of the life of Thomas Merton. See *Journey into the Unknown: Thomas Merton's Continuing Conversion*, Fordham University Ph.D. dissertation (Ann Arbor: MI: University Microfilms, 1976).

bias: dramatic, egoistic, group, or general.⁷ Following Lonergan's developments, scholars have attempted to develop his ideas by integrating them with insights from modern psychology. In turn, this has led to the positing of additional differentiations or notions of conversions by various scholars. Undoubtedly, operative in the background of their reflections are the few and brief comments that Lonergan made regarding, *affective conversion*.⁸ These statements about affective conversion suggested the possibility of additional notions of conversions and led to multiple, nuanced interpretations of what Lonergan meant by *affective conversion*.⁹ I will address these in more detail in a subsequent section of this paper.

Nearly two decades after Lonergan's death, there remains little consensus among scholars concerning the psychological and affective dimensions of conversion. While several scholars have made significant contributions to developing Lonergan's notion of conversion along these lines, the multiplication of various notions of conversions that often results threatens to cloud rather than to clarify the issue. This lack of clarity prompts one to ask: To what extent is the development of additional notions of conversion even necessary?

The questions these issues raise are complex, and so I limit this paper to the contributions of two scholars who write specifically on the subject of healing of the psychological subject. First, I will summarize and compare the work of Robert Doran on *psychic conversion*, and Bernard Tyrrell on

⁷ In *dramatic bias*, the flight from understanding is rooted in a psychic wound of the subject, and results in irrational behaviours that can be attributed to the psychic wound. *Egoistic bias* is rooted in one's self-centredness; it results in one's criteria for knowing and choosing being limited to one's own selfish outcomes. One could call *group bias* a collective egoistic bias in that it favours what is best for the group at the expense of others outside of the group. *General bias* resists theoretical knowledge and is content to live in the concrete world; it refuses to permit questions that might lead to theory. On bias see B. LONERGAN, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, pp. 214-15 and 244-51.

⁸ B. LONERGAN, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," in *A Third Collection*, Frederick E. CROWE (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 179-80.

⁹ See W. E. CONN, "Affective Conversion: The Transformation of Desire," in T. P. O'FALLON, and P. B. RILEY, (eds.), *Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 216-26. Robert DORAN, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), especially chap. 6; henceforth this text is cited parenthetically as *TDH*. Donald GELPI, *Experiencing God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), pp. 179-81. Bernard TYRRELL, "Affectional Conversion: A Distinct Conversion or Potential Differentiation in the Spheres of Sensitive Psychic and/or Affective Conversion?" in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 14 (1996), pp. 1-35; henceforth cited parenthetically as *AC*.

affectional conversion (not to be confused with Lonergan's use of *affective conversion*), and inquire as to whether or not these two conversions are distinct from each other and to what extent they might be complementary. In view of this, I suggest further that what may be moving forward in both of their developments is a fuller, synthetic account of the psychological aspects of conversion. Secondly, in light of the possibility of the latter, I inquire as to the feasibility of limiting the number of conversions. The use of an Occam's Razor in the subsequent reflection on conversion may help to prevent the unnecessary multiplication of other notions and hence bring more clarity to this ongoing reflection.¹⁰

2. Psychic Conversion and Affectional Conversion

Before proceeding, it will be helpful to summarize briefly Lonergan's theory of intentional consciousness.

There are four levels of *intentional* consciousness in Lonergan's cognitive theory: *experience*, *understanding*, *judgment* and *decision*.¹¹ *Knowing*, in the strict sense, occurs to the extent that one is attentive to one's experience, intelligent in one's understanding and reasonable in one's judgment – to the extent that one answers all the relevant questions to a specific inquiry through these operations. In turn, a question of value arises, which one would hope, prompts a person, to make responsible decisions based on those values. To the extent that this pattern of operations is allowed to unfold properly in the subject without the distortion of human bias, then one can say with Lonergan that "Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. It is to be attained only by attaining authentic subjectivity."¹²

The "distortion of human bias" that may block a person's intellectual, moral, psychological, social, or spiritual development can signal the need

¹⁰ Admittedly, however, the number of conversions is ultimately an empirical question and so my preference to limit the number to four remains at this point a working hypothesis.

¹¹ The philosophical foundations for Lonergan's theory of consciousness are expounded in detail in his text, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. For a more concise overview of his theory of consciousness see his articles: "Cognitive Structure," in *Collection*, Collected Works, Vol. 4, ed. by F. E. CROWE and R. M. DORAN (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 205-22; "The Subject," in *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 69-86; and chap. 1 of *Method in Theology*. Lonergan of course, uses the term "level" in a metaphorical sense, see "The Subject," in *A Second Collection*, p. 81.

¹² LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, p. 292. Of course, not all knowledge is immanently generated; there is being-in-love in an unrestricted manner, which for Lonergan is the foundation of faith.

for conversion. In this way, conversion for Lonergan "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."¹³ He emphasizes that conversion can occur in dramatic moments, as in the case of Saint Paul on the road to Damascus, or it may be more gradual, that is, "extended over the slow maturing process of a lifetime."¹⁴

Psychic Conversion

As stated above, Lonergan put forth the notions of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion. Robert Doran, however, seeks to integrate Lonergan's threefold notion of conversion into depth psychology and he calls this formulation *psychic conversion*. The latter fits within the context of Lonergan's other conversions as follows:

Religious conversion [...] affects proximately a dimension of consciousness – at times Lonergan called it a fifth level – where we are pure openness to the reception of grace; moral conversion affects the fourth level; intellectual conversion affects the second and third levels; and psychic conversion affects the first level (*TDH*, 42).¹⁵

Psychic conversion pertains to the first level *experience* and helps to heal the dramatic bias which prevents someone from attending to relevant data in one's experience.

There is significant evidence to suggest that Lonergan not only endorsed Doran's notion of psychic conversion but he saw it as an extension of his threefold notion of conversion. Lonergan states, in a letter to a publisher,

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.¹⁶

¹³ LONERGAN, "Theology in its New Context," in *A Second Collection*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁴ LONERGAN, "Theology in its New Context," in *A Second Collection*, p. 66.

¹⁵ Lonergan's use of the term *fifth level* of consciousness refers to non-intentional consciousness in the sense that there is no object intended in consciousness. Religious conversion culminates in a person being-in-love in an unrestricted manner. Hence, *that* with which one is in love remains uncomprehended – it is mystery. For a summary of this problem see Michael VERTIN, "Lonergan on Consciousness: Is There a Fifth Level?," in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 12 (1994), pp. 1-36.

¹⁶ Lonergan's Recommendation to publisher in support of a book proposal by Robert Doran, A2280 (File 490.1/6), Archives, Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto. Similarly in a letter to Fr. Edward Braxton (February 12, 1975) Lonergan wrote: "I agree with Robert Doran on psychic conversion and his combining it with intellectual, moral, and religious conversion." File 132, p. 1, also from the Lonergan Archives. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Lonergan Estate to cite from this unpublished material.

Simply stated, psychic conversion "is a transformation of the psychic component of what Freud calls 'the censor' from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person's development" (*TDH*, 59). The censor, according to Lonergan, is a "law or rule of interrelations between successive levels of integration."¹⁷ When the censor operates constructively, it sorts through irrelevant data and allows us to receive the necessary images needed for insights (*TDH*, 184). When the censor is repressive, it does not allow access to images that would allow needed insights. As a result, one may experience blocks in one's psychological development. This process pertains to the dramatic pattern of experience and usually results from a psychological wound due to victimization or abuse.

For Doran, repression is primarily of *images* rather than *insights*, and these images are "concomitant" with feelings. As a result, feelings may become disassociated from the repressed images and, in turn, become concomitant with other "incongruous images" (*TDH*, 60). For example, a child who has a violent fear of dogs may be responding to trauma from a prior animal attack. She may not remember the actual incident, but the presence of *any* dog quickly arouses her horror. Furthermore, it is also possible for feelings to be repressed insofar as they are coupled with the repressed images (*TDH*, 184). For example, the child, despite her fear of dogs, may also harbour repressed feelings of rage towards them.

Again, often the repressive functioning of the censor is the result of victimization or abuse. A psychic wound or dramatic bias develops which causes the censor to repress the painful images and in this way it functions as a form of psychic defense. However, during sleep the censor can be relaxed and thus may allow the repressed images to surface into one's consciousness (*TDH*, 60). Dream interpretation as such, in the context of psychotherapy, may facilitate psychic conversion and likewise assist in eventually bringing about psychological healing.

Doran calls for a re-orientation of depth psychology (especially with certain insights from Jungian psychology) through Lonergan's theory of intentional consciousness. He believes that this in turn will provide a point of theological integration between depth psychology and theology (*TDH*, 304).

¹⁷ LONERGAN, *Insight*, p. 482.

Affectional Conversion

Bernard Tyrrell addresses the healing of psychological neurosis in terms of *affectional conversion*. Specifically, he distinguishes between *deprivation* neurosis and *repressive* neurosis. The former refers to a neurosis resulting from a person's inner feelings of worthlessness and unlovableness. The latter refers to the "severe repression" neurosis that may result in destructive expressions to self or others. His notion of affectional conversion addresses, for the most part, the healing of deprivation neurosis (AC, 2 n. 5). However, he admits that deprivation neurosis can be severe enough to cause a repressive neurosis: "I think one can legitimately draw a certain analogy between degrees of severity or pathology involved in the stages of felt unlovableness and worthlessness and the degrees of severity at work in repressive psychic disorders" (AC, 16).

Furthermore, Tyrrell distinguishes two types of affectional conversions: *primal affectional conversion* and *upper level conversion*.

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 fulfillment 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, ongoing 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 (AC, 18).

In short, my understanding of Tyrrell's distinction of the two types of affectional conversion is that primal affectional conversion refers to the healing of psychic wounds inflicted on individuals as a result of pathological affectional neglect, and, like psychic conversion, it is proximate with the first level of operations in Lonergan's theory of consciousness – *experience*. On the other hand, upper level affectional conversion refers to the extent that those in need of this type of affectional healing make harsh self-judgments and self-destructive decisions out of their own inner feelings/beliefs of self-worthlessness. Tyrrell states, "two affectional conversions are really distinct to the extent that they can be related to transformations on distinct levels of consciousness." Together, affectional healing as primal and upper level affects all levels of consciousness (AC, 18).

Tyrrell distinguishes affectional conversion, specifically primal affectional conversion, from Doran's psychic conversion. He sees the "essential difference" as follows:

As I understand it, in the case of psychic conversion the focus is on the *data of the psyche that pertain to repression* as it is at work on the sensitive psychic level and to the transformation of the "censor" from a repressive to a constructive agency in a person's development, on the other hand in the case of primal affectional conversion the focus is on the *data of sensitive consciousness that pertain to the frustration of the pleasure/love appetite* in an individual and the transformative process results in the fulfillment of the sensitive love-desire (AC, 21, emphasis added).

Like psychic conversion, primal affectional deprivation can result in a repression of feelings as well (AC, 21-22). Still, despite Tyrrell's clarification it remains unclear as to how distinct primal affective conversion is from psychic conversion. One could argue that primal affectional conversion is a result of psychic conversion.

Doran and Tyrrell have each laboured significantly to integrate the insights of modern psychology with Lonergan's threefold notion of conversion. Both thinkers posit their conversions as being proximate with the first level of experience (primal affectional conversion for Tyrrell) and both acknowledge the role of love in bringing about the psychological healing of the subject. Both claim that their respective notions of conversion are distinct from what Lonergan referred to as *affective conversion*. Nevertheless, the question arises as to what extent their respective formulations overlap and to what extent they differ. Might there be a potential synthesis going forward in both of these formulations?

I return to the distinction that Tyrrell makes between *deprivation* neurosis and *repressive* neurosis.¹⁸ Perhaps a complementary understanding between psychic and upper level affectional conversion (not primal affectional conversion) lies in the fact that the latter addresses deprivation neurosis while psychic conversion addresses the healing of repressive neurosis.

In this way, it would seem that, in the more severe cases of abuse, the healing of the wounded psyche would involve both conversions. That is, psychic conversion would account for the bringing forth of the materials from the unconscious (for instance, memories) that the censor represses. In turn, affectional conversion would treat the inner feelings and beliefs of worthlessness that result from the effects of severe physical, mental, and psychological abuse of individuals. In this fashion it would seem that

¹⁸ Perhaps we are all in need to some degree of psychic and/or affectional conversion. For the purpose of this discussion, I will prescind from using examples of "healthy" or "normal" people. I will focus instead on the extreme neurotic forms that call for dramatic psychic healing.

psychic and affectional conversions could operate in a complementary fashion to bring about a fuller healing of the psychological subject – each emphasizing different aspects of the complex healing process.

Doran suggests that psychic conversion already includes the healing of affective wounds and habits (*TDH*, 62), and, to the extent that this is true, then Tyrrell's work may overlap on this point. Tyrrell does speak about affectional deprivation neurosis being severe enough to cause repression, and, insofar as he presupposes that affectional conversion can heal this type of neurosis, then I think his notion does overlap with Doran's psychic conversion. That is, it would seem that once the censor is operating to repress material needed for psychic integration, there is a need for psychic conversion. In other words, where there is repression involved, and where the healing is linked to that repressed material, then I think that Doran's psychic conversion has already covered this ground quite adequately. However, this is not to say that Tyrrell's formulation of affectional conversion does not make a contribution to understanding the healing of the fuller psychological subject. I think that the strength of Tyrrell's formulation of affectional conversion, specifically upper level affectional conversion, is that he elaborates more fully than Doran on how the healing of the wounded psyche is affected on the subsequent levels of intentional consciousness, that is, understanding, judgment, decision. I also think that Tyrrell has sought to integrate a broader range of psychological theories beyond that of depth psychology, which is Doran's primary concentration.

Doran and Tyrrell have laboured to flesh out the details of conversion with respect to the healing of the psychological subject that remained undeveloped in Lonergan's thought. I have attempted to point out in a succinct way where their respective developments differ and where they overlap. In view of this brief analysis I would further suggest that what is perhaps going forward in both of these developments is an emerging systematic synthesis that draws upon the insights of the broader field of psychology (as opposed to just depth psychology), and that this would further complement Lonergan's other three conversions. In this way I would borrow a term from Tyrrell and call this emerging synthesis *psychological conversion*.¹⁹ Hence, one could speak of conversion as fourfold: religious, moral, intellectual, and psychological. The latter would include

¹⁹ Bernard TYRRELL, "Passages and Conversion," in Matthew LAMB, (ed.), *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan*, S.J. (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1981), p. 24. *Psychological conversion* is an early notion of Tyrrell's that, as far as I can tell, he has moved beyond and incorporated into affectional conversion. I am simply borrowing the term, not the notion itself.

Doran's formulation of psychic conversion filled out with aspects of Tyrrell's formulation of affectional conversion. What is going forward in both of their formulations, then, is really one conversion (psychological) that concentrates on healing the wounded psyche and the healing of the ramifications of this woundedness on each of the levels of intentional consciousness. Admittedly, I find the succinctness of this formula provocative; however, whether it is adequate remains a further question.

3. Towards a Fourfold Conversion?

The foregoing analysis raises an interesting and ongoing question: Did Lonergan ever acknowledge a limited number of notions of conversion beyond his threefold distinction? We have noted that he accepted Doran's psychic conversion as a legitimate extension of his theory. Furthermore, when asked directly if Lonergan "envisioned a limited number of conversions," he answered, "Yes. I used to believe there were three but my friend from Marquette Robert Doran has convinced me there is a fourth."²⁰ Lonergan goes on to reiterate his initial response to the same question, "Yes, four: intellectual, moral, religious and aesthetic, or psychic or whatever you want to call it."²¹

Prima facie, these comments indicate that Lonergan was open to a fourth formulation of conversion and endorsed Doran's notion of psychic conversion as constituting the key development in this area. However, his comments also suggest some tentativeness regarding what exactly this fourth conversion entails, that is, "aesthetic, or psychic or whatever you want to call it".

However, it must be admitted that Lonergan's comments are spontaneous, and one cannot be certain to what extent they reflect his own position accurately had he worked it out more extensively. Moreover, even assuming that Lonergan does limit the number of conversions to four, one cannot be certain that he would not have changed his mind and been open to the possibility of other notions of conversions. Hence, I may be skating on thin ice in attempting to limit the formulations of conversion to just four. Nevertheless, it may be that Lonergan's response gives us a glimpse of the direction he was moving with respect to the issue of additional notions of conversions.

²⁰ Verbatim transcripts of question and answer session from the 1978 Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, File #885 Archives, Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto, p. 8.

²¹ File #885, p. 9.

There remains, however, a further complication. Let us assume that Lonergan favours limiting the number of conversions to four; the question then arises, "What sense do we make of his mention of *affective conversion*?" Could it be that perhaps scholars have read too much into Lonergan's use of the term "*affective conversion*" in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness" by regarding it as evidence that he was positing an additional conversion?

Doran and Tyrrell have each dealt with the affectivity involved in healing the psychological subject. It seems that Tyrrell, following Lonergan's suggestion of affective conversion, went on to develop his own notion of *affectional conversion*. Doran, on the other hand, incorporated affective conversion into his theory of psychic conversion. He suggests that affective conversion is the *fruit* (in part) of psychic conversion (*TDH*, 9). Doran may be closer to what Lonergan had in mind, if one considers that Lonergan does seem to link explicitly the notion of affective conversion to his understanding of "psychic" conversion. That is, in the same response to the question mentioned above, Lonergan specifies his own understanding of "psychic conversion." He states: "It is a conversion of one's affectivity. One's affectivity can have things go wrong with it, and they 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."²²

Again, these comments from Lonergan are spontaneous, and we cannot be certain whether what he means by "conversion of one's affectivity" is in fact the same as what he means by affective conversion in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," and if so, to what extent these comments are related to his suggestion of affective conversion in "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness." Moreover, we cannot be certain what he means by the phrase "there is an affective conversion and there is affective liberation", that is, whether affective conversion and affective liberation are distinct in his mind, and if so to what extent each pertains to psychic conversion. Nevertheless, *prima facie*, Lonergan's comments seem to corroborate Doran's suggestion that affective conversion is the fruit of psychic conversion, that is, at least insofar as psychic conversion facilitates affective conversion/liberation.²³

²² File #885, p. 9.

²³ For Doran, the healing of the censor from a repressive to a constructive agency in the subject may enable a person to recover those "affect-laden images of the psyche" (*TDH*, 61).

Moreover, there is a further complication, and it concerns a point that is often overlooked in Lonergan's mention of affective conversion in "Natural Right." Specifically, he does not use the term (at least directly) in reference to the healing of the psychological subject. Walter Conn speaks of affective conversion as "a radical reorientation of our passionate desires from obsession with self-needs to concern for the needs of others...."²⁴ I agree with his emphasis, but I would view affective conversion as essentially an aspect of moral conversion (as Lonergan defines it) and not as a distinct conversion because it involves essentially the conversion from selfishness/self-centredness to a commitment to the other (family, community, God). That is, affective conversion entails a shift in the criterion of one's decisions from satisfaction to value, wherein decisions based on satisfaction reflect decisions based on selfishness/self-centredness while the transformation of that desire leads to a commitment to one's family, community, and God which are all fundamentally choices of value. Viewed in this way, affective conversion is basically a moral conversion but with an emphasis on the conversion from selfishness/self-centredness. However, I am not convinced that it is feasible to speak of affective conversion as a distinct and unique conversion at least as Lonergan invokes the term in "Natural Right." That is, if one looks closely at Lonergan's use of the term *affective conversion* in "Natural Right," one finds that it is used in the context of being-in-love with one's family, being-in-love with one's neighbour (community), and being-in-love with God.²⁵ Lonergan uses these same three examples of *being-in-love* in the chapter on religion in *Method in Theology* but he discusses them specifically in light of religious conversion. His reference, for example, to the love of husband and wife is used as an analogy of the "other-worldly" being-in-love with God. Religious conversion culminates in the fulfillment of one's conscious intentionality which accompanies being-in-love in an unrestricted manner.²⁶

In the context of his comments in "Natural Right," affective conversion promotes a threefold commitment to love through being-in-love with one's family, through being-in-love with humanity, and through being-in-love with God. In this sense, Lonergan's use of the term *affective conversion*

²⁴ CONN, "Affective Conversion," in O'FALLON – RILEY, *Religion and Culture*, p. 270.

²⁵ LONERGAN, "Natural Right," in *A Third Collection*, p. 179.

²⁶ Lonergan writes in *Method in Theology*: "Being-in-love is of different kinds. There is love of intimacy, of husband and wife, of parents and children. There is the love of one's fellow men with its fruit in the achievement of human welfare. There is 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)," (p. 105).

suggests that the notion incorporates *all* forms of being-in-love. Being-in-love with God (or religious conversion), then, would be a subdivision of affective conversion.²⁷ Moreover, he does not link affective conversion directly to the healing of the psychological subject although one could infer it indirectly to the extent that dramatic bias may prevent one from being-in-love in either of these three ways.

Finally, it is quite possible that in Lonergan's reference to affective conversion in "Natural Right," he was referring to his own notion of religious conversion and simply substituted the term "affective conversion" in that instance out of consideration of his audience.²⁸ However, even if this was the case, this does not eliminate the need to address the psychological and affective dimensions of conversion in Lonergan's theory of conversion.

A further point to consider: perhaps part of the confusion surrounding Lonergan's few comments concerning affective conversion is that there has not been an adequate treatment of the structure of affectivity within Lonergan's overall theory of consciousness. That is, in *Insight*, Lonergan outlines a precise structure of the intellectual pattern of operations involved in human knowing, but he does not outline the structure of affectivity in human knowing. Nor should this be expected, since it was not his primary concern at the time. However, he does treat the topic of affectivity in the chapter titled "The Human Good" in *Method in Theology*. His treatment, though, is far from exhaustive and he deals specifically with ethics and the human good, emphasizing the inextricable relationship between values and feelings.

There are implicit references to feelings and affectivity throughout Lonergan's theory of consciousness, but the fuller structure remains to be fleshed out. For example, Lonergan begins his work in *Insight* with a reference to Archimedes and the famous scenario where, upon discovering the solution to the problem that plagued him, he ran naked through the streets shouting "Eureka!"²⁹ Archimedes' shout for joy illustrates the inextricable relationship between affectivity and the intellectual *desire to know* and the joy that can accompany the fruit of successful inquiry. There are also other implicit treatments of affectivity throughout various aspects of

²⁷ I am grateful to my conversations with Daniel Monsour, for helping me to clarify this point.

²⁸ I am grateful to Robert M. Doran for this hypothesis.

²⁹ See LONERGAN, *Insight*, pp. 27-28.

Loneragan's thought; but again, these remain aspects to be fleshed out and made more explicit.³⁰

A handful of scholars have attempted to develop the role of affectivity in Lonergan's theory of consciousness. However, the bulk of this scholarship deals solely with the affective dimension as it pertains to the fourth level of operations and specifically concerns ethical/moral decision-making.³¹ There remains a need to clarify and flesh out in a more comprehensive way the relationship between affectivity and the operations of intentional consciousness, taking into account Lonergan's full theory of consciousness. This is a tall order. In order to explicate fully the structure of affectivity throughout Lonergan's theory of consciousness, one would need to distinguish between the affectivity involved in each of the specific levels of operations of consciousness (experience, understanding, judgment, and decision) as well as in each of the transformations of consciousness (conversions).³² Such a project would include clarifying the role of affectivity as it functions in each of the various transformations of consciousness, that is, as it functions distinctly in *intellectual conversion*, as it functions distinctly in *moral conversion*, as it functions distinctly in *religious conversion*, and as it functions distinctly in the *psychological healing* of the subject. This project

³⁰ Some examples include: Lonergan speaks of the aesthetic pattern of experience and later derives a definition of art from his reading of Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). See B. LONERGAN, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, ed. by R. M. DORAN and F. E. CROWE (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 211. Lonergan refers to "transcendental feelings" which he takes from the Introduction of J. A. STEWART's *The Myths of Plato*. Michael Vertin cites his own unpublished interview with Lonergan. See M. VERTIN, "Judgments of Value in the Later Lonergan," in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 13 (1995), p. 235 fn. 46. Lonergan also infers the role of affectivity in chap. 17 of *Insight* when he refers to the unplumbed depths of the known unknown. See LONERGAN, *Insight*, p. 555.

³¹ See Elizabeth A. MORELLI, *Anxiety: A Study of Affectivity of Moral Consciousness* (Lanham, NY: University of America Press, 1985); Mark DOORLEY, *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics: The Role of Feelings in the Ethical Intentionality Analysis of Bernard Lonergan* (Lanham, MA: University of America Press, 1996); William SULLIVAN, *The Role of Affect in Evaluations According to Bernard Lonergan: Ramifications for the Euthanasia Debate* (University of Toronto, Dissertation, 1998). Jason Edward KING, *The Role of Feelings in Decision-making According to Bernard Lonergan* (Ph.D. Thesis, The Catholic University of America, 2001); Hazel MARKWELL, *The Role of Feelings in Informed Consent: An Application of Bernard Lonergan's Work on Feelings* (Ph.D. Thesis, 2001); Walter CONN fleshes out the close relationship between affective conversion and moral self-transcendence (moral conversion). See his *Christian Conversion* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 153.

³² Andrew TALLON's recent work, although not explicitly in line with this approach, is an attempt to integrate the affective and cognitive dimensions of human consciousness. See his *Head and Heart: Affection, Cognition, Volition as Triune Consciousness* (New York: Fordham University, 1997). See especially pp. 208-11.

obviously lies beyond the scope of this paper. The problem is worth mentioning, however, because this lacuna in Lonergan's theory of consciousness has undoubtedly contributed to the confusion and lack of clarity surrounding subsequent attempts to understand what Lonergan may have meant by affective conversion.

I believe that the fact that Lonergan himself never fully develops the psychological dimensions of conversion, coupled with the fact that he never explicated the structure of affectivity in his theory of consciousness, has prompted scholars to draw upon his use of the term "affective conversion" in order to fill out in part these aspects lacking in Lonergan's theory of intentional consciousness.

4. The Need for the Application of Occam's Razor?

We have noted that the question remains unanswered regarding what Lonergan actually meant by affective conversion and whether or not he actually was speaking of a distinct conversion. We have noted as well that there is a lacuna that remains in Lonergan's theory of consciousness concerning the explicit structure of affectivity. These two conditions, along with the need we have suggested for an integrated notion of the psychological aspects of conversion, have led some developers of Lonergan's thought to multiply unnecessarily the various notions of conversion. Hence, there may be a precedent for applying an Occam's Razor to this type of reflection. This could be done in such a way as to restrict the multiplication of notions of conversions to no more than absolutely necessary. Let us look at some examples.

Lonergan spoke of religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, with a few remarks about affective conversion (although he accepted psychic conversion). Doran speaks of religious, moral, intellectual, and psychic conversion, wherein affective conversion is the fruit of psychic conversion. Donald Gelpi presupposes the existence of Lonergan's threefold conversion but develops this by a more precise treatment of moral conversion. In turn, Gelpi distinguishes two types of moral conversion: *personal* and *sociopolitical*. He acknowledges Doran's contribution of psychic conversion but prefers to keep the term affective conversion. For Gelpi, the fruit of the latter conversion allows full access to one's emotional, imaginative, and esthetic sensibilities.³³ Bernard Tyrrell, as we have seen, affirms the above

³³ Donald GELPI, S. J., "The Authentication of Doctrines: Hints from C. S. Pierce," in *Theological Studies*, 60 (1999), pp. 272-73.

conversions of Lonergan and Doran but develops his understanding of Lonergan's affective conversion in terms of the twofold distinct aspects of affectional conversion (upper level and primal affectional). Tyrrell has also pondered the question of the possibility of *aesthetic conversion* (AC, 31). In his earlier work he pondered the notion of *conversion from addiction*.³⁴

In a recent study on modern spiritual autobiography, David Leigh uses some categories from Lonergan that he obtains from Walter Conn's *Christian Conversion*. Among these Leigh invokes affective, religious, intellectual and moral conversion. In addition he adds his own formulation that he calls *imaginative conversion*.³⁵ This does not necessarily exhaust the list and there will probably be more developments and formulations of conversion to follow.³⁶

In the first section of this paper, it could be said that I was applying Occam's Razor when I suggested that what might be going forward in the formulations of psychic and affectional conversions is a fuller understanding of the healing of the psychological subject. I borrowed a term from Tyrrell to call this emerging development *psychological conversion*.

Perhaps there is a sense in which the multiplication of various notions of conversions reflects the complex polymorphic structure of human consciousness. However, it seems more prudent to try to be more concise and move towards synthesis of these notions of conversions where feasible. After all, it seems redundant to speak of a sociopolitical conversion, for example, when it would appear that the transformation of social, economic, and political structures follow from the cumulative effects of the intellectual, moral, religious, and psychological conversions of individuals who participate and play a constitutive role in those structures.³⁷

³⁴ TYRRELL, "Passages and Conversions," in LAMB, *Creativity and Method*, pp. 24 ff., 31 ff.

³⁵ DAVID LEIGH, *Circuitous Journeys: Modern Spiritual Autobiography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 15. He defines *imaginative conversion* as "the discovery and transformation of one's directional images, which lead one beyond the self toward a search for ultimate meaning through a lifetime" (p. 15). As defined, this notion is dealt with by Doran insofar as *psychic conversion* allows one access to one's own symbolic system (TDH, 61).

³⁶ For example, Dr. Miguel BEDOLLA proposed the notion of a somatic conversion but as far as I am aware he has not developed the notion further. "The Notion of Somatic Conversion." Unpublished paper distributed at the Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 1989.

³⁷ WALTER CONN suggests that "social commitment," that is, commitment to social justice, is one of the fruits of affective and moral conversion. See *Christian Conversion*, pp. 153-57.

Similarly, it seems redundant to speak of conversion from addiction, for example, when in Lonergan's schema, such a conversion would fall under the rubric of *moral conversion*. This is not to say that addiction is a moral problem *per se*, although it certainly affects one's moral behaviour. However, in terms of Lonergan's definition of moral conversion as the transformation of the criterion for one's choosing from *satisfactions* to *values*, it could be argued that this definition includes the healing of addiction.³⁸ That is, insofar as addicted people do not have the ability to resist the satisfactions (that is, immediate gratification) of their "drug of choice," the addictive cycle progresses, and their ability to choose *value* over *satisfaction* is increasingly compromised through a progressive, uncontrollable pattern of self-destructive behaviour.

Applying Occam's Razor further to the ongoing reflection on conversion, one wonders if it is necessary to speak of an *aesthetic conversion* as a distinct, additional conversion. Might it not be better to speak of the affects of the so-called aesthetic conversion as included as the fruit of psychic conversion? For Doran, psychic conversion allows one access to one's own symbolic system and, further, he also suggests that there is a link between psychic conversion and the transcendental *beauty*.³⁹ Or, perhaps it might be better to drop the idea of an aesthetic conversion altogether and speak instead of an aesthetic differentiation of consciousness as exemplified by the artist and which is developed to greater and lesser degrees in other people. This raises the questions concerning the relationship between conversion and differentiations of consciousness, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Finally, we have noted that Lonergan seemed to suggest that there were four conversions. My preference is to consider this suggestion as a precedent for applying Occam's Razor. That is, since there are four levels of operations in Lonergan's theory of intentional consciousness (experience, understanding, judgment, and decision), why not try to limit this type of reflection to four conversions: intellectual, moral, religious and psychological? Certainly, I am not suggesting that each of the conversions matches neatly with each of the levels of intentional consciousness respectively. Nor

³⁸ Consider this quote from one of the primary texts of Alcoholics Anonymous concerning the alcoholic prior to sobriety in that program: "We had lacked the perspective to see that character-building and spiritual values had to come first, and that material satisfactions were not the purpose of living" (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* [New York: Alcoholics World Services Inc., 1953], p. 71).

³⁹ On symbolism, see *TDH*, 286-88; on beauty, see *TDH*, 161-69.

am I suggesting that limiting the number of formulations of conversions to four should be held to rigidly; it would certainly have to be modified in light of future empirical data. Nevertheless, I think Lonergan's comments concerning a limit of four conversions is provocative enough to warrant further testing of this hypothesis. If nothing else, it promises: 1) to promote a critical appraisal of subsequent formulations on conversion, following Lonergan's threefold development; 2) to bring more rigour to this type of reflection so as to avoid unnecessary formulations; and 3) hopefully, to bring more clarity to this reflection.