

BEING IN LOVE

Tad Dunne

This article originally appeared in *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13/2 (Fall 1995) 161-175. Three addenda are added at the end that incorporate materials made generally available after the publication of this article. I include them here to help researchers cover as many bases as possible.

Recently in this journal,¹ Michael Vertin expressed disagreement with Robert Doran on a question that has bothered many Lonergan students. In the early 70s, when Lonergan began speaking of a "fifth level," did he mean to add a distinct level of conscious and intentional operations to his previous articulation of four levels of attention, intelligence, reason and responsibility?² Doran believes Lonergan was identifying a distinct fifth level of consciousness,³ while Vertin suggests that Lonergan was thinking of the fifth level as a fulfillment of fourth level yearnings, but not an added level of consciousness.

Since Vertin and Doran both note that the data on what Lonergan meant is skimpy, I may be able to clarify things by bringing to the discussion a few pieces of evidence that have not appeared in Lonergan's major published works -- evidence that will support the view that Lonergan did not intend to posit a fifth and distinct level of consciousness.⁴

In the course of comparing Vertin and Doran, however, I was left with the impression that two assumptions were made about Lonergan's view of love that contradict some of Lonergan's explicit remarks. First, they both seem to assume that wherever Lonergan referred to a "fifth level," he always meant some form of religious consciousness. I would like to take this opportunity to present some texts suggesting that Lonergan often included ordinary being in love as well. Second, Doran assumes that wherever Lonergan cited Rom 5:5 ("God's love flooding our hearts"), he meant God's love *for us* flooding our hearts. I will offer some indications that Lonergan had something else in mind.

What Did Lonergan Mean by a 'Fifth Level'?

On a number of occasions Lonergan made references that suggest that he did not intend to identify a fifth level of conscious and intentional operations.

1. Both Vertin and Doran speak of a "fifth level of consciousness." But Lonergan doesn't seem to use that four-word term anywhere. The first recorded occurrence of "fifth level" appears in 1972, when a questioner had

asked Lonergan to explain a statement in *Method in Theology* regarding Rahner's reference to a "consolation without a cause." Lonergan replied that the initial experience may be conscious but not yet known. The questioner pushed on: "There would be no insight, no concept, no judgment?" Lonergan: "Not of itself, no. You can say it's on the fifth level. It's self-transcendence reaching its summit, and that summit can be developed and enriched, and so on. But of itself it is permanent."⁵ Notice Lonergan just says "level," not "level of consciousness."

Even when, ten years later, questioners refer to a "fifth level of consciousness," Lonergan doesn't use "of consciousness" in his reply.⁶ Further research using text-processors may prove me wrong, but the absence of "fifth level of consciousness" in the texts cited by Vertin and Doran and some additional ones I will refer to below might make a person curious.

2. Lonergan's typescript entitled "Karl Rahner's Method in Theology" compares interestingly with its published version, "A Response to Fr. Dych"⁷ (1980). I have put in italics what is found in the typescript but not in the published version.

. . . with the questions on the three levels of questions for intelligence, questions for sufficient reason for factual judgments, and questions for evaluation and decision, *not what's in it for me or what's in it for us -- that's egoism, but is it really worth while, is it truly good? The transition from the earlier type of morality listed by Kohlberg into the fourth and fifth level. Questions for evaluation. . . .* this makes the precedence of intellect on will like the precedence of sense on intellect. It makes it just what normally happens. It does not exclude divine operations directly on the fourth level, *or if you wish to call it the fifth. As St. Paul instructed the Romans, "God's love has flooded our inmost hearts by the Holy Spirit he has given us."*

It may be relevant that Lonergan uses the singular, "fourth and fifth level." Also, he uses the expression, "*if you wish . . .*" -- which mirrors his original mention of it in 1972, "*you can say it's on the fifth level.*" It seems that he has some reservations about saying "fifth level of consciousness."

3. In 1981, during an interview in which he was talking about vertical finality working in human consciousness, Lonergan clearly refers to the fourth level as the *top* level of consciousness. "When you are making a judgment, you get contrary instances tossed up, and your conscience (that *top level of consciousness*) is a peaceful or troubled or uneasy conscience . . ."⁸

4. Vertin notes several ways in which Lonergan uses level to support his view that Lonergan was using the term in a wide sense when he

mentioned a "fifth level" and therefore that Lonergan was not thinking of a distinct level of consciousness in a strict sense.⁹ However, there is another strict sense in which Lonergan uses level, a usage that actually supports Vertin's position more strongly. We find it in Lonergan's two articles, "Finality, Love, Marriage" (1943) and "Mission and the Spirit" (1976). There, Lonergan's perspective is not the structure of consciousness but the entire evolving universe of being. In "Finality, Love, Marriage," level occurs dozens of times, usually with the phrase, of operations. These operations can include conscious and intentional operations of the individual, but they also include activities done in common with fellow human beings and the operations of divine grace as they affect consciousness.

"Mission and the Spirit" picks up on this evolutionary perspective and terminology. There Lonergan addresses the question, "What, in terms of human consciousness is the transition from the natural to the supernatural?" He finds the link in a "passionateness of being" that "overarches conscious intentionality. There it is the topmost quasi-operator that by intersubjectivity prepares, by solidarity entices, by falling in love establishes us as members of community."¹⁰ Although Lonergan does not say so explicitly, there clearly is some kind of level beyond the fourth level of individual conscious intentionality, a level that participates in the overarching "passionateness of being."

Lonergan sees something beyond the fourth level of consciousness because he is discussing not merely the conscious and intentional operations of the individual subject. The context here is vertical finality -- the spindle on which Lonergan stacks all the schemes of recurrence whose circling and self-stacking make up an evolving world process. He apparently conceives that being in love constitutes a fifth level in the ascent of vertical finality, counting human attentiveness as level one. This fifth level is both conscious and intentional.¹¹ But its operator is not a question. Unlike the previous three levels, it does not depend on an individual's wonder alone to come to its proper term. Also, it constitutes the subject as a term of an interpersonal relation, which the four lower levels do not. That is, when we cooperate with being in love, our consciousness becomes also a common consciousness with friend, family, country, or God. The first four levels may be active without also giving that common consciousness.¹² Given these differences, it makes sense that Lonergan would hesitate to use the expression, "level of consciousness" lest his listeners take it to mean a level defined by operator questions in the same manner as the previous levels.

Still, we could ask why Lonergan doesn't mention a "fifth level" in "Mission and the Spirit." He may have used the more technical term, "topmost quasi-operator" to avoid the very ambiguity of "level" that Vertin, Doran and I have tried to sort out. He seems to recognize that our families, friends and communities exercise an enticement on consciousness that

performs an operator function similar to the draw of God's own self-communication in Word and Spirit. But this operator is unlike the operators that the other questions are, for the reasons mentioned above. Hence, a "quasi-operator."¹³

5. A late-arriving piece of evidence surfaced in 1994, just as Vertin was finishing his article. In a closing footnote, he refers to an unpublished paper Lonergan wrote sometime between June, 1977 and October, 1978 -- "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," which the editors of *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* promptly published in the Fall, 1994 issue.¹⁴ In the course of a familiar discussion of the structure of conscious intentionality, Lonergan surprisingly makes reference not only to a fifth but even a sixth level:

We must now advert to the fact that this structure [of conscious intentionality] may prove open at both ends. The intellectual operator . . . may well be preceded by a symbolic operator that coordinates neural potentialities and needs with higher goals through its control over the emergence of images and affects. Again, beyond the moral operator . . . there is a further realm of interpersonal relations and total commitment in which human beings tend to find the immanent goal of their being and with it their fullest joy and deepest peace. So from an intentionality analysis distinguishing four levels one moves to an analysis that distinguishes six levels.¹⁵

May I point out (1) an absence, again, of the term "levels of consciousness," (2) an absence of the modifier "intentionality" in "an analysis that distinguishes six levels," and (3) Lonergan's clear reference to the fact that these additional levels differ from the others insofar as they render the structure of our conscious intentionality "open" at both ends.

To sum up, it appears that what Lonergan meant by his occasional references to a "fifth level" is a level of operations that are intrinsically *cooperations* -- acts we share with one another and acts we share with God. The level at which such operations occur may be numbered "five" or "six" from the point of view of vertical finality. However, from the point of view of intentionality analysis, the top level of consciousness is better numbered "four."

Does the Fifth Level Include Love Among Humans?

Despite their differences on the structural status of the "fifth level" in consciousness, Doran, and less so, Vertin, seem to think of that level as exclusively concerned with religious experience and holiness.¹⁶ Granted, the focus of their discussion is God's love, not human love. Granted, too, it is at the fifth level that divine operations make their essential contact and

integration with otherwise merely human operations. And granted, finally, they may be presuming that any real love among humans is also divine, and, whether or not it is also known by its subjects as divine, they may be investigating that love simply as conscious. But lest readers draw a false conclusion about the kind of operations Lonergan identified at this fifth level, I would like to present data indicating that he meant to include human love as well as divine.

1. In 1975, I had an occasion to ask Lonergan what he meant by "personal relations" both in his "structure of the human good" and in his provocative remark in *Insight* that personal relations need to be studied only in a larger and more concrete context.¹⁷ In particular, I asked him whether these "personal relations" are also on this "fifth level." He said it was indeed. He added, (according to my notes scribbled during the interview): "5th level is being an agent in society, being in history, in society, in a family."

I have no doubt from this discussion that Lonergan's reference to a fifth level included all fulfilling relationships of love, not only loving relationships with God. No doubt, Lonergan understood the fifth level as the locus where a person would experience rest in God;¹⁸ but seems also true that Lonergan included some restless care-giving for one another as well.

2. Another reference supports this view of the fifth level as including our efforts to love one another. In a 1973 address to faculty and students of the Toronto School of Theology, Lonergan refers to a further level beyond the usual four:

But beyond all these, beyond the subject as experiencing, as intelligent, as reasonable in his judgments, as free and responsible in his decisions, there is the subject in love. *On that ultimate level* we can learn to say with Augustine, *amor meus pondus meum*, my being in love is the gravitational field in which I am carried along.

Our loves are many and many-sided and manifold. They are the everlasting theme of novelists, the pulse of poetry, the throb of music, the strength, the grace, the passion, the tumult of dance. . .

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Later in the same address he says, "We adverted to a topmost level of interpersonal relations and total commitments, a level that can be specifically religious, . . ." If he was choosing his words with care, then where he says interpersonal relations "can be" specifically religious, he likely intends to make room for our "many and many-sided and manifold" human loves.

So I suggest that where Lonergan mentions the "fifth level," he often had in mind not only the love of God but also the love of friendship, loyalty,

and family. This would be consistent with the view that this level pertains to vertical finality in the universe, not merely in the individual subject.

This interpretation also clarifies an unusual reference that Lonergan made to a type of conversion other than his usual intellectual, moral and religious conversions. In 1977, during an address to the American Catholic Philosophic Association entitled "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," he spoke of an "affective conversion," defined as "commitment to love in the home, loyalty in the community, faith in the destiny of man." It is unlikely that he meant "affective conversion" to replace "religious conversion," since he later spoke of "religious conversion" in "Unity and Plurality" (1982).²⁰ It seems more plausible that he recognized a dialectical difference between people who let their heart take the lead and people who do not (affective conversion). And among those whose heart leads, some let their love of God take priority over everything else (religious conversion).

My concern here is that by focusing too exclusively on individual holiness, we would lose some very familiar and common experiences of "fifth-level" operations that connect us to one another as well as to God. We'd lose a verifiable foundational reality for ecclesiology, for example, and for marriage, friendship, the social dimensions of grace, and the solidarity of the human community in history. This would be an unfortunate loss. Vertical finality is a gold mine for the functional specialty, systematics. It is rich lode too for doctrines because it posits an objective process by which the universe has an evolutionary dynamism whose achievements far exceed the effects of the commonly accepted principle of natural selection. Philosophers with any respect for empirical data can acknowledge this transcendent dynamism and the questions of God which it raises without feeling forced to embrace a particular religion. Believers can rest in a conviction that the work of God's Holy Spirit as well as God's Incarnate Word both operate in conjunction with vertical finality at this fifth level in human shared consciousness without feeling that God somehow must break the laws of evolution or physics in effecting salvation.

What Did Lonergan Mean by "God's Love Flooding Our Hearts"?

Doran's article aims to identify the kind of experience that grounds the habit of charity, and he suggests that it is the experience of being loved unconditionally by God, something we experience "as such."²¹ Where Lonergan quotes Romans 5:5 as "God's love flooding our hearts . . ." Doran reads, "God's love *for us* poured forth *into* our hearts."²² He says, "It is a different experience from our being in love with God."²³ For this interpretation Doran relies on current opinions of scriptural exegetes, and

upon it builds an imposing foundation for a distinction between sanctifying grace and the habit of charity. Vertin challenges Doran's interpretation, holding that it is practically impossible to distinguish between the experience of being loved by God and the experience of loving God.²⁴ I find Vertin's position convincing and would extend it by an intentionality analysis of the event of knowing one is loved by God.

1. One of the delicate points associated with interpreting Lonergan on how the heart works is that sometimes you have to lay the evidence of your own heart on the table. So, I venture to say that I have never experienced God's love for me flooding my heart "as such." What I have experienced is that I grew up enjoying the company of my family and friends. It was an experience of common consciousness, the experience of acting together as a "we." It would take many stories to convey how that compact experience differentiated into the knowledge that I had also been loved by my family and friends. Yet all the stories would have one thing in common: I had to believe the people who told me they love me. It was not an experience of being loved "as such." I had to realize, in a real assent, the truth of the proposition that they loved me. This realization is a judgment.

I propose that the same is true of God's love for us. We hear the word about God's love from our parents and the church, and we believe it. 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.²⁵ Most poignantly, I realized that my love *for* God is the quintessential evidence that God must love me too.

I am not doubting people who claim they have experienced God's love for them; this can be a genuine and relatively common religious experience.²⁶ I am only suggesting that what they "experience" is a judgment, a third-level operation. They realize a truth; they make a real assent. They experience a poignant drying up of relevant questions about their worth (a judgment of value) and a subsequent realization that God loves them without condition (a judgment of fact). Whether or not such judgments knock them down on their way to some Damascus or just quietly undermine their self-centeredness, they remain convictions. For all

of us, I believe, the source of questions which these faith judgments resolve lies in the prior experience of loving.

2. Is this not Lonergan's understanding too? In *Method in Theology* he says "Since he [God] chooses to come to me by a gift of love for him, he himself must be love."²⁷ Lonergan's point here is that God is not revealing divine love for us so that we might return that love. God is not waiting for our response before coming to us. God is the love with which we love.

3. Moreover, in the address mentioned above, "Variations in Fundamental Theology" (1973), Lonergan draws a clean distinction between God's love for us and the love described by the Rom 5:5 text: "But above all, at once most secret and most comprehensive, there is the love of God. It is twofold. On the one hand, it is God's love for us: 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life' (Jn 3, 16). On the other hand, it is the love that God bestows upon us: '. . . God's love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us' (Rom 5:5)."²⁸

4. We should also note that Lonergan identifies the gift of God's love flooding our hearts with religious conversion, not with God's *invitation* to such a conversion: "Religious conversion is . . . other-worldly falling in love . . . it is God's love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit." The flood of love is not simply God's offer of love; it is "total and permanent self-surrender."²⁹

5. In 1974, Lonergan made reference to Rom 5:5 in order to clarify what it means for us to love God, not vice versa: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength' (Mark 12: 29-30). Of such love St. Paul spoke as God's love flooding our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Rom 5:5)."³⁰ In a similar passage in *Method in Theology*, he notes that St. Paul's experience of God's love flooding his heart provided the evidence supporting his subsequent conviction that God loves us: "It grounds the conviction of St. Paul that 'there is nothing in death or life, . . . that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom 8:38f)."³¹

6. Further evidence on what Lonergan understands by Rom 5:5 can be found by looking up all the texts that cite the passage. None of the texts I am aware of contradict the interpretation I am suggesting. A more convincing account of Lonergan's understanding, however, lies not in the text but in the metaphor. Of all the ways God's love can be described, the image of an overflowing fountain seems particularly apt. For example:

The fount of our living is not *eros* but *agape*, 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 . . . so too those in Christ participate in the charity of Christ: they love God *super omnia* and so can love their neighbours as themselves.³²

The metaphor of an overflowing fountain carries ancient and revered credentials in the Church. In Peter's first homily after Pentecost, he says, "In the days to come -- it is the Lord who speaks -- I will pour out my spirit on all. . . . Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, Jesus has received from the Father the Holy Spirit who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit" (Acts 2:18,33). The outpouring of the Spirit that they saw and heard was the disciples pouring out loving words to all nations, represented by the cosmopolitan crowd gathered there in Jerusalem.

All these texts suggest that the "love of God" to which Lonergan refers is quite unlike romantic love. Young adults may be inclined to compare it to an I-Thou love between lovers, where the appropriate metaphor is an exchange of gifts. Indeed, Lonergan's penchant for the expression, "falling in love," reinforces this impression. But only as they grow old together do they realize the full dynamic of love, as the love between them floods over in a love that raises children, cares for neighbors and labors for the commonweal. To understand the Christian agape, we do better to compare it to the mature versions of human love than to its wondrous beginnings. It is not simply a mutual love; it is an overflowing. It is the logic of love found in 1 John: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we too should love one another."³³

I offer these observations not to discount the opinion that Paul's intention in the Rom 5:5 text was to speak of God's love for us. It would be unlike Lonergan to have been unaware that exegetes today favor the "for us" interpretation; the context makes that plain even to the non-professional. However, it seems to me that the point is to present Lonergan's intention, not Paul's. For Lonergan's intention, in turn, we should consider that it may well be within the third stage of meaning. On this consideration, St. Paul wrote Rom 5:5 in the stage of common sense, where terms are descriptive and compact, not precisely defined within a theoretical framework, and therefore able to represent both our love for God and God's love for us simultaneously. Joseph Fitzmeyer, the exegete on whom Doran relies, reads Paul's text within the second stage of meaning -- a linguistic and logical differentiation of consciousness that neatly slices experiences between God loving us and us loving God. Lonergan, then, pursues an understanding of the text within the third stage of meaning by attempting to make known what was conscious but not known to Paul -- that Paul first *experienced* loving God and neighbor and only subsequently

realized that this experience is, and always was, identical to *being loved* by God.

A Personal Commitment to Foundations

This has been an exercise in interpretation and dialectics. Yet, because the topic is Lonergan's understanding of being in love, it has also been an exercise in foundations. Foundational elements have innumerable implications for theology, but I would not like to leave off this discussion without giving two brief illustrations of what can happen to the person who makes a foundational commitment to this understanding of love.

My first illustration regards making a good decision. The criterion for judging good and bad is, like any judgment, the absence of relevant questions. Many pious believers try with all their might to discover what God wants of them, as if the outcome has to be a judgment of fact on the state of God's mind. Because this is a below upwards effort, made from the perspective of the fourth level of consciousness, it is easily undermined by the covert mischief of bias suppressing crucial questions. Its results do not stand the test of Christ's peace umpiring the heart (Col 3:15). What Lonergan's work has demonstrated is how affective conversion leads a person to take seriously the horizon of the fifth level as it uncovers questions from the lower levels kept in the dark by bias. St. Augustine said as much in his famous remark, "Love, and do what you will." The outcome of this kind of discernment is a judgment of value born of love. It gives a conviction rooted in trusting love, not a certitude rooted in analysis of data.

When it comes to a serious decision, some people rely on a spiritual mentor to help them clarify alternatives. The mentor, however, should do more than clarify alternatives. People also need to clarify the criteria of their choices. The most fundamental criterion is the belief that God actually loves them -- loves them without even the condition that they make a perfect choice. If the above interpretation of God's love is correct, that we first experience the gift of loving before realizing that we are loved (or before "experiencing being loved as such"), then the mentor's job becomes clear: To help people realize that God loves them without condition, start with the evidence of their loving. Help them talk about their families and friends, about what they would "love" to accomplish in life, and so on. Eventually lead them to face the question of where this loving comes from. No one ever claims to have decided to love; deep down one knows it's a gift. Left in solitude with this question, many are drawn by their own love to realize that God loves them. They will have moved from their affective conversion to their religious conversion. When they consider what they would love to accomplish in life side-by-side with the realization that God may just be flooding their hearts with this love, and if they experience no

relevant questions in that context, then the decision flows with a conviction built on faith.

For a final illustration, I would like to suggest what Lonergan's view of love may have done to Lonergan's theological interests. In the mid-40s, Lonergan developed the position that there are operations in us by which we attain God as God really is.³⁴ The question of the relationship between experience and grace marked the opening of a 30-year dialog between the old theology of grace and a newer theology that takes experience seriously. Lonergan's interest shifted from the question of how we "attain God" (*attingitur Deus*) toward how we are in love with God. At the same time, questions of historicity had enriched the dialog by asking what being in love means for history as well as for consciousness. It is this awareness of history that led Lonergan to write, "doctrines are not just doctrines. . . . They can strengthen or burden the individual's allegiance. They can unite or disrupt. They can confer authority and power."³⁵ That is, the concern of doctrines is just as much concerned with the policies and values that ought to shape our common future as its parallel specialty, history, is concerned with the policies and values that have shaped our common past. Lonergan's mature doctrine is that God's love is double. It is the outer word in our history and the inner word in our hearts. It concerns how thoroughly the faithful might let God's love be their love and how totally Christ's incarnation might incarnate in them God's love for this world. This transformation represents, it seems to me, God flooding Lonergan's heart with the divine love for this world as well as for God.

Addendum 1: 1975

Since the above article was published, the typescript of a response Lonergan gave at the Boston College Workshop in 1975 became generally available. It includes the following question and answer regarding a "fifth level."³⁶ He regards the understanding of a solitary human being, such as Robinson Crusoe, as a "real abstraction." The full concrete reality of human persons are persons in community. It seems to support the view I proposed above.

Question: Recently you have spoken of a fifth level of human intentional consciousness, whereby a plurality of self-transcending individuals achieve a higher integration in a community of love. Please expand on this.

Lonergan: There is very little to expand on this. Everyone knows what it means. Getting there is another thing. But the constitution of the subject is a matter of self-transcendence. You are unconscious when you are in a coma or a deep sleep, a dreamless sleep. When

you start to dream, consciousness emerges, but it is fragmentary; it is symbolic. You wake up, and you are in the real world. But if you are merely gaping and understanding nothing, you are not very far in. And so you have another level of asking questions and coming to understand. There is the understanding that people can have from myth and magic and so on, but arriving at the truth is a further step of being reasonable, liberating oneself from astrology, alchemy, legend, and so on and so forth. And responsible. And this is all a matter of immanent development of the subject. But even before you're born you are not all by yourself, and all during your life. Robinson Crusoe is a real abstraction. And if he really is all alone, his history does not go beyond himself. There is living with others and being with others. The whole development of humanity is in terms of common meaning. Not just my meaning, attention to my experience, development of my understanding, and so on. Common meaning is the fruit of a common field of experience, and if you are not in that common field you get out of touch. There's common understanding, and if you have not got that common understanding, well, you are a stranger, or worse a foreigner, you have a different style of common sense, and so on. Common judgments, what one man thinks is true another man thinks is false, well, they are not going to be able to do very much about anything, insofar as those judgments are relevant to what they do. Common values, common projects, and you can have a common enterprise, and if you don't [have common values], you will be working at cross-purposes. The highest form of this is love as opposed to hate. It is a hard saying, 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, love them that persecute you,' and so on. There are all kinds of things in the New Testament expanding on this.

Addendum 2: 1977

A similar conclusion about the "fifth level" being the concrete reality of persons in community can be seen in the following passage. Lonergan typed this in response to a question posed during the Boston College Workshop 1977.³⁷ Note that he sketches the rise of love as originating in "unconscious desire" but being successively sublated by intelligence, reason, responsibility, and being in love (specifically with God; the questioner was asking about our desire for God).

Question: (1). Would your post-*Insight* reflection on the objective referent of fourth-level religious experience be the same as the theistic argument of Chapter 19?

Lonergan: Love is to another, of another: hence objective referent to the experience (once it is identified as love)

I think of it quite explicitly now as fifth level: love is subjectivity linked to others; it goes beyond deliberation just as much as the preceding levels sublimate their predecessors.

Insight conceives God as unrestricted understanding: if understanding is unrestricted, it is free from all oversights and so is true by identity; etc. *Ins* 657-669

so for primary being, primary good, loving good,

Horizontal finalities: intelligible, true, good

Vertical finality: unconscious desire to being in love

Relation of unconscious

to intelligence via images that lead to insight

to truth via memories that substantiate or oppose projected judgments, again via envisaged possibilities that run counter to judgment

to the process of deliberation by memories and images that remind us of our uneasy conscience or warn us of the perils of our proposed course of action

to being in love, for being in love is the consummation of unconscious desire, and God's gift of his love is the agape that that sublimes eros

George Morel: man is the symbol of God

Further, in that same response to questions, Lonergan clearly links affective conversion to both human and divine love:

Lonergan: 6. Affective conversions let desire blossom into love, whether the love of the family, the love of one's neighbor, or the love of God.

Addendum 3: 1984

In 1984, Pierre Robert interviewed Lonergan on the relation between theology and the spiritual life.³⁸ In his introductory remarks, Robert refers to "five levels of consciousness" and names the fifth level "religious experience." During the interview, he posed a question about the "fifth level" in a way that identifies it with the religious and grace. However, since Robert constructed this exchange from notes taken during the conversation, it is difficult to conclude that Lonergan himself understands the fifth level as identical with religion and grace or that Lonergan regards the fifth level as a level being actuated in a solitary consciousness.

Question: About the need for a metaphysics to organize the materials, you have spoken of the passage from metaphysics to intentionality analysis. [Lonergan spoke of the need to ground metaphysics in intentionality analysis.] This holds for the first four levels of consciousness, which belong to the structure of the human being; but is this possible with the fifth (the religious level), which is in the order of grace?

Lonergan: The fifth level can be reflected on. One goes by the Scriptures: thus Rom 5:5, and also, "the love of Christ constrains me" [2 Cor 5:14] ... There are many texts. ...

Later in the interview, Lonergan does clearly identify a question that goes beyond the fourth level. This appears in their discussion of a "leap" that occurs with God's grace but which does not give certitude:

Question: There is a leap?

Lonergan: And yet even the sciences do not give certitudes, but the best available opinion. One has to hold to it, but without refusing future improvements....

Question: That is open-mindedness. Not being tied to closed certitudes. But the experience of saints?...[Here, he refers to an earlier question how the experience of saints may be relevant to theology]

Lonergan: The point is discovering in oneself one's own acts of intelligence. And discovering the questions: *why? how?* They are *a priori* because they do not emerge from sensibility itself. And neither does the question *Is it so?* So they are *a priori*. Neither does the question *What do I do?* And finally, the question, *Who is going to save us?* We are in a terrible mess: we cannot save ourselves. This last one is not exactly the same as the others: it requires the experience of the world and of oneself.

It seems cogent to identify this question with the "topmost quasi operator ... that establishes us as members of community³⁹ understanding that the community in question is our communion in God. Elsewhere Lonergan proposes a different question that may be identified with this topmost quasi operator: "Finally, there is the religious question: we are suffering from an unconditioned, unrestricted love; with whom, then, are we in love?"⁴⁰

Notes

[Additional notations in square brackets below have been added in September, 2008.]

1 Compare Michael Vertin, "Lonergan on Consciousness: Is There a Fifth Level?", *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 1-36 and Robert Doran, "Consciousness and Grace," *ibid.*, 11 (1993) 51-75.

2 *Philosophy of God, and Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973) 38. [Subsequently appeared in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 17 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 193.]

3 See Vertin 4-6 for his account of Doran's position on five levels of consciousness. Doran himself may be expressing some reservation insofar as he often uses the expression, "fifth level or enlargement of consciousness." (Italics mine.) See, for example, Doran 62, 63, 74.

4 Vertin, 2. Doran, 62

5 See note 2. The reference to a consolation without cause is in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) 106.

6 Vertin 19-20. [In 1968, Lonergan defined "heart" as "the subject on the fourth, existential level of intentional consciousness and in the dynamic state of being in love." See "Horizons" in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980, op. cit.*, 20.]

7 William J. Kelly, ed., *Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honor of Karl Rahner, S.J.* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980) 54-57. Lonergan's MS, 7.

8 Recorded on 2/26/81. See *Caring About Meaning: Patterns in the Life of Bernard Lonergan*, P. Lambert et al., eds. (Montreal: Thomas More Institute Papers, 1982) 19. Italics added.

9 Vertin, 21-23.

10 *A Third Collection* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) 23, 30

11 I am using these terms as they appear in *Method in Theology*, 7. That is, the operations are conscious in the sense that they mediate a self-presence in the subject; they are intentional in the sense that they are transitive, they intend objects, the operations of loving make the beloved present. While those who are in love with God without yet realizing it do not intend a known object, it is the intentional character of their love that moves them to come to know God.

12 For more on what Lonergan meant by "common consciousness," see his "Finality, Love, Marriage," *Collection* (Montreal: Palm, 1967) 34. I have some reflections on this in M. Lamb, ed., "Consciousness in Christian Community," *Creativity and Method: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980) 291-303.

13 I don't know if Lonergan has explained "quasi-operator" more fully elsewhere. Perhaps he's borrowing the use of quasi from Rahner's "quasi-formal causality" and inserting it onto his nest of genetic-method categories. This would be consistent with his preference for explaining the link between God and us as a term of a relation -- a kind of operator relation -- not merely a kind of formal cause.

14 *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 125-146. Frederick Crowe dates its composition between June, 1977 and October 1978 (122-123). Given its appearance after Doran's article appeared, Doran may have changed his views more in line with Vertin's,

particularly since Lonergan credits Doran for the very insight into a "level" that stands outside the four levels of a subject's conscious and intentional operations.

15 *Ibid.*, 134.

16 For example, Doran: "We identify this level of consciousness with the created communication of the divine nature . . . that is, with sanctifying grace" (63). And Vertin: "There is a fifth level, a level correlative *at root* with my experience of unrestrictedly being in love, . . ." (34). I italicize "at root" to suggest that Vertin may be aware of the operations of human love on the fifth level.

17 *Method in Theology* 48. *Insight* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958) 731. The interview took place on February 2, 1975.

18 Doran often emphasizes the 'rest' character of this love: "We have here identified this created, proportionate, and remote principle with a fifth level or enlargement of consciousness, where we rest in the experience of God's unconditional love for us." 64. See also 54, 75, and passages cited by Vertin (7, 8).

19 "Variations in Fundamental Theology" (Toronto: Lonergan Research Institute Library, File 773) 10. Italics on the English are mine. [Subsequently published in *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1965-1980, op.cit.* 248.]

20 See *A Third Collection*, 176, 179, 180; cf. 247.

21 Doran, 60.

22 Doran 61, 75. In the Greek, "for us" does not occur. Also, Doran translates the passage as God's love flooding over into our hearts. However, the Greek has *in* (en), not *into* (eis), which suggests that Paul means to convey not a flooding over of love from God for us flowing down into our hearts but rather a "love of God" already in our hearts flooding over in love for God and neighbor.

23 Doran 62; see also 57-58, 60, 61, 63.

24 Vertin, 30-34.

25 *Method in Theology*, 119.

26 They may understandably be influenced by the great wave of interest in religious experience generated by William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). It is a paradox that, for some believers, the proof that God loves them unconditionally has to be the condition that they experience this in some unmediated illumination rather than in the more risky judgment of value born of religious love.

27 *Method in Theology* 108. Also, in "Mission and the Spirit," Lonergan cites Romans 5:5 as evidence to support the fact that we can love God without yet knowing God. It wouldn't make sense if "love of God" there meant God's love for us, since God knows us thoroughly (*A Third Collection*, 31). Also, in "Pope John's Intention," Lonergan cites Romans 5:5 as evidence that God gives us the grace to observe the double commandment to love God and neighbor (*A Third Collection*, 237).

28 "Variations in Fundamental Theology," *op. cit.*, 11. Collection Works edition, 249.

29 *Method in Theology*, 240-241.

30 "Religious Experience," *A Third Collection*, 124.

31 *Method in Theology* 105.

32 *Collection* (Montreal: Palm, 1967), "Existenz and Aggiornamento," (1964) 249.

33 1 Jn 4:11. See also, Jn 4:14: "The water that I shall give will turn into a fountain inside you, welling up to eternal life."

34 *De ente supernaturali: Supplementum schematicum*. Notes for students, Collège de l'Immaculée Conception, Montreal, 1946), cited by Doran, 52.

35 *Method in Theology* 319.

36 Bernard Lonergan Archive # 85200DTE070. June 19, 1975.

<http://www.bernardlonergan.com/pdf/85200DTE070.pdf>

37 Bernard Lonergan Archive # 28870DTE070. June 20, 1977.

<http://www.bernardlonergan.com/pdf/28870DTE070.pdf> I have reproduced Lonergan's indentations.

38 Robert, Pierre. "Interview with Lonergan," *Lonergan Workshop* 10 (1994), 333-343). This original French version of this article appeared in *Science et Esprit* 38 (1986), 340. Robert refers to these comments in his later article, "Questions on the Fifth Level and the Processes of the Spiritual Subject," *Lonergan Workshop* 11 (1995) at pp. 146-47.

39 The quotation is from "Mission and the Spirit." See note 10 above.

40 "Lecture 3: Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'" *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 17 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 206