

THE REALMS OF DESIRE

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
THOUGHT OF BERNARD LONERGAN

BY THE FELLOWS OF THE WOODSTOCK THEOLOGICAL CENTER



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THE WOODSTOCK THEOLOGICAL CENTER

at Georgetown University • Washington, DC

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 1. The Realm of Common Sense | 13 |
| 2. The Realm of Theory | 42 |
| 3. The Realm of Interiority: From Descartes to the German Idealists | 65 |
| 4. The Rise of Intentionality Analysis: From Schopenhauer to the Existentialists.. | 98 |
| 5. The Realm of Interiority: Lonergan’s Intentionality Analysis | 133 |
| 6. Intellectual Conversion..... | 190 |
| 7. The Realm of Transcendence | 233 |
| 8. The Realm of Art..... | 284 |
| 9. The Centrality of History | 317 |
| 10. Lonergan and the Ecological Crisis..... | 347 |
| EPILOGUE..... | 362 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 367 |

Foreword

For decades, the thought of Bernard Lonergan has provided the methodological foundation that undergirds all the research of the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. Woodstock's Research Fellows are unified in their commitment to carrying out "theological reflection on the human problems of today"; but they come from diverse backgrounds, and are exploring topics as varied as economic globalization, immigration, business ethics, science & religion, education and urban issues, ecclesiology, interreligious dialogue, and the role of faith in the public sphere.

Where can scholars from such diverse fields find a common language that allows them to see their disciplines not as isolated silos of information, but simply as different facets of a larger, unfolding truth that encompasses all our knowledge of God, Creation, and humankind?

We have found the theological methodology of Bernard Lonergan invaluable, in providing just that sort of conceptual 'common ground' for all of Woodstock's projects. In fact, we have made the exploration of Lonergan's methodology (and adaptation of it for Woodstock's purposes) an ongoing, long-term initiative in which all the Center's Research Fellows participate, through our regular theological reflection seminar.

In 2007, the fruit of years' worth of seminar conversations appeared in the form of our book, *The Dynamism of Desire: Bernard J. F. Lonergan on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. Our seminar conversations during the following years have now yielded the new text that we are delighted to present here, in partnership with Marquette University and its groundbreaking efforts to make Lonergan's thought accessible online.

This work represents a collaborative effort of Woodstock's Research Fellows, whose thoughts and reflections appear throughout the text, and so greatly enrich it. Those of us who played a role in producing and refining the text found the process immensely meaningful; and we hope that in reading the text, you and scholars all around the world will find it equally valuable. We are happy to be able to share it with you.

Gaspar F. Lo Biondo, S.J.

Introduction

I have a pretty fair mind. But Bernard Lonergan? Now there's a mind!
John Courtney Murray

Thirty six years ago both *Time* and *Newsweek* called attention to Bernard Lonergan, a little known philosopher and theologian. *Time* reported that many intellectuals rank the Canadian Jesuit as “the finest theological thinker of the 20th century.” *Newsweek* pointed out that Lonergan’s life-long objective was, like that of Aquinas, to appropriate “the best of secular knowledge into a higher Christian synthesis.” In one “beefy volume”, it reported, Lonergan had succeeded in providing an “understanding of understanding” which even Aquinas had failed to achieve. His masterwork *Insight* throws light on the broad outlines of all there is to know and reveals the “invariant pattern” of conscious operations that opens the way for future advances in human knowledge. Protestant theologian Langdon Gilkey, a luminary at the University of Chicago Divinity School at the time, seemed to agree. He saluted Lonergan as “one of the great minds of Christendom,” and said “I used to read Jacques Maritain or Etienne Gilson to find out what Roman Catholic intellectuals were thinking. Now I read Father Lonergan to find out what *I* am thinking.” And Notre Dame’s David Burrell undoubtedly spoke for many when he added, “The most important thing about Lonergan is that he liberates you to be — and to trust — yourself.”¹ *Newsweek* concluded by predicting that, given the dimensions of Lonergan’s achievement, it might well take another generation for the full power of Lonergan’s thought to make itself felt within Catholic circles and beyond.

The prediction has proved accurate. I reread the articles in *Time* and *Newsweek* six years ago and immediately a swarm of questions arose. If Lonergan is the foremost theologian of the 20th century, why I wondered has he not been taken more seriously by modern secular philosophers? For that matter, why has he not been taken more seriously by Catholic philosophers and theologians? Why has Lonergan been taken up by so many and then dropped? True, Lonergan centers have multiplied and now exist around the world in places like Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Boston, Los Angeles, Washington, and Sydney. But there is nowhere near the widespread acceptance you might expect of one so highly touted a generation ago. The puzzling fact is that within Catholic circles Lonergan remains more of a “cult figure”² than a celebrity like Hans Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx, or Karl Rahner. In 1976, for instance, Hugo Meynell wrote: “Of all contemporary philosophers of the very first rank, Bernard Lonergan has been up to now the most neglected”³ and added that the neglect of his achievement remains “both astonishing and deplorable.”⁴ In 1998, in an article on Lonergan in *One Hundred Twentieth Century Philosophers*, Hugh Bredin asserted: “Lonergan is regarded by some as having one of the most powerful philosophical minds of the twentieth century, but he is not widely known outside Thomistic circles.”⁵ And this despite the judgment of the brilliant Jesuit

theologian John Courtney Murray---the *peritus* chiefly responsible for Vatican II's degree on human liberty, who once remarked: "I have a pretty fair mind. But Bernard Lonergan? Now there's a mind!"⁶ And finally, in May, 2001, at the first International Lonergan Workshop and in the very great hall at the Gregorian University in Rome where Lonergan taught for 26 years, Benedictine theologian Sebastian Moore noted with sadness and disbelief in his voice that no professors at the Greg today use Lonergan in their courses.

Who then is Bernard Lonergan? I asked myself. Is he really important or simply one whose reputation could not stand up to the relentless winnowing of time? But if his achievement is indeed significant, what precise contribution has he made? In particular, anything of use to Christian leaders engaged in dialogue with contemporary secular thinkers? Indeed, given the many problems facing the world today, my hope was that he had some fresh and untried approach to a solution that merits the world's attention.

Bernard Lonergan's main contribution, to echo *Newsweek*, can best be summed up in some such slogan as: *Understand understanding and you will understand much of what there is to be understood.*⁷ In the introduction to *Insight* Lonergan elaborated the idea:

*Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.*⁸

"You will understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood"---an extraordinary claim indeed; a claim that struck me as either hyperbolic or shot through with hubris. But it was to substantiate the claim that Lonergan wrote *Insight*. He designed its first eight chapters, he said, as "a series of five-finger exercises"⁹ with one goal in view: "to help people experience themselves understanding." Carl Rogers, Lonergan reminds us, had helped his clients "advert to the feelings that they experience but do not advert to, distinguish, name, identify, recognize." In the same way, Lonergan wished to help his readers "advert to the experience of understanding" and then "distinguish it from other experiences, name and identify it, and recognize it when it recurs." To be able to understand understanding or the process by which we come to understand, Lonergan himself had engaged in a life-long examination of human consciousness and an analysis of the various intentional operations within consciousness. In *Insight* Lonergan invites his readers to join him in his extraordinarily brilliant examination of consciousness---what philosophers today call intentionality analysis---and discover first hand how their own minds come to understand. To be brief, the aim of *Insight* is to convey insight into insight.

Lonergan is not so much a genius with a new cognitional theory, I'm told by those in the know, as "a guide" as to how all human beings think and decide on the way to full adulthood. It was this that attracted Langdon Gilkey for one. Indeed Lonergan's work has a strong affinity with the work of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg. He was especially taken with Piaget's painstaking research "on the representation of the world in the child's mind, on the language and thought of the child, on judgment and reasoning in the child, and on moral judgment in the child."¹⁰ This enabled Piaget, Lonergan writes, to present "an enormously detailed and at the same time a brilliantly organized account of how the child develops, what the child can and cannot do at any

stage, why there are different stages, and why the child can or cannot do these different things at these different stages.” Annie Dillard’s brilliant evocation of *An American Childhood* in Pittsburgh covers much the same ground and captures in magical language “the passion of childhood” and “a child’s vigor, and originality, and eagerness, and mastery, and joy.” She put in her memoir “what it was that had me so excited all the time—the sensation of time pelting me as if I were standing under a waterfall.”¹¹

What Piaget does for the child and Dillard in her memoir evokes in a more poetic way, Lonergan intended to do for full human development. Development, he says, begins with the sense of wonder. Spontaneously, we all “fall victim to the wonder that Aristotle named the beginning of all science and philosophy.”¹² Upon reflection, one finds in oneself an “all-inclusive, immediate awareness of unrestricted wonder.”¹³ In each of us, then, there is “a deep-set wonder in which all questions have their source and ground.”¹⁴ In other words, wonder is the spontaneous desire to understand. But it is never pure wonder; it is always “wonder about something.”¹⁵ In the child, for instance, “a secret wonder...rushes forth in a cascade of questions.”¹⁶ Annie Dillard is right on the mark when she reports:

The little child pinches the skin on the back of her hand and sees where God made Adam from spit and clay. The older child explores the city on foot and starts to work on her future as a detective, or an epidemiologist, or a painter. Older yet, she runs wild and restless over the city’s bridges, and finds in Old Testament poetry and French symbolist poetry some language sounds she loves.”¹⁷

And yet, to be clear, wonder about skin or streets or bridges is not the same as knowing. We immediately and directly wonder about being or reality, says Lonergan, but we don’t immediately or directly know being or reality. Wonder leads to intelligent inquiry. Wonder asks What? and Why? What is this? Why is it what it is? Wonder then is not knowing, but the potential to know and the curiosity it awakens spurs the quest for understanding. Wonder wants answers and the answers if correct bring satisfaction and the sheer joy of understanding.

Lonergan invites his readers to accompany him, in the words of a recent commentator Brian Cronin, on “a journey of self discovery.”¹⁸ You need not travel to “some distant region of the globe,” Lonergan writes, nor share in “some strange and mystical experience” No, he invites you to “pluck [his] general phrases from the dim world of thought to set them in the pulsing flow of life.”¹⁹ I can’t do that for you, he says; you must do it yourself. But discover for yourself the process by which your own mind works, the understanding it produces, and the verification process by which you can be sure of the accuracy of your judgments and the validity of your decisions. Do that, and you will have achieved the self-appropriation, says Cronin, that is “key to all of Lonergan’s thought and the strength of his position.”²⁰

All very interesting, I found myself thinking, but of what practical use can such knowledge be? Lonergan, I find, has already met the objection head on: “Insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge but also of all its practical applications and, indeed, of all intelligent activity.” It is his claim that “insight into insight...will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent.” In other words, “to be practical is to do the intelligent thing and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about.” The upshot, for him, is that “insight into both

insight and oversight is the very key to practicality.”²¹ I wanted to find out for myself the crucial ways in which insight into insight is highly practical when there is a call for judgment and decision.

I discovered early on that Lonergan’s intent during a life time of intellectual labor as a Christian philosopher and theologian was profoundly pastoral.²² Lonergan was always intensely interested in current events and their impact on human beings.²³ Lonergan would agree, for instance, with Isaiah Berlin and his postmodernist followers in their intellectual diagnosis of what Berlin calls the “great despotic visions”²⁴ of the right and left. However well-intentioned the seminal work of Fichte, Hegel and Marx from which they emerge, such visions served to justify monstrous policies in the twentieth century. Lonergan would, of course, emphatically disagree with the postmodernist solution that there are no solutions,²⁵ a position first enunciated in nineteenth century Russian thinker Alexander Herzen’s dismal pronouncement: “Do not look for solutions in this book—there are none; in general modern man has no solutions.” But Lonergan would concur with the contention that the Enlightenment with its uncritical faith in reason produced the “materialist trinity” of absolute ideologies that have plagued the contemporary world: “eighteenth century capitalism, nineteenth century communism and twentieth century nazism.” In a 1942 book review, Lonergan wrote:

...Communism is a collectivist reaction against capitalist individualism; nazism is a nationalist reaction against the international character of finance and world revolution. Despite their differences and oppositions, all three agree in their dedication of man, soul and body, to the goods of this world. None of them acknowledges...a higher end....Their consequences are not a matter of abstract deduction. The experiment has been performed and still is being performed on the quivering body of humanity. The results are not pleasant.²⁶

It was this awareness of ghastly experiments carried out on “the quivering body of humanity” that haunted Lonergan all his life and fired his passion to search for some alternative and more persuasive, practical, and benign solutions to the economic and political evils that bedevil the modern world .

In a lifetime of study, Bernard Lonergan retraced the remarkable journey of the human mind and its passion for meaning from its beginnings in primitive man up until the present day. Central to Lonergan’s story is the “unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit,”²⁷ that spirit of curiosity which wonders, inquires, and comes to understand, judge, and decide. The eros, he maintains, is inbuilt: “to inquire and understand, to reflect and judge, to deliberate and choose”²⁸ are as natural as the human need for “waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, talking and loving.” The desire and drive to understand provides the motive power that propels human beings to embark on what Lonergan calls this “sweet adventure.”²⁹

Let’s take a closer look. Only as the result of a prolonged development that spans centuries, says Lonergan, has the human subject worked its way out of a state of undifferentiated consciousness to arrive eventually at a state of differentiated consciousness.³⁰ Lonergan warns that “the labor of self-appropriation cannot occur at a single leap.” It involves “the development of the subject and in the subject and, like all development, it can be solid and fruitful only by being painstaking and slow.”³¹ There was a famous cardiologist teaching at Georgetown University’s medical school in the

1950's who routinely had his students listen to recordings of the New York Philharmonic. Listen to the undifferentiated stream of symphonic music, he suggested, and see if you can pick out the sound of the various instruments in the stream. Identifying the sound of the piano or violin or trumpet is child's play, of course, but how about the oboe, the French horn, or the bassoon? Train you ear, he said, and you will find it easier to note the variations in the beat of the human heart when you listen to the stethoscope. Clues, in other words, to whether the working of the heart is sound or impaired. In much the same way, undifferentiated consciousness is the simple awareness one has of the flow of the stream of one's consciousness. In his writings, Lonergan is bent on tracing the unfolding of the Eros of the human spirit from undifferentiated consciousness to differentiated consciousness. But what, asks Lonergan, is the net-gain of tracing the laborious and slow development of human thinking as it moved from undifferentiated to differentiated consciousness? It's enormous. Under certain conditions, he says, it will empower us to "withdraw from more ordinary ways of living to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophic pursuit of truth, a scientific account of understanding, and artistic pursuit of beauty."³²

I became more and more curious. I wanted to go where Lonergan had gone. I wanted to explore for myself, with Lonergan as my guide, the realms of meaning the human mind has explored in the long journey from the prehistoric world of hunter-gathers to the modern world of contemporary thinkers.

But first a fundamental question. What is "meaning"?³³ What does "meaning" mean? When I ask, "What?" I am looking for meaning. When I ask, "What is this?" I ask not for just a description of something, but for an explanation of what something is. If I get the answer and it's correct, the answer is the meaning of what something is. For instance, someone tells a joke. Either I get it or I don't. If I don't, I can ask someone to explain it. Once the joke is explained to me, I get it. I know its meaning. Meaning, then, contrasts with what is unknown or what for me at least is meaningless. But meaning is not only knowing the explanation I seek; it is the expression of it in language, symbol, equation or in some other medium. A "meant" is a carrier of meaning. For instance, Newton's *mass* and Einstein's *equation* ($E=mc^2$) are carriers of meaning. Each expresses what Newton meant by *mass* and Einstein by *energy*. In a phrase, meaning is the sense of a thing.

How does one get from the unknown to the known? How does one progress from a vexing question to a satisfying answer. What activities generate meaning? Here we arrive at what *Newsweek* referred to when it cited *Insight* as revealing "the invariant pattern" of conscious operations that ground future advances in human knowledge.

To start, it is all important, in Lonergan's judgment, to realize that reality is not *known* directly or immediately. What we *experience* immediately are sensations, feelings, and bodily movements—only, he says, a "narrow strip of space-time."³⁴ We experience "a world of data, of what is given to sense and given to consciousness." The world we experience, he adds, is "as yet without names or concepts, without truth or falsity, without right or wrong."³⁵ To be brief, only such single-level sensible experiencing (in animals and in infants before they learn to speak) reaches the sensible world immediately and directly.

But there is a far larger world, Lonergan adds, a "world constructed by imagination and intelligence, mediated by words and meaning, and based largely upon belief."³⁶ This is the real world we are unaware of as infants; we learn about it in the family, in school, and at work; it is the world in which we spend our lives. We move

“beyond experiencing through inquiry to ever fuller understanding.” We move “beyond mere understanding through reflection to truth and reality.” We move “beyond mere knowing through deliberation to evaluated and freely chosen courses of action.” Lonergan provides a brief summary that anticipates the richness of his analysis of human consciousness:

Now mere experiencing has to be enhanced by deliberate attention. Chance insights have to submit to the discipline of the schoolroom and to the prescriptions of method. Sound judgment has to release us from the seduction of myth and magic, alchemy and astrology, legend and folktale; and it has to move us to the comprehensive reasonableness named wisdom.³⁷

The world mediated by meaning is ‘an incredibly rich and varied world.’ It encompasses “the past and the future as well as the present, the possible and probable as well as the actual, rights and duties as well as facts.” It is a world that expands by means of “literature and history, by philosophy and science, by religion and theology.”³⁸ In other words, it is Lonergan’s claim in *Insight* and *Method in Theology* that we move out of the familiar world of immediacy into the new world mediated by meaning³⁹ by a four-stage set of operations that are functional and interrelated. The world in which we live and move and have our being is *known* only mediately, by means of a four-fold activity—by a compound of sensible/intellectual/rational/responsible operations. The world of sensible immediacy must, therefore, be carefully distinguished from the world mediated by meaning.

The stream of our consciousness when we first advert to it can seem vague and undifferentiated. And yet one thing is obvious. It contains “the pulsing flow of life”—the life of desire or what Lonergan calls the eros of the human spirit. For, as Vernon Gregson rightly says, “not only are our bodies erotic, our spirits are erotic too.” Or more precisely, he adds, “we are body-spirits and the energies of desire permeate our being.” Indeed, as human beings, we are well-springs of desire: “the desires and longings we have for what is beautiful, for what makes sense, for what is true, for what has value, and for what has ultimate value are at the heart of what it means to be human.”⁴⁰ We deal here with the basic human impulse to explore the realms of desire. These different human desires and needs are what evoke different modes of conscious and intentional operations in the stream of consciousness of which Lonergan speaks. Differentiated consciousness becomes differentiated as one employs and adverts to the various currents in the stream, the various operations of the mind whereby one senses, understands, judges, deliberates and decides. In addition, the activities by which one comes to know and decide is an event that reveals the universe of being mediated by meaning.⁴¹

Maurice Merleau-Ponty once asserted, in effect, that any “inventory of consciousness”⁴² reveals “that wherein a universe resides.” And so, the realms of desire give rise to different “realms of meaning.”⁴³ This universe (or world mediated by meaning) can thus be divided into those wider horizons or new territories or domains within which the human subject uses specialized operations in the stream of consciousness. In sum, realms of meaning emerge from the “contrasting eros and exigences”⁴⁴ of the human subject.

Lonergan provides a sketch map to identify the five realms (or specialized fields) of meaning which have arisen in response to the “different conscious aspirations and

demands” of the human spirit during the many millennia of our existence on earth. On it he locates realms of common sense, theory and science, interiority, transcendence, and art.⁴⁵ How is it possible to tell one realm from another? Any specialized field of inquiry differentiates itself from the others, Lonergan argues, whenever “it develops its own language, its own distinct mode of apprehension, and its own cultural, social, or professional group speaking in that fashion and apprehending in that manner.”⁴⁶ But, as Michael McCarthy points out, “To master a realm of meaning is to become intellectually and linguistically at home in a form of life unintelligible to those who dwell outside its boundaries.”⁴⁷

First, *the realm of common sense*. Undifferentiated consciousness begins to develop by way of common sense. Common sense is ordinary good sense. Its realm is the world of ordinary life and work in which most people think, make things, act, and converse in the daily give and take of interaction with other people. Faced with an unfamiliar situation, people with common sense pause long enough to figure out how to respond in an appropriate way. All of us inhabit the realm of common sense and we all use the language of everyday speech.

Second, *the realm of theory and science*. Theory deals with persons and things in “their internal relations, their congruences and differences, the functions they fulfill in their interactions.”⁴⁸ It is the world of the experts, the great theoreticians and the rocket scientists, the worlds of Heidegger and Einstein and von Braun. The philosophers and scientists who inhabit the realm of theory and science express their meaning in technical language.

Third, *the realm of interiority*. Interiority refers to the inner consciousness of human subjects and their operations. In the realm of interiority, you are able by self-appropriation to verify in your own experience the fact that you are a conscious operator. You become aware of the way in which you use specific mental operations. You attend to the process by which you attend to the data of your senses, come to understand meaning, judge the accuracy of your understanding, deliberate and reach decisions. It is the realm targeted for exploration by modern philosophers from Descartes to Lonergan. In the realm of interiority, philosophers express their meaning in the technical terms of intentionality analysis.

Next, there is the *realm of transcendence*. It is the realm of concrete religious experience, where one encounters the divine. It is the realm of primitive myth and magic, of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. It is the realm “of prayer and of prayerful silence.”⁴⁹ It is the realm of “sacred objects, places, times, and actions” and is mediated “through the sacred offices of the shaman, the prophet, the lawgiver, the apostle, the priest, the preacher, the monk, the teacher.”⁵⁰ Religious experience finds expression first in the language of myth and magic and then in the language of the great religious traditions, especially in the language of ascetics and mystics. It is, in a word, the realm of the sacred.

Finally, *the realm of art*. Conscious experience at the sensible level is patterned. There is “a patterning of what is perceived and a pattern of the feelings that flow out of and are connected with the perceiving.”⁵¹ Lonergan accepts Suzanne K. Langer’s focus on ‘significant form’ and her definition of art as “the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.”⁵² For him, art is “the objectification of a purely experiential pattern,” where meaning lies in “the internal relations of the pattern.”⁵³ Indeed, the pattern of form and feeling which the artist expresses in the language of art is concretely present in the words (poetry and drama), in the colors (painting), in the volume of the shapes

(sculpture), in the sounds (music), and in the movements (dance). And so, says Lonergan, art “presents the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the ‘plus’ that is in things,”⁵⁴ the profundity of the pattern in things, indeed, as Hopkins said, “the dearest freshness deep down things.” The artistic experience evoked by the forms symbolic of human feeling, moreover, is transporting and transforming. It opens a new horizon, presents something that is “other, different, novel, strange, new, remote, intimate.”⁵⁵ The human subject is rendered “emergent, ecstatic” and empowered to explore “the possibilities of living in a fuller richer world.”⁵⁶

To be succinct, there is a vast universe of meaning that is mediated by imagination and intelligence. This universe is divided into various realms:

- the realm mediated by common-sense meaning;
- the realm mediated by theoretical and systematic meaning;
- the realm mediated by interiority;
- the realm mediated by transcendent meaning; and
- the realm mediated by art.

I would make one final point. The story of the human race and its development is the intriguing story of human migration out of Africa and the consequent peopling of planet earth. Our understanding of when and how took a tremendous leap in the 1980's, thanks to geneticist Allan Wilson's revolutionary insight that each of earth's 6 billion current inhabitants is a living fossil. We now know from female mitochondrial DNA, for instance, that *Homo sapiens* appeared in Africa some 200,000 years ago and from male Y chromosome that the ancestors of all of non-Africans alive today set foot out of Africa sometime between 85,000 and 60,000 years ago.⁵⁷ The unfolding story of human migration from the savannas of Africa over the surface of the earth and beyond to a crater on the moon brings a rush of exhilaration. But the human story remains incomplete if one attends only to the exploration of the exterior landscape. There is also the interior landscape of the human mind and the story of its exploration exerts for me an equal fascination.

1. *Newsweek*, April 20, 1970; *Time*, April 20, 1970, 58-59.

2. Bernard F. Swain, “Lonergan’s Framework for the Future,” *Commonweal*, 25 January 1985, 46.

3. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1976 (first edition); 1991 (second edition), 1.

4. *Ibid.*, 185

5. Hugh Bredin writes in Brown, Stuart, Collinson, Dianne, Wilkinson, Robert, and Collinson, Dian E. (eds), *One Hundred Twentieth Century Philosophers*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1998, 112-115), 114.

6. In a private conversation with Gerard J. Campbell, S.J., former president of Georgetown University and at one time director of the Woodstock Theological Center.

7. *Insight*, xxviii.

8. *Insight*, xxviii and 748.

9. “*Insight* Revisited,” *A Second Collection*, 269.

10. Bernard Lonergan, “Piaget and the Idea of a General Education,” *Topics in Education*, 194. Cf. also

Bernard Lonergan, "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion" in *A Third Collection*, 207-208 : "Piaget examined operational development and placed its key in a repeated *decentering* that keeps shifting the center of the subject's activity from himself to his ever enlarging universe. Erikson's approach is from depth psychology and his eight developmental stages are successive and cumulative shifts in what one's *identity* becomes. Kohlberg, finally, attends to morals, distinguishes pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional morality, divides each into two stages, and reveal the defects of each earlier stage as compared with its successor. It happens, however, that the ideas of all three writers have been brought together in a unitary view in terms of *self-transcendence* [in Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender*. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press 1986.]."

11. Annie Dillard, "To Fashion a Text" in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, edited by William Zinsser (Boston/New York: A Mariner Book, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998) 143-145.
12. *Insight*, 330.
13. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 147.
14. *Insight*, 185.
15. *Insight*, 185.
16. *Insight*, 173.
17. Annie Dillard, "To Fashion a Text" in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, edited by William Zinsser (Boston/New York: A Mariner Book, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998) 144.
18. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology*, 7.
19. *Insight*, xix.
20. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology*, 15.
21. *Insight*, xiv-xv.
22. Cf. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., Lonergan, 128-132.
23. *Ibid.*, 37, n.64.
24. Quoted in Aileen Kelly's introduction to Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, xiv.
25. *Ibid.*, xiii.
26. Is Modern Culture Doomed? by Andrew J. Krzensinski (New York: Devin-Adair, 1942) reviewed by Bernard Lonergan in *The Canadian Register*, September 19, 1949, p. 8 and quoted by Matthew L. Lamb in "Lonergan: Social and Political Dimensions," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, edited by Vernon Gregson, 269-270.
27. *Method in Theology*, 13, and *Insight*, 74.
28. *Insight*, 474.
29. *Insight*, 331
30. see *Method in Theology*, 257 and 272.
31. *Insight*, xxiii
32. *Method in Theology*, 13.
33. *Insight*, 291. See especially the chapter in *Meaning in Method in Theology*, 57-99. Also "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 232- 246. Also *The Lonergan Reader*, 208-210.
34. "Faith and Beliefs," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, edited by Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2004), 34.
35. Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection*, 78.
36. "Faith and Beliefs," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, edited by Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2004), 34.
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43. *Method in Theology*, 81-85.

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44. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 274-275.
 45. *Method in Theology*, 85 and 272. Also *The Lonergan Reader*, 466-470.
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 50. *Ibid.*, 266.
 51. *Topics in Education*, 212.
 52. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, Susanne K. Langer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 40, and quoted in Lonergan, "Art," *Topics in Education*, 211.
 53. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 211.
 54. *Ibid.*, 222.
 55. *Ibid.*, 216.
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1

The Realm of Common Sense

In the drama of human living, human intelligence is not only artistic but practical. At first, there is little to differentiate man from beasts, for in primitive fruit-gathering cultures, hunger is linked to eating by a simple sequence of bodily movements. But primitive hunters take time out from hunting to make spears, and primitive fishers take time out from fishing to make nets. Neither spears nor nets in themselves are objects of desire. Still, with notable ingenuity and effort, they are fashioned because, for practical intelligence, desires are recurrent, labour is recurrent, and the comparatively brief time spent making spears or nets is amply compensated by the greater ease with which more game or fish is taken on an indefinite series of occasions.¹

Bernard Lonergan

The dawn of the modern scientific era in the 18th century widened the great divide between science and common sense.² The scientists of the Enlightenment, Lonergan reminds us, tended to look down their noses at commonsense folk, regarding them as naive and locked in superstition. Men of common sense for their part reacted predictably with jokes about inept intellectuals isolated from real life in their ivory towers. Even in ancient Greece, the no nonsense milkmaid burst out laughing when her master Thales of Miletus, gazing all lost in wonder at the astral splendor of the night sky, tumbled into a well. The cackle of her laughter has echoed down the centuries and prompted Lonergan to write: “If from this conflict the theorists of science proceeded to conclude that common sense must be some brutish survival, that it was in need of being instructed in lofty tones on the far superior virtues and techniques of the scientist, one cannot be surprised that common sense retaliated with its jokes on the ineptitude of the theorists and professors and with its quietly imperious demand that, if they were to justify their existence, they had best continue to provide palpable evidence of their usefulness.”³ Common sense thus became the victim of prejudice and the target of snobbish attacks upon its validity and credibility.⁴

Barry Lopez provides a particularly instructive instance of the “lamentable” rift between science and common sense in his *Arctic Dreams*. There is strong evidence, he tells us, that Bristol fishermen and whalers were working the waters off the coast of Newfoundland in the fifteenth century even before the arrival of explorers like John Cabot, Martin Frobisher, and Henry Hudson. Sailors had built up a rich fund of practical experience in the art of “navigation in icy seas.” Yet there was little or no exchange of information between tough seaman and gentleman explorer. “The spheres of separate knowledge of the mapmaker, the able-bodied seamen, the whaling captain, the Eskimo, and the British naval officer were kept segregated through contempt and condescension...” In short, “the Bristol fishermen thought Cabot’s first voyage an

extension of the royal amusement. British officers thought the common seaman too much of a scatterbrain and adolescent to have anything pertinent to say about navigating through ice.”⁵ Lonergan states the problem with clarity:

Undifferentiated consciousness insists on homogeneity. If the procedures of common sense are correct, then theory must be wrong. If theory is correct, then common sense must be just an antiquated relic from a pre-scientific age.⁶

Lonergan was deeply troubled by the perennial stand-off. Neither stance was fair or just. He brought common sense to center stage for critical examination so as to discover its distinguishing characteristics. His understanding of understanding---his conviction that insight plays a crucial role in all domains of human knowing, gave him the tool to reexamine the nature and scope of commonsense thinking. At the same time, he could spot in it a major limitation.

When I read what Lonergan had to say about the distinction and complementarity of common sense and science, I felt my interest quicken. What precisely is commonsense thinking? What are its claims to legitimacy? What is its proper domain? In what precise way does it differ from scientific thinking? What and how serious are its limitations? I realized I had never given the questions much thought. I now wanted to find out and was ready to join Lonergan on his exploration of the realm of common sense.⁷

I soon began to appreciate the fact that Bernard Lonergan was a man of enormous curiosity, someone who like Thomas Aquinas never stopped asking questions. I learned, for instance, that he was intensely interested in the intellectual and moral development of the human race, from primitive to modern times. How account, he wondered, for the ongoing achievements of the human mind since *Homo sapiens* made his appearance on earth? Critical to Lonergan’s thinking here is his awareness that man is a historical being. I remember with clarity the moment I first got my hands on a copy of his *Method in Theology*. My journal reminds me it was April 10, 1975. I was on sabbatical in Oxford, living at Campion Hall, the residence run by the English Jesuits. What flooded my mind with light was Lonergan’s explanation of what it means to be a historical being and the analogy he used to illustrate his meaning. To function and make progress in life, he wrote, an individual quite simply needs the memory of his past. Memory provides him with a sense of identity. In the past he made himself what he is. One’s remembered past is “the capital” on which a person lives. Without it, an individual cannot function. Indeed, should he suffer total amnesia, he must first recover his memory or start his life all over again from scratch. About this time an item in the newspaper concretized for me what Lonergan was getting at. A bag lady in New Orleans known as Dirty Sally had been on the streets for months. Her identity was unknown, for she was an amnesia victim. Finally some relative recognized her face on a missing person poster. Dirty Sally, it turned out, was not a nobody; she had a loving family in Ohio who had been distraught at her disappearance and were overjoyed at finding her again.

What intrigued me about Lonergan’s explanation is that what was true for an individual amnesia victim like Dirty Sally is true also for any group or organization. Groups, like individuals, “live on their past,” and “their pasts ...live on in them.”⁸ Indeed group amnesia can lead to a weakening of total group functioning and, in extreme cases, to collapse. Quite naturally we want our children (and new immigrants) to have a secure grasp of our nation’s history if they are to be Americans. Groups who have little

knowledge of their history have a very fragile sense of identity. It comes as a shock to realize that up to the invention of writing the human race suffered from almost total collective blackout.⁹ Today, as the clues multiply, we are recovering a bit from a case of massive amnesia. Archaeologist Colin Renfrew is right: “Just about the most interesting question for anyone alive today is figuring out who we are—trying, that is, to understand what it is to be human, and what we are doing here on this earth and how we got here and where from.”¹⁰ The all important and admirable task of modern experts then is to recover as much of our collective prehistoric memory as possible.¹¹ Lonergan would have agreed with Renfrew’s attractive suggestion that, in addition to the archaeologists, linguists, and geneticists who study evidence from our past, one should enlist students of art. “The insights and the critical questions of the contemporary sculptor, painter, performance artist and others can feed back into our own project of studying and understanding of the early human past.”¹² Lonergan favors historian Christopher Dawson’s observation that “we can learn more about mediaeval culture from a cathedral than from the most exhaustive study of constitutional law, and the churches of Ravenna are a better introduction to the Byzantine world than all the volumes of Gibbon.”¹³ The culture Dawson refers to is “human living at a level that has not been conceptualized.” History is not enough for the task. Lonergan is confident that “...a person with the requisite artistic sensibility will understand ... the tone of feeling, the orientation, the mentality of the people on a level” that a historian might miss.

Consider, then, the incredibly slow development of human intelligence during the multiple millennia of all but total darkness in which human beings have lived on earth. The long blackout stretches vastly from the advent of primitive humans on earth to the beginning of recorded history only 3500 years ago.¹⁴ What have we been able to recover to fill the gaps in man’s earliest story? From about 10,000 years ago, roughly 140,000 years, we do know that man lived in small nomadic communities. He hunted and fished, on constant alert to the threat of predatory animals. From time to time comes some new archeological discovery like a pinpoint of light in the vast black emptiness---a stone axehead, a bone awl, a necklace of fox teeth, each a precious clue as to what our prehistoric ancestors were up to, each like the fragment of a fading dream we struggle to recall. Each artifact is therefore precious; from each we learn something of the mind of its maker. Man’s mind, says Lonergan, is *potens omnia facere et fieri*; it can do and become all things. Its infinite potentiality is what makes human progress possible.¹⁵ And from the artifact we learn something of the thinking of its maker.

The commonsense thinking of early man arose in response to the overriding need for the food, warmth, and shelter. Man emerged on earth like a castaway on a desert isle among wild beasts. Lacking the jaws of a lion, the tusks of a boar, the talons of a bear, the fur of an arctic fox, or the carapace of a turtle, the only tools man had for survival in an environment red in tooth and claw were two hands and a brain. Aquinas had said the distinguishing marks of the human animal is a mind and a hand. Pre-historian Gordon Childe makes much of the fact that human hands are ‘delicate instruments capable of an amazing variety of subtle and accurate movements;’ they operate in conjunction with “a peculiarly complicated nervous system” linked to “an exceptionally big and complicated brain.”¹⁶ Benjamin Franklin famously said that man is the tool-making animal. I was taken aback the moment I realized that the familiar carpenter’s tools we kept in our basement at home—basic tools for hammering, cutting, shaving, chiseling, sawing, and puncturing, were all invented eons back in the black night of pre-history. From his reading of the archeological and anthropological record, Lonergan saw with clarity that

primal man had gained a “thorough understanding of the practical tasks of daily living.”¹⁷ He cites as evidence the tools invented by early hunters and fishers and the process they initiated. Invention followed invention and by trial and error tools were gradually improved. Inventions called forth human cooperation. The trading of surplus goods gave rise to a primitive economic system. The economy evoked the polity which shrewd men devised to organize people into tribes, clans, and states.¹⁸ Indeed, Lonergan was astonished by the way in which technological advances and complex interpersonal relationships accumulated by slow development over the millennia in the “almost total darkness”¹⁹ of the primordial Dark Age, to the point where humans were able to create high civilizations in the great alluvial valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates, the Indus, and the Yellow rivers, and again much later in Mexico and Peru.²⁰

One question immediately arises: What took so long? An incredible 98 per cent of man’s time on earth passed before hunter-gatherers with basically the same DNA as ours began to develop the great civilizations of the ancient world. The answer, says Renfrew, is clear: extensive cognitive and technological advances were necessary and were the result of a painful and unimaginably slow, cumulative process. You must first make the artifacts and then gradually the world of artifacts makes you.²¹

I find it difficult to hold in mind the sheer amount of time the process took. Our prehuman precursors were busy making stone tools for literally thousands of millennia — repeat, millennia — before the coming of modern *Homo sapiens sapiens*.²² Let’s review what we know.

3 million years ago: Omo Style Stone Tools Early hominids developed bipedal locomotion and thus “freed their hands for tasks that eventually could be used to make and handle tools.”²³ From the Omo region of Ethiopia²⁴ comes the earliest evidence. The first tools were stones used for pounding and cutting. Between 3 and 2 million years ago our prehuman ancestors smashed rough flakes from pebbles to make an edge suitable for cutting. Only limited intelligence is required for this feat, for it does not seem to be beyond the powers of a chimpanzee.

2.5 million years ago: Oldowan Style Tools From the Olduvai Gorge in East Africa comes further evidence that 2.5 million years ago an early human ancestor, long armed *Homo habilis* (Figure 1)²⁵, produced and gradually improved simple stone tools. It was a slight technological advance involving some understanding of fracture dynamics, well beyond the cognitive capacity of living chimpanzees but far below the mental capacities modern human beings. With smashing blows, he chipped away sharp outer flakes suitable for cutting; the remaining inner core he used for chopping (Figure 2 and 3).²⁶ Oldowan tools enabled man to skin an animal, slice its meat, cut through joints, and open bones to get at the marrow.²⁷ It comes as a shock to realize how remarkably effective sharp stone implements can be. Animal bones found with the tools in the Olduvai Gorge suggest that *Homo habilis* hunted, scavenged for, and then butchered pigs, antelopes, horses, rhinos, hippos, and even elephants. Indeed, a modern manufacturer uses glass-like volcanic rock called obsidian to make surgical scalpels. Obsidian scalpels have a cutting edge with an incredible sharpness, 500 times that of a steel scalpel, so fine and sharp indeed that it can actually cut between cells.²⁸ Seen through an electron microscope its leading edge is altogether smooth; a steel blade seen under the same magnification is serrated.²⁹

1.5 million years ago: Acheulian Style Tools There was a considerable growth in brain

size of our common ancestors roughly 2 million years ago which then remained on a plateau from 1.8 million until 500,000 years ago.³⁰ *Homo habilis* became extinct about 1.8 million years ago, but his technology was passed on to and improved upon by the African *Homo ergaster* (Man the Worker) and the Asian *Homo erectus* (both of whom were prehumans with a brain two-thirds the size of the human brain)³¹ (Figure 4)³². The surge in brain size was accompanied by a significant increase in brain power. With remarkable insight, some unknown *Homo ergaster* developed a new and much more distinctive tool, the multipurpose hand-axe first found and identified at St. Acheul near Amiens in northern France in the nineteenth century. In its symmetry and form, the new hand-axe revealed a significant advance in tool-making skill. You are not longer interested in just making a sharp edge. You must imagine the shape of the axe beforehand. You must vary your blows, meeting with skill the challenges each stone presents. You must impose the predetermined size and shape on original nodules which are roughly the same but with variations in quality, size, and shape. Finally you use a 'soft' hammer of wood or bone to remove the final flakes.³³ The new design and production technique caught on and eventually every stone age hunter had his standardized hand-axe, much as any outdoors man or woman today carries a Swiss Army knife (Figures 5, 5.1,6-9).³⁴

In the 1920's when the skull of "Peking Man" and the remains of 40 other *Homo erectus* hominids who lived some 450,000 years ago were found in limestone caves just north of Zhououdian³⁵, a village 26 miles southwest of Beijing (Peking), only Oldowan style stone tools and no Acheulian hand-axes were present. Indeed, the fact that no Acheulian style hand-axes have yet to be found in the Far East supports the interesting hypothesis that about 2 million years ago a *Homo habilis* group left Africa before the Acheulian tools were invented and gradually evolved into *Homo erectus* in the Far East with only the Oldowan cultural tradition as their legacy.³⁶

Incidentally it is worth noting here new and solid evidence that *Homo erectus* controlled the use of fire in Europe as far back as 400,000 years ago on the south coast of Brittany and on the shores of the Mediterranean not far from Nice.³⁷

Archaeologist Steven Mithen concludes that *Homo ergaster* certainly had rudimentary cognitive ability, a type of Swiss-army-knife mentality. The absence of any art or of bone or ivory tools as well as the sheer monotony of the handaxe industrial tradition which lasted without basic changes for about 1.7 million years strongly suggest that *Homo ergaster* had a type of mentality that is fundamentally different from the modern human mind. He simply lacked significant brain power the modern mind enjoys.³⁸

We now know there was a second 'spurt' of enlargement between 500,000-200,000 years ago when the brain reached the size of a modern human brain³⁹ There was also an ingenious new approach to tool making (a more efficient and sophisticated way of making "flake" tools called the Levallois technique⁴⁰) occurred 250,000 years ago. The technique was used extensively by *Homo Neanderthalensis* who existed in Europe and the Near East from 150,000 until 30,000 years ago.⁴¹

200,000 years ago: *Homo sapiens sapiens* (Wise Man) The first fossil records of anatomically modern humans reach back 150,000 years, perhaps as far back as 200,000 years. For instance, the fossilized skulls of two adults and one child who lived 160,000 years ago were found in Ethiopia in 1997 in an arid valley near the village of Herto, some 140 miles northeast of Addis Ababa. The find is of extraordinary importance. The bones

are the remains of hominids who might well be the immediate ancestors of modern *Homo sapiens sapiens*.⁴² Since their bones are close to, but not anatomically identical with modern human beings, they are classified as *Homo sapiens idaltu*, 'idaltu' being the word in the local dialect which means 'elder.' (Figure 10)⁴³ The first human footprints on the sandstone shore of a South African lagoon are 117,000 years old. At the moment, the consensus of mitochondrial DNA research, noted earlier, suggests that you and I are descended from a common female ancestor who lived in Africa some time between 100,000 and 200,000 years ago.⁴⁴ One theory suggests that "the modern mind is the result of a rapid genetic change." Richard Klein of Stanford university, for instance, puts the date of the change at 60,000 years ago, arguing from the surge of cultural artifacts and the exodus of modern humans from Africa at about that time.⁴⁵ There were earlier migrations, but geneticists now conclude that the group of *Homo sapiens* from which all modern humans are descended left East Africa about 60,000 years ago with the legacy of early stone age tool production and gradually spread out over the whole world. Subsequently over the millennia were born those unknown agents of astonishing intellectual development---creative personalities who used their considerable intelligence to improve tools and invent new ones to solve the recurring practical problems of primitive human existence.⁴⁶

Lonergan anticipated, I believe, the shift in contemporary archaeology from an earlier positivistic and behavioristic approach as reported by Colin Renfrew when he quotes Erwin M. Segal: "There is evidence of the mind of man in every archaeological site, just about every artifact and every edifice was intentionally created." Cognitive archaeology, as the new approach is called, aims:

to identify and specify many of the intentions, and cognitive and behavioral processes that went into the planning, design and construction of these objects. These are part of the conceptual world of the ancient peoples, and they can help us understand some of the cognitions and motivations involved in the use of these objects after they were constructed."⁴⁷

Thus Barry Lopez writes with feeling of archaeological work at the campsites of paleo-Eskimos of the Arctic Small Tool tradition (ASTt) 5000 years ago and of Thule (too'loo) culture Eskimos 3000 years ago, those magnificent hunters who were the direct ancestors of today's Eskimos:

The admiration one feels kneeling over the pathetic remains of an early ASTt campsite can be very deep. What tenacity. What courage. Another sort of feeling comes over one at Thule site. One misses any sense of remoteness or separation and feels instead profound respect. A powerful, dignified people, one imagines. The delicate and robust tools...are beautiful.⁴⁸

What we are in search of in asking questions about artifacts is "the answer that opens the timeless interior of the human mind, that collapses centuries of distance and transcends the object at hand."⁴⁹ Arctic archaeologist Peter Schledermann has a fine way of summing up: "Everything we are is in our spirit. In archaeology, you are examining the

long line of what we are.”⁵⁰

40,000- 21,000 years ago: Aurignacian Style Tools The Old Stone Age reached an climax in the Upper Paleolithic Age (40,000-10,000 years ago). There was an astonishing cultural explosion. Many archaeologists call it the big bang that marks the origin of truly human culture.⁵¹ A series of remarkable cultures (Aurignacian, Solutrean, and Magdalenian) flourished one after another during a 30,000 year stretch, so that by the end of the last Ice Age *Homo sapiens sapiens* had produced “a panoply of innovations”⁵² unparalleled by earlier species. *Homo sapiens* was not only anatomically identical with modern man, but the new cultures provided undeniable evidence that he was behaving in ways that are recognizably human.⁵³

Human bones surrounded by cultural remains were found in the Cro-Magnon rockshelter in the Dordogne region of southwest France. The well-known site has provided the name for the entire population of *Homo sapiens sapiens* which spread across Europe from the Near East to France and Spain⁵⁴ at the end of the last great ice age (Figure 11)⁵⁵. The invention of Aurignacian thin blade-shaped tools by Cro-Magnon man brought an ingenious new technique, much more difficult and efficient than the millennial Levallois method for making broad flake tools. Some unsung primitive genius had the imagination to see a narrow blade imbedded in flint much as Michelangelo saw his *David* embedded in a block of Carara marble. He came up with the insights needed to create narrow blades from carefully prepared stone cores (Figures 12 and 13.1-13.2).⁵⁶ Indeed, as Jordan says, the finely worked and distinctive blade became the “hallmark” of the “dazzling culture of the ice-age hunters and artists of fully modern physical type,”⁵⁷ for only the remains of *Homo sapiens sapiens* have been found with Aurignacian tools.⁵⁸

I pause to report that many archaeologists who have labored to date human arrival on the North American continent are in agreement that a second wave of immigrants occurred about 11,000 years ago when the glaciers of the Wisconsin Ice Age retreated. What is distinctive about the new arrivals was their advanced tool tradition. What is puzzling about the tools is their extraordinarily close kinship to the Aurignacian narrow blade tools developed by Cro-Magnon man millennia earlier.⁵⁹ The similarity in design and execution has fueled speculation that stone age man somehow managed to cross the Atlantic from Europe.

At any rate, man made another great technological leap forward about 35,000 years ago by inventing the “haft” or tool handle. Imagine holding a handaxe in one bare hand and trying to chop down a tree. Then imagine holding an axe by its handle with both hands and using a full swing to chop through the trunk. The great increase in power and effectiveness is obvious. In one remarkable experiment some years ago, men wielding stone-age axes on loan from the Danish National Museum were able to fell oak trees one foot in diameter and pine trees two feet thick. Three men cleared one eighth of an acre of silver birch trees in four hours—all with axes which had not seen use in 4000 years.

Other unknown geniuses designed tools with appropriate specificity. They took time out from hunting and fishing to devise a harpoon (Figures 14.1-6)⁶⁰, create scrapers to clean animal skins, and burins (slender flint tools with a head like a chisel) to cut and engrave bone and ivory. Prehistoric man no longer owned one all-purpose handaxe; he now had at his disposal a veritable toolbox of useful implements.

At this time, moreover, the production of personal ornaments gave initial evidence of man’s developing sense of himself as distinct from other human beings: clothing decorated with beads, bracelets, and pierced shell and animal tooth necklaces

(Figures 15)⁶¹. More astonishing perhaps is the appearance of Aurignacian Age artists as talented as later artists whose names we know from history. Witness the carving of so-called Venuses and the stunning paintings on the walls of caves (Figure 16) in southern France,⁶² Spain,⁶³ and Portugal.

It is worth noting in passing that mitochondrial DNA seems to have answered a long standing question: Neanderthal Man was not a direct ancestor of modern man.⁶⁴

Ceramics and weaving were long thought to be a development which followed only upon the establishment of farming villages some 10,000 years ago. But there is surprising evidence, first made public in 1990, for a much earlier origin for weaving. Indeed, this fresh find—fired clay with “negative impressions of a textile or finely twined basket”---shows that 27,000 years ago hunters and food gathers who roamed the southeastern Pavlov Hills in what is Czech Republic today took time out from daily chores to twist plant material into threads for weaving textiles or making baskets (Figure 17)⁶⁵. The evidence also indicates that clever inventors developed cords for nets, traps, and snares---technological advances which made hunting small animals like rabbits more efficient.⁶⁶

21,000-17,000 years ago: Solutrean Style Tools Named for the archeological site at La Solutré in southwest France, Solutrean tools stand out because of their exquisite workmanship and beauty. For over roughly four thousands years toolmakers developed handsome quartz, jasper, and flint blades and spearheads in the lovely shape of willow and laurel leaves (Figures 18 and 19).⁶⁷ In the words of one anthropologist, “The laurel leaf is without doubt a splendid creation, and fewer than a handful of people in the world today are skilled enough in the ancient craft to produce one.”⁶⁸

17,000-11,000: Magdalenian Style Tools The Magdalenian Age takes its name from La Magdaleine in southwestern France.⁶⁹ Semi-nomadic hunters of reindeer, horses, and bison carried forward the development of stone blades, burins, skin scrapers, awls, and projectile points for spears (Figure 20).⁷⁰ They also produced microliths or tiny stone tools using a wide variety of geometric shapes. But more often, they used bone and antler to produce adzes, hammers, spearheads, and needles. Fishermen developed boats and barbed bone harpoons. Artists of remarkable technical skill produced the unexpectedly beautiful polychrome paintings in the caves at Lascaux in France (Figure 21)⁷¹ and Altamira in Spain (Figure 22)⁷².

15,000-12,000: Harvesting Tools Flint sickle blades and grindstones discovered in Egypt are evidence that *Homo sapiens* was harvesting wild grains some 8000 years before the deliberate cultivation of crops and 12,000 years before the earliest civilization in Egypt.⁷³

13,000 years ago Man invented the bow and arrow and developed sophisticated projectile points (Figure 22)⁷⁴. The bow and arrow far surpassed the throwing power and accuracy of the human arm. Native Americans in Massachusetts, for instance, were startled by the seventeenth century guns of the English colonists. But they soon learned that the settlers were ‘terrible shots, from lack of practice’ and the guns ‘little more than noisemakers.’ In his book *1491*, Charles C. Mann tells us that “colonists in Jamestown taunted the Powhatan in 1607 with a target they believed impervious to an arrow shot. To the colonists’ dismay, an Indian sank an arrow into it a foot deep, ‘which was strange,

being that a Pistoll could not pierce it'....When the Powhatan later captured John Smith...., Smith broke his pistol rather than reveal to his captors 'the awful truth that it could not shoot as far as an arrow could fly.'"⁷⁵

Finally, the invention, improvement, and mass production of stone age tools and ornaments, says Lonergan, called forth human cooperation and the division of labor; and the trading of surplus tools required the invention of some rudimentary form of economic system⁷⁶ (Figure 17).

We arrive now in our story of prehistoric man at four basic inventions of prehistoric human beings that were and are of critical importance to the ongoing development of human beings and their culture. In combination and over time the four gave rise to cities, civilizations, and recorded history. The key inventions are the domestication of animals, agriculture, metallurgy, and the written alphabet. Each if invented today would no doubt merit a Nobel Prize.

12,000-10,000 years ago: *The domestication of animals* 12,000 years ago, wolves were first animals to be domesticated and on their way to becoming man's best friend, for all species of dogs are descended from wolves. 10,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age, hunters in Siberia likely tracked down and slaughtered the last of the woolly mammoths.⁷⁷ The need arose for other sources of food and *Homo sapiens sapiens* had the resources to cope. At roughly the same time from 10,400 to 10,000 years ago, there is evidence that in the foothills of the Taurus mountains in modern Turkey man began the transformation of wild boars into tame pigs. The pig was in all likelihood the first animal to be domesticated for food, 1000 years before the taming and herding of sheep in Iraq and goats in Iran for their wool, milk, and meat, and 2000 years before the transformation of wild aurochs into cattle.⁷⁸ It comes as no surprise then to learn that the early domestication of pigs was especially fortuitous: pigs "convert 35 percent of food energy into meat, compared to 13 percent for sheep or a mere 6.5 percent for cattle."⁷⁹ Equally fortuitous, but for different reasons, was the domestication of the horse. 6000 years ago in the pastureland east of the Ural mountains, some daring nomad tamed and rode the first wild horse, inaugurating the long process by which man put to man's use the greater power and stamina and speed of the horse—for travel or sport, for hunting or war, or to pull a plow, a wagon, a chariot.⁸⁰ Indeed, the domestication of the horse and the later invention of bridle and bit and the saddle provided the transportation and military power that make the building of great empires possible (Figure 23).

10,000 years ago: *The Invention of Agriculture* In 8000 BC, food-gathers made what is arguably mankind's most significant discovery when some practical genius realized that "the workings of nature could be improved, encouraged and exploited to minister to his needs." The Neolithic invention of agriculture began in the temperate climate of the Middle East where self-sown cereals like wheat and barley grew in abundance: in Anatolia, on the south west slopes of the Zagros mountains, at the head of the Tigris and Euphrates valley and in Palestine. From there it spread to places which appear on modern maps as the Persian Gulf countries, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and northwest India. Even today almost pure strains of wild einkorn wheat cover acres of land in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. In the 1960's agronomists Harlan and Zohary reported that the surprising fact that "it would be possible to harvest wild wheat today from natural stands almost as dense as cultivated wheat fields."⁸¹ By 5000 BC, the agricultural revolution had spread through Europe and found its way to the harsher climate of Britain.⁸² The great

Arab historian and sociologist, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1395), saw the implications of this new development. Back in the fourteenth century he zeroed in on one all-important consequence; agriculture made men cooperate. Indeed, surplus food boosts population growth and makes civilization possible.⁸³ It is no accident, then, that the first cities arose from farm villages in the valleys along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers about 5000 years ago. Indeed, the first evidence of urban master-planning comes from the excavations of the town of Tiris Hoyuk on the upper reaches of the Euphrates in modern Turkey, a city of 10,000 that flourished about 4500 years ago. Its streets were apparently mapped and laid out with precision before construction began and houses of varying sizes were built according to an identical floor plan.⁸⁴

9,000 years ago: *The Copper Age.* How metallurgy was invented is a riveting story.⁸⁵ Outcrops of copper masses with most of the impurities weathered away occur on many parts of the world's surface. The first evidence of man's use of native copper 9250-8750 years ago comes from Catal Huyuk near modern Konya in southwest Turkey. Some ingenious tinkerer discovered that copper is malleable: he could, by hammering the soft metal, harden it and shape it into sickles, daggers, and axes (Figure 24)⁸⁶. Later men began to mine unweathered copper underground. Again some genius managed to invent the smelting process by which to extract copper from its impurities by means of intense heat. After millennia of crudely wrought copper production, another genius figured out a way to melt, cast, and shape copper in molds. Gordon Childe reminds us that metalworking resulted from two crucial insights: (1) certain ores heated in conjunction with carbon yield copper and (2) copper when molten can be molded into any desired shape. The superiority of metal over stone handaxe, flint projectile point or bone harpoon is easily grasped. Gordon Childe lists the advantages. Molten metal is "completely plastic" and can be cast in "any desired form." Let it cool and it will be "as strong" as stone or bone and can take "as sharp an edge or as fine a point." It is "malleable" and when broken can be remelted over and over again. A moment's reflection on the complexity of the smelting process reveals the high degree of practical intelligence required for the invention and development, for instance, of the remarkable *cire-perdue* process first developed some 5000 years ago. You need a furnace, a fire, a blast of air from a bellows sufficient to raise the heat on the order of 1200 degrees Celsius, and a crucible in which to melt the raw copper. You make a wax model of an axehead, cover it with clay, and fire the clay till it hardens; in the process the wax melts, runs out, and leaves the shape of the axe within the hardening clay. You pour molten metal into the clay's cavity and, when the metal cools and hardens, you break the clay. The result is a metal casting that has the shape of the wax model. You have a copper axehead.⁸⁷

Indeed, man's inventive mind continues to find new uses for copper today. Copper is the key element in the making of computer chips; IBM announced in 2001 that it had produced 25 million copper chips. 9 million square meters of solar panels which are 90% copper were in place by the turn of the century. All eight denominations of the new Euro coins are made of copper. Indeed, copper is used today in refrigerators, air conditioners, automobiles, Internet wiring, mobile phones, to name a just a few of its practical applications. A trip to a super hardware store like Home Depot can be a revelation: the household uses of copper today are multitudinous.

5,000 years ago: *The Bronze Age* About 5000 years ago in Mesopotamia, some metalworker, by chance it seems, melted copper ore on a red hot charcoal fire; the ore

happened to contain cassiterite (tin) and the result was bronze.⁸⁸ Someone had the genius to appreciate the advantages of the new metal. Bronze melts at a lower temperature, is easier to cast in molds, is stronger than copper, indeed at times stronger than steel. Ingenious metalsmiths proceeded to produce bronze axes, awls, and hammers as well as swords and daggers. But there was a problem. There were ample supplies of copper in the ancient Near East, but no tin. Experts had thought that tin must have been imported from Afghanistan. But in 1994, in the Taurus Mountains 60 miles north of Tarsus in modern Turkey, archeologists discovered what no one had thought possible: a tin mine, a mining village, and ample evidence of a small scale tin-processing industry with a high level of metallurgy technology in place as far back as 2870 B.C..⁸⁹ One expects, we are told, that more such sites will be found.

4000 years ago: *The Iron Age* Falling stars introduced ancient man to iron, for only in meteorites is iron found in nature.⁹⁰ But iron ore is widely distributed on earth and easily accessible, and its use gradually brought the Bronze Age to its end. In all likelihood some Hittite built a wind whipped fire on a high outcropping of red iron ore and in the ashes discovered metallic iron. And some genius on the scene had the wit to grasp the possibilities of this accidental discovery, for the Hittites who flourished in Anatolia (Turkey) from 1600-1200 B.C. were, as far as we know, the first to produce wrought iron. By trial and error, they came up with the insights needed to invent a forge to heat the iron, an anvil on which to shape it by repeated hammer blows, and a water tank in which to cool it. Wrought iron is brittle, however, and, if dropped, shatters. But the Hittites somehow discovered that forged iron recovers its strength if it is ‘annealed’ or tempered by reheating it on a simple fire and allowing it to cool slowly.⁹¹ Hence the expression, strike while the iron is hot. The Hittites went on to invent iron casting. They also produced the first iron weapons. With these secret weapons, they became the terror of their neighbors and rudely introduced the rest of the world to the Iron Age. In the Far East, it should be noted, the Chinese also discovered iron ore, recognized its possibilities, and independently invented the blast furnace and iron casting.⁹²

8,000 years ago: *The Invention of Writing* Writing staves off amnesia and marks the divide between prehistory and history. There are as many different ways of creating a written language as there are different languages; and it is intriguing to study the several different and remarkably ingenious systems which man has developed for recording in written form the languages he has invented.

Around 8000 BC, Sumerian accountants devised a method of recording their transactions called cuneiform, a form of pictographic writing produced by a stylus which made wedge-shaped indentations in clay tablets, much as a deer leaves its wedge-shaped hoof-print in the clay bank of a stream. *Cuneus* is the Latin word for ‘wedge’. The primitive picture script used in accounting, say of a stick-drawn animal representing a goat or a sheep, gradually evolved into a simplified system for more widespread meaning and use, where the indentations in the clay came to stand for the sound of syllables.⁹³

Ancient Egyptians, 8000 years ago, developed an entirely different script – Hieroglyphics – religious and magical uses that were the sole preserve of priests, scribes, and imperial officials. Hieroglyphics or ‘sacred carvings’ are stylized pictures of an object to represent a word, a syllable, or a sound.⁹⁴

The Chinese, 3500 years ago during the Shang dynasty 1500-1000 BC, invented

their own distinctive characters, first incised on oracle bones, to stand for words or syllables. Thus, today a Chinese character can be read by all the who speak different dialects in China, much as the Arabic numeral 9 can be variously read as *nine*, *neun*, *neuf*, *nueve*, *jiu*, depending upon whether one speaks English, German, French, Spanish, or Mandarin.

The Phoenicians, about 3200 years ago, were merchants who needed a simpler and more efficient way to keep records. They made a stunning advance in writing by being the first to invent the alphabet. Some Phoenician genius hit upon the idea that a small number of symbols representing sounds, not syllables, can be combined in ways to represent the sound of any word in any language, thus creating the alphabet.⁹⁵ The Phoenicians proceeded to simplify the Sumerian cuneiform writing they had learnt from the Hittites: 550 cuneiform characters were ousted to make way for 22 letters of the new alphabet. And so today, for example, the name of China's foremost modern leader can be written either in traditional Chinese characters as or as 'Mao Zedong' in the alphabetized version known as Pinyin.

The Rise of the Ancient Great Civilizations We have reached one of the greatest turning points in the human story, the momentous shift from campsite to permanent dwelling, what Colin Renfrew calls "the sedentary revolution." and the stage was set for the rise of the ancient great civilizations. It marks *Homo sapiens*'s transition from hunter-gatherer to farmer. Once humans crossed the great divide from nomad to settler, they routinely built permanent shelters for themselves. A new and more complex relationship between man and the material world became possible. Our primal ancestors also created "valuables" (commodities or articles of commerce) and the systems of commodity exchange that became the basis for trade and the economy. They developed "ranked and stratified societies," and the power systems that made kingdoms and great empires possible. Finally, they constructed tombs and monuments to honor themselves and created images and shrines to honor their gods.⁹⁶ In other words, all the elements were in place for civilizations to emerge. And so they did in the great rivers valleys of the Middle East, Egypt, India, and China (and much later, of course, in Mexico and Peru). Lonergan gives a list of conditions required for the advent of a civilization: "an increasing differentiation of roles to be fulfilled and of tasks to be performed, an ever more elaborate organization and regulation to ensure fulfilment and performance, an ever denser population, and greater and greater abundance."⁹⁷

A human community on this scale is not something that occurs by chance. Civilization, says Lonergan, is "an achievement of man."⁹⁸ It is "a construction of the human spirit" and "not the work of an isolated individuals nor even of single generations."⁹⁹ Civilization is a joint enterprise that evolves from "a common mode of experience, a common mode of understanding, a common measure of judgment, and a common consent."¹⁰⁰ Such common meanings eventually "find expression in family and polity, in the legal and economic system, in customary morals and educational arrangements, in language and literature, art and religion..."¹⁰¹ This is to say that the common meanings which constitute human communities have histories:

[Communities] originate in single minds; they become common only through successful and widespread communication; they are transmitted to successive generations only through training and education. Slowly and gradually they are clarified, expressed, formulated, defined, only to be

enriched and deepened and transformed, and no less often to be impoverished, emptied out, and deformed.¹⁰²

Lonergeran was interested not only in man merely in the abstract, but also in man's historicity. A concrete individual human being has a constant — human nature —, but also a variable — human historicity.¹⁰³ At birth, human nature is yours as a gift. Historicity is what you make of yourself. The historicity of the human race is what the human race has made of itself; it is “mankind in its concrete self-realization.”¹⁰⁴ Or as Colin Renfrew puts it, the genetic DNA we inherit is humankind's “hardware;” the development of human culture, “the accumulating learned experience,” spells out for us the development of humankind's “software.”¹⁰⁵

The story of human meaning is thus the story of human collaboration within communities as it develops over the millennia. The desire to live, says Lonergan, precedes the desire to know.¹⁰⁶ In other words, says Lonergan, “the basic forward thrust has to do with doing, and it runs from primitive fruit-gatherers to the wealth and power of the ancient high civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and other lands.”¹⁰⁷ And so technological meaning expanded “as human ingenuity advances from the spears of hunters and the nets of fishers to the industrial complexes of the twentieth century.”¹⁰⁸ Social meanings in their turn expand as domestic, economic and political systems evolve.¹⁰⁹ As David Sloan Wilson points out:

...societies must become differentiated [into leaders and followers] as they increase in size. Thirty people can sit around a campfire and arrive at a consensual decision; thirty million people cannot.¹¹⁰

Lonergeran was interested in how primitive man went about the practical tasks of a life that is, he said echoing Thomas Hobbes, “hard, brutish, and short.”¹¹¹ His analysis focused on the development of practical understanding, of that the specific kind of thinking, as we have seen, that moved man from “fruit-collecting, hunting, fishing, gardening” to the creation of stone, copper, bronze, and iron tools and weapons and to farming and the domestication of animals—two key inventions which triggered population growth and the division of labor. Indeed, surplus food, goods, and services led to the invention of writing, the development of arts and crafts, and the practical sciences of surveying, engineering and metallurgy which in time made possible “the social organization of the temple states and later the empires of the ancient high civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, the valleys of the Indus and the Hoang-ho [the Yellow River in China], Mexico and Peru.” Lonergan stood in awe of the scope of their achievements: the emergence of “great works of irrigation, vast structures of stone or brick, armies and navies, complicated processes of book-keeping, the beginnings of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy.”¹¹²

For all his awe, Lonergan was in the long run less interested in the dimensions of what early men and women constructed than in the kind of thinking they used to make their achievements possible. The focus here is how Lonergan's understanding of understanding helped him and ourselves to understand the broad lines of the kind of thinking which enabled human beings to move through the stages from hunting and food gathering to the creation of the ancient high civilizations. Indeed, Lonergan's understanding of understanding gave him the tool with which to look back on human cultural and intellectual development and evaluate it with a kind of philosophical and

psychological hindsight. The story of early man's inventions, according to Lonergan's analysis, is basically the story of the development of that much abused way of thinking called common sense: "practical intelligence and its style is the spontaneous accumulation of insights into the ways of nature and the affairs of men."¹¹³ He was particularly struck by one surprising insight: "the technical art involving the use of tools and instruments flourished before any great introduction of [theoretical] science into practical living."¹¹⁴ It was extraordinary that civilizations can arise, even though "thought and speech and action remain within the world of common sense, of persons and things related to us, of ordinary language."¹¹⁵

I think Lonergan would have readily concurred with accuracy of the calculated judgment Thomas Goldstein expressed in his history of the rise of modern science:

It is a mark of modern ignorance to think that we have become progressively smarter. As far as sheer mental vigor is concerned (including the capacity for applying a disciplined intellect to a given problem), history tells us in no uncertain terms that creative intelligence was always present as a human potential, even in civilizations that we choose to think of as primitive....Who is to say whether the task of tackling a problem without the benefit of a well-developed body of methods and information may not have required far greater intellectual vigor and originality than is needed for proceeding from problem to problem within the safely established disciplines? Prehistoric, early historic, as well as Medieval science have faced such a task.¹¹⁶

In summary, Lonergan spotted in the initial cultural achievements of early men and women evidence for the kind of thinking he identifies as lying within the realm of common sense. Common sense is common insofar as it is common to all in the group. Undifferentiated common sense is the characteristic of primitive man: "thinking is a community enterprise" where all have "developed skills, a language and some tools."¹¹⁷ Tribe will differ from tribe. For instance, there are "enormous differences between Eskimos and the pygmies or the bushmen, but in any given group there is a common intelligence."¹¹⁸ Indeed, human cooperation called for a division of labor; and over time the undifferentiated common sense of the family, the tribe and the clan gave rise to the differentiated common sense of the laborer, the technician, the entrepreneur, and the politician and statesman, all collaborating eventually in the vast enterprise of creating the ancient high civilizations.¹¹⁹

To be brief, the realm of common sense, then, is the world of persons and things in their relationship to us.¹²⁰ It is the world of material things, of flora and fauna, of relatives, friends, acquaintances, fellow citizens, and of all other persons we encounter in life and work. It is the world of the immediate, the concrete, the particular, the world in which all of us, like early men and women, live and move and have our being.¹²¹

With the help of Lonergan's analysis, then, let's take closer look at ordinary good sense. Fundamentally, for him, common sense is "an accumulation of insights resulting in an intellectual habit." Specifically, an individual with good common sense in almost any situation can 'grasp just how to behave, just what to say, what to do, how to do it.;" without common sense, he is at a loss and simply "does not understand the concrete milieu in which he lives."¹²² The success of modern scientific thinking, as we have seen, fostered an unwarranted prejudice against commonsense thinking to the point where

some attempt to discredit or invalidate it entirely.¹²³ Common sense has its limitations, true; and more about them later. But actually commonsense thinking is perfectly valid, as evidenced by its spectacular success over the millennia in solving the concrete problems of daily existence.

In the area of practical inventions, there are therefore three elements: a practical problem, a solution, and a criterion for judging the success or failure of the solution. Insight is the pivot that “makes the difference between the tantalizing problem and the evident solution.”¹²⁴ Primitive man needed a cutting tool. Some inventive genius with insight designed a handaxe and by trial and error worked out a practical method of producing it. The criterion of any tool’s success, of course, is whether it works or not. The handaxe, as we have seen, was a spectacular success. Roughly the same but more sophisticated elements are needed for collaboration in the complex arena of trade, the economy, and politics. Lonergan writes:

The seed of intellectual curiosity has to grow into a rugged tree to hold its own against the desires and fears, conations and appetites, drives and interests, that inhabit the heart of man. Moreover, every insight has its retinue of presuppositions, implications, and applications. One has to take the steps needed for that retinue to come to light. The presuppositions and implications of a given insight have to knit coherently with the presuppositions and implications of other insights. Its possibilities of concrete application have to enter into the field of operations and undergo the test of success or failure.¹²⁵

In brief: for successful human cooperation one must be intellectually alert, take one’s time, talk things over, and put any plan to the test of action. If the plan works, it is a success. “The pragmatic criterion of success,” says Lonergan, “is the absence of failure that would reveal the necessity of thinking things out afresh.”¹²⁶

What then for Lonergan are the characteristic traits of commonsense thinking? Common sense, says Lonergan, is egocentric, intellectual, widespread, and practical. First of all, ordinary good sense is *egocentric*. Not in the pejorative sense of the word as meaning self-centered or selfish. Rather, common sense considers others persons and things in reference to oneself and one’s practical needs. But it concerns itself with what I am to say or do or need, not with what someone else might say or do or need. For instance, if I wish to orient myself in a large shopping mall, I find the floor plan and look for the little arrow which says “You are here;” and then for the shops I intend to visit. I am “here” and the shops are “there.” I am the point of reference.¹²⁷ Primitive humans lived very much in the present: the immediate need was for nourishment, shelter, offspring, and protection from wild animals. Indeed, need motivated them to acquire the skills that would ensure very concrete and particular goods: sufficient food and drink, adequate shelter, warm clothing, tools, and weapons for hunting or defense.¹²⁸

As the glaciers retreated from the last Ice Age, man had discovered multiple ways of using fire. There is evidence that *Homo habilis* had first tamed fire, as we have seen, as far back as 400,000 years ago. Pre-historian Gordon Childe had a plausible conjecture of how it happened. Man would have been attracted to a tree set afire by lightning, its flames burning mysteriously in the night, “the terrible red flower from which other jungle dwellers flee in terror.”¹²⁹ Some individual grasped the potential of fire. The first task was to feed it and keep it burning. Perhaps the eternal flame burning at John F.

Kennedy's tomb in Arlington satisfies a dual atavistic urge: memory like fire must never be allowed to die out. Noticing that even the largest animals took flight at the advance of a wild fire, some one had a momentous insight: a fire at the entrance of his rock shelter would keep hungry night prowlers at bay. With a flaming torch in hand, moreover, one would be able to explore the innermost recesses of the pitch-black cave in which one found shelter, a venture to serve as a symbol of the eternal human desire to search out whatever lies hidden in darkness. Some daring and probably very hungry individual may have taken a bite of roasted flesh from an animal caught in a forest fire and learned that one can eat meat which when taken raw is indigestible. In Childe's judgment, the discovery of fire is of "first class significance;" it enabled man to create and control "the mysterious power of heat."¹³⁰ Indeed, "in the mastery of fire man was controlling a mighty physical force and a conspicuous chemical change. For the first time in history a creation of Nature was directing one of the great forces of nature."¹³¹ The control of fire is undoubtedly the first great achievement of commonsense intelligence.

Second, common sense is *intellectual*. Each of us lives and has to use his head to live well; each of us has to deal daily with concrete, particular things, persons, situations and each needs knowledge to deal successfully with problems of concrete living.¹³² You ask questions about what to say or do and questions lead to insights. Indeed, common sense involves a "flow of questions" which produce a "clustering of insights,...a matter of concrete insights into concrete situations."¹³³ Thus, Lonergan calls common sense an accumulation of insights which results in "an intellectual habit."¹³⁴ You come to know the world you live in by an intellectual habit, by a practical, self-correcting learning process, by trial and error. The least common denominator in common sense, says Lonergan, is precisely this characteristic, self-correcting, trial and error, process of learning:

Experience gives rise to inquiry and insight. Insight gives rise to speech and action. Speech and action sooner or later reveal their defects to give rise to further inquiry and fuller insight.¹³⁵

Lonergan suggests you reflect on your own experience in dealing with other people: "insights gradually accumulate, coalesce, qualify and correct one other."¹³⁶ In any given situation, "with a good look round and a shrewd eye on this or that person," you come up with insights that "will decide what's up and what's to be done."¹³⁷ Over time you store up the insights you need to speak and act in a way that fits the situation, although you may have to pause long enough to figure things out when the situation is unfamiliar. In all circumstances, then, you are able "to grasp just how to behave, just what to say, what to do, how to do it."¹³⁸ And this you do pretty much as a matter of course, without paying much attention to it.¹³⁹ Indeed, common sense is a procedure you ordinarily practice spontaneously: "one notices, admires, tries to imitate, fails perhaps, watches and listens again and again till practice makes perfect."¹⁴⁰ But eventually insights add up to the point where you can deal successfully with whatever turns up. On the other hand, should you be one of those unfortunates who lack common sense, you fail to understand the concrete milieu in which you find yourself; you simply haven't a clue how to act and so are lost.¹⁴¹

Lonergan sketches a pleasing portrait of the man of commonsense intelligence in his dealing with others:

At a given place, in a given job, among a given group of people, a man can be at intelligent ease in every situation in which he is called upon to speak or act. He always knows just what is up, just the right thing to say, just what needs to be done, just how to go about it. His experience has taken him through the cycle of eventualities that occur in his milieu. His intelligence has ever been alert. He has made his mistakes and from them he has learnt not to make them twice. He has developed the acumen that notices movements away from the familiar routine, the poise that sizes them up before embarking on a course of action, the resourcefulness that hits upon the response that meets the new issue.¹⁴²

The classic example of a man of common sense is, of course, the wandering hero of Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, in scrape after scrape on his journey from the Trojan War to his home in Ithaca, is able to face every threat to his life, size it up, and deal with it with competence and assurance. The wily Odysseus, says Homer, is a man who is never at a loss.

Common sense, moreover, is *widespread*. Such intelligence, Lonergan reminds us, is not the exclusive preserve of Nobel Prize winners; one encounters men and women of intelligence in every walk of life.¹⁴³ You will find intelligence among family members and friends and the people where you work. There are intelligent farmers and craftsmen, employers and employees, electronic technicians and auto mechanics, doctors and lawyers, politicians and diplomats. There is intelligence in business and industry, on Madison Avenue, in journalism, in sports writing, in entertainment and the arts. What distinguishes the intelligent man or woman in every instance is "a greater readiness in catching on, in getting the point, in seeing the issue, in grasping implications, in acquiring know-how."¹⁴⁴ Intelligent people possess a kind of 'universal tool' which they can adapt in a way that enables them to deal with any situation they are likely to encounter. "People who are mechanically minded," says Lonergan, "can purchase a handle into which you can fit a hammer, a screwdriver, a chisel, an awl, or a wrench—one tool that can be adapted to a whole series of purposes."¹⁴⁵ This squares perfectly with what Barry Lopez reports: "In *Eskimos Realities* Edmund Carpenter remarks on a well-known phenomenon, that Eskimos quickly grasps the essence of any mechanical problem and solve it...Nineteenth-century explorers remarked on this capacity often, as have modern scientists with broken outboard engines and wristwatches."¹⁴⁶ Père Dutilly, a Marist arctic biologist at Catholic University who spent his summers among the Inuit, told me in the 1960's that whenever an Eskimo bought a new outboard motor he promptly disassembled and reassembled it with astonishing ease.

Most important of all, common sense is *practical*. It concerns itself with "the practical tasks of daily life;"¹⁴⁷ it seeks knowledge for the sake of "making and doing."¹⁴⁸ It is not only interested in "dealing with persons but in mastering things."¹⁴⁹ In any given field, one gradually accumulates insights until one is at home with the necessary tasks, and becomes "a master of the trade." A skilled shoemaker knows whether or not there any further relevant questions to ask in the making or repairing of shoes.¹⁵⁰

Artifacts garnered from all over the planet testify to the common sense intelligence of early man. Consider, for instance, the fascination for archeologists of the 5300 year old Iceman found in the Tyrolean Alpine glacier which lies not only in his perfectly preserved body, but also in his weapons and tools and the clothes he was

wearing (Figure 24.1)¹⁵¹. Common sense thinking and making had outfitted him with a leather belt and loincloth, a deer skin jacket, leather leggings, an outer cape of woven grasses, a fur-lined conical cap, and calf-skin shoes insulated with grass. His sensible survival kit included a copper ax, a hazel and skin frame (possibly for a back pack), bone arrow points, quiver, flint tools and knives, a leather pouch with a flint awl, and a sharpened flint scraper. One expert archeologist was so struck by the practicality of the apparel that he wrote: “the sophistication of past technology and culture tends still to take us by surprise.”¹⁵² In the exercise of practical commonsense, primitive man excelled.

I cannot but marvel at the accomplishments of prehistoric hunters and gatherers. Barry Lopez speaks for many when he writes of the achievements of the paleo-Eskimos of the Arctic Small Tool tradition, for instance, who crossed the Bering Strait in skin boats (at roughly the same time as the Iceman traveled in the Alps) and set up camp-sites in what Canadian archaeologist Robert McGhee calls “the coldest, darkest and most barren regions ever inhabited by man.” No wonder then, says Lopez, that “one looks today upon the remains of their dwellings—a fox-bone awl, a quartz arrowhead, the ring of stones that held down their skin tents—with profound respect.”¹⁵³ And what Lopez has written about the Eskimos whom the first Europeans encountered in the arctic is equally true of our primal ancestors:

With a minimum of materials historic Eskimos created a wealth of utilitarian implements, distinguished by ingenuity in design, specificity of purpose, and appropriateness of material to the task.”¹⁵⁴

The role of the common sense mode of intellectual operation, therefore, is of unparalleled significance and absolutely essential for daily living. Consider, for instance, the achievements of Mesoamerican Indians. Indian maize was and is the most common crop throughout Mesoamerica. Its harvest weight is heavier than any other cereal grain. But maize does not occur in the wild as do edible grains in the Middle East. Its kernels are encased in husks too tough for self-propagation and must be sown by farmers. Maize therefore does not come from domesticated wild strains. Man created maize. How is not yet clear. One thing seems certain. Modern maize was the result of intentional hybridization, “arguably,” says Penn State geneticist Nina V. Federoff, “man’s first, and perhaps his greatest feat of genetic engineering.”¹⁵⁵ In addition to maize, Mesoamerican farmers created the *milpa*, a “field” in which maize is cultivated with as many as twelve other crops.¹⁵⁶ What is remarkable is that in combination the crops are “nutritionally and environmentally complementary”. The system meets the body’s nutritional needs and allows the same acres to be cultivated over and over again without rotation. Some plots in Mesoamerica have been in use for four thousand years. In the judgment of maize researcher H. Garrison Wilkes, “the *milpa* is one of the most successful human inventions ever created.”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, where the *milpa* flourished, so did Mesoamerican civilization.

While commonsense—egocentric, intelligent, and practical—accounts for the material achievements of early men and women up to and including the ancient high civilizations, one must not forget the crucial social dimension of their lives. We have already mentioned the social dimension, but it merits more focused attention here. The primitive community, says Lonergan, was intersubjective. He writes with feeling:

The bond of mother and child, man and wife, father and son, reaches into

a past of ancestors to give meaning and cohesion to the clan or tribe or nation. A sense of belonging together provides the dynamic premise for common enterprise, for mutual aid and succour, for the sympathy that augments joys and divides sorrows. Even after civilization is attained, intersubjective community survives in the family with its circle of relatives and its accretion of friends, in customs and folk-ways, in basic arts and crafts and skills, in language and song and dance, and most concretely of all in the inner psychology and radiating influence of women....Emotion and sentiment are invoked to impart an elemental vigour and pitch to the vast and cold, technological, economic, and political structures of human invention and convention.¹⁵⁸

There are then, says Lonergan, as many brands of common sense as there are different languages, different occupations, different social arrangements, different cultures. Thus, as noted earlier, the practical common sense of primitive communities is differentiated over time by a division of labor.¹⁵⁹ The demands of specialized tasks lead to the “development of arts and crafts and practical sciences such as astronomy, engineering, and surveying.”¹⁶⁰ Lonergan was obviously fascinated by the methods of discovery that make civilization possible. From his account of insight, he was able to discern the structure of civilizational development and decline.¹⁶¹ His understanding of insight enabled him to differentiate the role that commonsense insight and oversight played in the growth and the disintegration of ancient high civilizations.¹⁶² He writes:

...someone understands something, gets a bright idea, and figures out what would happen if this idea were put into effect. He takes counsel with others or with the influential people; a policy is devised; consent is won; and human action changes in the light of the new idea. The change in human action brings about a new situation, and the new situation suggests further acts of understanding.¹⁶³

The whole process by which civilizations rise, he says, functions like a wheel: “situation, insight, counsel, policy, common consent, action, new situation, new insight, new counsel, new policy,...and the snowball effect of the entire cycle.”¹⁶⁴

The cumulation of insights leads to progress and conversely the cumulation of oversights leads to decline. Progress occurs as human intelligence develops over time; as Lonergan writes in *Insight*:

...concrete situations give rise to insights which issue into policies and courses of action. Action transforms the existing situation to give rise to further insights, better policies, more effective courses of action. It follows that if insight occurs, it keeps recurring; and at each recurrence knowledge develops, action increases its scope, and situations improve.¹⁶⁵

In other words, he says, “the wheel of progress moves forward through the successive transformations of an initial situation in which are gathered coherently and cumulatively all the insights that occurred along the way.”¹⁶⁶

But the wheel of progress becomes a wheel of decline when bias distorts the process. Decline occurs when men and women take flight from understanding. For

Lonergan, the flight from understanding is a bias that “blocks the insights that concrete situations demand.”¹⁶⁷ Lonergan himself summarizes what he has written on the biases that block insight:

- There is the bias of the neurotic fertile in evasion of the insight his analyst sees he needs.
- There is the bias of the individual egoist whose interest is confined to the insights that would enable him to exploit each new situation to his own personal advantage.
- There is the bias of group egoism blind to the fact that the group no longer fulfills its once useful function and that it is merely clinging to power by all the maneuvers that in one way or another block development and impede progress.
- There is finally the general bias of all ‘good’ men of common sense, cherishing the illusion that their single talent, common sense, is omniscient, insisting on procedures that no longer work, convinced that the only way to do things is to muddle through, and spurning as idle theorizing and empty verbiage any rational account of what has to be done.¹⁶⁸

For all its utility, common sense has one tragic flaw. It can easily make the profound mistake of viewing itself as *omniscient* and as the ultimate tribunal that settles all questions.¹⁶⁹ Common sense restricts its questions to “the realm of the concrete and particular, the immediate and practical.” As a result, common sense is all too prone to concentrate on short-term benefits and ignore long-term costs. While it is true that common sense knows, “it does not know what it knows nor how it knows nor how to correct and complement its own activities”¹⁷⁰ when civilization is in decline. Lonergan issued an emphatic warning: “Common sense commonly feels itself omniscient in practical affairs, commonly is blind to long-term consequences of policies and courses of action, commonly is unaware of the admixture of common nonsense in its more cherished convictions and slogans.”¹⁷¹ Indeed, common sense is so thickheaded, says Lonergan, that only “blind and destructive blows, inevitable in even a partial break-down of social order, can impress on practical common sense that there are limits to its competence and that, if it would master the new situation, it must first consent to learn.”¹⁷² Unfortunately, commonsense may all too easily brush aside any other question as irrelevant; for after all, in Lonergan’s ironic remark, “men of common sense are busy. They have the world’s work to do.”¹⁷³

Tragically, says Lonergan, the activities of biased minds lead to “unintelligent policies and inept courses of action.” Indeed, “the deteriorating situation seems to provide the uncritical, biased mind with factual evidence in which the bias is claimed to be verified.” The upshot is that “in ever increasing measure intelligence comes to be regarded as irrelevant to practical living.” One settles into “a decadent routine. Civilization becomes “a dump” in which one casts “the amorphous and incompatible products of all the biases of self-centered and shortsighted individuals and groups.”¹⁷⁴ In the end, “initiative becomes the privilege of violence.”¹⁷⁵

But fortunately for the human race, says Lonergan, “within the walls of [anyone’s] individuality, there is more than a Trojan horse.” In each individual, he reminds us, there is the invariant structure, the normative pattern of conscious intending:

experiencing, understanding the experience, verifying one's understanding, judging, and deciding. In other words, conscious intending will out. In the end, Lonergan is optimistic about human beings and the future of our race:

[Man] has no choice about wanting to understand; he is committed not by any decision of his own but by nature to intelligent behaviour; and as these determinants are responsible for the emergence of social orders in the past, so they account for their development, their maintenance, their reformation. Spontaneously every collapse is followed by a reconstruction, every disaster by a new beginning, every revolution by a new era.

His conclusion is emphatic and full of hope: “commonly, men want a different social order but, left to themselves, they never consent to a complete anarchy.”¹⁷⁶ What Barry Lopez writes of migrating birds can be said of human beings: “...their lives seemed flushed with yearning.”¹⁷⁷

The process of progress and decline, then, is cyclical, a process which Arnold Toynbee, in Lonergan's judgment, had “so lavishly and brilliantly illustrated” in his *Study of History*.¹⁷⁸ He greatly admired Toynbee's “daring and imaginative” spirit and judged him “superb” in illustrating “how human intelligence works in history.” Toynbee had analyzed the cycle in terms of challenge and response, withdrawal and return, where the challenge of a situation elicits a response that is guided by intelligent and practical insight into the situation. Lonergan was particularly taken by Toynbee's account of the role which creative personalities and creative minorities play as prime agents in the process by which civilizations rise. Thus, he writes:

[Any] situation can be wholly transformed if there is a succession of personalities who are not simply sunk into the existing situation, immersed in its routines, and functioning like cogs in a wheel, with little grasp of possibilities, with a lack of daring. They withdraw perhaps even physically, but at least mentally. They are detached; it is because of their detachment that they can see how things could be different. They may be accounted as nobodies while they are withdrawn, but when they return, they transform the world. In their withdrawal they become themselves, and they return with a mission.¹⁷⁹

Lonergan gives a striking example of such withdrawal and return; in his judgment, “the most influential man in the twentieth century—the strongest candidate at least—is Karl Marx, and he spent years in the British Museum writing books that everyone else laughed at.”¹⁸⁰ Whether intentionally or not, this description of a creative personality and his role fits Lonergan himself to the T.

While the ‘return’ of which he writes may not take place in the lifetime of a creative personality, Lonergan continues, “Toynbee accounts for the process of [the creative personality's] influence in terms of a creative minority. To begin, a creative personality influences a small group, which in turn influences other groups.”¹⁸¹ What Toynbee states here reminded Lonergan of Plato's “spark that leaps from soul to soul.”¹⁸²

Finally, the insight that caught and held Lonergan's attention as he studied the history of primitive man and the rise of the ancient great civilizations was what he came to call “emergent probability”. I was intrigued to learn that today archeologists are not

interested so much in the typology of stone age artifacts as in the “operational sequence” by which a stone age tool was “made, used, resharpened, recycled, changed shape, and finally thrown away.”¹⁸³ Typology deals with a stone artifact as an end product. Operational sequence (*chaîne opératoire*)¹⁸⁴ deals with the whole process of toolmaking, from finding the raw material, reducing suitable stones to cores, removing blanks from the cores, retouching the blanks, using the tools, and eventually discarding them. By reconstructing the operational sequence, one can get some idea of the choices made at each stage of the process (Figure 22.1). One is thus interested in the life history of the implements and the human choices that the story of their history reveals.¹⁸⁵ In much the same way, Loneragan was interested in the operational sequence or emergent probability by which civilizations arise. By emergent probability he meant a “conditioned series of schemes of recurrence” and the probability of their emergence and survival. The schemes that recur are accumulations of insights into the successive situations of concrete living which over time are adapted and adjusted by a process of trial and error. Concretely, where conditions were right, the schemes of recurrence gave rise to the manufacture and distribution of stone and metal tools and weapons, the raising and harvesting of crops, the breeding of animals, and the various methods of keeping written records. What is probable, says Loneragan, sooner or later becomes actual, given the proper conditions. Once it is operating, the probability of emergence of a scheme of recurrence gives way to the probability of its survival. Once the first stone tools were invented, stone tools continued to be manufactured and improved upon over the millennia. Next, the actual functioning of one scheme fulfills the conditions for the functioning of future schemes. The actual production of stone tools paved the way for the production of copper tools, once copper was discovered and some one had an insight into its possibilities. To be concise, as long as any scheme of recurrence survives, it fulfills the conditions of the probability for the emergence of future schemes. Once the key inventions guaranteed the stable production of food and record keeping, population swelled, commerce thrived, cities and empires were built, and great civilizations arose.¹⁸⁶ Every civilization, then, is an enormously complex human artifact.¹⁸⁷ The world-order that results from emergent probability is “not some design for utopia, some theoretic ideal, some set of ethical precepts, some code of laws, or some super-institution.” It is rather “the actual functioning or malfunctioning set of ‘if-then’ relationships guiding operators and coordinating operations.” Every civilization, whether in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Mexico, and Peru, is from the beginning and remains throughout its existence one vast on-going construction site. It is the product “of all the skill and know-how, all the industry and resourcefulness, all the ambition and fellow-feeling of a whole people, adapting to each change of circumstance, meeting each new emergency, struggling against every tendency to disorder.”¹⁸⁸

The practical implications of a grasp of the notion of emergent probability are, for Loneragan, enormous; it is conceivable, he argues, that informed and authentic human beings can ensure the progress of civilization and correct its decline. Indeed, with the knowledge emergent probability provides, human beings can eventually control history. Loneragan writes:

Man can work out the manner in which prior insights and decisions determine the possibilities and probabilities of later insights and decisions; he can guide his present decisions in the light of their influence on future insights and decisions; finally, this control of the emergent probability of

the future can be exercised not only by the individual in choosing his career and in forming his character, not only by adults in education the younger generation, but also by mankind in its consciousness of its responsibility to the future of mankind.

Lonergan concludes: “Just as technical, economic, and political development gives man a dominion over nature, so also the advance of knowledge creates and demands a human contribution to the control of human history.”¹⁸⁹

To sum up. The first signs of commonsense intelligence, of purposely-directed human intelligence, are the stone age implements of primitive man. Indeed, says Lonergan, primitive hunters took time out from hunting to make flint spearheads and primitive fishers took the time out to create fish hooks and nets—an early instance of what he terms withdrawal and return. The time spent and the ingenuity employed in making weapons and tools were more than amply rewarded by greater success in hunting and fishing.¹⁹⁰ In addition, new tool making techniques were developed and perfected; tools were made, and a surplus stored and then traded. None of this took place without intersubjective cooperation and a division of labor: commonsense technology evokes a common sense economy, and a commonsense economy evokes a commonsense polity. Such, then, is the commonsense specialization that eventually “does the world’s work, conducts its business, governs its cities and states, teaches most of its classes and runs all of its schools.”¹⁹¹ Briefly, “common sense is the mode of all concrete understanding and judgment.”¹⁹² What all this means, says Lonergan, is that common sense yields, not generalized knowledge, but generalized utility. Indeed, common sense communicates its wisdom not in a general principle which applies to every situation, but in a proverb which offers a specific piece of useful advice *Look before you leap!*, which, it should be noted, is commonly countered by its opposite *He who hesitates is lost!*¹⁹³ Indeed, it is common sense which over time gives the world its wisdom literature.¹⁹⁴

Finally, the material and social development of the human race, for all its progress and decline, gradually became “an indispensable constituent of human living.” The “common meanings” that constitute a community and the lives of individuals in the community “are the hard-won fruit of man’s advancing knowledge of nature, of the gradual evolution of his social forms and of his cultural achievements.”¹⁹⁵ This twofold human development, says Lonergan, is “in accord with emergent probability”¹⁹⁶ which is “like an incoming tide, first it reaches the promontories, then it penetrates the bays, and finally it pours up the estuaries[;] ...new ideas spread over most of the earth to bind together in an astounding interdependence the fortunes of individuals living disparate lives in widely separated lands.”¹⁹⁷

In November 1519, Spanish invaders marched to the capital of Montezuma’s Aztec empire and beheld one splendid result of emergent probability. Charles C. Mann imagines the stunning impact which the sight of Tenochtitlán¹⁹⁸ must have had on Hernán Cortés and his troops:

Tenochtitlán dazzled its invaders—it was bigger than Paris, Europe’s greatest metropolis. The Spaniards gawped like yokels at the wide streets, ornately carved buildings, and markets bright with goods from hundreds of miles away. Boats flitted like butterflies around the three grand causeways that linked Tenochtitlán to the mainland. Long aqueducts conveyed water from the distant mountains across the lake and into the

city. Even more astounding than the great temples and immense banners and colorful promenades were the botanical gardens—none existed in Europe. The same novelty attended the force of a thousand men that kept the crowded streets immaculate. (Streets that weren't ankle-deep in sewage! The conquistadores had never conceived of such a thing.)

An awestruck Cortés reported to his master in Madrid: “In Spain there is nothing to compare with it.”¹⁹⁹

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1. *Insight*, 207-208.
 2. *Ibid.*, 295.
 3. *Ibid.*, 298.
 4. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 69.
 5. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 344-345.
 6. *Method in Theology*, 84.
 7. For Lonergan on common sense, see *Insight*, Chapters VI and VII, 173-244. Also *The Lonergan Reader*, 97-152; 466-470.
 8. *Method in Theology*, 181.
 9. *Ibid.*, 181.
 10. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd. 2003, 6.
 11. Nicholas Wade, “The Origins of Europeans; Combining Genetics and Archeology, Scientists Rough Out Continent's 50,000-Year-Old Story,” in Nicholas Wade, ed., *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 261.
 12. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*, 9.
 13. Christopher Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History*, ed. John J. Mulloy (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956) 69. Quoted in Lonergan “History” in *Topics in Education*, 253.
 14. Nicholas Wade, “The Origins of Europeans; Combining Genetics and Archeology, Scientists Rough Out Continent's 50,000-Year-Old Story,” in Nicholas Wade, ed., *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 258.
 15. “The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration,” Vol. 10: *Topics in Education*, 49.
 16. Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), 14.
 17. *Method in Theology*, 89.
 18. *Insight*, 208-209.
 19. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 20.
 20. *Method in Theology*, 89.
 21. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*, 136-137.
 22. Homo sapiens: http://www.wsu.edu/gened/learn-modules/top_longfor/timeline/timeline.html Also human ancestry: <http://www.archaeologyinfo.com/species.htm>
 23. Isaac Asimov, in the introduction to Thomas Goldstein, *Dawn of Modern Science*, vii.
 24. Omo Valley, Ethiopia: <http://www.aliciapatterson.org/APF001973/Rensberger/Rensberger04/Rensberger04.html>
 25. Homo habilis: <http://www.archaeologyinfo.com/homohabilis.htm> Also: Google Image Search homo habilis
 26. Oldowan stone industry: <http://lithiccastinglab.com/gallery-pages/oldowanstonetools.htm> See also Google Image Search: Oldowan tools
 27. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 98.
 28. <http://www.finescience.com/commerce/cc1065-obsidian-scalpels.htm>
 29. "American Medical News", Nov. 2, 1984:21.
 30. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 11 and 144.

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31. Recent finds challenge the view that *homo habilis* evolved into *homo erectus*. Rather they may have been sister species overlapping in time.
32. Evolution of the Human Skull: http://uk.encarta.msn.com/media_461518283_761566394_1_1/evolution_of_the_human_skull.html. See also Google Image Search: Homo erectus, and Homo ergaster
33. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 118.
34. See Google Image Search: Levallois technique. Also Acheulian: <http://antiquity.ac.uk/Prolegals/marshall/marshall.html>
35. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1B1-383335.html>
36. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 37-38.
37. *Ibid.*, 50.
38. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 146 and 150.
39. *Ibid.*, 12.
40. <http://www.hf.uio.no/iakh/forskning/sarc/iakh/lithic/LEV/Lev.html>
41. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 25, 119.
42. See Google Image Search: Homo sapiens sapiens
43. John Noble Wilford, "In Ancient Skulls from Ethiopia, Familiar Faces," *NYTimes*, Tuesday, June 12, 2003, 1. See also <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2978800.stm>
44. Nicholas Wade, "The Origins of Europeans; Combining Genetics and Archeology, Scientists Rough Out Continent's 50,000-Year-Old Story," in Nicholas Wade, ed., *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 262. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 86.
45. Richard Klein, "Great Mysteries of Human Evolution," *Discover*, September, 2003, 41. Klein's theory is challenged by Sally MacBrearty of the University of Connecticut who maintains that there is evidence for the advent of modern humans as far back as 250,000 years ago.
46. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 51.
47. Erwin M. Segal, "Archaeology and Cognitive Science," in Colin Renfrew and Ezra Zubrow (Eds.), *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, 28 (Cambridge University Press, 1994). See also Steven Mithen's masterful account of recent advances in cognitive archaeology in *The Prehistory of the Mind* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1996, pb 1999); he writes (p. 11): "Indeed many archaeologists now feel confident that the time is ripe to move beyond asking questions about how these ancestors looked and behaved, to asking what was going on within their minds. It is time for a 'cognitive archaeology'."
48. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 187.
49. *Ibid.*, 190-191.
50. Quoted in Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 188.
51. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, 151-152.
52. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 109.
53. Paleolithic picture gallery: <http://www.iabrno.cz/agalerie/aagallery.htm>
54. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 92.
55. See Google Image Search: Aurignacian culture Also Aurignacian culture <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/chauvet/en/espa2.htm>
56. See Google Image Search: Knapping flint. Also Lavellois: <http://lithiccastinglab.com/gallery-pages/2002marchaurignacianpage3.htm>
57. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 82.
58. *Ibid.*, 93.
59. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987; originally published by New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 179.
60. See Google Image Search: Making harpoon
61. See Google Image Search: Animal tooth necklace
62. Chauvet: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/chauvet/en/> Lascaux: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/fr/>
63. <http://www.showcaves.com/english/es/showcaves/Altamira.html>
64. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 78-79.
65. See Google Image Search: Weaving Pavlov Hills
66. Brenda Fowler, "Finding Suggests Weaving Preceded Settled Life," *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, Nicholas Wade, ed., 52-56.
67. Solutrean tools: <http://www.geocities.com/lobrana/features/american.htm>

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68. *Humankind Emerging* (3rd edition) Bernard D. Campbell, editor (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown and Company 1982) 434.
69. Magdalenian culture: <http://www.iabrno.cz/agalerie/magdal.htm>
70. See Google Image Search: Magdalenian Style Tools:
71. See Google Image Search: Lascaux
72. <http://www.expasy.ch/spotlight/images/sptlt046.JPG>
73. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 105. See Google Image Search: flint sickle.
74. See Google Image Search: Paleolithic Projectile points
Also: <http://lithiccastinglab.com/gallery-pages/2008januariesolutreanpage2.htm>
75. Charles C. Mann, *1491: Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, 58.
76. *Insight*, 208.
77. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 108
78. John Noble Wilford, "First Settlers Domesticated Pigs Before Crops," *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, Nicholas Wade, ed., 35-36.
79. *Ibid.*, 38.
80. *Ibid.*, 36. Even today, in Maryland where I reside as I write, there are over 80,000 horses used primarily for sport and recreation.
81. J. R. Harlan and D. Sohary, "Distribution of Wild Wheats and Barley," *Science* (1966)153:1078; quoted in Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2005), 199.
82. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 21. Current evidence suggests agriculture was invented independently in different parts of the world. Roughly 10,000 years ago, the Chinese cultivated rice. Later, Mexicans grew corn and beans, South Americans potatoes, American Indians sunflower seeds. Recently we learn that taros and bananas were cultivated in the highlands of New Guinea beginning perhaps as far back as 10,000 years ago. See John Noble Wilford, "An Early Heartland of Agriculture Is Found in New Guinea," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, June 24, 2003, p.2.
83. Noted by C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 22.
84. John Noble Wilford, "Another Ancient Innovation: City Planning," *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 57-61. See hunters and gathers and farmers: <http://www.iabrno.cz/agalerie/mesolithic.htm>
85. Stephen L. Sass, *The Substance of Civilization: Materials and Human History from the Stone Age to the Age of Silicon* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998), 49-67.
86. See Google Image Search: Copper Age
87. Gordon Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, 96.
88. See <http://www.archaicbronze.com/>
89. John Noble Wilford, "Enduring Mystery Solved as Tin is Found in Turkey," *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 46-51.
90. Stephen L. Sass, *The Substance of Civilization: Materials and Human History from the Stone Age to the Age of Silicon*, 82-97.
91. See Google Image Search: Iron Age Tools
92. "Iron Mining and Processing," *Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia*, Vol. 9, 894 a. Chicago: Benton Publishers, 1981.
93. See Google Image Search: Cuneiform
94. See Google Image Search: Ancient Hieroglyphics
95. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 51.
96. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*, 115.
97. *Method in Theology*, 257-258.
98. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness, *A Third Collection*, 176.
99. "Existenz and Aggiornamento, *Collection*, 226.
100. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness, *A Third Collection*, 170.
101. *Ibid.*, 170.
102. "Existenz and Aggiornamento, *Collection*, 225-226.
103. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness, *A Third Collection*, 171.
104. *Ibid.*, 171.
105. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*. 117.

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106. "Common Sense," *Understanding and Being*, 86.
107. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, 177.
108. *Ibid.*, 176.
109. *Ibid.*, 176-177.
110. Quoted in Jared Diamond's review of David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*, *The New York Review of Books*, Volume XLIX, NUMBER 17, November 7, 2002, 31.
111. Appendix C, *Topics in Education*, 263. A slightly inaccurate quote, taken no doubt from Thomas Hobbes, who (in *Leviathan*, Part I, Chapter XIII) described man's life as being "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Cf. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 20. Paul Jordan writes (*Early Man*, 77) that "life was hard for the Neanderthals [who overlapped with Homo Sapiens] and almost always short—only into the thirties for males, the twenties for females, with high infant mortality..."
112. *Method in Theology*, 89, and "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 74-75.
113. "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, 177.
114. "Common Sense," *Understanding and Being*, 87.
115. *Method in Theology*, 158.
116. Thomas Goldstein, *Dawn of Modern Science*, 44.
117. "It is highly unlikely that [Old Stone Age or Paleolithic] tools were invented more than a very few times. Thus the community had to have the knowledge and had to communicate it to the toolmaker..." Erwin M. Segal, "Archaeology and Cognitive Science," in Colin Renfrew and Extra Zubrow (eds.) *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, 23; also on the internet at <http://cas-courses.buffalo.edu/classes/psy/segal/ARCHCHAP.htm>, p. 7.
118. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 73-74.
119. *Insight*, 209.
120. *Method in Theology*, 81.
121. *Ibid.*, 303.
122. Lonergan, "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 71.
123. Joseph Flanagan, S.J., *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 69, 90-94.
124. *Insight*, xi.
125. *Ibid.*, 285.
126. *Ibid.*, 293.
127. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 72-73, 140.
128. Matthew L. Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Lonergan's Theology," in Vernon Gregson, editor, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 257.
129. Gordon Childe, *What Happened in History*, 23.
130. *Ibid.*, 47.
131. *Ibid.*, 49.
132. "Common Sense," *Understanding and Being*, 86.
133. *Ibid.*, 88 and 91.
134. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 71.
135. *Method in Theology*, 303.
136. *Ibid.*, 81.
137. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 72.
138. *Ibid.*, 71.
139. "History," *Topics in Education*, 253.
140. *Method in Theology*, 303.
141. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 71.
142. *Insight*, 180.
143. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 74.
144. *Insight*, 173.
145. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 72.
146. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 194.
147. *Method in Theology*, 89.
148. *Insight*, 207.
149. "The Human Good as the Developing Subject," *Topics in Education*, 87.

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150. "Science and the New Learning," *Topics in Education*, 149.
151. See Google Image Search: Alpine Iceman. See also www.american.edu/ted/iceman.htm
152. Quoted in John Noble Wilford, "Iceman's Stone Age Outfit Offers Clues to a Culture," in *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, ed. by Nicholas Wade, 29.
153. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 181.
154. *Ibid.*, 191.
155. Quoted by Charles C. Mann in *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 196. See N. V. Federoff, "Prehistoric GM Corn," *Science* (2003) 302:1148-59.
156. See Google Image Search: Milpa
157. From an interview quoted by Charles C. Mann in *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 198.
158. *Insight*, 212.
159. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 74.
160. *Ibid.*, 75.
161. *Ibid.*, 50.
162. *Method in Theology*, 228.
163. "Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 50. Lonergan suggests Arnold Toynbee's treatment of "Challenge and Response" in his *Study of History* (vol.3: *The Growth of Civilizations*; index, Challenge-and-Response) as a fine illustration of his own analysis. Lonergan admits "a major weakness" in Toynbee's work: "he presented himself as an empirical scientist," and for this his critics faulted him. (See "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 52-53, note 18).. Lonergan remained enthusiastic, however, about Toynbee's achievement, and recommends that one views the work "not as an exercise in empirical method, but as the prolegomena to such an exercise, as a formulation of ideal types that would stand to broad historical investigations as mathematics stands to physics." ("Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," *A Third Collection*, 178)
164. "Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 50-51.
165. *Insight*, xiv.
166. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 105.
167. *Insight*, xiv.
168. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 105. Lonergan here summarizes what he wrote at greater length in *Insight*, 191-206, 218-242, 627-633, and 688-693.
169. "Discussion 3," *Understanding and Being*, 322.
170. *Insight*, 216.
171. *Method in Theology*, 53.
172. *Insight*, 216.
173. *Ibid.*, 178.
174. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 105.
175. *Insight*, xiv.
176. *Ibid.*, 215.
177. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 158.
178. *Insight*, 209. As already pointed out in n. 130, Lonergan was aware of criticisms of Toynbee's empirical method, but felt that Toynbee had met many of them in his *Reconsiderations*; see Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 109, n 8.
179. "Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 52.
180. *Ibid.*, 52.
181. *Ibid.*, 51-52.
182. *Ibid.*, 52.
183. Stringer, C. & Gamble, C. *In Search of the Neanderthals*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993. Quoted in Roger Grace, "The 'chaîne opératoire' approach to lithic analysis." www.hf.uio.no/iakk/roger/lithic/sarc.html, 3.
184. See Google Image Search: *chaîne opératoire*
185. Roger Grace, "The 'chaîne opératoire' approach to lithic analysis." www.hf.uio.no/iakk/roger/lithic/sarc.html, 1-3.
186. *Insight*, 121-122.
187. *Ibid.*, 124.
188. *Method in Theology*, 49-50.

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189. *Insight*, 227.
 190. *Ibid.*, 207.
 191. *Method in Theology*, 97.
 192. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 73.
 193. *Method in Theology*, 230.
 194. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 74.
 195. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, 4.
 196. *Insight*, 226-227.
 197. *Ibid.*, 214.
 198. See Google Image Search: Tenochtitlan
 199. Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* 126.

2

The Realm of Theory

When an animal has nothing to do, it goes to sleep. When a man has nothing to do, he may ask questions.¹

The consciousness of a man who can fall into a well because he is extremely interested in the stars is not an ordinary pattern of experience. When Newton was working out his theory of universal gravitation, he lived in his room for weeks on end. A bit of food was brought to him now and then, but he had very little interest in it, and he slept only when necessary, but as soon as that was over he was back at work. He was totally absorbed in the enucleation, the unfolding, of his idea. Insofar as it is possible for a man, he was living totally in the intellectual pattern of experience.²

It is astonishing when you come to think of it: for the first ninety-eight per cent of his time on earth (about 150,000 years), *Homo sapiens sapiens* used his mind in the practical pattern of thinking. Much of the thinking of early man was performance focused on things and their usefulness in contributing to the survival and growth of family, tribe, clan, and empire. In the struggle to meet basic needs, as we have seen, early man invented, maintained, and developed remarkable commonsense specializations that created “enormous structures of technology, economics, politics, and culture.” The achievement set primitive man apart from nature and created a new network of human relationships at increasingly higher levels of complexity and sophistication.³ It involved a recurring set of insights and actions adapted to concrete situations. Its adaptation and growth is a source of wonder and admiration, ‘as secret as the germination, the division, the differentiation of cells in seed and shoot and plant.’⁴ Lonergan is sensitive to the remarkable fecundity of commonsense thinking:

Inventions outlive their inventors and the memory of their origins. Capital is capital because its utility lies not in itself but in the acceleration it imparts to the stream of useful things. The political machinery of agreement and decision is the permanent yet self-adapting source of an indefinite series of agreements and decisions.⁵

What is significant in all this for Lonergan and equally astonishing was the realization that the achievement of ancient high civilization was the work of the practical

common sense of the group. Lonergan asserts: “In the primitive community it is not the individual but rather the community, through individuals, that thinks, deliberates, decides, acts.”⁶ Now from the time of George Orwell and Søren Kierkegaard before him the terms ‘group think’ and ‘herd mentality’ have rightly been deemed terms of opprobrium. But if for most of man’s existence on earth he relied upon the thinking of the community to survive, evolve culturally, and build the ancient high civilizations, surely in such a context the terms deserve a more benevolent interpretation. Enlightenment philosophers and modern scientists, as we have seen, disparaged, neglected, or dismissed common sense. It is to his credit that Lonergan brought commonsense thinking back to center stage, examined it, defined its scope, its strengths, and its weaknesses.

No matter how complicated and difficult the practical issues with which the collective thinking of primitive men and women wrestled in their struggle to create the ancient high civilizations, it turns out that *Homo sapiens sapiens* had much more to learn about what the mind can do and the range of its power to understand. Different human needs stimulate different human responses. Practical needs trigger conscious and intentional mental operations — practical commonsense thinking that makes things and gets things done. But there is another need that raises questions that common sense cannot answer; it is the need that stimulates a different conscious and intentional operation which can come up with a different kind of answer — the need to identify and explain what a thing is. Take iron, for instance. Our human ancestors in all likelihood first came upon iron in the form of meteorites. Sumerians identified it as “heaven-metal.” Egyptians termed it “black copper from heaven.” We know Eskimos in Greenland fashioned knives from “a 68,000 pound iron-rich meteor” for generations.⁷ Common sense asks how can you make iron and shape it into a hoe or a sword. Some three thousand years ago common sense metallurgists with considerable ingenuity figured out a way to smelt iron ore and change it into steel and usher in the Iron Age.⁸ But another question is What is iron? What is its make-up? It is only in modern times that chemists have identified and classified what iron actually is:

A chemical element with the symbol Fe (Latin: *ferrum*) and atomic number 26. Iron is a group 8 and period 4 element. Iron is a lustrous, silvery soft metal. It is one of the few ferromagnetic elements.⁹

As far as we know, Socrates was among the first to employ this new way of using the mind and exploring a whole new realm of meaning beyond what early man had yet imagined.¹⁰ It was as though some one in a circle of primitive drummers stood up to play a flute, surprising everyone with a stream of melody floating over the familiar rhythm of the drums.

Biographer Rüdiger Safranski retells Xenophon’s fascinating story which testifies to Socrates’ singular power of concentration:

He had taken part, as a gallant soldier, in the Peloponnesian War. On one occasion, however— when the troops were on the march---he had suddenly stopped, lost in thought, and there he had stood for a whole day, oblivious of himself, oblivious of his surroundings, oblivious of the situation. Something had occurred to him, or something had struck him

that made him think, and so he had dropped out of his reality.

What had happened? Safranski continues:

He had come under the power of his thinking, which transported him to some Nowhere where he seemed, in a strange way, to feel at home. This Nowhere of thinking is the great interruption in the events of the ordinary day, and it is an alluring Elsewhere. Judging by everything we know of Socrates, the experience of this Elsewhere of the spirit was a prerequisite to his triumph over fear of death. Socrates, seized by thinking, had become untouchable. They would be able to kill his body, but his spirit would live.¹¹

Where is this Nowhere, this Elsewhere? What are the features of its landscape? It is this new domain of the mind which we will now with Lonergan's help attempt to explore. The first records of explorations in this new realm date, it seems, from what Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age.

The Axial Age For Christians, the incarnation of the Son of God is the axis of world history. For them, all history leads to Christ and from Christ all history proceeds. To this belief even our secular calendar gives witness. But Karl Jaspers, in a book which Lonergan found stimulating and convincing, asks us to imagine another axial period in human history, another "axis" on which human intellectual history turns. Imagine, he suggests, a defining moment "a point which gave birth to everything which, since then, man has been able to be, the point most overwhelmingly fruitful in fashioning humanity." Its character, Jaspers adds, would not be "empirically cogent and evident." And yet it would be 'so convincing to empirical insight' that all would readily accept it as a point of reference, independently of the "particular articles of belief" any one of them might happen to champion. Make no mistake. What we are imagining, says, Jaspers, would be "the most deepcut dividing line in history...when man, as we know him today, came into being."¹² Indeed, it would be that fateful moment when commonsense man began to think for himself and venture across the border from commonsense thinking into the as yet unmapped realm of theory.

Indeed, the great divide, it turns out, was not just imaginary. Karl Jaspers maintains and Lonergan concurs that there was such an axis. It can be dated at about 500 B.C. or at the midpoint of the 'spiritual process' of an age that extended from 800 to 200 B.C. In China, India, Iran, Palestine, and Greece, by what seems a remarkable coincidence, a cluster of remarkable human beings appeared on the human stage. Socrates was not alone in venturing beyond common sense and on into realm of theory. Jaspers writes:

- Confucius and Lao-tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being...;
- India produced the Upanishads and Buddha and, like China, ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities down to skepticism, to materialism,

sophism and nihilism;

- In Iran Zarathustra taught a challenging view of the world as a struggle between good and evil;
- In Palestine the prophets made their appearance, from Elijah, by way of Isaiah and Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah;
- Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, of the philosophers—Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato—of the tragedians, Thucydides and Archimedes.”¹³

What occasioned this unique opportunity for spiritual progress was the wholesale breakdown of the ancient high civilizations and “their political, cosmological and religious myths.” Lonergan elaborates what happened during the Axial Age:

A population can decline, dwindle, vanish. A vast technological expansion, robbed of its technicians, would become a monument more intricate but no more useful than the pyramids. An economy can falter, though resources and capital equipment abound, though skill cries for its opportunity and desire for skill’s product, though labour asks for work and industry is eager to employ it; then one can prime the pumps and make X occur; but because the schemes are not functionally properly, X fails to recur. As the economy, so too the polity can fall apart. In a revolution violence goes unchecked; laws lose their meaning; governments issue unheeded decrees, until from sheer weariness with disorder men are ready to accept any authority that can assert itself effectively. Yet a revolution is merely a passing stroke of paralysis in the state. There are deeper ills that show themselves in the long-sustained decline of nations and, in the limit, in the disintegration and decay of whole civilizations.¹⁴

When such a breakdown occurs, it brings a moment of panic— a moment of bewilderment, desperation, and crisis. The panic moment, says philosopher Cornelius Verhoeven, is a moment of paralyzing indecision, when one is struck numb and seized by a fit of trembling. For the collectivity, the panic moment leads most often to denial of the surrounding chaos and to abject submission to it. But for an individual, bewilderment can be ‘the strongest form of wonder’ and can lead to an ‘explosion’ of fresh possibilities.¹⁵

With the breakdown of the ancient high civilizations in the axial age, the loss of the “whole superstructure left individuals with a highly developed technical society.” But it also left them “on their own”--- stripped of all the supports that had hitherto provided a sense of security.¹⁶ It was a horrifying moment. But in the event, the moment of panic brought the unexpected: an unparalleled “burst of philosophic reflection and of individualism.”¹⁷ In primitive communities, as Lonergan has noted, it was the community that did the thinking, deliberating, deciding, and acting (through anonymous individuals to be sure) for the family, the clan, and the tribe. Individuality had in fact already begun to emerge, as Mircea Eliade has pointed out, in the activities of the nameless shaman and medicine man.¹⁸ But at the axis of history---that fateful moment when individualism

emerged---individuals arrived whose names we know.

Prophets, mystics, and philosophers asked new questions, especially about themselves. Lonergan formulates their questions for us: “Who am I? What am I making? What am I to do to make my way in this world or in the next?”¹⁹ Through the hard mental work of these pioneering geniuses, says Lonergan, man came of age: “he set aside the dreams and fancies of childhood; he began to face the world as perhaps it is.”²⁰ We have no record of such questions ever being asked before. For these individuals to emerge, however, something important must happen first: “man must discover mind.” Man must first become aware of the mind’s operations, separate them, sort them out. He must also separate “feeling from doing, knowing from deciding.”²¹ Only then was the stage set for a genius like Socrates to function.

The Discovery of the Mind Fortunately, during the Axial Age in Greece, to take one instance, there is a record of how man gradually became aware of himself as a thinking being. Lonergan was delighted to come across an extraordinary book called *The Discovery of the Mind*. The author, Bruno Snell, provided “a very beautiful illustration of man’s discovery that he has a mind.” However, says Lonergan, the human intellect was not a new continent to be discovered as Columbus discovered America. Hitherto, the intellect did not exist precisely as intellect. What Lonergan means is that of course man knew, but he did not know that he knew. Intellect as such can come into existence only by man becoming aware of himself as having a mind.²² Further, the knowledge of man’s intellect is not the product of man’s familiar commonsense thinking, as though it were the solution of some practical problem—like producing a hand axe for butchering game or hammering out a bartering agreement to facilitate trade. Stone age tools went through a long process of invention and accumulated improvement from the Odowan handaxe to the Aurignacian hafted axe. In much the same way man’s awareness of his thought processes went through a slow but much more subtle process of discovery. But I wondered how. It is Snell’s basic contention that the intellect came to exist “in the process of revealing itself,” that is, “in the course of history.”²³ Over a period of twenty years Snell made it his quest to tease out the fascinating story of man’s discovery of mind during the Axial Age. It lay hidden but detectable, he became convinced, in the epics and lyrics of Greek poets and in the plays of Greek tragedians. I read with pleasure Snell’s account of his patient search through the love lyrics of Sappho, the martial and satiric iambics of Archilochos, and the dramas of Aeschylus, ever alert for clues of man or woman at work uncovering the workings of the mind.

I remember how startled I was to learn that what seems obvious when we use terms like ‘body, mind, soul, intellect and will’, cognitional and volitional activity was not at all evident to our early ancestors. Indeed, it came as a total surprise to learn that in Homer, for instance, there are words for body parts, but no word for the whole body. *Sóma* for Homer means corpse and not body as it came to mean in later Greek. *Psychê* means life breath, but not yet soul. Homer’s heroes are capable of emotion and reflection. But there are no words in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* to express the “interior processes” of the mind “as actions of the intellect or the soul.”²⁴ Achilles may change his mind, but Homer does not present the change as an interior process under his hero’s personal control; rather a god or goddess intervenes to change Achilles’ mind for him. Thus when king Agamemnon deprives Achilles of the slave girl Briseis, Achilles is enraged and at

the point of drawing his sword and slaying all around him. But the goddess Athena appears and persuades him of the folly of slaughtering his fellow Greeks.²⁵ In Homer's time, then, man had not yet reached the point where he had created the language to state simply what seems obvious to us: Achilles changed his mind.

The early lyric poets all shared Homer's view of man and the limitations of his language, but Sappho, Archilocus, Simonides, and the great Pindar went one step further and in their lyrics gave rise to the individual.²⁶ They gave expression to "personal human feeling," to "singular, remarkably intense events in internal living."²⁷ Men and women of course have fallen in love from time immemorial, but Sappho (650 B.C.) is among the first to record the vehemence of her passion in a poem for one she calls 'more than an hero':

...If I meet
 you suddenly, I can't
 speak—my tongue is broken;
 a thin flame runs under
 my skin; seeing nothing,
 hearing only my own ears
 drumming, I drip with sweat;
 trembling shakes my body
 and I turn paler than
 dry grass. At such times
 death isn't far from me²⁸

Archilochus (c.700 or c.650 B.C.), a poet I confess hitherto unknown to me, was to the ancient Greeks another Homer. His iambics express without sentimentality what a tough mercenary might expect to meet in hand-to-hand combat:

Few bows will be stretched and not many will be
 the slings, when Ares [god of war] at last brings war
 into the plain. The brutal work will be for swords.
 Our enemy yonder are masters of such warfare,
 lords of Euboia, famed for their spears.

The battle-hardened veteran can also spot the difference between appearance and substance:

I do not like a tall general, striding forth on his long
 legs; who prides himself on his locks, and shaves his chin
 like a fop. Let him be a small man, perhaps even bow-legged,
 as long as he stands firm on his feet, full of heart.²⁹

Archilochus, says Snell, reveals in his work "all the symptoms of an uninhibited individualism."³⁰ His poems, we are told, "possessed strength, flexibility, nervous vigour, and, beyond everything else, impetuous vehemence and energy: Horace speaks of the 'rage' of Archilochus, and Hadrian calls his verses 'raging iambics.'"³¹

It was the distinct achievement of the Greek tragedians, however, to take the description of inner processes even further. The plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, says Lonergan in commenting on Snell, exhibited “human decisions, their conflicts and interplay, and their consequences.”³² Aeschylus, in *The Suppliants* focuses our attention on “just one thing: a decision.” King Pelasgus must decide risking war with the Egypt by giving asylum to the daughters of Danaus who are fleeing from Egyptian suitors. In the play, Aeschylus objectifies “the inner process of deciding” by which Pelasgus makes “a free choice.” Each of us, of course, has free will and exercises it. But it is quite another thing “to be able to think about one’s own free will” as one might think about external objects like the sun, the moon, and the stars. It was the further achievement of Sophocles and Euripides to “take a series of similar, even more complex steps that set forth men’s inner lives as objects.”³³

Thus, Greek poets and philosophers gradually came to such an understanding of themselves that they were able to “objectify and state the fact that they had minds and wills, bodies and souls.”³⁴ This is evident from Snell’s examples:

The discoveries of the Greeks...take shape as vital experiences. They assert themselves with a violence which is not merely arbitrary or accidental; the historical situation on the one hand, and the forms in which the mind may understand itself on the other, provide the dynamic setting for the self-realization of the intellect.³⁵

Put briefly, it was the achievement of the Greek poets in lyric and drama to be the first to objectify “the inner life of man” and thereby “disclose man’s inner self” to himself.

For Bruno Snell, then, the Greek discovery of mind was “nothing less than a revolution.”³⁶ But later it will require the work of the Greek philosophers, says Lonergan, to exploit this “disclosure” of man’s inner life by their “analyzing, distinguishing, relating, establishing, deducing”—by employing the very processes from which emerge “Greek logic, Greek psychology, Greek cognitional theory, and Greek moral theory.”³⁷ What is clear is that the stage was now set for the appearance of Socrates.

The Realm of Theory The discovery of the mind in the Axial Age, says Lonergan, marked “the emergence of individualism, the emergence of individuals who think for themselves, decide for themselves, lead their own lives.”³⁸ This advance made possible man’s migration from the realm of common sense into the realm of theory.³⁹ It was an event even more significant than mankind’s migrations out of Africa. What then is the realm of theory? How does its landscape differ from the world of common sense? To find out, says Lonergan, one can do no better than to follow Socrates. Socrates was surely one of history’s most authentic human beings. He was passionate in his quest of a deeper understanding of reality. He stood out among his fellows not only for the power of his mind, but also for his intellectual honesty, his humility and the moral integrity of his life. At a crucial point in his life Socrates began to ask the questions that changed the course of man’s thinking forever.

What questions I wondered. I learned first of all that Socrates’ questions were unique, but not entirely unheralded. The Pythagoreans were there before him. The presocratic philosophers were the first to ask a more thoughtful question about things

than what does it look like or how can I use it. They puzzled over the problem of the One and the Many. When I was a boy one Christmas brought joy in the form of a set of molds. I would melt lead in a steel pot on the kitchen stove, pour the molten metal in the molds, let it cool, and then pry apart the two sides of the molds. Out would pop, to my delight, a bright World War I doughboy. The dull lead was transformed; the new toy was as shiny as silver. Its 'primal mass', were I now to ask, was at a very literal and "accidental" level a lump of lead to which the mold had given its 'form'. Obvious enough. But much earlier Parmenides (about 515-450 B.C.) had asked a much more "substantial" question that set man's thinking off in a much different direction from the practical bent of common sense. He asked How can there be many things of the same kind whether stones or plants or animals? What is the primeval mass out of which things are made? Was it formless air? Or formless water? Or fire? And again Why do things take the shape they have? What is it that gives them the form they have as stone or plant or animal. Parmenides did not ask to what use can things be put as would any practical man of common sense. Basically he asked What is the nature of their reality? How explain why they are what they are? Indeed, much earlier, 500 years before Parmenides, Thales of Miletus had declared that the substratum from which all things flow is water. Now what is significant here is not the correctness of Thales' assertion. Rather it was the assumption implied in the answer: the universe is coherent and has a substratum. Famous scholar and classicist Rex Werner stressed the unique significance of Thales' assumption: "There is a sense...in which it would be true to say that the distance between Thales and a modern atomic physicist is less than the distance between Thales and the whole history of civilization before him."⁴⁰

Socrates like Plato and Aristotle after him was basically a Pythagorean in asking the questions he asked. But Socrates was adding a twist to the questioning. Lonergan calls it "a new gimmick." To understand its novelty one must understand the context. Earlier Greek philosophers like Heraclitus had introduced the reasoning process. But unless your terms are accurately defined, logical reasoning can be fruitless. You can get bogged down in endless disputes over terms.⁴¹ And so, says Lonergan, Socrates was looking for something more, something new, for a very precise but as yet unknown X. He was looking for something to control thought, pin it down, explain it so that all will accept it as reasonable and true. He sought something that fit every and all concrete particulars. In a word, he was looking for "definitions".⁴² In his conversations with the Athenians, Socrates would say: Identify for me the single enduring quality that makes courage courage, self-control self-control, justice justice. Give me, he said, something that expresses the essence of a thing, something I can apply *omni et soli*, to every case and no other. Exact definitions that hold in every case are what make the whole reasoning process possible, that is, the logical process by which "one uses propositions as tools to settle a course of action or to make a judgment." At this point Socrates was doing pioneer work. He came up with a heuristic structure for thinking in the realm of theory. 'Heuristic' comes from the Greek word *heurisko* 'I find' combined with the suffix *-ikon* meaning 'principle of'. Thus a heuristic structure provides a framework for finding answers to questions. It channels the mind's dynamic pursuit of the unknown.⁴³

To illustrate the difference between the world of common sense and the world of theory, take the example of iron. The previous chapter noted how ancient man invented a method of making iron in 4000 years ago — a technological advance that millennia later

would make possible the industrialization of the modern world. The immediate effect, however, was the production of iron weapons that made the Hittites the terror of the Middle East and later the Canaanites masters of Palestine. The Book of Judges (1:19) tells us, for instance, that “the Lord was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he did not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.” By trial and error, blacksmiths learned to create a forge to heat iron ore, shape it, plunge it in a water tank to create wrought iron, and then gradually temper the brittle wrought iron into a metal of high-strength. To strengthen iron, we now know, a small amount of carbon has to be added. Prehistoric blacksmiths solved the problem without understanding what they were doing. They strengthened iron by heating it for long periods of times at high temperatures over a charcoal fire. They thought they were purifying the iron. But modern scientists have learned only in the last 200 years that the early iron-making procedure actually dissolved carbon into the molten metal by a process called carburization. Stephen L. Sass, a materials scientist at Cornell University, informs us that the crystal structure of iron has large open spaces (interstices) between the atoms — what are called ‘interstitial voids’. During carburization, he explains:

The carbon atoms move or diffuse into the iron by jumping from one interstitial void to a neighboring one, the way drops of oil or water skip on a grill. Ancient smiths never knew that it was the absorption of carbon during prolonged heating that was the key to strengthening iron.⁴⁴

A second instance of the difference between common sense and theory. Lonergan was fond of using the example of the father who takes his son to the zoo and shows him a giraffe. They come up with a commonsense description of the beast:

They take a look at the giraffe and decide that it is a giraffe because it is mostly neck. They see the head, the neck, the trunk, the legs, and the tail, and say, ‘That’s a giraffe.’⁴⁵

To digress for a moment. I think Lonergan might have been intrigued as I was by the poem *The Giraffe* which Nicholai Gumilyov presented as a birthday gift to his wife Anna Akhmatova after a trip to Africa:

...far, far away, on Lake Chad
Roams a proud giraffe.

He has been blessed with grace and bliss,
His hide adorned with a magical pattern
That only the moonlight,
shattered and dancing on the surface of the lake, would dare rival.

From a distance he could be taken for the colored sail of a ship,
And when he runs, he glides, as with the joyous flight of a bird....

...far, far away, on Lake Chad

Roams a proud giraffe.

At the same time, in Lonergan's example, there is also a biologist at the zoo standing alongside the father and the son. The biologist sees the giraffe as a unity of systems, says Lonergan, and uses technical language to give an explanation of what he observes:

There is a locomotive system, a digestive system, a vascular system, a nervous system, and so on. These systems have as their implements organs, parts of the body. The systems unify the organs in their operations, bring them together; and the systems are interdependent. Without the digestive system, the vascular system lacks blood; without the respiratory system, the blood lacks oxygen; and so on. The biologist examines the organs more closely and finds that they are composed of cells, and the cells are centers of enormous numbers of chemical processes, and the chemical processes reduce, according to physics, to subatomic processes, and these cannot be imagined.⁴⁶

What then is a giraffe?

- For the father and his son, the common sense answer is descriptive: an animal that is mostly neck.
- The more imaginative poet describes a giraffe as a proud beast, blessed with grace, his hide adorned with a magical pattern, easily mistaken at a distance for a painted sail or, when he runs, like a bird in flight.
- The biologist begins with description expressed in ordinary language but soon moves into a scientific explanation which requires technical language: a giraffe is a unity "in which skeletal, locomotive, digestive, vascular, and nervous systems combine and interlock."⁴⁷

Here description and explanation seem to overlap.⁴⁸ They obviously both deal with the same object: a giraffe. Actually description seeks to express what our senses give us; explanation expresses what we reach by analysis. Description, Lonergan says, "supplies...the tweezers by which we hold things while explanations are being discovered or verified, applied or revised."⁴⁹ The whole constitutes something beyond sight or touch or imagination, something the theoretic mind of the biologist reduces to "theoretically determined entities."⁵⁰ By that Lonergan means "a unity of systems that regard immediately organs, but the organs reduce to cells, the cells to chemical processes, the chemical processes to subatomic processes, and the whole is something that cannot be imagined." In other words, the whole is not seen by the senses or imagined, but grasped by understanding.⁵¹ You can't see nor imagine 'giraffeness'; you understand it. And once you understand what a giraffe is you can apply it to all other giraffes, despite their differences in size and age. Each giraffe is as equally a giraffe as any other. But to go further. A giraffe and a horse resemble each other, despite their specific differences. You can classify them as mammals, and, then as ungulates (mammals having hoofs), arriving eventually at genus and species, (a common class and the specific differences that

distinguish one member of the class, the giraffe, from another, the horse).⁵² In sum, says Lonergan, Socrates led the way to systematic meaning “which develops technical terms, assigns them their interrelations, constructs models, and adjusts them until there is reached some well-ordered and explanatory view of this or that realm of experience.”⁵³

Briefly, the father and poet describe; the biologist explains. Common sense gives description. Theory gives explanation. Common sense asks questions for the purpose of describing and identifying. Theory asks questions for the purpose of understanding. A commonsense thinker is one type of person; a theoretic thinker is another kind of person. There is the milkmaid and there is Thales. Indeed, the two worlds—the one practical and the other theoretical—stand in fundamental opposition to one another. But rightly understood there is in principle no conflict between them. Description deals with things as they appear. From the viewpoint of ordinary description, the sun rises and sets. Explanation deals with things as they are. From the viewpoint of explanation, the planet Earth spins on its axis and moves in an elliptical orbit around the sun. The average person is concerned about how the weather affects himself. If extremely hot, turn on the air conditioner. If extremely cold, turn on the furnace. The scientist controls our understanding of the weather by measuring temperature by degrees on the Celsius or the Fahrenheit scale. Thus, description and explanation complement one another. You can be in either world, but not in both simultaneously; you must shift from the one to the other. In each, you are a different kind of thinker, use different techniques, think about the same objects but differently. In each, you use a with different language in talking about them. As a commonsense person you use every day language; plain English is the native language of common sense. But as a biologist, says Lonergan, you must learn a foreign tongue with terms like ‘skeletal’, ‘locomotive’, ‘digestive’, ‘vascular’ and use the precise technical language of “principles and laws that must hold in absolutely every case or else they are completely worthless.”⁵⁴ Conflict between the two realms only shows up when each thinker tries to impose the criterion of his method on that of the other. Common sense asks How can this be used? Theory asks What is the nature of this? And so, to avoid such confusion Lonergan has a word of clarification:

To regard them as rivals or competitors is a mistake, for essentially they are partners and it is their successful co-operation that constitutes applied science and technology, that adds inventions to scientific discoveries, that supplements inventions with organizations, know-how, and specialized skills.⁵⁵

Theoretical Questions Philosophers before Socrates like Thales, Parmenides, Pythagorus were interested in the nature of external things which are physical and measurable, like trees and stones and stars. Socrates was interested in the nature of man and his mind. What, he asked, can man become? And so he used to buttonhole his fellow Athenians, ask simple questions for the purpose of understanding, and listen with attention to their answers. The questions were new, but not particularly difficult. What is courage? What is self-control? What is justice? What is knowledge? Who among us, Lonergan asks, will admit “that he has no notion of the difference between courage and cowardice, or that he does not know what is meant by self-control, or that he has never been able to figure out what people mean by justice, or that knowledge and ignorance are

all one to him.”⁵⁶ Athenians (and for that matter many who lived before Socrates) were not stupid or without understanding. “They all knew by insight, by commonsense understanding,” says Lonergan, “what it was to be wise or silly, intelligent or stupid, brave or cowardly, just or unjust, and so on.”⁵⁷ They were as quick as Socrates to tell a man of courage from a coward, a sober man from a drunk, a just judge from a crook. But Socrates wanted something more. This is the tricky part and what irked the Athenians. The answers, Socrates insisted, must be “brief and exact statements that fitted every case of courage and, at the same time, fitted nothing except courage; or that fitted every case of self-control and nothing but self-control; that applied to each and every instance of justice and only to justice.”⁵⁸ Give me something ‘universal’: some one thing that I can apply to many particulars. And so, he asked, What is virtue (*arete*)? What is the common denominator in courage, self-control, justice that makes them instances of *arete*? Such a universal definition of virtue, he was sure, would point “to a precious invisible mystery, to something genuine and enduring.”⁵⁹ Aristotle rightly judged that Socrates’ importance and originality lie in his use of definitions and the inductive method, reasoning from particular facts or individual cases to a general conclusion. But Rex Warner would add a third factor, the “religious fervor” of his faith; like Thales, Socrates had a burning faith “in the existence of an intellectual and moral order and in the possibility of discovering it.”⁶⁰

The idea of definition was new and strange to the Athenians. Lonergan writes: “[The Athenians] knew and they did not know. They knew insofar as they had a commonsense development of understanding; they did not know insofar as they had not worked out the conceptual expression.”⁶¹ It is one thing to understand. It is something altogether different to express one’s understanding in a definition that is valid in each and every case. It was easy enough for the Athenians to understand the kind of answer Socrates wanted, but they could not come up with definitions. Indeed Socrates himself could not come up with the kind of answer he sought. He said his *daimonion*, a divine voice within, told him what not to do. It did not tell him what to do. He was humble enough to admit his ignorance. The same Delphic oracle who had laid down the injunction ‘Know thyself’ pronounced Socrates the wisest of men precisely because he did not know but admitted his ignorance. What Socrates was aiming at in his questioning, says Richard Tarnas, was to bring the Athenians to an awareness of the human soul and its “central significance... as the seat of the individual waking consciousness and of the moral and intellectual character.”⁶² The soul, for Socrates, is the seat of a person’s intelligence and action.

Now what drove Socrates was not the desire for wealth or acclaim or power, but a simpler longing, a human desire for a virtuous life. How to live a good life was central to his thinking and fueled the thrust behind all his insistent questioning. The soul can be virtuous or evil, brave or cowardly, just or unjust. But a man can be wise and happy only if he knows how to act aright. Only thus can man must be master of his soul. Self control becomes essential when traditional controls weaken. Athens was at the time a city state in deep decline, humbled by military defeats, suffering from poor leadership, prey to the prevailing skepticism of the Sophists who had abandoned the search for any true and abiding knowledge. In such circumstances, says Bruno Snell, “the ego stands lost and alone in the midst of an unknowable universality.”⁶³ At such times, self-mastery becomes a goal of paramount importance. The individual must stand apart from the crowd.

In asking about the nature of the good, Socrates had used a simple analogy. The carpenter wants to make a good table. He has an image of a good table in mind before he begins to work. The image guides his use of saw and hammer at every step in the process of making a good table. His goal is never in doubt: the concrete object, a good table. But in asking what is virtue, the moral agent is asking what is good behavior. The outcome is not a concrete object empirically given like a good table, but a free decision carried into action according to a positive standard of action. Thus a hero in a Greek tragedy asks, "What am I to do?" Socrates raised the question to a philosophical level: What is a morally good decision that will bring happiness? 'Arete' originally meant 'profitable' behavior. So now the question became what is true profit as contrasted with only apparent profit. Eventually, then, 'virtue' came to mean What profits man most? What brings true happiness?⁶⁴

Plato's Ideas To get a bit ahead of our story, Socrates' foray into the realm of theory and his search for the definitions led Plato to speak of a world of Ideas. Plato's Ideas were not, as Aristotle later supposed, "separate things" existing in a world apart. Lonergan reports the excitement he felt on first reading J.A. Stewart's *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*. There he discovered that the Ideas were "explanations" of sensible phenomena. Plato's Ideas or Forms, says Stewart, exist only "dynamically." They exist, he means, only insofar as they perform the function of making sensible things understandable. They amount to "concepts-in-use." Ideas are the tools which human understanding employs to perform its job of interpreting the world. And that world is the familiar world of the senses, not some far off world that exists in some ethereal Elsewhere or in the mists of the past that is recoverable by reminiscence. Stewart puts it this way:

The "eternal Idea" is revealed in some welcome, some familiar or beautiful, object of sense—literally *in* the object of sense: not as another object which the object of sense "resembles," but as that very object of sense itself transfigured, become a wonder. It is not *a* skylark that Shelley hears and sees, but *the* Skylark.⁶⁵

It is not *a* giraffe that Gumilyov sees, but *the* giraffe.

Plato's Ideas are the means by which the mind grasps "the intelligible in the sensible."⁶⁶ The Platonic Ideas are actually metaphors intended to express some experience we all have in common: understanding on the intellectual level. What Lonergan learned from Stewart triggered, for Lonergan, an unexpected and stimulating insight: Plato was 'a methodologist'.⁶⁷ The Ideas were helps to reach the understanding or meaning that the scientist and the philosopher seek to discover. The method Plato used in "the scientific or philosophic process towards discovery was one of question and answer."⁶⁸ The midwife that assists the birth of understanding is "the dynamism" of the mind. The mind's dynamism is pre-conceptual or hard-wired. As dynamic, the mind in its "intellectual search for the unknown"⁶⁹ spontaneously seeks understanding through the method of questions and answers. The dynamic mind stands midway between the description of sensible data and explanation expressed in idea and judgment. The mind is the midwife between experiencing what this thing looks like and understanding what kind of thing it is. Between description (it has four legs and long neck) and explanation (it's a

giraffe). With precise definitions and a few precise propositions, one arrives at “the idea of a science as an ordered body of definitions and implications exploring a delimited field of possible human knowledge.”⁷⁰ Plato was thus developing Socrates’ heuristic structure.

It was left to Plato to come up with a working hypothesis on how to answer the questions Socrates posed. Within the torrent of sensations we experience moment by moment, one can discern timeless essences which give form and meaning to concrete particular reality. In other words, universal Ideas. When one of Plato’s critics objected, “I can see particular horses, but not horseness,” Plato’s reply echoed Heraclitus: “That is because you have eyes but not intelligence.”⁷¹ Plato realized that what Socrates had been groping for was the essence of virtue that gives form to all virtuous men. Virtuous men are just specific instances of virtue, incarnations of its Form, a reality more fundamental than its particular embodiment. Finally, it was left to Aristotle, writing about ethics a generation later, to come up with “the answers to Socrates’ questions, the universal answers, the universal definitions” of the virtues.⁷²

Technical Language To return to our story. The import of Socrates’ experiment with the Athenians gradually became clear to me: there is a whole new world of meaning beside commonsense meaning. One leaves one’s familiar world and must like a bold explorer enter a whole new country. Upon arrival there you find yourself disconcerted. The first shock is to realize that technical thinking requires technical language for its expression. The inhabitants all speak a foreign tongue, as unintelligible as French or German to an American child entering kindergarten. One cannot converse as an equal with a lawyer, an engineer, an architect, a biologist, a theologian, or a philosopher about their fields without first mastering the technical language of each profession. It’s a daunting challenge.

As Socrates soon discovered, most people are not all that interested in learning a new language. Lonergan puts it more precisely: “human society does not spontaneously accept the drive towards the universal.” Of course, he says, we all “want people to be truthful, brave, and just.”⁷³ But most of us cannot be bothered with the hard thinking required to work out a universal definition of truth, bravery, or justice and then invent the technical philosophical language required to express it. Later, as we have already intimidated, Aristotle found answers to Socrates’ questions and expressed them in the technical language of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. At the time, Socrates’ questions rattled the Athenians and made them acutely uncomfortable. Athenians tried, but could come up with the answers, for Socrates demonstrated by shrewd cross examination---to their considerable chagrin---how each answer was flawed. Indeed, says Lonergan, “the average man does not define; he is suspicious of the search for definitions; and when that pursuit brings out the inference that he does not know what he is talking about, he is rather resentful.”⁷⁴ Socrates kept goading the Athenians to cross the divide that separates the world of common sense from the world of theory and they resented being prodded. Socrates was, in C.V. Wedgwood’s summation, “a demolisher of loose-thinking, a champion of logic and clarity in the use of words and the definition of meaning, exhilarating to listeners who heard him step by step entangle an opponent by a ruthless process of question and answers; less exhilarating for the opponent, caught in the mesh of logic like a bird in a net.”⁷⁵ Eventually, the resentment of his commonsense opponents grew to the point where they could no longer put up with “Socrates’ nonsense,” says

Lonergan, “so they gave him the hemlock.”⁷⁶

Actually, what Socrates was teaching was not subversive of any genuine value, just novel. Commonsense understanding, as we have seen, is content with general utility, with “the continuous adaptations and adjustments demanded by the successive situations of concrete living.” Systematic thinking concerns itself with “universal definitions and truths that must hold in every instance with an exactitude that will bear the weight of lengthy inferences.”⁷⁷ One might well object at this point. I know well enough what I mean and Socrates is right, I find it extremely difficult to pinpoint what I mean. But isn’t it an idle waste of time to seek precise definitions? Why waste precious time in “useless speculation”?⁷⁸ One might say with some irritation, Lonergan suggests, that “after all, philosophers are a little weak in the head...; the ultimate answers come from the man of common sense.”⁷⁹ Or, put more bluntly, “What on earth is the good of theory? Aren’t all those theorists just nuts?”⁸⁰ Here historian C.V. Wedgwood speaks up in defense of theory. She reminds the mocking milkmaids among us that the absent-minded Thales who fell into the well was the very one who “made observations of the stars by which, on a clear night, mariners could steer with tolerable accuracy.”⁸¹

Any person who takes Socrates seriously, on the other hand, is a new type of person. He employs a new type of consciousness, a new kind of conscious thinking. A commonsense thinker can get along with everyday language to express his meaning; he communicates his wisdom through the proverb, the story, the fable, and the allegory, and myth.⁸² But anyone interested in theory requires technical language to express technical thought. Earlier thinkers, of course, had been interested in technique. Egyptian surveyors had developed the technique for constructing the right angle triangle they needed to make proper land measurements along the Nile. Babylonian accountants had devised the method of calculation needed for accurate book-keeping. Later, Mayan astronomers would come up with the technique required for creating highly accurate calendars. But it was the Greeks who were the first who were interested in reflection on technique. It was the Greeks who for the first time in all the millennia of human life on earth seized on the question: Why must it be so? Why must a right angle triangle have a right angle? Why must the method of computing work? Why must the calendar calculations turn out to be accurate? As we’ve said, common sense is interested in knowledge for its practical utility; theory is interested in knowledge of its own sake.⁸³

Basic Theoretical Questions Later on, Aristotle would rely on Socrates to reduce the search for such theoretical knowledge to four basic questions, two regarding understanding and two regarding facts: *What is it? Why is it? Is it? Is it so?* Thus, take the giraffe in the zoo, for instance: *What is it?* and *Why is it so?* What is the nature of this animal that exists? It’s a living animal called a giraffe. *Why is it so?* Why is it a giraffe? What is the reason for the connection between what I attribute to it (giraffeness) and this animal?⁸⁴ It has all the distinguishing marks of a giraffe. *Is it?* Does this ‘thing’ actually exist? Can I attribute ‘existence’ to this ‘thing’ I see before me? Is it really a giraffe? In asking these questions, Socrates was operating on the level of empirical consciousness: his senses were working, he was taking in sights, sounds, smells, the feeling of what he touched and the flavor of the food he ate. He was present to the world his senses brought to him. But Socrates was also operating on what Lonergan calls the level of intellectual consciousness. Socrates wondered about what he sensed. Wonder moves one to the level

where one understands what is understandable about the object one is considering, the level where one grasps the pattern of intelligibility that is in the object and makes it be the sort of thing that it is. Such wonder, as Aristotle was later to say, is the beginning of all philosophy and science. In our own time Martin Heidegger argued that philosophy began in Greece and begins anew not in thought but in a mood of wonder. According to Heidegger's biographer, what for Heidegger always gives birth to philosophy is "astonishment, fear, worry, curiosity, jubilation."⁸⁵

When wonder, writes Lonergan, becomes "the dominant concern in consciousness, experience takes on a pattern of its own that is dictated by the exigences of that wonder." There is "a spontaneous cooperation of everything in the man" mobilized in service of wonder, and "at the same time, all other concern apart from the wonder falls into the background." Once one slips into the intellectual pattern of experience, one finds that one's consciousness "is dominated by wonder, by the pure desire to know, by intellectual detachment and impartiality. One wants to know, What is it? And whether one's answer to that question is true."⁸⁶ Lonergan is clear-sighted enough to realize that "men share not only in intellectual curiosity but also in more earthly passions and prejudices."⁸⁷ But no matter how involved we may be with other issues and concerns, Lonergan reminds us that "deep within us all, emergent when the noise of other appetites is stilled, there is a drive to know, to understand, to see why, to discover the reason, to find the cause, to explain."⁸⁸ Lonergan is in effect restating Aristotle's basic assertion that "all men by nature desire to know."⁸⁹

Socrates was wondering not just how things might be put to practical use, as might the man of common sense. He was wondering whether and what and how. That means, in addition to eyes (to register the sensible data), he also had intelligence (to describe and understand the data). Indeed, when he asked what courage, self-control, and justice had in common, he was being actively intelligent in a new way.

What Socrates accomplished, moreover, was to introduce a technique of thinking that would in time break the hold that uncritical imagination and feeling had on human thinking. Or as Lonergan put it:

No matter how brilliant, how delightful, how plausible, how complete may be an explanation, we ask, Is it really so? At that point, consciousness takes another leap. On the first level, consciousness is merely empirical; on the second, it becomes intelligent; on the third, it becomes reflective, rational. 'Man is a rational animal' means that man is an animal with that level of consciousness that has the capacity to ask, Is it so?⁹⁰

Asking Is it so? really matters. "It makes the difference," says Lonergan, "between alchemy and chemistry, astrology and astronomy, legend and history, opinion and truth." It is the precise merit of the Socratic achievement, says Lonergan, that it provides "a technique that puts an end to idle talk; it is not a vain subtlety but a cure for a malady to which all men are prone."⁹¹ And, as we shall see, asking *Is it so?* will be the way to break out of what for many was the straight jacket of myth and magic and superstition.

What Socrates initiated, therefore, was a new and unanticipated stage in "the ongoing discovery of mind"⁹² that hastened the emergence of the individual from the collectivity, the flute player from the drummers. Lonergan develops the idea:

The individual appeals to immanent norms, to what is true against the false, to what is right against the wrong, to what is good against the evil. The autonomy of the human spirit emerges. There is a development of argument, definition, science, the critique of gods, of myths, of magic, of taboos, of institutions and manners, of aims and values....The individual asserts his freedom to be himself. He liberates aesthetic, intellectual, scientific, moral and religious activity from traditionally restricted functions within the collectivity.⁹³

Socrates, in the event, set the hounds off in pursuit of an elusive fox. The fox in this case was the meaning of all that is. Thereafter, like relentless hounds in the pursuit of meaning, the Greeks, says classicist Edith Hamilton:

...could never leave anything obscure. Neither could they leave anything unrelated. System, order, connection, they were impelled to seek for. An unanalyzed whole was an impossible conception for them.... They must analyze and reflect upon everything. Any general term they found themselves using must be precisely realized and the language of all philosophy is their creation.⁹⁴

Lonergan agrees: "Such a formulation of the intellectual pattern of experience was the specific Greek achievement."⁹⁵ It has been the "controlling influence" in determining what intelligence and intellect mean up to modern times.⁹⁶

The World Mediated by Theoretical Meaning All this leads to the important conclusion we are making in this chapter: besides the world mediated by common sense meaning, there is the world mediated by theoretical meaning.⁹⁷ Be advised, though, that Lonergan has a stern warning for any who might be tempted to look down their nose at the obtuseness of the commonsense Athenians who dismissed Socrates out of hand. I found it sobering to see how at this point Lonergan was actually reading my own mind. You may tip your hat, he says, to the great theoreticians like Newton and Einstein, Aristotle and Aquinas, Kant and Hegel and join in history's thunderous applause at the mention of their names. But if you have "no personal experience of the intellectual pattern of living," you will have no grasp of "what it is to live as a theorist lives."⁹⁸ You will have little understanding of how what goes on in the mind of a genius like Socrates or like Isaac Newton, to give another instance, is far different from the ordinary pattern of human experience.⁹⁹ Lonergan writes:

When Newton was working out his theory of universal gravitation, he lived in his room for weeks on end. A bit of food was brought to him now and then, but he had very little interest in it, and he slept only when necessary, but as soon as that was over he was back at work. He was totally absorbed in the enucleation, the unfolding, of his idea. Insofar as it is possible for a man, he was living totally in the intellectual pattern of experience.¹⁰⁰

You will not be raising yourself up to Newton's level but cutting him down to your own size.¹⁰¹ Unless you have been "bitten by theory," in Lonergan's telling phrase, you will never experience a Socratic moment.¹⁰²

Be that as it may, mankind's crossing the great divide between the realm of common sense and the realm of theory is "the fruit of an extremely prolonged development"¹⁰³ and had far-reaching consequences for man's most ambitious projects. If great civilizations are to arise, flourish, avoid decline or recover from decline, commonsense practicality is essential. But common sense is not enough. True, by devising ingenious methods of discovery, commonsense man uses technological intelligence to invent and manufacture tools and weapons and then, with his social intelligence, "originates and develops capital and technology, the economy and the state." But for civilizations to endure, Lonergan was convinced, man must develop theoretical intelligence and methods of reflection. He writes:

If man's practical bent is to be liberated from magic and turned towards the development of science, if his critical bent is to be liberated from myth and turned towards the development of philosophy, if his religious concern is to renounce aberrations and accept purification, then all three will be served by a differentiation of consciousness, a recognition of the world of theory.¹⁰⁴

For civilization to survive and endure, he points out, there must be a properly functioning culture.

The World Mediated by Culture What is culture? A culture is simply the set meanings and values that inform the way of life of a community. Cultures can decline rapidly, but develop only slowly, for development is a matter of coming to understand new meanings and coming to accept higher values. Moreover, any notable culture has a long history: it has borrowed from other cultures; it has adapted what it borrowed into its new context; it has effected the development of its own patrimony. Cultures are many and varied; they all have their good points and their deficiencies; and the ideal culture is far far rarer than the ideal man.¹⁰⁵ The one essential function of culture, in Lonergan's understanding of the term, is man's "capacity to ask, to reflect, to reach an answer that at once satisfies his intelligence and speaks to his heart." He explains:

Delight and suffering, laughter and tears, joy and sorrow, aspiration and frustration, achievement and failure, wit and humour, stand not within practicality but above it. Man can pause and with a smile or a forced grin ask what the drama, what he himself is about.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, in the absence of such critical reflection, the "whole unfolding of practicality constitutes no more than the setting and the incidents of the drama" of human living. When practical man is uncritical, "human aberration" can easily take an uncritical culture captive. In practice, culture ceases to perform its essential function when it fails to pass "a detached yet effective judgment upon capital formation and technology, upon

economy and polity.” Without such an assessment, says Lonergan, “human living settles into a helpless routine without a capacity for vital adaptation and without the power of knowledge that inspires and directs the movement from real possibility to concrete achievement.”¹⁰⁷ Lonergan employs an arresting image: in such circumstances, the actor in the human drama is reduced to a stage hand: “the setting is magnificent; the lighting superb; the costumes gorgeous; but there is no play.”¹⁰⁸ Or, briefly, civilization in decline mindlessly “digs its own grave.”¹⁰⁹

Over the course of a relatively few centuries, then, human beings made the discovery of the mind and the realm of theory, that extraordinary advance from the experience of consciousness to knowledge of the experience of consciousness.¹¹⁰ In other words, ever since his appearance on earth roughly 150,000 years ago, commonsense *Homo sapiens sapiens* had been able to know. But only with the Greek discovery of mind does commonsense man know what he knows, and how he knows, and how he is able to correct and complement the activities of his mind and will.¹¹¹

Indeed, with Socrates and Plato, man migrated from the realm of common sense into the realm of theory, an Elsewhere, “a new Olympian realm, a realm that reflected the new sense of rational order.” The discovery that made the migration possible was the human intellect, which Plato judged to be a “divine faculty” because by it “the human soul could discover both its own essence and the world’s meaning.” Indeed, this “divine intellectual power” lay dormant in every human being, whether small or great. All that was required was “its awakening.”¹¹² As a teacher, Socrates awakened the minds of brilliant students like Xenophon and Plato. His focus on logic and ethics as the central issues of Greek philosophy proved to be irresistible to “the best minds of the West.”¹¹³ Socrates’ personal search for universal definitions and his use of the dialectical (question and answer) method he developed foreshadowed “Plato’s broader enunciation of the major outlines and problems for subsequent Western philosophy in all its diverse areas—logic, ethics, politics, epistemology, ontology, aesthetics, psychology, cosmology.”¹¹⁴

Socrates: A New Odysseus No wonder then that in his *Dialogues* Plato, seeking to give adequate expression to the genius and achievement of Socrates, presented him as a new Odysseus, reborn as the “hero of the intellectual and spiritual quest for absolutes.” Even his physical appearance, writes Rex Warner, has burned itself into the popular imagination: “a snub-nosed man of very great physical toughness and strength, a sight that would be forbidding if it were not for the remarkable charm, cordiality and sense of humor which lit up both his face and his conversation.” And the kind of person he was? Rex Warner continues:

... in him we are confronted with a character quite unlike any that had previously appeared. He is extraordinary through being ordinary, universal through being Athenian, religious through a method of skepticism, wise through a profession of ignorance. Yet in his character, his conduct and his opinions there are no contradictions. He is all of a piece. His personality is always imposing and one feels that even so great an artist as Plato could not, even if he had wished to do so, have distorted it. It is a personality which has impressed itself on posterity as has the personality of no other philosopher.... He was quite indifferent to luxury,

danger in war, snobbism or moral intimidation in peace. He was far from indifferent to his friends, to his city and to the laws of that city even when they had unjustly condemned him to death.¹¹⁵

At his trial for corrupting the youth and subverting the Athenian democracy, Socrates said in his defense that he saw himself as a gadfly:

...if you kill me you will not easily find another like me who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by the God; and the state is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has given the state and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you. And as you will not easily find another like me, I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel irritated at being suddenly awakened, when you are caught napping; and you may think that if you were to strike me dead..., you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you gives you another gadfly.

It is obvious that Socrates was no stage hand in the drama of human history. Plato testified for the ages when he wrote in the *Phaedo* that Socrates was “the wisest, the justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.” Plato, in literary critic Lucy Beckett’s summary, “tells us who Socrates was for those who learned from him.” Plato conveys, she writes, “Socrates’s goodness and his brilliant intelligence, his wisdom, his sense of humour, and his ability (touchingly referred to in the *Theaetetus*) to deliver the unborn thoughts of others.”¹¹⁶

During the axial moment of which Jaspers speaks, then, came the dawn of Western civilization in Greece. Profiting from a centuries-long groundswell of literary endeavor and pre-Socratic philosophic investigation, the Sophists, Socrates and the fourth-century Greek tragedians moved human intellectual development into “a radically new era.”¹¹⁷ One can with Jaspers discern a kind of fault line in man’s thinking, “the most deepcut dividing line in history.”¹¹⁸ It clearly separated the familiar world of commonsense practicality from a remarkable new world, the world of theory. It signaled the emergence of individual responsibility and individual judgment and, says Richard Tarnas, an “extraordinary flowering of culture” which endowed subsequent generations with “a perennial source of insight, inspiration and renewal.”¹¹⁹ In footsteps of Socrates the pioneer genius came Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, and Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger, as well as Copernicus and Kepler, Newton and Einstein. Indeed, concludes Tarnas, our Western “way of thinking is still profoundly Greek.”

Annie Dillard has written of ‘innocence’ as “the spirit’s unself-conscious state at any moment of pure devotion to any object.” One can pursue innocence, she asserts, “as hounds pursue hares.” The same can be applied, I think, to those who in the spirit of the Greeks follow like hounds the scent of being in their relentless pursuit of meaning in an ever expanding realm of theory: “single-mindedly, driven by a kind of love, crashing over creeks, keening and lost in fields and forests, circling, vaulting over hedges and

hills wide-eyed, giving loud tongue all unawares to the deepest, most incomprehensible longing, a root-flame in the heart...”¹²⁰ Indeed, the eros of the human spirit is the “root-flame in the heart.”

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1. *Insight*, 10.
 2. “The Human Good as the Developing Subject” in *Topics in Education*, 86.
 3. *Insight*, 207.
 4. *Ibid.*, 211.
 5. *Ibid.*, 209.
 6. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 120.
 7. Stephen L. Sass, 83.
 8. *Ibid.*, 84.
 9. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron
 10. For Lonergan on the realm of theory, see *The Lonergan Reader*, 466-470.
 11. Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 276.
 12. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 1.
 13. *Ibid.*, 2.
 14. *Insight*, 209-210.
 15. Cornelius Verhoeven, *A Philosophy of Wonder*, 52-55.
 16. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 120.
 17. “Discussion 1,” *Understanding and Being*, 267.
 18. See Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*.
 19. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 120.
 20. “Dimensions of Meaning,” *Collection*, 238.
 21. *Method In Theology*, 90.
 22. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, vi.
 23. *Ibid.*, vii.
 24. *Ibid.*, *The Discovery of the Mind*, ix.
 25. “Theology as Christian Phenomenon,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 246.
 26. See Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 43-70.
 27. “Theology as Christian Phenomenon,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 246.
 28. Sappho, *He Is More Than A Hero* (translated by Mary Barnard), in *Love Poems by Women: An anthology of poetry from around the world and through the ages*. Edited by Wendy Mulford (Ballantine Books: New York, 1990), 230.
 29. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 49.
 30. *Ibid.*, 50.
 31. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archilochus>
 32. *Method in Theology*, 90.
 33. “Theology as Christian Phenomenon,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 246.
 34. *Ibid.*, 245.
 35. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, x.
 36. *Ibid.*, v.
 37. “Theology as Christian Phenomenon,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 247.
 38. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 120.
 39. *Method in Theology*, 93.
 40. Rex Werner, *The Greek Philosophers*, 13.
 41. “The New Learning: Mathematics,” *Topics in Education*, 119.
 42. See *The Lonergan Reader*, “51-57; 100-101; 391-392; 467-468.
 43. See “The Dynamic Aspect of Knowing,” 63-65.
 44. Stephen L. Sass, *The Substance of Civilization: Materials and Human History from the Stone Age to the Age of Silicon*, 86-87.
 45. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, 112. See also, *Method in*

Theology, 82-83.

46. "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, 112.
47. *Method in Theology*, 83.
48. See *Insight*, 7-13; 247; 262-267; 291-292; 295-296. *The Lonergan Reader*, 55-56; 57 193-196; 399.
49. *Insight*, 291.
50. "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958-1964*, 112.
51. *Ibid.*, 112.
52. See Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 191.
53. *Method in Theology*, 304.
54. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and theological Papers 1958-1964*, 195.
55. *Insight*, 295.
56. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 235.
57. "The New Learning: Mathematics," *Topics in Education*, 119.
58. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 236.
59. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 34.
60. Rex Warner, *The Greek Philosophers*, 55.
61. "The New Learning: Mathematics," *Topics in Education*, 119.
62. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 33.
63. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, 189.
64. *Ibid.*, 189.
65. J.A. Stewart, *Plato's Doctrine of Ideas*, 11, quoted in Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 43.
66. *Ibid.*, 43. Reading Plato was, Lonergan said, a delight and convinced him that the *Dialogues* could serve any serious student as the "perfect introduction to philosophy." Plato may not have all the answers, but, Lonergan argued, he will always challenge a student with the "serious questions" and never fail to spark his interest.
67. *Ibid.*, 42.
68. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 264.
69. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 46.
70. "The New Learning: Mathematics," *Topics in Education*, 119.
71. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 8.
72. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 194. His work was, says Lonergan, a magnificent example of the emergence of systematic meaning; see *Method in Theology*, 310.
73. "Common Sense," *Understanding and Being*, 87.
74. *Insight*, 307.
75. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 101.
76. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 72.
77. "Method in Catholic Theology," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 34-35.
78. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 236.
79. "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 322.
80. *Ibid.*, 120.
81. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 76.
82. "Common Sense," *Understanding and Being*, 92.
83. "Discussion 1," *Understanding and Being*, 267-268.
84. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 198. See also "Self-appropriation and Insight," *Understanding and Being*, 29.
85. Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, translated by Ewald Osers (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1.
86. "The Human Good as the Developing Subject," *Topics in Education*, 86-87
87. *Insight*, 290.
88. *Ibid.*, 4.
89. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, 980a 23.
90. "Science and the New Learning," *Topics in Education*, 147.
91. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 237.

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92. *Method in Theology*, 305.
 93. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 75.
 94. Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way to Western Civilization*, 28.
 95. "The New Learning: Mathematics," *Topics in Education*, 119.
 96. *Ibid.*, 121.
 97. *Method in Theology*, 304.
 98. "Time and Meaning," Vol.6: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 121.
 99. "Exegesis and Dogma," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 155.
 100. "The Human Good as the Developing Subject," *Topics in Education*, 86.
 101. "Method in Catholic Theology," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 38.
 102. "Exegesis and Dogma," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 155.
 103. *Method in Theology*, 257.
 104. *Ibid.*, 258.
 105. "Revolution in Catholic Theology," *A Second Collection*, 232.
 106. *Insight*, 236.
 107. "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," *Collection*, 111.
 108. *Insight*, 237.
 109. *Method in Theology*, 55.
 110. "Theology as Christian Phenomenon," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 246-247.
 111. Cf. *Insight*, 216.
 112. Richard Tarnes, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 38.
 113. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 103.
 114. Richard Tarnes, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 39-40.
 115. Rex Warner, *The Greek Philosophers*, 53.
 116. Lucy Beckett, *In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 44-45.
 117. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 237-238.
 118. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, trans. Michael Bullock (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953) 1.
 119. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 2.
 120. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 82.

3

The Realm of Interiority: From Descartes to the German Idealists

*Now the natural and human sciences aim at accounting for all the data of sense. Accordingly, if there is to be any general science, its data will have to be the data of consciousness. So there is effected the turn to interiority . . .*¹

Bernard Lonergan

*[The seventeenth century scientific] revolution...outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom.*²

Herbert Butterfield

*The historical revolution in human thinking, which was accomplished in the nineteenth century, is just as important as the scientific revolution of two centuries earlier. But they are not two separate revolutions; they are aspects of the one great transitional movement from the medieval to the modern way of looking at things.*³

Alan Richardson

Bernard Lonergan traced the long journey by which human beings learned to utilize the fantastic dynamism of the human spirit in a variety of responses to human exigences. He tracked the unfolding of the eros of the human spirit — that root-flame in the human heart — as it moved from undifferentiated consciousness to the various differentiations of consciousness of which the human subject is capable. Fully differentiated consciousness, says Lonergan, embraces five basic realms of meaning: common sense, theory, transcendence, interiority, and art. One realm may be differentiated from another, he argues, “when it develops its own language, its own distinct mode of apprehension, and its own cultural, social, or professional group speaking in that fashion and apprehending in that manner.”⁴

In the first stage of its unfolding, the mind functions in the realm of common sense: the mind deals with all other things and people insofar as we interact with them. Lonergan gives us some understanding of the common sense way of thinking as used by primitive man, by the creators of the ancient great civilizations, and by ourselves in our ordinary practical interaction with things and other people.

In a second stage of its unfolding, the mind operates in the realm of theory: the mind deals with persons and things as they relate to one another. The mind seeks to know how they are related internally, how they are congruent with or different from each other,

and how they function as they interact. Indeed, the mind reflects on the realm of common sense and proceeds by way of definition and strict logic into the realm of theory. Lonergan retraced the route by which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle moved out of the realm of commonsense and came into the realm of theoretical philosophy and science that was to dominate Western thinking in ancient and medieval times.

In a third stage of its unfolding, the mind operates in the realm of transcendence. Lonergan explored how the human subject functions in the realm of religious experience; he identified the various ways in which priests and prophets, shamans and mystics have lived and described their experience of the numinous, and then their attempts to explain its meaning by means of myth and magic, by image and symbol and art, and by theology. We shall explore this realm later in Chapter Seven, but only after some necessary preparation in this chapter and the next.

At this point we have reached the point from which to set out with Lonergan on an exploration of the fourth realm of meaning — the realm of interiority. Lonergan scholar Mark Miller helps one get one's bearings when he states:

All serious thought starts with the practical, political, ethical question about the *good*: How do we best live in society: What should we do? [Thus, Socrates and Plato]

But before we answer this, we must backtrack to the question about *reality*: What is real? What is good? [Thus, Aristotle and Aquinas]

Still, to answer the question of the real, we eventually backtrack to the question about *knowing*: How do you know? How does one come to know what is real, what is true? [Thus, Descartes up to contemporary philosophers]

Ultimately, all questions lead to ultimate questions, and these are questions about *God*: What is the meaning of it all? Is anything really worthwhile? Why even live? Is there justice? Is there truth? Is there a God? Does s/he care about me? Is s/he *doing anything* about what's going on?⁵

For the moment we will leave aside ultimate questions about reality — questions for theology. In seeking to answer the fundamental question about knowing which he considered all important, Lonergan sought “a common ground on which men of intelligence might meet...at a time when neither mathematicians nor scientists nor men of common sense were notably articulate” on the subject of understanding understanding.⁶ What Lonergan attempted in his masterpiece *Insight* was “a preliminary, exploratory journey” into what he called “an unfortunately neglected region.”⁷ But before we join him on this further stage of the journey into the world of consciousness, we must pause once more to recall two historical factors of supreme importance which will influence our understanding of the realm of interiority:

- the advent of modern science and the modern notion of history,
- the extraordinary impact of science and history on the subsequent development of human thought since Descartes, which triggered the examination of intentional consciousness.

Herbert Butterfield and Alan Richardson are both on target, says Bernard Lonergan, in calling attention to the singular importance of the advent of modern science and history. Butterfield highlights “the radical shift in the notion of science in the seventeenth century” and Richardson underscores “the radical shift in the notion of history in the nineteenth century.”⁸

The Advent of Modern Science and the Notion of History Modern science is for Butterfield ‘the most striking event’ in Western history since the beginning of Christianity. Its influence on the subsequent history of Western thought has been unparalleled. As a young man in the 1920's Lonergan had become aware of the unsettling impact of the shift in thinking from classical science to modern science: the shift from Aristotle’s focus on the intelligibility that is necessary to the intelligibility of the modern scientist “that is (1) possible and (2) probably verified.”⁹ The shift, in other words, from what is understandable as being necessary to what is understandable as being possible and indeed probable. Briefly, says Lonergan, “necessity was a key notion for Aristotle but today it is marginal; in its place is verifiable possibility.”¹⁰

Aristotle the scientist focused on the necessary and the immutable.¹¹ The classical science he initiated is made up of the conclusions you can draw with strict logic from self-evident and necessary principles.¹² The necessary always happens; the stars always swing in the paths of the celestial spheres. Classical science drew a precise distinction between what is necessary and what is contingent, between the necessary laws of the heavenly bodies and the contingent laws of things on this earth. What then of the contingent? The contingent usually happens, but admits of exceptions. What is heavy usually falls to the earth, but its fall can be interrupted; the road bed of a bridge is heavy, but prop it up and it does not fall.¹³ Thus, for Aristotle, scientific conclusions yielded true and certain knowledge of things through their causes or laws; the contingent can be explained by way of being the exception to the rule.¹⁴

A. N. Whitehead had the intriguing insight that every philosophy operates out of a “secret imaginative background.” Secret because it was not made explicit. For the Greek thinkers, the background was “essentially dramatic.” For them, everything in nature was imagined as “a work of dramatic art.” Everything heads toward its proper end like the plot of a play towards its denouement. Thus, Greek and medieval scientists distinguished everything in nature by determining the appropriated end towards which each moved. Whitehead writes:

There was the centre of the universe as the end of motion for those things which are heavy [the sun], and the celestial spheres as the end of motion for those things whose natures lead them upwards [the planets] Nature was a drama in which each thing played its part.¹⁵

Greek science was concerned with ‘the end’, the *finis* in Latin, and so, in philosophical language, with *final* causes.

In the last analysis, Aristotle’s dramatic conception of science stands in drastic contrast to the modern. In a number of places Lonergan points out differences between classical and modern science which he found striking:

- In the Aristotelean notion necessity was a key category; in modern science it is marginal; it has been replaced by verifiable possibility.
- For the Aristotelean science is certain; for the modern, science is not true or certain, it is no more than probable, the best available scientific opinion.¹⁶ [And so, modern science is] “not fully knowledge; it is hypothesis, theory, system, the best available opinion.”¹⁷
- For the Aristotelian, causality was material, formal, efficient, exemplary, or final; for the modern, causality is correlation.¹⁸ Correlation speaks of the relations that exist directly between things.¹⁹ Modern science still speaks of causes, but it does not mean “the end, agent, matter, form of Aristotle’s physics, but simple correlation.”²⁰
- For the Aristotelian, a science was a habit in the mind of an individual; for the modern, science is knowledge divided up among the scientific community; no one knows the whole of modern mathematics, of modern physics, of modern chemistry, or modern biology...²¹

Where the Aristotelian wished to know things in their essences and properties, the modern scientist is satisfied with control and results.²²

In Lonergan’s summary, philosophy and science for Aristotle merged in “a single, logically interlocking unity” and it was the job of philosophy to supply science with its basic terms and principles. For him, the goal of science was not practical results, but the contemplation of eternal truths.²³ In stark contrast, modern science is empirical; its questions can only be settled by appeal to the observable results of experiments.²⁴ Whitehead contrasts Galileo with his Aristotelian contemporaries: “Galileo keeps harping on how things happen, whereas his adversaries had a complete theory as to why things happen.”²⁵

In sum, says Lonergan, “[modern scientific] inquiry supervenes upon experience and gives rise to insights which are expressed in hypotheses and ground deductions; the deductions are checked against experimental and observational results, which give rise to attention to new data, which in turn give rise to further insights and the expression of further hypotheses.” Empirical natural science may be thought of as “a group of operations,” indeed “a dynamic group,” a rolling sequence of operations. Indeed, the phrase “rolling circle of operations” makes precise for Lonergan what is meant by a natural science.²⁶

In Lonergan’s judgment, Aristotle’s science was brilliant for its day, but now is long out of date. Lonergan is fully appreciative of the advance and power of modern science and the range of its achievements:

- As a form of knowledge, it pertains to man’s development and grounds a new and fuller humanism.
- As a rigorous form of knowledge, it calls forth teachers and popularizers and even the fantasy of science fiction.
- But it is also a principle of action, and so it overflows into applied science,

engineering, technology, industrialism.

- It is an acknowledged source of wealth and power, and the power is not merely material. It is the power of the mass media to write for, speak to, be seen by all men.²⁷

Indeed, Lonergan applauds the unequivocal pronouncement of historian Herbert Butterfield that the appearance of the new science “outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes, mere internal displacements, within the system of medieval Christendom.”²⁸ In support of his sweeping assertion, Butterfield argues:

Since it changed the character of men’s habitual mental operations even in the conduct of the non-material sciences, while transforming the whole diagram of the physical universe and the very texture of human life itself, it looms so large as the real origin both of the modern world and the modern mentality that our customary periodization of European history has become an anachronism and an encumbrance.²⁹

Philosopher Karl Jaspers would agree with Butterfield in affirming that “the facts of modern science are without their like in the whole preceding course of history.” His list of scientific achievements (which Lonergan quotes) astonishes:

The most striking new element is probably the natural scientific knowledge gained by the application of mathematical theory since Kepler and Galileo; it has had unprecedented effects through its consequences for technology....

Never before had man been cognizant of the earth as a sphere in this real sense (not as a mere surmise)....

Human anatomy (Vesalius) was laid bare through the dissection of corpses....

With the aid of the microscope, the seething activity in a drop of water was disclosed to Leeuwenhoek.

In the telescope Galileo saw planets and moons never seen before:

- ...excavations brought to light bygone and forgotten historical realities (Pompeii), enabled whole cultures to be reconstructed, and fulfilled Schliemann’s yearning for the reality of the Homeric age.
- The deciphering of scripts and languages made audible the men who lived thousands of years ago....Today we know more about the history of early Greece, of the Near East and of Egypt than the Greeks themselves did.
- The horizon of history has been pushed thousands of years farther back into the past, the history of the earth is spread out before our eyes, the immeasurable depths of the starry firmament are disclosed to us.

- The modern world seems at all points to give birth to fresh sciences that are independent of one another, but spring from a common spirit. [For instance,] natural science grew up in the workshops of painters and architects, geography developed in attendance upon navigation, and economics upon the interests of the State: all of them arose out of the initial impulse to gain practical advantages and were then pursued for their own sakes, independently of utilitarian purposes.

In theology historical criticism of the Bible made its appearance.³⁰

The victory of modern science over Aristotlean science is, in Lonergan's judgment, absolute: "[its] prestige...is unquestioned, its effectiveness...palpably demonstrated, its continuing necessity...beyond doubt."³¹ Modern science, he writes, has demonstrated its superiority in applications which have "resulted in industrialization, urbanization, automation, a population explosion, mass media, instantaneous world news, rapid transportation, guided missiles, and thermonuclear bombs."³² It should be pointed out that for all his appreciation of modern science, Lonergan was not naive. He had a clear-eyed awareness of the impressive power of modern science both for evil as well as for good: science can "fashion the nation's youth in the image of the wise man or in the image of a fool, in the image of a free man or in the image prescribed for the Peoples' Democracies."³³

The Impact of Modern Science on Philosophy It was not long before the highly successful new science muscled its way into field of philosophy. Empirical science soon led to empirical philosophy. If Socrates and Plato focused on the political and the ethical, if Aristotle and Aquinas focused on the real and metaphysics, Descartes, Hume, and Kant shifted the focus to concentrate on epistemology and cognitive theory. The effects of this shift, as we shall see, were revolutionary. Thus there occurred the monumental turn from speculative reason to the subject that knows and acts and to the consciousness of the subject and its inner operations. As a consequence, the modern philosopher tends to begin not with metaphysics, but with the immediate data of consciousness. We are now in a position to continue our story of the unfolding of the eros of the human spirit in the realm of interiority.

The realm of interiority is a distinct world of its own where the eros of the human spirit unfolds in yet another way, different from the developments of the mind in the world of common sense or the world of theory we have already explored, yet, says Lonergan, "related to, important for, and connected"³⁴ with them. It is the realm that each one can discover for himself by an examination of one's consciousness and its operations. It is a realm, Lonergan admits, that is difficult to talk about in any "ordinary common sense conversation." Indeed, it is a topic you cannot speak of adequately by using "any amount of theory."³⁵ For one enters the realm of interiority, he says, only by a process of self-appropriation. Self-appropriation means that one adverts to immediate internal experience, to oneself as a conscious operator, to one's conscious operations, and to the dynamic structure that relates the operations to one another.³⁶ One attempts, says Lonergan, "to give basic terms and relations the meaning they possess as names of conscious events and conscious processes."³⁷

Only after you have verified for yourself by this process of self-appropriation the

existence of your conscious operations and the dynamic structure that relates conscious operations to one another, says Lonergan, that you have a basis for understanding understanding. Upon becoming aware of the exigence to understand understanding, says Lonergan, you find yourself immediately “confronted” by three basic questions:

- What am I doing when I am knowing?
- Why is doing that knowing?
- What do I know when I do it?³⁸

As we shall see, the answer to the first question, says Lonergan, provides a cognitional theory. The answer to the second yields an epistemology. The answer to the third gives one a metaphysics.³⁹

Begin, then, by venturing from the worlds of common sense and theory into the realm of interiority. Attend to your “immediate internal experience.” Lonergan wrote *Insight* to help you the reader investigate the realm of interiority.⁴⁰ Its aim, he explained, is the self-appropriation by which you enter and take ownership of yourself. Come to know first hand then not “just what it is that happens when one understands,” but also “all the different ways in which one understands.”⁴¹

But this is by no means an easy task. It has taken, says Lonergan, “a long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation” for brilliant human beings to move on beyond the realms of common sense and theory, to penetrate the realm of interiority, and appropriate for themselves what they find there. For any who follow, self-appropriation, he promises, will provide “a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both.”⁴² To secure this basis, says Lonergan, “modern philosophy has been groping in its efforts to overcome fourteenth-century skepticism, to discover its relationship to the natural and the human sciences, to work out a critique of common sense which so readily blends with common nonsense, and to place abstractly apprehended cognitional activity within the concrete and sublating context of human feeling and of moral deliberation, evaluation, and decision.”⁴³

In his pantheon of brilliant thinkers who explored and mapped the realm of interiority, Lonergan placed Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Marx, Newman, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Husserl, Bergson, Blondel, Scheler, Ricoeur, the personalists and the existentialists. We now want to move on with Lonergan as guide and trace the ongoing development of the human drive to understand interiority in the wake of the advent of modern science.

The Turn to the Subject A bit more background information is helpful, indeed necessary at this point. The Enlightenment made its appearance in the eighteenth Century, says Lonergan, “carried” by two powerful currents, the one social and the other cultural. The social current would he says, “sweep away the remnants of feudalism and a lingering absolutism by proclaiming liberty, fraternity, equality” at the time of the French Revolution. The cultural current would burst forth with the “triumph” of Isaac Newton (1642-1727) “who did for mechanics what Euclid had done for geometry;” and his success carried others forward with an unshakable confidence in the powers of human

reason that “led philosophers...to swell the ranks of the empiricists.”⁴⁴

The Enlightenment was for historian Peter Gay the movement that gave rise to modern paganism.⁴⁵ Lonergan draws upon the studies of French academician Paul Hazard to show that “already in full swing between the years 1680 and 1715” was “a far-flung attack on Christianity from almost every quarter and in almost every style.” What accounts for the unprecedented assault? Lonergan sums up Hazard’s answer: “It was a movement revolted by the spectacle of religious persecution and religious war.” And its goal:

...to replace the God of the Christians by the god of the *philosophes* and, eventually, the god of the *philosophes* by agnosticism and atheism. It gloried in the achievements of Newton, criticized social structures, promoted political change, and moved towards a materialist, mechanist, determinist interpretation no less of man than of nature.⁴⁶

While Lonergan was fully aware of the genuine strengths of the Enlightenment, he also saw with great clarity its pervasive and in his judgment baneful effect it had on the direction of modern education. Writing in 1970, Lonergan drew attention to the obvious fact that “human knowledge results from a vast collaboration of many people over unaccounted millennia.” At its core, such collaboration requires a tradition of belief, for, writes Lonergan “what any of us knows, only slightly results from personal experience, personal discovery, personally conducted verification; for the most part it results from believing.” The 18th century Enlightenment not only attacked religious tradition, but all tradition, for, he wrote, “it set up a rationalist individualism that asked people to prove their assumptions or else regard them as arbitrary.” Indeed, he adds, “such rationalist individualism in the 20th century seems to have infected our educationalists.” It is all well and good that “students are encouraged to find things out for themselves, to develop originality, to be creative, to criticize.” But, he objects, such teachers do not seem “instructed in the enormous role of belief in the acquisition and the expansion of knowledge.” They seem oblivious of the fact that “what they know of science is not immanently generated but for the most part simply belief.”⁴⁷

Let’s follow Lonergan then as he traces the genesis of modern philosophy under the influence of the new science and reports on his own dialogue with the new philosophy. Consider the impact of the new science on the three founders of modern philosophy—Descartes, Hume, and Kant. It is the pervasive influence of these pioneers that paved the way for others to explore the realm of interiority. How then did each of them answer the basic questions, what am I doing when I am knowing? Who am I as a being that knows?

Rene Descartes (1596-1650) lived in an age of unprecedented skepticism, a time of epistemological crisis when many were not sure whether there was any such thing as true and certain knowledge. The upshot of the recent Copernican revolution had been the shocking realization that the senses can be misleading and so philosophically untrustworthy: the sun does not rise and set, as the senses report; actually it is the earth, spinning like a top, that orbits the sun.

What was there about Descartes and his work that intrigued Lonergan? Descartes

is important because he was the first to initiate the shift from ancient and medieval philosophy to modern philosophy. An unprecedented shift from one philosophical starting point to another. To be specific, from substance to subject. Earlier philosophy had concentrated on objects and indeed his brilliant contemporary Spinoza (1632-1677) would continue to focus on “substance.” But Descartes was the first to turn his attention to consciousness and the thinking subject. He showed how anyone can explore “the possibility of coming to know the conscious subject and his conscious operations” and (this is the salient point) “without presupposing a prior metaphysical structure.”⁴⁸ Descartes, like Augustine before him, was a pioneer in exploring this new realm of meaning; he was among the first to venture into the realm of interiority.

To arrive at this new realm of meaning, says Lonergan, much advance work had been needed:

- The Greeks needed an artistic, a rhetorical, an argumentative development of language before a Greek could set up a metaphysical account of mind.
- The Greek achievement was needed to expand the capacities of common sense knowledge and language before Augustine, Descartes, Pascal, Newman could make their commonsense contributions to our self-knowledge.
- The history of mathematics, natural science, and philosophy and, as well, one’s own personal reflective engagement in all three were needed if both common sense and theory are to construct the scaffolding for an entry into the world of interiority.⁴⁹

Greek and medieval philosophers equated the foundation of knowledge with metaphysics, the Big Picture that explains all that is. Metaphysics, though the last stage in the development of theoretical knowledge, was actually first in the order of being. For two reasons: philosophers sought the first principles of all things; they also employed their fundamental categories (potency, form, act) in their orderly exposition of every other discipline.⁵⁰ As a consequence, psychology is a prolongation of metaphysics and a further determination of the fundamental categories. To accept the psychology of the Greek and mediaeval philosophers, one had to accept their metaphysics. Metaphysics first, then psychology.

Cartesian Doubt Descartes accepted the new science and attempted to give it a new philosophical foundation.⁵¹ Descartes started afresh by making a clean sweep. He employed the drastic method of universal doubt.⁵² Indeed he doubted everything he had learned and brushed aside all past assumptions about philosophy. Descartes and the philosophers who followed him shunted philosophical attention and inquiry away from the first principles of being and concentrated on the foundational principles of human thinking. Descartes focused on the one thing about which he (and anyone else) could have no doubt. He entered boldly into the realm of interiority and issued a brief manifesto: *Cogito, ergo sum*. I think, [and because I think] therefore I am. I can think, he proclaimed, and that means I exist. He appealed to conscious experience (his *Cogito*) and argued from the concrete experience of thinking to the concrete fact of his existence

(*ergo sum*). “I exist,” says Lonergan, is a rational affirmation with a rational basis. In other words, *ergo sum* is a judgment that claims to reach the real, the reality of my existence: if it is a fact that I am, it follows that I am real. Indeed, such a judgment gives knowledge of reality; in other words (and this will also be the salient point for Lonergan), reality is indeed known in true judgment.⁵³ Reality with a capital R.

Incidentally, in a short, epoch-making book with a long title, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Using the Mind in Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, Descartes described the analytical method he followed in his work. By force of this book (still in print today) and his own practice as a philosopher, says Lonergan, Descartes ‘imposed on subsequent philosophers’ the requirement that they use a “rigorous method” in their own work.⁵⁴ His greatest claim to fame, says Robert B. Downs, is his teaching that “through the proper use of intelligence,...human beings could penetrate the most hidden secrets of the universe.”⁵⁵ The range of his influence may be surmised by one scholar’s assertion that our contemporary world “is Cartesian to the core—this world of high technology, mathematical physics, calculators and robots, molecular biology and genetic engineering—a world in which deductive reason guides and controls...our science, technology, and practical action...”⁵⁶

Cartesian Dualism Descartes is commonly judged to be a dualist. There is an inherent dualism in his philosophy---a fundamental dichotomy between the thinking substance and the extended substance. He affirmed two basic positions. First, his *Cogito, ergo sum* affirms the existence of the *res cogitans*, the thinking substance, the subject. The subject is not the Aristotelian and Thomistic metaphysical “soul,” or “the first act of an organic body.”⁵⁷ Rather, the existence of the subject is rooted in subjective experience, spirit, consciousness—all that I perceive within myself as the basis for affirming my existence as a thinking substance. Second, Descartes affirms the existence of the *res extensa*, the extended substance. Substance includes everything outside my mind---my physical body, all other physical bodies, plants and animals, stones and stars, indeed the entire physical universe. In fact, it includes the already out there now real, everything I can observe by my sense of sight, everything that has spacial extension, however it is shaped, whether block or ball or cone or whatever shape matter can take. Because spatial substance is geometrical, it is ‘inherently measurable;’ you can use numbers and mathematics to measure its dimensions, its shape, calculate its length of existence, its weight and specific gravity and its relative position vis-a-vis other objects or bodies. You can measure a brick, a baseball, an ice cream cone, a golf bag, or a blob of solidified concrete. All this issues in a major conclusion for Descartes. Only human beings unite *res cogitans* and *res extensa* in a single being; hence, for him, a human being is a mind in a machine, a spiritual mind in a material body.

Descartes thereby opened the gap, indeed the chasm, between what is “inside” the thinking subject and what is “outside.” Outside is the *res extensa*, the object (or that which lies opposite, or outside, or over against what is inside the thinking subject). The problem that immediately arises is How does one bridge the Cartesian gap? How do I get from the ‘inside’ of my mind to the things ‘out there’? The risk is that once I turn *within* I may never turn up *without*.⁵⁸ Thus, Descartes divided what is real into matter and spirit, but he failed to give a satisfactory philosophical explanation of how matter and spirit interact. That failure created the Cartesian gap between mind and matter, this ‘foisting’

on the world, to use Huston Smith's word, the body-mind problem—"the residual bridgeless gap between mind and brain."⁵⁹

As a basic position, Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum* was a valid and useful starting point, says Lonergan; but it remained undeveloped and straightaway invited further questions. What is the self? What is thinking? What is being? What are the relations between them? As a basic counter-position, the affirmation of the *res extensa*, in Lonergan's judgment, invites its reversal. To understand why, however, more of the unfolding story of the human mind's development needs to be told. In the event, the two different kinds of knowledge in Descartes, rational and empirical, became "separated and alienated." The empiricist side led to David Hume and empiricism; the rationalist side led to Immanuel Kant and idealism, and, says Lonergan, "once the two sides are split, the problem is to put them together again."⁶⁰ In the judgment of Michael H. McCarthy who has written the most incisive study of the crisis in contemporary philosophy, Descartes' pioneering venture was powerful, but "so confused that it took centuries to unravel." Indeed, "though he could not solve the problems he created, his model of a solution cast a spell over everyone who tried."⁶¹ And according to Richard Tarnas, Descartes "set in motion a train of philosophical events—leading from Locke to Berkeley and Hume and culminating in Kant—that eventually produced a great epistemological crisis;" Descartes stands at "the crucial midpoint between the Copernican revolution in cosmology and the Copernican revolution [Kant's revolution] in epistemology."⁶²

According to Descartes, therefore, Who am I? I am a thinking substance; therefore I exist. Of myself as existing I am certain.

Consider now, with help from Lonergan, how key philosophers following Descartes' lead worked out new theories of human cognition.

John Locke (1632-1704), a contemporary of Isaac Newton, developed the empiricist side of Descartes philosophy. He took as his starting point the Aristotlean and Scholastic position that there is nothing in the human intellect that was not previously in the senses (*Nihil in intellectu quod non antea fuerit in sensu*). Locke strictly limited his attention and interest in the realm of interiority to the region of sensory experience. For Locke, all knowledge is based on the experience of the senses; consequent reflection on sensory impressions yield ideas. Ideas then are produced by the mind and so are not innate; rather, it is the power of the mind to produce ideas that is innate. Locke thus took the fork in the road that leads to empiricism and rejected the road that leads to philosophical idealism. Tarnas puts Locke's empiricist position well: "The mind without sensory evidence cannot possess knowledge of the world, but can only speculate, define terms, or perform mathematical and logical operations."⁶³ That said, it follows that science can never know the real structure of external things. It can only come up with probable assertions about external things, based on hypotheses about sensory appearances. If Locke is right, you immediately come up against one disquieting limit: you have no guarantee that what you think about sensory experience actually corresponds to the world of objects outside your mind. Hence, Locke was unable to bridge the Cartesian gap.

According to John Locke, therefore, Who am I? I am an empiricist: a thinking substance capable of sensory experience with the mental power to produce ideas

which carry no guarantee of their actual correspondence to things in the world outside my mind.

Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) pushed Locke's analysis of human cognition to its logical conclusion: there is nothing available to the mind but sense impressions and so anything the mind comes up with about the objects external to the mind is a product of the mind and so by nature untrustworthy. Indeed, the world outside the mind may not actually exist at all, for all *esse est percipi*. That means "to be" is nothing more than something is "perceived" by the mind. It is only the "perception" that one can be sure of. If true, you can know nothing with certainty about the objects you "perceive." As a Christian believer, however, Bishop Berkeley was forced to posit on faith that there is a God whom you obviously do not perceive, yet who produces the sensory ideas that occur with regularity in individual minds. Reflection on these God-given ideas reveals 'the laws of nature.' By such reasoning Berkeley explained the orderliness in experience; by it he sought (without logical success it must be admitted) to save both religion and science.

According to Bishop Berkeley, Who am I? I am an idealist: a thinking substance with the power to perceive objects out there, the reality of which is all in my perceiving. Their esse is percipi (Their existence is to be perceived by me).

David Hume (1711-1776) asserted that "the central science is the empirical science of man"⁶⁴ and that philosophy's central task is to investigate the mind of man.⁶⁵ Lonergan fully agreed. He spoke of Hume's philosophical intent with obvious approval in the introduction to *Insight* where he stated: "David Hume wrote that one does not conquer a territory by taking here an outpost and there a town or village, but by marching directly upon the capital and assaulting its citadel."⁶⁶ In this respect, Lonergan and Hume marched shoulder to shoulder in their assault on the citadel. They were both intent on understanding understanding.

The Data of Consciousness The opening sentence in Hume's *A Treatise on Human Nature* is an epistemological manifesto about the realm of interiority that reiterates Locke's basic position about sensory experience: "All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS." Perceptions include everything we are conscious of; impressions are what the senses make upon consciousness. Hume went on to say, however, that in addition to sense impressions there are ideas that are merely faint copies of the sense impressions from which ideas stem. (At this precise point, however, Lonergan will part company with Hume, as we shall see later.) The range of our knowledge, therefore, is ultimately limited to the area of our sense impressions. There may well be an external physical world, says Hume, existing independently of our awareness of it. But our knowledge of it is limited to the contents of our consciousness, which are not, of course, external physical objects, but impressions that show up in the mind as the result of "unknown causes." Knowledge stops at sense impressions, not at external physical objects. Or, in Meynell's words, "however carefully I look about me, I can perceive nothing but sense-impressions; by no exercise of my senses or my reasoning powers can I discover real material bodies which somehow transcend these sense-impressions."⁶⁷ What actually happens in your mind is, in Tarnas' words, a "reification of a psychological expectation, apparently affirmed by

experience, but never genuinely substantiated.”⁶⁸ Hume’s conclusion was emphatic: the Cartesian gap is unbridgeable.

The Absence of Causality Hume concludes this analysis of interiority with an assertion that will shock the scientific, philosophical, and religious world of his day like a thunderclap: whatever order shows up in the flow of sensible presentations can be explained only by sequence and not by causality.⁶⁹ Causality is kaput. The ripple effect of Hume’s pronouncement is still being felt to this day. Hitherto, orderliness in the world had been explained by Aristotle and Aquinas by an application of the principle of causality and an appeal to God as prime mover or prime cause. But now, contends Hume, a rigorous analysis of consciousness reveals that cause and effect as presented in immediate consciousness are indeed nothing more than the habitual succession of events in time. There is no causal link between them that is detectable at the experiential level. In baseball, for instance, ball is pitched, bat hits ball, ball sails into the bleachers. You perceive the sequence of events in time, it is true, but you cannot *perceive* any causality. In effect, Hume was claiming, all the mind is capable of knowing is sensible perception; he explained that “the nexus, the connection, the causal relations, the unifications in our knowledge [are] due to custom or habit,” which amounts to saying that causality is “purely subjective.”⁷⁰ And so we *customarily* say that the bat caused the ball to sail into the bleachers, but (and this is the key point for Hume) there is no rational evidence, no rational basis *in our perception* of the events, to justify the assertion of the existence of causality. Put it this way, Hume might say. Your mind gets the “impression” that there is a real ball and bat out there, objective substances which exist and are independent of your mind and which cause the sight you have of them and the consequent crack you hear as bat meets ball. But, says Hume, if you examine your consciousness closely and without preconceptions, all you actually perceive are impressions of ball and bat (and never their substance) and the sequence of bat hitting ball (and never the causal nexus itself). You may jump to conclusions about the existence of ball and bat and their causal interaction, but your conclusions are without warrant. In the final analysis, there is no causality, but only the stream of presentations. Lonergan will agree with Hume that the mind cannot perceive causality within the flow of the data of consciousness and will search for the ground of the principle of causality elsewhere.

The Absence of a Self Indeed, Hume goes further in his analysis of consciousness. An equally disturbing claim, for many. There is no mind existing independently of the contents of my consciousness. Meynell summarizes Hume’s position this way: “However carefully and persistently I look within myself, I always come across some particular feeling or memory or sensation, never on some ‘self’ existing somehow prior to or independently of such feelings or memories or sensations.” Meynell traces Hume’s line of reasoning as follows:

- If I have or am a substantial self over and above my sense-impressions and ideas, I will be able to find this substantial self by the same kind of introspection as that with which I advert to my current sense-impressions and ideas.
- But when I engage in this kind of introspection in search of this kind of

entity, I find nothing.

- Therefore I have no reason to think that I have or am such a substantial self.⁷¹

Hume finds in mind no evidence for the existence of mind. The contents of mind, the data of which we are conscious, “are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind”⁷² Lonergan agrees with Hume that in fact we can find no direct perception of the substance of self in sense experience, but disagrees with the stark conclusion that Hume draws from this fact – that there is no self. The reasons for his disagreement will become clear later.

But despite that, Hume would add, I am a believing animal. Paradoxically, Hume admitted that we do believe many things even without rational proof. We believe the external world of objects exists. We believe that causality is at work in nature. We believe that we have 'selves' that exist and endure. Indeed, we cannot do other than believe because, he argues, "nature, by an absolute and uncontrollable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel..."⁷³

According to David Hume, Who am I? I am an empiricist: a thinking being, capable only of sense impressions and ideas which are only faint copies of sense impressions. I have no sensation of my 'self' as a substantial self.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) took as dogma the traditional arguments for the existence of God and for the laws of Newtonian science, both of which he assumed to be true and certain. The rationalists Marlebrance, Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Wolff whom Kant followed had developed Descartes' position that material substance is extension, *res extensa*.⁷⁴ It was Hume's thunderbolt—the brash challenge to such assumptions---that jolted Kant wide awake from what he called his “dogmatic slumber.” Indeed, Kant woke up to the realization that the traditional assumption of a preordained correspondence between the mind and its object is a dogma that cannot stand up under critical analysis. This insight spurred him on to create a new philosophy which, he hoped, would provide a stable basis for both religion and science. In the event, it caused a Copernican revolution in the history of philosophy.

Kant thereupon followed Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume into the realm of interiority. He brought his genius to bear upon empirical consciousness and sought to identify the conditions that make knowing and knowledge possible. How is it possible, he asked himself, for us to know anything at all? He agreed with Locke that knowledge arises out of sense experience. But it does not end in sense experience, as Locke maintained. Indeed, Kant invites us to proceed further than his predecessors into the realm of interiority with himself as guide. According to Kantian scholar Giovanni Sala, there were two presuppositions at this point in Kant's thinking:

- 1) A realistic conception of human knowledge. We know objects, which Kant at this time assumes to transcend the subject, as independent in their being from the subject.

- 2) A rationalistic presupposition: we are in possession of a priori concepts (or principles, or straightforward knowledge — on this point rationalism is rather vague), since out of experience we can gain for ourselves no universal and necessary knowledge.⁷⁵

The problem then for Kant, writes Sala, was how are we “capable of making valid a priori statements about objects that are nonetheless independent of us.” The solution for Kant involved the rejection of the realistic presupposition: “Objects known a priori are not objects in themselves, but things as they appear to us; they are precisely not independent of us, but conform to our understanding, which is the ‘author of experience’.”⁷⁶

Knowledge of Space and Time We are all aware, writes Kant, of the steady stream of sense impressions within consciousness—sights, sounds, feelings, imaginings—which we somehow receive as stimuli either from inside ourselves or from things out there. How is it possible to make any sense of sense impressions? We can ascertain that they exist in space and in time. How do we know that? Not from the stream of sense impressions themselves which as Hume had demonstrated merely float along in consciousness like leaves on the surface of a brook. We have no direct experience of objects, of space or time, or of the causal link between objects. Oliver A. Johnson in his study of Kant reminds us that Kant became aware that we do not experience time in the same way we experience the color or the shape of an object. As Johnson says, “none of our five senses give us any impression of the all-pervasive but elusive passage of time.”⁷⁷ For knowledge of space and time, something else is required besides raw experience: the creative activity of the mind.

The Inbuilt (A Priori) Structure of the Mind There is, contends Kant, something over and above sense experience, something that ‘transcends’ sense impressions, something going on in consciousness indeed that had escaped Locke and Hume’s analysis of human understanding. That something else besides sense impressions is an operation within the in-built structure of the mind to perceive objects in space and time. Kant discovered in consciousness “an inner sense,” by which he means an awareness of perceiving, imaging, desiring, feeling and the like. From the reality of the “inner sense,” Kant argued that the mind is hardwired to sort through the jumble of sense-impressions it receives and come up with knowledge of them as spatial and temporal. In other words, sifting through what Plato called “the rabble” of sense impressions, the mind singles out objects, locates them in space, and fixes them in time, past, present or future. One does not directly see space and time, but the mind has the ability of making sense out of the passing jumble of sense impressions by attributing some sensations to this object right here or that object over there, to objects right now or in the future or in the past. The mind does all this simultaneously with its sensing. The mind’s prior structure is the condition that makes knowledge possible. What is new and original in Kant’s exploration of interiority is the existence of the inbuilt structure of the human mind which uses sensible data in its operations. The prior existence of that structure is the condition that makes knowledge at all possible.

Kant starts indeed, as had Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, with the immediate

experience of concrete particular objects. As an example, let us start with sensations which are merely the awareness of a stimulus. Take a piece of fruit and attend to the sensations it produces (and the verse it evokes in this writer):

Its heft in my hand and the feel of its down,
 Its temperature cool from its stay in the fridge,
 And the look of its skin that's all yellow and red;
 The sound that it makes as it yields to my bite;
 Its ripe smell in my nose,
 And the taste of its juice as it pleasures my tongue.⁷⁸

In a word, our senses supply the matter of our experience and our creative minds supply the raw data of consciousness with the coherent form which the raw data takes in consciousness, in this case a bit of verse I call "The Peach."

Phenomena and Noumena Kant identified two things (phenomena and noumena) as he explored the realm of interiority, and he drew a precise distinction between them. He called all sensations in consciousness *phenomena*—all sense impressions, all sights, sounds, feelings and imaginings, all the primary and secondary qualities of things. Kant called all things-in-themselves *noumena*—all those things that are out there, independent of the mind, things that somehow (Kant argues, though he doesn't know how) produce these impressions on our senses in a way that allows them to show up in consciousness. Noumena, then, are the residue in the mind of real things as made up of their spatial and temporal qualities. The world we know is the world of phenomena. What that means is that we actually have no direct knowledge of the noumenal world, the world of external things in themselves. The peach I hold in my hand has only subjective existence in my mind as I observe it. It exists only as a phenomenon in the mind of the observer and not as a noumenon (an object in the external world). It may actually exist independently of my thinking about it, Kant asserts, but I have no way of verifying the fact that it exists. Kant will only go so far as to assert that, unless we assume the existence of a world outside our ken (as he has described "ken"), there would be no way to explain the raw data that shows up in consciousness and which alone makes possible any knowledge at all.

Anschauung Kant systematized the meaning of "object" in its etymological sense (in Greek, Latin, German and the Romance languages) as being "what lies opposite." Object thus means "something sensible, localized, locally related presumably to a spectator or sensitive subject."⁷⁹ The mind, says Kant, is therefore hard-wired *a priori* (that is, in advance, by its nature as mind) to take a look (an *Anschauung*) at sense impressions (phenomena) and come up with knowledge of objects (noumena) as located in space and fixed in time, at some point in the past, or the present, or the future. Notice that Kant is claiming, says Lonergan, that "the only way in which our knowing can be related immediately to objects is through *Anschauung*" which means *a looking at or an intuition*) of the phenomena of the objects, not the objects themselves. The operations of understanding are knowledge of objects only mediately. Unless *Anschauung* is added, [phenomena] are no better than dreams or [products of] imagination."⁸⁰ In Kant's view,

“*Anschauung* is only of phenomena;” and that, says Lonergan, “is the key to his whole philosophy.”⁸¹ In effect, Kant does not deny the existence of the world of objects outside of the thinking subject, but affirms the impossibility of reaching any knowledge of it. For Kant as well as for Hume, then, the Cartesian gap is unbridgeable.

Question of God If natural beings are unknowable, then *a fortiori* for Kant a supernatural being like God is unknowable. In the light of his critical analysis of human reason, Kant found the traditional arguments for the existence of God untenable. He still believed in God, but only as the result of ‘a something else’ he discovered in the realm of interiority---a *postulate* of practical reason or an article of moral faith. We cannot prove it, but we need it to back up the moral law and guarantee its fulfillment. It is a law that all of us as rational beings have a duty to fulfill. Nevertheless, while it is true that Kant built a theory of knowledge “that excludes, to a great extent, knowledge of reality,” says Lonergan, he developed “an ethical doctrine of remarkable elevation;”⁸² indeed, he judged Kant’s ethical doctrine to be “superior to his doctrine on knowledge and on metaphysics.” Moreover, since the conditions for knowledge are not the same as the conditions for a possible course of action in the future, says Lonergan, “Kant can attribute validity to the ideas of reason or the ideals of reason from the viewpoint of action that he cannot from the viewpoint of knowledge.”⁸³

It is at this precise juncture that Lonergan parts company with Kant and exposes what he judges to be the flaw in Kant’s critique of pure reason. The human mind is not a second sense; it does not just look at the raw data of consciousness. Rather the mind is intelligent, it understands. Reality is not known by a second act much like the act of seeing, but by an act of understanding which is not at all like a look, an intuition, or an *Anschauung*. How Lonergan explains the difference we shall see later as we follow him more deeply into his own critique of human understanding.

Impact of Kantian Thought Kant’s life work of such daring and originality provoked an earthquake in the history of human thought. Consider for a moment the remarkable contrast which the prescient German poet Heinrich Heine drew between Kant’s quiet life as bachelor professor in the town of Koenigsberg and the subsequent impact of his Copernican revolution upon philosophy:

I do not believe that the great clock of the cathedral there did its daily work more dispassionately and regularly than its compatriot Immanuel Kant. Rising, coffee drinking, reading college lectures, eating, walking, all had their fixed time, and the neighbors knew that it was exactly half past three when Immanuel Kant in his grey coat, with his bamboo cane in his hand, left his house door and went to the Lime tree avenue, which is still called, in memory of him, the Philosopher’s Walk....Strange contrast between the external life of the man and of his destroying, world-crushing thought! In very truth, if the citizens of Koenigsberg had dreamed of the real meaning of his thought, they would have experienced at his sight a greater horror than they would on beholding an executioner who only kills men. But the good people saw nothing in him but a professor of philosophy, and when he at the regular hour passed by, they greeted him

as a friend, and regulated their watches by him.

Indeed, at this point, Heine did not hesitate to compare Kant with Maximilian Robespierre who led the efficient police during the reign of terror in the French Revolution:

We find in them the same talent for mistrust, which the one showed as regards thoughts and called it criticism, while the other applied it to men and entitled it republican virtue. But there was manifested in both, to the very highest degree, the type of *bourgeoisie*, of the common citizen. Nature meant them to weigh out coffee and sugar but destiny determined that they should weigh other things; so one placed a king, and the other a god in the scales—and they both gave exact weight.”⁸⁴

For Hume as for Kant, therefore, the Cartesian gap is incapable of being bridged. Hume demonstrated to his own satisfaction (and to that of modern empiricists and positivists) that there are no grounds in consciousness for a verifiable metaphysics. Hume reduced metaphysics to rubble. Kant reached the judgment that metaphysics is dead. Both men wreaked havoc in the libraries of the world.

According to Kant, therefore, Who am I? I am an idealist: a thinking substance, with a mind structured to use sensible data in its operations and capable of imposing space and time upon sense impressions. I am hardwired to single out sense impressions, locate them in space, and fix them in the past, present or future. All these activities of my mind produce an inner mental construct that may or may not have some real correspondence to objects in the outside world.

The Absolute Idealists Harvard professor Henry Aiken has admirably summarized the impact of philosophy’s failure to bridge the Cartesian gap and the prolonged crisis of trust in reason which Descartes, Hume, and Kant precipitated:

...the whole history of ideas in the modern age may be regarded as a history of the progressive breakdown of the medieval Christian synthesis which had been most powerfully articulated in the *Summas* of Thomas Aquinas and most movingly and persuasively expressed in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*....Many philosophers...are determined...to reconstitute the ideals of Western culture on a radically secular and humanistic, that is to say, a radically non-Christian basis.

The upshot was that “the nineteenth-century philosophers became involved in a gigantic ideological and cultural reconstruction which precluded the very possibility of doing philosophy in the time-honored “rational” and “objective” ways which had prevailed in Western philosophy since the time of Plato and Aristotle.”⁸⁵

Kant’s epistemological perspective underwent a continuing development at the hands of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, as well as Romantics like Goethe, Coleridge, and

Emerson. They advanced the radical notion that the relation between the mind and reality was not “dualistic, but participatory.”⁸⁶ By this they meant with Kant that all knowledge of the world is determined by subjective principles. They went on to affirm that these principles are not just subjective phenomena. Such principles are “in fact an expression of the world’s own being” and by them the human subject participates in reality. Indeed for them “the human mind is ultimately the organ of the world’s own process of self-revelation.”⁸⁷ Let’s follow this development more closely as it works itself out in the writings of Fichte, Goethe, and Hegel.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) was one of Kant’s most devoted students. In a letter to a friend, he wrote of the transforming impact of Kant’s thought on his intellectual development:

It is incredible how profoundly Kant’s philosophy . . . has influenced the total system of one man’s thinking and how decidedly Kant’s philosophy has initiated a revolution in my total philosophic thought. Since I read the *Critique of Practical Reason*, I am living in a totally different world. The principles I hitherto believed to be absolutely certain have been totally uprooted and destroyed An inexhaustible joy fills me.”⁸⁸

But later he was to confront what he (and in turn Hegel) saw as a fundamental problem with Kant’s understanding of noumena (things-in-themselves). Strip the sensory qualities from things in themselves, he said. Strip them too of theoretical qualities that the mind imposes on them (space, time, categories, etc.). Things-in-themselves then amount, if truth be told, to nothing at all. Hugo Meynell sums up Fichte’s objection: “If things are ineluctably dependent on their being sensed or conceived by conscious subjects, then they cannot exist at all apart from such subjects.”⁸⁹

So Fichte abandoned Kant’s preoccupation with objects and developed Kant’s thinking “in an unexpected idealist direction.” He focused his attention on interiority itself, concentrating on the inner life of the mind that does the thinking and not the objects one thinks about. “The world,” he was to pronounce, “is my *Ich*, my Ego,” (or as Hegel would later say “The world is the Idea”). What Fichte meant was that henceforth the inner life of his mind (and not objects) was to be the focus of his interest, his concern, his philosophical horizon. For him, says Aiken, “metaphysics, theory of knowledge and ethics became essentially normative disciplines whose function it is to analyze, appraise, and reconstruct basic principles by which we ought to think and live.”⁹⁰ The reality he was now interested in was not the factual reality of things-in-themselves (the world outside the mind), but the “ideal” reality, that is, “questions of principles rather than of facts, . . . standards of validity or rationality” one discovers through the activity of the mind. Fichte had no interest in whether or not things “conform to those standards.”⁹¹

Fichte and like-minded absolute idealists like Hegel and Shelling thus took Kant’s “transcendental Ego” and expanded it beyond anything Kant had intended. They elevated Kant’s ‘mind’ which imposes space and time (and the other categories of sensed objects) and transformed it into an aspect of an absolute all encompassing Mind (Fichte) or, as we shall see, an absolute Spirit underlying all reality (Hegel). Fichte, along with Hegel and

Schelling, concluded that “the cognitive categories of the human mind were in some sense the ontological categories of the universe.” Put another way, the conscious activity of a thinking subject does not point to a divine reality apart from the human subject. The human subject was itself the divine reality. Indeed Universal Mind reveals itself through the activities of human minds.⁹²

According to Fichte, Who am I? I am an absolute idealist: a thinking substance that is part of a transcendental Ego (an absolute, divine, all encompassing Mind) which reveals itself through the activities of my mind.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) a contemporary of Kant, made his own attempt to bridge the Cartesian gap by joining “empirical observation with spiritual intuition.”⁹³ He saluted Kant’s account of the constructive role of the mind in reaching knowledge, but faulted it for being insufficient. Indeed, in Goethe’s view, says Tarnas, “emotion and imagination, rather than reason and perception, were of prime importance.”⁹⁴ Goethe maintained, in Tarnas’ analysis, that “the human spirit does not simply impose its order on nature, as Kant thought. Rather, nature’s spirit brings forth its own order through man, who is the organ of nature’s self-revelation,” and so nature discloses itself “in the very act of human cognition.” Indeed, for Goethe, says Tarnas, “nature permeates everything, including the human mind and imagination.”⁹⁵ There was here a new concern for what science ignored: “the exalted and noble but...the contraries and darkness in the human soul, with evil, death, the demonic, and the irrational.” It now became imperative, says Tarnas, for the Romantics from Blake to Nietzsche “to explore the mysteries of interiority, of moods and motives, love and desire, fear and angst, inner conflicts and contradictions, memories and dreams, to experience extreme and incommunicable states of consciousness, to be inwardly grasped in epiphanic ecstasy, to plumb the depths of the human soul, to bring the unconscious into consciousness, to know the infinite...”⁹⁶ There was, says Tarnas, “an impassioned striving for conscious unity with nature, both poetic and instinctual.”⁹⁷ Goethe, like the romantics who followed, strove to yoke poet and scientist in a joint quest for understanding reality.⁹⁸

According to Goethe, then, who am I? I am a Romantic: the organ of nature, the voice of its self-revelation.

In sum, if there is a profound emphasis on ‘the subject’ in philosophy today, says Lonergan, it “may easily be traced to the influence of Hegel” upon Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Buber.⁹⁹ The efforts of each of them represent an attempt to get beyond Kant by “an insistence on the subject to offset and compensate for Kant’s excessive attention to sensible objects.”¹⁰⁰ While Kant had indicated the “technical prominence” of the subject in philosophy, he had made “only minimal concessions to its reality.” It was left to his successors “to win for the subject acknowledgment of its full reality and its functions.”¹⁰¹ We will continue now by examining in turn each of the subsequent attempts to articulate the exact nature of the human subject as it functions in the realm of interiority. First, Hegel.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) drew elements from Greek philosophy, Christian mysticism, and German romanticism to construct a comprehensive synthesis intended to bridge the Cartesian gap. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Lonergan found “many useful things...on the coming to be of mind.”¹⁰²

The World as Absolute Spirit All reality (all nature), Hegel maintained, is rational and spiritual. The world of the real is the world of the ideal, the world of the spirit. Indeed the world discloses to the philosophic inquirer an all encompassing spiritual principle---an absolute spirit in which all nature participates.¹⁰³ Material things are actually the correlative of a spirit which becomes real in and through the on-going processes of nature. Thus, spirit develops and evolves by way of a spiritual process in which the lower (mineral, vegetable, and animal) can be explained in terms of the higher (spirit). Eventually (and here lay the mesmerizing appeal of Hegel for many) spirit becomes conscious in human beings.¹⁰⁴

Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis For Hegel, reality is not only ideal; it is also one. Hegel is a monist as well as an idealist. Still there is room in his monism for difference. His ‘one’ is capable of differentiation. As the absolute spirit develops and evolves, the resulting differences do not fly apart, but find themselves kept together in a unity that is all comprehensive. An illustration will be helpful here. As a society develops, it requires an ever increasing division of labor. But each new division of labor creates an even greater unity, for the members of society grow into an ever greater interdependent relationship. It follows in Hegel’s system that no individual can be understood apart from its relationship to the whole.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, one moves beyond the representation of any particular thing to the universal concept which it reveals. True, the development of differences produces conflict between the differences. But, in reality, they complement one another and eventually find reconciliation in a higher unity. Hence the dialectic for which Hegel is famous: the conflict of thesis and antithesis finds resolution in a higher synthesis.¹⁰⁶ According to Hegel’s understanding of dialectic, “all things unfold in a continuing evolutionary process whereby every state of being inevitably brings forth its opposite.”¹⁰⁷ The opposites interact and generate a third stage in which they become integrated; in other words, what were opposite “are at once overcome and fulfilled—in a richer and higher synthesis, which in turn becomes the basis for another dialectical process of opposition and synthesis.”¹⁰⁸ It was Hegel’s basic conviction that, were this basic process understood, “every aspect of reality—human thought, history, nature, the divine reality itself—could be made intelligible.”¹⁰⁹ If Descartes required subsequent philosophers to adhere to a rigorous method, henceforth, says Lonergan, “Hegel has obliged them not only to account for their own views but also to explain the existence of contrary convictions and opinions.”¹¹⁰

The Meaning of History The Hegelian notion of development and evolution through dialectic led to another significant turning point in the unfolding of the philosophical tradition: a new understanding of the meaning of history and its uses. “For the first time,” says Michael McCarthy, “temporal becoming and change became the central concern of theoretical reflection.”¹¹¹ Hegel turned the spotlight away from “the classical emphasis on the abstract and universal” and directed it “to the historical concern for concreteness and

particularity.”¹¹²

The traditional and classical approach to philosophy had stressed the abstract and the universal, for instance, the unchanging essence which all human beings share. Lonergan put it this way: “If one abstracts from all respects in which one man can differ from another, there is left a residue named human nature and the truism that human nature is always the same.”¹¹³ One may go on, he says to “fit out the eternal identity, human nature, with a natural law....complete it with the principles for the erection of positive law....hearken to divine revelation to acknowledge a supernatural order, a divine law, and a positive ecclesiastical law.”¹¹⁴ But, Lonergan concludes, it is highly unlikely that by following this path “one will arrive at a law demanding the change of laws, forms, structures, methods.” The reason is obvious: “Universals do not change; they are just what they are defined to be; and to introduce a new definition is, not to change the old universal, but to place another new universal beside the old one.”¹¹⁵ It is true that, by following this path, “one can apprehend man abstractly through a definition that applies *omni et soli* and through properties verifiable in every man;” and indeed, one knows man as such, but “man as such, precisely because he is an abstraction, also is unchanging.”¹¹⁶ If the essence of man is viewed as unchanging, “one is never going to arrive at any exigence for changing forms, structures, methods, for all change occurs in the concrete, and on this view the concrete is always omitted.”¹¹⁷ But there is in the new philosophy a new way of looking at man.

Classical philosophy focused on the universal and the eternal, on “the static and the already finished.”¹¹⁸ But from now on the classical ideals of ‘unity, constancy, and identity’ would seem “immobile and excessively homogeneous.”¹¹⁹ With the coming of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, philosophy shifted its attention to becoming and change in history. The shift was momentous, as Alan Richardson noted:

The historical revolution in human thinking, which was accomplished in the nineteenth century, is just as important as the scientific revolution of two centuries earlier. But they are not two separate revolutions; they are aspects of the one great transitional movement from the medieval to the modern way of looking at things.¹²⁰

Philosophy widened its interest as it became more empirical (witness the creation of the new human sciences—psychology, sociology, and anthropology). It now focused on “the unfinished, the developmental” character of man and society. It sought “the intelligibility of human life in the numerous experiences of human pluralism, in the stages of dynamic development, personal and historical, and in the arresting differences among cultures and peoples.”¹²¹

The Meaning of Culture While he was teaching high school in Montreal from 1930-1934, Lonergan managed to find time for reading that would shape the direction of his thinking for the rest of his life. In the summer of 1930, he came across the work of Christopher Dawson whose *The Age of the Gods*, he writes, “introduced me to the anthropological notion of culture and so began the correction of my hitherto normative or classicist notion.”¹²² The classicist sees culture as one, universal, permanent, and normative. The empirical view is that culture is “a set of meanings and values informing

a common way of life.” According to the new viewpoint, says Lonergan, “human concepts and human courses of action are products and expressions of acts of understanding, human understanding develops over time, such development is cumulative, and each cumulative development responds to the human and environmental conditions of its place and time.”¹²³ Dawson got him thinking about human historicity. A human being is ‘a historical being’. Each of us shape our own lives, but we shape them “only in interaction with the communities and traditions in which we happen to find ourselves at birth. Indeed the traditions themselves are but the existential ‘deposit’¹²⁴ left us by our predecessors: “individual and group memories of the past, stories of exploits and legends about heroes, in brief, enough of history” for us to have “an identity as a group” and as individuals to make our own “contribution to maintaining and promoting the common good of order.”¹²⁵ As a result of historicity, cultural differences exist between peoples of different eras (e.g, the Sumerians and the Greeks) or between different peoples who are contemporaries (e.g., the ancient Romans and the Chinese). There are therefore many cultures over the course of history, differing to the degree that the underlining meanings and values of their way of life differ.¹²⁶ Culture moreover is an ongoing process. Any culture may remain unchanged for years on end. But there are times when culture can be either in a state of gradual development or of rapid decline. Lonergan also informs us that during the years (1940-1946) when he was teaching theology at L’Immaculée Conception in Montreal, “I read the first six volumes of Toynbee’s *A Study of History* in the long winter evenings.”¹²⁷ and was heavily influenced by Toynbee’s analysis of the growth and decline of civilizations.

Alan Richardson is absolutely correct, says Lonergan, in stating that the historical revolution in human thinking is as important as the scientific revolution. They are both aspects of the same exercise of critical inquiry which moved Western men and women from the medieval to the modern world. Richardson explains: “The critical faculty, once awakened, could not rest satisfied with the successful exploration of the realm of nature; it was bound to go on from there to the critical investigation of the more intractable realm of human nature, and, when the idea of development was fully understood, to seek to understand scientifically how, in fact, man and his institutions have come to be what they are.” His conclusion? “Since the nineteenth century it has been an axiom of Western thinking that men and their institutions cannot be understood apart from their history.”¹²⁸

The upshot is that modern man has become fully conscious of one extraordinary fact: the modern world is the construction of man himself. What constitutes the modern community and the lives of individuals in the community is “the hard-won fruit of man’s advancing knowledge of nature, of the gradual evolution of his social forms and of his cultural achievements.” Lonergan lists some of the ways this reality manifests itself:

- There are modern languages and modern literatures, consciously developed by turning away from the Latin and Greek languages and literature.
- There are modern mathematics and modern science, and they differ not only in extent but also in their fundamental conceptions from the Greek achievement.

- There are modern technology and industry, modern commerce and finance, the modern city and the modern state, modern education and modern medicine, modern media and modern art, the modern idea of history and the modern idea of philosophy.¹²⁹

Lonergan sums up the world in which we find ourselves as being “one of technology, automation, built-in obsolescence, a population explosion, increasing longevity, urbanism, mobility, detached and functional relations between persons, universal, prolonged, and continuing education, increasing leisure and travel, instantaneous information, and perpetually available entertainment.”¹³⁰

In the event, modern man has deserted, if not repudiated, says Lonergan, “the old models and methods,” and embraced with all its heart “the exercise of freedom, initiative, creativity.”¹³¹ As Hegel put it, “The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom.”¹³² The mind’s structures, said Hegel, are not “fixed and timeless, as Kant supposed.” Over time, the evolving mind comes up with fresh possibilities that render earlier views incomplete, even though at the time they were necessary and valid steps in the unfolding of human knowledge. Tarnas summarizes Hegel’s thought:

[B]oth nature and history are ever progressing toward the Absolute: The universal Spirit expresses itself in space as nature, in time as history. All of nature’s processes and all of history, including man’s intellectual, cultural, and religious development, constitute the teleological plot of the Absolute’s quest for self-revelation....The essence of [Hegel’s] philosophical conception was expressed in the Christian revelation of God’s incarnation as man, the climax of religious truth.¹³³

Hegel’s God What Hegel did, concludes Tarnas, was to substitute his understanding of history for traditional theology’s understanding of God as creator of the universe and Lord of history:

God is not beyond the creation, but is the creative process itself. Man is not the passive spectator of reality, but its active co-creator, his history the matrix of its fulfillment....At the climax of his long evolution, man achieves possession of absolute truth and recognizes his unity with the divine spirit that has realized itself within him.¹³⁴

For Hegel, absolute idealism ends as a form of pantheism.

According to Hegel, then, Who am I? I am an absolute idealist: a being with power of thinking and willing. By these activities exercised in the course of my life history I am the vehicle by which the reality of Absolute Spirit actualizes itself. I am thus a finite actualization (and so a manifestation) of God conceived of as Absolute Idea.

The Wild Years of Philosophy and Their Consequences Time for an interlude. By the

end of the eighteenth century philosophy had entered what Safranski calls ‘the wild years of philosophy’, years dominated by the thought of Kant, as developed by Fichte and Schelling, by Goethe and Hölderin, and by the poets of the Romantic movement, by Hegel, Feuerbach, and the young Marx. He writes:

Such exciting and excited ideas never existed before. The reason was the discovery of the ego; whether it took on the role of the spirit, of morality, of nature, of the body, or of the proletariat, it produced a euphoric mood which gave rise to the most extravagant hopes.¹³⁵

Some background then on the ‘discovery of the ego.’ Kant had postulated the existence of the noumenon---the thing-in-itself which according to his epistemology is unknowable, lying as it does concealed beneath the world of our mental perceptions and representations. But Kant had also made the noumenon the cause of the change in consciousness by which the thinking subject, using sense and reason in combination, produces phenomena. Here Fichte detected a flaw in Kant’s line of argument. Fichte argued, as would Schopenhauer later, that Kant had, at this all important juncture, actually contradicted himself:

The assumption that the world as it appeared to us was concealing a world as it was in itself, and that this world-in-itself as ‘material’ was ultimately the *cause* of what, by means of our senses and reason, we would transformed into the phenomenal world— this, as it were, ‘realistic’ assumption was itself only made by means of the causality principle, i.e. by means of our intellect.

Safranski spotlights the point of contradiction:

...The causality principle, which [according to Kant] was valid only for the phenomenal world, was being applied to a sphere that lay beyond appearance. Thus the ‘thing in itself’, which was beyond experience and intellect, was derived only with the aid of causation which, however, applied only to the phenomenal world.¹³⁶

Fichte accepted Kant’s epistemology, but in this matter of the ego, he now shifted his attention to Kant as “the great theoretician of human freedom.”¹³⁷ According to Kant’s notion of freedom, I myself am a thing-in itself, a noumenon, existing before I attend to myself as existing and indeed as being beyond my powers of full self-comprehension. But I am in fact free and am conscious that I am free. True, my nature is urge-driven— my inclinations and my desires urge me to satisfy my needs. But I am also conscience-driven: the voice of conscience compels me to do what is good. There is in Kant’s analysis a categorical imperative within consciousness---an imperious voice that lays down an absolute command: *Act only according to that maxim of action that you can at the same time will to be a universal law.* Moreover, Kant insists, treat all your fellow human beings as persons and not as things to be used. Rework the first imperious command of conscience then to read: *Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own*

person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only. Just as Kant had postulated the existence of the thing-in-itself to explain the data of our senses, so at this point he postulated the existence of God—equally unknowable according to his epistemology—to guarantee the fulfillment of the categorical demands of conscience. In other words, Kant presents not a ‘rational’ proof for the existence of God, but a ‘postulate’ demanded by practical reason; otherwise the categorical imperatives would be incapable of implementation.¹³⁸

Fichte accepted Kant’s analysis. Closer analysis, for Fichte, reveals that I myself as ‘thing-in-itself’ am to be understood (in Safranski’s words) “not as an empirically unique ‘individual’ ego at all, but as an ‘ego-ness’ pulsating, as an active force of self-awareness, below any individual sense of ego.”¹³⁹ Further, I can say I am a ‘thing-in-itself’ with a capacity for freedom. Poised to act, I experience myself as free, as ‘undetermined’. The exercise of freedom is the precise activity by which the ego can of itself “*begin-to-be* at any moment.” I experience myself as “the beginning, as it were out of nothing, of a new chain of causalities.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed by the free activity of my will “I give birth to myself as an ego, and therefore I am.” The revelation of the secret power of human freedom struck Fichte with the force of a ‘thunderbolt.’ He had, says Safranski, “the knack of popularizing his difficult philosophy by captivating rhetoric.”¹⁴¹ His eloquence would make him the chief witness to the new “spirit of subjectivism and unlimited feasibility.” His subsequent proclamation of his discovery produced, as noted earlier, “the euphoric mood which gave rise to the most extravagant hopes.” The power and the prospect of making all things new intoxicated his followers and turned them into the wild men of philosophy. One unsympathetic contemporary, to be sure, balked. The philosopher Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi had serious reservations, for he saw with sober clarity the either/or precipice toward which the wild men of philosophy were hurtling: “God is outside me, a living Being existing on its own, or else I am God.”¹⁴² Undeterred, Hölderin, Hegel, and Schelling were convinced that they could literally ‘make sense’, that they could for instance create a new mythology to replace traditional religion. In one celebrated meeting over a bottle of wine they came up with ‘a new society-shaping idea’ expressed in a document that has come to be known as “The Oldest System Program of German Idealism”---what Safranski calls “a youthfully fresh-document, driven by the world-shaking spirit of creation and of the ego” that euphoric spirit of ‘unlimited feasibility’, that defining “spirit of the wild years of philosophy.”¹⁴³

The Russian Intelligentsia The scientific, historical, and philosophical revolution we have just traced exploded like a bomb in the intellectual history of the western world. It liberated and intoxicated the intellectuals of the day. Isaiah Berlin gives a striking account of how the thought of Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling stimulated the birth of the Russian intelligentsia during the despotic regime of Tzar Nicholas I (an event which Berlin calls ‘the largest single Russian contribution to social change in the world’¹⁴⁴). Foremost among them, the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, the novelist Ivan Turgenev, the social literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, and the socialist Alexander Herzen. Berlin writes of them:

Imagine, then, a group of young men, living under the petrified regime of Nicholas I---men with a degree of passion for ideas perhaps never equaled

in a European society, seizing upon ideas as they come from the west with unconscionable enthusiasm and making plans to translate them swiftly into practice---and you will have some notion of what the early members of the intelligentsia were like. They were a small group of *litterateurs*, both professional and amateur, conscious of being alone in a bleak world, with a hostile and arbitrary government on the one hand, and a completely uncomprehending mass of oppressed and inarticulate peasants on the other, conceiving of themselves as a kind of self-conscious army, carrying a banner for all to see---of reason and science, of liberty, of a better life.¹⁴⁵

Almost as an aside, Berlin inserts Alexander Herzen's derisory remark about the enthusiasm of his contemporaries—an ominous comment which would prove to be prophetic:

We [Russians] are great doctrinaires and *raisonneurs*. To this German capacity we add our own national...element, ruthless, fanatically dry: we are only too willing to cut off heads....With fearless step we march to the very limit, and go beyond it...¹⁴⁶

In any event, says Berlin, the members of the new Russian intelligentsia “were a persecuted minority who drew strength from their very persecution.” They were, he writes, “the self-conscious bearers of a western message, freed from the chains of ignorance and prejudice, stupidity or cowardice, by some great western liberator...who had transformed their vision.”¹⁴⁷

The exhilarating experience of liberation, Berlin reminds us, is not something “uncommon in the history of Europe:”¹⁴⁸

A liberator is one who...ends your anxieties and frustrations by placing you within a new framework where old problems cease to have meaning, and new ones appear which have their solutions, as it were, already to some degree prefigured in the new universe in which you find yourself. I mean that those who were liberated by the humanists of the Renaissance or the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century did not merely think their old questions answered more correctly by Plato or Newton than by Albertus Magnus or the Jesuits---rather they had a sense of a new universe....The moment at which ancient chains fall off, and you feel yourself recreated in a new image, can make a life.¹⁴⁹

Such a liberator is what Lonergan calls anyone who occasions a profound horizon shift, from one area of interest and concern into another.

The Russian intelligentsia of whom Berlin writes were liberated “by the great German metaphysical writers, who freed them on the one hand from the dogmas of the Orthodox Church, on the other from the dry formulas of the eighteenth-century rationalists....What Fichte, Hegel, Schilling...provided was little short of a new religion.”¹⁵⁰

The job of the absolute idealist, says Berlin, was “to discern the march of history,

or of what was, somewhat mysteriously, called the Idea, and discover whither it was carrying mankind.” The flow of history is “an enormous river;” the task of the philosopher is to attend to “this inward *Drang*, this subterranean current,” first determine in oneself by “a kind of deep inner contemplation” where it led, and then identify “the spiritual direction of the larger ‘organism’ (or unit)” to which you belong. Berlin notes that:

- Herder declared this unit to be a spiritual culture or way of life;
- the Roman Catholic *penseurs* identified it with the life of the Christian church;
- Fichte somewhat obscurely, and after him Hegel unequivocally, declared it to be the national state.”¹⁵¹

Consider a second consequence of the absolute idealism. Consider Fichte’s conversion to nationalism. Fichte had been a passionate supporter of the French Revolution until Napoleon invaded Germany. Thereupon, Fichte’s equally impassioned *Addresses to the German Nation* revealed his racism and nationalism. For Fichte, the Germans are “the bearers of Germanness” which he identified as “the essence of humanity.”¹⁵² The Germans, he asserted, are suited by nature to be the educators and leaders of mankind. The Germans, for him, are the elect whose destiny is to usher other nations into the Kingdom of God on earth.¹⁵³ Increasingly in his writings, says Aiken, the freedom of the individual is “subordinated to, and perhaps even identified with, the self-development of the Absolute Spirit as that manifests itself historically in the life of the community.”¹⁵⁴ German idealists like Fichte, Lonergan reminds us, “belong to a historicist tradition. They are both illuminating and more dangerous, because more obscure.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, he adds, the idealists “provide philosophy as an instrument in man’s making of man.”¹⁵⁶

For this reason, many thinkers see Fichte as “a direct ancestor of Nazism.”¹⁵⁷ And Lonergan, who was ever interested in current events, once said, “Germany has been dominated by historicist thinking.” He went on to note that “when the Americans had access to the archives of the German government after the last war, they discovered that the philosophy of Fichte had been an ultimate and controlling inspiration and criterion in top-level German politics and statesmanship.”¹⁵⁸

The mind, for Fichte, does not possess innate ideas (as Kant had maintained), but innate power. When the mind constructs ideal reality, it builds by using its own powers of introspection and organization. And so, Fichte concocted from his own mind a full-blown metaphysical system as beautiful but, to the science-minded philosophers who followed him, about as substantial as the dazzling cob-web a spider might spin from its own innards. The charge which Francis Bacon had leveled at the Scholastics was eventually aimed at Fichte: all reason can do is concoct a web of abstraction which is unverifiable and so of no practical use to any one.¹⁵⁹ In Will Durant’s wry comment, modern philosophy went on a wild metaphysical binge for a generation, but then swore off metaphysics for life.

It is true, as Henry Aiken states, that after Kant metaphysics “underwent a semi-miraculous reincarnation” in the absolute idealism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, lived

on in the “evolutionary naturalism of Herbert Spencer,” and for many until the fall of Communism found “its eternal home” in the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx.¹⁶⁰ And while it is also true, in Lonergan’s judgment, that the absolute idealists “enriched philosophy enormously,” in the long run, the project they initiated to “restore speculative reason to its ancient eminence in a new idealist context” met with but limited success.¹⁶¹

In Lonergan’s judgment the absolute idealists (Shelling, Fichte, and Hegel) were “a mistaken reaction against Kant’s practical reason.” At the same time, he acknowledged their positive achievements: “They enriched philosophy enormously: philosophy of history, philosophy of right, philosophy of culture, all that sort of thing.”¹⁶²

1. *Method in Theology*, 316.

2. Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science*, vii. Quoted in Lonergan, “Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection*, 147.

3. Alan Richardson, *History, Sacred and Profane*, 32-33. Quoted in “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response”, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 354.

4. *Method in Theology*, 272.

5. Mark T. Miller, “Introduction to Lonergan,” manuscript article, 2007.

6. *Insight*, xiv.

7. *Ibid.*, xiv.

8. “Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response”, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 353.

9. “Revolution in Catholic Theology,” *A Second Collection*, 235.

10. “The Absence of God In Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 103-104.

11. *Method in Theology*, 6.

12. *Ibid.*, 6.

13. *Insight*, 129.

14. “Belief: Today’s Issue,” *A Second Collection*, 94.

15. *Science and the Modern World*, 8.

16. “The Future of Thomism,” *A Second Collection*, 51.

17. “Belief: Today’s Issue,” *A Second Collection*, 94.

18. “The Future of Thomism,” *A Second Collection*, 51.

19. *Insight*, 38.

20. “Belief: Today’s Issue,” *A Second Collection*, 94.

21. “The Future of Thomism,” *A Second Collection*, 51.

22. “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 104. Cf. Also Lonergan’s treatment of Aristotle’s science in “Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation,” *A Third Collection*, 41-44.

23. “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection*, 148.

24. “Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation,” *A Third Collection*, 4 2.

25. *Science and the Modern World*, 9.

26. “The Theory of Philosophic Differences,” *Topics in Education*, 161-162.

27. *Method in Theology*, 99.

28. Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science*, vii., Quoted in Lonergan, “Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection*, 147.

29. *Ibid.*, 7-8.

30. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 82.

31. “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 104.

32. “The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” *A Second Collection*, 183.

33. *Method in Theology*, 99.

34. “Time and Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 114-115.

35. *Ibid.*, 114-115.

36. *Method in Theology*, 257.

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37. "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965–1980*, 21-22.
38. *Method in Theology*, 83.
39. *Ibid.*, 25.
40. Hugo A. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, n.15, 188.
41. "Time and Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 114.
42. *Method in Theology*, 85.
43. *Ibid.*, 275.
44. "Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our time," *A Third Collection*, 63.
45. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, An Interpretation*, New York: Knopf, 1966. Referred to in "Theology in its New Context," *A Second Collection*, 56.
46. Paul Hazard, *The European Mind*, London: Hollis & Carter, 1953. Referred to in "Theology in its New Context," *A Second Collection*, 57.
47. "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," *A Second Collection*, 185-186.
48. *Method in Theology*, 261.
49. *Ibid.*, 262.
50. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis in Philosophy*, 231 and 362, n. 10.
51. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped the Western View*, 278.
52. Lonergan reminds us that Newman had his doubts about the wisdom of Descartes' universal doubt. Newman remarked, says Lonergan, "that it would be better to believe everything than to doubt everything. For universal doubt leaves one with no basis for advance, while universal belief may contain some truth that in time may gradually drive out the errors." Cf. *Method in Theology*, 223.
53. "A Definition of Metaphysics," *Understanding and Being*, 186.
54. *Insight*, 530.
55. Robert B. Downs, *Books That Changed the World*, 17
56. Richard Watson, *Cogito, Ergo Sum: The Life of René Descartes*, 3.
57. *Method in Theology*, 95-96.
58. See Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 102-103.
59. Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters*, 182.
60. "The Theory of Philosophic Differences," *Topics in Education*, 182.
61. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 185.
62. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 417.
63. *Ibid.*, 334.
64. *Insight*, 529.
65. *Ibid.*, 386.
66. *Ibid.*, xxx.
67. Hugo A. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, 5.
68. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 337-338.
69. *Method in Theology*, 16.
70. "The Theory of Philosophic Differences," *Topics in Education*, 182-183.
71. Hugo A. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, 5.
72. Quoted in Oliver A. Johnson, "David Hume," *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 268. Friedrich von Hügel found Hume and his 'clarities' a little much to take: "He is the sort of person young people are taken in by . . . He knows everything. He got to the bottom of everything by the time he was sixteen: he sees everything through clear glass windows. If I were to die to-night, he would know all about me by tomorrow. These old bones would be all arranged, sorted out, explained and in his coat-pocket; but somehow he would not have got me all the same." Quoted in Joseph P. Whelan, S.J., *The Spirituality of Friedrich von Hügel*, 30.
73. Quoted by Oliver A. Johnson in "David Hume," *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 268.
74. "A Definition of Metaphysics," *Understanding and Being*, 187.
75. Giovanni Sala, "Kant's Theory of Knowledge," in Fred Lawrence, editor *Lonergan Workshop Volume*

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- 16: *Lonergan and the Human Sciences*, 200. He adds: “Incidentally, you see here how completely Kant was oblivious to the act of insight into the concrete, namely of the source of universal concepts” which was of course the central issue as we shall see for Lonergan.
76. *Ibid.*, 200-201.
77. Oliver A. Johnson, “Immanuel Kant,” *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 282.
78. A tip of the hat here to Antonio Carlos Jobim and the “fascinatin’ rhythm” of his little classic *The Waters of March*.
79. “Natural Knowledge of God,” *A Second Collection*, 121-122.
80. “Consciousness and the Trinity,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133.
81. *Ibid.*, 134.
82. “Discussion 5,” *Understanding and Being*, 371.
83. *Ibid.*, 371. Cf. also Oliver A. Johnson, “Immanuel Kant” in Ian P. McGreal, editor, *The Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 284-285.
84. Heinrich Heine, *Germany, Works*, V, pp. 136-137. Quoted in Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 28.
85. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 25-26.
86. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 434.
87. *Ibid.*, 434.
88. http://www.csudh.edu/phenom_studies/europ19/lect_2.html Quoted in Elizabeth A. Murray, “The Second Moment of Intellectual Conversion”(p.18), an unpublished paper delivered at the 35th Lonergan Workshop at Boston College, June 18, 2008.
89. Hugo Meynell, *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, 32.
90. Henry W. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 23.
91. *Ibid.*, 23.
92. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, 351.
93. *Ibid.*, 378.
94. *Ibid.*, 368.
95. *Ibid.*, 378.
96. *Ibid.*, 368.
97. *Ibid.*, 376.
98. *Ibid.*, 378.
99. “The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, 69-70.
100. “Natural Knowledge of God,” *A Second Collection*, 122.
101. “The Subject,” *A Second Collection*, 70, n.3.
102. “Method in Catholic Theology,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 37-38.
103. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, 376.
104. John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought: The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1960*, 24. See also Clark A. Kucheman, “Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel”, *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 331-336; and Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*, 203-220.
105. This was the favorite illustration of the British Neo-Hegelian Edward Caird to explain Hegel’s “principle of identity in difference”. See John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought: the Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1960*, 24.
106. *Ibid.*, 24.
107. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 379.
108. *Ibid.*, 379.
109. *Ibid.*, 379.
110. *Insight*, 530.
111. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 228. McCarthy (360, footnote 5) recommends Hannah Arendt’s “penetrating account of this theoretical shift and its disruptive effect on the philosophical tradition” in *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), especially Chapter 1 and 2.

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112. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 228.
113. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, 3.
114. *Ibid.*, 3.
115. *Ibid.*, 3.
116. *Ibid.*, 5.
117. *Ibid.*, 5.
118. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 228.
119. *Ibid.*, 228.
120. Alan Richardson, *History, Sacred and Profane*, 32-33. Quoted in "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response", *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 354.
121. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 228.
122. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 264; quoted in Crowe, *Lonergan*, 18.
123. *Method in Theology*, 302.
124. *Ibid.*, 81.
125. *Ibid.*, 182.
126. *Ibid.*, xi.
127. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 36, n. 56.
128. Alan Richardson, *History, Sacred and Profane*, 32-33. Quoted in "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 354.
129. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, 4-5.
130. "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," *A Second Collection*, 114. One consequence, Lonergan goes on to note, is that 'in this ever changing scene God, when not totally absent, appears an intruder. To mention him, if not meaningless, seems to be irrelevant.'
131. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, 5.
132. Quoted in David Denby, *Great Books*, 313.
133. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, 380-381.
134. *Ibid.*, 381.
135. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 1.
136. *Ibid.*, 126.
137. *Ibid.*, 113.
138. See Oliver A. Johnson, "Immanuel Kant," in *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, Ian F. McGreal, editor, 284-285.
139. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 126.
140. *Ibid.*, 114.
141. *Ibid.*, 127.
142. *Ibid.*, 64.
143. *Ibid.*, 127. See also Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 136-139.
144. Isaiah Berlin, "Birth of the Russian Intelligentsia," in *Russian Thinkers*, 116.
145. *Ibid.*, 126. The book is a major source on which Tom Stoppard relied in writing his epic three-part play about Russian thinkers, "The Coast of Utopia".
146. *Ibid.*, 126.
147. *Ibid.*, 126.
148. Incidentally, this illustrates what Lonergan calls a vertical shift, a profound change in view point and horizon.
149. Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, 127.
150. *Ibid.*, 127.
151. *Ibid.*, 121.
152. James Collins, *A History of Modern European Philosophy*, 566.
153. *Ibid.*, 566.

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154. Henry W. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 54.
 155. "The Theory of Philosophic Differences," *Topics in Education* , 188.
 156. *Ibid.*, 186, n. 23.
 157. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Thinkers*, 54.
 158. "History," *Topics in Education*, 234.
 159. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, 273.
 160. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 13.
 161. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 242.
 162. "Is it Real?", *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980* , 137.

4

The Rise of Intentionality Analysis: From Schopenhauer to the Existentialists

The foregoing shift to interiority was essayed in various manners from Descartes through Kant to the nineteenth-century German idealists. But there followed a still more emphatic shift from knowledge to faith, will, conscience, decision, action in Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Newman, Nietzsche, Blondel, the personalists, and the existentialists.¹

Bernard Lonergan

As the exploration of the realm of interiority continued to unfold in the nineteenth-century, philosophy took a radical turn from cognitional activity to deliberation and action. Up till now we have been considering the historic turn from substance to subject, the shift to interiority begun by Descartes and carried through the thought of Kant to the German idealists. But at this point, as Lonergan reminds us, there occurred “a still more emphatic shift” — the decisive turn to will, from conscious thinking subject “to faith, will, conscience, decision, action in Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Newman, Nietzsche, Blondel, the personalists, and the existentialists.”²

With the advent of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) the turn to will was abrupt. With utter contempt, he dismissed the metaphysical speculation and system of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling. Without becoming modest, Schopenhauer made the flat assertion that “I cannot see that between Kant and myself anything has been done in philosophy.”³ In the words of his recent biographer, his vision was acute: “he saw the nakedness of the emperors in the German chairs of philosophy, he saw careerism, obsession with originality, and acquisitiveness showing through their finely spun philosophical systems.”⁴ What provoked his anger was the grandiose metaphysical webs which in his judgment the idealist spiders (especially Hegel) had spun. He left his readers in no doubt about his disdain and its main target: “...the height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had previously been known only in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most bare-faced general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, and will remain as a monument to German stupidity.”⁵ What precisely fueled Schopenhauer’s loathing? The conviction that the absolute idealists had “subverted what is true and valuable in the philosophy of Kant.” They had raced “outwards in all directions,” he complained, “instead of going into themselves, where any riddle can be solved.”⁶ And so in Will Durant’s apt diagnosis, “intellectualism—the conception of man as above all a thinking animal [*animal rationale*], consciously adapting means to rationally chosen ends—fell sick with

Rousseau, took to its bed with Kant, and died with Schopenhauer.”⁷

And so, Schopenhauer’s rallying cry became “Back to Kant!”⁸ First of all, he went back to Kant’s understanding of mind as the *a priori* synthetic power which imposes order (time and space) on phenomena (representations) and eschews noumena (the world outside) as unknowable. The first volume of his masterwork *The World as Will and Representation* is a painstaking résumé of Kantian cognitional theory. It begins with the puzzling affirmation: “The world is my Idea.” What did he mean? In essence what Kant had already asserted; Schopenhauer put it this way:

...this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness. If he really does this, he has attained to philosophical wisdom. It then becomes clear and certain to him that what he knows is not a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth; that the world which surrounds him is there only as an idea, *i. e.*, only in relation to something else, the consciousness, which is himself.

What he takes as being rock bottom certain is “that all that exists for knowledge, and therefore this whole world, is only object in relation to subject, perception of a perceiver, in a word, idea [i.e., representation].” Things-in-themselves for Schopenhauer (as for any thinking subject) are mere representations or ideas. And so, for him, as for Kant, “material things” remain unknowable in themselves.

Indeed, it merits pausing here for a moment to point out one crucial implication of this assertion: if one takes as Kantian dogma the conviction that the things of this world are unknowable, it follows that God is that much more unknowable. Schopenhauer will make the point clear in responding to a letter in which his most eager disciple Julius Frauenstädt had waxed eloquent about the ontological argument for the existence of God. In his reply, Schopenhauer openly mocks the man’s naiveté:

The “Thing in itself,” for you, is the absolute, the ontological proof, in disguise, with the god of the Jews astride it. And as for you, you go in front of it like King David before the Ark of the Lord, dancing and singing, puffed up with vanity. And yet, despite the aforesaid definition, which should have made it unshakable (the “original, eternal being, which had no beginning and cannot perish”), it has been well and truly cast forth by Kant. It has been handed down to me like a corpse, and when the smell of it comes back to me, as it did in your letter, I am filled with impatience.”⁹

Indeed Schopenhauer had to rein in his exasperation while writing to Frauenstädt:

My dear friend, I have to remind myself of your numerous and great merits in propagating my philosophy in order not to lose my patience and composure. . . . In vain, for example have I written to you not to seek the thing in itself in cloud-cuckoo-land (i.e. where the God of the Jews resides) but in the things of this world—in the table at which you write, in

the chair under your arse. . . . My philosophy is never concerned with cloud-cuckoo-land but with this world, i.e. it is *immanent*, not transcendent.¹⁰

But to continue. After submitting Kant's theory on the nature of understanding and its limits to a sharp analysis in volume one of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer made the all important shift in the second volume to what would be his unique contribution to the history of philosophy. He began by choosing a new starting point. The most argumentative of men himself, he had come to realize the uselessness of trying to convince anyone by logic. "Nothing," he wrote, "is more provoking, when arguing against a man with reasons and explanations, and taking all pains to convince him than to discover at last that he *will* not understand, that we have to do with his *will*."¹¹ So he took another tack. He appealed directly to consciousness. We must begin any philosophical investigation, he asserted, within our consciousness as understood by Kant. Empirical consciousness, he asserted, is the only reality we know directly and intimately:

We can never arrive at the real nature of things from without. However much we investigate, we can never reach anything but images and names [representations]. We are like a man who goes around a castle seeking in vain for an entrance, and sometimes sketching the facades."¹²

He directs the reader's attention to the point at which one moves from world as representation (as phenomenon) to appropriation of one's self as thing-in-itself (as noumenon). Indeed, he contends, it is the only point at which one gets beyond the facade and enters the castle. That point is my embodied self. In other words, one enters by attending to the "immediacy of the body as embodied will."¹³ Rüdiger Safranski, Schopenhauer's recent biographer, explains how Schopenhauer was able "to clarify the nature of the 'inner experience' and to differentiate it clearly from representing, perceiving activity." True, I *see* my body, but I *feel* more. He writes:

...when I see my body, when I observe and explain its activity, then what I perceive and recognize is still only imagined, but here, on my own body, I also feel those urges, that desire, pain, or pleasure which simultaneously, in activities of my body, present themselves to my imagination and to the imagination of others.

In his exploration of interiority, he had discovered that cognitional consciousness is "the mere surface of our minds," of which we know "only the crust."¹⁴ There is another *a priori* beneath the surface structure of the mind---"another, non-intellectual, access to reality which is provided by the will."¹⁵ In other words, what I feel is 'will'.

Safranski analyses Schopenhauer's insight more closely:

Only within myself *am* I that which appears to me (and to others) as imagined and which, simultaneously, one can reflect on. Only in myself is there this dual world, [outside and inside]....as it were. Only in myself do I

experience that which the world *is* [*noumenon*], in addition to being presented to me as imagined, as representation [*phenomenon*].

In other words, when I directly experience myself as will, I directly experience myself as ‘thing-in-itself’, as *noumenon*. And further?

The world ‘outside’ has for me only an imagined ‘inside’; only in myself am I that ‘inside’ myself. I am the inside of the world. I am what the world is in addition to being representation.¹⁶

Schopenhauer came to the conclusion that what empirical consciousness registers is ‘will’ and will is the Kantian thing-and-in-itself---the universal reality that underlines all representations in consciousness. What is real is will. In his journal he wrote: “*The world as the thing in itself is the great will which does not know what it wants; for it does not know but merely wills, simply because it is a will and nothing else.*”¹⁷ Kant had earlier asserted the primacy of the will in ethics; indeed for him it was an ethical category. But Schopenhauer had now gone further. He affirmed will as “the basic metaphysical category, the root of all that we regard as ‘real.’”¹⁸ In this way Schopenhauer was able to resolve for himself the Kantian quandary of the unknowability of the “thing-in-itself.” It is only by attending to oneself as willing, he asserted, that one has empirical access to reality. In the end, he was supremely confident that he had found the entrance to the castle which lay deep within human consciousness. Safranski spells it out: “it was not the imagined, discursively recognized will which he identified with the ‘thing in itself’ but the will perceived in ‘internal experience’ and felt in his own body.”¹⁹ Kant had located the ‘thing-in-itself’ in thought (as phenomenon and in no way as noumenon). By contrast, Schopenhauer had discovered the ‘thing-in-itself’ in the will (indeed as noumenon), “in the immediacy of the body as embodied will.”²⁰ This, he maintained, is what set him apart from all earlier philosophers:

One of the principal mistakes of all *philosophy* to date, one that is connected with the fact that it was being viewed as a *science*, is the fact that *indirect* knowledge, i.e. knowledge from *reasons*, was sought even where *direct* knowledge exists. Thus, e.g. the identity of my body with my will is a case of direct knowledge.²¹

And so Schopenhauer was now in a position to draw his famous conclusion: “The world is my will.”²² An assertion, to be sure, that needs unpacking. What did he mean by it? The Kantian “idea”—what one experiences in the mind as perception, conception, image, or feeling—is actually for Schopenhauer, says philosopher Ian McGreal, “the phenomenal or subjective aspect of the fundamental and universal *will*.”²³ In Schopenhauer’s analysis, the will—desire, decision, action at the center of one’s being takes priority over the thinking mind. Schopenhauer’s new horizon—the new area of his interest and concern and study—encompasses the will---conscious or unconscious---that lies underneath the conscious intellect. Kantian scholar Henry Aiken stresses another point: “It is only to the degree that we are aware of ourselves as willing something that we have any awareness of reality as something more than a system of coherent ideas,”²⁴

that is, something more than a mental construction. The will, for him, is that driving instinctive power, spontaneous, alive, active, indeed imperious—the basic human desire to live and live life to its fullness:

The Will is the only permanent and unchangeable element in the mind....It is the will which [by its singleness of purpose] gives unity to consciousness and holds together all its ideas and thoughts, accompanying them like a continuous harmony."²⁵

Let's take an even closer look at Schopenhauer's understanding of the nature of 'will'. It was, in Safranski's words, an "unquenchable desire which keeps us trapped in a pointless and aimless activity."²⁶ 'Will', he says, is "a blind, rankly growing, aimless, self-lacerating activity, with no clear direction towards anything intended, towards anything meaningful."²⁷ As Schopenhauer himself put it, man is "like a squirrel running in a treadmill."²⁸ He understands 'will', writes Aiken, as "a malignant force which at every turn frustrates the spiritual life of man."²⁹ Indeed all reality "is shot through not with reason but with such a will." Over time he became obsessed with the evidence of decline in human history and reached the conviction "that nothing at all is worth our striving, our efforts and troubles; that all good things are vanity, the world in all its ends bankrupt..." The conclusion of this heir of a wealthy Hamburg merchant was bleak: "...life is a business which does not cover expenses."³⁰

In the end, what Schopenhauer discovered in the realm of interiority is that there is under the crust of consciousness, in McGreal's summary, "a blind stirring that is never ending, that manifests itself as life, that realizes itself in suffering and that triumphs only in its denial."³¹ More later about 'denial'. As for 'suffering', the will-to-live finds itself involved in "competition, conflict, and the futile effort to satisfy desires that are continuously frustrated."³² The mind, to use Schopenhauer's image, "is the strong blind man who carries on his shoulders the lame man who can see."³³ And so his bitter conclusion? Life lames.

The life that cripples the individual leads Schopenhauer to a more general conclusion. It is equally pessimistic: the world at large is evil. Consider the world of nature. As evidence Schopenhauer offers a naturalist's report from the field:

...he saw in Java a plain, as far as the eye could reach, entirely covered with skeletons, and took it for a battle-field; they were, however, merely the skeletons of large turtles, ...which come this way of the sea to lay their eggs, and are then attacked by wild dogs who with their united strength lay them on their backs, strip off the small shell from the stomach, and devour them alive. But often then a tiger pounces upon the dogs....For this these turtles are born....Thus the will to live everywhere preys upon itself, and in different forms is its own nourishment, till finally the human race, because it subdues all the others, regards nature as a manufactory for its own use. Yet even the human race...reveals itself with most terrible distinctness this conflict, this variance of the will with itself; and we find *homo homini lupus*.³⁴

If man is indeed ‘a wolf to man’, Schopenhauer presented Napoleon as a clear case in point:

Bonaparte is in fact no worse than many people, not to say the most. He simply had the very common *egotism* of seeking his advantage at the cost of others. What distinguishes him is solely his greater strength of satisfying that will.... Because that rare strength was given to him he revealed the whole wickedness of human will: and the sufferings of his age, as the necessary reverse of it, revealed the misery which is inseparably tied up with the evil will, whose manifestation as a whole is this world.³⁵

And so Schopenhauer ended up as a profound pessimist and became “one of the world’s great haters.”³⁶ Such were the circumstances of his family life that he came by his pessimism quite understandably. His grandmother was insane. His rich merchant father committed suicide when Arthur was seventeen. His widowed mother, Joanna, the hostess of a literary salon in Weimar frequented by Goethe, was famous—for ten years the most read woman novelist in German---and at the same time infamous as an advocate of free love. Mother and son quarreled repeatedly. Joanna pulled no punches when she wrote: “I am not blind to your good points; besides, that which repels me from you lies not in your . . . inmost being but in your manner, in your exterior, your views, your judgments, your habits.” She continued: “Look, dear Arthur, you were visiting me only for a few days, and each time there were violent scenes, about nothing and again about nothing, and each time I only breathed freely again when you had gone, because your presence, your complaints about inevitable things, your scowling face, the bizarre judgments uttered by you like oracular pronouncements not permitting any kind of objection, oppressed me, and even more so the everlasting struggle inside me, by which I forcibly stifled everything I would have liked to object to, in order not to provide an occasion for renewed quarreling.” At the climax of one quarrel, however, verbal push came to actual shove, Joanna sending Arthur tumbling down the stairs of her home. It seemed, in Safranski’s knowing assessment, that “the noise of battle must drown the whimpering of the unloved child.”³⁷

The two parted and eventually the son’s neurotic fury found expression in a bitter essay with the title “Of Women”. In it he notoriously fired off shots like: “Women are directly fitted for acting as the nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous and shortsighted.” Or: “It is only the man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual impulses that could give the name of *the fair sex* to that undersized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, short-legged race” Or: “It will be found that the fundamental fault of the female character is that it has no *sense of justice* They are dependent, not upon strength, but upon craft; and hence their instinctive capacity for cunning, and their ineradicable tendency to say what is not true.”³⁸

The war-torn age in which he lived no doubt confirmed Schopenhauer in his pessimism. Indeed, says Safranski, he was the only philosopher to “match” his age.³⁹ Schopenhauer composed, as one scholar puts it, the metaphysical “Pathétique Symphony of nineteenth-century thought.”⁴⁰ The post-Napoleonic years marked the end of the hopes and dreams of many idealistic reformers. Goethe for one thanked God that “I

am not young in so thoroughly finished a world.”⁴¹ Aiken reminds us that Schopenhauer was “entirely free...of the nationalistic mania that afflicted Fichte and Hegel.”⁴² No wonder, then, that caught in the wake of the economic, cultural, and social anarchy that followed the Napoleonic wars, Schopenhauer focused on the darkness of the human soul.

How then is one to deal with ‘will’, how escape its slavery? By denial, by renunciation, by what Schopenhauer called the ‘Great No’. For Schopenhauer, in contrast to Kant, ‘will’ is by nature egotistical; it seeks its own selfish interests.⁴³ Kant’s intellect, Schopenhauer was convinced, cannot come up with sufficient motivational clout to deal with the power of egotism. It cannot impel one to unselfish acts of genuine moral value which Schopenhauer defined as acts “of voluntary justice, pure love of neighbor and real nobility of the soul.”⁴⁴ His line of reasoning took the following path. I am by nature ‘will’: the core of my being is desire, blind, insatiable, accompanied in its exercise by suffering. I come to realize that all other things on the planet are caught in the same turmoil and must endure the same pain and sorrow as I. The whole world, all Being, “is suffering because it is will.” In consequence, he worked his way toward the notion of denial by his experience of pity and compassion.

And so, one must experience compassion for the suffering of the world; otherwise there will be no change. Safranski explains:

Compassion cannot be preached. One either has it or one does not. It is a kind of tie with Being, higher than all the reason of self-assertion. Compassion is a happening in the dimension of the will: will, suffering in itself and, faced with the pains of others, momentarily ceasing to will itself within its individual limitations.⁴⁵

Further, if I can escape “for a few instants from the limitations of the individual, from the limitations of egotistical self-assertion of *my* will, I become free to participate in suffering Being.”⁴⁶ By what route is escape possible? Not by taking thought, but only by exposure to individual instances of suffering. There was nothing speculative about Schopenhauer’s approach. He was thinking of the slavery of blacks abroad, but also of slavery much closer to home, in the sweatshops of industrial Europe. He had, Safranski assures us, “a sharp eye for the social hardships of his day”:

...to enter at the age of five a cotton-spinning or other factory, and from then on to sit there every day first ten, then twelve, and finally fourteen hours, and perform the same mechanical work, is to purchase dearly the pleasure of drawing breath. But this is the fate of millions, and many more millions have an analogous fate.⁴⁷

“A philosophy,” he once remarked, “in between the pages of which one does not hear the tears, the weeping and gnashing of teeth and the terrible din of mutual universal murder, is no philosophy.”⁴⁸

Let’s pause for a moment and take stock. I come to the realization that the nature of all other things is will. I am rocked by the insight that in all my fellow human beings resides my own truth and innermost self. Their nature as will is the same as mine. In consequence, all other things suffer the same pain and sorrow that I do. The endless

sufferings of all who live are my own. This realization enables me to take upon myself the pain of the whole world. In experiencing their suffering and pain, pity wrings my heart—an experience shot through with powerful emotions. As this realization comes to maturity, it tends to quiet every impulse to self-assertion. Indeed, he continues, I shudder at the thought of the pleasures which result from the self-assertion of my will and feel impelled toward a state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete will-lessness.⁴⁹ One denies one's will by a 'self-suspension' of will; that is, by a refusal to assert one's selfish desires.⁵⁰ In his diary Schopenhauer recorded his personal struggle with insatiable desire: "we follow the darkness, the grim urge to want to live, we go deeper and deeper into vice and sin, into death and nothingness—until gradually life's anger turns against itself, until we realize what road we have chosen, what kind of world we have wanted, until torment, dismay and horror make us come to, until we go into ourselves, until the better realization is borne out of pain."⁵¹

As Schopenhauer worked his way toward his Great No, he came across the Buddhist Upanishads and the writings of Christian ascetics and mystics. To his surprise and delight, he discovered that their experience confirmed his own. The individual subjects and objects which one knows are all mere appearances, what the Buddhists call Maya. The phenomenal world of individuality and multiplicity (all subjects and objects) is an illusion. The noumenon lies behind the veil of Maya and it is possible to penetrate the veil and reach the reality beyond. What one discovers there is Will. All individuals are in actuality one, since all are phenomena of undivided Will. The whole world, he concluded, is caught in 'a constant passing away, a vain stirring, an inward conflict and continual suffering'.⁵² At this point, Schopenhauer was convinced, , Buddhists, and Western ascetics and mystics like Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhardt and Joannes Tauler, arrive at the level of sympathy or compassion. Copleston puts their common understanding this way:

We have goodness or virtue which is characterized by a disinterested love of others....True goodness is love, *agape* or *caritas* in distinction from *eros*, which is self-directed. And love is sympathy (compassion). [In Schopenhauer's words], "All true and pure love is sympathy (*Mitleid*) and all love which is not sympathy is selfishness (*Selbstsucht*). *Eros* is selfishness; *agape* is sympathy."⁵³

There is another way of escape from the slavery of will besides the way of asceticism. Schopenhauer himself, as Safranski makes clear, was "no saint, and no ascetic either...Nor was he chaste..." On the contrary, "he was an expert on denial, so long as it did not affect his own will. That he effectively asserted, often in a possibly berserk manner."⁵⁴ There is a second way of escape which he found more congenial, the way of aesthetic contemplation, the way of art. Schopenhauer speaks of a "better consciousness": the "blessedness of will-less perception"⁵⁵, and its expression in art. He explains:

The pleasure of everything beautiful, the consolation afforded by art, the enthusiasm of the artist which enables him to forget the cares of life all this is due to the fact that...the in-itself of life, the will, existence itself, is a

constant suffering, and is partly woeful, partly fearful. The same thing, on the other hand, as representation alone, purely contemplated, or repeated through art, free from pain, presents us with a significant spectacle.⁵⁶

Again:

Whilst science ... is with every end it attains again and again directed farther, and can never find an ultimate goal or complete satisfaction, anymore than by running we can reach the point where the clouds touch the horizon; art, on the contrary, is everywhere at its goal.... The first is like the mighty storm, rushing along without beginning or aim, bending, agitating, and carrying everything away with it; the second is like the silent sunbeam, cutting through the path of the storm, and quite unmoved by it. The first is like the innumerable violently agitated drops of the waterfall, constantly changing and never for a moment at rest; the second is like the rainbow silently resting on this raging torrent⁵⁷

Music, for Schopenhauer, is the highest form of art: radiant sunbeam and spectacular rainbow. In music, "the deepest recesses of our nature find expression." In music, the thing-in-itself is present, but altogether incorporeal. Indeed, in music, he says, the will 'sings'.⁵⁸ Further, philosophy gives one at best an imprecise account of truth. For Schopenhauer, in contrast to most philosophers before and since, it is not philosophy, but art that brings one the closest to truth. Schopenhauer was the artist's philosopher and won recognition as such by Richard Wagner, Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, and Samuel Beckett.⁵⁹ He was, said Wagner, the only philosopher who "grasped the essence of music."⁶⁰

Leo Tolstoy also found himself strongly attracted to Schopenhauer. Precisely, according to Isaiah Berlin, because of the "gloomy picture' Schopenhauer drew of 'the impotent human will beating desperately against the rigidly determined laws of the universe.'" Schopenhauer, in Berlin's summary, "spoke of the vanity of all human passions, the absurdity of rational systems, the universal failure to understand the non-rational springs of action and feeling, the suffering to which all flesh is subject, and the consequent desirability of reducing human vulnerability by reducing man himself to the condition of the utmost quietism, where, being passionless, he cannot be frustrated or humiliated or wounded."⁶¹ It was a picture which mirrored Tolstoy's own bleak experience of life. Over time Schopenhauer's dark view of human nature has come to be seen as prophetic, as the early effort of a genius to explore the realm of the unconscious. Other geniuses would mine the same dark region: Kierkegaard, Hawthorne and Melville, Poe and Baudelaire, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche,⁶²—all contributing to a process that would reach its culmination in the brilliant insights of Freud and Jung.⁶³

Ian McGreal sums up Schopenhauer's original contribution to modern philosophy as follows: "All reality is fundamentally will---the blind striving that is never-ending, that manifests itself as life, that realizes itself in suffering, and that triumphs only in its own denial."⁶⁴

According to Schopenhauer, therefore, Who am I? I am a conscious

subject, the core of my being shot through with will--- blind, insatiable, self-lacerating will---and I am summoned to extricate myself from its power by renunciation or by the ecstasy of art.

Praxis Descartes, you will recall, had shifted his horizon from the theoretical world of Galileo and Newton to the “intentional world of the transcending knower.” Schopenhauer had now widened the horizon of cognitional inquiry in the realm of interiority to include the world of “the transcending chooser.”⁶⁵ Lonergan points out one notable consequence of the shift to the transcending chooser—what he calls the shift to praxis. In the wake of the failure of absolute idealism, says Lonergan, ‘praxis’ now came “repeatedly . . . to the fore.”⁶⁶ The praxis involved in living one’s life well and to the full now becomes the overriding concern of mainstream philosophers. Their concern would be not so much the question of knowing, but of choosing. They ask : “What am I doing when I am choosing? And then, Why do I choose? What is my goal and basic objective in choosing?”⁶⁷ History reveals that man is “the self-completing animal, in the manifold variety of his concrete living.” By means of praxis one attempts to deal with the fundamental issues of life: “What are you to do about [your life]? What use are you to make of your knowledge of nature, of your knowledge of man, of your awareness of the radical conflict between man’s aspiration to self-transcendence and, on the other hand, the waywardness that may distort his traditional heritage and even his own personal life?”

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), we are told, was a passionate reader of Schopenhauer. He too judged Hegel’s absolute idealism with its brilliant exploration of “whole realms of meaning” to be a straight-jacket for the individual human being. Douglas Steere summarizes Kierkegaard’s instinctive recoil from Hegel’s philosophical speculation:

Hegel tended always to make the individual a mere passing-point, a moment, in the cosmic process, and to insist on the individual’s gaining his concrete ethical significance through being identified with the social, religious, and political institutions of his time. Man is to be saved by identification with a set of external arrangements. Thus this for Kierkegaard is the ultimate blasphemy.

Precisely why? “...instead of heightening his core of responsibility and integrity man is invited to do what he is already enamored with doing, to join the crowd, the mass, to be dissolved into the organic whole.”⁶⁸ Thus, it is Kierkegaard’s complaint, says Lonergan, “that what is logical also is static, that movement cannot be inserted into a logic, that Hegel’s system has room not for existence (self-determining freedom) but only for the idea of existence.”⁶⁹

Kierkegaard was not prepared to cross swords with Hegel philosophically; he wrote:

It must be apparent to anyone with even a little dialectical skill, that one cannot attack the (Hegelian) system from within. Outside of it, however, there is only one free seminal point, ‘the individual.’ ethically, religiously, and existentially accentuated.⁷⁰

His reaction to Hegel's understanding of philosophy was to insist on faith or trust in God. Thus, in contrast to Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard "took his stand on faith,"⁷¹ a bold stand, says Lonergan, "in the teeth of Hegelian philosophy."⁷² Philosophy for him had become "bankrupt or...irrelevant to living,"⁷³ and so he "turned to decision and action."⁷⁴ He couldn't refute Hegel, but he said in effect, "I exist, and I have to live, and I have to be a man, and I have to be a Christian." His basic fear, says Lonergan, was that he become one who does what everyone else is doing, says what everyone else is saying, thinks what everyone else is thinking.⁷⁵ To become, in a word, 'a drifter.' Kierkegaard had asked:

What does a mere individual count for? Our age knows only too well how little it is, but here also lies the specific immorality of the age. Each age has its own characteristic depravity. Ours is perhaps not pleasure or indulgence of sensuality, but rather a dissolute pantheistic contempt for the individual man...Everything must attach itself so as to be a part of some movement: men are determined to lose themselves in the totality of things, in world history, fascinated and deceived by a magic witchery; no one wants to be an individual human being.⁷⁶

The striking passage might well serve, says Daniel J. Boorstin, as "a manifesto for the Existentialists."⁷⁷

And so, Kierkegaard asked himself: Am I really a Christian? Does my actual way of living square with the exacting demands of the Christian message? Or in Lonergan's paraphrase: "Is it enough to say that I was born in Denmark and am automatically a member of the State Church of Denmark?" Is something else required? One becomes an authentic Christian, says Kierkegaard, only by taking the leap of faith. Kierkegaard's leap, says Lonergan, is "blind" and faith is "faith as confidence, the Lutheran tradition of faith [as trust], not faith as believing truths."⁷⁸ Kierkegaard rejects the Hegelian attempt to construct a rational system of reality which he felt unable to refute. In its place he stresses "passionate, inward, subjective appropriation," which is "incapable of rational synthesis." If truth be told, he maintains, one cannot explain or defend Christianity "in terms of speculative philosophy; [it] remains essentially paradoxical and calls for a radical decision of faith."⁷⁹ What Kierkegaard means is that "there comes a critical point where one finds out for oneself that one has to decide for oneself what one is going to do with oneself." And that, says Lonergan, is the all-important moment, the moment of *Existenz*. "You find out for yourself that it's up to you to decide for yourself; and when you decide for yourself you make the existential decision, you decide what kind of man [or Christian] you are going to be."⁸⁰ Kierkegaard wrote *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*, according to Quaker theologian Douglas Steere, to induce the individual reader to face that moment of *Existenz* where one shoulders one's "sovereign responsibility" to be an individual⁸¹. Indeed the book serves as an excellent introduction to Kierkegaard's thought and to a form of praxis, one reviewer warns, that is the equivalent of shock therapy.

According to Kierkegaard, then, Who am I? I am a conscious being with the exigence to become an individual and so summoned to make a radical decision based not on reason but on faith to be a Christian.

At his death, Kierkegaard was all but forgotten. But, seventy five years later and contrary to all expectations, his thought surfaced again in the twentieth century, and it would now be hard to overestimate its influence on modern thinkers.⁸² Secular existentialists like Sartre and Camus who stem from Kierkegaard modify his basic question to read, Am I really a man, really an authentic human being? They ask, says Lonergan, whether to be a truly human individual “Is it enough to have a birth certificate?” By no means, for “man is defined not by a static essence but by an exigence” to become a human being. And so, to be a human being demands that one choose to become an authentic human being by will and decision. Just as Kierkegaard had brushed Hegel aside, the modern existentialists brush aside the positivism (that stems from Hume and the empiricists) in order to live human lives.⁸³ By positivism they mean what science tells us and which fails spectacularly to “connect with the problems of living, and deciding, and being oneself.”⁸⁴

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was, says Lonergan, “the most influential man of the twentieth century—the strongest candidate at least,” even though “he spent years in the British Museum writing books that everyone else laughed at.”⁸⁵ Marx was squarely in the line of new philosophers who emphasize decision and action. He labored long to develop “the notion of a practical theory of history.”⁸⁶ His concern was “not merely to know but principally to make history.”⁸⁷ Ideas have consequences that affect the progress or decline of civilizations. Marx’s ideas, as put into practice by his Communist followers, exert force and have had catastrophic consequences. For our purposes, we will concentrate on three major ideas in Marx’s thinking.

The first major idea: the whole of world history is “the creation of human labor.” Labor is good and should lead to progress. But Marx suspected that some director, hidden off-stage, was skewing the performance of those who labored in the drama of human history. Marx was, in the words of Paul Ricoeur, “a master of suspicion.” The culprit, for Marx, was capital and the pernicious schemes of recurrence that conspire to allow some classes to dominate others.⁸⁸

Thus, the second major idea: “Capitalist development prevents human beings from reaching their full potential as self-determining beings.”⁸⁹ Lonergan detected in Marx “a terrific hatred;” it was, he says, “a hatred of sin.” Lonergan is convinced that what fundamentally fueled Marx during his years of labor in the British Museum was “his hatred and critique of the sins of the bourgeoisie [the middle class] in the nineteenth century.”⁹⁰ Marx demonstrated in his writings an “apprehension of sin in its real ugliness.” Indeed, Lonergan reminds us that there was at the time “a developing understanding, reflective differentiation, and penetrating criticism of sin.” Admittedly, he says, the criticism may not be “true in all respects, but nonetheless it is a real awareness of sin.”⁹¹

If Freud identified the presence of the personal unconscious, says Richard Tarnas, Marx spotted the presence of “the social unconscious” in the unfolding of history. The prevailing values of each generation, in Marx’s analysis, were in actuality “determined by economic and political values” which foment “a basic struggle for material power.” Thus, history has witnessed the struggle for power between the subject masses and their tyrant leaders in the Asiatic societies, between the slaves and their masters in the ancient

societies, between serfs and their aristocratic leaders in the Middle Ages, and finally between the proletariat and the bourgeois elite in modern capitalist societies. Any truly honest member of the capitalist elite, writes Tarnas, might well recognize himself “in Marx’s dark portrait as a self-deceiving bourgeois imperialist oppressor.”⁹²

The fact of sin and a knowledge of it, therefore, is not, as Lonergan says, the “private prerogative of Catholics.”⁹³ Indeed, in Marx’s materialist analysis, Christianity was a major part of the problem. It did nothing to change the plight of the poor and worked hand in glove with the ruling bourgeoisie. In his view, says Richard Tarnas, Christianity provided “a social opiate” which drugged the laboring masses into an acceptance of injustice and exploitation by holding out “the false security of divine providence and the false promise of eternal life.”⁹⁴

Class differences inevitably, Marx argued, lead to a new social order.⁹⁵ He asserted that a civilization in decline would, in Lonergan’s reading, “correct itself more rapidly through class wars” and then he jumped “gaily to the sweeping conclusion that class war would accelerate progress.”⁹⁶ As the result of such action, Marx envisioned a classless society in which one would witness the inevitable “withering of the state.”⁹⁷ This evolutionary and historical model of change was the result of what Marx called the working of a dialectic materialism in human affairs. His view of history was, he said, “Hegel turned on his head.” The clash was therefore not between ideas (thesis vs antithesis) from which synthesis emerges victorious. It was the clash between material forces (dialectical materialism) from which a classless society would emerge.⁹⁸

Hence, Marx’s third major idea: “Only when capitalists are overthrown, private property is abolished, and communal ownership of the means of production is established by an initial dictatorship of the proletariat can economic justice be achieved.”⁹⁹ The classless society which Marx promised entranced the minds and hearts of many modern men and women and fired them for action in the war of the classes. Bernard Shaw was on target with the insight that Marx “gathered fifty years of critical thought about the system that kept the majority poor and...made the world listen in earnest.”¹⁰⁰

According to Marx, then, Who am I? I am an individual summoned to take part in the inevitable historical struggle of exploited human beings to win freedom from domination by the forces of economic and political domination.

But today we are in a position to see that the promise turned out to be just another utopian illusion.¹⁰¹ Committed Marxists in Russia and China would work sedulously to raise “the class-consciousness of the masses.”¹⁰² Marx was a materialist; and a materialist, says Lonergan, is forced by his own principles to be “a manipulator.” Marx’s materialist followers used the stick-and-carrot approach later advocated by B.J. Skinner for purposes of reeducation and reinforcement. Once in power, Communist leaders in Russia and China, wrote Lonergan in 1975, set up “salutary” material conditions to control the march of history: “a closed frontier, clear and firm indoctrination, controlled media, a vigilant secret police, and the terrifying threat of labor camps.”¹⁰³ What the world actually witnessed in the Soviet Union and in China, he says, was not progress and a classless society, but the decline of the state into thoroughgoing “brands of totalitarianism.”¹⁰⁴ As noted earlier, Lonergan wrote in 1949 that “the experiment has

been performed and still is being performed on the quivering body of humanity.” The results of Soviet and Maoist experimentation, he wrote with considerable understatement, “are not pleasant.”¹⁰⁵ In the end, the result was not progress, but catastrophic decline.

John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was another in the series of powerful thinkers who made the emphatic shift from intellect to will, to the thinking subject as chooser, to praxis. Newman, says Lonergan, raised the “toast to conscience.”¹⁰⁶ He had read only snippets of Voltaire, Locke, Hume, Paine, Gibbons, and John Stuart Mill. When he was only fourteen, for instance, he read Paine’s *Tracts against the Old Testament* and admits that he “found pleasure in thinking of the objections which were contained in them.” He also read essays of Hume, “perhaps that on *Miracles*.” He recalled copying out some French verses, perhaps from Voltaire, denying the immortality of the soul. His response to this heady diet was, he says, something like “How dreadful, but how plausible.”¹⁰⁷

Throughout his life, Newman remained remarkably open to modern liberal thought and was quick to acknowledge its strengths. “It must be borne in mind,” he wrote, “that there is much in the liberalistic theory which is good and true; for example, not to say more, the precepts of justice, truthfulness, sobriety, self-command, benevolence, which, as I have already noted, are among its avowed principles and the natural laws of society.”¹⁰⁸ He was inclined to go along with the rising tide of the times. It was only, he said, when he became convinced that “this array of principles intended to supersede, to block out religion, that we pronounce it to be evil.”¹⁰⁹ The liberalism to which he objected was, he said, “the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another.” As a consequence, it refused to recognize any religion as true. It held that all doctrines and all creeds “are to be tolerated, but all are matters of opinion.” This brand of liberalism Newman saw “gaining substance and force daily.” Thereafter, the thrust of his life’s work was to resist “the spirit of liberalism in religion” with all the force of his considerable intelligence and eloquence of his style.¹¹⁰

Lonergan was much taken with one assertion in Newman’s *The Idea of a University* that the suppression of any one part of human knowledge (such as knowledge of God and religion) leads to three deleterious effects:

- first, it results in ignorance of that part;
- secondly, it mutilates what of itself is an organic whole;
- thirdly, it causes distortion in the remainder in which man endeavors to compensate for the part that has been suppressed.¹¹¹

The liberal secularism about which Newman sounded the alarm ignores God and religion and thereby “mutilates knowledge as a whole and brings about distortion in what remains.” Lonergan gives examples of such distortion. First, the omission of the God question distorts man’s notion of human knowledge. Secularism, says Lonergan, stresses “personal experience, personal discovery, personally conducted verification” while slighting belief, not merely religious belief, but the belief in a cultural tradition that “results from a vast collaboration of many peoples over the millennia.” Such secularists, he says, seem to be unaware of “the enormous role of belief in the acquisition and the expansion of knowledge.” The majority of what we learn is based on belief in the honesty and expertise of those from whom we learn in lectures, textbooks, and learned

journals.

Second, the omission of God and religion distorts man's apprehension of human reality. Positivists, naturalists, and behaviorists, says Lonergan, share the conviction "that the human sciences have to be conducted on the same lines as the natural sciences." In applying such a notion of science in "all departments of thought' and "all walks of life" blocks "advertence to human dignity and respect for human morality."

Third, the omission of God and religion distorts man's organization of human affairs. Lonergan grants that "anything less than the most efficient procedures threatens the survival of the mass of mankind," for we need efficiency "in the vast industrial, commercial, financial, administrative, educational, military complex" that constitutes the modern world. All very well, but a danger lies in a dehumanizing subordination of men's lives, labors, goods and services to the application of the law of efficiency.¹¹²

It is important to remember that, in pursuing his life's goal, Newman preached and wrote not only for cultured readers, but also for people of ordinary intelligence who could think for themselves but who lacked a university education. Indeed, one is touched to learn that he had especially written the last hundred pages of *A Grammar of Assent* "for such ladies as are bullied by infidels and do not know how to answer them---a misfortune which I fear is not rare in this day."¹¹³ While Newman was not a professional philosopher, it is crucial to understand that implicit in his common sense writings, expressed with such elegance and clarity, is a philosophy and a theology of the individual human person.¹¹⁴

Lonergan was delighted to find in Newman the clue to the fundamental nature of human understanding for which he had long been searching. It is common to contend that one reaches knowledge by logic or by scientific method which uses logic. Logic proceeds by strict reasoning from self-evident principles to certain conclusions; and science proceeds by observation, by formulation of hypotheses and verification of hypotheses by experimentation, and by arrival at conclusions that are probable. But Newman claimed that in addition to logic and scientific reasoning, there is another way of arriving at assent. There is more to your thinking, he said, than logical processes; there is indeed another non-logical judgment possible that admits of absolute verification. There is an assent, Newman contends, that posits the real existence of things.¹¹⁵ The process by which we grasp the fulfillment of the conditions for making such an assent Newman explains by what he calls the illative sense, "a solemn word," he says, "for an ordinary thing."¹¹⁶ Lonergan quotes Newman's analysis:

Our reasoning ordinarily presents itself to our mind as a single act not a process or series of acts. We apprehend the antecedent and then the consequent, without explicit recognition of the medium connecting the two, as if by a sort of direct association of the first thought with the second. We proceed by a sort of instinctive perception from premise to conclusion....We perceive external objects and we remember past events without knowing how we do so, and in like manner we reason without effort and intention or any necessary consciousness of the path which the mind takes in passing from antecedent to conclusion.¹¹⁷

Newman defines the judgment of the illative sense as "the cumulation of

probabilities...too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogism.”¹¹⁸ The illative sense, in Lonergan’s paraphrase, “proceeds along ways unknown to syllogism from a cumulation of probabilities—too manifold to be marshaled, too fleeting to be formulated—to a conclusion that nonetheless is certain.”¹¹⁹ To illustrate the illative sense in action Lonergan gives the example of a diplomat and a broker:

- ...the diplomat studies persons, problems, movements to predict reactions to given policies. [One thinks of Edmund Burke, for instance, debating policies of state in the British Parliament.]
- ...the broker examines both general trends and the actual position of, say, Broadcast Bounty, Inc., to foresee that Broadcast Bounty will rise. [One thinks of Bernard Baruch, perhaps, in his adroit trading on the New York Stock Exchange.]¹²⁰

Newman describes the distinctive working of the illative sense “as a single act not a process or series of acts.” Put more precisely, “we apprehend the antecedent and then the consequent, without explicit recognition of the medium connecting the two, as if by a sort of direct association of the first thought with the second.” In other words, “we proceed by a sort of instinctive perception from premise to conclusion.” Indeed, Newman says, “we perceive external objects and we remember past events without knowing how we do so, and in like manner we reason without effort and intention or any necessary consciousness of the path which the mind takes in passing from antecedent to conclusion.”¹²¹ In short, Newman contends:

Common sense, moral perception, genius, the great discoverers of principles do not reason. They have no arguments, no grounds, they see the truth but they do not know how they see it; it is as much a matter of *experiment* with them, as if they had to find a road to a distant mountain, which they see with the eye and they get entangled, embarrassed, overthrown, in the *superfluous* endeavor.¹²²

Lonergan puts it in a nutshell: in these matters “...mind judges rather than syllogises.”¹²³

Lonergan, for his part, analyses the working of the illative sense and asserts that any conclusion reached from the data present to such diplomats as Burke or financiers like Baruch is not repeatable. Any such concrete assessment as theirs is not “any general principle or rule.” Take a closer look at such a conclusion, says Lonergan:

- It arises from the intuition of the moment;
- its ground is the objective configuration of the moment as interpreted through the accumulated insights of experienced judgment;
- its value is just the value of that judgment; its only court of appeal is the event, and when the event has come then, except on a theory of identical historical cycles, the day of usefulness is over forever.¹²⁴

In other words, what worked for Burke in parliamentary debate or for Baruch on the New York Stock Exchange on any given day will never work again except in the highly unlikely chance that all the objective circumstances were the same and all the complex subjective interpretations and judgments were identical. In brief, every assent or judgment is the solution to a concrete problem or set of problems and cannot be repeated.

Newman, in Lonergan's estimate, was a man of "imperial intellect."¹²⁵ As a youth he had taken Newman as his fundamental mentor and guide when he began to search for solutions to the problem of how we know. The problem vexed him during the first years he studied philosophy. He was looking, he said, "for some one with common sense who knew what he was talking about. And what was Newman talking about? About assent about real apprehension and notional apprehension, notional assent and real assent."¹²⁶ Lonergan found the clue to the solution to his problem in Newman's commonsense contribution to self-knowledge expressed in *A Grammar of Assent*, the main parts of which he read six times. It is also no small matter, Lonergan notes in passing, that "Newman's remark that ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt has served me in good stead. It encouraged me to look difficulties squarely in the eye, while not letting them interfere with my vocation or my faith."¹²⁷ What Lonergan learned from Newman became "the kernel" from which he went on to other authors in his search for a way to understand understanding.

What was that kernel of thought? Newman alerted Lonergan to the notion of "the unconditional character of assent" and its importance. Newman in his *A Grammar of Assent*, says Lonergan, is "the fundamental thinker on the unconditioned." Indeed, he says, "the idea of assent as unconditioned, as absolute positing" is missing in Plato and Aristotle, in most of the medieval thinkers, and altogether in the German philosophers we have been studying.¹²⁸ In Plato, for example, judgment is viewed as "a composition or synthesis of concepts," as an interweaving of ideas (*symploke to eidon*). But that is not judgment; indeed, says Lonergan, "in any hypothesis you may have an endless number of concepts linked together, but until you say whether something is so or not so, you do not have judgment."¹²⁹ Much more on this topic later.

Newman made the all-important distinctions between the chooser's notional and real apprehension. He distinguishes between notional apprehension and notional assent, between notional assent and real assent. Assent is notional when we understand some idea and are content... with no more than an esthetic response that it is indeed a fine idea. We reach real apprehension and real assent when we are thereby motivated to live out what we have learnt.

For instance, says Lonergan following up on Newman's distinction between real and notional assent, when sinners are caught in moral impotence, "what is needed if they are to break away from the aberration of sin is a leap ---not a leap beyond reason, ... but a leap from unreason, from the unreasonableness of sin, to reason. That leap is not simply a matter of repeating, pronouncing, affirming, agreeing with prepositions that are true, while misapprehending their meaning and significance....The leap is rather really assenting to, really apprehending...." In other words, says Lonergan, "what is wanted is something existential---real apprehension and real assent to the truth."¹³⁰ Years later, Lonergan will report: "I had become something of an existentialist from my study of Newman's *A Grammar of Assent*."¹³¹

According to Newman, then, Who am I? I am a conscious subject, capable of logical thought but also endowed with an illative sense, summoned to free and responsible judgment, decision, and action not by means of logical processes (syllogisms) but by a sort of instinctive perception from premise to conclusion that admits of absolute verification.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), says Lonergan, “proclaimed the will to power.”¹³² He was another in the continuing line of philosophers who insist “on the subject to offset and compensate for Kant’s excessive attention to sensible objects”¹³³ and to reiterate the primacy of the practical reason in the realm of interiority.¹³⁴

Nietzsche’s major ideas include the following:

- Life is the will to power; our natural desire is to dominate and to reshape the world to fit our own preferences and to assert our personal strength to the fullest degree.
- Ideals of human equality perpetuate mediocrity.
- Christian morality, which identifies goodness with meekness and servility, is the prime culprit in creating a cultural climate that thwarts the drive for excellence and self-realization.
- God is dead: a new era of human creativity and achievement is at hand.¹³⁵

In 1865, a twenty-one year old Nietzsche wandered into a second-hand bookstore, purchased the two volumes of Schopenhauer’s *World as Will and Representation*, and once home quickly read through them. His recent biographer reports that the experience left Nietzsche walking on air:

He read in Schopenhauer that the world construed by reason, historical meaning, and morality is not the actual world. True life, namely the will, roars behind or underneath it.¹³⁶

It was Schopenhauer’s view, according to Safranski, that “the core of a world was not solid ground, but an abyss, the depths of the will, tormenting existence, the heart of darkness.”¹³⁷

While a second reading strongly confirmed Nietzsche’s appreciation for Schopenhauer, still some doubts did arise. For, in the meantime, Nietzsche had read Friedrich Albert Lange’s *History of Materialism* with its careful account of “Kant’s critique of knowledge, ancient and modern materialism, Darwinism, and the basic outlines of the modern natural sciences.”¹³⁸

Schopenhauer ought not assert, Nietzsche wrote, that ‘will’ is the thing-in-itself. Indeed, he reasoned, one ought not make any judgments at all about the thing-in-itself, for it remains unknowable as Kant had rightly maintained. Indeed Nietzsche

acknowledged that ‘will’, as his recent biographer reports, is “an elemental, perhaps even primary life force,” but he rejected the notion that ‘will’ is identical with the ‘thing in itself’.¹³⁹

Schopenhauer, as we have seen, was repelled by the Dionysian nature of unbridled desire. He had distanced himself from its power by renunciation (his Great No) and by art. Nietzsche, writes Safranski, was of a different temperament. He found himself “powerfully attracted to Dionysian nature” and, confident that he was “himself impervious to vertigo,” he had no hesitation about advancing “right up to the abyss because he envisioned even more alluring secrets there.”¹⁴⁰

Nietzsche was also been captivated by the terrifying yet fascinating notion of ‘becoming’ in the writings of Heraclitus; he put it this way:

The eternal and exclusive process of becoming, the utter evanescence of everything real, which keeps acting and evolving, but never is, as Heraclitus teaches us, is a terrible and stunning notion. Its impact is most closely related to the feeling of an earthquake, which makes people relinquish their faith that the earth is firmly grounded. It takes astonishing strength to transpose this reaction into its opposite, into sublime and happy astonishment.¹⁴¹

Nietzsche saw Heraclitus as an “aesthetic man who has learned from artists and the genius of artworks how... necessity and playfulness as well as opposition and harmony must pair to create a work of art.”¹⁴² It is the “philosophers, artists and saints’, he concluded, who emancipate themselves from ‘animal existence’. In them the ‘animal ego’ no longer dominates; in them the ‘mental will’ triumphs over the ‘natural will’. Nietzsche maintained, therefore, that there was something else besides Schopenhauer’s renunciation and art by which blind desire is overcome. Something indeed within us. What is that ‘something’? Safranski puts it this way:

The will is not extinguished; something within man makes this “leap” and triumphs over the ordinary will..., something...that rules the other restless and oblivious something. Ultimately, this calming something is nothing other than an extraordinarily strong will.... “Dionysian wisdom”...is strong enough to endure a gaze into the abyss; it does not shatter, but maintains a mystifying, almost cheerful tranquility.¹⁴³

One can no longer be content to rummage around like mediocre academics in the dustbins of the past, rehashing old ideas, for it is dismaying, he wrote, to realize “the immense number of mediocre thinkers [who] are occupied with really influential matters.”¹⁴⁴ What is required is genius capable of insights translatable into world changing action. Indeed, “a deliberate poetic recreation of minds, events, characters.”¹⁴⁵

By the end of his career, “life” had become the pivotal word for Nietzsche—the equivalent of his ‘will to power’. His approach came to be known as *Lebensphilosophie* (life philosophy). Not a philosophy about life, but life itself that is “doing the philosophizing.” Safranski defines it as “an organ of life, improving its quality, developing new forms, and conferring new shape.” It was the “life of an alert mind.”

Indeed, in Safranski's view, it was the 'vitalist variant of pragmatism.' Pragmatism calculated the value of an insight by its "potential for practical application;" *Lebensphilosophie* defined the worth of the insight by its "creative capability."¹⁴⁶ The term 'life' for Nietzsche, Safranski explains, "signaled a plethora of forms, a wealth of invention, and an ocean of possibilities so incalculable and adventurous that no 'beyond' would be required, since it would be amply represented in the here and now."¹⁴⁷

Since God is dead, there is no world beyond this world. Yet Nietzsche's will to power was not a ticket to a life of Dionysian indulgence in wine, women, and song. Will, for him, meant creative potential, the creative impulse, the Dionysian vision that leads to a life of creativity. Thus Zarathustra affirmed its power:

*No one knows yet what is good and evil unless it is the one who creates!—
He, however, is the one who creates man's goal and gives the earth its
meaning and future. He is the one responsible for something being good
or evil.*¹⁴⁸

But one cannot be certain that people will react to the conviction that God is dead by lives of freedom and creativity. Yet Nietzsche was optimistic:

At long last the horizon appears free again to us, even granted that it is not bright: at last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an 'open sea.'¹⁴⁹

Eventually, Safranski reminds us, 'life' in the Nietzschean sense became a word with "a new ring, both mysterious and seductive." It was a blunt challenge to both "soulless materialism" and to "the halfhearted idealism of the German neo-Kantian professors and bourgeois moral conventions," to any "system of eternal values that have been laboriously deduced or mindlessly parroted."¹⁵⁰ It fired the imagination of leading intellectuals and artists. "All the significant artists currents in the early twentieth century, from symbolism to art nouveau and expressionism, were inspired by Nietzsche." Each underwent a "Nietzschean experience" much like a religious conversion. Safranski quotes Harry Graf Kessler as spokesman for his generation:

He did not merely speak to reason and fantasy. His impact was more encompassing, deeper, and more mysterious. His ever-growing echo signified the eruption of *Mystik* into a rationalized and mechanized time. He bridged the abyss between us and reality with the veil of heroism. Through him we were transported out of this ice age, reenchanting and enraptured."¹⁵¹

Freud would say that Nietzsche had grasped beforehand by intuition what the systematic labor of psychoanalytic investigation would later uncover. Thomas Mann was captivated by Nietzsche and pronounced him the "most uncompromisingly perfect aesthete." *Lebensphilosophie* liberated a generation of artists from subjection to art as

representation and gave expressionist artists the freedom and the self-confidence to express “visions with which they registered their protest against the wretchedness of reality.”¹⁵² His influence made itself felt in Bergson’s notion of “creative will” and of “time “as a creative, dynamic force.”¹⁵³ Together Nietzsche and Bergson became twin influences on Max Scheler; they enabled us, he wrote, to free ourselves “from ‘the prison’ of the ‘purely mechanical and mechanized’” and lead us into the ‘garden’ where it is possible for flowers to blossom.¹⁵⁴

According to Nietzsche, then, Who am I? Since God is dead, I am an individual, constituted by nature with a will to power and summoned to break out of the prevailing mediocrity (produced by traditional Christian morality) and assert my free creative powers to their utmost.

The Notion of Intentionality Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard emphasized will and decision. Franz Brentano recovered the long neglected notion of intentionality whose roots he found in Greek and medieval Scholastic philosophers. His disciple Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) made intentionality central to his phenomenological study of cognitional activity. Intentionality thereafter became the centerpiece of the whole modern phenomenological movement. Brentano “inspired” Husserl, says Lonergan, and then, as we shall see, Husserl’s “intentionality analysis routed faculty psychology.”¹⁵⁵

Both Brentano and Husserl were reacting to the naturalistic application of science to the study of cognition. They had no objection to the use of science, but to the particular area to which its use was being put. The naturalists who attempted to reduce philosophy to science focused on the non-intentional elements in cognition, those “non-intentional sensations causally produced through interactive physical stimulation.”¹⁵⁶ Michael McCarthy points out that they were working in the Humean tradition which he summarizes well:

[Hume] reduced intentional consciousness to a temporal succession of one-dimensional psychic states, which he called *perceptions*. These unit states of awareness were isolated from any structural reference to an object beyond themselves; they were simply nonintentional occurrences occupying a temporal position within a single stream of consciousness.¹⁵⁷

The naturalists focused on the physical and physiological activities of the human brain, measuring whatever is observable and quantifiable. In Leipzig, Husserl had worked with Wundt, the father of modern experimental psychology which emphasizes neuroscience.

The attempt to naturalize cognition and especially epistemology was, in the judgment of Michael McCarthy, “a colossal blunder.”¹⁵⁸ Basically, it failed to distinguish what differentiates philosophy from science. It failed to distinguish the intentional from the non-intentional. In the judgment of Brentano and Husserl, it failed to conceive and target “the appropriate subject matter of philosophy.” It ignored the fact that “the core, sources, acts, terms and norms of cognition are all inherently intentional.”¹⁵⁹ It ended up as “*psychologism*, the attempted reduction of authentic philosophical disciplines to the nonintentional psychology of sensation.”¹⁶⁰

What, then, is meant by intentionality? Husserl, following Brentano, called

attention to the fact that an examination of consciousness reveals that conscious, active experience is 'intentional.' Consciousness, like a transitive verb, is transitive, it takes the accusative; it intends an object; it stretches out toward an object in the root meaning of the verb in-tend. Consciousness is a dynamism "with a from-to orientation," from the conscious subject to the object, from the intend-ing subject to the intend-ed object. One of his basic ideas is that "conscious experience is intentional in nature, always having both a subject and object pole."¹⁶¹ Husserl called the act of intending *noesis* and the thing intended *noema*.¹⁶² And so Lonergan agrees that Husserl "by his painstaking analysis of intentionality made it evident that human thinking and judging are not just [non-intentional] psychological events [as Hume had supposed] but always and intrinsically intend, refer to, mean objects distinct from themselves."¹⁶³

Lonergan thus traced the trajectory of the new emphasis on praxis which was initiated by Schopenhauer's conception of the world in terms of will and representation. After Schopenhauer, he writes, came the following thinkers:

Kierkegaard insisted on faith. Newman toasted conscience. Marx was concerned not merely to know but principally to make history. Nietzsche proclaimed the will to power. Blondel strove for a philosophy of action. Paul Ricoeur has not yet completed his many-volumed philosophy of will and Jürgen Habermas has set forth the involvement of human knowledge in human interests. Along with them have marched in varying ways pragmatists, personalists, existentialists, while phenomenologists have supplanted faculty psychology with an intentionality analysis in which [as we shall see], cognitional process is sublated by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action.¹⁶⁴

Lonergan has a fascinating insight into what motivates those today who they have taken to the streets in protests and demonstrations. Conspicuous examples of theology as praxis, he says, include "liberation theologies, whether geared to liberate Latin America from the fetters of capitalism, or to liberate black Americans from the injustice of racial discrimination, or to liberate women from the domination of a patriarchal society."¹⁶⁵ The leaders of modern protest movements are reacting not simply against what they perceive to be the limitations of the behaviorists and the positivists or against the "faceless" and intractable bureaucracies of industry and government. Actually what takes them to the streets can be traced to the pervasive influence of the general philosophical trend we have been studying as it developed during the past two hundred years: the responsible use of human freedom, the praxis that results from deliberation and choice. "It appears," says Lonergan, "in Kant's first and second critiques, in Schopenhauer's world as will and representation, in Kierkegaard's reliance on faith and Newman's reliance on conscience, in Nietzsche's will to power," and as further developed "in Blondel's philosophy of action, in Ricoeur's philosophy of will, in Habermas's juxtaposition of knowledge and human interests."¹⁶⁶ Indeed, "in the same direction," he says, "tend the pragmatists, personalists, and existentialists."¹⁶⁷

To return to our story. The Greek differentiation of consciousness into theory and practice was, as Lonergan reminded us, "a momentous event in human history." But any distinction between practice and theory falls far short of dealing with "any serious

modern problem.”¹⁶⁸ Why? The Greek philosophers and the medieval scholastics dealt with the realm of “the absolute, the immutable, the eternal,” while modern philosophers since Descartes, as we have seen, deal with “the realm of interiority, the realm of *Existenz*...”¹⁶⁹

With Descartes, we saw the shift of modern philosophy from the object to the subject, indeed to the human subject as thinker, chooser, doer. Michael H. McCarthy in *The Crisis of Philosophy* has admirably traced the developments we have been describing and how they eventuated in logical positivism and phenomenology.¹⁷⁰ Descartes shifted the target of philosophical inquiry from “the principles of being to the principles of knowledge.” He sought to establish an unquestionable base of truths on which one could logically deduce the rest of what could be known.

Hume countered with the claim that the basic science is the science of man within whose “cognizance” all other sciences lie and upon whose “powers and faculties” of judgment they depend;¹⁷¹ the first target of inquiry, he argued, should rather be the inquiring subject. The empiricists who followed Hume eventually reduced the cognitive subject to “a bundle of impressions and ideas,” period. Gottlob Frege, “the most important philosopher of mathematics in the nineteenth century”¹⁷² and the grandfather of logical positivism, in turn criticized the empiricists and limited the search for a basis of knowledge to “the analysis and reconstruction of the propositional structure of science.” Philosophy, for him, became “the logical analysis of thoughts.” Thoughts in his theory “serve two interrelated functions...: semantically, they are the sense or meaning expressed by indicative sentences; epistemically, they are the intentional content apprehended or grasped in acts of understanding and judgment.”¹⁷³ The realm of thoughts, for Frege, is made up of “propositional terms of meaning, such as the Pythagorean theorem, the second law of thermodynamics, or the principle of the excluded middle.”¹⁷⁴ Accordingly, Frege and the early Wittgenstein concentrated their attention on “the expression and terms of meaning.” Their effort has undeniable merit in McCarthy’s judgment, but suffers from “one major flaw.” Which was? The neglect of any ‘theory of cognitional performance.’¹⁷⁵

Brentano and Husserl supplied for this neglect by descriptive psychology and phenomenology, seeking the sources of “the logical products of mental activity...in their cognitive acts.” But their consequent failure to clear up “the precise relationship between the transcendental ego and the finite, factual intentional subject of inquiring” triggered a strong reaction from the naturalistic philosophers who claimed that all philosophy of the mind can be reduced to its physical and measurable components in the brain. This new wave of naturalistic philosophy linked “the analytical programs of logical analysis with the behavioral approach to cognitive psychology.” Its influence was pervasive:

- It preserved Frege’s interest in the logical structure of science but rejected his search for the invariant conceptual foundations of that structure.
- It sustained Dewey’s interest in a behavioral theory of inquiry but identified the basic cognitive operations with forms of linguistic activity.¹⁷⁶

McCarthy points out that “the foundational principles of contemporary naturalism are

distinctively methodological.” Thus, contemporary naturalist philosophers “restrict legitimate theoretical inquiry about cognition to the intersubjective evidential base of language or behavior.” Indeed, their intent was “to model philosophical reflection on the canonical methods of empirical science.” The result was that “naturalism restored the cognitive subject to the domain of surveyable fact, but neglected the full reality of the subject’s intentional consciousness.”¹⁷⁷

Lonergan notes that modern philosophers have passed from logic to method and have developed methods that are distinctive of their own disciplines, but have failed to come up with a “higher discipline” which could explain their respective methods for them.¹⁷⁸ With the publication of *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan attempted to supply for that failure.

Let’s pause to take stock one more time. Jesuit Henri de Lubac, writing in 1950, noted one momentous shift in the intellectual history of Western men and women. Along with the concentrated effort of so many philosophers to explore the realm of interiority there was the tectonic drift of nineteenth century philosophers from Christian belief to agnosticism and atheism. In his brilliant study, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, de Lubac stated that, “beneath the numerous surface-currents which carry contemporary thought in every direction, it seems possible to detect a deep undercurrent...or rather a sort of immense *drift* through the action of a large proportion of its foremost thinkers...” “What profound change is going on?”, he asks. “... the peoples of the West are denying their Christian past and turning away from God.” Among their foremost thinkers, de Lubac counts August Comte (positivist humanism), Ludwig Feuerbach with his disciple Karl Marx (Marxist humanism), and Friedrich Nietzsche (Nietzschean humanism).¹⁷⁹ “Great as the contrast between them,” de Lubac writes, “their common foundation in the rejection of God is matched by a certain similarity in results, the chief of which is the annihilation of the human person.”¹⁸⁰

Thus, Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, and Heinrich Heine wrote his ironic comment on the “catastrophe” to which modern philosophy after Kant had led:

Our hearts are thrilled with compassion, for it is old Jehovah himself who is making ready to die. We have known him so well, from his cradle in Egypt, where he was brought up among the divine crocodiles and calves, the onions and ibises and sacred cats....We saw him bid farewell to those companions of his childhood, the obelisks and sphinxes of the Nile, to become a little god-king in Palestine to a poor nation of shepherds....We saw him move to Rome, the capital, where he abjured everything in the way of national prejudice and proclaimed the celestial equality of all peoples; with these fine phrases he set up in opposition to old Jupiter and, thanks to intriguing, he got into power and, from the heights of the Capital, ruled the city and the world, *urbem et orbem*....We have seen him purify himself, spiritualize himself still more, become paternal, compassionate, the benefactor of the human race, a philanthropist....But nothing could save him!

Don’t you hear the bell? Down on your knees! The sacrament is being carried to a dying God.¹⁸¹

To which Nietzsche added, “It is we who have killed him....We are the assassins of God.”¹⁸² It followed for many that Humanity is now in the place of God. Comte, who considered himself Humanity’s High Priest, seriously proposed that Notre Dame in Paris be converted into “the great Temple of the West”, and that “the statue of Humanity” be installed on the high altar of the dead God who has become Humanity’s “footstool.”¹⁸³

Nietzsche went on in *Der Wille zur Macht* to wage ‘war against the Christian ideal, against the doctrine which makes beatitude and salvation the aim of life, against the supremacy of the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, the suffering, the failures....When and where was there ever a man worthy of the name who resembled that Christian ideal.”¹⁸⁴ Rainer Maria Rilke, caught up as a young man in the enthusiasm which Nietzsche generated in the young, developed in a short story the implications of the new ideal with seductive logic; thus, one of his characters says:

He whom men worship as the Messiah turns the whole world into an infirmary. He calls the weak, the unfortunate, the disabled His children and His loved ones. What about the strong? How are we ourselves to climb if we lend our strength to the unfortunate and the oppressed, to idle rogues with no wits and no energy? Let them fall, let them die, alone and wretched. Be hard, be terrible, be pitiless: You must thrust yourselves forward, forward! A few men, but great ones, will build a world with their strong, muscular, masterful arms on the corpses of the weak, the sick and the infirm!¹⁸⁵

Not everyone was taken in by the new ideal of humanity. Dostoevsky, for one, foresaw where all this enthusiasm was heading and, with the insight of a prophet, warned, “If God is nothing, everything is permitted....If God is nothing, everything is a matter of indifference.”¹⁸⁶

Modern philosophy, taking its start from Descartes’ *Cogito* (human consciousness), came up with a theory of human cognition marked, says Richard Tarnas, by “ever increasing rigor, subtlety and insight.”¹⁸⁷ But eventually, the modern epistemological project ended by convincing many of the modern world’s intellectual elite of “the disquieting limits” within which the human mind seemed to be inescapably confined.¹⁸⁸

Thus, Iris Murdoch has with great perception and honesty pointed out the dead end to which Kant’s Copernican revolution has led modern secular man and woman:

The idea of life as self-enclosed and purposeless is of course not simply a product of the despair of our own age. It is the natural product of the advance of science and has developed over a long period. It has already in fact occasioned a whole era in the history of philosophy, beginning with Kant and leading on to the existentialism and the analytic philosophy of the present day.

Murdoch singles out “the chief characteristic” of this period of philosophy:

Kant abolished God and made man God in His stead. We are still living in the age of the Kantian man, or Kantian man-God. Kant's conclusive exposure of the so-called proof of the existence of God, his analysis of the limitations of speculative reason, together with his eloquent portrayal of the dignity of rational man, has had results which might possibly dismay him. How recognizable, how familiar to us, is the man so beautifully portrayed in the *Grundlesung*, who confronted even with Christ turns away to consider the judgement of his own conscience and to hear the voice of his own reason.

Murdoch goes on to sketch the striking features of this Kantian man who has become such a familiar figure on the modern intellectual and artistic landscape:

Stripped of the exiguous metaphysical background which Kant was prepared to allow him, this man is with us still, free, independent, lonely, powerful, rational, responsible, brave, the hero of so many novels and books of moral philosophy. The *raison d'être* of this attractive but misleading creature is not far to seek. He is the offspring of the age of science, confidently rational and yet increasingly aware of his alienation from the material universe which his discoveries reveal; and since he is not a Hegelian (Kant, not Hegel, has provided Western ethics with its dominating image) his alienation is without cure. He is the ideal citizen of the liberal state, a warning held up to tyrants. He has the virtue which the age requires and admires, courage. It is not such a very long step from Kant to Nietzsche, and from Nietzsche to existentialism and the Anglo-Saxon ethical doctrines which in some ways closely resemble it. In fact Kant's man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer.¹⁸⁹

Let's jump ahead of our story for a moment. In another essay Murdoch writes about the latter-day incarnation of the Kantian man in the heroes of existentialist novelists like Sartre and Camus and identifies the elements in existentialist consciousness that leave modern man gloomy, jittery, parochial, scared, and beginning to entertain doubts about his own divinity:

The existentialist response is the first and immediate expression of a consciousness without God. It is the heir of nineteenth-century Luciferian pride in the individual and in the achievements of science. It is, or tries to be, cheerfully Godless. Even its famous gloom is a mode of satisfaction. From this point of view, man is God. The mystical attitude is a second response, a second thought about the matter, and reflects the uneasy suspicion that perhaps after all man is not God. One might connect this with our gradually changing consciousness of science. Science today is more likely to make us anxious than to make us proud, not only because we are now able to blow up our planet, but because, oddly enough, space travel does not make us feel like Gods. It makes us feel rather parochial

and frightened.¹⁹⁰

Indeed, we are here a long way from the intoxicated optimism of the first generation of Russian intellectuals or the exhilaration of the young Rilke. Modern philosophy has taken a different path, one which curiously enough a man of faith like Blaise Pascal had anticipated back in the 17th century: “I am terrified by the eternal silence of these infinite spaces.”¹⁹¹ And so, Frederick Buechner is surely on target when he also writes that artists instinctively pick up the eerie silence at the center of the storm we stir up whenever we banish God from our universe: “... much of the most powerful preaching of our time is the preaching of the poets, playwrights, novelists because it is often they better than the rest of us who speak with awful honesty about the absence of God in the world and about the storm of his absence, both without and within, which, because it is unendurable, unlivable, drives us to look to the eye of the storm.”¹⁹²

Harold Bloom credits Shakespeare with “the invention of the human,”¹⁹³ and by human he means contemporary man. No wonder, then, that Buechner first cites King Lear as a prime instance of such preaching about the absence of God in the world:

I think of *King Lear* especially with its tragic vision of a world in which the good and the bad alike go down to dusty and, it would seem, equally meaningless death with no God to intervene on their behalf, and yet with its vision of the world in which the naked and helpless ones, the victims and fools, become at least truly alive before they die and thus touch however briefly on something that lies beyond the power of death. It is the worldly ones, the ones wise as the world understands wisdom and strong in the way the world understands strength, who are utterly doomed.¹⁹⁴

Buechner sees this as “so much the central paradox of *Lear* that the whole play can be read as a gloss if not a homily on that passage in First Corinthians where Paul expresses the same paradox in almost the same terms by writing, “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.” Thus, Buechner writes: “God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are” (1 Corinthians 1:27-28), thus pointing as Shakespeare points to the apparent emptiness of the world where God belongs and to how the emptiness starts to echo like an empty shell after a while until you can hear in it the still, small voice of the sea, hear strength in weakness, victory in defeat, presence in absence.”¹⁹⁵

Seamus Heaney has also pointed out how an agnostic like Robert Frost in *Desert Places* suggests how the emptiness one experiences in the woods during a snowstorm, though dwarfed by “a vacuous interstellar immensity,” registers the loneliness and vacuity of human existence:

And lonely as it is that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less—
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
 Between stars—on stars where no human race is.
 I have it in me so much nearer home
 To scare myself with my own desert places.¹⁹⁶

Robert Frost exemplifies what Lonergan calls “the native bewilderment of the existential subject, revolted by mere animality, unsure of his way through the maze of philosophies, trying to live without a known purpose, suffering despite an unmotivated will, threatened with inevitable death and, before death, with disease and even insanity.”¹⁹⁷

Buechner’s second instance of such preaching about the absence of God is the stubborn faith of Dostoevski’s Alyosha: “I think of Dostoevski in *The Brothers Karamozov* when the body of Alyosha’s beloved Father Zossima begins to stink in death instead of giving off fragrance as the dead body of a saint is supposed to, and at the very moment when Alyosha sees the world most abandoned by God; he suddenly finds the world so aflame with God that he rushes out of the chapel where the body lies and kisses the earth as the shaggy face of the world where God, in spite of and in the midst of everything, is.”¹⁹⁸

Despite the persistence of believers, it remains true today, as Max Scheler has said, that “postulatory atheism” is for many educated men and women one of the essential characteristics of the modern world.¹⁹⁹ For them the question of God is now closed once and for all; it no longer merits serious attention. Thus, as recently as 1999 Nobel physicist Steven Weinberg could state while attending a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science:

I learned that the aim of this conference is to have a constructive dialogue between science and religion. I am all in favor of a dialogue between science and religion, but not a constructive dialogue. One of the great achievements of science has been, if not to make it impossible for intelligent people to be religious, then at least to make it possible for them not to be religious. We should not retreat from this accomplishment.²⁰⁰

Perhaps we can best close by relating the famous scene in *The Gay Science* where Nietzsche’s madman with a lantern began to shout in the market one morning, “I seek God! I seek God!”

As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances. “Whither is God?” the madman cried. “I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe

away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither are we moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns?...plunging continually?... straying as though through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder?... night and one night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God?....

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.

The rest of the day, Nietzsche tell us, the madman visited the churches in the city and sang me his *requiem aeternam* to God. Asked to explain his odd behavior he simply said:

What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God? How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? . . . It is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it?²⁰¹

At this moment in history, Lonergan takes stock. Our world, he says, “is in advance of its predecessors in its mathematics, its natural science, its human science, and the wealth and variety of its literary potentialities.” Formerly, he adds, our ancestors based their efforts on trust in God. But, he adds, modern man has now “opted to sustain them by an appeal to man’s complete autonomy.” He fully acknowledges “man’s intelligence, his rationality, his responsibility.” But nothing more. Any secularist who is “consistent” with his principles finds it “irrelevant” to speak of God. The sincere secularist is convinced of one foundational truth: “to turn to God—except by way of the political gesture or an emotional outlet—is to sacrifice the good that man both knows and, by his own resources, can attain.”

For Lonergan, the intellectual world today is sharply divided between “this-worldly secularists and other-worldly believers.” Each acknowledge a deep divide in understanding reality and values. What follows from the great divide? Lonergan sees it this way:

The other-worldly believers hold that God exists and is operative in religious living; the this-worldly secularists do not. Again, the other-worldly believers acknowledge other-worldly values, and this acknowledgment influences in varying degrees their this-worldly valuations; but the this-worldly secularists avoid such a complication for they acknowledge no other-worldly values and so are free to concentrate on the values of this world.²⁰²

Nietzsche’s fable sums up the contemporary challenge to men and women of

faith. It was to this challenge that Lonergan responded in his writings. Lonergan took as his own the stance of St. Paul when he wrote:

...only the Spirit of God knows what God is. This is the Spirit that we have received from God, and not the spirit of the world, so that we may know all that God of his own grace gives us...A man who is unspiritual refuses what belongs to the Spirit of God; it is folly to him; he cannot grasp it, because it needs to be judged in the light of the Spirit.²⁰³

Lonergan's life and work was the effort of one modern believer to give the reason for the faith that was in him. The faith that issues a ringing proclamation: The Son of God became man so that we might become God.

1. *Method in Theology*, 316.

2. *Ibid.*, 316.

3. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol 2, 5; quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 234.

4. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 2.

5. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 221.

6. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 200.

7. Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 263.

8. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 100.

9. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, 21.

10. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 329.

11. *The World as Will and Representation*, II, 328. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 236.

12. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol 1, 128. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 235.

13. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 206.

14. *The World as Will and Representation*, II, 328. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 236.

15. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 100

16. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 200.

17. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 199.

18. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 100.

19. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 199.

20. *Ibid.*, 206.

21. P 1 (early manuscripts), 209. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 205.

22. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 106.

23. Ian P. McGreal, "Schopenhauer", *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 342.

24. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 100.

25. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol 2, 421; quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 237.

26. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 198.

27. *Ibid.*, 207.

28. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 198.

29. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 100.

30. *The World as Will and Representation*, III, 383. Quoted in Durant, 247.

31. Ian P. McGreal, "Schopenhauer", *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 341.

32. *Ibid.*, 344.

33. *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol 2, 421. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 236.

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34. *The World as Will and Representation*, I, 192; III, 112; I, 191. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 245-246.
35. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 207.
36. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 98.
37. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 171.
38. Ian P. McGreal, "Schopenhauer", *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 346.
39. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 232.
40. *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. Edited, with an introduction by Irwin Edman, (New York: The Modern Library, 1956), v.
41. Quoted in Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 227.
42. Henry D. Aiken, *The Age of Ideology: The 19th Century Philosophers*, 99.
43. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 320.
44. From *On the Foundations of Morality*, 208; quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 320.
45. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 320-321.
46. *World As Will and Representation* II, 578. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 321-322.
47. *World As Will and Representation* II, 578. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 321-322.
48. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 305-306. Schopenhauer was in no way a social activist and was criticized by Max Horkheimer: "Be mistrustful of anyone who asserts that one can either only help the great whole or not at all. This is the lifelong lie of those who do not in fact wish to help and who invoke grand theory in order to talk themselves out of their responsibility in a specific individual case. They rationalize their inhumanity." Quoted in Safranski, 321.
49. See *World As Will and Representation* I, 378-379. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 235.
50. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 234.
51. Quoted in Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 171.
52. *Ibid.*, 234.
53. Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, Part II: Schopenhauer to Nietzsche*, (New York: Image Books, 1965), 50.
54. Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 236.
55. *World As Will and Representation*, 1, 198. Quoted in Safranski, 217.
56. *World As Will and Representation*, 1, 267. Quoted in Safranski, 218.
57. *World As Will and Representation*, 1, 185. Quoted in Safranski, 218-219.
58. *World As Will and Representation*, 1, 256. See Safranski, 236-237.
59. Rüdiger Safranski, 219.
60. Quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Biography*, 57.
61. Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, 56
62. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 368.
63. Their findings will also influence Lonergan's position on dramatic bias and the consequent need of psychic conversion for any damaged individual on the way to authenticity and self-transcendence. Briefly, one suffers from the bias of *neurotic need*, the bias of "the dynamic unconscious," the bias that can effectively limit human freedom: "...the sensitive subject is invaded by anxiety, by obsessions, and by other neurotic phenomenon that restrict his capacity for effective deliberation and choice" (*Insight*, 622). Such feelings, says Lonergan, are "far from being integrated into an equable flow of consciousness" and may well "become a source of disturbance, upset, inner turmoil" ("Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *Third Collection*, 58).
64. Ian P. McGreal, "Arthur Schopenhauer", *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 341.
65. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 235.
66. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 15.
67. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 10.
68. Soren Kierkegaard, *Purity of Heart is to Desire One Thing*. (Translated with Introductory Essay by Douglas Steere. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1956) 17.

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69. *Method in Theology*, 264.
70. *Collected Works*, Vol. XIII, 604. Quoted in Douglas Steere's introduction to *Purity of Heart is to Desire One Thing*, 17.
71. "Revolution in Catholic Theology," *A Second Collection*, 236.
72. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 239.
73. *Ibid.*, 239.
74. "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," *A Second Collection*, 184. In "Art", *Topics in Education*, 217, Lonergan wrote that Kierkegaard did not want to be "a replaceable part adjusted to and integrated into a ready made world."
75. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 238.
76. Quoted in Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Seekers: The Story of Man's Continuing Quest to Understand His World*, 253.
77. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Seekers: The Story of Man's Continuing Quest to Understand His World*, 252.
78. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 239.
79. John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought: The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1960*, 194.
80. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 239.
81. Douglas Steere in the introduction to his translation of *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*, 14.
83. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 239.
84. *Ibid.*, 239.
85. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 52.
86. *Insight*, 233.
87. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 160.
88. Matthew L. Lamb, "The Social and Political Dimensions of Lonergan's Theology," in Vernon Gregson, editor, *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 261.
89. Terry Kershaw, "Karl Marx," in Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 378.
90. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 58.
91. *Ibid.*, 69.
92. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 329.
93. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 69.
94. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 314.
95. Terry Kershaw, "Karl Marx," in Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 380.
96. *Insight*, 235.
97. *Ibid.*, 238.
98. See Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present*, 588-589.
99. Terry Kershaw, "Karl Marx," in Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 378.
100. The paraphrase of the Shaw's remark is by Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present*, 589.
101. "The Human Good as Object: Its Invariant Structure," *Topics in Education*, 47.
102. *Insight*, 241.
103. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 107.
104. *Insight*, 235.
105. In a review by Bernard Lonergan of *Is Modern Culture Doomed?* by Andrew J Krzensinski in *The Canadian Register*, September 19, 1949, p.8. Quoted by Matthew L. Lamb, in "The Social and Political Dimensions of Lonergan's Theology," *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan..* Vernon Gregson, editor, 270.
106. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 160.

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107. John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1913) 3. Quoted in Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 17.
108. Newman's "Biglietto" Speech," 9, quoted in Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 18.
109. *Ibid.*, 18.
110. *Ibid.*, 17.
111. "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World," *A Second Collection*, 185.
112. *Ibid.*, 186.
113. M. Basil Pennington, O. C. S.O., "John Henry Newman," Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 354.
114. H. Francis Davis in his introduction to *The Heart of Newman: A Synthesis arranged by Erich Przywara, S.J.*, 11 and 13.
115. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 38.
116. See C. Stephen Dessain, "Cardinal Newman on the theory and Practice of Knowledge; The Purpose of the *Grammar of Assent*," *The Downside Review* (1957), 11, referred to in *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 26.
117. *Grammar of Assent*, 259-260; quoted in *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 25-26.
118. "The Form of Inference," *Collection*, 257, note c.
119. *Ibid.*, 3.
120. *Ibid.*, 6-7.
121. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 25-26.
122. *Ibid.*, 26.
123. "True Judgment and Science," 3; quoted in *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 27.
124. "The Form of Inference," *Collection*, 6-7.
125. Quoted in Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 39.
126. Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light*, 16.
127. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 263.
128. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 237.
129. *Ibid.*, 237.
130. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 64.
131. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 276.
132. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 160.
133. "Natural Knowledge of God," *A Second Collection*, 122.
134. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 242.
135. John K. Roth, "Friedrich Nietzsche," in Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 408.
136. Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002) 45.
137. *Ibid.*, 50.
138. *Ibid.*, 48.
139. *Ibid.*, 48.
140. *Ibid.*, 50.
141. *Ibid.*, 116
142. *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. (Edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. 15 vols. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980) 1, 831: "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks" § 7. Translated and quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 117.
143. Nietzsche, "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks," *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. 1.842f; "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks" § 5. Translated and quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 116
144. *Frühe Schriften, 1854-1869*, 3, 320. Translated and quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 53.
145. *Frühe Schriften, 1854-1869*. Edited by Hans Joachim Mette (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994) vol. 3, 336. Translated and quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 53.

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146. Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 320.
147. *Ibid.*, 319.
148. *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe.*, 246f; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Third Part, “On Old and New Tablets” § 2. Translated and quoted in Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 322.
149. Quoted in John K. Roth, “Friedrich Nietzsche,” in Ian P. McGreal, ed., *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 412.
150. Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, 319.
151. *Ibid.*, 323.
152. *Ibid.*, 326.
153. *Ibid.*, 327
154. *Ibid.*, 327.
155. *Method in Theology*, 96.
156. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 34.
157. *Ibid.*, 36.
158. *Ibid.*, 34.
159. *Ibid.*, 35.
160. *Ibid.*, 35.
161. Dan Stiver, “Husserl”, in Ian P. McGreal, editor, *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 424.
162. See Dan Stiver, “Husserl”, in Ian P. McGreal, editor, *Great Thinkers of the Western World*, 426.
163. *Method in Theology*, 212.
164. “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection*, 159-160. The level of deliberation, for instance, sublates earlier levels, says Lonergan, when it “goes beyond them, ...directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing them, preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition.” Cf. *Method in Theology*, 316.
165. “Theology and Praxis,” *A Third Collection*, 184.
166. *Ibid.*, 185.
167. “Revolution in Catholic Theology,” *A Second Collection*, 236.
168. “Exegesis and Dogma,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 156.
169. *Ibid.*, 156.
170. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 231-232.
171. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, xi. Quoted in Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 231
172. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 24.
173. *Ibid.*, 38.
174. *Ibid.*, 38.
175. *Ibid.*, 232.
176. *Ibid.*, 232.
177. *Ibid.*, 232.
178. *Method in Theology*, 94.
179. Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, vii.
180. *Ibid.*, vii.
181. Quoted in de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism*, 21-22.
182. *Ibid.*, 22.
183. *Ibid.*, 100.
184. *Ibid.*, 64.
185. *Ibid.*, 66-67.
186. *Ibid.*, 212.
187. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 332.
188. *Ibid.*, 332.
189. Iris Murdoch, “The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts,” *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, 365-366.

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190. Ibid., 226.
191. Quoted in Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 420.
192. Frederick Buechner, *Listening to Your Life*, 25.
193. See Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, xvii-xviii..
194. Frederick Buechner, *Listening to Your Life*, 25.
195. Ibid., 26.
196. Quoted in Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, Derek Walcott, *Homage to Robert Frost*, 64-65.
197. *Insight*, 385.
- *Listening to Your Life: Daily Meditations with Frederick Buechner*, 25-26.
199. Ibid., 27.
200. Steven Weinberg, "A Designer Universe?", *The New York Review of Books*, October 21, 1999, 48.
201. Quoted in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (Edited, with an introduction, prefaces, and new translations by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956) 106-107.
202. "Pope John's Intention," *The Third Collection* 234.
203. 1 Cor. 2:11-14.

5

The Realm of Interiority: Lonergan's Intentionality Analysis

Lao Tse said that the growth principle in life, which he called the Tao, is too exclusive to be named or to be grasped at all, . . . it is evanescent, like smoke going out the chimney.¹

Ira Progoff

As the world of common sense and its language provide the scaffolding for entering into the world of theory, so both the worlds of common sense and theory and their languages provide the scaffolding for entering into the world of interiority.²

Bernard Lonergan

No doubt, we have all to begin from undifferentiated consciousness, from common-sense traditional procedures, from some one of the multitudinous guages" in which the endless varieties of common sense express themselves. . . . It is only by knowledge making its bloody entrance that one can move out of the realm of ordinary languages into the realm of theory and the totally different scientific apprehension of reality. It is only through the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation that one can find one's way into interiority and achieve through self-appropriation a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from commonsense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both.³

Bernard Lonergan

Consciousness --- like a stream. Or like a column of smoke rising from a chimney. And now, after a long twilight of philosophic initiation, the continuation of our story --- a still further differentiation of the activities and the potentiality of the mind apart from its power to know and make choices in the realms of the practical, the theoretical and the transcendent. Now the effort to push on, to explore the hitherto unexamined realm of one's own interiority.⁴

In writing *Insight*, Bernard Lonergan set himself the ambitious task of understanding understanding. He wrote:

Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding.⁵

By understanding understanding, he meant 'understanding how we come-to-know.' What

is the process by which we come-to-know? We have reached the point in our story where we want to gain some understanding of Lonergan's own analysis of understanding, in the light of the Humean and Kantian analyses of understanding we have been studying and which Lonergan found to be inadequate. For it is Lonergan's heady claim that, if his analysis is correct, you will be in a position to understand not only "the broad lines of all there is to be understood," but you will also have "a fixed base" on which will rise "all future developments of understanding."⁶ It is a claim which Lonergan invites each of us to verify for ourselves.

Lonergan's radical question is: What is knowing? What am I doing when I am knowing? Lonergan begins his exploration of the realm of interiority with the immediate data of consciousness, which anyone can intentionally advert to. He does not start, as did the Greeks and the medieval philosophers, with a metaphysical system one must master before applying it to an understanding of understanding. In other words, he starts with immediate data of consciousness and not with some philosopher's metaphysics. Data which is available to you in your own consciousness, if you care to advert to it. You can advert to your own consciousness easily enough, but it is not an easy task to trace the shape of its flow. No wonder then, as Ira Progoff reminds us, that Lao Tse complained that "the growth principle in life, which he called the *Tao*, is too elusive to be named or to be grasped at all." The flow of consciousness, he said, is as "evanescent" as smoke rising from a chimney. And so, says Progoff:

We know it exists, but its shape keeps changing. It has no shape that we can fix in our mind; we cannot contain it in any mold. We know it is real, but soon it has disappeared and is beyond us.⁷

Clearly, the data does lie within the consciousness of each of us, as Lonergan maintains and anyone can verify for himself, and is available for examination and for differentiation, if one has enough patience and persistence. Lonergan's aim in writing *Insight* is "to help people experience themselves understanding, advert to the experience, distinguish it from other experiences, name and identify it, and recognize it when it recurs." His aim, he adds, is similar to that of Carl Rogers who helped his clients "advert to the feelings that they experience but do not advert to, distinguish, name, identify, recognize."⁸

When then is understanding? How in fact do we come-to-know? First of all, says Lonergan, understanding is more of an art than a science. One properly begins to practice any art by studying the masters of the art: one seeks to uncover the method by which the masters exercise their mastery.⁹ One studies successful performance and then analyzes it to discover the secret of its success. Or, one can study a conspicuously successful science and analyze the methods of its practitioners.

Let's examine a little more closely what such an analysis means in the case of knowing. The very possibility of knowing what knowing is, Lonergan maintains, resides in the nature of consciousness. Since knowing is a conscious activity, consciousness is an awareness that is present in any cognitional activity. And so, Lonergan assures his readers that they can indeed discover within their own consciousness something that is common to us all: "the dynamic structure of their own cognitional and moral being;" it is a structure, one will discover, that is fixed, normative, and "not open to radical

revision.”¹⁰ Lonergan’s concern, then, is to help one to discover in-built in the activity of one’s own consciousness the method by which one can reach truth and genuine value. Human consciousness functions, to use an over-simple analogy, like an intricate machine. The question is, How does the machinery work? What is its method?

The method, as Lonergan said, is more of an art than a science. It is, he writes, “a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise.”¹¹ Lonergan calls such patterned operations a “transcendental method,”¹² by which he means a general method that transcends or goes beyond any particular method employed in any particular area of cognitional and deliberative activity.

Lonergan starts with an analysis of a particular method, the method of the natural sciences.¹³ It provides the clearest model of successful performance. Science works and the secret of its success lies in its method. The scientific method, he says, “inculcates a spirit of inquiry, and inquiries recur.”¹⁴ Here the key word is ‘recur.’ Indeed, successful scientific method employs a basic pattern of recurring operations:

- It insists on accurate observation and description: both observations and descriptions recur.
- Above all, it praises discovery, and discoveries recur.
- It demands the formulation of discoveries in hypotheses, and hypotheses recur.
- It requires the deduction of the implications of hypotheses, and deductions recur.
- It keeps urging that experiments be devised and performed to check the implications of hypotheses against observable fact, and such processes of experimentation recur.¹⁵

In brief, the scientist proceeds by a sophisticated form of common sense trial and error.

These recurring operations are distinct, but related. Related in such a way that together they form a pattern, and the pattern specifies the correct way of doing scientific investigation. Lonergan identifies the elements in the pattern as inquiry, observation, discovery, formulation of hypothesis, deduction and testing. Together they produce results. Lonergan offers a bit more detailed analysis of scientific method:

- By “inquiry,” the scientist turns ordinary experiencing into “the scrutiny of observation.”
- By observation, he “pins down’ what he observes by careful and accurate description. True, contrasting descriptions may give rise to problems the scientist must puzzle over.
- But by “discoveries,” he resolves the problems.
- By a “hypothesis,” he formulates the discovery as a possible or probable explanation of the problem.
- By logical “deduction,” he draws out the implications of the hypothesis and devises experiments to seek its “verification.”¹⁶

To sum up, in scientific method, the mind uses logical operations that were employed by Greek and medieval philosophers: their operations dealt with propositions,

terms, and relations, and they described, formulated problems and hypotheses, and deduced implications. But, after the advent of modern science, method moves beyond such strictly logical operations to include non-logical operations such as “inquiry, observation, discovery, experiment, synthesis, verification.”¹⁷ In the natural sciences, says Lonergan, one employs “the logical operations of description, the formulation of hypotheses, the deduction of assumptions and implications;” at the same time “there also occur such nonlogical operations as observation, discovery, the planning an execution of experiments, the presence or absence of verification and, in the latter case, the modification of the hypothesis or substitution of another hypothesis.”¹⁸

In modern science, therefore, logical and non-logical operations work in tandem. The logical are used to “consolidate what has been achieved;” the non-logical keep the door “open to further advance.” In yoking the two sets of operations, modern science engages “in an open, ongoing, progressive and cumulative process.” The method thus differs sharply from what Lonergan terms “the static fixity” of both Aristotle’s method and Hegel’s dialectic. Aristotle, by using only logic, concentrated on “the necessary and immutable.” Hegel for his part focused on movement within a complete system where, writes Tarnas, “both nature and history are ever progressing toward the Absolute...” Through this movement “the universal Spirit” finds expression “in space as nature, in time as history.”¹⁹

Generalized Transcendental Method As we have seen, Lonergan was looking for a more fundamental method. That method will be fundamental if it underlies the methods of the natural sciences and is indeed to be found in all the activities of the human mind in all the realms of meaning. A generalized method transcends all individual methods. In other words, Lonergan looks for “a basic pattern of operations that one employs in every cognitional” and in every volitional activity.²⁰ But, if any “account of our awareness of the levels of consciousness is to be intelligible, it has to be preceded by a grasp, both precise and firm, of the successive types of activity that serve to make and to define the successive levels of consciousness.”²¹ Only patient analysis will sort out all the intertwined strands.

Let’s join Lonergan, then, in his quest for the transcendental method.²² First of all, one prescind from the realms of commonsense, theory, and transcendence, and enters the realm of interiority (the realm of intentional consciousness as it manifests itself in its intentional operations). As we have seen in writing of Brentano and Husserl, consciousness is “intentional,” in the sense that it tends towards objects. Michael McCarthy has a useful summary of Lonergan’s understanding of intentionality which serves to refresh the memory:

The basic elements of cognitional structure are intentional operations. Cognitive acts are intentional because they are *of* or *about* something; they take a psychological accusative; they have objects. These are different ways of saying that intentional acts embody the basic distinction between a subjective *intending* and an object *intended*. Cognitional operations by their intentionality make object psychologically present to the human subject. Through the operation, the subject becomes conscious of the object, which is its intentional content.²³

Upon entering the realm of conscious intentionality, one quickly comes upon what Lonergan calls the world of immediacy and the world of meaning. What is the world of immediacy? What is the world of meaning? And what is the difference between the two?

The world of immediacy lies at the first level of intentional consciousness. The world of meaning emerges at the second and third levels. The difference between the two will emerge as our analysis continues.

The First Level of Intentional Operation The first level is the world of sense experience — the world of immediacy. It is the world you enter through your senses.²⁴ The world of immediacy, for Lonergan, is “the sum of what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelt, felt.”²⁵ If you are an infant, it is the world of what you feel, touch, grasp, suck, see, hear. If you are an adult, it is a world of immediate experience, the world “of the given as given,” the world “of image”, and, as Lonergan adds significantly, the world of “affect” --- the feelings you experience prior to any understanding, reflection or judgment, deliberation or choice.²⁶ Thus, the world of immediacy is also the world in which you experience “pleasure and pain, hunger and thirst, food and drink, surrender, sex, and sleep.”²⁷ It is the world to which “the adult returns when with an empty head he lies in the sun.”²⁸ Lonergan helps you to identify the world of immediacy when he writes:

Insofar as one is lost in dreamless sleep, or lies helpless in a coma, then meaning is no part of one’s being. As long as one is an infant, etymologically a nontalker, one is busy learning to develop, differentiate, combine, group in ever broader syntheses one’s capacities for operation in the movements of head and mouth, neck and arms, eyes and hands, in mastering the intricacies of standing on one’s feet, then of tottering from one spot to another. When first hearing and speech develop, they are directed to present objects, and so meaning initially is confined to a world of immediacy, to a world no bigger than the nursery [To] all appearances, it is quite correct to say that reality comes first and meaning is quite secondary.²⁹

In the world of immediacy, objects are immediately present to you. Your intentional operations as a sensing subject, therefore, are immediate when their objects are present to you: “seeing is immediate to what is being seen, hearing to what is being heard, touch to what is being touched.”³⁰ Here, says Lonergan, “the intending of our senses is an attending.” Here you are dealing with your consciousness as it begins to expand at the level of experiencing the data provided by your senses. This is the empirical level on which you “sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move.” You are at the first level of conscious operation, the level of sense experience.³¹ Indeed the very same level, Lonergan reminds us, which David Hume examined with brilliant originality and in meticulous detail. Hume contended (and Lonergan agrees) that at the experiential level of consciousness, the only thing you perceive is a stream of “sensible presentations.” What you more commonly call sights, sounds, touches (hot or cold), scents (fragrant or malodorous), and flavors (bitter or sweet). To be concrete, attend to

the loveliness of a Venus de Milo or any other beauty bare, the sound of a Gershwin tune, the touch of love, the scent of jasmine, the taste of honey. The Humean world of sensible presentations is indeed identical with what Lonergan calls “the world of immediacy” where you find an “endless variety of things to be seen, sounds to be heard, odors to be sniffed, tastes to be palated, shapes and textures to be touched.”

Lonergan stresses what must not be missed: in the world of immediate sensations you also experience feelings. You “feel pleasure and pain, desire and fear, joy and sorrow, and in such feelings there seem to reside the mass and momentum of [your] lives.” Moreover, he says, you express feeling, you “move about in various manners, assume now this and that posture and position, and by the fleeting movements of [your] facial muscles, communicate to others the quiet pulse or sudden surge of [your] feelings.”³² All such sensible presentations, says Lonergan, are produced within you in much the same way as a child’s burst of laughter is produced by a tickle. The world of immediacy therefore includes only those objects which are the objects of immediate experience, “where ‘experience’ is understood in the narrow sense and denotes either the outer experience of [your] senses or the inner experience of [your] consciousness.”³³

It is important, we pause here to note, that when Lonergan speaks of consciousness he means “an awareness immanent in cognitional [and volitional] acts.” By way of contrast, you have biological acts that are not conscious. Recall the difference (noted earlier in speaking of Husserl) between conscious and nonconscious activity. It is relatively easy to differentiate between the two. Lonergan lists a few non-volitional activities: “The metabolism of one’s cells, the maintenance of one’s organs, the multitudinous biological processes that one learns about through the study of contemporary medical science.”³⁴ Lonergan scholar Michael McCarthy reminds us that “conscious occurrences like pains, emotions, and intentional acts differ intrinsically from such nonconscious episodes in a person’s life as the growth of hair, the circulation of the blood, and the normal functioning of the nervous system.”³⁵ Briefly, biological activity takes place outside your consciousness; cognitional activity occurs within it. Lonergan explains how cognitional activities at this level are conscious:

Seeing is not merely a response to the stimulus of colour and shape; it is a response that consists in becoming aware of colour and shape. Hearing is not merely a response to the stimulus of sound; it is a response that consists in becoming aware of sound. As colour differs from sound, so seeing differs from hearing. Still seeing and hearing have a common feature, for in both occurrences there is not merely content but also a conscious act.³⁶

You hear a police helicopter overhead and you look up and see it black against the sky.

In brief then, the first level of your intentional consciousness is the level of experiencing. It is the level of sensible presentations and feelings. At this level you become aware of “an empirical consciousness characteristic of sensing, perceiving, imagining.” And the awareness immanent in the act of experiencing, Lonergan notes, is “the mere given-ness of the acts” of sensation, perception, imagination.³⁷ It begins to rain and you feel the rain on your outstretched hand.

The Experience of Self-Appropriation To repeat, Lonergan never wants you to forget that the goal of *Insight* and *Method* is intellectual conversion, “not the known but the knowing.” Not mathematics, nor science, nor common sense, nor any amount of knowledge. But rather intellectual conversion is the self-appropriation of the dynamic cognitional and volitional structure by which one comes to know and value. The crucial issue for Lonergan is an experiential issue: *one’s own rational and responsible self-consciousness clearly and distinctly taking possession of itself as rational and responsible self-consciousness*. Philosophy’s “primary function,” he writes, is “to promote self-appropriation.” For self-appropriation, in Lonergan’s judgment, “cuts to the root of philosophic differences and incomprehensions.”³⁸ You undergo an intellectual conversion experience when you make rational judgments and responsible decisions and then come to understand the process by which you judge and decide. This, for Lonergan, is the “decisive achievement.” To intellectual conversion, all leads; from it all follows. And the conversion must occur as a result of what you do by yourself alone. You must self-appropriate. Neither Lonergan nor anyone else can do it for you.³⁹

Let Lonergan take you by the elbow, then, as you work your way around the obstacles that block intellectual conversion and on through the stages which lead to it. The steps he suggests will aid you in the process of self-appropriation. By allowing him to be your guide you will come to understand precisely what goes on in consciousness as you move toward intellectual conversion — conversion from what he calls seductive cognitional myth to secure cognitional fact.

Recall first of all the difference between human beings as “metaphysical substances” and as “subjects.” Michael McCarthy reminds us that the rational psychology of the metaphysician like Aristotle and Aquinas deals with a human being as “a metaphysical substance;” a human being, for instance, is a rational animal to be distinguished from all other animals “by psychological attributes and powers.” Lonergan’s intentionality analysis, by contrast, deals with a human being as a psychological subject, as (in McCarthy’s words) “finite, factual, historically situated conscious persons.” For the rational psychologist, a human being is “a substance whether awake or asleep.” In Lonergan’s analysis, writes McCarthy “persons are only subjects when they exist as centers of consciousness..., the experiential center of the desires, operations, and dispositions constitutive of conscious life.”⁴⁰ It was the result of this shift from substance to subject that intentionality analysis, as Lonergan has said, excited modern philosophers and “routed faculty psychology.”⁴¹

You are dealing here with conscious activity and it is worth repeating Lonergan’s insistence, as McCarthy puts it, “on psychological facts that can be discovered and verified in [your] intentional experience.”⁴² The recurrent operations of your cognitional and volitional processes are a ‘given’ within your consciousness. Your unity as an intentional subject and the normative pattern of your intentional operations are a reality in your conscious experience prior to your analysis of it. Indeed, when you analyze your conscious experience, Lonergan insists, you analyze an already “functional and functioning unity.”⁴³ Through personal appropriation of what is already going on in consciousness, you are on the way to discovering what you actually are doing when you pursue knowledge.⁴⁴ When you formulate what you discover in your consciousness, you do not express “surprising novelties,” but merely “the routines of [your] conscious living and doing.”⁴⁵

Note too that, while earlier he had used the word ‘experience’ to mean seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, feeling, Lonergan in this context also uses the word ‘experience’, but in a much wider sense to include the experience of consciousness and introspection, the experience of self-appropriation, the experience of coming to self-knowledge. Lonergan, though, is leery of the word ‘introspection’ and uses it only with specific qualifications. He qualifies it this way:

“...[I]ntrospection...is misleading inasmuch as it suggests an inward inspection. Inward inspection is just myth. Its origin lies in the mistaken analogy that all cognitional events are to be conceived on the analogy of ocular vision However, ‘introspection’ may be understood to mean, not consciousness itself but the process of objectifying the contents of consciousness.⁴⁶

In other words, you cannot take an inner operation of the mind, hold it like an object with tweezers, and inspect it.

How then do you objectify the contents of your consciousness? Reflect for a moment. Lonergan reminds us of what is true of us all: insofar as your conscious operations occur consciously, you know that you know. You, the conscious subject, experience yourself operating. You are *aware* of what is going on.⁴⁷ Consider moreover the difference between being aware of and adverting to. First, what does “aware” actually mean? To be consciously ‘aware’, says Lonergan, means to ‘be present to’. There is an important distinction between two modes of intentional presence: prereflexive experiential consciousness and reflexive intentional analysis. Michael McCarthy explains the distinction. Prereflexive experiential consciousness is your “prereflexive nonintentional awareness of [yourself] and [your] intentional acts.” That means:

All intentional presence presupposes an act of *intending* of which its subject is prereflexively aware. There is no *intended* without an *intending*; nor an *intending* without an *intender* whose presence to himself is not initially *intended*.

By reflexive intentional analysis, on the other hand, you “intentionally attend to [your] conscious acts or states.”⁴⁸ When you attend to your conscious operations you heighten your presence to yourself as subject, but attention to them “does not constitute that presence.”⁴⁹ In fact, says McCarthy, “without the prior experiential presence of intentional life, introspection would be impossible.” But what was originally your “act of intending” now, though intentional analysis, becomes “an object *intended*.”⁵⁰ In other words, during this process of “reflexive inquiry” you “continue to be present to [yourself] as subject, “but once you attend to your own conscious acts you also “become present to” yourself as object.⁵¹

In this way you begin to objectify the contents of your consciousness. You can stretch out your hand when it begins to rain. You feel the drops of rain on your palm. You are aware that it is raining. And while it is still raining, you can also advert to the fact that you are conscious of your awareness of the feel of raindrops on your palm, aware that you are now present to yourself feeling the rain, and by this reflexive inquiry become

present to yourself as an object — a being consciously feeling the rain on your palm. Lonergan makes the point this way:

. . . the presence of the object is quite different from the presence of the subject. The object is present as what is gazed upon, attended to, intended. But the presence of the subject resides in the gazing, the attending the intending. For this reason the subject can be conscious, as attending, and yet give his whole attention to the object as attended to.⁵²

Check it out for yourself.

But there is more to Lonergan's analysis of presence. You can be conscious of many different things. That means you can be *present* to many different things: to objects (say, to a clock on the wall), or to other human beings, or to you yourself. When you are present to objects or human beings, there is always, says Lonergan, 'the spectacle and the spectator.' You are present to objects the way a spectator is present to a spectacle. Lonergan uses the useful image of a parade to illustrate the point: "As the parade of objects marches by, spectators do not have to slip into the parade to become present to themselves; they have to be present to themselves for anything to be present to them; and they are present to themselves by the same watching that, as it were, at its other pole makes the parade present to them."⁵³ You watch the parade; you are aware that you are watching the parade; and finally you advert to the fact that you are aware of watching the parade. Indeed, the spectator has to be present to himself to be present to anything or any person other than himself. And so, he notes, "objects are present by being attended to; but subjects are present as subjects, not by being attended to, but by attending." Lonergan gives a compelling explanation of why the subject must be 'simultaneously and concomitantly' present to himself whenever an object or another is present to himself as spectator: "If he were not present to himself, if he were not all there, if he were dead to the world, nothing would be present to him."⁵⁴

And so, Lonergan continues, the way you are 'present' to yourself is altogether different from the way you are present to objects or others. He explains how the subject "is present to himself all along, as long as he is awake---and even if he is asleep, provided he is dreaming: the subject is present to himself in his dreams with a fragmentary presence."⁵⁵ Indeed, in all conscious operations, the subject is present to himself "not as an object [which one must take a look at], but by the mere fact that he is exercising any of these cognitional activities, or [for that matter] any affective or voluntary activities."⁵⁶ You don't have to join the parade and then take a look at yourself marching in the parade as though you were a separate part of the spectacle.

Lonergan gives instances of what he calls prereflexive experiential presence:

- When you ask the questions, What is it? And Why? you do not do so unconsciously.
- When you get the point, when you catch on, you catch on not unconsciously but consciously; you 'know' something has happened, you 'know' that you are knowing, in the generic sense of the word 'know.'
- Similarly, when you are asking, 'Is that so?' you are aware you are asking it. And when you are weighing the evidence and you see that this has to be

the answer and you make the judgment, you are aware of what is going on, and you are aware that this particular set of activities has reached a term. You know something and you know that something has been settled, insofar as you use consciousness.⁵⁷

Self-Knowledge, Yes Introspection, No Reflexive intentional analysis presupposes prereflexive experiential presence, that is, prior experientially conscious intentional performance. Self-knowledge or self-appropriation --- the grasp of what actually goes on in consciousness when you come-to-understand --- “presupposes the successful performance of intentional analysis.”⁵⁸ Neither experientially conscious antecedent operations nor reflexive intentional analysis are in themselves enough to guarantee self-knowledge. Successful passage through the stages of a process is required if you are to know your own cognitional structures: you must first attend to the data of consciousness, then understand what you attend to, and finally pass judgment on the correctness of your understanding. Therefore, concludes McCarthy, “experientially conscious intentional performance, reflexive intentional analysis, and affirmation of what is understood through reflexive inquiry are necessary, distinct, and complementary stages in the passage to cognitive self-appropriation.”⁵⁹ Or in Walter Conn’s summary:

Such is the fundamental distinction Bernard Lonergan draws between the subject-as-subject (consciousness) and the subject-as-object (reflexive intentionality). Operations as intentional make objects (including the self) present to the subject; operations as conscious make the subject present to herself or himself. Thus, in “self” language, we have the interior duality of self-as-object (and so I speak of “myself”) and self-as-subject (and so I speak as “I”).⁶⁰

Now, knowing in this way how you are always present to yourself in knowing, Lonergan maintains, helps you to distinguish between awareness and advertence, between consciousness and self-knowledge at all the levels of conscious activity. “Consciousness,” that is, experience of experiencing, experience of understanding, and experience of judging, he says, “is not knowing knowing but merely experience of knowing.”⁶¹ Once you understand that knowing is a structure (sensible experiencing, understanding, judging), knowing knowing, he says, “must be a reduplication of the structure.” In other words, self-knowledge is the structure of coming-to-know “reduplicated” in consciousness: “it is experience, understanding, and judging with respect to experience, understanding, and judging.”⁶²

Lonergan’s use of a mirror to explain reduplication is helpful. Consciousness mirrors ‘knowing’ in the sense in which we all ‘know’ experiencing, understanding, and judging. Indeed, when you know, you know that you know. You are aware of what is going on in consciousness while it is going on: you experience and you are aware that you are experiencing; you understand and you are aware that you understand; you judge and you are aware that you judge. Now that doesn’t mean that you have analyzed all the structure of human knowing---the whole set of activities which constitute human knowing. No, what it means is that, when you perform those activities, you perform them consciously; you are aware of what you are doing as you perform them. I stand outside

with my hand outstretched; I feel raindrops on my palm and come to know and judge that it is indeed raining; I'm getting drenched, so I decide to come in out of the rain. But I can concomitantly advert to myself (be present to myself) as standing outside with my palm up, be present to myself feeling the raindrops, be present to myself as I come to understand that it's raining and I'm getting drenched, and be present to myself as I make the decision either to come in out of the rain or, being in an antic mood, make like Gene Kelly. "Look, ma, I'm singing and dancing . . . in the rain."

Lonergan grants that "if knowing is just looking, then knowing knowing will be looking at looking;" but Lonergan of course rejects the idea that knowing is just taking a look. It will be obvious, then, that for Lonergan the effort to reduplicate or mirror the structure of coming-to-know cannot be introspection (just taking a look):

The reader, if he tries to find himself as subject, to reach back and, as it were, uncover his subjectivity, cannot succeed. Any such effort is introspecting, attending to the subject; and what is found is, not the subject as subject, but only the subject as object; it is the subject as subject that does the finding.⁶³

On the other hand, if knowing knowing indeed mirrors knowing, what follows? It makes sense, he argues, that, "if knowing is a conjunction of experience, understanding, and judging, then knowing knowing has to be a conjunction of:

- experiencing experience, understanding and judging,
- understanding one's experience of experience, understanding, and judging, and
- judging one's understanding of experience, understanding, and judging to be correct.⁶⁴

And what must you do then to be present to yourself as subject? You must "heighten one's presence to oneself;" one must not "introspect," but raise "the level of one's activity."⁶⁵

But you may immediately ask: how does one in fact raise the level of one's activity? You raise it, Lonergan answers, by attending to what you are doing. Listen to his summary. First you run through a list of the different levels of activity you are capable of--dreaming while asleep and while awake attending, understanding, judging, evaluating, and choosing:

- If one sleeps and dreams, one is present to oneself as the frightened dreamer.
- If one wakes, one becomes present to oneself, not as moved but as moving, not as felt but as feeling, not as seen but as seeing.
- [Next,] if one is puzzled and wonders and inquires, the empirical subject becomes an intellectual subject as well.
- [Then,] if one reflects and considers the evidence, the empirical and intellectual subject becomes a rational subject, an incarnate reasonableness.

- [Finally,] if one deliberates and chooses, one has moved to the level of the rationally conscious, free, responsible subject that by his choices makes himself what he is to be and his world what it is to be.⁶⁶

If you have followed him this far, Lonergan is at pains to point out that the presence you have to yourself differs at each level of conscious activity. The same is true, as we shall see, for all the other levels of consciousness.

Self-Knowledge: At the Level of Immediate Sensible Experiencing Let's go through the steps again (attend, understand, judge, decide), this time in slow motion. For a start, he says, consider how your presence to yourself can differ at the experiential level when you are dreaming or when you wake up:

I have already said that the dreamer is conscious up to a point, with a minimal type of consciousness. When he wakes up and begins to experience, he is *empirically conscious*. That is something better than dreaming. One is awake, [perhaps] lying on the beach, with not a thought in his head, not a question; he has empirical consciousness.⁶⁷

Then, take step one: Attend and advert the while to your activity at the first level of sensible experiencing. If 'knowing' is not like 'seeing,' says Lonergan, you can get an insight into the difference between knowing and seeing by paying attention, first of all, to your immediate sensible experience:

That is quite easy with regard to seeing. Anyone can have an immediate experience of seeing and connect that experience with the word and the concept 'seeing.' To have the experience as often as he pleases, to turn it off and on, all he has to do is blink. By opening and closing his eyes he will turn on and off the experience of seeing. What do you mean by 'seeing'? Exactly that experience. A blind person cannot experience seeing; it is just the same for him whether he opens or closes his eyes. But for a person who is not blind, it is a quite simple matter to experience seeing as often as he pleases and to connect the name with the experience. The same is true with hearing...⁶⁸

Take a piece of fruit and attend to the sensations (as reported earlier) which it produces in this writer at least:

Its heft in my hand and the feel of its down,
 Its temperature cool from its stay in the fridge,
 And the look of its skin, all yellow and red;
 The sound that it makes as it yields to my bite;
 Its smell ripe in my nose,
 And the taste of its juice as it pleasures my tongue.⁶⁹

You can quite easily be aware of *yourself* when you are experiencing a peach.

You can see the appetizing peach and ask yourself “Who am I?” You can say “I am a subject that can see a shape that is yellow and red.” But you can also say “I am a subject that can experience the seeing of yellow and red. I am a see-er seeing yellow and red, true; but I am also someone aware that I am a see-er seeing yellow and red.” In other words, you experience the data of sense: “colors, shapes, sounds, odors, tastes, the hard and soft, the rough and smooth, hot and cold, wet and dry, and so forth.”⁷⁰ Equally, in addition to the data of sense, you can experience feelings. You can bite into the peach, experience the pleasure of its taste, and ask, “Who am I?” You answer: “I am someone feeling pleasure, a feel-er feeling pleasure;” or perhaps the peach is tasteless and you feel disappointed and say, “I am a feel-er feeling disappointment.”

At this point then, Who am I? “At the first level of conscious activity, I am a sense-er sensing something. I am aware that I am a sense-er sensing something. I am advertent to the fact that I am aware of being a sense-er sensing something.”

The Second Level of Intentional Consciousness In addition to the experiential level (the level of experiencing), there is another and different level of consciousness, the level of understanding. Insofar as you are “empirically conscious” — conscious at the first level of experiencing, you may not seem much different from the higher mammals, your biological cousins.⁷¹ Both you and animals share the same five senses. The biological pattern of existence which you share with animals, Lonergan writes, involves sequences of sensations that “converge upon terminal activities of intussusception or reproduction or...self preservation.”⁷² Animals spend much of their lives in sleep (cats spend as much as 14 hours out of the 24 asleep) and, he writes with a touch of humor, “it is as though the full-time business of living called forth consciousness as a part-time employee, occasionally to meet problems of malfunctioning, but regularly to deal rapidly, effectively, and economically with the external situations in which sustenance is to be won and into which offspring are to be born.”⁷³ This summary of animal behavior is a fact to which almost any TV documentary about a pride of African lions will attest --- mating or on the prowl for wildebeest or all tangled in sleep in the shade of an acacia tree.

But you are, in fact, far different from non-human animals. To illustrate one difference, Lonergan scholar Brian Cronin gives the instance of a cow and a man gazing at a landscape. The cow uses its imagination and memory to “perceive and react” to things that meet its needs and instincts: “The cow can recognize grass, smell an approaching fox, hear and fear rumbling thunder in the distance.” The man gazes at the same scene, but in addition to seeing, he also identifies and names what he sees: “He sees five different species of trees, he sees the smoke of the village in the distance; he sees the lack of nitrogen in the pasture; he sees one of the sheep limping and speculates on the cause.” It is precisely “this synthesis of animal experiencing and emerging intelligence constitutes the uniqueness of human knowing” and distinguishes man from beast.⁷⁴

It turns out, says Lonergan, that the sense experience we share with the rest of the animal kingdom is only “the substratum” for further operations.⁷⁵ The world of immediacy is a narrow segment, indeed but “a tiny fragment,”⁷⁶ of the reach of human consciousness. Mere experiencing the world of immediacy left Lonergan unsatisfied, for, he writes, “the Humean world of mere impressions comes to me as a puzzle to be pieced together.” Once one has immediate experience, one feels a spontaneous urge “to

understand, to grasp intelligible unities and relations, to know what's up and where I stand.”

It follows, in Lonergan's analysis, that sensing is not understanding. Sensing and understanding are simply different operations. “You cannot start off from seeing and say, ‘An insight! Ah, you have the “sight” in there after the “in”’; it must be something like seeing.”⁷⁷ If you say that, says Lonergan, you couldn't be more wrong. You have begun to be seduced by the cognitional myth. Actually, the opposite is true. Understanding is “not something like seeing; it is something quite different from seeing.” The fallacy lies in thinking that you can take a look and straightaway see meaning with the naked eye. He develops the difference between two stages in the process. Consider first, he says, what happens when you see:

A person ordinarily sees just the color that is there to be seen, unless he is color blind. He sees the shape that is there to be seen, he does not have to see it, and see it, and see it, and accumulate acts of seeing before he sees something. He sees right at the first crack...⁷⁸

On the other hand, consider what happens when you understand. Indeed, as Lonergan has been insisting, “it is an entirely different story.” You don't get an insight and understanding at first crack simply by taking a look. Quite the opposite:

Insights are a dime a dozen, and most of them are wrong. [Insights must be checked out, must be painstakingly verified.] A second [insight] complements the first, qualifies it, and corrects it. And the third complements, corrects, and qualifies the first two. It is only after you have had a hundred that you begin to get a grip on some subject and to gain some light on the matter.”⁷⁹

Insight and understanding are totally different from taking a look, for it is only after careful verification of the insights that you reach understanding.

An example of understanding. Lonergan recalls Archimedes' “Aha experience” in the baths in Syracuse when he worked out his equation for specific gravity. His comment? “Though I never enjoyed so remarkable an insight as Archimedes, still I do know what it is to miss the point and to get the point, not to have a clue and then to catch on, to see things in a new light, to grasp how they hang together, to come to know why, the reason, the explanation, the cause.” After a spontaneous search for understanding both Lonergan and Archimedes became conscious of “an increment of knowledge.”⁸⁰ To gain that increment, Lonergan explains, consciousness “expands in a new dimension.” How? “From mere experiencing [you] turn to the effort to understand what [you] have experienced.”⁸¹ And what precisely is new about the effort? Your human intelligence takes you “beyond experiencing to ask what and why and how and what for.”⁸² In other words, your intelligence “looks for intelligible patterns in presentations and representations; it grasps such patterns in its moments of insight; it exploits such grasp in its formulations and in further operations equally guided by insights.”⁸³ In addition to empirical consciousness, then, there is “intelligent consciousness” which is characterized by “inquiry, insight, and formulation.”⁸⁴ You are beyond the substratum of experiencing;

you have moved up to the level of questioning.

Lonergan gives further examples of such questioning when he interprets Aristotle's theory of formal cause in terms of intentionality analysis:

What is a man? What is a house? The clue lies in the fact of insight into sensible data. For an insight, an act of understanding, is a matter of knowing a cause.⁸⁵ Presumably, in ultimate and simple cases, the insight is knowledge of a cause that stands between the sensible data and the concept whose definition is sought...What is a man? What is a house? The meaning is, Why is this sort of body a man? Why are stones and bricks arranged in a certain way, a house? What is it that causes the matter sensibly perceived to be a thing? To Scholastics the answers are self-evident. That which makes this type of body to be a man, is a human soul. That which makes these stones and bricks to be a house, is an artificial [man-made] form. That which makes matter, in general, to be a thing is the *causa essendi*, the formal cause.⁸⁶

We have arrived, finally, at the heart of Lonergan's understanding of understanding. It is here that he makes his original contribution to the history of philosophy: the 'insight' that plays the central role in human understanding.

Insight What then is 'insight'? Lonergan starts the preface of insight by an appeal to the reader's familiarity with who-done-its:

In the ideal detective story the reader is given all the clues yet fails to spot the criminal. He may advert to each clue as it arises. He needs no further clues to solve the mystery. Yet he can remain in the dark for the simple reason that reaching the solution is not the mere apprehension of any clue, not the mere memory of all, but a quite distinct activity of organizing intelligence that places the full set of clues in a unique explanatory perspective. What then is meant by the word 'insight'? "... not any act of attention or advertence or memory but the supervening act of understanding."⁸⁷

But note straight off that Lonergan offers some words of reassurance; insights are not esoteric, but commonplace, indeed quite familiar:

It is not any recondite intuition but the familiar event that occurs easily and frequently in the moderately intelligent, rarely and with difficulty only in the very stupid. In itself it is so simple and obvious that it seems to merit the little attention that commonly it receives.⁸⁸

But no matter how quotidian an insight might be, Lonergan stresses how important it is to grasp at the very start why an understanding of insight is so central to the entire philosophical project. Why? Because he is convinced that "to grasp it in its conditions, its working, and its results, is to confer a basic yet startling unity on the whole

field of human inquiry and human opinion.”⁸⁹ Indeed, he could not be more blunt: “to miss the point here is the most effective way of missing everything.”⁹⁰ The ‘point’ being an accurate understanding of the act and nature of insight and its function in the process of coming to know and decide. Lonergan goes on to maintain (and invites you to ascertain for yourself) that the central operation in transcendental method is the act of insight, and the process by which one arrives at insight, then, is the topic of this chapter.

First off. What does the act of insight grasp? “. . . neither an actually given datum of sense nor a creation of the imagination;” what it grasps is “an intelligible organization that may or may not be relevant to data.”⁹¹ In other words, “*Insights grasp forms immanent in sensible presentations* . . . (emphasis added)”⁹² The ‘immanent form,’ ‘the intelligible organization’, grasped in insight is then expressed in concepts.⁹³ When one grasps an intelligibility in insight, one expresses it, philosophers say, in an ‘inner word’ or a concept. When you put all the clues in the detective story together and suddenly grasp the identity of the murderer, you utter a silent inner word, “the butler!” Yet making concepts or uttering the inner word is not “an automatic process;” rather, says Lonergan (following Aquinas), it is “the term and product of a process of reasoning.”⁹⁴ Note carefully: as long as your reasoning process continues (seeking answers to questions, seeking the identity of the murderer), you cannot conceive a concept or utter an inner word. Your reasoning continues, because you do not as yet understand (the answers to your questions still elude your grasp). Until you reach the point where you can utter the inner word (the answer to your questions), you are not yet understanding, but are still thinking (questioning) in order to understand. If relevant details or clues are missing, one cannot understand the intelligible pattern that gives meaning to the cluster of clues. There are enough relevant details, for instance, still missing in Jon Benét Ramsey murder mystery which prevent a positive identification of her murderer. We never answer a question by staring at it and expecting “an ecstatic intuitive event.” Michael McCarthy states with great precision “the gradual discursive process” by which one solves a murder mystery or any other problem that requires a solution — whether a joke, a riddle, a scientific enigma:

The immediate antecedent of insight is the activity of thoughtful inquiry that frames the questions and shapes the schematic images to which insight responds. Insight momentarily breaks the tension of inquiry by discerning a possible solution to the problem or question in which the investigating subject is absorbed.

But for insight to happen something prior is required:

As investigative questioning and thinking are prior to understanding, so the data of experience are prior to the onset of questioning. It is the mark of active intelligence that it seeks to understand the content of its experience.

We do not of course immediately get the answers to difficult problems and so we ask specific relevant questions to help us grasp the solution we seek:

The operating presence of our native intelligence is manifest at every phase of this patterned procedure. Because we are intelligent, we seek to understand experience, anticipate the kind of understanding we may attain, frame particular questions in the light of that anticipation, and play with schematic models or images of potential relevance to the intelligibility that is sought.⁹⁵

McCarthy concludes that, “the shared activity of interrogative dialogue, first portrayed philosophically in the Socratic-Platonic philosophical dramas, provides a richer image of the cognitive context that any empiricist model of direct intuition.”⁹⁶

There nothing esoteric about the discursive process; it is so commonplace that you automatically go into the questioning mode, for instance, whenever anyone starts to tell you a joke: “Did you hear the one about . . . ?” An elderly couple driving across the great plains suddenly spot a couple of buffalo. They stop, get out of the car, and stare at the beasts. Husband says, “I don’t think I’ve ever seen such filthy, mangy animals in all my life.” Wife: “Yes, and they stink.” They hustle back into the car and drive off. One buffalo slowly swings his huge head towards the other and says, “I think we’ve just heard a discouraging word.” A good comic supplies just enough necessary and sufficient clues for one to get the joke. Here it helps, of course, to have some acquaintance with Western ballads like *Home on the Range*.

But once the insight comes when either getting a joke or the answer to any other question, Lonergan notes, “understanding and inner word are simultaneous, understanding being the ground and the cause of the inner word.”⁹⁷ Make no mistake: human understanding has its object in the phantasm or sensible presentation and knows it in the phantasm, pre-conceptually and pre-verbally. But you are not content to know it just in the phantasm; your human understanding “pivots on itself to produce for itself another object” which is an inner word or a concept.⁹⁸ But always remember, says Lonergan, that “this pivoting and production is no mere matter of some metaphysical sausage machine,” clattering away merrily, “at one end slicing species off phantasms, and at the other popping out concepts.” There is nothing automatic or mechanical about it at all, but it is rather “an operation of rational consciousness.”⁹⁹

It is indeed this ‘pivoting’ which keeps the circuit open between reality and thought. As McCarthy affirms, “direct insights, then, do not occur haphazardly or at random. They result from thinking through an exploratory question for intelligence that was prompted by antecedent perceptions, images, or memories.”¹⁰⁰ The result of the reasoning process is the concept, and the concept is the definition; and thus, says Lonergan, “the definition always rests on prior knowledge.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, he adds, “defining is the fruit of intelligence;” for the definition gives you “the *quid rei* [or the nature you wish to understand] and the *quid nominis* [or meaning of the word you wish to understand].”¹⁰² Through insight, you first penetrate to the inwardness of things, to their inner nature, and then you express it in a concept, a definition, an inner word.¹⁰³ This holds true for a joke, a who-done-it, or the insight by which Leo Szilard grasped the idea of a nuclear chain reaction that would make possible the harnessing of nuclear energy for practical purposes.

It follows, then, that the act by which the human mind understands --- and this is a most crucial point---is not an intuition. It is not a direct ‘perception of being,’ as Kant

and Gilson maintained. Rather, says McCarthy, “insight is a preconceptual event that consciously unifies and organizes the data of experience the subject is investigating.” Through insight, one “either grasps an *intelligible unity* within that data or grasps a pattern of *intelligible relations* among its various elements.”¹⁰⁴ This is the equivalent of McCarthy’s statement that insight “grasps in simplifying schematic images intelligible possibilities that may or may not prove relevant to an understanding of the data of experience.”¹⁰⁵

Consider the matter a bit more closely. Imagine the way soft wax is changed by the pressure of the seal and receives its impression. Just as the senses ‘receive’ sensation or sensible impressions from the sensible object and so are changed, in a similar way the thinking subject is also changed; for it ‘in some way receives’ the content of an insight from the sense data. It receives but not in exactly the same way as the senses receive, because human understanding is immaterial and cannot receive a properly material impression as the senses do. But it remains true that the reception is “in some way” akin to the material reception (or impression) in the senses. In other words, in coming-to-know, some kind of impression is received, for the act of insight or of understanding, prior to its conception in a concept or its utterance in an inner word, is a ‘reception’ in the thinking subject. And once received, the insight is grasped; you understand the insight you receive.¹⁰⁶ This throws light on what Aristotle meant when he asserted that the insight (the form or intelligible pattern) is embedded in what is sensed: “what is known by the intellect is a partial constituent of the realities first known by sense.”¹⁰⁷

At this point, whenever you “inquire, come to understand, express” what you have come to understand, your intentional consciousness is operating on Lonergan’s second or “intellectual level.”¹⁰⁸ The presence of the sense data on the first level is of course essential for any further activity on this second level; obviously “without the data there would be nothing for [you] to inquire about and nothing to be understood.”¹⁰⁹ In sum, “the data of sense provoke inquiry, inquiry leads to understanding, understanding expresses itself in language.”¹¹⁰

But the object you seek at the level of inquiry is, maintains Lonergan, “never just another datum.” Rather, to repeat, you seek an insight into phantasm or sensible presentation; you seek “the idea or form, the intelligible unity or relatedness, that organizes the data into intelligible wholes.”¹¹¹ You are at the level of conscious operation where you ask (with Aristotle): What is it? And why is it so? At the zoo you ask, for instance: What is that animal? Why is it a giraffe and not an elephant? Or in an orchard, What kind of fruit is this? Why is it a peach and not an apple? Briefly, it is here --- by such questioning at the second level of operation---that you enter the world of the nature of things, the world of meaning. Crowe puts it this way: “The content of insight is not a datum; it is an intelligibility;”¹¹² intelligibility is the meaning that makes a thing intelligible or understandable. It is what is specific about a giraffe that makes it a giraffe.

Insight into sensible presentation, Crowe adds, is “without words or language,...is prior to language,...[and] can endure though language changes.”¹¹³ It is worth remarking in passing that Augustine had also understood the basic fact that insight is pre-conceptual and pre-verbal. Augustine was aware of an inner word in the mind and an outer spoken word. He was accustomed to say, as Crowe reminds us, that the interior word “is neither Greek nor Latin, nor any other language.”¹¹⁴ One must, said Augustine with great precision, “get hold of [the inner] word..not only before it is sounded, but even before the

images of its sounds are revolved in fantasy [cogitatione].”¹¹⁵ What Augustine had hit upon was the all important awareness that the ‘real’ need not be a ‘body.’¹¹⁶ The immaterial or spiritual character of one’s grasp of the ‘real’ is “prior to the inner word [by which one formulates the insight] and much more prior to the spoken word.”¹¹⁷ And that is why for Lonergan “it is essential that the notion of insight...not only should be grasped clearly and distinctly but also, in so far as possible, should be identified in one’s own personal intellectual experience.”¹¹⁸

Indeed, if one understands Lonergan’s explanation of the nature of insight and its place in the process of understanding, it becomes clear how it differs from the standard lack of any satisfactory explanation of understanding about which Lonergan complained when he first studied Scholastic philosophy. Lonergan writes: “...if you look up the type of Latin scholastic manual that was still current between 1926 and 1929, ...you’ll find an account of intellect that doesn’t at any stage have anything to say about understanding anything.” What the manuals do say is that “you form concepts, and they’re little nuggets.” The authors of the texts display no awareness of the notion of insight; for them concepts are simply “functions of the thing; they’re not dependent upon any intelligently conscious process; they’re first; the first element of intellectual knowledge is the concept.”¹¹⁹

It also becomes clear why Lonergan parts company with Hume and with all the empiricists and positivists who follow Hume in explaining the essence of understanding; for them understanding is just taking a look at the flow of sensitive data in consciousness, while for Lonergan it is insight into sensible data. Indeed, it is precisely the act of insight, says Michael McCarthy, that “both empiricists and linguistic behaviorists tend to overlook .”¹²⁰ To repeat, coming-to-know is more than merely taking a look; it involves insight into what you are looking at.

At this point in your journey of discovery, therefore, you wish to understand understanding, to know the meaning of ‘knowing’ or, more precisely, of ‘coming-to-know.’ Lonergan invites you to attend once more to your own experience. You cannot escape or ignore the fact, he says, that you experience “sensations, percepts, and images” either when you are awake or indeed in dreams when you are asleep. True, you can exert some control over what you sense, perceive, or imagine; but what escapes your control is the ability “to sense nothing, perceive nothing, imagine nothing.”¹²¹

But reflect, says Lonergan, a bit more. While you cannot escape sensations, neither can you rest content with them. All science and philosophy, as Aristotle said, begins with a sense of wonder.¹²² The poet Charles Simic tells us that as a young man he used to read philosophy throughout the night, all absorbed in wonder:

I would be struggling with some intricate epistemological argument which promised a magnificent insight at its conclusion. I could smell it, so to speak. I couldn’t put the book away, and it was getting very late. I had to be at work in the morning. Even had I tried to sleep my head would have been full of Immanuel Kant.

At six a.m. on the Chicago El on his way to work one morning when he was twenty, he reports that “it happened” — a moment of profound philosophic enlightenment, rare perhaps for one so young:

The train was overheated, but each time the door opened at one of the elevated platforms, a blast of cold air would send shivers through us. The lights, too, kept flickering. As the train changed tracks, the lights would go out and I would stop reading the history of philosophy I had borrowed the previous day from the library. “Why is there something rather than nothing?” the book asked, quoting Parmenides. It was as if my eyes were opened. I could not stop looking at my fellow passengers. How incredible, I thought, being here, existing.¹²³

The wonder of the your mind is as natural and spontaneous as the hunger of your body for food. Spontaneously, says Lonergan, you fall victim to wonder;¹²⁴ indeed find yourself all lost in wonder. Spontaneously you want to understand. Spontaneously you enter a state of mind where you start asking questions --- questions that will lead to your coming to understand something.¹²⁵ As so you ask when you meet something new, What is this thing? And why precisely is it what it is and not something else?

Pay close attention, moreover, to the fact that at the first level of conscious operation, the eye and the other senses operate without intermediary on sensible objects; your senses are in direct physical contact with what they sense. The immediate operation of the senses is quite simple: you open your eyes and you take a look; you sniff the air and you smell, you reach out and touch. Understanding, on the other hand, has a lot of work to do; you must work your way to understanding through the medium of imagination, memory and questioning; thus, says Brian Cronin, “understanding is mediated by questioning, selecting relevant data, organizing suggestive images, constructing helpful diagrams.” The mediated operation of understanding is not as simple as sensing, but involves “a complex series of interrelated activities.” Indeed, Cronin repeats what McCarthy already emphasized: “human intelligence is discursive, it is a conversation with oneself; it is a jumble of activities.” Indeed, we know from experience that “we rarely go directly to the correct solution; more often we take many by-ways, make many mistakes, get distracted, come back to it again.”¹²⁶

Suppose for a moment, Lonergan suggests, that like Descartes you question everything. You might question everything else, but you cannot question your ability to question. For, argues Lonergan, “to question questioning is self-destructive.” Why so? Well, you could conceivably come up with a plan to “escape intelligence.” But paradoxically in the very effort to avoid intelligence you would have to plan intelligently and make every effort to convince others that “escaping intelligence was the intelligent thing to do.”¹²⁷ Arguing in this way you would find yourself acting intelligently; indeed you would pin yourself to the mat by your own line of reasoning.

To sum up, you in company with Lonergan and Archimedes wish “to know how to do something;” that is, you all three wish “to solve a problem,...to understand.” Your consciousness operates here at a second level above the level of sensory experience “where it seeks the intelligible and follows up partial insights with further questions until there comes the final crowning insight that ends questioning and satisfies intelligent consciousness.”¹²⁸ At this second level of consciousness, then, you are involved in detective work.

Let us pause here for a moment with Lonergan to generalize:

In every empirical inquiry there are knowns and unknowns. But the knowns are apprehended whether or not one understands; they are the data of sense. The unknowns, on the other hand are what one will grasp by insight and formulate in conceptions and suppositions.

Let us next, says Lonergan, “bestow a name upon the unknown . . . [or] rather, lest us advert to the fact that already it has been named” He explains:

For what is to be known by understanding these data is called their *nature*. Just as in algebra the unknown number is x , until one finds out what the number is, so too in empirical inquiry, the unknown to be reached by insight is named ‘the nature of ...’

Lonergan gives an instance:

Once Galileo discovered his law, he knew that the nature of a free fall was a constant acceleration. But before he discovered the law, from the mere fact that he inquired, he knew that a free fall possessed a nature, though he did not know what that nature was.”¹²⁹

The second level of your intentional consciousness is therefore the level of understanding. It is the level of intelligence. The awareness immanent in the act of understanding, says Lonergan, is “the awareness of intelligence, of what strives to understand, of what is satisfied by understanding, of what formulates the understood, not as a schoolboy repeating by rote a definition, but one that defines because [you grasp] why that definition hits things off.”¹³⁰ One has reached a point where it is perhaps clear why Lonergan can make the claim: “to grasp [insight] in its conditions, its working, and its results is to confer a basic yet startling unity on the whole field of human inquiry.”¹³¹ In the end, Lonergan is clear and blunt: understanding is “the act which, if frequent, gains a man a reputation for intelligence and, if rare, gains him a reputation for stupidity.”¹³²

Self-Knowledge: At the Level of Understanding Let’s go through this second level of operation again, this time in slow motion. “When [the subject] starts to wonder about something, to ask some questions,” says Lonergan, “he is moving up [from the level of sensing] to *intellectual consciousness*, to inquiry.” Wonder is an identifiable moment, as Charles Simic testified, on one’s way to understanding. Deep-set wonder is not just ‘pure wonder.’ You don’t just wonder; you wonder about something.¹³³ Wonder is the desire to understand something. Wonder is but another word for ‘intelligent inquiry’:¹³⁴

Wonder is the root of all questions. It is not itself the question formulated in words; it is not the questions formulated in concepts in the mind; it is just the effort itself, without any formulation. We are concerned here just with the effort to understand.¹³⁵

And were you to ask yourself at this moment “Who am I?”, the answer would be simply

“I am a wonderer wondering about a puzzle.”¹³⁶ I am conscious that I am wondering and I advert to the fact that I am conscious that I am wondering.

And so, says Lonergan, seek self-knowledge at the level of understanding: advert to your activity at the second level of inquiring and understanding. In fact, however, it is not an easy step to take. Lonergan is quick to admit that the various levels of cognitional activity are not “equally accessible.” At the first level, it is simple: you can immediately experience seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, and identify them without much difficulty. But at the second level it is more complicated: you must also advert to your experience of inquiry, of insights, of thoughts, and of reflective understanding; and that, he warns, will not be so simple or easy. Adverting to the activity of understanding is indeed quite different from adverting to seeing. But Lonergan gives a helpful clue: in the same way that “experience of seeing is to be had only when one actually is seeing, experience of insight is to be had only when one actually is having an insight.”¹³⁷ You must catch the insight in the act or in its ‘reenacting’. As he takes pains to explain, there is a significant difference between insight and the act of seeing:

You cannot have an act of understanding and insight just when you please, by blinking your eyes. To have the experience of an act of understanding, of an insight, *you have to be learning something you did not know before. Or you have to be reenacting in yourself a previous process of learning* (emphasis added).¹³⁸

Once again Lonergan invites you to advert to how you are present to yourself at the level of understanding. At the intellectual level, you make the effort to understand what you have experienced. You inquire, come to understand, express what you have understood, and work out for yourself the presuppositions and implications of your expression.¹³⁹ At this level, you experience inquiry, insight, formulation of the insight, and critical reflection on it.¹⁴⁰ At this level, you conceive, think, consider, define, suppose, formulate.¹⁴¹ Virginia Woolf once spoke of a more sweeping project — the art of self-portraiture — as being “a matter of profound, mysterious, and overwhelming difficulty.”¹⁴² But her comments, I think, are also relevant to the exploration of interiority. Montaigne, she reminds us, remarked that “‘it’s a rugged road, more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions;” the effort to explore the inner workings of the mind he pronounced to be “a new and extraordinary undertaking.”¹⁴³ Virginia Woolf knew firsthand the difficulty of expression. All of us all the time occupy ourselves with thinking, she wrote, but when the moment comes to put thought on paper she expressed astonishment at “how little are we able to convey”. Her image is striking: “The phantom is through the mind and out of the window before we can lay salt on its tail, or slowly sinking and returning to the profound darkness which it has lit up momentarily with a wandering light.”¹⁴⁴ In this matter of exploring the realm of interiority, Lonergan is perhaps a modern Montaigne, striving to salt the tail of insight.

It is here precisely that you come upon a key element in Lonergan’s understanding of understanding. To reach the level of insight, one’s imagination must first play its important role in the process. Lonergan explains:

To have an insight, you have to have an image. The sensible data are so complex, so multiform, that you simplify in imagination. You get a schematic image, and you get hold of something and you compare your schematic image with your data.¹⁴⁵

Jacques Hadamard, for instance, in an interview with Albert Einstein stated: “It would be very helpful for the purpose of psychological investigation to know what internal or mental images, what kind of “internal word” mathematicians make use of: whether they are motor, auditory, visual, or mixed...” Einstein replied: “The words or the language...do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and *more or less clear images* which can be “voluntarily” reproduced and combined The above mentioned elements are, in my case, of visual or some of muscular type” (emphasis added).¹⁴⁶ By muscular, Einstein apparently means kinesthetic images.

Once you wonder, you try to understand, get insights, move on to thoughts, and find ways to express your understanding. Lonergan repeats: the move is unavoidable:

Nor can one be content merely with experiencing. One can claim that one is not an intellectual. One can argue that it is a ‘bad thing’ to be an intellectual. One can say that people that are smart do not get very far; they may be bright in school but what happens to them later on is very sad...

But here Lonergan introduces a shrewd observation: “But when one is saying all this, one does not mean that one is stupid. One may be willing to play the buffoon, but one wants to do it intelligently.” He then paraphrases the point he made earlier:

One cannot renounce one’s intelligence, and the greater the effort one makes to do so, the more one betrays that one is by nature intelligent. One cannot get around the fact that one has intelligence, and that these questions keep popping up all the time.¹⁴⁷

Three Examples of Insight While it is true, writes Lonergan, that “we use our understanding all the time” and that “insights are...a dime a dozen, most of them habitual,” there is a problem “We do not notice them and so they are not useful for identifying in oneself the experience of an act of understanding.” Why don’t we notice insights? Actually “the thing is so obvious to you that you cannot quite make out what a person who asks you to identify an insight is talking about.” It follows that “the best instances of insight, too, are not commonsense understanding, because it is very, very difficult to define accurately what the insight in question is.” No, in Lonergan’s judgment, “the best examples are from the sciences, from mathematics, and particularly from geometry, where you have a very clear cut diagram.”¹⁴⁸

So test yourself. Try to catch yourself in the act. Jokes and puzzles help. You can *understand* introspectively, that is, advert to the experience of insight, says Lonergan, “when you provoke insights by puzzles, experiments, and so forth, and watch for the

experience of the insight under the conditions you have set yourself.”¹⁴⁹

Indeed, you have an insight whenever you get the point of a joke. You also get an insight whenever you suddenly come up with the right word in a crossword puzzle. Or when you understand any puzzle, for that matter.

And so, consider Puzzle One:

*A bear walked one mile due south, one mile due east, and one mile due north to return to his starting point. What color is the bear?*¹⁵⁰

Try to answer the puzzle before looking on.

If you have trouble getting the answer, ask yourself what images are you using. Consider a couple of clues:

Clue One: your initial insight, hunch, guess, hypothesis may be based on the points of the compass and the image of a square. But the insight doesn't fit the data; it doesn't check out: if the bear were walking along three sides of a square, it could not return to its starting point, but would end up one mile due east. You pivot between the data and your image and you realize that the image of a square does not fit the data.

Clue Two: the insight doesn't fit because you probably imagine that the bear is traveling on a flat surface, whereas in reality it is traveling on the earth's surface and, therefore, on a curved surface.

Clue Three: there is only one place on the earth's surface where a bear can travel as described and end up at its starting point. Where would that be?¹⁵¹

Answer: Once you see in imagination not a square on a flat surface, but a triangle on the curved surface of a globe, you get the right schematic image, understand the puzzle, and can reach the correct judgment. The bear could be only at the north pole. What kind of bear would be at the north pole? A polar bear. What color would the bear be? Your answer will be a judgment. Obviously, a white bear. But more about judgments later.

This example illustrates what Lonergan says about an insight. Any insight you have is not an intuition of reality. It is not knowledge of what really is so. Of itself, your insight is merely the grasp of what may be relevant to what you are imaging. Indeed, if your imaging is sufficiently accurate, it may be relevant to an understanding of what is so. It is only when you shift from imagining a bear trudging along a curved and not a flat surface that your imaging is accurate enough to give you the solution to the puzzle.¹⁵² In other words, says Lonergan, your intellect does not intuit essences; rather, “it grasps in simplifying images intelligible possibilities that may prove relevant to an understanding of the data.”¹⁵³ You grasp the meaning of the puzzle. The meaning is not immediate, but mediated by means of the insight. That means you move from the world of immediacy to the world of mediated meaning. Lonergan's conclusion is that coming-to-know involves “a gradual accumulation of insights that complement, qualify, correct one another.”¹⁵⁴

* * * * *

Consider Puzzle Two:

Visualize two old fashioned vinyl phonograph records, one a 12 inch record and the other an LP (long playing) 16 inch record. How many more grooves does the LP record have than the 12 inch record?

Again, try to answer the puzzle before moving on.

Clue One. If you are having trouble coming up with a precise answer, it may be that your schematic image is incorrect. You may picture in your mind a record with a radius extending from its center to the outer edge and try to guess how many grooves cross the radius; obviously more for the LP than for the 12 inch record. Your answer would be only a guess, and a wrong one at that. But a precise answer is possible. What is it?

Clue Two: forget the radius and focus on the needle of the phonograph player as it travels in the groove of the LP and then of the 12 inch record as each spins on the turntable. What would your schematic image be now? How many more grooves does the LP have than the 12 inch?

Answer: Each record has only one spiral groove, and so the LP has no more grooves than the 12 inch record.

* * * * *

Consider Puzzle Three (which appeared in *Parade Magazine*, November 28, 1999):

The larger square in the illustration below has an area of 10 square inches. What's the area of the smaller square?

Hint: You can discover the answer using only insight and no math at all.

Answer: By mentally rotating the inner square inside the circle, we can see that it occupies exactly half of each of the four parts that make up the entire outer square.

In the bear puzzle, once you see the schematic image of a triangle on the curved surface of the earth, you understand that the bear *must* be at the north pole. In the record puzzle, once you see the schematic image of a spiral groove, you understand that there *must* be only one groove. In the geometry puzzle, once you rotate the inner square in the circle, you understand that

it *must* occupy exactly one half the space of the outer square. You cannot see or imagine a *must*, says Lonergan; a *must* comes only with understanding. You can only “understand that it *must*, and this understanding with respect to diagrams, with respect to images,” he says, “is insight.”¹⁵⁵

Our topic here is the level of intellectual consciousness — the levels at which we are trying to understand, catch on, get the point, grasp the meaning, find the solution. Lonergan reminds us that St. Thomas says that “whenever we try to understand anything, we form images, in which, as it were, we see the solution to the problem.” St. Thomas is talking about insight. Lonergan offers this explanation of insight:

Beyond the level of sense --- colors, sounds, odors, tastes, feelings --- and beyond the level of imagination, there is this *must* and *can be* and *cannot be* that we grasp. Getting hold of that is the insight. It is that event that is our primary object of attention [when we advert to the intellectual level of conscious activity].¹⁵⁶

And so, these three puzzles have been offered as simple examples to provoke insights with the help of schematic images and as occasions to watch for your own experience of insight. They help to advert to the process by which your mind comes to understanding when it understands. Lonergan gives a concise summary in *Insight* when he states that insight:

- comes as a release to the tension of inquiry ,
- comes suddenly and unexpectedly
- [Aha! I’ve got it!],
- is a function, not of outer circumstances, but of inner conditions ,
- [internal conditions are paramount:
- native endowment and so...insight is the act that occurs frequently in the intelligent and rarely in the stupid
- a perpetual alertness ever asking the little question ‘Why?’
- the accurate presentation of definite problems {the carefully honed wording of the joke and the precise details of the puzzles}],
- pivots between the concrete and the abstract
- [...insight is the mediator, the hinge, the pivot. It is insight *into* the concrete world of sense and imagination. Yet what is known by insight...finds its adequate expression only in the abstract and recondite formulations of the sciences.], and
- passes into the habitual texture of one’s mind.”

[Before Archimedes could solve his problem, he needed an instant of inspiration. But he needed no further inspiration when he went to offer the king his solution.

Once one has understood, one has crossed a divide. What a moment ago was an insoluble problem, now becomes incredibly simple and obvious. Moreover, it tends to remain simple and obvious.]¹⁵⁷

At this level, the intellectual level, the subject is, Lonergan concludes, “the intelligent author of his acts of inquiry, of his insights, and of his thoughts.”¹⁵⁸

And again, if you ask yourself at this point “Who am I?”, the answer comes: “At the second level of conscious activity I am an understand-er grasping the point. I am aware that I am an understand-er grasping the insight. I am adverting to the fact that I am an understand-er grasping the meaning.”¹⁵⁹

The Third Level of Consciousness Just as you can never rest content, says Lonergan, “with the cinematographic flow of presentations and representations” in the world of Hume, so you can never remain “content with inquiry, understanding, and formulation” of what you have come to know and jump to a conclusion.¹⁶⁰ You may protest, Lonergan suggests, that you are interested not ‘in the quarry but in the chase.’ You will still, he insists, restrict the chase to “fields where the quarry lies.”¹⁶¹ For if your aim is above all to arrive at understanding, you will want to get the facts straight.

Charles Simic writes that Descartes was (like the rest of us) “greedy for the absolute” and quotes from the *Meditations*:

The Meditation of yesterday filled my mind with so many doubts that it is no longer in my power to forget them. And yet, I do not see in what manner I can resolve them; and, just as if I had all of a sudden fallen into very deep water, I am so disconcerted that I can neither make certain of setting my feet on the bottom, nor can I swim and so support myself on the surface. I shall nevertheless make an effort and follow anew the same path as that on which I yesterday entered, i.e., I shall proceed by setting aside all that in which the least doubt could be supposed to exist, just as if I had discovered that it was absolutely false; and I shall ever follow in this road until I have met with something which is certain, or at least, if I can do nothing else, until I have learned for certain that there’s nothing in the world that is certain. Archimedes, in order that he might draw the terrestrial globe out of its place, and transport it elsewhere, demanded only that one point should be fixed and immovable; in the same way I shall have the right to conceive high hopes if I am happy enough to discover one thing only which is certain and indubitable¹⁶²

To continue. As Lonergan remarked earlier, insights are a dime a dozen. You succeed in coming up with an insight, but the question immediately arises: is it true or false? You must move on. You must make a judgment or correct, if necessary, a hasty judgment.¹⁶³ Indeed, verification of insight is necessary, because the sudden illumination, no matter how certain it may seem, may or not be true; it may be simply a figment of your imagination. You will have check its accuracy and verification will take place at a third level of operation.¹⁶⁴

So what is your next move? At the second level of consciousness, says Lonergan,

there are *direct insights*; at the third, there are *reflective insights*. The second yields definitions; the third yields judgments. Michael McCarthy explains the role the two kinds of insight play in cognition: “direct insights are the pivotal operations on the second level of cognitive process; reflective insights play a similar critical role on the third level of rational consciousness.”¹⁶⁵ Direct insights are the cause of and find expression in mental formulations that have been variously called inner words, propositions, concepts, “formal terms of meaning,” or “logical truth-vehicles;” they are simply the “provisional answers” you come up with in response to the questions you ask about the data of your consciousness.¹⁶⁶ Direct insights are the “conceptual formulations” which, says McCarthy, “express the intelligible content grasped by insight.”¹⁶⁷ In the end, direct insights find expression in definitions. Such expressions, however, are but a tentative effort to express meaning. You want to understand, but in addition you want to make sure that what you understand is correct. Indeed that what you assert is actually a fact and not merely some bright idea you dreamed up---some figment of your imagination. And so, whenever you achieve understanding, your next step will be to check it out. You will ask: Is it so? Is it a fact? Did I get it right? Is it an oasis or simply a mirage? A unicorn or merely a flight of fancy. Is it a real diamond or just a fake. Such reflective thinking seeks what Lonergan calls reflective insight. You achieve reflective insight, says McCarthy, when you ascertain that “the truth conditions” of your tentative formulation “are satisfied by an appropriate array of evidence.”¹⁶⁸ Reflective inquiry, McCarthy goes on to state, “is a pivotal return from the abstract propositional synthesis produced by developing insight to its concrete sources in sense and direct intelligence , a rational pivot from the abstract logical order back toward concrete experience.”¹⁶⁹ Here it is all important to stress that reflective thinking is not just a matter of logical inquiry, but also of experiential evidence.¹⁷⁰ What you are to do at this point, says Lonergan, is to interrupt the process toward understanding by submitting your initial understanding of the data to the check of judgment: Is it so? Is there evidence to verify your assessment?

Thus, in the bear puzzle, your first direct insight may have been the schematic image of a bear traveling along the perimeter of a square each side of which is one mile long. If so, you realize at once, the bear will never end up where it started. At this point you may realize that you had assumed the bear was traveling on a flat surface, whereas in reality it would be traveling on the curved surface of the earth. If so, your next direct insight might be the schematic image of a triangle; in which case the bear would travel along the perimeter of an equilateral triangle. And if so, the only location that makes sense of the clues is at the north pole. In the bear puzzle, you must do some reasoning because you are asked to identify the bear’s color which depends upon the species of the bear. You must first determine the kind of bear.

Indeed, the inbuilt drive to understanding must submit to the bridle of judgement, for as Lonergan says in a telling image “intelligence may be a thoroughbred exulting in the race; but there is a rider on its back; and, without the rider, the best of horses is a poor bet.”¹⁷¹ In the end, reflective insights find expression in correct judgments. Plus the assurance that the formulation --- the definition --- you derived from direct insight is correct.¹⁷²

What is Lonergan insisting on here? In addition to being intelligent you must be rational. And what does Lonergan mean by “rationality”? Frederick Crowe tells us that Lonergan from his study of Augustine and Aquinas “discovered in understanding a

power that at every stage of the process was aware of itself, its own dynamism, and its own fertile procedures.” Rationality is a power that unfolds in two steps: “the direct understanding of ‘insight into phantasms’ producing meaningful concepts, and the reflective understanding of Newman’s illative sense grounding concrete judgements.”¹⁷³ Lonergan himself asserted that “my account of reflective understanding is, in different terms, but roughly equivalent to, what Newman calls the illative sense.”¹⁷⁴ You are rational insofar as you are capable of reflective insight, of making correct judgments. Indeed, by such correct judgments, you move one level further from the world of immediacy into the world of meaning.

Let’s pause at this point and take a closer look at *the critical problem* that has bedeviled modern philosophy from its unfolding. Philosophers from Hume and Kant to the postmodernists have, in Lonergan’s judgment, labored under a monumental misconception: they mistake a cognitional myth for a cognitional fact. Lonergan deals with the problem head on. It is of supreme importance, he insists, to differentiate between myth and fact. What is required, says Lonergan, is a proper understanding of cognitional fact so as to distinguish it from myth. And herein lies the practicality of Lonergan’s cognitional theory. Understand cognitional fact and you will immediately be able to distinguish it from what Lonergan calls cognitional myth. What, then, is cognitional fact and how does it differ from cognitional myth?

First, cognitional fact. Lonergan frames the question this way: “What is that clear, precise, definitive, irrevocable, dominant something that we name fact?” By fact Lonergan means that which is concrete, intelligible, and virtually unconditioned:

- Clearly . . . fact is concrete as is sense or consciousness.
- Again, fact is intelligible: if it is independent of all doubtful theory, it is not independent of the modest insight and formulation necessary to give it its precision and its accuracy.
- Finally, fact is virtually unconditioned:
 - it might not have been;
 - it might have been other than it is;
 - but as things stand, it possesses conditional necessity, and nothing can possibly alter it now.¹⁷⁵

But what is ‘conditional necessity’? Something possesses conditional necessity if it is, in Lonergan’s terminology ‘virtually unconditioned’. From his analysis of the intentionality of the thinking subject, Lonergan states that “judgment proceeds rationally from a grasp of the virtually unconditioned.” And what precisely does Lonergan mean by “the virtually unconditioned”? The virtually unconditioned is “any *x* that has no unfulfilled conditions.” This amounts to saying that it is “a conditioned whose conditions are fulfilled.” You must first “marshal the evidence...to ascertain whether all the conditions are fulfilled.” You must then “weigh the evidence...to ascertain whether the fulfillment of the conditions certainly or probably involves the existence or occurrence of the conditioned.”¹⁷⁶

And so when is a thing virtually unconditioned? Something is virtually unconditioned explains Michael McCarthy (echoing Lonergan) “if it has antecedent conditions and those conditions are in fact fulfilled.”¹⁷⁷ To avoid misunderstanding, it should be noted straight off that the word ‘virtually’ in the phrase ‘virtually unconditioned judgment’ does not mean what it means in ordinary usage: ‘almost’ or ‘very nearly’ or ‘all but’ or ‘just about’ conditioned. Rather, ‘virtually’ in Lonergan’s use of the word means that the judgment is unconditioned ‘in virtue of the fact that’ there is sufficient evidence for making the judgment. Once you are satisfied that there is sufficient evidence, the judgment is ‘actually unconditioned’ or ‘in fact unconditioned’ or, simply, ‘verified’. In sum, something is virtually unconditioned when all the conditions are fulfilled.¹⁷⁸

The virtually unconditioned, for Lonergan, is therefore whatever “is grasped by reflective understanding and posited in judgment.” The virtually unconditioned has conditions, but the conditions happen to be fulfilled.¹⁷⁹ You must ask all the relevant questions and grasp all the evidence required for affirming a virtually unconditioned. If all the conditions are satisfied or put it this way, if all the “ifs” are satisfied, you may safely affirm the existence of the virtually unconditioned. Indeed, it follows that, whenever all the conditions are fulfilled, the virtually unconditioned is “*de facto* absolute.” In other words, the content of a virtually unconditioned judgment is absolute and does not depend upon its relation to the person who utters the judgment.

All this abstract talk clamors for concrete instances. Take the following example which Lonergan suggests:

Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon was a contingent event occurring at a particular place and time. But a true affirmation of that event is an eternal, immutable, definitive validity. For if it is true that he did cross, then no one whatever at any place or time can truly deny that he did.¹⁸⁰

To repeat, what elements in combination constitute a cognitional fact? For Lonergan there are three:

- ...the concreteness of experience,
- the determinateness of accurate intelligence [i.e., understanding],
- and the absoluteness of rational judgment.”¹⁸¹

Dying of thirst in the Sahara you wonder whether the oasis you see in the distance is for real or just a mirage. You keep pushing on step after step and the palm trees materialize as you approach and you are soon slaking your thirst. Lucky for you, the oasis turns out to be a virtual unconditioned.

Again let us take stock and review the process one more time. Direct insights lead to a prospective judgment that remains conditional; it is still to be verified by reflective insights. There is a link between the conditioned judgment and its conditions. There is the fulfillment of the conditions. There then results the virtually unconditioned judgment. Fact, says Lonergan, “is the anticipated unity to which sensation, perception, imagination, inquiry, insight, formulation, reflection, grasp of the unconditioned, and judgment make

their several, complementary contributions.” Cognitive fact is “the natural objective of human cognitive process.”¹⁸²

In addition, the general form of reflective insight which leads to an affirmation or a denial of what is simply true or false applies both to the practical and to the theoretical. Reflective understanding can lead to concrete judgments of fact, commonsense judgments, scientific judgments, and (as we shall see) judgments reached by statistical method. Depending upon the nature of the sufficient evidence, moreover, the resulting judgment can be certain, highly probable, probable, or merely possible. There indeed are a variety of judgments.

Concrete Judgments of Fact In concrete judgments of fact, as we have just seen, the evidence is given in the data of consciousness. Verification consists in pivoting between the data and the hypothetical judgment until the evidence becomes clear. By this process, you get beyond the realm of the mere imaginary to the realm of fact. By advancing across the desert, you determine that the oasis is a mirage and not real at all. By scrutinizing the symptoms, the doctor determines whether the patient is really sick or just faking it. By close observation of the data, you figure out that the ceiling is actually flat even though by a clever *trompe d’oeil* the artist creates the illusion of a dome. With the help of powerful telescopes, astronomers ascertained that the position of the star during the solar eclipse turned out to be where Einstein’s theory of relativity predicted it would be and not where it should have been on the basis of Newton’s calculations.¹⁸³

Commonsense Judgments While we have been focusing here on the understanding that occurs in science, mathematics, philosophy, and whodunits, Lonergan also wrote of common sense knowledge as being intelligent and rational. Common sense knowledge leading to common sense action, says Lonergan, is “intelligent and...involves insights.” One finds common sense among all sorts of ordinary people in all kinds of human activities. Its source is “the same intellectual alertness and intellectual curiosity” that one finds in great thinkers whether scientists or philosophers or detectives. People simply “want to know *why*” in every area of life.¹⁸⁴ Thus common sense understanding involves “a flow of questions” which results in “a clustering of insights.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, explains Lonergan, “people catch on to one thing and then another, building up habitual clusters of insights into the problems of their concrete living.” Children, he says, have “to have insights to learn to talk, to use language.” But, he adds, “the cluster is not aimed at arriving at universal definitions and universal propositions that will bear the weight of systematic and rigorous deduction.” Rather, common sense seeks “concrete insight into concrete situations”¹⁸⁶ and so the cluster aims “at guiding concrete action.”¹⁸⁷ Lonergan’s conclusion? Common sense “consists of a basic nucleus of insights that enables a person to deal successfully with personal and material situations of the sort that arise in his ordinary living...”¹⁸⁸

Common sense, as noted earlier in chapter one, is egocentric, intellectual, widespread, and practical. It deals with your relationship to things and other people. You use your head to deal with material things and to maintain successful interaction with other people in the give and take of daily living. Your use of common sense, he says, is spontaneous:

One notices, admires, tries to imitate, fails perhaps, watches or listens again, tries again and again till practice makes perfect. The result is an accumulation of insights that enables one both to deal successfully with recurrent situations and, as well, to notice what is novel in a new situation and to proceed to deal tentatively with that.¹⁸⁹

The least common denominator in common sense thinking, says Lonergan, is precisely this characteristic, self-correcting, trial and error, process of learning:

Experience gives rise to inquiry and insight. Insight gives rise to speech and action. Speech and action sooner or later reveal their defects to give rise to further inquiry and fuller insight.¹⁹⁰

By such a process, you seek practical solutions to the problems you face, you look for the link between the evidence and the conclusion, you are determined to be reasonable in making things you need or in dealing with others in all the practical affairs of human living. A statesman like Abraham Lincoln was a master of common sense political judgments during the Civil War, for the correctness of his judgments was verified by the preservation of the United States as one nation indivisible.¹⁹¹ A superb general like Napoleon Bonaparte was a master of common sense military judgments where, for instance, the correctness of his tactical decisions was verified by his smashing victory on the battlefield at Austerlitz.¹⁹²

Scientific Judgments Commonsense judgments deal with things or persons insofar as they are related to you. Scientific judgments deal with things insofar as they are related among themselves. Commonsense seeks specific concrete judgments in solving particular problems, in particular times and places. Scientists seek correct understanding and judgments about how the entire physical universe operates.¹⁹³ Galileo was interested in verifying his hunch that “all bodies fall with certain accelerating speeds” in order to affirm his “law of falling bodies.” Joseph Flanagan explains that “. . . scientists like Galileo, Newton, and Einstein are not interested in mediating concrete, particular, descriptive relations; their interest lies in correctly mediating the explanatory relations that ground and explain why things behave and are seen and heard in the way they are.”¹⁹⁴ Why and how does the apple fall from the tree.

In the pre-modern age before the advent of science, as we saw earlier, the assumption was that one used the speculative intellect to work one’s way towards a grasping self-evident and necessary truths. In fact, says Lonergan, what one grasps in the data of consciousness and comes-to-know in concepts is not self-evident and necessary truth, but only a possible explanation of the data which may or not be relevant. Moreover, one does not arrive at a correct answer to a question at the first crack. From mistaken hypotheses, one moves to better theories and better methods. One corrects errors in hypotheses and in methods as one proceeds. At this point, the hypothesis is indeed “intrinsically hypothetical” and clamors to be checked and verified “before it can be asserted as *de facto* relevant to the data at hand.”¹⁹⁵

Brewster Ghiselin in a landmark book about creative process has marshaled the evidence that new knowledge is not the result of taking a look. Creative geniuses in art,

literature, and science report the often drawn out process by which they came to grasp the meaning they express in their paintings, writings, and scientific breakthroughs.¹⁹⁶

An Example of Insight and Its Verification: the Testimony of Henri Poincaré The great mathematical genius Henri Poincaré, for instance, describes with fascinating precision the process by which he came to grasp the nature of what he called Fuchsian functions. One does not have to be a mathematician, Poincaré insisted, to understand the process.¹⁹⁷ In an essay on mathematical creation, he narrates the sequence of events. First, hard concentrated study:

For fifteen days I strove to prove that there could not be any functions like those I have since called Fuchsian functions . . . every day I seated myself at my work table, stayed an hour or two, tried a great number of combinations and reached no results. One evening, contrary to my custom, I drank black coffee and could not sleep. Ideas rose in crowds; I felt them collide until pairs interlocked, so to speak, making a stable combination. By the next morning I had established the existence of a class of Fuchsian functions

Then, an unexpected insight:

Just at this time I left Caen Having reached Coutances, we entered an omnibus...At the moment when I put my foot on the step the idea came to me, without anything in my former thoughts seeming to have paved the way for it, that the transformations I had used to define the Fuchsian functions were identical with those of non-Euclidean geometry

Next, the direct insight needed the reflective insight that led to verification:

I did not verify the idea; I should not have had time, as, upon taking my seat in the omnibus, I went on with a conversation already commenced, but I felt a perfect certainty. On my return to Caen, for conscience's sake I verified the result at my leisure.

More hard study followed:

Then I turned my attention to the study of some arithmetical questions apparently without much success and without a suspicion of any connection with my preceding researches. Disgusted with my failure, I went to spend a few days at the seaside, and thought of something else.

Then, another “Aha” experience:

One morning, walking on the bluff, the idea came to me, with just the same characteristics of brevity, suddenness and immediate certainty, that the arithmetic transformations of indeterminate ternary quadratic forms are

identical with those of non-Euclidean geometry

At this point, Poincaré found himself stumped by one final difficulty. He made a sustained conscious effort to solve the difficulty without success. All this effort, he adds, was “perfectly conscious.”

Then, a final illumination:

Thereupon I left for Mont-Valérien, where I was to go through my military service; so I was very differently occupied. One day, going along the street, the solution of the difficulty...suddenly appeared to me.¹⁹⁸

Poincaré went on to list the stages in the process that is typical of the work of mathematicians.” First, the insight or “sudden illumination” is “a manifest sign of long, unconscious prior work.” But the unconscious work prior to the insight is “possible, and...only fruitful, if it is on the one hand preceded and on the other hand followed by a period of conscious work.” He elaborates:

These sudden inspirations (and the examples already cited sufficiently prove this) never happen except after some days of voluntary effort which has appeared absolutely fruitless and whence nothing good seems to have come, indeed where the way one takes seems totally astray. These efforts then have not been as sterile as one thinks; they have set agoing the unconscious machine and without them it would not have moved and would have produced nothing.¹⁹⁹

That there is a need for a second period of conscious work after the inspiration or direct insight, Poincaré adds, is “still easier to understand.” The insight has to receive expression in a formulation, a concept, an equation, and finally a judgment: “It is necessary to put in shape the results of this inspiration, to deduce from them the immediate consequences, to arrange them, to word the demonstrations, but above all is verification necessary.”²⁰⁰ In addition, he says, “in the second period of conscious work,...one verifies the results of this inspiration and deduces their consequences.”²⁰¹ Why is verification necessary? He addresses the issue directly:

I have spoken of the feeling of absolute certitude accompanying the inspiration; in the cases cited this feeling was no deceiver, nor is it usually. But do not think this is a rule without exception; often this feeling deceives us without being any the less vivid, and we only find it out when we seek to put on foot the demonstration.²⁰²

The results which the scientist obtains by these recurring operations accumulate and produce progress. They confirm the hypothesis and, says Lonergan, may lead to “new discovery, new hypothesis, new deduction, and new experiments.”²⁰³ The scientist broadens the range of observed data, adds new discoveries to previous ones, and gives formulation to new insights while preserving all that was valid in earlier ones. All this, he adds, “gives method its cumulative character” and creates “the conviction that, however

remote may still be the goal of the complete explanation of all phenomena, at least we now are nearer to it than we were.”²⁰⁴ Joseph Flanagan reminds us that “if we were to trace the history of chemistry from the four-element theory of earth, air, fire, and water which developed in ancient Greek thought to the nineteenth-century ninety-two-element theory, we would have a marvelous example of scientific learning which proceeds, not deductively, but developmentally and discursively, as scientists assimilate, complement, correct, modify, eliminate, and cumulatively advance past, direct and reflective theoretical understanding. Indeed, he says, whether in the practical daily living or in the pursuit of science, you make progress “by trial and error, advancing and declining in remarkably different but related ways.”²⁰⁵ In this way, says Lonergan, “the wheel of method not only turns but also rolls along.”²⁰⁶

Any sketchy analysis of method in the natural sciences gives rise, Lonergan concludes, to a preliminary notion of method as “a set of rules or directives for the advancement of science.”²⁰⁷ But it should be noted at the outset that he is not talking about a set of rules that one can follow blindly. Successful and progressive results will follow provided there is a flow of insights, he insists, a “sustained succession of discoveries” which accumulate only if there is “a synthesis of each new insight with all previous, valid insights.”²⁰⁸

In brief, at the heart of scientific method one has the kind of insight Lonergan has in mind whenever “one grasps why, knows the reason, sees the point, catches on.” Such insights may be “very pedestrian affairs,” for they occur, he says in a wry aside, “with the ease and frequency that save us from acquiring a reputation for stupidity.”²⁰⁹ Or insights may induce a trance-like condition such as “the overmastering absorption that almost without interruption kept Sir Isaac Newton at his desk for weeks.” Or, indeed, a few insights may turn out to be epochal and prompt “the explosive delight that made Archimedes shout, ‘Eureka!’”²¹⁰

Any given insight in science, then, is an act of discovery. When discoveries accumulate, science advances. The job of scientific method is heuristic: to encourage, direct, and order the flow of discoveries as they accumulate. It was the use of the such method, for instance, which enabled Orville and Wilbur Wright, despite many failures along the way, to construct the first powered airplane to fly. It was the use of the same method that allowed American and Russian scientists, despite successive and agonizing failures on the launch pad and in flight, to come up with successful rocket-powered space flight. Even now discovery and synthesis are never at the beck and call of any set of rules, warns Lonergan; successful space flights follow statistical laws; while risks can be minimized and flights made ever safer, absolute safety can never “be assured by any set of prescriptions.”²¹¹

Statistical Judgments Next, what is statistical method? What are statistical laws? Aristotle, Galileo, and Newton all assumed that science was engaged in a search for laws that are universal and necessary and can be applied to all cases without exceptions. All were aware that exceptions do occur, but they had not the slightest clue as to the possibility of a science of “accidental happenings.”²¹² They would have been astonished, as indeed even in our time Einstein was astonished, to learn that there are statistical laws, neither universal nor necessary, that anticipate exceptions to scientific laws and indicate average frequencies or normative probabilities.²¹³ Statistical laws focus on events or

occurrences or happenings such as predicting the outcome of an election before all the votes are counted, while classical scientific laws are concerned, not with events, but with the form or kind of events that recur.²¹⁴

Both scientists and statisticians want to get beyond description to explanation. Both statisticians and scientists use the same method: they ask questions about experience, seek understanding through insight, formulate their explanation of the experience, and then verify the formulation. But both ask different questions and expect different kinds of insights, different kinds of formulations and verifications. Scientists concentrate on why and what things are; statisticians on how many and how often things or events occur. Scientists deal with species; statisticians deal with “the number of the species (the total number, not the whole) and how often the individuals do whatever it is that they do (reproduce, marry, die, produce goods and services).”²¹⁵ Scientists attempt to predict what must happen on the basis of scientific law (the apple will fall from the tree because of the law of gravity), while statisticians try to predict what probably will happen next month (the voting in an election) or next year or ten years from now by generalizing from what happened during the last ten or twenty years. Classical laws tell what will happen if certain conditions are fulfilled. Drop an apple and it falls to the ground by the law of gravity. Statistical laws tell us how often one might expect the conditions to be fulfilled. Track a hurricane and by the law of probabilities predict when and where the eye will hit the Florida coast. Both are verified by their results.

The invention of the science of statistics was important, Flanagan reminds us, because it “eventually undermined most of the explicit but unverified assumptions of Euclid and Newton about the mechanistic and deterministic order of the universe.”²¹⁶ Indeed statistics opened the way to the modern understanding of thermodynamics, the kinetic theory of gases, and quantum theory.²¹⁷

Another Example of Insight and Its Verification: the Testimony of Vincent Van Gogh Let’s conclude this section with an example from the world of art. The process of grasping insights and verifying them is marvelously illustrated, for instance, by what Vincent van Gogh writes about his own creative process in general:

I seldom work from memory When I have a model who is quiet and steady and with whom I am acquainted, then I draw repeatedly till there is one drawing that is different from the rest, which does not look like an ordinary study, but more typical and with more feeling HOW IT HAPPENS [sic] THAT I CAN EXPRESS SOMETHING OF THAT KIND? Because the thing has already taken form in my mind before I start on it. The first attempts are absolutely unbearable. I say this because I want you to know that if you see something worthwhile in what I am doing, it is not by accident but because of real intention and purpose

Van Gogh then writes of his landscape paintings:

When I once get *the feeling of my subject*, and get to know it, I usually draw three or more variations...only I always refer to Nature for every one of them and then do my best not to put in *any detail*, as the dream quality

[the artistic meaning] would then be lost. When Tersteeg or my brother then says to me: “What is that, grass or coal?” I answer: “Glad to hear that you cannot see what it is.” Still it is enough like Nature for the simple peasants of this part of the country. They say: “Yes, that’s the hedge of Juffrouw Renese,” and “There are the beanpoles of van der Louw.”²¹⁸

The conclusion is obvious: just taking a look at the world out there does not give you understanding of the world out there either in creative art or in creative thinking; something more (insight and understanding) is required. As Hugo Meynell puts it: “Immediate experience merely gives us *clues* to the real world., which itself can be known only through the medium of judgment based on understanding.”²¹⁹ Lonergan himself sums up:

Insights are not like seeing. They differ from it very much, and if someone tries to think of them on the analogy of seeing he will come up with a notion of something that is not like understanding or insight at all. He may talk a great deal about ‘intellect,’ but what he tells you about intellect bears no relation to intelligence. Insight is precisely *the exercise of intelligence* in the ordinary meaning of the word (emphasis added).²²⁰

Let us pause once more to get our bearings. In a ringing summation of his cognitional theory Lonergan maintains that you are committed to the world of fact by the following constraints:

- by an inability to avoid experience,
- by the subtle conquest in us of the Eros that would understand,
- by the inevitable aftermath of that sweet adventure when a rationality identical with us demands the absolute, refuses unreserved assent to less than the unconditioned and, when that is attained, imposes on us a commitment in which we bow to an immanent Ananke [Necessity].²²¹

For Lonergan, therefore, coming-to-know is not the same thing as seeing or taking a look. He emphatically rejects the spectator theory of knowledge (what he terms picture-thinking). Such a basic misunderstanding of understanding he calls ‘cognitional myth’. To imagine that taking a look is knowing, he warns, is to make nothing but trouble. For, to repeat, the myth that knowing is simply taking a look has misled modern philosophers from the time of Hume to the present. The truth of the matter is that coming-to-know involves asking questions and finding answers. More precisely, maintains Lonergan, you come to know by answering Aristotle’s four fundamental questions: “Is it? Is it so? What is it? Why is it so?”²²² Ask these key questions, Aristotle said, and their answers give you knowledge or meaning. Answer these questions correctly, says Lonergan, and you avoid ‘cognitional myth’ and arrive at ‘cognitional fact’.

Lonergan sums the matter up in the following injunction:

Observe the significant facts. Unfortunately, what can be observed is

merely a datum; significance accrues to data only through the occurrence of insights; correct insights can be reached only at the term of a prolonged investigation that ultimately reaches the point where no further relevant questions arise; and without the combination of data and correct insights that together form a virtually unconditioned, there are not facts.²²³

We have arrived at the moment where it becomes clear why Lonergan insists over and over again on the paramount importance of grasping the difference between the world of immediacy and the world mediated to us by its meaning. Lonergan identifies failure to recognize this crucial difference as “the source of the critical problem” of philosophers from Kant to contemporary thinkers. They fail, he maintains, “to advert to the difference between the criteria for a world of immediacy and, on the other hand, the criteria for a world mediated by meaning.”²²⁴ Indeed, their “inadvertence” lies at “the root of the confusion” about objects and their objectivity which has reigned since the publication of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. Lonergan identifies the three epistemological cul-de-sacs consequent to such inadvertence --- naive realism, empiricism, and idealism:

- Naive realism arises from the assumption that the world mediated by meaning is known by taking a look.
- Empiricism arises when the world mediated by meaning is emptied of everything except what can be sensed.
- Idealism retains the empiricist notion of reality, insists that human knowledge is constituted by raising and answering questions, and concludes that human knowledge is not of the real but of the ideal.²²⁵

By the application of his understanding of understanding Lonergan differentiates a fourth approach to philosophy, differing from and correcting the limitations of naive realism, empiricism, and idealism. He argues that the criteria of the world of immediacy are to be found “either in the outer experience of our senses or in the inner experience of our consciousness.” By contrast, the criteria for the world mediated by meaning are “the objects that are intended by questions and known by intelligent, correct, conscientious answers.” By this Lonergan means that the world mediated by meaning is the world mediated by experiencing, understanding, and judging: “It is by his questions for intelligence (*quid sit, cur ita sit*), for reflection (*an sit*), for moral deliberation (*an honestum sit*), that man intends without yet knowing the intelligible, the true, the real, and the good.”²²⁶ The salient point for Lonergan is that “by that intending man is immediately related to the objects that he will come to know when he elicits correct acts of meaning.”²²⁷ He proposes what he calls a critical realism which “claims that human knowledge consists not in experiencing alone but in the threefold compound that embraces experiencing and understanding and judging.”²²⁸

Lonergan’s world of meaning is, thus, a world far larger world than the Humean world of immediacy. Indeed the world in which you live out your life is what we call the real world. But reaching this real world “does not lie within anyone’s immediate experience.”²²⁹ To repeat, it is not a world, argues Lonergan, that is reached merely by

taking a look at it. “Those looks,” says Lonergan, “simply do not exist.”²³⁰ Rather, this larger world is mediated by meaning.²³¹ You reach this larger world by coming-to-know it *by means of* its meaning grasped in insight. It is of critical importance, therefore, to understand that meaning is not a conscious act that merely repeats experiencing; it goes beyond experiencing to understanding and beyond understanding to judgment; meaning, therefore, is the end product of the process of experiencing, understanding, and judgment. In other words, says Lonergan with great precision, “what is meant, is what is intended in questioning and is determined not only by experience but also by understanding, and commonly, by judgment as well.” It is this precise addition of understanding and judgment, he says, that “makes possible the world mediated by meaning, what gives it its structure and unity, what arranges it in an orderly whole of almost endless differences partly known and familiar, partly in a surrounding penumbra of things we know about but have never examined or explored, partly as an unmeasured region of what we do not know at all.”²³² The real world for Lonergan “is the verified; it is what is to be known by the knowing constituted by experience and inquiry, insight and hypothesis, reflection and verification.”²³³

The third level of your intentional consciousness, therefore, is the level of judgment. It is the level of reflection. It is therefore the rational level. Briefly, the awareness immanent in the act of judging is the awareness of seeking and discovering sufficient evidence to ground assent and of refusing to assent unreservedly on any lesser ground.²³⁴ It is by this process that you end up being in touch with reality. There is actually no Cartesian gap to bridge.

Self-Knowledge: At the Level of Judging Let’s attend to this third level of operation again. There is more to coming to know than being aware of the data of the senses and having an insight into their meaning. One quickly and inevitably reaches this third level of consciousness. You ask: How can I be certain that my understanding is correct? How can I be sure? Well, says Lonergan, “if your knowing is just on the first two levels, the levels of experience and understanding, then there is no difference between fact and fiction, reality and appearance, philosophy and myth, astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, history and legend.”²³⁵ Obviously, your understanding must be submitted to judgment. As he puts it in another place, what makes all the difference at this third level is judgment:

It is by judgment that you reject what is merely insight into imagination and accept understanding of experience. To distinguish between the two, you have the process of reflective understanding and judgment. You do not give that up. No one wants to be a nut! That ‘not wanting to be a nut’ is just a rude way of expressing the exigence of rational consciousness, the demand to know whether or not it really is so.²³⁶

And so, make a judgment and advert to how you are present to yourself in the process of judging. In reaching a judgment, you are operating at the level of “*rational consciousness*, [the level where the subject] asks whether his thoughts are true,”²³⁷ the level at which you seek evidence to verify the truth of your understanding. The simplest way to proceed here is to take the three examples of insight we considered earlier and go

through them in slow motion. In the case of the bear, you may have imagined the bear ending up a mile east of where he started from. You were perhaps stumped. You wondered if some clue was missing or that you were missing something. Assured that no clue was missing, you may have considered the possible color bear could have: some bears are black, grizzlies are brown, and polar bears are snow white. Polar bears remind one of the arctic, perhaps of the north pole. But to think of the north pole, one usually thinks of the top of the earth, in other words, of a rounded surface. Once you grasp the schematic image of a trip that turns out to be a triangle and not a square you can conclude logically that the bear must be a polar bear. You judge the bear to be white. And you are sure of your judgment. And you can do the same for the examples of the vinyl records and the circle within the square.

Lonergan imagines you asking him at this point: “You have given us a beautiful theory of how cognition works. But is it true? Is this what human knowing is?...Is my human knowing really this structure of experiencing, understanding, and judging?” If you ask these questions, you are being rational: you are asking correctly what it means to be rationally conscious on the third level. In other words, you ask for sufficient evidence; you find sufficient evidence or its lack; you make a judgment on the basis of the evidence; and indeed to be reasonable, to be yourself, you cannot not judge whenever you are faced with sufficient evidence.²³⁸ In other words, the correctness of this judgment of fact has been pinned down by the evidence. Moreover, a fact has an element of the absolute about it (Julius Caesar did in fact cross the Rubicon); indeed, insofar as all the relevant questions have been asked and answered satisfactorily and since all the conditions have been met, Lonergan calls the result a ‘virtually unconditioned’ fact, or ‘a conditioned whose conditions are fulfilled’.²³⁹ And if it is a fact, then, says Lonergan, it’s a fact and that’s all there is to it. All that remains to be done is to assent to the judgment you have reached as being true and correct.

And so I have reached the point in the realm of interiority where, if I ask myself “Who am I?”, I can answer with assurance:

At the third level of conscious activity I am a judger affirming a fact. I am aware of myself as a judger affirming a fact. And I am adverting to the fact that I am aware of myself as a judger.

Important Logical Results Knowing (or coming-to-know, to put it more precisely) is a matter of getting the correct answers to the questions you ask --- answers which give the meaning of what you want to know. The identity of the murderer is the answer one seeks in a who-done-it. Meaning (or the answers to questions) is what makes knowledge knowledge; indeed meaning is constitutive of human knowing. From such an understanding of understanding, there are certain important logical consequences. Human knowing, Lonergan explains, is (1) a compound of activities, (2) structured, and (3) self-assembling.

First result: human knowing --- the achievement of meaning---is not any single cognitive act, but a compound of activities. No single element taken alone is the human knowing that differentiates man from the animals. The act by which you see or hear, smell or taste, feel or touch may should not be called knowing. Nor can the act of inquiry or understanding. Rather, human knowing, “in the specifically human sense of knowing---

the knowing that animals do not possess,” says Lonergan, “is a compound of three components: an experimental, an intellectual, and a judicial component.”²⁴⁰ In other words, an analysis of your intentionality will reveal that your coming-to-know is a compound of:

- meaning on the level of sense,
- meaning on the level of understanding, and
- meaning on the level of judgment.

Second result: the meaning that is constitutive of coming-to-know is structured. True, all the activities of human knowing are distinct and irreducible: “seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting inquiring, imagining, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, weighing the evidence, judging.”²⁴¹ And yet no single activity in this set or structure ‘alone and by itself’ constitutes human knowing. Lonergan explains: “An act of ocular vision may be perfect as ocular vision; yet if it occurs without any accompanying glimmer of understanding, it is mere gaping; and mere gaping, so far from being the beau ideal of human knowing, is just stupidity.” The same holds true for “merely hearing, merely smelling, merely touching, merely tasting;” they are “parts, potential components of human knowing, but they are not human knowing itself.”²⁴²

Accordingly, Lonergan sums up the nature of human knowing by first stating what knowing is not: knowing is “not experience alone, not understanding alone, not judgment alone; it is not a combination of only experience and understanding, or of only experience and judgment, of only understanding and judgment; finally, it is not something totally apart from experience, understanding, and judgment.” It follows inevitably that human knowing is not “this or that operation,” but “a whole whose parts are operations.”

Human knowing is a whole structure whose parts, however, are not things, like the bricks that are parts of a house; rather, he says, they are activities --- much like activities “in a song, a dance, a chorus, a symphony, a drama.”²⁴³ For Lonergan, genuine human knowing (the process of coming-to-know) requires all of its activities (experiencing, understanding, and judging) to act in conjunction with one another. We have, he says, “three acts, or three levels of activity, and they presuppose one another --- just as cooking the meat presupposes buying it, and eating it presupposes cooking it.” In other word, he says, “these three levels are mutually related, and complementary --- the second presupposes and complements the first, the third presupposes and complements the second, as cognitional activities.”²⁴⁴ Human knowing is “a structure and, indeed, a materially dynamic structure.”²⁴⁵

Third result: human knowing is also a structure that is formally dynamic --- it is self-assembling and self-constituting. For you to come-to-know, sensation must be accompanied by understanding and understanding must be preceded by sensation. For without the prior activity of the senses, there is nothing for you to understand; and if there is no data to understand, then nothing happens: no understanding occurs.

For instance, says Lonergan, you can “understand what one merely imagines, come up with a brilliant idea, be enthralled with one’s cleverness in thinking something out.” But understanding what you happen to imagine is not knowing; it is “understanding

merely what one imagines, and what one imagines has no corresponding data of sense or data of consciousness.” Or take a related instance, mythic consciousness or what is called ‘mythic’ thought.²⁴⁶ Myth, says Lonergan, “involves a great deal of understanding but it is not understanding experience; it is understanding [merely] what one imagines.” And so, Lonergan repeats, “understanding alone, without experience, is not human knowing, just as experiencing---seeing, hearing, tasting, touching---without understanding falls short of human knowing.”²⁴⁷

A further point that is crucial to the dynamic process: if you are to come-to-know, your combined operations of sensing and understanding require an additional operation, namely, judging. “To omit judgment,” says Lonergan, “is quite literally silly: it is only by judgment that there emerges a distinction between fact and fiction, logic and sophistry, philosophy and myth, history and legend, astronomy and astrology, chemistry and alchemy.”²⁴⁸ Or, to pass judgment on something you does not understand --- and here Lonergan is blunt---is to exercise “not human knowing but human arrogance.”²⁴⁹ Or, he adds, to exclude sense experience and understanding and “pass judgment independently of all experience means you have “set fact aside.”²⁵⁰ Indeed, in such a case your judgment merely floats ‘in the air’, because it has no relation to any data of experience, no connection with it, and so is in no way factual.²⁵¹ Indeed a judgment without data or understanding to back it up is a judgment you can expect no one to take seriously.

Finally, and to repeat, human knowing as a structure of activities is formally dynamic. It is self-assembling and self-constituting. Human knowing “puts itself together, one part summoning the next, till the whole is reached.” This assembling takes place in much the same way as a dance or a symphony or a drama, “not with the blindness of natural process, but consciously, intelligently, rationally.” Knowing “constructs itself.” By that Lonergan means:

It doesn’t construct itself just any way at all. It’s intelligence that puts the questions that move one beyond experience to insight and thought. It’s one’s reasonableness that puts the different types of questions that move one to reflective understanding and judgment.

But make no mistake, he cautions: “They not merely move, not merely are ‘elevators’ moving from one level to the next, but they also control the activities that occur, set their standards.” What follows?

You can’t judge without sufficient evidence, and if you have sufficient evidence you have to judge. The ‘can’t’ and ‘have to’ are not in terms of physical necessity, physical force, but in terms of the necessity imposed on one by one’s own rationality.²⁵²

And so analyze the process of coming-to-know more closely and you discover, says Lonergan, that “experience stimulates inquiry, and inquiry is intelligence bringing itself to act; it leads from experience through imagination to insight, and from insight to the concepts that combine in a single object both what has been grasped by insight and what in experience or imagination is relevant to the insight.” Concepts in their turn, he says, “stimulate reflection, and reflection is the conscious exigence of rationality; it

marshals the evidence and weighs it either to judge or else to doubt and so renew inquiry.”²⁵³

Loneragan lays the process out in a way that summarizes the notion of the dynamic structure of conscious activities as follows:

- In this dynamic structure that is human knowing, there is a level of experience---any sense
- Activity: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling, feeling.
- But there is a second level. People ask questions--Why this? Why is it there? It wasn't there yesterday! Who moved it? What is it?---all the questions one can ask.
- And there are not only the formulated questions but also the prior intellectual curiosity. In answer to the questions there are insights and thoughts, concepts, formulations, hypotheses, theories.
- The thoughts provoke a different kind of question, on a third level: Is that so? Are you sure? Might it not be otherwise? And so there is reflective understanding and judgment.²⁵⁴

Finally, it is important to note as Lonergan keeps reminding us, that the various conscious operations we have been examining are different from each other. In fact, he says, “there is no reason to expect the several cognitional activities --- attending, understanding, judging---to resemble one another.”²⁵⁵ To assume they do misleads. Lonergan repeatedly warns that one major misconception is “to scrutinize ocular vision and then assume that other cognitional activities must be the same sort of thing” No, one should be aware of their differences. For, Lonergan insists, if you are “to proceed scientifically, each cognitional activity must be examined in and for itself and, no less, in its functional relations to other cognitional activities.”²⁵⁶

The Fourth Level of Consciousness In his analysis of intentionality, as we have stated repeatedly, Lonergan begins with you as you really are as a human subject. Apart from the times when you lie in dreamless sleep, you continually perform intentional acts. At the empirical level of consciousness, “we sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move.” At the intellectual level, “we inquire, come to understand, express what we have understood, work out presuppositions and implications of our expression.” At the rational level, “we reflect, marshal the evidence, pass judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability, of the statement.” All this conscious activity Lonergan analyzed in *Insight* which he published in 1958. But by 1966, Lonergan was stating explicitly that in addition to these intentional acts, you also ‘deliberate, decide, act.’²⁵⁷ There is also a fourth level of operations --- the responsible level.

According to the editors of *A Second Collection* of Lonergan’s papers, these words signal “a crucial shift,...a watershed in Lonergan’s thinking;” they mark “the clear emergence of the primacy of the fourth level of human consciousness, the existential level, the level of evaluation and love.”²⁵⁸ The first three levels (with only adumbrations of the fourth) Lonergan studied in *Insight*, but in *Method in Theology* he focused

especially on the study of an additional level of consciousness, the existential level, the level of evaluation, the level of love.²⁵⁹ At this --- the responsible --- level, “we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions.”²⁶⁰ We experience and understand what we experience. We check out our understanding to make sure it is not just a bright idea, but actually is. Once we reach such judgments of fact, we have to deliberate and decide what we are to do about them at this level of ethics and decision. Indeed it is here that we reach the level of value. Here we discover that the pure detached desire to know is identical with the pure detached desire for value. In brief, truth is goodness, and goodness truth.

Lonergan’s analysis of the entire process of coming to reach an authentic decision reveals the following:

The transcendental notion of value is the single unfolding through four levels of one intention of what is good, of what is worthwhile, that manifests itself in each individual evaluation. It is the universal principle of appraisal and criticism prior to any choosing. This single unfolding, in manifesting itself in different stages, determines the specific levels of human consciousness: experience, understanding, reflection, and evaluation. Evaluation is the keystone of the structure of intentionality. It constitutes the level of the existential subject who freely and responsibly makes himself what he is, whether good or evil.²⁶¹

In addition to the world mediated by meaning, therefore, one learns that there is a world motivated by value.²⁶² In addition to your pure detached desire to know (which Lonergan identified in *Insight*), there is your “pure detached desire for value” (which Lonergan identified and developed in *Method* and other articles). In *Insight* Lonergan showed how the judgment of truth followed upon a reflexive insight. Brian Cronin suggests that the judgment of value issues from a ‘deliberative insight’. In other words, “reflective insight produces the judgment of truth; . . . ‘deliberative insight’ produces the judgment of value.” Lonergan did not use the term, but Lonergan scholars like Michael Vertin, Patrick Byrne, Robert Doran and Mark Doorley have used terminology that is “suggestive of something like a deliberative insight, a grasp of the virtually unconditioned of value.”²⁶³

The fourth level is, therefore, the existential level where you intend what is good and worthwhile, and where your intention manifests itself in every individual evaluation you make. There are thus four levels of human consciousness --- experience, understanding, reflection, and evaluation. Evaluation, says Lonergan, is “the keystone” of the structure of your intentionality. For at this level you---insofar as you are an ‘existential subject’ --- “freely and responsibly” make yourself what you are, for good or for ill.²⁶⁴

The notion of ‘making oneself’ according to an ideal of what is good and valuable, of course, is not altogether new nor original with Lonergan. As early as January 3, 1892, André Gide was recording in his journal the following reflection:

A man’s life is his image. At the hour of death we shall be reflected in the

past, and, leaning over the mirror of our acts, our souls will recognize *what we are*. Our whole life is spent in sketching an ineradicable portrait of ourselves. . . . He must live his life as he will recount it. In other words, the portrait of him formed by his life must identify itself with the ideal portrait he desires. And, in still simpler terms, he must be as he wishes to be.²⁶⁵

The ultimate goal of philosophy, Lonergan reminds us, is not just objective knowledge but authentic human living. To reach that high goal, writes Lonergan:

One who has to move beyond strictly cognitional levels of empirical, intellectual, and rational consciousness to the more inclusive level of rational self-consciousness [the level of responsibility and existential decision]. Though being and the good are coextensive, the subject moves to a further dimension of consciousness as his concern shifts from knowing being to realizing the good.

Momentous questions for personal decision emerge at this level, questions involving “freedom and responsibility, encounter and trust, communication and belief, choice and promise and fidelity.” Indeed, it is at the fourth level that you entertain questions for deliberation and ask: Is this worthwhile? Is it truly or only apparently good? Here in nutshell is Lonergan’s analysis of the process which he invites you to verify for yourself:

- You “aspire” to the good in your intentional response of “feeling to values.”
- As “a virtuous or authentic person with a good conscience,” you make known what you come to value in “judgments of value.”
- And finally, you bring about the good by “deciding and living up to “ your decision.
- In short, Lonergan concludes that “intelligence sublates sense,...reasonableness sublates intelligence,...deliberation sublates and thereby unifies knowing and feeling.”²⁶⁶

Questions for decision are momentous because by them the progress or decline of individuals or nations hang in the balance. Lonergan argues:

On this level subjects both constitute themselves and make their world. On this level men are responsible, individually, for the lives they lead and, collectively, for the world in which they lead them. It is in this collective responsibility for common or complimentary action that resides the principle constituent of the collective subject referred to by ‘we,’ ‘us’ ‘ourselves,’ ‘ours.’²⁶⁷

It is at this level, in Lonergan’s judgment, that the question of God is most

fruitfully addressed.²⁶⁸ In *Method* Lonergan states his conviction that “our basic awareness of God comes to us not through our arguments or choices but primarily through God’s gift of his love.”²⁶⁹ In Lonergan’s analysis, religious experience is not something you produce yourself; it is something you experience at the fourth level of consciousness. It is precisely the awareness you have that you have been ‘given’ something --- what Lonergan calls the gift of “being-in-love with God” or what traditional theology calls sanctifying grace or charity. For God’s love, in the words of what is perhaps Lonergan’s favorite passage from the New Testament, “has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us.”²⁷⁰

Self-Knowledge: At the Level of Deliberation Finally, self-appropriate the level of deliberation. Take step four: deliberate and decide and then advert to how you are present to yourself at the fourth level of consciousness. This is the level of *rational self-consciousness* (not to be confused with the third level of *rational consciousness*). At this level you are concerned with the good; here you deliberate and then decide the best way to act, “deciding about things and other people, and ipso facto making oneself the kind of man or woman one is.”²⁷¹ At this existential level you become a responsible human being. The fourth level, of course, presupposes the first three. Lonergan states that

the fourth level of intentional consciousness --- the level of deliberation, evaluation, decision, action --- sublates the prior levels of experiencing, understanding, judging. It goes beyond them, sets up a new principle and type of operations, directs them to a new goal but, so far from dwarfing them, preserves them and brings them to a far fuller fruition.²⁷²

Brian Cronin has a helpful summary of the activities --- questioning, deliberating, judging, deciding and implementing --- which we perform when we confront a moral problem:

- If we are facing a problem, then we are *questioning* which way to go, which to choose, which is right, which course is better than the other, what values are at stake here. The questioning is the dynamic operative throughout the process from the initial question to the final judgment of value, usually followed by decision and action.
- We identified the activity of *deliberating* by which we meant assembling evidence for or against, learning from previous judgments, appealing to examples, examining hypotheses, considering alternative courses of action, envisaging various immediate and remote consequences of action. We noted the four components operative here, the cognitive, the effective, the volitional, within the total context of a process of self-transcendence. Deliberative insight incorporates all four components into a unity and issues in a judgment of value.
- The *judgment* affirms the truth of the value statement, adds no content of its own, [and by it] we take a stand and become responsible . . .
- With good will and resolution, we freely and responsibly *decide* to follow the

right choice of action and become actually self-transcendence when we *implement* the decision.²⁷³

Cronin then identifies and explains the four components that unite in a judgment of value:

- The *cognitive* component involving reasoning, arguing, inferring, comparing, weighing the evidence, [that is] a heuristic structure we follow as we move to a conclusion.
- The *affective* component by which we intend value, we seek value, we want to do the right thing, we want the best for our kids, we would like to leave the world a better place by our passing contribution. At the same time we are suspicious of glib arguments, of persons whose motives are self-interested, where evidence is not convincing, [when] we feel uneasy about the course of action.
- The *volitional* element recognizes free decisions operating all through the process, before the process and after the process; it is in virtue of this free deciding that we are responsible or not responsible for our action.
- The element of *self-transcendence* recognizes the human condition as a being on the way; it is the total human context understood from a moral point of view; for deliberation is purposive, it is heading to a goal, to a final end, to happiness, to self-transcendence.²⁷⁴

Finally, at this point in your journey into the realm of interiority ask yourself , “Who am I?” You can now answer: “At the fourth level of conscious activity I am a do-er making a responsible decision. I am aware of myself as a do-er making a responsible decision. I am adverting to my awareness of myself as a do-er making a responsible decision.”

One Final Question At this point, Lonergan puts one final question to the reader --- the blunt question that is skeptical of Lonergan’s entire analysis of interiority: “Does this many-leveled subject actually exist?” It is the question, he says, that each of you has to answer for yourself. For himself, of course, the answer is never in doubt. Lonergan lines up his reasons:

- Not even behaviorists claim that they are unaware whether or not they see or hear, taste or touch.
- Not even positivists preface their lectures and their books with the frank avowal that never in their lives did they have the experience of understanding anything whatever.
- Not even relativists claim that never in their lives did they have the experience of making a rational judgment.
- Not even determinists claim that never in their lives did they have the

experience of making a responsible choice.²⁷⁵

And you, once you have verified for yourself that you exist as one-who-knows-and-decides, can agree with Lonergan's conclusion: "There exist subjects that are empirically, intellectually, rationally, morally conscious." One may object that "not all know themselves as such, for consciousness is not human knowing but only a potential component in the structured whole that is human knowing." Granted. But Lonergan insists that "all can know themselves as such, for they have only to attend to what they are already conscious of, and understand what they attend to, and pass judgment on the correctness of their understanding."²⁷⁶

But nagging questions may persist. Is Lonergan correct in his understanding of understanding? Is this really the structure by which each and all of us come-to-know? Perhaps it is only another hypothesis or theory, itself subject to future revision. Perhaps in time, you may say, human beings will discover new information, not known now. With new data, won't people understand better, embrace both the old data along with the new, and so prefer some new theory?²⁷⁷ Ask these perfectly legitimate questions, says Lonergan, you will be operating at the levels of reflective and rational understanding and in doing so will in the act be verifying them.

What are the ways in which a revision of Lonergan's understanding of understanding is possible? First, he says, you would need new data, based either on internal or external experience. Then, you would need a new insight to have a new theory of understanding. The new theory would have to explain with satisfaction both the old data and the new; otherwise, you cannot have a judgment that the new theory is new and better. In other words, Lonergan argues, any possible future revision would itself involve experiencing, understanding, and judging. You "may make the structure more complete," he explains, but to revise it — the crucial point — you will have "to keep the structure." Lonergan concedes that his explanation of intentionality analysis may not yet be complete, still, he persists in maintaining, no matter how much one may revise it in the future, one will always be employing the same structure.²⁷⁸

Conclusion This section on self-appropriation of interiority now draws to a close. You know. You are aware that you know. You advert to your awareness that you know. You have gone through the four elements that make up the structure of coming-to-know and to decide. Lonergan gives us this summary of the process:

- First, there is consciousness of the elements [experiencing, understanding, judging]
- Secondly, there is introspection into the several different activities.
- Thirdly, there is insight into the existence of the structure from the inevitabilities of the subject, who cannot avoid experiencing, cannot renounce his intelligence --- even though he is anti-intellectual, he thinks that this is the intelligent thing to be --- and cannot avoid the question of reflective understanding, the question whether or not this structure is just a nice theory, something that can be revised, or whether it is something that has to be presupposed as a possibility of revision.²⁷⁹

To repeat, then, if I ask myself at this point in your exploration of the realm of interiority “Who am I?” I can answer with assurance: “I am a judge affirming a fact. I am aware of myself as a judge affirming a fact. I am also chooser making a decision. I am aware of myself as a chooser embracing a value.”

Lonergan adds, with pointed irony, that, if one’s answer to the question “Who am I?” is not as above, it amounts to “the admission that one is a non-responsible, non-reasonable, non-intelligent somnambulist.”²⁸⁰

To arrive at this destination you have come a long way --- from undifferentiated consciousness through the realms of common sense and theory to the realm of interiority. You have made the journey, says Lonergan, “through the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation” and found your way into the realm of interiority.²⁸¹ To reach this point is to have undergone what Lonergan calls ‘intellectual conversion’ --- a radical clarification of how the mind works. By it one acquires “the mastery in one’s own house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing.”²⁸² Here you have achieved through self-appropriation what Lonergan calls “a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both.”²⁸³ History demonstrates that “a civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency.”²⁸⁴ Intellectual conversion is a “new beginning” It enables a “fresh start.” It “opens the way to ever further clarifications and developments” some of which subsequent chapters will explore.²⁸⁵

1. Ira Progoff, *At a Journal Workshop*, 17-18.

2. *Method in Theology*, 259.

3. *Ibid.*, 85; see also 83.

4. Cf. *Insight*, Introduction, xvii-xxx.

5. *Ibid.*, xxviii.

6. *Ibid.*, xxviii, and 748.

7. Ira Progoff, *At A Journal Workshop*, 17-18.

8. “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 269.

9. *Method in Theology*, 3.

10. *Ibid.*, xii.

11. *Ibid.*, 4.

12. *Ibid.*, 4; see also Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 256-263.

13. Cf. *Insight*, 3-172; also “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 269-271.

14. *Method in Theology*, 4.

15. *Ibid.* 4-5.

16. Cf. *Method in Theology*, 5.

17. *Ibid.*, 6.

18. “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 270.

19. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 380.

20. *Method in Theology*, 4.

21. *Insight*, xx.

22. See *Method in Theology*, 3-25; and *Insight*, Part II: *Insight as Knowledge*, 319-748.

23. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 233-234.

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24. *Method in Theology*, 238.
25. *Ibid.*, 238.
26. “Existenz and Aggiornamento,” *Collection*, 225.
27. *Ibid.*, 225.
28. “Existenz and Aggiornamento,” *Collection*, 225.
29. “Dimensions of Meaning,” *Collection*, 232. Anton Chekhov has a wonderful story about the worlds of immediacy written from the point of view of a two year eight month old child; “Grisha” *Anton Chekhov’s Short Stories*. Selected and edited by Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 31-34. Grisha is taken for a walk by his ‘Nursie’ from the immediate world of his nursery out onto the surrounding village streets where his horizon is enlarged to include a bewildering number of sights and sounds and smells and feelings: ‘the waxing sun of April, . . . Papas and Mammias and Aunties, . . . vehicles, . . . horses, . . . a squad of soldiers, . . . two big long-nosed cats, . . . a basket of oranges, . . . a stove with a huge oven mouth gaping at him.’”
30. *Method in Theology*, 28.
31. *Ibid.*, 9.
32. “The Ongoing Genesis of Methods,” *A Third Collection*: 166.
33. “Unity and Plurality,” *A Third Collection*, 240.
34. *Insight*, 320.
35. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 234.
36. *Insight*, 321.
37. *Ibid.*, 322.
38. *Method in Theology*, 95.
39. *Insight*, xviii.
40. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 233.
41. *Method in Theology*, 96.
42. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 262.
43. *Method in Theology*, 17, and *Insight*, 319-32.
44. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 262.
45. *Method in Theology*, 18.
46. *Ibid.*, 8.
47. “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 221.
48. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 234.
49. *Ibid.*, 234.
50. *Ibid.*, 235.
51. *Ibid.*, 234.
52. *Method in Theology*, 8.
53. “Cognitive Structure,” *Collection*, 210.
54. *Ibid.*, 222.
55. “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” *Philosophical and theological Papers: 1958-1964*, 222.
56. *Ibid.*, 222.
57. *Ibid.*, 221.
58. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 235.
59. *Ibid.*, 235.
60. Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York/Mahway: Paulist Press, 1986), (34).
61. “Cognitive Structure,” *Collection*, 208.
62. *Ibid.*, 208.
63. *Ibid.*, 210.
64. *Ibid.*, 208.
65. “Cognitive Structure,” *Collection*, 210.
66. *Ibid.*, 210.

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67. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and theological Papers: 1958-1964*, 222.
68. *Ibid.*, 218.
69. A tip of the hat here to Antonio Carlos Jobim and the "fascinatin' rhythm" of the cascading melody in his little classic *The Waters of March*.
70. *Insight*, 274.
71. *Method in Theology*, 9-10.
72. *Insight*, 183.
73. *Ibid.*, 183.
74. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology*, 83.
75. *Method in Theology*, 10.
76. *Ibid.*, 238.
77. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 217.
78. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 217.
79. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 217.
80. *Insight*, 324.
81. *Method in Theology*, 9.
82. *Method in Theology*, 9.
83. *Insight*, 323.
84. *Ibid.*, 322. Cf. also *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 183-184. Frederick Crowe reminds readers of *Insight* that they may have noticed the frequency of the phrase "insight and formulation" without being aware that Lonergan had already devoted a book to an exposition of its meaning. Lonergan's *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, Crowe says, "reveals the rich content of the phrase, [and]...shows us something of the wealth of conscious 'reasoning' activity, of the 'rational process', that enters into the production of a concept, a formulation, a law, a theory." See Frederick E. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 50.
85. Lonergan interrupts the flow of his analysis at this point to state: "The Aristotelian analysis of understanding (*epistasthai*), *Posterior analytics*, I,2, 71b 9-19 (*In I Post. anal.*, lect. 4), is first its identification with knowing a cause and secondly its expression in scientific syllogism Hence, I should say that to miss the point here is the most effective way of missing everything." See *Verbum*, n.58, 28.
86. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 28. Quoted by Michael L. Rende as being the heart of Lonergan's interpretation of Aristotle's concept of form in *Lonergan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America: 1991), 19-20. It is precisely to this understanding of cause, as we have seen, that Hume took vigorous exception.
87. *Insight*, x. Cf. *The Lonergan Reader*, 46-75.
88. *Ibid.*, x.
89. *Ibid.*, x.
90. See note 310 above.
91. *Method in Theology*, 10.
92. "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Collection*, 148 (CWL 4).
93. "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Collection*, 148 (CWL 4). Lonergan maintains that both Aristotle and Aquinas agree that the proper object of intellect is *quod quid est* or 'that which any thing is.' "Aquinas," he says, "knew perfectly well what Aristotle meant by *quod quid est*, by the wonder that is the source of all science and philosophy, by insight into phantasm..." Cf. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 48, with relevant citations in footnotes 163 and 165. Lonergan himself hit upon "the decisive importance of insight" in his study of (*intelligere* understand) in St. Thomas. See McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 341, footnote 19.
94. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 51.
95. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 265.
96. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 265.
97. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 51.

98. *Ibid.*, 47-48. Other terms for inner word or concept are *ratio* (cause, definition, essence, form, formal property, idea, meaning, nature, object of thought), *intentio* (mental word), *definitio* (definition), *quod quid est* (what something is or corresponds to the essence or essential definition); see also *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 307, 310, 315, 316.

99. *Ibid.*, 48.

100. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 265-266.

101. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 48.

102. *Ibid.*, 56.

103. *Ibid.*, 33. It is precisely this understanding of the process of understanding that differentiates Lonergan from the conceptualists, who advert to concepts, but overlook their “intentional source in insights;” see McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, note 96, 365. See also *Verbum*, 152-190, and “The Subject” in *A Second Collection*, 73-5. For Lonergan’s critique of Etienne Gilson’s position, see “Metaphysics as Horizon,” in *Collection*, 193-203; and also of Kant and Gilson in “Consciousness and the Trinity,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133-134.

104. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 266.

105. *Ibid.*, 265.

106. See *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 141-142.

107. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 33.

108. *Method in Theology*, 9.

109. *Ibid.*, 10.

110. *Ibid.*, 10.

111. *Ibid.*, 10.

112. Frederick E, Crowe, *Lonergan*, 118.

113. *Ibid.* 118.

114. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Bk XV, cap. 10, n.19.

115. *Ibid.* n.19.

116. Frederick E, Crowe, S.J., *Lonergan*, (Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book. The Liturgical Press, 1992), 118/ Cf. *Insight*, xx-xxi, xxiii, 412.

117. *Ibid.*, 118.

118. *Insight*, xx. A fairly lengthy quotation from Lonergan will at this point help forestall objections one may have to his explanation of understanding thus far: “The Thomist concept of inner word is rich and nuanced: it is no mere metaphysical condition of a type of cognition; it aims at being a statement of psychological fact, and the precise nature of those facts can be ascertained only by ascertaining what was meant by *intelligere* [or to understand]. Behind the notion of quiddity there lies the speculative activity that began with Socrates, was pushed forward at the [Platonic] Academy, and culminated in Aristotle: the *quod quid est* is central to a logic, a psychology, a metaphysic, and an epistemology; and this unity is intimately connected both with the metaphysical concept of form and the psychological experience of understanding. This conclusion is reinforced by the insistence of Aquinas on insight into phantasm, by the turn he gave to the notion of an inner word, by the psychological nature of his theory of abstraction. No less powerfully is it confirmed by the psychological wealth of his pages on intellect as contrasted with the psychological poverty of the pages of other writers mean by *intelligere*, not principally the act of understanding, but any cognitional act of an alleged spiritual nature.” See *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 59.

119. *Understanding and Being*, 350.

120. *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 265.

121. *Insight*, 330.

122. Metaphysics, 1.2, quoted in Vol. 5, *Understanding and Being*, 36 and 300.

123. Charles Simic, “Reading Philosophy at Night,” *The Best American Essays 1988*, Edited and with an introduction by Annie Dillard. Robert Atwan, Series Editor. (New York: Tichnor & Fields, 1998), 307-308. The enduring philosophical movement that began with Parmenides — the first in the West to ask, What is being? — was passed on through Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Duns Scotus, Christian Wolff, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Lonergan; see “The Theory of Philosophic Differences,” *Topics in Education*, 172-173.

124. *Insight*, 330.

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125. Ibid., 330.
126. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*, 81.
127. *Insight*, 330.
128. Ibid. 324.
129. Ibid., 36-37. Michael McCarthy sums up with admirable precision Lonergan's account of the human subject's activities at the second level of consciousness: "Because we are intelligent, we seek to understand experience, anticipate the kind of understanding we may attain, frame particular questions in the light of that anticipation, and play with schematic models or images of potential relevance to the intelligibility that is sought. Direct insights, then, do not occur haphazardly or at random. They result from thinking through an exploratory question for intelligence that was prompted by antecedent perceptions, images, or memories. Nor are insights automatic or subject to explicit rules. Until they occur, the answer to the absorbing question eludes us, increasing the tension of our intelligent search. But what precisely happens when they do occur? Insight is a preconceptual event that consciously unifies and organizes the data of experience the subject is investigating. In the act of understanding, the cognitive subject either grasps an *intelligible unity* within that data or grasps a pattern of *intelligible relations* among its various elements. The intentional content that is grasped is a function of the selected data, the precision of the exploratory question, and the subject's own effort, intelligence, and cognitive background. Direct insights are the preconceptual acts of understanding that transport the subject from the perplexing question to its possible solution. They occur in every field of inquiry, both theoretical and practical, in which human intelligence is engaged;" *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 265-266.
130. *Insight*, 322.
131. Ibid., x.
132. *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 50.
133. *Insight*, 9, 343.
134. Ibid. 356.
135. "*Understanding and Being*, 36.
136. See Tom Daly, S.J., "Learning Levels", *Australian Lonergan Workshop*, 236.
137. Ibid., 208.
138. Ibid., 218.
139. *Method in Theology*, 9.
140. Ibid., 15.
141. Ibid., 74.
142. Virginia Woolf, "Montaigne" *The Common Reader*, 58.
143. Montaigne, *Of Exercitation*. Quoted in Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader*, 59.
144. Virginia Woolf, "Montaigne" in *The Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1984), 59.
145. "An Interview with Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.," *A Second Collection*, 223.
146. Quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, editor, *The Creative Process*, 43.
147. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958-1964*, 224.
148. Ibid., 218-219; see also illustrations of insights from Plato and Euclid, 21-26.
149. Ibid., 223. *The Mensa Puzzle Calendar* (Workman Publishing) supplies the user with a daily puzzle and thereby provides the opportunity to discover a fresh insight each day of the year. See also Edward de Bono, *The 5-Day Course in Thinking*, especially the practical course on "Insight Thinking," 6-61, which requires for instance the assemblage of four empty beer or soft-drink cans, four table knives, and a drinking glass full of water. The problem is to arrange the cans and the knives in such a way as to construct a platform sturdy enough to support a glass full of water. De Bono challenges the reader with "the sort of problem which is usually solved quite suddenly by a flash of inspiration --- what might be called insight thinking" (13). See pp. 17-31 for solutions.
150. I am grateful to Richard M. Liddy for this puzzle.
151. Lonergan draws out the implications for teaching of the notion of insight grasping the intelligible in the sensible: "Because it is a conscious human process, one must not suppose that because a student is a human being...the student must be abstracting intelligible species from phantasm. It is a *conscious* process, and something that people can be helped in. The teacher can help people form the correct phantasm. That

is why there are blackboards in schoolrooms. One can use a schematic diagram, where the diagram is drawn to bring out the point. All that is wanted is a diagram that does emphasize the point. It need not be a beautiful drawing. The fewer irrelevant details the better, because that makes it that much easier to grasp the point.” “The New Learning: Mathematics,” *Topics in Education*, 114.

152. “Insight Revisited,” *A Second Collection*, 274.

153. *Ibid.*, 268.

154. *Ibid.*, 278.

155. *Understanding and Being*, 24.

156. *Ibid.* 27. Lonergan also makes the case that both Aristotle and Kant acknowledged the role of insight in understanding: Aristotle in explaining an eclipse and what makes a man a man; and Kant in explaining how you can have synthetic a priori principles in mathematics. But, Lonergan adds, “Kant does not think of the image as causing the insight. In Aristotle and St. Thomas, on the other hand, the insight and the concept are distinguished, and the phantasm, the image, causes the insight.” See *Understanding and Being*, 39-41.

157. Quotation is a combination of quotes from *Insight*, 3-5

158. “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958-1964*, , 222.

159. See Tom Daly, S.J., “Learning Levels”, *Australian Lonergan Workshop*, 236. Also “Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958-1964*, 226.

160. *Insight*, 330.

161. *Ibid.*, 330.

162. Quoted in Charles Simic, “Reading Philosophy at Night,” *The Best American Essays 1988*, 309.

163. See *The Lonergan Reader*, 162-177; *Insight*, 271-316; *Method in Theology*, 9-10, 74-76.

164. See Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 269-273.

165. *Ibid.*, 264.

166. *Ibid.*, 268.

167. *Ibid.*, 268.

168. *Ibid.*, 269. See Lonergan’s treatment of reflective understanding in *Insight*, 279-316; for reflective insight, see *Insight*, 280-281.

169. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 269.

170. For Lonergan’s treatment of experiential objectivity, see *Insight*, 381-383.

171. *Ibid.*, 330-331.

172. This is the precise point, you should know, where Lonergan distances himself from Kant. “Kant asked,” he says, “about the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience in the sense of knowing the object.” Lonergan himself asks, “not for the conditions of knowing an object, but the conditions of the possible occurrence of a judgment of fact.” What, he asks, are “the conditions of an absolute rational ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ viewed simply as an act.” Lonergan, as Lonergan scholar Michael Rende notes, is not asking here about the object nor the subject of cognitional acts, but rather “about the condition for the possibility of a certain kind of act --- the correct judgment;” see *Lonergan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 102 n. 33.

173. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 50.

174. See “Discussion 4” in *Understanding and Being*, 351, where Lonergan states: “I believe that my account of reflective understanding is, in different terms, but roughly equivalent to, what Newman calls the illative sense. Newman was concerned with that same problem, What’s the ground of the assent? The ground of the assent is grasping the sufficiency of the evidence. I worked it into a formula for an insight, the virtually unconditioned, that eliminates the metaphors.” See also the summaries in *Verbum*, 47-48, 141-142, 183-187.

175. *Insight*, 331.

176. *Method in Theology*, 102. Lonergan summaries here the answer he worked out in *Insight*, Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven.

177. Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 270.

178. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan’s Cognitional Theory and Epistemology*, 224.

179. *Insight*, 377.

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180. Ibid., 378.
181. Ibid., 331.
182. Ibid., 331.
183. Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy*, 228.
184. "Lecture 4: Common Sense" *Understanding and Being*, 88.
185. Ibid., 88-89.
186. Ibid., 91.
187. Ibid., 89.
188. Ibid., 91-92.
189. *Method in Theology*, 303.
190. Ibid., 303.
191. See Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York : Simon & Schuster, 2005.
192. See Claude Manceron, *Austerlitz; The Story of a Battle*. Translated by George Unwin New York, Norton, 1966.
193. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 128-129.
194. Ibid., 129.
195. *Method in Theology*, 317.
196. Brewster Ghiselin, *The Creative Process* (New York: The American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1955).
197. Henri Poincaré, "Mathematical Creation Poincaré" from *The Foundations of Science*, quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, 33-42, Poincaré apologized to his readers for using "barbarous" technical expressions like Fuchsian functions, non-Euclidean geometry, indeterminate ternary quadratic forms, which he feared might frighten them off before they realized that they need not understand the functions in order to grasp the process by which he had arrived at them. See Brewster Ghiselin, *The Creative Process: A Symposium*, 36.
198. Ibid., 36-37.
199. Ibid., 38.
200. Ibid., 38.
201. Ibid., 42.
202. Ibid., 38.
203. *Method in Theology*, 5.
204. Ibid., 5.
205. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 130. For the fascinating story of how common sense and science have shaped material substances from the Stone Age to the Silicon Age, see *The Substance of Civilization* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998) by Stephen L. Sass, professor of material science at Cornell University.
206. *Method in Theology*, 5.
207. "Method in Catholic Theology," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 29.
208. *Method in Theology*, 6.
209. "Method in Catholic Theology," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 32.
210. Ibid., 32.
211. *Method in Theology*, 6.
212. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 65-66. See also Brian Cronin, *Foundations of Philosophy: Lonergan's Cognitive Theory and Epistemology* (Nairobi: Consolata Institute Press, 1999) 137-137.
213. See *The Lonergan Reader*, 76-96; *Insight*, 53-62, 82-83, 103-139.
214. See Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 280.
215. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan's Philosophy*, 100.
216. Ibid. 65. For the invention and development of statistics, see Theodore M. Porter, *The Rise of Statistical Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
217. Ibid., 66.
218. Vincent van Gogh, "Letter to Anton Ridder van Rappard," quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, *The Creative*

Process, 54-55.

219. Hugo Meynell, *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, 70.

220. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 217.

221. *Insight*, 331.

222. "The kinds of question we ask are as many as the kinds of things which we know. They are in fact four: – (1) whether the connection of an attribute with the thing is a fact, (2) what is the reason of the connexion, (3) whether a thing exists, (4) what is the nature of the thing ... These, then, are the four kinds of question we ask, and it is in the answers to these questions that our knowledge consists." Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, II, 1, 89b 21-25; II, 2, 89b 36. Quoted in "The Analogy of Meaning" in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964 (CWL 6)*, 198 n36.

223. *Insight*, 411-412. Michael McCarthy in his admirable summary (*The Crisis in Philosophy*, 269-270) zeroes in on 'reflective insight' and its decisive role in the verification process: "Reflective inquiry is a pivotal return from the abstract propositional synthesis produced by developing insight to its concrete sources in sense and direct intelligence. It is a rational pivot from the abstract logical order back toward concrete experience. The truth conditions of the formulated proposition are understood abstractly, in an act of nonintuitive intellectual apprehension. But the evidence that bears on the satisfaction of these truth conditions ultimately is concrete. The process of reflective inquiry, of propositional verification, originates in the logical order, the order of presupposition and deductive implication, but it culminates finally in the order of concrete experience Without slighting the central role of logical inference in the activity of rational consciousness, we want to emphasize the experiential evidence that so often is neglected in today's epistemic theories."

224. "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection*, 239.

225. *Ibid.*, 240.

226. *Ibid.*, 240. *Quid sit* (what is it?); *cur ita sit* (why is it such?); *an sit* (is it? whether it is); *an honestum sit* (is it worthwhile? whether it is worthwhile).

227. *Ibid.*, 240.

228. *Ibid.*, 240.

229. *Method in Theology*, 77.

230. *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*. Edited by Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran, S.J. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 200.

231. Lonergan comments dryly that "the closer one's living resembles that of an infant, of a moron, of a man in a coma, the less the importance of meaning." Cf. "The Analogy of Meaning," Vol. 6: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 200.

232. *Method in Theology*, 77.

233. *Insight*, 252.

234. *Ibid.*, 323.

235. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1958-1964*, 224.

236. *Ibid.*, 224.

237. *Ibid.*, 222.

238. *Ibid.*, 225.

239. *Method in Theology*, 75. Also, see *Insight*, Chapter Ten.

240. "The Analogy of Meaning," Vol. 6. *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 198

241. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 206.

242. *Ibid.*, *Collection*, 206.

243. *Ibid.*, 206.

244. *Understanding and Being*, 391.

245. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 207.

246. More on myth in the chapter on the realm of transcendence.

247. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 215.

248. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 206-207.

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249. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 215.
250. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 207.
251. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 216.
252. *Ibid.*, 238.
253. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 207.
254. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 216.
255. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 207.
256. *Ibid.*, 208.
257. "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical-Mindedness," *A Second Collection*, 3.
258. *A Second Collection*, Introduction by William F. J. Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., vii.
259. *Ibid.*, viii.
260. *Method in Theology*, 9 and also 34-41. See Brian Cronin, *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective* (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, 2006) for a lucid and masterful presentation of Lonergan on the notion of value and on judgments of value.
261. *A Second Collection*, ix.
262. *Ibid.*, viii.
263. Brian Cronin, *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective*, 183 and 171-208. See also Robert Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), "virtually unconditioned in the realm of value," 58. Patrick Byrne, "Analogical Knowledge of God and the Value of Moral Endeavour," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 11.2 (1993), 103-135, especially 115-116. Michael Vertin, *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, 13.2 (Fall 1995), 221-248. Mark Doorley, *The Place of the Heart in Lonergan's Ethics: The Role of Feelings in Ethical Intentionality Analysis of Bernard Lonergan*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), "evaluative insight", 75.
264. *A Second Collection*, Introduction by William F. J. Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., ix.
265. André Gide, *The Journals of Gide*, Edited, Translated, Abridged, and with an Introduction by Justin O'Brien, Volume 1: 1889-1924, (New York: Vintage Books, Inc., 1956), 12.
266. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 277.
267. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 219. See also page 303, editorial note P.
268. See *Method in Theology*, 101-103; also *Insight*, 657-686.
269. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 277. See the chapter on the realm of transcendence.
270. *A Second Collection*, Introduction by William F. J. Ryan, S.J., and Bernard J. Tyrrell, S.J., ix.
271. *Ibid.*, 222; see also *Method in Theology*, 121-124.
272. *Method in Theology*, 316.
273. Brian Cronin, *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective*, 472-473.
274. *Ibid.*, 474.
275. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 210.
276. *Ibid.*, 210-211.
277. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol. 6: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 225.
278. *Ibid.*, 225-226.
279. *Ibid.*, 226.
280. "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 273. See also *Method in Theology*, 17.
281. *Method in Theology*, 85.
282. *Ibid.*, 239-240.
283. *Ibid.*, 85.
284. *Ibid.*, 52-55.
285. *Ibid.*, 238-240.

6

Intellectual Conversion

Intellectual conversion is a new beginning, a fresh start.¹ [It] is to acquire the mastery in one's own house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing.² Intellectual conversion is a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowledge.³

But if insight into insight is verifiable, then the consequent philosophy and metaphysics will be verifiable. In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements regarding sensible fact, so every statement in philosophy and metaphysics can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.⁴

Bernard Lonergan

We are now in a better position in our journey to understand one salient point Lonergan made earlier about human consciousness---the world of immediate experience is “but a tiny fragment of the world” mediated by meaning. This far larger mediated world is known, says Lonergan, “not by the sense experience of an individual but by the external and internal experience of a cultural community, and by the continuously checked and rechecked judgments of the community.”⁵ Indeed, it is a voluminous world, packed with meaning---“what we have found out for ourselves, but also all we care to learn from the memories of other men, from the common sense of the community, from the pages of literature, from the labors of scholars, from the investigations of scientists, from the experience of saints, from the meditations of philosophers and theologians.”⁶ It encompasses “the world of the believer, the world of the theologian, the world of realist philosophy, the world of human and natural science, and the world of common sense.”⁷ The world of meaning embraces all the realms we have been exploring with the help of Bernard Lonergan: the realm of common sense, the realm of theory, the realm of interiority we have just explored, and the realms of transcendence and art still to be explored in later chapters.

Generalized Empirical Method By this route Lonergan has arrived at the paramount goal he had been seeking all along: the discovery of a meta-method — a generalized empirical method which underlies the procedures of every conscious intentional activity and transcends the methods of any particular discipline. He was seeking, he tells us, “a common ground on which men [and women] of intelligence might meet.”⁸ Method, he says, is “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.”⁹ The operations of which he speaks occur at the various levels of

consciousness and are “just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit.” That means: “To know the good, it must know the real; to know the real, it must know the true; to know the true, it must know the intelligible; to know the intelligible, it must attend to the data.”¹⁰

Lonergan goes on to summarize the stages we can verify for ourselves in the amazing process by which the eros of the human spirit unfolds in its quest for what is good, true, beautiful:

So from slumber, we awake to attend. Observing lets intelligence be puzzled, and we inquire. Inquiry leads to the delight of insight, but insights are a dime a dozen, so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure. Alternative courses of action present themselves and we wonder whether the more attractive is truly good. Indeed, so intimate is the relation between the successive transcendental notions [the true, the good, the beautiful], that it is only by a specialized differentiation of consciousness that we withdraw from more ordinary ways of living to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, a philosophic pursuit of truth, a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty.¹¹

The Rock The most important conclusion the reader can draw from Bernard Lonergan’s analysis of human intentionality is that there exists in each of us what Lonergan calls the “rock.”¹² That bedrock is the human subject and its conscious operations. Indeed, you are the rock. It is you yourself as a human subject — along with the intentional dynamism of the spirit that works itself out in the dynamic patterns of your intentional activities. You must advert to it, Lonergan insists, if you are to discover this “supporting rock” for yourself in yourself — in your own acts of experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, and loving.¹³ Indeed, at the bedrock of all human knowledge you discover, says Lonergan, not the “static concepts and abstract propositional statements” which you uncover, for instance, in the realm of geometry. No, you discover something much more foundational — the dynamic patterns of intentional activities from which stem all cognitive and volitional development and change. Discover the rock for yourself and on it you can construct a comprehensive cognitional theory to serve as the foundation of all your cognitional and volitional activity. Indeed, as Michael McCarthy points out, “Philosophy is the flowering of the individual’s intentional consciousness in its coming to know and take possession of itself.”¹⁴

All genuine human progress, Lonergan concludes, depends upon adherence to five imperatives or what he calls transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligence, Be reasonable, Be responsible, Be loving. Lonergan spells out their meaning:

Being attentive includes attention to human affairs. Being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrealized possibilities. Being reasonable includes the rejection of what probably would not work but also the acknowledgment of what probably would. Being responsible includes basing one’s decisions and choices on an unbiased evaluation of short-term and long-term costs and benefits to oneself, to one’s group, to two other groups.¹⁵

To repeat, the human subject is the rock and, says Lonergan, “the precise character of the rock....is the subject in his conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility.”¹⁶ Make no mistake. You are the rock.

These patterns are operative in the cognitional activities of any thinking subject waiting to be discovered. And yet, paradoxically as Michael McCarthy notes, philosophers have “rarely acknowledged, investigated or brought [these patterns] to the full level of intentional articulation.” The neglect of the subject and its operations has in Lonergan’s judgment been a “momentous” failure, a tragic oversight that has deprived philosophers of “the critical base” upon which to “unify and organize the diverse fields of cognitive meaning.”¹⁷

Intellectual Conversion But once you come to an awareness of transcendental method in all of your cognitional and volitional activities, once you affirm the reality of its basis in the dynamic structure of your own knowing and choosing, you undergo what Lonergan calls *intellectual conversion*. As Patrick Byrne has put it: to grasp the insight that happens in understanding something as simple as “2+2+4” demands the intellectual conversion of which Lonergan speaks.¹⁸ Briefly, intellectual conversion for Lonergan is “the recognition and affirmation that the dynamic structure of one’s own knowing and choosing consists of the compound set of operations---experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.”¹⁹

But make no mistake: such recognition and affirmation are difficult to come by. Lonergan is the first to admit that “cognitional self-transcendence is neither an easy notion to grasp nor a readily accessible datum of consciousness to be verified.”²⁰ Nor is it, obviously, “just a matter of finding out and assenting to a number of true propositions.” What is it, then? “More basically,” he says, “it is a matter...of a personal philosophic experience, of moving out of a world of sense and of arriving, dazed and disorientated for a while, into a universe of being.”²¹ Dazed and disoriented? Just reflect for a moment how unsettling it can be merely to address the question of personal philosophic experience. Sage philosopher Iris Murdoch reminds us how the effort to think as a philosopher thinks can send tremors through the familiar *terra firma* on which we plant our feet:

I think philosophy is very counter-natural, it is a very odd unnatural activity. Any teacher of philosophy must feel this. Philosophy disturbs the mass of semi-aesthetic conceptual habits on which we normally rely....It is not easy to persuade people to *look* at the level where philosophy operates.²²

Take that first step and immediately you come up against a second difficulty---the task bristles with complications. In itself, Lonergan argues, intellectual conversion is “essentially simple.” Upon reaching the age of reason, he maintains, everyone “spontaneously ...drops earlier criteria of reality..., and proceeds to operate on the criteria of sufficient evidence or sufficient reason.” But spontaneous intellectual conversion can become “insecure.” Why? For one simple reason. The task of objectifying for oneself what is meant by sufficient evidence or sufficient reason easily becomes “excessively

complex,” while “the objectification of taking a good look is simplicity itself.”²³ In fact, it is all but irresistible for many beginners who try their hand at philosophy to imagine that knowing is like taking a look. For them, “some form of naive realism seems to appear utterly unquestionable.” All you must do, budding philosophers assume, is pay attention and you will ‘see’ meaning. Indeed, “as soon as they begin to speak of knowing, of objectivity, of reality, there crops up the assumption that all knowing must be something like looking.”²⁴ But take just this one false step, Lonergan warns, and you begin to slip and slide. The consequences, says Lonergan, are predictable: “one becomes a naive realist; if one takes that seriously, one becomes an empiricist; if that proves uncomfortable, one can move on to idealism; then to pragmatism; then to phenomenology.”²⁵

To liberate oneself from what Lonergan calls the “blunder”---imagining that knowing is like taking a look---and to discover for oneself the actual process of coming to know “is to break open long-ingrained habits of thought and speech.”²⁶ The discovery can come, as we have noted, with the force of an earthquake and can contribute to what he takes to be a common condition---“the native bewilderment of the existential subject, revolted by mere animality, unsure of his way through the maze of philosophies, trying to live without a known purpose, suffering despite an unmotivated will, threatened with inevitable death and, before death, with disease and even insanity.”²⁷

But, Lonergan is quick to add, have no fear. the advantages that result from the earthquake however unnerving---are manifold and in time will compensate for the initial vertigo. Indeed, the upheaval is such that Lonergan can only define the experience as “a conversion, a new beginning, a fresh start.”²⁸ One emerges from the rubble as from darkness into broad daylight, through what Lonergan calls a process of intellectual conversion---“a radical clarification and, consequently, the elimination of an exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth concerning reality, objectivity, and human knowing.”²⁹ By intellectual conversion, he says, one acquires “the mastery in one’s own house that is to be had only when one knows precisely what one is doing when one is knowing.”³⁰ You possess an explanatory account of the terms and relations of your own consciousness. You know what is real as the result of a judgment you reach by satisfying all the available and relevant questions.

Dialectic What is more, intellectual conversion “opens the way to ever further clarifications and developments” in the realms of meaning and in the history of philosophy.³¹ It is Lonergan’s basic contention that “if insight into insight is verifiable, then the consequent philosophy and metaphysics will be verifiable.” What he means is that “just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements concerning sensible fact, so every statement in philosophy and metaphysics can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.”³² Once you undergo intellectual conversion---once in possession of the rock by self-appropriation, you are equipped with the ability to engage in dialectic.³³ Dialectic is the art of examining ideas logically in an effort to determining their validity.³⁴ Dialectic deals with conflict, with the philosophical wars that have raged between positions and counter-positions from the pre-Socratic dawn of philosophy in the West.³⁵

Positions and Counter-positions For Lonergan, “positions invite development and

counter-positions invite reversal.”³⁶ Lonergan explains:

In any philosophy, it is possible to distinguish between its cognitional theory and on the other hand its pronouncements on metaphysical, ethical, and theological issues. Let us name the cognitional theory the basis, and the other pronouncements the expansion. The inevitable philosophic component, immanent in the formulation of cognitional theory, will be either a position or else a basic counter-position.

Lonergan defines the terms position and counter-position with precision:

It will be a basic position,

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

On the other hand it will be a basic counter-position, if it contradicts one or more of the basic positions.³⁷

In consequence, Lonergan provides us with the tools to examine critically the epistemological starting points of Descartes, Hume, Kant, the higher criticism of the German biblical exegetes, the postmodernists, and modern sceptics like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett and identify them as basic counter-positions. Lonergan gives a simple example: Cartesian dualism. Cartesianism contains a basic position and a basic counter-position.

The basic position is the *cogito, ergo sum*....As Descartes did not endow it with [sufficient] clarity and precision..., its further development is invited by such questions as, What is the self? What is thinking? What is being? What are the relations between them?

On the other hand, the basic counter-position is the affirmation of the *res extensa*; it is real as a subdivision of the ‘already out there now’; its objectivity is a matter of extroversion [that is, a matter of taking a look]; knowing it is not a matter of inquiry and reflection.

The counter-position invited reversal, first at the hands of Hobbes (he reduced *res cogitans* to *res extensa*) and then by Hume (he reduced anything ‘already out there now real’ to manifolds of impressions linked by mere habits and beliefs) and by Lonergan himself, as we saw in an earlier chapter. With the reversal of the counter-position, says Lonergan, “one is back at the thinking subject and, at the term of this reversal, one’s philosophy is enriched not only by a stronger affirmation of the basic position but also by an explicit negation of the basic counter-position.”³⁸

For Lonergan then positions are statements you reach by inquiry, understanding,

and judgment, statements that are “compatible with intellectual, moral and religious conversion.” With them you can integrate “fresh data and further discovery.”³⁹ Counter-positions are statements that are “incompatible with intellectual, moral or religious conversion.” Subject them to cross examination and they turn up flawed by some flight from understanding that skews the conclusion. Fortunately, counter-positions can be “reversed when the incompatible elements are removed.”⁴⁰

With this understanding of dialectic, Lonergan views the history of philosophy as “a sequence of contributions to a single but complex goal.” In the course of history, he writes,

significant discoveries, because they are not the prerogative of completely successful philosophers, are expressed either as positions or as counter-positions. But positions invite development, and so the sequence of discoveries expressed as positions should form a unified, cumulative structure that can be enriched by adding the discoveries initially expressed as counter-positions. On the other hand, since counter-positions invite reversal, a free unfolding of human thought should tend to separate the discovery from its author’s bias in the measure that its presuppositions are examined and its implications tested.⁴¹

What then it is the high function of dialectic? To bring conflicts out into the open, uncover the flights from understanding that skew counter-positions, and in the end—a highly ambitious goal indeed—bring peace among the warring philosophies.⁴² In other words, one is finally in a position to deal effectively with the prevailing and false assumption that after all philosophy is nothing but argument without end.

Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity without Objectivity It is time to come to grips with the problem of objectivity. By the middle of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, there was the wholesale shift of emphasis in philosophy from substance to the ‘subject’. Philosophers like Schopenhauer had come to judge the metaphysics of absolute idealism to be ‘bankrupt’ and ‘irrelevant to living’ and focused his energies on the ‘subject’. Kierkegaard, as we have seen, had reacted as if by instinct, professing his Christian faith ‘in the teeth of Hegelian philosophy’ and crying out ‘At least I have to live.’ Lonergan reminds us that Kierkegaard could not come up with a philosophical refutation of Hegel. Undeterred, Kierkegaard insisted on the rationally self-conscious subject and affirmed “I exist, and I have to live, and I have to be a man, and I have to be a Christian.” That stubborn affirmation of the subject in Kierkegaard, says Lonergan, “is blind; it ties in with faith as confidence, the Lutheran tradition of faith, not faith as believing truths.”⁴³

Again in the twentieth century, says Lonergan, that same blind affirmation of the subject “came alive... in various types of philosophy which at least apparently are anti-rational and anti-intellectual.” Existentialist philosophers like Heidegger and others, Lonergan says, are “extremely intelligent ...; they do philosophy extraordinarily well.” They insist on the importance of the responsible existential subject. But they “brush aside” the question of objectivity. In particular they sweep positivism aside, saying in effect:

We need to get beyond positivism if we are to lead human lives.... By positivism we mean what the scientists can tell us; and what they can tell us doesn't connect with the problems of living, and deciding, and being oneself.⁴⁴

And so up to the present---as we have seen in the chapter on the rise of intentionality analysis---the philosophical reaction against positivism since Kierkegaard has been an emphasis on subjectivity and intersubjectivity. It is an emphasis with which Lonergan heartily agrees: "everything that is said in praise of subjectivity and intersubjectivity and *Existenz*, of the subject determining what his own living is to be, making himself at the present time, is all excellent."⁴⁵ But unfortunately it often happens that the question of objectivity goes unanswered.

Lonergan is not shy about admitting that, when he was a professor at Rome's Gregorian University, students from northern Europe heavily influenced his own intellectual development:

I was learning all the time myself; I was moving into the European atmosphere in which phenomenology was dominant. There were highly trained students from German and France, Belgium and Northern Italy.⁴⁶

"No use insisting on objectivity" with them, he reports, "but if you talk subjectivity, well, you start talking sense." His account continues:

In Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, Northern Italy, objectivity is finished. "Well, [the student would say,] that's all right for natural scientists, and so on. When you're talking on a subject like religion, you just have to blot that out. You'll putter around with diagrams and never get anywhere."

What was going on in their heads? Lonergan's best guess was:

They're conceiving objectivity in a positivistic fashion usually. But the complexity of the philosophies, going through them all and so on, finding your way through, is such that they're blocked on that. They're convinced that there's no way out, no use trying. Especially the "no use trying"---that's always a perfect block. It saves a lot of work.⁴⁷

Is Kant, Lonergan asks, at the root of the problem of objectivity? His answer: a thunderous Yes:

Kant is fundamental. Kant has not generally been thought through; he is not out of date yet. Jaspers, for example, proves an extremely rich writer and penetrating.... Kantian limitations run straight through all his thinking. Now there are other people who try to get around these somehow or other; Heidegger contains potentialities of getting beyond Kant, but he can't push through. . . . Kant is still a problem.⁴⁸

Must one conclude then, Lonergan asks, that subjectivity necessarily implies a lack of objectivity? His answer is an emphatic ‘No’, insistent, shot through with feeling: “No, no, no. Subjectivity need not imply any negation of objectivity.” People who concentrate on subjectivity, he argues, will still “insist on being perceptive and not being stupid, not being silly; and that’s what being objective is.” What is missing, what they still lack, Lonergan explains, is a “*theory of objectivity*”⁴⁹ In fact, there are abundant theories available and yet the vexing problem persists. Lonergan writes:

I have given six theories of objectivity: empiricist, rationalist, idealist, naive-realist, Kantian, and my own theory of objectivity as a compound. As you can imagine, there are many people who study all six theories and many more, and what do they do in the end? They throw up their hands: “Objectivity is for the birds.”⁵⁰

The Objectivity of Knowing The overriding need then is for a verifiable theory—a theory that will stand up under critical cross examination. What is Lonergan’s theory of objectivity? He offers the all important epistemological theorem that “knowledge in the proper sense is knowledge of reality.” By that he means, “knowledge is intrinsically objective.” Objectivity is “the intrinsic relation of knowing to being;” indeed one can affirm that “being and reality are identical.”⁵¹ Lonergan gets down to specifics: “If I am asked whether mice and men really exist, I am not answering the question when I talk about images of mice and men, concepts of mice and men, or the words, mice and men; I answer the question only if I affirm or deny the real existence of mice and men.”⁵²

Put it another way: if you perform each step of the process of coming-to-know correctly (i.e., experiencing, understanding, judging), the knowledge you reach is objective. The objectivity of human knowing is thus for Lonergan “not a single property of a single operation, but a triad of properties found in distinct operations.”⁵³ Therefore, if you answer the questions (What is it? Is it so?) correctly, you reach objectivity—the concrete mice and men you come to know by this process—experiencing, understanding, judging—really exist. Period.

Next, objectivity depends upon intentionality—the intrinsic objectivity of human cognitional activity depends upon its intentionality. Lonergan reminds us that Edmund Husserl “by his painstaking analysis of intentionality made it evident that human thinking and judging are not just psychological events but always and intrinsically intend, refer to, mean objects distinct from themselves.”⁵⁴ Intentionality is the driving force within human consciousness; it is “the dominant content of the dynamic structure that assembles and unites several activities into a single knowing of a single object.”⁵⁵ Intentionality is the driving force by which “human intelligence actively greets every content of experience with the perplexity, the wonder, the drive, the intention, that may be thematized by (but does not consist in) such questions as, What is it? Why is it so?” It is the driving force by which “inquiry through insight issues forth in thought that, when scrutinized, becomes formulated in definitions, postulates, suppositions, hypotheses, theories.”⁵⁶ Finally, it is the driving force by which “thought in turn is actively greeted by human rationality with a reflective exigence that, when thematized, is expressed in such questions as, Is that so? Are you certain?” Whenever you marshal and weigh all the evidence, when you judge or

doubt, says Lonergan, you are making “efforts to say of what is that it is and of what is not that it is not.”⁵⁷ The conclusion is inescapable: what “the dynamic structure of human knowing intends [is] being.”⁵⁸ The intentionality of human consciousness stretches out beyond oneself toward being. Intentionality is the driving force that brings one from impersonal existence as a substance to the presence of a person in the world.⁵⁹

Intentionality is thus “the originating drive of human knowing.” That stretching of the conscious human spirit beyond oneself---what Lonergan calls the eros of the human spirit. Lonergan gives ‘eros’ a careful analysis:

Consciously, intelligently, rationally it goes beyond: beyond data to intelligibility; beyond intelligibility to truth and through truth to being; and beyond known truth and being to truth and being still to be known. But though it goes beyond, it does not leave behind. It goes beyond to add, and when it has added, it unites. It is the active principle that calls forth in turn our several cognitional activities and, as it assembles them into single instances of knowing, so it assembles their many partial objects into single total objects. By inquiry it moves us from sensing to understanding only to combine the sense and understood into an object of thought. By reflection it moves us from objects of thought through rationally compelling evidence to judgments about reality. From the partial knowledge we have reached it sends us back to fuller experiencing, fuller understanding, broader and deeper judgments, for what it intends includes far more than we succeed in knowing. It is all-inclusive, but the knowing we reach is always limited.⁶⁰

Because intentionality is all-inclusive, it is unrestricted: there is nothing that can escape being questioned. Intentionality is likewise comprehensive: you can question every aspect of everything---ultimately any aspect of the entire “universe in its full concreteness.”⁶¹ The universe in its full concreteness is being and being so understood is the same thing as reality. Whatever is is real; and so being and reality both include “the concrete totality of everything.”⁶²

Further, objectivity in act is not some single property of human knowing. True, says Lonergan, “empiricists have tried to find the ground of objectivity in experience, rationalists have tried to place it in necessity, idealists have had recourse to coherence.”⁶³ Each, says Lonergan, is partly right in what each affirms, each partly wrong in what each excludes. Actually, as he maintains, objectivity in act (i.e., in the structured activities of knowing) is a compound of three properties each of which is quite different from the others. The objectivity of human knowing is what Lonergan calls “a triple cord” compound ---a cord with three strands:

- There is an experiential component that resides in the givenness of relevant data;
- There is a normative component that resides in the exigencies of intelligence and rationality guiding the process of knowing from data to judging;
- There finally is an absolute component that is reached when reflective understanding combines the normative and the experiential elements into a

virtually unconditioned, i.e., a conditioned whose conditions are fulfilled.⁶⁴

In other words, he concludes, the objectivity of human knowing depends upon “an unrestricted intention and an unconditioned result.”⁶⁵ For instance, if I ask whether mice and men really exist, a true answer expresses an unconditioned: they exist. Lonergan gives the following surgically precise explanation, moving from step to step with painstaking care:

Mice and men are contingent, and so their existence has its conditions. My knowing mice and men is contingent and so my knowing of their existence has its conditions. But the conditions of the conditioned may be fulfilled, and then the conditioned is virtually an unconditioned; it has the properties of an unconditioned, not absolutely, but de facto. Because human knowing reaches such an unconditioned, it transcends itself. For the unconditioned *qua* unconditioned cannot be restricted, qualified, limited; and so we all distinguish sharply between what is and, on the other hand, what appears, what seems to be, what is imagined or thought or might possibly or probably be affirmed; in the latter cases the object is still tied down by relativity to the subject; in the former the self-transcendence of human knowing has come to its term...

And so, Lonergan’s conclusion? “When we say that something is, we mean that its reality does not depend upon our cognitional activity.”⁶⁶ When by this process we affirm that mice and men exist, their actual existence does not depend on the thought process by which I come to know them.

We pause for a moment to take stock. For Lonergan, “knowing is not just seeing; it is experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing.” And the criteria of objectivity? Not just “the criteria of ocular vision” (that’s just the cognitional myth), but “the compounded criteria” of experiencing, of understanding, of judging, and of deciding (that’s the cognitional fact). In other words, “the reality known is not just looked at; it is given in experience, organized and extrapolated by understanding, posited by judgment and belief.”⁶⁷ If I come to know by experiencing, understanding, and judging, my subjectivity is authentic. As so, Lonergan reaches the conclusion that sums up his efforts: authentic subjectivity yields objectivity: “...in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.” However much various disciplines may differ, they have for Lonergan “the common feature that their objectivity is the fruit of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.”⁶⁸

Lonergan is dealing here with what he calls transcendental method—the method of self-appropriation or self-knowing. Joseph Flanagan develops the idea with clarity:

The key step in learning this method is to discover that, in every correct judgment, you are not asserting what you think is so; you are actually affirming a fact that is true or probably true independently of your saying so. Such independent judgments commit you to a realm of factual realities

that other knowers may in turn verify for themselves. Even the most personal or private facts, if they are facts, are public and communally verifiable. This leads to the surprising, and, at first, paradoxical, fact that to be a truly objective knower of what is so, you must be faithful to your own immediate, spontaneous desire to know and its objective. Your desire to know provides you with the immanent norms and directives for knowing what reality is, including the reality that constitutes you. The norm for being an objective knower is achieved not by being a faithful observer of the sensible realities surrounding you, but by mediating such immediate, sensible realities through your own acts of understanding and judging.⁶⁹

To come to understand and accept this epistemological position is what Lonergan means by intellectual conversion---conversion from cognitional myth to cognitional fact.

If I have come this far with Lonergan, I can ask myself, Who am I? The answer is "I am a critical realist."

The Philosophical Consequences of Intellectual Conversion The epistemological consequences of intellectual conversion are far reaching, sending shock waves through the entire philosophical enterprise. First of all, says Lonergan, "the philosophy and metaphysics that result from insight into insight will be verifiable." Lonergan argues as follows:

For just as scientific insights both emerge and are verified in the colours and sounds, tastes, and odours, of ordinary experience, so insight into insight both emerges and is verified in the insights of mathematicians, scientists, and men of common sense. But if insight into insight is verifiable, then the consequent philosophy and metaphysics will be verifiable. In other words, just as every statement in theoretical science can be shown to imply statements regarding sensible fact, so every statement in philosophy and metaphysics can be shown to imply statements regarding cognitional fact.⁷⁰

Indeed, if you allow the dynamic process of your detached and disinterested inquiry to function without impediment, Lonergan predicts, insights will "emerge with a notable frequency."

The Flight from Understanding But, he warns, besides insight into insights there are "oversights." Let bias skew inquiry and the result will be a flight from understanding; from then on oversights will occur "regularly and one might almost say systematically." Flight from understanding, moreover, is not simply "a peculiar aberration that afflicts only the unfortunate or the perverse." What is worse, the flight from understanding can block true insight. It occurs in the case of many philosophers---the result of "an incomplete development in the intelligent and reasonable use of one's own intelligence and reasonableness." The flight from insight can indeed be "covert and

devious...resourceful and inventive, effective and extraordinarily plausible.”⁷¹ It is “quite competent to work out a philosophy so acute and profound that the elect strive in vain and for centuries to lay bare its real inadequacies.”⁷² Lonergan’s conclusion? “If insight into insight is not to be an oversight of oversights, it must include an insight into the principal devices of the flight from understanding.”⁷³

Obviously, it will be highly advantageous then to have “an insight into the principal devices of the flight from understanding.”⁷⁴ You will be able to discriminate “between the products of the detached and disinterested desire to understand and...the products of the flight from understanding.”⁷⁵ Indeed, Lonergan is utterly convinced that conversion from the cognitional myth of knowing as seeing to cognitional fact makes possible anyone’s intellectual conversion from naive realism, empiricism, and idealism to critical realism.

Intellectual Conversion from Naive Realism First, conversion from naive realism. The naive realist is one who “knows the world mediated by meaning but thinks he knows it by looking.”⁷⁶ Indeed, he quite correct in asserting “the validity of human knowing, but mistakenly attributes the objectivity of human knowing, not to human knowing, but to some component in human knowing.”⁷⁷ He assumes as true what Lonergan calls the “exceedingly stubborn and misleading myth” about the process by which one comes to know and then about what is objective and real. The naive realist jumps to an erroneous conclusion and makes the claim that “knowing is a matter of taking a good look; objectivity is a matter of seeing what is there to be seen; reality is whatever is given in immediate experience.”⁷⁸ By this point you will have surely verified for yourself that you come to know, not by taking a look, but by experiencing, understanding, and judging.

Intellectual Conversion from Empiricism Second, conversion from empiricism. Naive realism gave birth to empiricism.⁷⁹ David Hume’s basic contention was explosive: cause and effect habitually float along side each other in consciousness as time goes by with no discernible link between them. Hume the empiricist insists on data and he is right, for “in the givenness of data” one contacts “the experiential component of objectivity.” But he is mistaken, according to Lonergan’s analysis, in limiting “objective knowledge to sense experience” and maintaining that “understanding and conceiving, judging and believing are merely subjective activities.”^{80,81}

To assert that what is real is “what is given in immediate experience” is in the end to empty from the world of reality “everything that is not given in immediate experience.”⁸² Hume’s analysis of experiential consciousness boxed him in and, in Lonergan’s judgment, shunted him into an inescapable philosophical cul de sac. Were Hume’s position on human understanding correct, then obviously belief in miracles and in religion based on miracles would be logically ridiculous. Where there in fact is no law of causality, you cannot rationally argue your way with plausibility from concrete sensible data to an existing suprasensible God. Put another way, any argument for the existence of God would have no basis in experiential consciousness. Indeed, it must be granted in passing that Hume was evenhanded in his criticism of traditional ways of thinking. He was as critical of science as he was of religion. He did not hesitate to call even “the magnificent creation” of Newtonian mechanics into question when he asserted that science as well as religion had no solid basis in reason.

Hume's first book on human understanding---unwieldy as it was---sank without a ripple. A second slimmed down version turned out to be dynamite. It gutted belief in Reason as well as belief in God. It jolted Kant out of his dogmatic slumber, made him question all he had hitherto taken to be secure dogma, and set him on the way to a radical reconstruction of philosophy and religion.⁸³ But for those who followed Hume and remained boxed in a Humean world of mere impressions,⁸⁴ the dykes of faith were breached and wave after wave of secular skepticism and agnosticism (empiricism, positivism, and logical analysis) flooded the philosophic landscape up to the present.⁸⁵ Indeed, Erick Przywara focused attention on one abiding legacy of the empiricist tradition. Hume's peremptory "thus far and no further"—constricting knowledge to sensation—set up boundaries---unbreachable for many—"that confine the individual consciousness and render doubtful the existence of a world in itself common to all." It is a philosophical position, observes Przywara, that "leads to that peculiar solipsism which may be regarded as the epistemological version of 'my house is my castle.'" Indeed Berkeley's solipsism, he concludes, "is not the antithesis of Locke and Hume, but their inner and necessary fulfillment."⁸⁶

It was at this point, as we have said, that Lonergan parted company with Hume in his celebrated 'assault on the citadel'. In Lonergan's judgment, Hume was correct in what he asserted and mistaken in what he excluded.⁸⁷ For Lonergan detected what he was convinced was the flaw in Hume's analysis of cognitional activity that would render futile any effort to attain knowledge of the external world with any objectivity. While it is true, as Hume maintained, that "neither the self nor the causal nexus [say, between bat and ball]" are detectable within sensible experience, nevertheless sensible "experience is not the only component of the cognitional process."⁸⁸ While it is possible "to slip into a lotus land in which mere presentations and representations are juxtaposed and successive," that is not, Lonergan protests, "my normal state." My inquiring mind is not normally content with the mere contemplation of sensible presentations, for there is much more to knowing than mere experiencing at the sensible level of operation. On the contrary. "The Humean world of mere impressions," he writes in a passage quoted earlier, "comes to me as a puzzle to be pieced together."⁸⁹ Lonergan wants "to understand,...to know what's up and where I stand" He wants to "inquire and catch on, see the thing to do and see that it is properly done." You are familiar, he says, with the story of Archimedes, and says that "though I've never enjoyed so remarkable an insight as Archimedes, still I do know what it is to miss the point and to get the point, not to have a clue and then to catch on, to see things in a new light, to grasp how they hang together, to come to know why, the reason, the explanation, the cause."⁹⁰

Lonergan cannot but acknowledge with all the world that Hume was "an extremely intelligent and reasonable man; his account of human knowledge is "persuasive." But there is a salient distinction that Lonergan insists must be made. There is the knowledge Hume uses in giving his account of knowledge, and there is the account of knowledge he gives: namely that "knowledge is a manifold of sense impressions linked by mere habits and beliefs." The knowledge Hume uses in giving his account of knowledge is "brilliant." But here we have the heart of the matter: for Lonergan, "in Hume the *author*,...and in the knowledge he uses to give his account, we have *more* than a manifold of sense impressions linked by habit." In other words, Hume is "persuasive, not because his knowledge is a manifold of sense impressions, but because it is the

product of intelligent and rational consciousness: if it were not, his account would not have been the acceptable and reasonable account it is, even though its content” is mistaken.⁹¹ In the last analysis, says Lonergan, “the intelligence and reasonableness of Hume’s criticizing were obviously quite different from the knowledge he so successfully criticized.” It would make more sense to “identify knowledge with the criticizing activity” of Hume’s mind rather than with “the criticized materials.”⁹²

Actually, says Lonergan, Hume’s own way of proceeding reveals the gaping flaw in his understanding of human understanding. For in fact the understanding which Hume uses in analyzing the thought process is not just taking a look at a stream of sense-impressions in consciousness. In the very act of his analysis, Hume is unwittingly using intelligence and reflection---additional components in the process of human understanding over and beyond mere sensation. Such intelligence and reflection can in no way be reduced to the sense-experiences upon which they are exercised. Even for Hume, though he does not for all his genius advert to it, human knowing is not merely “taking a look;” it also includes understanding and judgment. Lonergan in effect catches Hume red handed in the *flagrante delicto philosophic* that Hume himself had proscribed.

Despite Hume’s flagrant flight from understanding, the cognitional myth that knowing is like seeing has provided “the unshakable foundations of materialism, empiricism, positivism, sensism, phenomenalism, behaviorism, pragmatism.”⁹³ Unshakable, that is, for believers in the myth. For empiricists of all stripes what counts is looking, not judging.⁹⁴ The empiricist takes flight from understanding; he fails “to note all the structuring elements [understanding, judging] that are constitutive of human knowing yet not given to sense.”⁹⁵ In Lonergan’s analysis, Hume and Comte and the rest of the positivists stand---quite simply---in need of intellectual conversion from cognitional myth to cognitional fact.

Intellectual Conversion from Idealism Next, conversion from idealism. Empiricism, says Lonergan, “begets” idealism. Indeed, an idealism that is critical of empiricism.⁹⁶ The idealist dismisses the empiricist’s notions of knowledge and reality as ‘nonsense’. “The strength of the idealist position,” Lonergan is quick to admit, “is the sharpness with which it refutes the mistaken claims of naive realists.” The weakness of the idealist position? “Its inability to break completely with the confusion introduced by naive realism” and its assumption that knowing is taking a look.⁹⁷ Indeed, “the idealist insists that human knowing always includes understanding as well as sense; but he retains the empiricist’s notion of reality, and so he thinks of the world mediated by meaning as not real but ideal.”⁹⁸ For Kant, “our knowing is in immediate relation to the known only through *Anschauung* (appearances), taking a look (*for Kant, what you take a look at are phenomena*)” (emphasis added).⁹⁹ Lonergan points out:

An idealist holds that, if we did perceive [reality directly], we would know; but in fact we do not perceive reality; and so we do not really know; all we can achieve are the immanent activities of meaning, and all we reach by meaning is the meant. We are boxed within a world of meaning, and as we cannot get beyond it, we can never know anything more than what we mean.¹⁰⁰

This takes some explaining. According to Lonergan, the idealist is amused by the philosophical innocence of the naïve realists. They simply miss the distinction between appearance and reality. The idealist grants that appearance is not “illusion or hallucination.” By appearance, he means what any naïve realist like Jack or Jill really sees. Lonergan suggests the simple example of an outstretched hand. Jack and Jill see “the shape of an outstretched hand, its color, the lines that marked it, its position in front of the head.” They cannot see, of course, “the feelings inside the hand and the conjunction in ordinary experience of the feelings with the visible object.” The idealist accurately concludes: all that Jack and Jill see (shape, color, lines on the palm, and position) are not reality but appearance.

How does the idealist establish the logic of his position? He argues this way, writes Lonergan:

When I lift a lump of lead, I may report either that the lead is heavy or that the lead feels heavy. When I gaze out my window at a green field, I may report either that the field is green or that the field looks green.

Closer scrutiny reveals, Lonergan continues, that one report is not the same as the other:

When I say ‘is heavy’ or ‘is green,’ I am using language that purports to report the real properties of real things. When I say ‘feels heavy’ or ‘looks green,’ I am not committing myself to any statement about the objective properties of the things but, on the contrary, am limiting my statement to impressions made on me. Hence it is quite possible for one to say that, while he does not know whether or not the field really is green, at least it appears green to him. Knowledge of appearance, then, is one thing; and knowledge of reality is another.¹⁰¹

The idealist is able, according to Lonergan, to subject the example of Jack and Jill to further critical analysis:

Now what does Jack know when he looks at his hand? What does Jill know when she looks at hers? Two answers are possible, so Jack may say that his hand *is* out there in front of his face, and Jill may say that her hand at least *seems* to be out there in front of her face.

The difference between what Jack and Jill say is easy to spot:

When Jack says ‘is,’ he is not reporting what he knows by sight alone [the sight of his hand]; he also has made a judgment [it’s out there in front of my face]; he has added *Denken* [thought and judgment] to *Anschauung* [appearance]. When Jill says ‘seems,’ she is limiting her report to what is known by sight alone; the act of reporting involves thought and judgment; but what is reported is simply and solely what is known by her seeing, the appearance of a hand in front of her face.¹⁰²

The idealist, Lonergan explains, could well extend the meaning of “appearance” even further. “What is true of outer sense,” he might say, “also is true of inner sense: by our consciousness we know, not our reality, but only its appearance.” By that, he explains:

...when we inquire, understand, think, we have only appearances [= Hume’s sense impressions] to investigate, to understand, to think about. When we judge, our judgments must be based, not on things themselves, but only on their appearance.¹⁰³

Giovanni Sala gives a useful summary of Kant’s thinking to this point:

The beginning of the cognitional process is a realistic one: things themselves affect our senses [Jack and Jill’s pail of water, for instance] and so they set our faculties of knowing in motion. But in the following cognitional process the faculty “supplies from itself” an element (indeed formal elements: the intuitions of sensibility and the categories of understanding), so that the result of the process is the knowledge of an object which — as known — is no longer a thing in itself; on the contrary it is a product of the subject. This means that the outcome of the cognitive process is knowledge in an idealistic sense.¹⁰⁴

Lonergan in turn summarizes Kant’s position vis-a-vis knowledge of objects:

...the one way in which our cognitional activities are related to objects immediately is by *Anschauung*, by intuition. Since for Kant our only intuitions are sensitive, it follows that the categories of the understanding and the ideals of reason of themselves are empty; they refer to objects only mediately, only inasmuch as they are applied to the objects intuited by sense. Accordingly, our cognitional activity is restricted to a world of possible experience and that a world not of metaphysical realities but of sensible phenomena.

The idealist draws one ironclad conclusion from all this: “There is no way in which knowledge of reality [noumena] could creep into our cognitional operations.”¹⁰⁵

Lonergan draws attention to “the pivotal importance of empirical *Anschauung*” in Kant’s cognitional theory.¹⁰⁶ According to Kant, Lonergan points out, “the only *Anschauung* [looking, perceiving] we enjoy is sensitive; sense does not know noumena [things-in themselves, like an outstretched hand or a pail of water]; and so our concepts and principles have no reference to noumena [the pail of water in itself]. Human cognitional activity is confined to phenomena [appearances of things].”¹⁰⁷

Again, Giovanni Sala’s summary of Kant’s precise understanding of the cognitional process is useful:

There is in our knowledge a passive or receptive moment of sensibility. This and only this . . . mediates us reality. But as soon as we try to know

the reality which has affected our senses, the a priori forms of sense and of understanding intervene, so that what we come to know is the reality “for us,” “relative to us”; in a word reality as it appears to us: “appearance (*Erscheinung*).”¹⁰⁸

For Kant, you will remember, the meaning of object is something that lies opposite---“something sensible, localized, locally related presumably to a spectator or sensitive subject.”¹⁰⁹ For Kant, the mind is hard-wired by its nature as mind to take a look (an *Anschauung*) at phenomena in the mind and come up with some knowledge of noumena (objects outside the mind)—knowing them as located in space and fixed in time, past, present, or future. Note with care: for Kant *Anschauung* is only of phenomena of the objects, not the objects themselves. The only way you can know an object is to take a look at the phenomena of the object in the mind. When *Anschauung* operates in this way, you have concepts. This is the key to Kant’s cognitive theory.¹¹⁰ Note also: Kant does not deny the existence of the objects (indeed the whole world) outside the subject who knows; only the possibility of the subject reaching any objective knowledge of objects that may exist outside the subject. For Kant the Cartesian gap is unbridgeable.

The central issue here, for Lonergan, is how much ‘knowing’ comes from the subject and how much from the object. For idealists like Kant, ‘knowing’ is “a matter of confrontation, of taking a look, of seeing what is there, intuition.” Knowing is what comes from the look, from something “given in the look and what is known is what is out there to be looked at and seen when one looks.” You may distinguish between sensible looks (looks through one’s senses) and spiritual looks (looks with one’s intellect, interior and spiritual x-rays that penetrate the essence of things and see the essence that is there.)¹¹¹ As we said, a Kantian ‘look’ yields concepts. And so, in Lonergan’s judgment, it follows that Kant and the idealists who follow him, however admirable their achievements, all stand in need of intellectual conversion from cognitional myth to cognitional fact.

For Lonergan, knowing is a matter of cognitional fact. For him, in contrast to Kant, an object is what you know in a true judgment. An object is what is; you say of it, It is. It is a virtually unconditioned. Moreover, any object that is and is also a knower is what Lonergan identifies as a subject—“the unity-identity-whole that senses, perceives, imagines, inquires, understands, conceives, reflects, grasps the virtually unconditioned, and judges.”¹¹² For Kant, intuition (*Anschauung*) yields concepts, but Kant’s analysis of coming-to-know is flawed by having no “recognition of judgment and grasp of the unconditioned: he does not make the unconditioned a key point.”¹¹³

Here is where the issue of the bridge between subject and object shows up. Knowledge is something that goes on in the knower, in the subject. Knowledge is a process within the subject. But how does the subject know anything besides himself? By the process that can yield judgments. Thus, you experience, understand, grasp the unconditioned, and judgment follows. Experiencing, understanding, grasping sufficient evidence terminates in judgment. Follow the process and you know the subject and you know objects. There is no problem of a bridge to cross from subject to object. Lonergan is confident that if you can reach the judgment, you are there. You have arrived at knowledge that is objective. He reasons:

An object means no more than that A is. If I am A, and A is, and B is, and A is not B, then we have a subject: I am a knower . . . ; and we have an object: something that A knows, that I know, that is not myself, that is not the subject. Through true propositions, you can arrive at an objective world. This is the principal notion of objectivity.¹¹⁴

With Kant in mind, Lonergan pursues the matter further. Judgment moves you into the realm of absolute objectivity. He reasons: A is, B is; A is not B; consequently there are at least two in the realm of absolute objectivity. Jack is and Jill is; Jack is not Jill; here there are two. If A is a knower and B is not, then A is a subject and B is not a subject but just an object. If Jack is a knower and his pail of water is not, then Jack is a subject and the pail of water is not a subject but an object. And “when you say ‘I am’, when you make that true judgment, you know yourself as in that absolute realm” of objectivity. You exist and know you exist and you state it absolutely, ‘I am’. This judgment does not give you a *sense* of yourself; you have to have that sense beforehand, if you are to be able to make the judgment properly,---experiencing, understanding, and grasping the concrete evidence for your existence. Of course, for the judgment to happen, you must be “familiar with your own experience and intelligence and reasonableness. But that familiarity is just the experiential side.” When you move on in the process of knowing yourself, you come to know yourself through judgment, “you know yourself as objectified.” If you know your ‘self’ as objectified---as affirmed as subject, you know yourself with absolute objectivity. You exist and you are sure of it. By the same process of coming-to-know, you work your way through the absolute realm of objectivity dividing up the objects you encounter there by means of the relevant set of judgments.¹¹⁵

Again, with Kant in mind, Lonergan pursues his alternative analysis of cognition: Objectivity involves a multiplicity of true judgments falling within a certain pattern. But absolute objectivity is found in each judgment by itself. The virtually unconditioned is an unconditioned, and an unconditioned is an absolute. An unconditioned is not dependent, qua unconditioned, on anything. Not depending on anything, it is not dependent on the subject. The process of knowing, when you grasp the unconditioned and affirm it, moves beyond subjectivity by the mere fact that you reach an unconditioned.

Further, writes Lonergan:

You step in, through the judgment, into an absolute realm. There is nothing outside being that can take a look at it and have being as its object. If it is outside being, it is nothing. You move through judgment, and through the unconditioned, to an absolute realm, and in that realm you find not only objects but also yourself.”¹¹⁶

Kant and Gilson Étienne Gilson, a leading Thomist in the 20th Century, also tried to deal with the Kantian gap between phenomenon and noumenon, between the appearance of a thing and the reality of the thing itself. But Gilson took a position quite different from Lonergan’s basic stance. Lonergan deals expressly with Kant and Gilson¹¹⁷ in his treatment of perceptualism— a precipitous philosophical ledge, from which one can all

too easily fall into an intellectual trap. In his critique of perceptualism, Lonergan is relying upon the work of Emerich Coreth who is part of a movement in philosophy which stems from the seminal insights of Joseph Maréchal, S.J.¹¹⁸ The perceptualist maintains that knowing is perceiving and one perceives by taking a look. Now says Lonergan, there is a “realist view represented by Gilson and an idealist view represented by Kant, in both of which knowing essential is looking.”¹¹⁹ Kant is a perceptionist and an idealist. We know through *Anschauung* (perception, taking a look at). In Lonergan’s’s reading, Kant the idealist “holds that, if we did perceive, we would know; but in fact we do not perceive reality; and so we do not really know; all we can achieve are the immanent activities of meaning, and all we reach by meaning is the meant.’ Further: “We are boxed within a world of meaning, and as we cannot get beyond it, we can never know anything more that what we mean.”¹²⁰

Gilson is a perceptionist like Kant, but he is a realist and in no way an idealist like Kant.. What then differentiates Gilson the realist from Kant the idealist? Both agree that there are things that really exist outside the human subject. But Gilson differs from Kant in maintaining that we can know them. How? What Gilson ‘perceives’ is different from what Kant perceives. Gilson perceives being. Kant perceives phenomena (the appearances of real things) and not noumena (the things themselves). Gilson maintains that there is, in addition to the eye’s vision, the intellect’s vision—intellectual vision. Just as we take a look with our eyes, says Gilson, we can take a look with our intellect. We look with our eyes and see particular things; we look with the eyes of our intellect and see universal concepts. We look again and see the nexus between universals and so reach principles. We look at the nexus between propositions and so reach syllogisms. For Gilson that is cognitional fact.¹²¹

Lonergan subjects Gilson’s position on cognitional ‘fact’ to a closer scrutiny:

Kant asserts that sense does not apprehend noumena, and Prof. Gilson is far from asserting that sense does apprehend noumena. His assertion is that over and above sensitive perceptions and intellectual abstractions there exists an intellectual vision of the concept of being in any sensible datum. Moreover, he adds, it is the concept of being, seen in this manner, that is predicated in perceptual judgments of existence. Thus, ‘the apprehension of being by intellect consists in a direct *vision* in any sensible datum whatever of the concept of being.’¹²² Again, ‘when the concept of being is, on the contrary, abstracted from a concrete existent perceived by the senses, the judgment predicating being of this existent attributes being to it ... as ‘seen’ in the sensible datum from which the concept of being was abstracted.”¹²³

To be specific, when you see a peach with your eyes, you also, according to Gilson, see the being of the peach, see with your intellect---through an act of intellectual vision. Gilson, for Lonergan, makes an effort to plug every possible ‘loophole’ through which some form of idealism---some mental activity, something innate or something a priori---might slip into the process of coming to know being.. Gilson holds, says Lonergan, that “realism is possible if and only if we *perceive* reality.” What then, for Gilson, grounds realism? Not a deductive conclusion nor anything innate nor anything known a priori. For

him, knowledge must be a posteriori, must come from sensible experience of reality. Gilson relies on the old adage *Nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu* (Nothing in the intellect unless it shall have been beforehand in the sense) to establish his position and applies it “with absolute universality...and with full rigor.”¹²⁴ Make no mistake about it, says Lonergan. Gilson does not try “to refute Kant by appealing to a fact that Kant overlooked.”¹²⁵ Gilson’s position is dogmatic; it is, as he puts it himself, a “blunt reaffirmation of the dogmatic realism whose validity was denied by Kant’s critique.”¹²⁶ And the dogma Gilson asserts? It is “that the whole is prior to the parts, that realism is a whole, prior to its parts, and so incapable of being assembled by starting from some part and step by step adding on the others.”¹²⁷ You ask Gilson, ‘How do you know a thing exists?’ He will always reply, ‘By perceiving it.’¹²⁸

That ‘perceiving’, for Gilson, is simply a ‘fact’. He is speaking here, says Lonergan, as a metaphysician—as a Thomist. In the words of Lonergan’s summary:

Gilson holds that being can be known only through a perception of being. This perception is not sense perception but intellectual perception. Now intellects abstract from things, but he feels that there is some sort of osmosis between the two — the human subject operating on both the sensitive and the intellectual levels; and some combination of sense and intellect amounts to a perception of the reality of being. This perception he proceeds to integrate into a Thomist exposition of intellectual operations. For him being must be perceived, and if it is not perceived you must be an idealist. Idealism does not involve an internal contradiction, so that the disproof of idealism must be the fact that we actually do ‘see’ being.¹²⁹

Lonergan reminds us that “Prof. Gilson does not believe metaphysicians should attempt to do psychology (125)” that is, investigate the ‘fact’ in terms of psychological introspection and analysis. Rather, says Lonergan, “he asserts a general osmosis between sense and understanding, but leaves it to psychologists to work out the details (207).” True, “he indicates the area in which the perceptual judgment of existence is to be found, but he makes no effort to survey, explore, and work out a detailed report (225)” — something, of course, Lonergan had himself done in the 875 pages of *Insight*. The upshot is that Gilson’s ‘fact’, in Lonergan’s critique, “is not a manifest datum, accessible to everyone, and by its sheer givenness imposed on any and every philosopher.” As a consequence, the ‘givenness’ of Gilson’s ‘fact’ remains “vague and its accessibility is restricted.”¹³⁰ Lonergan’s damning conclusion? There is no verifiable evidence for Gilson’s assertion that there is “a human, intellectual intuition of concrete, actual existence.”¹³¹

Gilson is an eminent philosopher—in Lonergan’s judgment “an extremely intelligent man, in contact with first-class philosophic thinkers.”¹³² His book, Lonergan was aware, was in 1951 “still influential.”¹³³ However, Gilson starts with metaphysics and Lonergan maintains that if you start with metaphysics, “you have no way of critically justifying your metaphysics.” The only way to justify it critically, Lonergan maintains, is to derive your metaphysics from a cognitional theory and an epistemology. If you cannot find evidence for Gilson’s ‘intellectual intuition of concrete, actual existence,’ you *can* still find the grounds for a valid cognitional theory in yourself---“in the concrete,

conscious, active reality of the subject asking a question.”¹³⁴ You start with your own conscious operations—operations you can identify in your own experience. But at this point the Neo-Thomist will immediately object, Start with subjectivity and you will never get out of the subject. You open yourself, they say, to the charge of subjectivism and philosophical idealism and relativism. Lonergan’s reply to the charge is always: *Authentic subjectivity yields objectivity.*

Let’s follow Lonergan’s analysis of how we come to know anything one more time. Gilson maintains that you can *see* being or the concept of being in sense data. Lonergan maintains on the contrary that being is what you ask about when you question the data of sense. You do not see being in the data; rather being is intended, it is something you get when you go beyond the data. For, explains Lonergan, “questioning goes beyond an already known [the sense datum] to an unknown [answer] that is to be known: for Fr Coreth the already known is the datum, and the unknown to be known is being.”¹³⁵

A further point. For Gilson, your knowledge is a posteriori: you only get abstract concepts of being and existence from sense; and you reach the concrete by an intellectual vision: you see being with your intellect. Gilson attempts to bridge the gap between phenomena and noumena by postulating an act of intellectual vision—‘an intellectual perception of existence’.¹³⁶ For Coreth, however, being is an a priori: when you intend being, stretch out to reach being in questioning, what you are doing, in Coreth’s and Lonergan’s analysis, “bears no resemblance to sensitive or empirical knowledge.” Lonergan elaborates:

What is perceived is not unknown, not to be known, but already known. But being as intended in questions is the exact opposite of the object of perception: it is not already known, it is unknown; it is to be known. In other words, the analysis of questioning forces one to conceive human intelligence, not on the analogy of sense, but properly in terms of intelligence itself.¹³⁷

Intelligence, to repeat, is intellect seeking understanding through questions (Lonergan), not through some unverifiable act of vision analogous to eyesight (Gilson).

A closer analysis now of questioning itself. The starting point of coming to know is questioning. The first question you may ask about being or existence is, *An sit?* Is it so? If you say, ‘Something exists,’ you are affirming that something exists from the very start of your acts of awareness.¹³⁸ Lonergan agrees with Coreth that the essence of questioning—something found in every question, something that makes a question a question, the condition of the possibility of any and all questions---is “an awareness that goes beyond the already known to an unknown to be known.”¹³⁹

Like Gilson, Coreth accepts the adage *Nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu* (Nothing in the intellect unless it shall have been beforehand in the sense), but makes an important distinction in the way he understands its meaning. Coreth, says Lonergan, distinguishes “between the way there is nothing in a box and the way there is nothing in a stomach.” and Lonergan goes on to explain Coreth’s position:

When there is nothing in a box, a box does not feel empty; when there is

nothing in a stomach, the stomach does feel empty. Human intelligence is more like a stomach than like a box. Though it has no answers, and so is empty, still it can ask questions.”¹⁴⁰

All this is the equivalent of stating that knowledge is discursive and not intuitive or a matter of simply taking a look. Because knowledge is discursive: it begins with questions and leads through conscious operations to answers. First, it involves close attention to objects that leads to understanding. Lonergan gives a simple example: “Suppose there is a bug on a table.” My first reaction is ‘Something is there on the table.’ My awareness of the bug’s presence coincides with the beginning of my wondering what it is. What I do implicitly (or may do explicitly) is to ask and answer the question *Quid sit?* What is it? Lonergan continues:

All I can say about it is that it is a bug. But an entomologist can tell you 100 or 150 or 200 things about it, and he can do so because he has the words and the concepts, and he has studied the thing carefully under all its aspects.¹⁴¹

First, the question (*Quid sit?*) requires careful attention which leads to understanding. Because knowledge is discursive, the question *Quid sit?* brings you to the third level where (if you are an entomologist) you affirm the precise kind of bug which has landed on your table---the level at which you make a reasonable judgment.¹⁴² Lonergan traces the process:

This wonder is heading towards being, and the fact that you head towards being through insights in the sense in which we have spoken of them gives you your component of form or essence in being. This applies to any being you can know [like the bug on the table], since it is going to be through understanding that you know it. But since your understanding is always just a ‘what might be,’ without settling the question of whether or not it is, your concepts give rise to a further question — *An Sit?* — that is going to be answered by a yes or a no. It is or It isn’t.¹⁴³

And so in addition to *Quid sit?* one may ask *An sit?* Can I follow up my affirmation of what it is with an affirmation of its existence? I can and for Lonergan such a judgment is objective:

Judgments result from sufficient evidence, and sufficient evidence for something precise that has been conceived. So your questions for intelligence precede your questions for reflection, your judgments, and your experience has to precede your acts of understanding; otherwise, you will have nothing to be understood.¹⁴⁴

And so for Lonergan, *Authentic subjectivity yields objectivity*. Lonergan sums up his analysis as follows:

- Subjectivity is authentic in the measure that it is attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible. Those are the conditions of being an authentic person.¹⁴⁵
- Subjective does not mean anything distinct from objective; it is the source of objectivity.¹⁴⁶
- The roots of authentic subjectivity are already there in your attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.¹⁴⁷
- Authentic subjectivity [is] the result of raising and answering all relevant questions for intelligence, for reflection, and for deliberation.¹⁴⁸

And Lonergan concludes:

...it is now apparent that in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value, objectivity is simply the consequence of authentic subjectivity, of genuine attention, genuine intelligence, genuine reasonableness, genuine responsibility.¹⁴⁹

This conclusion holds true for mathematics, science, philosophy, ethics, and theology despite their differences, for they all have “the common feature that their objectivity is the fruit of attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.”¹⁵⁰

In this way Lonergan critiques the realist position represented by Gilson and the idealist position represented by Kant — the essence of which is that knowing is looking. His own position he states as follows:

It happens to be my opinion that human knowing...is true meaning.
 I disagree with the perceptionist's fictions.
 I disagree with both perceptionists and idealists in their claim that true meaning is not knowing.
 I grant, of course, that to accept what I call the realist view, what is also the dogmatic view (in the R.C. sense of dogma), presupposes [an intellectual] conversion.¹⁵¹

Intellectual Conversion to Critical Realism Conversion is always a turn from something and to something. Intellectual conversion is a radical shift from naive realism, empiricism, or idealism to critical realism. It is only the critical realist, argues Lonergan, who “can acknowledge the facts of human knowing and pronounce the world mediated by meaning to be the real world; and he can do so only inasmuch as he shows that the process of experiencing, understanding, and judging is a process of self-transcendence.”¹⁵²

The point Lonergan hammers home is not just a “technical point in philosophy.” It is the central point, the heart of the matter. It is ground zero---the epistemological starting point for anyone embarking on the philosophical quest. Getting it right at the start is pivotal. Either one's starting point is verifiable and so correct or one is off to a false start. The starting point determines one's stance---distinguishing it from other philosophical systems with differing starting points and differing horizons. He gives three

instances:

- An empiricist may argue that quantum theory cannot be about physical reality; it cannot because it deals only with relations between phenomena. An idealist would concur and add that, of course, the same is true of all science and, indeed, of the whole of human knowing. The critical realist will disagree with both: a verified hypothesis is probably true; and what probably is true refers to what in reality probably is so.
- To change the illustration, what are historical facts? For the empiricist they are what was out there and was capable of being looked at. For the idealist they are mental constructions carefully based on data recorded in documents. For the critical realist they are events in the world mediated by true acts of meaning.
- To take a third illustration, what is a myth? There are psychological, anthropological, historical, and philosophic answers to the question. But there are also reductionist answers: myth is a narrative about entities not be found within an empiricist, an idealist, a historicist, and existentialist horizon.¹⁵³

What implication underlies such assertions ;and leads to confusion?

Empiricism, idealism, and realism name three totally different horizons with no common identical objects. An idealist never means what an empiricist means, and a realist never means what either of them means.¹⁵⁴

For many philosophers, Lonergan explains, some sort of naive realism as starting point appears to be “utterly unquestionable.”¹⁵⁵ And yet for all that, Lonergan asserts, you cannot see meaning with the naked eye or with any postulated inner eye of the mind.

The Question of God At this point the question of God arises and clamors for attention.¹⁵⁶ Michael Vertin reminds us that the finality of the human spirit---“a radical spiritual dynamism”---is “an important though often neglected theme in the history of explicit philosophy.” He writes:

It is a spiritual hunger to which Aristotle alludes when, in the first line of his *Metaphysics*, he asserts that all humans by nature desire to know. It is the primordial yearning to which Augustine alludes when, in the first paragraph of his *Confessions*, he observes that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. It is the basic longing to which Aquinas alludes when, throughout Book One of his *Summa contra gentiles*, he speaks of our natural desire to know the divine essence. It is the fundamental tendency to which Kant alludes when, in Part Two of his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, he describes our given inclination to choose what is morally good. It is the inexorable orientation to which Hegel alludes when, in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, he traces the progression of spirit from

sense-certainty to absolute knowledge.¹⁵⁷

Despite the importance and persistence of the question, Lonergan sounds the alert that modern empirical science is no help at all in providing an answer. Lonergan argues this way. Empirical science deals exclusively with sensible data:

...it begins from data, it discerns intelligible unities and relationships within data, and it is subject to the check of verification, to the correction and revision to be effected by confrontation with further relevant data. Now such procedures cannot lead one beyond this world.

Why not? Because “the divine is not a datum to be observed by sense or to be uncovered by introspection.” Nor is there, moreover, “any intelligible unity or relationship verifiable within such data [that will] lead us totally beyond such data to God.” Lonergan’s conclusion?

Precisely because modern science is specialized knowledge of man and of nature, it cannot include knowledge of God. God is neither man nor nature. It would only be the idolatry of identifying God with man or with nature if one attempted to know God through the methods of modern science.¹⁵⁸

Kenneth R. Miller, a biologist at Brown University and a believer, agrees; indeed he says bluntly to ask science about the human soul or, I would add, about God is ‘pointless’, because neither soul nor God is “physical and investigateable in the world of science.” When asked after lectures on college campuses, “What do you say as a scientist about the soul?” his reply is invariably, “As a scientist, I have nothing to say about the soul. It’s not a scientific idea.”¹⁵⁹ The same answer could be given by scientists to questions about God.

To repeat, the question of God is unavoidable. Indeed, as John Cottingham puts it in his review of Christopher J. Insole’s book *The Realist Hope*: “There is something fundamentally evasive about all attempts to duck the question of God’s reality.”¹⁶⁰ Speak of a virtually unconditioned and up pops the question whether there is an unconditioned, or more precisely, a strictly unconditioned—something that has no conditions. Besides contingent beings, is there a necessary being? Is there a reality that transcends the reality of this world? Is there a God?¹⁶¹

This is the inescapable, indeed the paramount question. As Dostoevski perceived, on its answer ultimately depends whether or not there is anything truly worthwhile. It is true, says Lonergan, that

we praise the developing subject ever more capable of attention, insight, reasonableness, responsibility. We praise progress and denounce every manifestation of decline.¹⁶²

But however praiseworthy or blameworthy our efforts, are they all ultimately in vain? “...Is the universe on our side, or are we just gamblers,” Lonergan asks, “and, if we are

gamblers, are we not perhaps fools, individually struggling for authenticity and collectively endeavoring to snatch progress from the ever mounting welter of decline?"¹⁶³

Novelist Don DeLillo gives an illustration of this common human dilemma in his novel *Falling Man*. Lianne, wife of a Twin Tower survivor, tries to make sense of life as a Manhattanite in a post 9/11 traumatized world. She is a self-styled infidel who wants to disbelieve in God, but has doubts about her doubts about God. She wonders:

This mind and soul, hers and everyone's, keep dreaming toward something unreachable. Does this mean there's something there, at the limits of matter and energy, a force responsible in some way for the very nature, the vibrancy of our lives from the mind out, the mind in little pigeon blinks that extend the plane of being, out beyond logic and intuition.

She remembers how her architect father used to reason with her: "Look around us, out there, up there, ocean, sky, night, and she thought about this, over coffee and toast, how he believed that God infused time and space with pure being, made stars give light." At this her skeptical mind balked: "But this was crap, wasn't it, night skies and divinely inspired stars. A star makes its own light. The sun is a star."¹⁶⁴ Yet, DeLillo tells us, Lianne "was stuck with her doubts but liked sitting in a church"¹⁶⁵ — a small Catholic church in East Harlem, finding comfort being with others at early morning Mass. She wonders:

But isn't it the world itself that brings you to God? Beauty, grief, terror, the empty desert, the Bach cantatas. Others bring you closer, church brings you closer, the stained glass windows of a church, the pigments inherent in the glass, the metallic oxides fused onto the glass, God in clay and stone, or was she babbling to herself to pass the time?¹⁶⁶

In the end, Lianne faces up to the final roadblock to belief—a sense of dread, a movement within consciousness which Lonergan identifies as a call to a dreaded holiness:

God would consume her. God would de-create her and she was too small and tame to resist. That's why she was resisting now. Because think about it. Because once you believe such a thing, God is, then how can you escape, how survive the power of it, is and was and ever shall be.¹⁶⁷

The question of God, Lonergan maintains, arises naturally—like blossom from bud--- out of the transcendental tendency of the human spirit that asks questions. It rises inexorably out of our conscious intentionality, out of the *a priori* structured drive that promotes us from experiencing to the effort to understand, from understanding to the effort to judge truly, from judging to the effort to choose rightly. However the question may be phrased and however different the answers which the questions evoke, says Lonergan, "still at the root there is the same transcendental tendency of the human spirit that questions, that questions without restriction, that questions the significance of its own

questioning, and so comes to the question of God.”¹⁶⁸ In the measure that we advert to our own questioning and proceed to question it, there arises the question of God.¹⁶⁹

Elizabeth Johnson echoes Lonergan when she emphasizes “the open-endedness of this age-old search for the living God”:

. . . the search goes on because the human heart is insatiable. A universal experience of immense longing propels the human adventure in all fields. When it comes to matters of religion, as God-seekers of every age have testified, the human spirit cannot rest in any one encounter but, intrigued by the glimpse already gained, continues to hunger for more. People keep on journeying through beauty and joy, through duty and commitment, through agonizing silence and pain, toward greater meaning and deeper union with the ineffable God, to their last breath.¹⁷⁰

Dealing with Kant’s Legacy Most modern secular thinkers are comfortable with the conviction that Kant administered the philosophical death blow to the traditional arguments for the existence of God.¹⁷¹ But, were Kant to walk into his classroom, Lonergan would meet him head on at what he is convinced is Kant’s weakest point: his cognitional theory.¹⁷² For, as we have seen, our only immediate contact with reality, says Kant, is through *intuition*; therefore we can only get in contact with the objects we know through our senses. Knowing is restricted to sense knowledge. Admit that and any attempt to establish the existence of God is automatically destined to fail.

Lonergan maintains, on the contrary, that knowing (coming-to-know) is not through Kantian intuition. Intuition is simply a hypothesis asserted without verification. On the contrary, coming-to-know is driven by a desire which reveals itself in questioning; and that desire is satisfied only after one asks all relevant questions; and the relevant questions are either questions for understanding (questions that seek answers that explain what or why something is) or questions for reflection and judgment (questions that seek verification of the understanding one has reached, or briefly, is it so?).¹⁷³

Lonergan maintains further that the three steps just mentioned in coming to know are a hypothesis that can be verified by any thinking person. To convince the reader of the point, Lonergan takes you through “five-finger exercises”¹⁷⁴ which admittedly involve hard intellectual work. You can verify for yourself, Lonergan says, the accuracy of his analysis of understanding and judgment; and, if you do, you will be led to the indisputable existential fact: “I am a knower.” As Lonergan puts it in the introduction to *Insight*:

... the dynamic, cognitional structure to be reached is ... the personally appropriated structure of one’s own experiencing, one’s own intelligent enquiry and insights, one’s own critical reflection and judging and deciding. The critical issue is an experimental issue, ... performed not publicly but privately. It will consist in one’s own rational self-consciousness clearly and distinctly taking possession of itself as rational self-consciousness. Up to that decisive achievement all leads. From it, all follows.¹⁷⁵

Take one instance of what follows. “I am a knower” is one concrete, existential fact, a fact that I cannot in all honesty deny; and “since a single fact is all it takes to build a theistic proof, it ought to be possible to argue from my own existence as a knower to the existence as God as the explanation of *why* that is so.”¹⁷⁶ Grant his epistemological premise and Lonergan’s argument from contingency (from the existential fact to the existence of a rational explanation of the existential fact) unrolls as follows:

Finally, if I am operating in the intellectual pattern of experience, if I am genuine in my acceptance of the domination of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to enquire intelligently and reflect reasonably, then I have no just grounds for surprise if I find myself unable to deny either that there is a reality or that the real is being or that being is completely intelligible or that complete intelligibility is unrestricted understanding or that unrestricted understanding is God.¹⁷⁷

Lonergan’s conclusion? The question of God is inescapable—one cannot simply ignore it.

There lies within [our] horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise.

And yet, Lonergan insists, all their “negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.”¹⁷⁸

Becoming Authentic: Philosophy as Praxis The trajectory of modern philosophy from Descartes to the present time heads in Lonergan’s judgment to one inescapable conclusion about contemporary philosophy: “the primacy [in philosophy] now belongs to praxis and the task of philosophy is to foster the emergence of authentic human beings.”¹⁷⁹ The focus is now squarely on what Lonergan calls the fourth level of conscious activity, the level of authentic human behavior. Indeed, what faculty psychology used to call ‘speculative intellect’ “now turns out to be merely the operations of experiencing, understanding, and judging, performed under the guidance of the moral deliberation, evaluation, decision, that selects an appropriate method and sees to it that the method is observed.”¹⁸⁰

So, as Lonergan keeps repeating, study the concrete data of your own consciousness and you will discover the built-in precepts that impel you along the way to authenticity:

...Human authenticity is a matter of following the built-in law of the human spirit. Because we experience, we should attend. Because we can understand, we should inquire. Because we can reach the truth, we should reflect and check. Because we can realize values in ourselves, we should deliberate. In the measure that we follow these precepts, in the measure we fulfill these conditions of being human persons, we also achieve self-

transcendence both in the field of knowledge and in the field of action.¹⁸¹

The common theme, then, that runs through modern philosophy is emphasis on the will, on praxis and authenticity. If philosophy can no longer claim an intelligibility in things based on necessity, if must, if it is not to flounder, concern itself with authenticity.

In summary, modern philosophy's interest in the existential subject means an interest in praxis, in the practical business of living an authentic life. Not surprisingly, the emphasis on praxis raises a host of practical questions:

What are you to do about [your life]? What use are you to make of your knowledge of nature, or your knowledge of man, of your awareness of the radical conflict between man's aspiration to self-transcendence and, on the other hand, the waywardness that may distort his traditional heritage and even his own personal life?¹⁸²

Authenticity at Each Level of Conscious Operation In a word, praxis raises the question of authenticity. "If we are not simply to flounder," Lonergan insists, "we have to take our stand on authenticity", indeed, authenticity at each level---sensation, understanding, reflection, and deliberation---of conscious operation. Thus:

- on the authenticity with which intelligence takes us beyond the experimental infrastructure to enrich it, extend it, organize it, but never to slight it or much less to violate its primordial role;
- on the authenticity with which rational reflection goes beyond the constructions of intelligence and draws sharply the lines between astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, legend and history, magic and science, myth and philosophy;
- on the authenticity with which moral deliberation take us beyond cognitional process into the realm of freedom and responsibility, evaluation and decision, not in any way to annul or slight experience or understanding or factual judgment, but to add the further and distinct truth of value judgments and the consequent decisions demanded by a situation in which authenticity cannot be taken for granted.¹⁸³

Mind you, says Lonergan, intentional activity is 'ascensional' in structure, Intentional activity ascends from its origin in the unconscious, in Lonergan's analysis, all the way up to fully conscious, deliberate and mature self-transcendence. Its "hidden root" lies buried in the unconscious—"the dark abode of primordial desires and fears, . . . the obscure home of the drive that makes man not merely the symbolic animal but also the self-completing animal..." In sleep reside "not only the dreams of the night that correspond to biological tensions but also the dreams of the morning in which the human subject before waking is already taking a stance towards his coming day."¹⁸⁴

Lonergan's analysis of the "daytime unfolding" of intentional activity draws upon studies by Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg. Lonergan summaries each:

Piaget examined operational development and placed its key in a repeated *decentering* that keeps shifting the center of the subject's activity from himself to his ever and larger universe. Erikson's approach is from depth psychology and is eight developmental stages of successive and cumulative shifts in what one's *identity* becomes. Kohlberg, finally attends to morals, distinguishes preconventional, conventional, and postconventional morality, divides each into two stages and reveals the defects of each earlier stage as compared with its successor.

The differing viewpoints of each of the three happen to coalesce, Lonergan notes, "in a unitary view in terms of *self-transcendence*."¹⁸⁵

Finally, if the eros of the human spirit is to reach its goals and self-transcendence, it must be untrammelled. Indeed, for human subjects to reach self-transcendence requires a threefold conversion: they must attain "intellectual conversion to renounce the myriad of false philosophies, moral conversion to keep themselves free of individual, group, and general bias, and religious conversion so that in fact each loves the Lord his God with his whole heart and his whole soul and all his mind and all his strength."¹⁸⁶

At this point, Lonergan puts one blunt question to the reader: "Does this many-leveled subject actually exist?" Each of you, he says, has to answer for yourself. For himself, of course, the answer is never in doubt. He lines up his reasons:

- Not even behaviorists claim that they are unaware whether or not they see or hear, taste or touch.
- Not even positivists preface their lectures and their books with the frank avowal that never in their lives did they have the experience of understanding anything whatever.
- Not even relativists claim that never in their lives did they have the experience of making a rational judgment.
- Not even determinists claim that never in their lives did they have the experience of making a responsible choice.¹⁸⁷

And you, once you have verified for yourself that you exist as one-who-knows, you can agree with Lonergan's conclusion: "There exist subjects that are empirically, intellectually, rationally, morally conscious." One may object that "not all know themselves as such, for consciousness is not human knowing but only a potential component in the structured whole that is human knowing." Granted. But Lonergan insists that "all can know themselves as such, for they have only to attend to what they are already conscious of, and understand what they attend to, and pass judgment on the correctness of their understanding."¹⁸⁸

But nagging questions may persist. Is Lonergan correct in his understanding of understanding? Is this really the structure by which each and all of us come-to-know? Perhaps it is only another hypothesis or theory, itself subject to future revision. Perhaps in time, you may say, human beings will discover new information, not known now. With new data, won't people understand better, embrace both the old data along with the new,

and so prefer some new theory?¹⁸⁹ Ask these perfectly legitimate questions, says Lonergan, you will be operating at the levels of reflective and rational understanding and in doing so will actually verify them.

What are the ways in which a revision of Lonergan's understanding of understanding is possible? First, you would need new data, based either on internal or external experience. Then, you would need a new insight to have a new theory of understanding. The new theory would have to explain with satisfaction both the old data and the new; otherwise, you cannot have a judgment that the new theory is new and better. In other words, Lonergan argues, any possible future revision would involve experiencing, understanding, and judging. You "may make the structure more complete," he explains, but to revise it—the crucial point—you will have "to keep the structure." Lonergan concedes that his explanation of intentionality analysis may not yet be complete, still, he persists in maintaining, no matter how much you may revise it in the future, one will always be employing the same structure.¹⁹⁰

This section on self-appropriation now draws to a close. You know. You are aware that you know. You advert to your awareness that you know. You have gone through the three elements that make up the structure of coming-to-know. Lonergan gives us this summary of the process:

- First, there is consciousness of the elements [experiencing, understanding, judging]
- Secondly, there is introspection into the several different activities.
- Thirdly, there is insight into the existence of the structure from the inevitabilities of the subject, who cannot avoid experiencing, cannot renounce his intelligence—even though he is anti-intellectual, he thinks that this is the intelligent thing to be—and cannot avoid the question of reflective understanding, the question whether or not this structure is just a nice theory, something that can be revised, or whether it is something that has to be presupposed as a possibility of revision.¹⁹¹

To repeat, then, if I ask myself at this point "Who am I?," I can answer with assurance: "I am a judger affirming a fact. I am aware of myself as a judger affirming a fact. I am also chooser making a decision. I am aware of myself as a chooser embracing a value."

Lonergan and Analytic Philosophy To be noted in passing. Lonergan had a life-long interest in contemporary analytical philosophy as well as in European philosophy, according to British scholar Andrew Beards.¹⁹² Beards outlines "the sometimes quite dramatic changes...in analytic philosophy over the past thirty years or so."¹⁹³ In the 1950s Lonergan came up with a rather positive evaluation of work then underway in Anglo-American circles. As might be expected, his particular interest lay in "the foundations of logic which are to be found precisely in the human subject, in the foundational realities of the intelligent and reasonable operations of the human person."¹⁹⁴ Lonergan, according to Beards, had "a knack for spotting" what was of long-term significance" in work being done by the philosophy of logic in analytical circles in

mid-Century—work that Beards judges has passed the test of time. His conclusion? “Lonergan’s philosophy may be of real service to current analytical debates.”¹⁹⁵

Lonergan’s Contribution to Dialogue with the Postmodernists To resume. Lonergan made his comments on self-appropriation in 1969 when modernism still held sway. By the year 2008, however, the prevailing viewpoint has shifted; the current horizon is defined by postmodern philosophers who are in energetic reaction to modernism. Thus David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity* states the view of many that postmodernism is “a legitimate reaction to the ‘monotony’ of universal modernism’s vision of the world.”¹⁹⁶ What was that vision? Harvey quotes literary critic Terry Eagleton’s definition of universal modernism: “Generally perceived as positivistic, technocentric, and rationalistic, universal modernism has been identified with the belief in linear progress, absolute truths, the rational planning of ideal social orders, and the standardization of knowledge and production’.”¹⁹⁷ And Isaiah Berlin, in the preface to his reflections on Russian thinkers, states that “the entire burden of these collected essays...is [their] distrust of all claims to the possession of incorrigible knowledge about issues of fact or principle in any sphere of human behavior.”¹⁹⁸ Finally, what Alexander Herzen wrote in the introduction to one of his books in the nineteenth century, could well stand as a slogan that expresses the conviction of postmodernists writing today: “Do not look for solutions in this book---there are none; in general modern man has no solutions.”¹⁹⁹

The consequences of such thinking have been momentous.. The traditional Christian belief that truthfulness, beauty and goodness of great works of literature in the Western canon have genuine value, that their truthfulness, beauty and goodness “rests in their relation to the absolute truth, beauty and goodness that are one in God and that are definitively revealed to the world in Christ”, writes English literary critic Lucy Beckett, is “now highly contentious and in some academic circles even ridiculous statements.” The source of their scorn may be found in Nietzsche’s contention that an individual’s ‘perspective’ is “the basic condition of all life and the ‘will to power’ the basic drive of the human world.”²⁰⁰ Beckett quotes Richard Rorty’s assertion that today “truth is what your contemporaries will let you get away with.”²⁰¹ The upshot in Beckett’s judgment? “The only intellectual consensus,” she says, “is that there is no consensus.”²⁰² The impact of such teaching on education is, moreover, everywhere apparent. “[W]e are educated,” Beckett notes, “to remain, in the words with which Pascal at the dawn of the enlightenment described the sceptics of the 1650s, ‘neutral, indifferent, suspending judgment on every thing, not excepting ourselves.’”²⁰³

Postmodernism Take a closer look at postmodernism. Harvey identifies its specific reaction to modernism and lists some of its emphases:

Post-modernism...privileges ‘heterogeneity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse.’ Fragmentation, indeterminacy, and intense distrust of all universal or ‘totalizing’ discourses ...are the hallmark of postmodernist thought. The rediscovery of pragmatism in philosophy (e.g. Rorty, 1979), the shift of ideas about the philosophy of science wrought by Kuhn (1962) and Feyerabend (1975), Foucault’s emphasis upon discontinuity and difference in history and his

privileging of 'polymorphous correlations in place of simple or complex causality,' new developments in mathematics emphasizing indeterminacy (catastrophe and chaos theory, fractal geometry), the reemergence of concern in ethics, politics, and anthropology for the validity and dignity of 'the other', all indicate a widespread and profound shift in 'the structure of feeling.'²⁰⁴

Awakening from the Nightmare of Modernity Harvey again quotes the literary critic Terry Eagleton, writing in 1987 on postmodernism as an awakening from the nightmare of modernity: "Post-modernism signals the death of such 'metanarratives' whose secretly terroristic function was to ground and legitimate the illusion of a 'universal' human history.' Modernism, he continues, "with its manipulative reason and fetish of the totality" created the 'nightmare' world of the twentieth century. Postmodernism has "renounced the nostalgic urge to totalize and legitimate itself " and has settled "into a "laid-back pluralism." Postmodernists are united in the demand that "science and philosophy must jettison their grandiose metaphysical claims and view themselves more modestly as just another set of narratives."²⁰⁵

One spin off of such thinking for human living, both private and public, is the postmodern conviction that commitment can mean only a 'temporary contract'. As Jean-François Lyotard noted in 1980, "the temporary contract is in practice supplanting permanent institutions in the professional, emotional, sexual, cultural, family, and international domains, as well as in political affairs."²⁰⁶

Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment Hugo A. Meynell has analyzed postmodernism from the viewpoint of what he calls Lonergan's New Enlightenment. His sure and balanced analysis can only be summarized here. He examines the thought of Nietzsche the forerunner, then of his followers, Foucault and Derrida, Lyotard and Rorty, and finally a host of postmodern feminists; he identifies the best features of their thought, but candidly criticizes their inadequacies and the risks of following in their footsteps. Meynell juxtaposes postmodernism and the New Enlightenment:

Roughly, I think a writer is "postmodernist" so far as she repudiates the norms of cognition and evaluation that were propounded and applied by thinkers of the Old Enlightenment, and inveighs against the abuses to which they may be supposed to have given rise. The "New Enlightenment," which is represented above all by the work of Bernard Lonergan, clarifies, modifies, justifies, and applies these norms in such a way that the objections of the postmodernists to Enlightenment rationality are to some extent corroborated, to some extent undercut; but the New Enlightenment firmly and consistently rejects the nihilism and relativism to which postmodernism tends."²⁰⁷

The Old Enlightenment made admirable contributions to the evolution of human thought and culture, but, Meynell readily admits with its postmodern critics, that it "spawned monsters." He lists four:

- One...is “scientism,” which appears to make all value an arbitrary matter, and everything specifically human illusory.
- Another is a limited utilitarianism that issues in consumerism; the only value that can be readily quantified is the production and consumption of goods, so it must be the only ‘real’ value....
- A third is a naive attitude to the darker human passions, together with the assumption that when people are shown the benefits of reason, they will always embrace it without much more ado.
- A fourth is an uncritical contempt for traditional ways of thinking, speaking, and acting, and a tendency to reject them before their grounds and consequences have been admirably examined.²⁰⁸

Thus, postmodernists have singled out ‘rationality’ as the essence of modernism and tend to reject reason along with the monsters to which it gave birth. In addition, they tend to jettison “the related ideals of objectivity and truth as either impossible or objectionable.” In place of the constraints which objectivity and truth impose, they advocate “either aesthetic attractiveness or anarchic freedom,” a cure which Meynell maintains is far worse than “any of the diseases attributable to the Old Enlightenment.”²⁰⁹ Along with the loss of objectivity and truth came the more damaging postmodernist claim of not merely the death of God, but “the death of the subject.” As Foucault puts it: “the breakdown of philosophical subjectivity...is probably one of the fundamental structures of contemporary philosophical thought.”²¹⁰

Modernism’s core problem, Meynell suggests, is this: the Old Enlightenment never came to an adequate understanding of understanding and so “never properly solved the problem of the nature and credentials of the reason it extolled.” Hugo Meynell follows Lonergan in stating that, while “Kant’s unknowable things-in-themselves are the residue of real things as constituted by their primary qualities,” the critical analysis to which Kant subjects ‘things’ is “not quite thorough enough.” Meynell goes on to state that, accordingly, the *a priori* categories which Kant brings to our understanding of the world stem from “a not quite sufficiently rigorous analysis of the cognitional process.”²¹¹ Indeed, the suggestion is that at this point Kant lost his nerve and failed to push his analysis to the full extent of which it is capable. Indeed Kant never quite grasped that the concept of knowledge itself is intelligible and possible only if one assumes that prior to any intellectual activity at all there must be “real objects and properties which are objects of knowledge and which are actually known by the knowing subject.”²¹² Lonergan, in Meynell’s judgment, succeeded in providing such a foundational understanding of ‘reason’ and the possible objectivity of ‘rationality’. With reason thus grounded and applied, Meynell contends, one can in principle correct the errors of the Old Enlightenment. He writes:

It is less than fully reasonable

- to adopt a “scientism” that is in the last analysis incompatible with anyone reasonably believing it (or indeed practicing science at all);
- or to embrace a scheme of values so restricted as not only to starve the

human spirit but to head for ecological disaster;

- or to fail to take into account the many aspects of human nature, whether benign or intensely dangerous, that are not readily amenable to reason;
- or to reject established ways of thinking and acting before their full ramifications are known, probably in deference to a “scientific” worldview that is demonstrably a tissue of confusions.²¹³

That said, however, there is no need to indulge in “the fashionable despair”²¹⁴ about the future of the human race which postmodernists seem to cultivate or to reach “the deplorable conclusion”²¹⁵ that all one can do is to remain “passive in the face of a rising wave of cruelty and cynicism.”²¹⁶ Indeed, Meynell concludes by echoing a conviction which Lonergan shared:

Any well-founded hope for our future must depend upon our being *more* and not *less* rational than we have been in the past. As I have been at pains to reiterate, the fundamental defect of the Old Enlightenment is not excess of rationality, but the fact that it was not quite rational enough.²¹⁷

Lonergan was well aware of the rising tide of cruelty and cynicism and was convinced of the urgent need for a triple conversion in a world where “the body social becomes the victim of warring egoisms and blundering short-sightedness.” He explains:

...Amoralism raises its ugly head . . . , sets aside the moralists and appeals to the efficient causes of modern science....But the cult of efficiency in politics and economics easily becomes oppression, revolution, warfare. So we learnt about the liquidation of the opponents of Machiavelli’s *Principe*, the liquidation of the feudal remnants blocking the expansion of bourgeois liberalism, the liquidation of the bourgeoisie in the peoples’ republics.”

To which we must add the liquidation of the Jews, Gypsies, and homosexuals in Germany, the Hutus in Ruanda, and the Kosovos in Serbia.

The horrifying liquidation of peoples is not the solution, of course, because “the problem of warring egoisms keeps recurring,” says Lonergan, “as long as inattentiveness, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility keep producing and augmenting the object social surd of the unintelligible and irrational situation.” What then is Lonergan’s solution? The truly authentic human person:

What alone goes to the root of the problem is the new man, the man converted at once intellectually, morally, religiously. Above all, religiously. For the new man will have to be a man of faith, for only faith can triumph when reason has been discredited, and reason was discredited by the ongoing process of rationalization put forward in defense of amoralism. The new man will have to be a man of hope, for only hope can release people from the hopelessness of warring egoisms and blundering short-sightedness. The new man will have to love God above

all and his fellows as himself, for even-handed justice becomes merely destructive once injustice has penetrated the very fabric of a society.²¹⁸

The New Atheism Recently, a spate of bestsellers written by Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens attempt to debunk religion on the basis of evolutionary biology. Stung by attacks on science and evolution by religious fundamentalists and motivated by science-inspired atheism, the three popular authors maintain that theological and Darwinian explanations are mutually exclusive. However attractive these atheist treatises may be to the general reader, critic and theologian John Haught finds them as intellectually disappointing as the religious fundamentalism they attack:

. . . the treatment of religion in these tracts consists mostly of breezy overgeneralizations that leave out almost everything that theologians would want to highlight in their own contemporary discussion of God. Rather, the new atheism is so theologically unchallenging. Its engagement with theology lies at about the same level of reflection on faith that one can find in contemporary creationist and fundamentalist literature.

The flimsiness of the attack comes as no surprise to professional theologians, writes Haught, because it appears that the new atheists have “garnered much of their understanding of religious faith”²¹⁹ from the creationists and intelligent design theorists they attack. Indeed, he adds, “their understanding of religious faith remains consistently at the same on scholarly level as the unreflective, superstitious, and literalist religiosity of those they criticize.”²²⁰

Haught, on the other hand, belongs like Lonergan “to a theistic religious tradition, . . . one that professes belief in a personal God, a God of infinite power and love, who creates and sustains the world, and who forever opens up the world to a new and unprecedented future, a God who makes all things new.”²²¹ In addition, the tradition includes in its ranks “many biblically informed, critically reflective, religious thinkers” for whom theology is “an appreciative but also critical, philosophical reflection on religions that profess belief in God.”²²²

Haught labels Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens as soft-core atheists. They seem to assume that, if you no longer believe in God life will go on as usual, much as it does for children who no longer believe in Santa Claus. Haught hearkens back to an earlier generation of what he calls hard-core atheists. Nietzsche, Camus, and Sartre realized that, if you are logically consistent as an atheist, “the whole web of meanings and values that had clustered around the idea of God in Western culture has to go down the drain along with its organizing center.” Nor were these non-nonsense thinkers so naive as to believe that a good science education will guarantee good behavior in a world without value or purpose. They were honest enough to challenge their readers to face “the logical, and cultural implications of a godless world.”²²³

Conclusion Bernard Lonergan’s supreme achievement was to bring to full consciousness the generalized empirical method that lies implicit in the inbuilt conscious operations of the human subject. Self-appropriation—your personal awareness of the actual operations by which you come to know and act with objectivity—reveals the rock

which guarantees that your cognitional and volitional activities are capable of being authentic. What is more, with such understanding, you are able to subject any epistemological or philosophical or ethical position to critical scrutiny. You can engage, that is, in dialectic.

Dialectic has to do with the concrete, the dynamic, and the contradictory. But the existential subject is concrete; he is dynamic, for his living is operating; he is confronted with the contradictory alternatives of being an authentic or an unauthentic human being.

Where can one discover the authentic or the unauthentic?

...while the psychological reality of authenticity and its opposite are accessible only within the consciousness of the individual subject, it remains that these inward events and transactions have their outer manifestation in silence and speech, in words and deeds, and motives that move some and not others, in goals that some pursue and others opposed. So it is that from the inner opposition of authenticity and unauthenticity there proceeds the generally accessible opposition of positions and counterpositions; and it is only a fuller manifestation of a radicalness of this opposition when it is covered over with the confusion that ensues when the authentic name positions what the unauthentic name counterpositions and, vice versa, when the authentic name counterpositions what the unauthentic name positions.²²⁴

This chapter has traced how Lonergan engaged in dialogue with naïve realism, empiricism, idealism, and postmodernism—with Hume, Kant, Gilson, and Rorty.

What follows from all this? One clear fact: Lonergan, as a critical realist, as a Christian philosopher and theologian, was empowered to face the daunting problems that confronted humanity towards the close of the 20th century with faith, love, and hope for the future.

1. *Method in Theology*, 240.

2. *Ibid.*, 239-240.

3. *Ibid.*, 238.

4. *Insight*, xii.

5. *Method in Theology*, 238.

6. *Ibid.*, 77.

7. "The Analogy of Meaning," Vol. 6: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199-200 n. 39.

8. *Insight*, xiv.

9. *Method in Theology*, 13-14.

10. *Ibid.*, 13.

11. *Ibid.*, 13.

12. *Ibid.*, 19.

13. John E. Coons and Patrick M. Brennan, *By Nature Equal: The Anatomy of Western Insight*, 136. See also Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," Vol. 4: *Collection*, 205, 208-211.

14. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 233.

15. *Method in Theology*, 53.

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16. *Ibid.*, 19-20.
17. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 232. See also Bernard Lonergan, "The Subject," Vol.2: *A Second Collection*, 69-86.
18. I am indebted to Richard M. Liddy for Patrick Byrne's remark..
19. Vernon Gregson, "The Desire to Know: Intellectual Conversion," *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 26.
20. *Method in Theology*, 243.
21. "The Subject," *A Second Collection*, 79.
22. Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, 8. Lonergan, of course, would undoubtedly prefer to use "advert to" rather than the word "look."
23. "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection*, 248.
24. *Method in Theology*, 239..
25. "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection*, 248.
26. *Method in Theology*, 239.
27. *Insight*, 385.
28. *Method in Theology*, 240.
29. *Ibid.*, 238.
30. *Ibid.*, 239-240.
31. *Ibid.*, 239-240.
32. *Insight*, xii.
33. See Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 296-297, for Lonergan's dialectical strategy in dealing with philosophical conflict.
34. Dialectic, for Lonergan, has one 'notable' presupposition: "it supposes that cognitional theory exercises a fundamental influence in metaphysics, in ethics, and in theological pronouncements." This presupposition Lonergan explores in Chapter XIV of *Insight*, 389-430. See also Michael McCarthy, *the Crisis of Philosophy*, 291-294 for a brief survey of the 'deep intellectual conflict' in the history of Western philosophy.
35. See *Method in Theology*, 128-130. Also *Insight*, 217-218; 387-390.
36. *Insight*, 387.
37. *Ibid.*, 387-388. See also Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 297-318.
38. *Ibid.*, 389.
39. *Method in Theology*, 249.
40. *Ibid.*, 249.
41. *Insight*, 389.
42. *Method in Theology*, 129.
43. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 239.
44. *Ibid.*, 239.
45. *Ibid.*, 236.
46. *Ibid.*, 242.
47. *Ibid.*, 242.
48. *Ibid.*, 242.
49. *Ibid.*, 243.
50. *Ibid.*, 234.
51. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 211.
52. *Ibid.*, 213.
53. *Ibid.* 221.
54. *Method in Theology*, 212
55. "Cognitional Structure," Vol. 4: *Collection*, 211.
56. *Ibid.* 211.
57. *Ibid.* 211.
58. *Ibid.* 211.
59. See *Method in Theology*, 70.
60. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 211-212.

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61. Ibid. 211.
62. Ibid. 211.
63. Ibid. 212.
64. Ibid. 213.
65. Ibid. 213.
66. Ibid. 213.
67. *Method in Theology*, 238.
68. *Ibid.*, 265.
69. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 231-232.
70. *Insight*, xii.
71. *Ibid.*, xii-xiii.
72. xiii.
73. *Insight*, xii.
74. *Ibid.*, xii.
75. *Ibid.*, xiii.
76. *Method in Theology*, 238.
77. "Cognitive Structure," Vol. 4: *Collection*, 214.
78. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 241.
79. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 241.
80. *Method in Theology*, 238.
81. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 241.
82. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 241.
83. Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present*, 413.
84. *Insight*, 234.
85. Hugo A. Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, 5. Meynell's further comment is apposite to our story: "Twentieth-century empiricism has been much indebted to Hume. For Bertrand Russell, whose theory of knowledge was largely a development of and continuation of that of Hume, minds and bodies were alike 'logical constructions' out of sensations; in other words, to talk of minds and bodies is in the final analysis simply to talk of sensations. The central thesis of logical positivism, that any statement (provided it is not true by definition) which is in principle impossible to validate in terms of 'sense-data' or 'sense-contents' is simply nonsensical, depends on the same assumption."
86. Erick Przywara, "St Augustine and the Modern World." *A Monument to St. Augustine* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957) 281; quoted in Richard M. Liddy, *Transforming Light: Intellectual Conversion in the Early Lonergan*, 37.
87. "Cognitive Structure," *Collection*, 212.
88. Hugo Meynell, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, 150.
89. *Insight*, 324.
90. *Ibid.*, 324.
91. *Method in Theology*, 17; and "A Definition of Metaphysics," *Understanding and Being*, 187.
92. *Insight*, 389. Paradoxically, says Lonergan, "Hume's own mind was not what Hume considered the human mind to be." If Hume's conclusion were correct, that since I have no "substantial self" discernible in consciousness I have no substantial substance, Lonergan objects that I would be little more than a sleepwalker, indeed, "a non-responsible, non-reasonable, non-intelligent somnambulist" ("*Insight Revisited*," *A Second Collection*, 273). The nature of the human subject and its substantiality is a topic to which we will return.
93. *Method in Theology*, 214.
94. "Method in Catholic Theology," Vol. 6, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 39.
95. *Method in Theology*, 76.
96. "The Origins of Christian Realism," *A Second Collection*, 241.
97. "Cognitive Structure," *Collection*, 2121-215.
98. *Method in Theology*, 238-239.
99. "The Analogy of Meaning," Vol. 6., 199. See also *Insight*, 339-342.

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100. "The Analogy of Meaning," Vol. 6., 199, footnote 38.
101. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 216.
102. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 216-217.
103. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 217.
104. Giovanni Sala, "Kant's Theory of Knowledge," 205.
105. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 217.
106. On Kant's transcendental account of cognition, see Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 305-314.
107. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 194.
108. Giovanni Sala, "Kant's Theory of Knowledge," 205.
109. "Natural Knowledge of God," *A Second Collection*, 121-122.
110. *Ibid.*, 134.
111. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 159.
112. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 171.
113. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 179.
114. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 172.
115. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 173.
116. "The A Priori and Objectivity," *Understanding and Being*, 172-173.
117. "Consciousness and the Trinity," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133-134.
118. See "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 188-204.
119. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199.
120. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199, n. 38
121. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199.
122. Etienne Gilson, *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris: Vrin, 1939), 215. The translation of the quotations is by Lonergan.
123. Etienne Gilson, *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance*, 225-226. Lonergan gives another analysis of how Gilson and Kant agree and differ in "Consciousness and the Trinity," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133-134.
124. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 196. Cf. Gilson, 200.
125. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 196.
126. Gilson, 163, quoted in "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 196.
127. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 196.
128. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 196. Cf. Gilson, 203.
129. "Consciousness and the Trinity," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133.
130. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 197.
131. Cf. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 296.
132. "Consciousness and the Trinity," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 133.
133. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 192.
134. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 190.
135. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 200.
136. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 201.
137. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 201.
138. Cf. "Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 212.
139. Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematische Grundlegung* (Innsbruck-Vienna-Munich: Troia-Verlag, 1961), 88. Quoted in "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 190.
140. "Metaphysics as Horizon," *Collection*, 200.
141. "Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 213.
142. "Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 212.
143. "Discussion 2," *Understanding and Being*, 303.
144. "Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty

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- 'Systematics',” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 212-213.
145. “Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty ‘Systematics’,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 213.
146. “Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty ‘Systematics’,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 217.
147. “Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty ‘Systematics’,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 217.
148. “Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 398.
149. *Method in Theology*, 265.
150. *Ibid.*, 265.
151. “The Analogy of Meaning,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199-200.
152. *Method in Theology*, 239.
153. *Ibid.*, 239. See “Lecture 1: Philosophy of God”, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 162-178.
154. *Method in Theology*, 239.
155. *Ibid.*, 239-240.
156. See Joseph Flanagan on the question of God in *Quest for Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Lonergan’s Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 233-236.
157. Michael Vertin, “The Finality of Human Spirit: From Maréchal to Lonergan”, page 1. A paper delivered at the Second International Lonergan Workshop (July 31-August 7, 2004), Regis College, Toronto, An earlier version of this talk appeared as “La finalité intellectuelle: Maréchal et Lonergan,” in Paul Gilbert, ed., *Au point de départ: Joseph Maréchal entre la critique kantienne et l’ontologie thomiste* (Bruzelles: Éditions Lessius, 2000), 447-465.
158. “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 107.
159. Quoted in Cordelia Dean, “Science of the Soul? ‘I Think, Therefore I Am’ Is Losing Force,” *The New York Times* (June 26, 2007)
160. See John Cottingham’s review in **Times Literary Supplement**, (June 22, 2007) 22 of Christopher J. Insole, *The Realist Hope: A Critique of Anti-realist Approaches in Modern Philosophical Theology* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006).
- *Method in Theology*, 102. For a rapid-fire summary of Lonergan’s ‘one comprehensive’ argument for the existence of God, see “Ethics and God,” *Understanding and Being*, 245-246. “If the real is being — I mean, the intelligible — then God exists; but the real is intelligible, the real is being; therefore, God exists.”
- *Method in Theology*, 102.
- *Ibid.*, 102.
164. *Falling Man*, 232.
165. *Falling Man*, 233..
166. *Falling Man*, 234.
167. *Falling Man*, 235.
168. *Method in Theology*, 103.
169. *Ibid.*, 103. Lonergan acknowledged the charge of inconsistency leveled at his approach to the question of God in Chapter 19 of *Insight*: “While my cognitional theory was based on a long and methodological appeal to experience, in contrast my account of God’s existence and attributes made no appeal to religious experience” (“Philosophy of God,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1963-1980*, 72). In *Method in Theology*, by contrast, he based his approach on religious experience: “Our basic awareness of God comes to us not through our arguments or choices but primarily through God’s gift of his love” (“*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 277). Mark and Elizabeth Morelli (*The Lonergan Reader*, 272) remind us that “while Lonergan never retracted his claim that critical method yields knowledge of God’s existence, his later treatments introduce explicitly the religious horizon of the inquiring subject.” On the same point, see Charles F. Hefling, Jr., “Philosophy, Theology, and God,” in Vernon Gregson, ed., *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 120-122.
170. Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York and London: Continuum) 13.

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171. Charles C. Hefling, Jr. "Philosophy, Theology and God," in Vernon Gregson, editor, *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, 123.
172. Lonergan's starting point in dealing with the affirmation of God in Chapter Nineteen of *Insight* is not the philosophy of metaphysics, but the philosophy of human experience. Cf. Hefling, 121.
173. Hefling, 125.
174. Hefling, 125; "Insight Revisited," *A Second Collection*, 269.
175. *Insight*, xviii.
176. Hefling, 125. "The self-affirmation of the knower in Chapter Eleven (of *Insight*) is still Lonergan's base in Chapter Nineteen. In between, however, he expands that base to include the whole intelligible universe." The nature of "the knower who is myself is enough to lead to an affirmation of God, but for Lonergan --- with good reason --- prefers to make a thorough job of it." Hefling, 125-126.
177. *Insight*, 675.
178. *Method in Theology*, 103.
179. "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection*, 246.
180. *Ibid.*, 246.
181. "The Response of the Jesuit," *A Second Collection*, 169-170.
182. "The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 159.
183. *Ibid.*, 160.
184. "A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion," *A Third Collection*, 207.
185. *Ibid.*, 207-208. Lonergan refers the reader to Lonergan scholar Walter Conn's study of the three in *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986).
186. *Method in Theology*, 270.
187. "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, 210.
188. *Ibid.* 210-211.
189. "Philosophical Positions with Regard to Knowing," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 225.
190. *Ibid.*, 225-226.
191. *Ibid.*, 226.
192. Andrew Beards, "The Future of Analytical Philosophy: Lonergan's Challenge", a paper delivered at the Third International Lonergan Workshop in Mainz in January 2007.
193. *Ibid.*, 2.
194. *Ibid.*, 3.
195. *Ibid.*, 21. See also Michael McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy*, for a treatment of Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn in philosophy (103-139) and of contemporary analytic philosophers (140-169).
196. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 8-9.
197. Terry Eagleton, "Awakening from Modernity," *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 February 1987. Quoted in Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 9.
198. *Russian Thinkers*, viii.
199. Quoted in Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, xiii.
200. Lucy Beckett, *In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition*, 1.
201. Quoted in Lucy Beckett, *In the Light of Christ: Writings in the Western Tradition*, 1.
202. *Ibid.*, 2.
203. *Ibid.*, 3 .
204. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 9.
205. *Ibid.*, 9.
206. Jean Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 66. Quoted in Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 113, 291.
207. Hugo A. Meynell, *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, xi.
208. *Ibid.*, 184.
209. *Ibid.*, 184-185.
210. Quoted in *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, 63-64.

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211. Hugo Meynell, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Bernard Lonergan*, 54.
212. Hugh Bredin, in Brown, Stuart, Collinson, Dianne, Wilkinson, Robert, and Collinson, Dian E. (eds), *One Hundred Twentieth Century Philosophers*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1998, 113-115), 114.
213. Hugo A. Meynell, *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, 185.
214. *Ibid.*, 185.
215. *Ibid.*, 140.
216. *Ibid.*, 140.
217. *Ibid.*, 185-186.
218. *Questionnaire on Philosophy: Responses by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.* (Unpublished manuscript, 1984) 16.
219. John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens*. (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) xi. Haught is not alone in maintaining that the core of the Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens attack on religion is soft, not intellectually rock solid but amateurish, what philosopher and fellow-atheist Thomas Nagel dismisses as “thumb -your-nose-at-religion chaff.” For the chorus of like-minded critics, many scientists, philosophers, and avowed atheists among them, see Peter Steinfels’ article “Books on Atheism Are Raising Hackles in Unlikely Places,” *New York Times*, March 3, 2007.
220. *God and the New Atheism*, xiii.
221. *Ibid.*, xii.
222. *Ibid.*, xii. Haught lists thinkers like Paul Tillich, Alfred North Whitehead, Paul Ricoeur, Rudolph Bultmann, Edward Schillebeeckx, Bernard Lonergan, Karl Barth, John Bowker, Elizabeth Johnson, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Ian Barbour, David Tracy, Dorothee Soelle, Sallie McFague, Henri de Lubac, Hans Jonas, Emil Fackenheim, and a Seyyed Hossein Nasr. None of whom, incidentally, are mentioned by Dawkins, Harris, or Hitchens.
223. *Ibid.*, 22-23.
224. “The Scope of Renewal,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 295.

7

The Realm of Transcendence

...while for secular man of the twentieth century the most familiar differentiation of consciousness distinguishes and relates theory and common sense, still in the history of mankind both in the East and in the Christian West the predominant differentiation of consciousness has set in opposition and in mutual enrichment the realms of common sense and of transcendence.¹

So it is... that man can reach basic fulfillment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm in which God is known and loved.²

Bernard Lonergan

In December, 1994, spelunker Jean-Marie Chauvet and two companions managed to squeeze their way through the narrow entrance of a passage way to a previously undiscovered string of caverns 1700 feet in length, larger than the caves at Lascaux in France and Altamira in Spain, long famous for their Stone Age art work. The newly discovered cave, apparently undisturbed for centuries, lay in a gorge near the town of Vallon-Pont-d'Arc in the Ardeche region in the south of France. On its walls the excited explorers discovered "one of the great marvels of pre-historic art,"³ a dazzling treasure trove of more than 300 stone age paintings and charcoal drawings of human hands and rhinos, bears, mammoths, horses, oxen, a hyena, a panther, and some owls. Experts estimate that the arresting charcoal sketches of two rhinoceroses and a bison are between about 30,340 and 32,410 years old, the world's earliest known drawings (Figure 27). The French Culture Ministry reached the startling conclusion that "the human race early on was capable of making veritable works of art."

But, as archeologist Jacquetta Hawkes reminds us, in any account of primitive society "it is impossible to consider the arts apart from religion."⁴ Indeed, *Homo sapiens sapiens* for much of his existence up to the advent of the ancient high civilizations had been quite like the very primitive people of the Trobriand Islands today. They hunt and fish, sow and reap. But the rest of their lives are "penetrated through and through by myth and magic."⁵ To the best of our knowledge, our early ancestors could be "as intelligent and reasonable as the rest of us in the practical affairs of life;"⁶ and yet, paradoxically, myth and magic permeated and dominated both their day-to-day activities as well as "the profound and secret aspirations" of their hearts.⁷ Indeed, as we have seen, the sophisticated creators of the ancient high civilizations and the populations they governed were highly intelligent in regard to the practical. They vastly extended the range in which they exercised practical intelligence. "Large-scale enterprises" Lonergan reminds

us, “were common: there were great works of irrigation, vast structures of stone or brick, armies and navies, complicated processes of bookkeeping, the beginnings of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy.”⁸ And though their wealth and power replaced the poverty and weakness of stone age primitives, they too remained “locked in myth.” Indeed, says Lonergan, “their religion, their cosmology, and their politics” were shot through with myth.⁹ All the great ancient civilizations of the ancient world took their stand on belief in the realm of transcendence, expressed in what Lonergan calls “the cosmological myth that depicted as continuous and solidary the order of society, the order of the cosmos, and the divine being.”¹⁰

In creating the world of myth, these early ancestors of ours were not dealing with the practical exigence which funnels the stream of consciousness into the specialization we call common sense. Nor were they responding to the systematic theoretical exigence which channels the flow into the specialization that operates in the realm of theory and science. Nor were they driven by the reflexive methodological exigence that, given the historical development of common sense and theory, impels consciousness into the specialization by which intelligence becomes reflective about all its cognitional activity and seeks to understand what we do when we use our minds in whatever form of differentiation our thinking takes. In creating the world of myth, our ancestors were dealing squarely with what Lonergan calls ‘the transcendent exigence’ by which the human spirit raises “questions about the ultimate foundations of existence and value.”¹¹

Openness to the Transcendent It is Lonergan’s contention that *Homo sapiens sapiens* from his infancy as a species has been open to being. By openness he means “the pure, detached, disinterested, and unrestricted desire to know.” In other words, an “unstoppable curiosity” that anticipates “the thrill of discovery.”¹² Such openness, when functioning, is immediately ‘given’ in consciousness. Aristotle spoke of the fact of openness as “the beginning of all science and philosophy.” For Aquinas, openness included the natural desire to know God by his essence.¹³ There is in each of us a transcendent exigence; one asks (and from the beginning man has asked) the big question: “What is going on here?” Is there a Big Picture (a metaphysics, a worldview) that explains all that is?¹⁴ A good question, says Annie Dillard. “What do we think of the created universe, spanning an unthinkable void with an unthinkable profusion of forms? Or what do we think of nothingness, those sickening reaches a time in either direction?”¹⁵ Indeed, as Lonergan poses the ultimate question: “Are cosmogenesis, biological evolution, historical process basically cognate to us as moral beings or are they indifferent and so alien to us?”¹⁶ In weighing the perilous issue, Lonergan is forthright: “Is the universe on our side, or are we just gamblers and, if we are gamblers, are we not perhaps fools, individually struggling for authenticity and collectively endeavoring to snatch progress from the ever mounting welter of decline?”¹⁷ To put the question in philosophical terms: “Is there an absolute, intelligent, unconditional ground of contingent reality? Is this ground a personal center of moral responsibility and a proper subject for moral evaluation?”¹⁸

Achievement of openness, however, only occurs, says Lonergan, “when the actual orientation of consciousness coincides with the exigence of the pure, detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.” It is Lonergan’s contention that, however one phrases the big questions and whether one’s answers are religious or irreligious, “at their

root there is the same transcendental tendency of the human spirit that questions, that questions without restriction, that questions the significance of its own questioning, and so comes to the question of God.”¹⁹ Indeed, the question is all but inescapable because for Lonergan it “rises out of our conscious intentionality, out of the *a priori* structured drive that promotes us from experiencing to the effort to understand, from understanding to the effort to judge truly, from judging to the effort to choose rightly.” Lonergan is convinced that to the degree “we advert to our own questioning and proceed to question it, there arises the question of God.”²⁰ It follows inevitably, for Lonergan, that within anyone’s neighborhood “there lies...a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness.”²¹ It is his position, moreover, that “the crop of philosophies produced since the Enlightenment are not open to revealed truths because they possess no adequate account of truth.”²² And so the salient point for him is that even “their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.”²³ Lonergan’s conclusion? Because of the invariant structure of the human spirit, man is hardwired for the transcendent. It comes as no surprise then that man is by his very makeup open to religious experience. Basic human curiosity is insatiable and inevitably leads to the ultimate question that haunts mankind.²⁴ Briefly, the mind of man like arrow to target flies to the question, Does God exist?

Further, it is abundantly clear that religion finds its origin in experience. In common parlance, ‘experience’ means practical knowledge. One is either experienced in the ways of the world or inexperienced. But in the realm of transcendence, experience means ‘immediate, undifferentiated awareness’ of the transcendent. It is prior to any attending to, understanding, or judging the experience. In a celebrated study of religious experience, *The Idea of the Holy*, Rudolf Otto went beneath any specific expression of religious belief to uncover “the common religious ground” from which the different world religions sprang. He asked, in effect, What am I doing when I am having a religious experience?²⁵ Specific beliefs, he points out, emerge from an immediate experience of power, frightening, awe-inspiring, fascinating power, something wholly other. Indeed, something which always manifests itself as totally different from the material world.

Experience of the Transcendent What then is the experience from which religions emerge? Initially one enters the realm of the transcendent by an experience of awe. The raw power of earthquakes, erupting volcanos, and hurricanes never fail to inspire awe. The blood-chilling experience of encountering man-eating beasts which few of us have today, but with which our primitive ancestors were familiar in their daily struggle for existence. When aboriginal Eskimo hunters first met English seamen from the whaling ship *Cumbria* in 1823, Barry Lopez reports, “they regarded the whalers with a mixture of *ilira* and *kappia*....*Ilira* is the fear that accompanies awe; *kappia* is fear in the face of unpredictable violence. Watching a polar bear— *ilira*. Having to cross thin ice— *kappia*.”²⁶ From his months of travel among Eskimos today, Lopez came to realize that they are more afraid of nature than we are. He quotes a shaman’s reply to a query about Eskimo beliefs: “We do not believe. We fear.” It is not, however, a matter of “debilitating fear.” Lopez explains: “They are afraid because they accept fully what is violent and tragic in nature....Sudden cataclysmic events are as much a part of life, of really living, as are the moments when one pauses to look at something beautiful.”²⁷

Sebastian Junger, the author of *The Perfect Storm*, states that “there is probably some elemental human fascination with something that’s completely overpowering.” He writes that, though he professes to be an atheist himself, “a volcano, an earthquake are all awe-inspiring...We witness whatever we perceive to be God, that this is God’s handiwork.”²⁸ Creators of Greek myths were particularly sensitive, says classicist W. K. C. Guthrie to “the superhuman character of many things...which give us...sudden stabs of joy or pain which we do not understand.”²⁹ Where Jews or Christians would say “God is Lord, Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth,” Greek mythmakers would reverse the order of the sentence and say “the storm is a god,” “the raging sea is a god,” “the earthquake is a god.”

This *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (tremendous and fascinating mystery) can manifest itself in individual material things like a tree or a stone which are an integral part of our natural world.³⁰ This terrible and fascinating power discloses itself as something wholly other than the profane, something other than the quotidian, something we experience and thereafter identify as sacred. Any manifestation of the sacred—any hierophany---may take place, as I say, in a stone or a tree. Indeed, the stone or tree is not itself worshiped as divine, but venerated as the site of a hierophany. Stone or tree is no longer ordinary, something merely profane, but becomes something sacred.³¹ Indeed, as recently as 1995, I witnessed flames flickering from candles placed at the base of a banyan tree revered as sacred by Hakka peasants in the mountains of China’s Fujian Province.

What then is the human reaction to an encounter with the sacred? For W. H. Auden, it is “a passion of awe.” He writes:

This awe may vary greatly in intensity and range in tone from joyous wonder to panic dread. A sacred being may be attractive or repulsive—a swan or an octopus---beautiful or ugly—a toothless hag or a fair young child—good or evil—a Beatrice or a Belle Dame Sans Merci—historical fact or fiction—the person met on the road or an image encountered in a story or a dream—it may be noble or something unmentionable in the drawing room, it may be anything it likes on condition, but this condition is absolute, that it arouse awe.³²

Peak Experiences Let’s get down to cases. We begin with what Abraham Maslow calls the world of peak experiences and the role they play on the road to self-actualization. Lonergan was attracted by the writings of Maslow who was a leading mover in what has come to be called the Third Force in modern psychology. It is a movement which studies, not the psychologically sick, but the well. Let’s listen to accounts of witnesses who give report having peak experiences.

A young mother was scurrying around her kitchen and getting breakfast for her husband and young children. The sun was streaming in, the children, clean and nicely dressed, were chattering as they ate. The husband was casually playing with the children; but, as she looked in at them she was suddenly so overwhelmed with their beauty and her great love for them, and her feeling of good fortune, that she went into a peak-

experience.

A hostess after a dinner party where everything had gone perfectly and it had been a fine evening, said good-bye to her last guest, sat down in a chair, looked around at the mess, and went in to a peak of great happiness and exhilaration.³³

A young man working his way through medical school by drumming in a jazz band reported years later, that in all his drumming he had three peaks when he suddenly felt like a great drummer and his performance was perfect.³⁴

Virginia Woolf describes a peak experience (like that of the young mother Maslow reports) in her novel *To The Lighthouse*. Mrs Ramsay, wife of an agnostic professor and mother of their eight children, sits knitting at a window from which the lighthouse is visible and finds herself reflecting:

How could any Lord have made this world? She asked. With her mind she had always seized the fact that there is no reason, order, justice: but suffering, death, the poor. There was no treachery too base for the world to commit; she knew that. No happiness lasted; she knew that. . . . Always, Mrs. Ramsay felt, one helped oneself out of solitude reluctantly by laying hold of some little odd or end, some sound, some sight. She listened, but it was all very still; cricket was over; the children were in their baths; there was only the sound of the sea. She stopped knitting; she held the long reddish-brown stocking dangling in her hands a moment. She saw the light [of the lighthouse] again. With some irony in her interrogation, for when one woke at all, one's relations changed, she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call (she woke in the night and saw it bent across their bed, stroking the floor), but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotised, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!³⁵

Maslow's studied people, writes Lonergan, who are "conspicuously healthy,"³⁶ people like Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay who "keep growing over a long lifetime."³⁷ Frank Goble has reworked Maslow's research and writing on peak experiences into an organized and simplified synthesis.³⁸ They are moments, says Goble, when people feel "at their very best, moments of great awe, intense happiness, rapture, bliss, or ecstasy." Maslow reports, moreover, that initially he expected to find peak experiences "only rarely

and then in exceptional individuals.” However, he was surprised, as indeed was Lonergan, that the “peak experiences really were common, that most people had them....”³⁹ Moreover, says Goble, peak experiences give “a fleeting glimpse of what self-actualization is.”⁴⁰ A peak experience is “a moment in the individual’s life when he is functioning fully, feels strong, sure of himself, and in complete control.” A moment when he likely strikes others as “more reliable, dependable, and trustworthy.”⁴¹ For Carl Rogers, such an individual is a “fully-functioning” person.⁴²

Indeed, peak experiences may vary in kind and intensity, but those who have them find themselves freed to grow more easily in the area of self-transcendence. Maslow reports, in addition, the important discovery that such experiences can produce “beneficial therapeutic effects.” Peak experiences make you feel good, but they can, in addition, promote self-transcendence: “many people, during and after these moments of joy, felt very fortunate and grateful, and, as a result, felt a love for others and the world, and even had a desire to do something good as repayment.” Maslow adds that “it looks as if any experience of real excellence, of real perfection, of any moving toward the perfect justice or toward perfect values, tends to produce a peak experience.”⁴³ Lonergan agrees: “When they listen to music, gaze upon a tree or landscape, are stopped by beauty of any kind, they are freeing their sensitivity from the routines imposed by development and allowing it to follow fresher and deeper rhythms of apprehension and feeling.”⁴⁴ Peak experiences provide what Virginia Woolf calls “a momentary stay against confusion.”

Further, in reflecting on the transformative power of peak experiences, Maslow had another insight which struck with considerable force. The uncanny way in which peak experiences exhibit most of the features commonly ascribed over the centuries to peak religious experiences: “Is it not meaningful also,” he asks, “that the mystic experience has been described in almost identical words by people in every religion, every era, and in every culture?”⁴⁵

Mystical Experiences In his celebrated study of mysticism, for instance, F. C. Hoppold starts with the suggestion that the term mysticism can with justice be applied to a kind of peak experience that is less developed than those of the great mystics. He writes:

An experience of the sort which may, without unjustifiably stretching the meaning of the word, be called mystical may happen to anyone, sometimes quite unexpectedly; but, when it occurs, it is clearly recognizable. It may happen only once in a lifetime; but, when it does happen, it brings an illumination and a certainty which can rarely, if ever, be reached by the rational consciousness and may change the whole tenure of a life.⁴⁶

Consider some examples of mysticism in its broadest sense. First, the experience of a girl of nine (recalled and reported later as an adult):

Suddenly the Thing happened, and, as everybody knows, it cannot be described in words. The Bible phrase, “I saw the heavens open”, seems as good as any if not taken literally. I remember saying to myself, in the awe and rapture, “So it’s like this; now I know what Heaven is like, now I

know what they mean in church”. The words of the 23rd Psalm came into my head and I began repeating them: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. Soon it faded and I was alone in the meadow with the baby and the brook and the sweet-smelling lime trees. But though it passed and only the earthly beauty remained, I was filled with great gladness, I had seen the “far distances”.⁴⁷

A second example, the experience of a mature man of 50. Warner Allen came to the disturbing realization that he could discern no rational purpose to his life. For a year he had pondered the absence of any meaning in his life. Then the answer came, like a lightning bolt, while listening to music: “during a performance of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony at the Queens Hall, in the triumphant fast movement when ‘the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy’.”⁴⁸ What had happened to him in that “infinitesimal fraction of a second”? He struggled to put it in words: “Something has happened to me -- I am utterly amazed -- can this be that? (*That* being the answer to the riddle of life) -- but it is too simple -- I always knew it -- it is remembering an old forgotten secret -- like coming home -- I am not ‘I’, not the ‘I’ I thought -- there is no death -- peace passing understanding -- yet how unworthy I --” Only later Allen understood the experience as a moment of illumination, “a *wordless* stream of complex feelings in which the experience of Union combined with the rhythmic emotion of the music like a sunbeam striking with iridescence the spray above a waterfall -- a stream that was continually swollen by tributaries of associated Experience...” It was also a moment of enlightenment, “the recollection in tranquility of the whole complex of Experience as it were embalmed in thought-forms and words.”⁴⁹ Allen wrote:

Rapt in Beethoven’s music, I closed my eyes and watched a silver glow which shaped itself into a circle with a central focus brighter than the rest.... There was an impression of drawing strength from a limitless sea of power and a sense of deepening peace. The light grew brighter but was never dazzling or alarming. I came to a point where time and motion ceased.... I am absorbed In the Light of the Universe, in Reality glowing like fire with the knowledge of itself, without ceasing to be one and myself, merged like a drop of quicksilver in the Whole, yet still separate as a grain of sand in the desert. The peace that passes all understanding and the pulsating energy of creation are one in the center in the midst of conditions where all opposites are reconciled.”⁵⁰

A third example. Novelist Winifred Holtby, aged 33, with two years to live, exhausted by illness, unable to work, and seriously depressed, walked up a hill to a group of lambs gathered around a frozen water trough. A friend, Vera Brittain reports in *Testament of Friendship* what happened:

She broke the ice for them with her stick, and as she did so heard a voice within her saying “Having nothing, yet possessing all things”. It was so distinct that she looked round startled, but she was alone with the lambs on the top of the hill. Suddenly, in a flash, the grief, the bitterness, the sense

of frustration disappeared; all desire to possess power and glory for herself vanished away, and never came back.... The moment of 'conversion'..., she said with tears in her eyes, was the supreme spiritual experience of her life. She always associated it afterwards with the words of Bernard Bosanquet on Salvation:

And now we are saved absolutely, we need not say from what, we are at home in the universe, and,...feeble and timid creatures as we are, there is nothing within the world or without it that can make us afraid.⁵¹

A fourth example which Annie Dillard relates in *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. First a bit of background. Marius von Senden in *Space and Sight*, she writes, informs us of the curious fact that blind patients who recover their sight through surgery have no perception of space. Rather, they see the world "as a dazzle of color-patches." One young girl gazed at a tree and could only describe it with delight as "the tree with the lights in it".⁵² Fascinated by the girl's wonder, Dillard reports its effect on her: "I saw color-patches for weeks after I read this wonderful book." She was haunted by the image of the tree with lights in it:

It was for this tree I searched through the peach orchards of summer, in the forests of fall and down winter and spring for years. Then one day I was walking along Tinker Creek thinking of nothing at all and I saw the tree with the lights in it. I saw the backyard cedar where the mourning doves roost charged and transfigured, each cell buzzing with flame. I stood on the grass with the lights in it, grass that was wholly fire, utterly focused and utterly dreamed. It was less like seeing than like being for the first time seen, knocked breathless by a powerful glance.

She caught her breath, the Herclitean vision passed, but the transformation lingered on:

The flood of fire abated, but I'm still spending the power. Gradually the lights went out in the cedar, the colors died, the cells unflamed and disappeared. I was still ringing. I had been my whole life a bell, and never knew it until at that moment I was lifted and struck. I have since only very rarely seen the tree with the lights in it. The vision comes and goes, mostly goes, but I live for it, for the moment when the mountains open and a new light roars in spate through the crack, and the mountains slam.⁵³

Centuries earlier, Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) recorded a dialogue he had with himself in which he gives a remarkably precise phenomenological description of a peak religious experience. He asks himself:

What is that sweet thing that comes sometimes to touch me at the thought of God? It affects me a with such vehemence and sweetness that I begin wholly to go out of myself and to be lifted up, whither I know not. Suddenly I am renewed and changed; it is a state of inexpressible well-

being. My consciousness rejoices. I lose the memory of my former trials, my soul rejoices, my mind becomes clearer, my heart is inflamed, my desires are satisfied. I feel myself transported into a new place, I know not where. I grasp something interiorly as if with the embraces of love.

Hugh confesses that he is mystified:

I do not know what it is, and yet I strive with all my strength to hold it and not to lose it. I struggled deliciously to prevent myself leaving this thing which I desire to embrace forever, and I exult with ineffable intensity, as if I had at last found the goal of all my desires. I seek for nothing more. I wish for nothing more. All my aspiration is to continue as the point that I have reached.

Hugh asks himself again:

Is it my Beloved? Tell me, I pray thee, if this be he, that, when he return, I may conjure him not to depart, and to establish in me his permanent dwelling place.

Hugh answers his own question with conviction:

Yes, it is truly thy Beloved who visits thee. But he comes *invisible, hidden*, incomprehensible. He comes to touch thee, not to be seen; to intimate his presence to thee, not to be understood; to make thee taste of him, not to pour himself out in his entirety; to draw thy affection, not to satisfy thy desire; to bestow the first fruits of his love, not to communicate it in its fullness.

This kind of peak experience, Hugh assures himself, is “the most certain pledge of thy future marriage: that thou art destined to see him and to possess him eternally...” And in consequence? “In the times of his absence thou shalt console thyself; and during his visits thou shalt renew thy courage, which is ever in need of heartening.”⁵⁴

More than four centuries ago, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) related that on the steps of a monastery in Manresa “his understanding began to be raised up, in that he was seeing the Most Holy Trinity in the form of three keys on a keyboard, and this with so many tears and so many sobs that he could not control himself.” The experience kept ringing for him for his entire life and triggered a lifelong devotion to the Trinity. Ignatius continued: “once the way in which God had created the world was represented in his understanding, with great spiritual joy: it seemed to him he was seeing a white thing from which some rays were coming out, and that God was making light out of it.” Ignatius reported yet another experience:

Once he was going in his devotion to a church, which was a little more than a mile from Manresa..., and the way goes along by the river [Cardoner]. Going along thus in his devotions, he sat down for a little

while with his face towards the river, which was running deep below. And as he was seated there, the eyes of his understanding began to be opened: not that he saw some vision, but understanding and knowing many things, spiritual things just as much as matters of faith and learning, and this with an enlightenment so strong that all things seemed new to him....And this left him with the understanding enlightened and so great a way that it seemed to him as if he were a different person, and he had another mind, different from that which he had before.

And the impact of these experiences? Ignatius reports they “always gave him such confirmation regarding the faith, that he has often thought to himself that if there weren’t Scripture to teach us these matters of the faith, he would be resolved to die for them solely on the basis of what he has seen.”⁵⁵

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) recorded one such experience that echos both Heraclitus and Moses before the burning bush:

From about half past ten in the evening to
about half an hour after midnight.

Fire.

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,

Not the god of philosophers and scholars.

Absolute Certainty: Beyond reason. Joy, Peace.

Forgetfulness of the world and everything but God.

The world has not known thee, but I have known thee.

Joy! Joy! Joy! Tears of joy!⁵⁶

Such a peak religious experience is without a doubt the pearl of great price. But “the literature of illumination,” Annie Dillard reminds us, reveals that, however disciplined you may be in the art of prayer, the pearl always arrives as “a gift and a total surprise.” Her report from the field is:

I return from one walk knowing where the killdeer nests in the field by the creek and the hour the laurel blooms. I return from the same walk a day later scarcely knowing my own name. Litanies hum in my ears; my tongue flaps in my mouth Ailinson, alleluiah!⁵⁷

The Role of Intentionality Analysis in the Appropriation of the Experience of the Transcendent In his introduction to *Insight*, you may recall that Lonergan made the bold claim: understand understanding and you will understand in broad outline all there is to be understood. An understanding of understanding will provide you with “a fixed base and an invariant pattern” that will help you to understand “all further developments of understanding.”⁵⁸ Indeed, it will be the vantage point from which to explore “all the differentiations of human consciousness.”⁵⁹ Once you understand how the various realms of meaning are distinguished and related, you can “easily,” following Lonergan’s lead, figure out the manifold ways in which religious experience has found expression in the realm of transcendence.⁶⁰ Let’s examine this matter of expression now a little more

closely. Exploration of the realm of interiority “identifies in personal experience one’s conscious and intentional acts and the dynamic relations that link them to one another.”⁶¹ And so once you understand how the human subject operates in the realm of interiority, you will have the tools to understand its operations in the realm of transcendence. One uses the tools identified in the realm of interiority to understand the ways in which we process the experience of *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*.

The Difficulty of Self-Appropriation While peak experiences are common, as we have seen,—indeed most people have them, Maslow found that few people seem to be “aware” that they have them. And Lonergan agrees that what Maslow says about peaking and peak experiences in this context can also be true for self-appropriation through intentionality analysis, especially in the realm of transcendence. Not everyone, “he says, “is skillful enough at psychological introspection to detect it.”⁶² He salutes Maslow’s call for a kind of “experiential education”. Maslow explains:

We must make him aware of the fact that peak-experiences go on inside himself. Until he has become aware of such experience and has this experience as a basis for comparison, he is a non-peaker; and it is useless to try to communicate to him the feel and the nature of peak-experience.

But what if one can succeed in bringing a peak experience to someone’s awareness? What follows? Much:

He now knows what you are talking about...; and it is possible to teach him by reference to his own weak peak-experiences how to improve them, how to enrich them, how to enlarge them, and also how to draw the proper conclusions from these experiences...

Maslow continues: “Until that point is reached at which he has a detached, objective, conscious awareness of the relationship between a particular name or label or word and a particular set of ineffable, subjective experiences, no communication and no teaching are possible...”

On the other hand, if one can help a person “to become aware of internal, subjective, subverbal experiences so that these experiences can be brought into the world of abstraction, of conversation, of communication, of naming, etc.,...it immediately becomes possible for a certain amount of control to be exerted over these hitherto unconscious and uncontrollable processes.”⁶³

At root, then, Lonergan agreed with Maslow, even though he had some reservations. Maslow, in his judgment, had not yet developed “a consistent vocabulary, particularly with regard to what is conscious but not thematized, and, on the other hand, what is conscious but has become explicitly thematized.”⁶⁴ Or what Lonergan had already done himself in *Insight*. That said, what is Lonergan’s conclusion? Peak experiences constitute an infrastructure in consciousness:

It is one thing to have a peak experience. It is something else again to advert to it, to compare it with other experiences, to note its singularity, to

draw up a scale of higher and lower, to assign this type of experience to the topmost rank, and to label it a peak inexperience.

In addition to an infrastructure, Lonergan continues, there is a superstructure in consciousness: “all such adverting, comparing, evaluating, labeling pertain to a superstructure.” It follows that one may very well have a peak experience (or a religious experience for that matter) without being “explicitly aware” of it.⁶⁵

At the Level of Experiencing First, at the level of experiencing, the first level of conscious operation. This is experience of the transcendent at the level of immediate experience,⁶⁶ examples of which we have just been considering. Pure experience, in other words, raw experience, as yet unmediated experience, of the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*. In Auden’s phrase, pure experience of “the numinous-in-itself.”⁶⁷ It is an encounter with the transcendent. Through such encounters one enters the realm of transcendence. At this first level of operations, experience of the transcendent remains unmediated, is not objectified, and indeed, as Lonergan writes, may abide long within subjectivity merely as “a vector, an undertow, a call to a dreaded holiness.”⁶⁸ Pure religious experience is sensation as distinct from perception and altogether prior to any expression of it. It is sensible data prior to any naming of the data and prior to any hypothesis about the meaning of the data. As inner experience, it is consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge. In other words, it may register in your consciousness prior to your adverting to it. In addition, any encounter with the transcendent arouses feelings, often the powerful feelings that Pascal reported. It is ordinarily accompanied by an emotional charge.⁶⁹ One may cry out with Auden, *sanctus, sanctus, sanctus!*⁷⁰ Or with Annie Dillard, alleluiah! But like peak experiences, an experience of the transcendent can range anywhere “from slight and unnoticed to absorbing, fascinating, and dominating”⁷¹ like the experiences of a nine year old girl, Warner Allen, Winifred Holtby, Annie Dillard, Hugh of St. Victor, and Ignatius Loyola. And so Lonergan speaks of ‘emerging religious consciousness’, by which he means “the transition from lesser to greater luminousness, intensity, clarity, fullness.”⁷² But the experience itself comes with no label attached, without any formulation of itself, indeed as unformulated as any immediate experience. In Lonergan’s analysis, pure experience is the infrastructure that is prior to a superstructure that identifies, names, and explains the data. It is naked experience of the transcendent before being identified, given a name tag, and dressed in recognizable clothing.

At a Level of Understanding and Formulation What Lonergan is doing is pointing out a difference in levels of operation within consciousness. Between an infrastructure and a superstructure. And so, to take stock, how does Lonergan identify the infrastructure of the experience of transcendence?

It is pure experience, the experience underpinning and distinct from every superstructure.... It is consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge, consciousness as distinct from any introspective process in which one inquires about inquiring, and seeks to understand what happens when one understands, and endeavors to formulate what goes longer when one is

formulating, and so on for all the inner activities of which all of us are *conscious* and so few of us have any exact *knowledge*.⁷³

Lonergan goes on to say that we are conscious of these activities because, as is evident, “our sensing and feeling, our inquiring and understanding, our formulating and checking, our deliberating and deciding, are not unconscious but conscious.” Lonergan acknowledges, however, that not many of us have any “exact knowledge” of these inner operations, because such consciousness is “only the infrastructure in a potential knowledge that few get around to actuating by adding its appropriate superstructure.”⁷⁴ In other words, the exact knowledge we are attempting to actuate here and inviting you to verify for yourself in your own consciousness. In brief, Lonergan distinguishes between an infrastructure and a superstructure: “an infrastructure of insights as discoveries or of feelings as felt and ...a superstructure of insights as formulated in hypotheses or of feelings as integrated in conscious living.”⁷⁵

It is at the intellectual level of understanding (the second level of conscious operation) that the human subject begins to process the data of immediate experience.⁷⁶ In what way? Here you advert to the experience and begin to deal with it at the level of understanding. Here you inquire, come to understand, express what you have understood, and work out the presuppositions and implications of what you are expressing. Here you ask questions and begin to give answers. You ask, What is happening to me? What is this strange new realm in which I find myself? You may express the experience in image, symbol, art, or in language. As you attempt to express the experience, you move out of the world of immediacy and into the world mediated by meaning. The expression, formulation, and interpretation in whatever medium you choose become the means you use to mediate to yourself and others the meaning of your experience.

Expression in Art In the past the formulation of the experience of the transcendent has found expression in art, symbol and myth, and in language.

First art. Let’s look at the archaeological record and trace the forms in which religious experience has found expression over the millennia. The two realms—common sense and transcendence—coexisted and interpenetrated each other—with the realm of transcendent meaning struggling to express itself in art, but also, as we shall see later, in myth and magic. The first hard evidence of religious experience appeared roughly 40,000 years ago. Cave paintings and burial sites suggest that as early as the Upper Paleolithic Age *Homo sapiens sapiens* was religious and that his religious experience found early expression in art. At this time in Europe, *Homo sapiens sapiens* was established as cave-dweller and hunter. “Adventurous, persevering, resourceful and aggressive,” says C.V. Wedgwood, “with an ever increasing capacity for creating and destroying and inspired by an insatiable curiosity and a powerful imagination, [he] appeared destined to master the world.”⁷⁷ Stone age *Homo sapiens sapiens* had at this time inherited the use of fire and came up with improved and new weapons to hunt bear, bison, reindeer, and woolly-haired rhino and mammoth. As Paul Jordan puts it: “Our ancestral line was transformed into a very big-brained, toolmaking, fire-wielding species that by about 40,000 years ago was beginning to manifest even the most sophisticated traits of modern human behaviour.”⁷⁸ In other words, he had other distinctive qualities besides common sense, as Wedgwood notes; he had “a sense of awe and a sense of beauty”⁷⁹ and extraordinary

artistic power to express it. In Jordan's words: "The paintings of the cave artists of the last ice age are as good as anything that humanity has ever achieved in this line."⁸⁰

Art is important for Bernard Lonergan in this context because art has "an ulterior significance." By that he means that art expresses "a plus" beyond visual representation, some "ulterior presence", a realm of transcendent meaning that lies within but also beyond the realm of commonsense and theory. He puts it this way:

Art...*presents* the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the 'plus' that is in things ...It draws attention to the fact that the splendor of the world is a cipher [=secret code], a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is *present*... Art can be viewing this world and looking for the something more that this world reveals, and reveals, so to speak, in silent speech, reveals by a presence that cannot be defined or got hold of.⁸¹

It is a striking fact that among primitive food-gathers and hunter-fishers and in the ancient high civilizations the realm of common sense and the realm of transcendence existed side-by-side. The first stirring of the human mind is to ask questions. Questioning lures you out of yourself and sets you on a quest to know what you as yet don't know. It is a fact that lends credence to Lonergan's emphatic claim that the Eros of the human spirit when unimpeded flies inevitably to the ultimate question, the question of God, like arrow to target. Our early ancestors were surely like that newborn child of whom Annie Dillard writes:

An infant who has just learned to hold his head up has a frank and forthright way of gazing about him in bewilderment. He hasn't the faintest clue where he is, and he aims to learn.⁸²

In the life of early man, as we saw in chapter one, there was "the sphere of reality that is domesticated, familiar, common," one's own neighborhood, charted and tame,---the realm of common sense meaning where a spade is unmistakably a spade. But in the late Paleolithic---millennia before Socrates and his entry into the realm of theory, early man surmised that something more was going on in the neighborhood than meets the eye or strikes the ear. Something mysterious and vertiginous. Some realm still unmapped, still to be explored in fear and trembling, says Lonergan, "the sphere of the ulterior unknown, of the unexplored and strange," with an "undefined surplus of significance and momentousness."⁸³ In this context, consider W. H. Auden's remarkable analysis of the poetic imagination. Writing from his experience as a working poet, Auden echoed Coleridge in claiming that we have a Primary and a Secondary Imagination. By Primary Imagination, we establish contact with "sacred beings and sacred events." He uses the word sacred in the widest possible meaning it can have and identifies contact with a sacred being as follows:

A sacred being cannot be anticipated; it must be encountered. On encounter the imagination has no option but to respond. All imaginations do not recognize the same sacred beings or events, but every imagination

responds to those it recognizes in the same way. The impression made upon the imagination by any sacred being is of an overwhelming but undefinable importance – – – an unchangeable quality, an Identity, as Keats said: I-am-that-I-am is what every sacred being seems to say. The impression made by a sacred event is of an overwhelming but undefinable significance.⁸⁴

Hierophanies, says Lonergan, may manifest “the so-called gods of the moment.” By this he means:

When they are many but recognized as possessing a family resemblance, then there is a living polytheism represented today by the 800,000 gods of Shintoism. When distinct religious experiences are associated with a single place, there arises the God of this or that place. When they are the experiences of a single person and united by the unity of that person, then there is the god of the person, such as was the god of Jacob or of Laban. Finally, when the unification is social, there result the god(s) of the group.⁸⁵

Indeed, for those who have had the experience of hierophany, all nature can manifest its “cosmic sacrality”, all nature can become a hierophany.⁸⁶

Moreover, Jacquetta Hawkes not only affirms the tight bond between religion and art, as we have seen, but goes on to develop the idea: “man’s sharpening a self-consciousness gave him a sense of isolation from the rest of life, and almost all his activities other than those necessary to keep him alive were directed to establishing a harmonious, satisfying and effective relationship with the external world.” It is her considered opinion that “perhaps no contribution made by prehistoric man to his successor is more important than the body of magico-religious attitudes, beliefs and customs that grew up as a part of this mental traffic with the universe.”⁸⁷

Expression in Symbol and Myth While it has its origin in experience, religion finds its expression in myth. Myth is grounded in the reality of concrete religious experience. Indeed, there are occasions when outer circumstances and inner disposition combine to “call forth the more intense [religious] experiences that leave one now aghast, now amazed, now entranced.”⁸⁸ In the most primitive religions of mankind, the inbuilt exigence in the human spirit for transcendence found its initial and rudimentary expression in the images and symbols of myth we have been considering. The language of image and symbol is parallel to, but different from, the language of the ordinary words of common sense. Indeed, the sacred images and symbols of primitive religion make up a specialized form of expression invented by the imagination precisely to account for the unique experience of the transcendent.

What Auden has written about the Secondary Imagination is, I think, applicable to religious expression. He asserts that expression is active not passive:

The impulse to create a work of art is felt when, in certain persons, the passive awe provoked by sacred beings or events is transformed into a

desire to express that awe in a rite of worship or homage, and to be fit homage, this rite must be beautiful.

It has but one object: to praise the sacred ‘for being and happening.’⁸⁹

Thus the realm of religious consciousness differentiates itself from other realms of meaning once “it develops its own language, its own distinct mode of apprehension, and its own cultural, social, or professional group speaking in that fashion and apprehending in that manner.” For, says Lonergan, the realm of transcendence is “approached by the ascetic and reached by the mystic.”⁹⁰ Indeed, experience of the transcendent, he says, reaches its apex in mystical experience. Lonergan cites Mircea Eliade, moreover, and his study of the religion of primitive peoples, in which he focuses on “the archaic techniques of mysticism” employed by the shaman among the peoples of north central Asia and by the medicine man among North American Indians.⁹¹ The culture of any of society, says Lonergan, finds its “expression in the customs, the stories, the traditional wisdom of every society.”⁹² indeed a mom primitive people culture it was embedded in “the recitals and ritualizing of their myths.” They act out their religion in song, dance, and drama; and their myths explain in symbol the meaning of ceremonies. Eliade drew upon Carl Jung’s understanding of the collective unconscious to develop a “hermeneutics of retrieval” by which he uncovered in primitive culture an ‘archaic ontology’ which shaped “an absolute, true account of the intrinsic reality of all things, from the perspective of their origins or beginnings.”⁹³ Lonergan identifies the structural invariants within consciousness which underlie Jung’s use of the term ‘collective unconscious’: “there are natural, spontaneous tendencies in human consciousness toward certain types of symbols which recur irrespective of cultural and linguistic frontiers.” It is Eliade’s singular insight to realize that the notion of collective unconscious is “a key to a study of the history of religions.”⁹⁴ For Eliade, images constitute “a transcultural language.” Study fundamental images, he says in effect, and “one can understand a civilization that is totally removed from one’s own, both in time and space and all historical connections.”⁹⁵ He finds evidence that mystical experience was a reality in the lives of primitive people and exerted its influence upon primitive society in Siberia and in Central Asia and where the shaman was ‘the dominating figure’. “For through this whole region in which the ecstatic experience is considered the religious experience par excellence,” he writes, “the shaman and, and he alone, is the great master of ecstasy.”⁹⁶ Thus among primitive people, shamans are “those who experience the sacred with greater intensity than the rest of the community—those who, as it were, incarnate the sacred, because they live it abundantly, or rather ‘are lived’” by the gods, spirits, ancestors, etc.,” that have chosen them.⁹⁷ Eliade reminds us that “Central Asian shamanism is part and parcel of the prehistoric culture of the Siberian hunters” at the end of the last ice age.⁹⁸ Indeed, there is even evidence of ‘shamanic elements’ in the religion of Paleolithic Homo Sapiens if archeologist Horst Kirchner is correct in spotting “a representation of a shamanic trance” in the celebrated cave paintings at Lascaux.⁹⁹

Consider more closely, then, the language of myth. Of language in general, Quintilian famously said: *paene omnia quae dicimus metaphora est*. Practically every word we utter is a metaphor. The initial meaning of most words is sensible, is rooted in sensation, expressing a sensation: a sight, a sound, a touch, a smell, a taste. The stream of consciousness, of course, is a stream of images. For instance, take the word

“conceive”. It comes from the Latin *capere* which means to “take hold of or to grasp.” Add the suffix “con” and you get “to become pregnant.” That initial sensation and the sense-based meaning a word like “conceive” convey may gradually sink and fade from memory. Or, says Lonergan, it may grow into a veritable tree of meaning: “from that hidden stem there branch out, often in bewildering variety, a set of other meanings that to a greater or less extent transcend the sensible plane.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, “to conceive” branches out to mean “to form,” “to develop or devise in the mind,” “to come to understand,” “to represent in words.”

While man is by definition a rational animal, Ernst Cassirer in his influential *Essay on Man* reminds us that a human being is also a *animal symbolicum*.¹⁰¹ In the abstract, we tend to define a person as a rational animal. But in the concrete a person is a symbolic animal. Joseph Flanagan has pointed out one important consequence of the distinction: “Just as the nineteenth century brought about the rehearsal in the priority of practical intellect over speculative intellect, in the twentieth century we have come to realize that symbolic emotional reasoning has a priority over cognitive or theoretical reasoning.”¹⁰²

Reflect for a moment on the implications of the distinction. The stream of consciousness on the sensible level, if you advert to it, presents itself as an ongoing flow of symbolic consciousness. Our senses continuously operate, for instance, in much the same way that a camcorder that takes in every sight and sound.¹⁰³ What is a symbol and how does it differ from an image? A symbol is an image freighted with feeling; it is an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.¹⁰⁴ The image and the symbol anticipate intelligence and rationality insofar as they “carry the dim, imperfect development of the intelligence and rationality that is proper to man.” Images and symbols anticipate meaning before you grasp meaning and express it in words. Seamus Heaney understands this well. Writing of poetic insight, he states: “the crucial action is pre-verbal.” He means that the first hint of an insight, what he calls “the first alertness or come-hither,” may be “sensed in a blurred or incomplete way;” and so the poet must allow time for the meaning “to dilate and approach as a thought or theme or phrase.”¹⁰⁵ The image already carries within it that which understanding will formulate and judgment will affirm. In other words, meaning is different from sensation although it emerges from sensation, for it is by means of the image or symbol that the meaning of the sensation is caught and expressed in an insight. Furthermore, says Lonergan, images become symbols if they have the power to “release emotions and affect and result in action.” For instance, a horse is a horse, but a unicorn is a mythical animal represented as a horse with a single straight horn growing from its forehead. Galloping horses and their easy riders out on the range symbolize thundering strength and awesome speed and mobility; the very image of them sells millions of Marlboro cigarettes. In medieval tapestries unicorns symbolize purity and innocence and they still cast their spell; indeed, my search engine came up with 158,000 entries for ‘unicorn’ on the web.

Ideally a clear and distinct idea is univocal; it has one precise meaning, a quality prized by Socrates, Descartes, and there say that after by mathematicians, scientists, and philosophers. But it is highly significant to note that “the image has a logic of its own,” and “is not subject to any law of univocity.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed it is the nature of an image to have multiple meanings. There is therefore a fundamental ambiguity in the image; its meaning cannot always be pinned down to one meaning.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, says Lonergan, there is “a condensation, an overexuberance” in the symbol. Particularly in Shakespeare, he

reminds us, “images come crowding in from all sides to express the same point.”¹⁰⁸ Many meanings, then, can be condensed in an image or symbol.¹⁰⁹ In addition, as noted above, a power-packed image is efficacious: it releases emotion and affection; it propels to action.¹¹⁰ Lonergan quotes the anonymous saying, “Let me write a nation’s songs, and I care not who writes her laws.”¹¹¹

Symbols, moreover, have remarkable powers of endurance. Despite the fact that from the time of the Enlightenment, says Lonergan, “rationalism drew man’s attention away from his symbols and the importance of symbols in his life.... and though man tried to live... as though he were a pure spirit, a pure reason, this did not eliminate the symbols or their concrete efficacy in human living...”¹¹² Symbols today continue to stir the passions. Indeed the same symbol can at different times mean different things to different persons. Their meaning can shift from day to day and from person to person. During the Vietnam war, for instance, the Stars and Strips provoked mindless patriotism for some as well as flag-burning protests for others. In the wake of 9/11, the sight of the Stars and Stripes still there in the ruins of the Twin Towers stirred Americans with patriotic pride and terrorists (one assumes) with rage. Images, moreover, can be enriched or devalued. The symbol of Paradise Lost shows up in *South Pacific* as Bali Hai, “a never-never land where everything is perfect.”¹¹³ The Venuses and Aphrodites of Greek mythology reappear in the pages of *Playboy* or the swimsuit issues of *Sports Illustrated*: “the image is still there,...still performing its functions: but those functions have been depraved, cheapened, lowered.”¹¹⁴ And so, while symbol and myth were denigrated and neglected by the followers of the Enlightenment, says Lonergan, “the rediscovery of the symbol is one of the main themes in contemporary thought.”¹¹⁵ He goes on to explain:

...there is the rediscovery of the symbol in depth psychology, in the work of Eliade in the history of religions, and Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, in Voegelin’s interpretation of the ancient Near East, Israel, and Greece, and phenomenologists and existentialists. But there are also the social engineers and the hidden persuaders, the propaganda ministries and the advertising industry.¹¹⁶

The modern concern with image took many forms other than Eliade’s highly useful investigation of the cross-cultural language of image and symbol in primitive religion. Thus, modern psychology initiated a clinical study of images to explore the depths of psychological abnormality, the dream, the primal archetypes, and the collective unconscious. Indeed, with such understanding of image, says Lonergan, one can “explore the arts of Madison Avenue in democracies, or of the ministries of culture in totalitarian states.”¹¹⁷ Or one can accompany literary critics or liturgists in their exploration of the psychic mechanisms that underlie “the glossy surface of poetry’s immortal lines” and the structure and style of liturgical worship.¹¹⁸ Such knowledge of image has as its basic purpose “to control the mediation of reality by meaning, to hold in check the affect-laden images that even in the twentieth century have the power to make myth seem convincing and magic seem efficacious.”¹¹⁹

What then is myth? Basically an expanded metaphor. Myth carries all the charged power of image and symbol. In its broadest sense myth is a story. Lonergan reminds us that Plato and created myths, “insisting that they were not the truth but cave

and inkling into the truth.” Lonergan develops Plato’s hint:

...since man’s being is being-in-the-world, he cannot rise to his full stature unless he knows the world. But there is much that is obscure about the world. People easily enough raise questions for intelligence, for reflection, for deliberation. But we can have hunches that we cannot formulate clearly and exactly, so we tell a story.

Now stories, says Lonergan, are ‘existential’; by that, Lonergan means that there are “true stories that reveal the life that we are really leading.”¹²⁰ A myth then is defined as “a traditional story concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, typically involving the supernatural.”¹²¹ Lonergan sharpens the dictionary definition: myth is a laudable, but “untutored effort of the desire to know, to grasp and formulate the nature of things” like rainfall and harvests.¹²² Professor A. Seth would agree: myth is not only the result of “the endeavour of the human mind to grasp... the ultimate reality of things,” but also (and this is the salient point) “to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with the highest.”¹²³ Contemporary cognitive archaeologists, moreover, have discovered that myths tell us much about the religion of ancient man. Indeed, they note three recurrent characteristics of primitive religion. First, there is in individuals a spiritual part that can survive in death and preserve its individuality. Second, certain individuals are recipients of direct inspiration and messages from non-human gods or spirits. Third, the enactment of certain rituals can bring about changes in the world of nature.¹²⁴ For primitive people, as Mircea Eliade demonstrates with a wealth of data from many different cultures, myths embodied meanings and values which people prized and lived by. His exhaustive research, says Joseph Flanagan, amounts to a “hermeneutics of retrieval.” What riches have been retrieved? The understanding that myth is not some “fanciful, illusory explanation of the world and society,” but is “an archaic ontology that purports to present an absolute, true account of the intrinsic reality of all things.” Myth, for Eliade, are ‘ontological’ stories of why and how things came to be, where the meaning of the stories is communicated through symbols.¹²⁵ Lonergan reminds us that “when ancient man or the ancient higher civilizations used symbols, the meaning of the symbol could be just as profound as the thought of later great philosophers.”¹²⁶ When the primitive says light, don’t immediately assume that he is talking about the light of the sun. He may well be referring to light that is spiritual. Indeed, “any power, any force” that passes understanding, “could thus be called a god, and most of them were.”¹²⁷

According to Lonergan scholar Joseph Flanagan, it is “the special gift” of Mircea Eliade “to identify the transcultural structures”¹²⁸ that undergird the religious myths and rituals of primitive religions. Myth, in the words of Paul Horgan, is “the collective dream of the deep past recovered.”¹²⁹ The common structure discernible in their stories took pretty much the following form. In the beginning was the “Great Time.” It was the time when supernatural beings—gods, cultural heroes, or mythical ancestors—performed certain sacred activities by which the universe passed from chaos to cosmos, from disorder to order, from a chaotic world to a well-ordered world, indeed from death to life. These divine activities guaranteed that all things pass from one way of being to another, from a lower way to a higher:

The cosmic solar, lunar, and seasonal cycles exemplify this basic passage. Everyday the sun dies at night, only to be reborn in the morning; every lunar month the life (light) of the moon 'waned' toward death only to be brought back to life three days later; every winter the earth with its vegetative life dies, only to be reborn in the spring, which blossoms into summer, only to fade and decay in fall, and finally die in the winters.¹³⁰

Moreover, these supernatural ancestors devised sacred initiation rites for the benefit of the human beings they created. By performing such rites, man revealed an almost universal belief that human beings participate in the same super-human and divine activities that bring about a supernatural experience of death and resurrection, in other words, a sacred birth. The rituals properly performed guarantee individual and social security and survival. Primitive men and women believed that to neglect such rituals would spell doom for all living things and precipitate a fall back into primeval chaos. For primitive people, then, the religion of myth was always a matter of life and death. Flanagan writes:

Such supernatural experiences symbolize the passage from one way of being to another:

Just as in creation the cosmos passes from non-being to being, so at birth the embryo passes from the womb of the mother (earth) to life. In sickness, a symbolic burial is enacted in order to regenerate and restore life; and in marriage ceremonies, where the conjugal ritual reenacts analogously the creation of the cosmos, the groom is symbolically identified with the sky god and the bride with the mother earth."¹³¹

Put another way, the living things on planet earth grow old, begin to wear out, become unglued, and disintegrate; in the process they lose their "life-giving energy."¹³² But at the heart of primitive belief and practice is the all but unshakeable conviction that religious rituals and dance in their retelling, reenactment, and reliving of the creation of the world have power to recreate, reorder, and make all living things new. Indeed, human beings are under a "sacred obligation" to participate in "the creating events brought about by supernatural beings who did actually recreate, and periodically restore and reform, the cosmic, animal and vegetative cycles, as well as the community's social and political cycles."¹³³ By these recurring rites, primitive people in collaboration with the gods routinely transformed nature and themselves from a state of chaos or disorder into a well-organized cosmic community. They thereby passed to a higher, more perfect, and timeless way of being. Indeed, they tried by means of traditional rituals "to escape history by living in a non-historical eternal present,"¹³⁴ to move from diurnal living to living in the "Great Time" when all things had first come into existence.¹³⁵ By mythic ritual, primitive people moved out of the profane into the realm of the sacred.

Primitive men enacted their 'ontological' stories over and over again in mythico-ritual practices of song, dance, and drama. Nature as sacred manifests itself as being "saturated" with power, being, reality. With such an understanding of the sacred, it is no surprise to learn that primitive man wished to live in close proximity to sacred objects, to

live, so to speak, in the sacred. “Thus,” says Eliade, “religious man desires to *be*, to participate in *reality*,” and thus to be themselves “saturated with power.”¹³⁶ And while over the millennia, religious experience has found expression in a variety of ways, “nevertheless,” says Eliade, “between the nomadic hunters and the sedentary cultivators there is a similarity in behavior that seems to us infinitely more important than their differences: *both lived in a sacralized cosmos*, both share in the cosmic sacrality manifested equally in the animal world and in the vegetable world.”¹³⁷ For primitive man, then, ritual becomes a kind of “sacrament, that is, a communion with the sacred.”¹³⁸ Hence the attraction of our primal ancestors to ritual and their fascination with it.

We spoke earlier of Lonergan’s concentration on the “unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit,”¹³⁹ to that spirit of curiosity which wonders, inquires, and comes to understand, judge, and decide. Concretely, he says, the eros of the human spirit is the human operator as “the detached and disinterested desire to know.” One is not satisfied with what one already knows, one is always “headed towards further knowledge,...into the known unknown,”¹⁴⁰ into “the paradoxical unknown of unanswered questions.”¹⁴¹ Myth then, as an expression of human reaction to life-threatening power, attempts to make sense of man’s search for the meaning of existence and of his inbuilt hunger for a life that is meaningful.

A brief aside on the contribution of cognitive archeology to the discussion. The earliest artistic records of ancient man testify to his use of image and symbol. Let me now summarize one highly significant aspect of the story of human development we have been tracing thus far, as we find it expressed by modern cognitive archeology. Oral memory, dependent on mnemonic devices, was to be supported henceforth by the development of two powerful allies—art and writing. Art created beads, bracelets, necklaces, statuettes, and cave paintings that made possible what archeologist Merlin Donald calls “external symbolic storage.”¹⁴² The caves at Vallon-Pont-d’Arc, Lascaux, and Atamira, for instance, continue to serve today as ‘storage lockers’ for the preservation of the paintings of artists who died 30,000 years ago. For its part, writing, along with maps and diagrams, made possible “external theoretic storage.” Before the invention of writing, there may have been “flashes of philosophic acumen and profundity,” says Lonergan, but now humankind had at its disposal the means to disseminate and preserve whatever insights and judgments it was accumulating.¹⁴³ From this time forward, whatever intellectual “software” men like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle developed would stand a chance of being stored in a retrievable form. Colin Renfrew, following Merlin Donald, lists three key “cognitive phases” in the evolution and development of humankind’s cultural “software,” that is, its “accumulating learned experience”:

- Linguistic or mythic culture, characteristic of early *Homo sapiens*, c. 40,000 years ago.
- Symbolic-material culture, utilizing external symbolic storage, characteristic of early agrarian society with permanent settlements, monuments and valuables.
- Theoretic culture using sophisticated information retrieval systems for external symbolic storage, usually in the form of writing, frequently in

urban societies.¹⁴⁴

Expression in Language But back to the main story. Religious experience then can find expression in art or symbol. Indeed, art has always served to heighten religious expression: “It makes rituals solemn, liturgies stately, music celestial, hymns moving, oratory effective, teaching ennobling.”¹⁴⁵ But most often language is the vehicle of choice because it is the most adequate for the articulation of religious meaning. First in the language of common sense. For instance, in the ordinary language of the woman recalling an event that occurred when she was nine years old or in the more sophisticated phenomenological report of Hugh of St. Victor. Moreover, memory, using common sense language, recalls and portrays religious experience in the lives, activities, achievements of individuals and the movements they inspire. In Confucius and Confucianism. In Buddha and Zen Buddhism. In Sufi and Sufism. In Mohammed and Islam. In Moses and Judaism. In Jesus and Christianity.¹⁴⁶ It can be preached and taught in the language of common sense, but as adapted to the capacities of the individual and to the degree of differentiation of consciousness which individuals have achieved.¹⁴⁷

But religious experience also finds expression in the technical language of the realm of theory. One seeks answers to theoretical questions. What is the meaning of religious experience? What is the nature of divinity? What is the order of the universe and how explain it? What is the destiny of the human race? What is the lot of each individual human being?¹⁴⁸ Through theory, says Lonergan, religion can arrive at “a clearer and firmer delineation of itself, its objectives, and its aims.”¹⁴⁹ It moves “into the realm of theory by its dogmas, its theology, its juridical structures and enactments.” It can “construct the common basis of theory and of common sense that is to be found in interiority.” It can use “that basis to link the experience of the transcendent with the world mediated by meaning.”¹⁵⁰ It attempts to paint the Big Picture that explains all that is.¹⁵¹

Indeed, as one grows in self-appropriation, writes Lonergan, one can appreciate “the strange contrast and tension between the old common sense apprehension instinct with feeling and the new theoretical apprehension devoid of feeling and bristling with definitions and definitions and theorems.”¹⁵² Thus, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as contrasted with the God of the philosophers and theologians. Or the contrast between feeling compunction and of finding it, between singing the praises of Father, Son, and Spirit and delivering a learned lecture on the nature of the triune God.

An awareness of the process of human operations in the realm of interiority reveals how over time the expression of religious experience works its way through the various realms of meaning and has its say in each:

for its source and core is in the experience of the mystery of love and awe, and that pertains to the realm of transcendence. Its foundations, its basic terms and relationships, its method are derived from the realm of interiority. Its technical unfolding is in the realm of theory. Its preaching and teaching are in the realm of common sense.¹⁵³

Quite often expression of the experience of the transcendent is tightly associated with its outward occasion—the time and the place where the timeless moment occurred.

The farmyard trough, the symphony hall, the cedar tree, and for Jews and Christians the burning bush in the Sinai desert. Expression of the experience gets shaped by its context, its time and place, and the culture in which it arises. Indeed, any formulation emerges within the context of a cultural tradition and so different traditions give rise to different formulations. Any formulation of the data or hypothetical explanation of it involves cultural or technical language provided by a cultural or scientific background. Thus, to anticipate a bit, pure experience of the transcendent, according to Lonergan's judicious suggestion, is the common denominator that gave rise to Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrian Mazdaism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.¹⁵⁴ Echoing the studies of William Johnston in eastern and western mysticism, Lonergan sums up by stating that religious experience is "common to East and West, morally uplifting, cosmic in orientation but, when interpreted, takes on the distinctiveness of diverse traditions."¹⁵⁵ The literature of illumination discloses, moreover, how commonsense language was used in communicating the traditions of the major world religions through preaching and teaching.

Eastern religion stressed religious experience. Semitic religion stressed prophetic monotheism. Western religion cultivated the realm of transcendence through its churches and liturgies, its celibate clergy, its religious orders, congregations, confraternities. It moved into the realm of theory by its dogmas, its theology, its juridical structures and enactments. It has to construct the common basis of theory and of common sense that is to be found in interiority and it has to use that basis to link the experience of the transcendent with the world mediated by meaning.¹⁵⁶

In much the same way Raimundo Panikkar writes of a "human priordial relatedness" in all the world religions when they grapple with matters of ultimate concern.¹⁵⁷ He conceives of a fundamental theology, writes Lonergan, "that takes its stand on the lived religion or mystical faith that is prior to any formulation or perhaps beyond formulation."¹⁵⁸

The Need for Critical Intelligence Every formulation of experience at the second (intellectual) level of operation must be tested and verified before a judgment can be reached at the third (rational) level of operation. As Lonergan says, "the act of judgment is the act that adds assent to a proposition, that changes a proposition from the expression of an object of thought;" not every bright idea that comes into your mind" can be automatically affirmed as correct. For it is only when one agrees and assents "that the proposition then becomes an object of affirmation." In brief, "the level of thinking heads for objects of thought; but the level of judgment heads for objects of knowledge."¹⁵⁹ And so, to be authentic at the level of deliberation and decision, the human subject must at the third rational level of operation verify the accuracy of his understanding of what is going on in the realm of transcendence.

Now, the desire to know is "the root of all science and philosophy;" but in the realm of transcendence, Lonergan says, experience of the numinous is especially prone, in its unfolding, to pitfalls and unforeseen dangers.¹⁶⁰ The experience may be genuine, but the conclusion one draws from it may be mistaken at the level of judgment and

harmful at the level of decision. It is at this point that all the alarms begin to go off. Any hypothesis about the meaning of the experience must be put to the test. The accuracy of the explanation of reality provided by the myth must be verified. It is precisely for this reason that many rationalist scientists and philosophers since the Enlightenment have judged myths to be illusionary. Highly imaginative stories perhaps, they say, and of some interest to students of anthropology, but otherwise not worthy of serious attention. And so, while myth and magic both convey meaning, Lonergan cautions that the meaning of myth and magic, unless subjected to strict critical control, can block further meaning. He puts it this way: "Just as the earth, left to itself, can put forth creepers and shrubs, bushes and trees, with such excessive abundance that there results an impenetrable jungle, so too the human mind, led by imagination and affect and uncontrolled by any reflexive technique, luxuriates in a world of myth with its glories to be achieved and its evils banished by the charms of magic."¹⁶¹

Myth expresses a declarative meaning, and magic an imperative. But what myth declares may well be mistaken; and magic casts its spell in vain. Both express meaning, says Lonergan, but meaning may have "gone astray."¹⁶² For while an image or symbol can lead to correct understanding, true judgments, and right decisions, it can also lead one off into human violence and cruelty. So be forewarned, says Lonergan. When religious experience becomes separated from the pursuit of self-transcendence, the cult of the numinous can all too easily seek "re-enforcement in the erotic, the sexual, the orgiastic."¹⁶³ The historical evidence is damning, he warns, for "living on in the level of the image can be a closing off against the development of intelligence and rationality and virtue."¹⁶⁴

Here begins the dark side of the human story, especially the primal horror of human sacrifice. Indeed, human sacrifice is a particularly noxious instance of what Lonergan calls group bias. For, as Lonergan insists, "unless religion is totally directed to what is good, to a genuine love of one's neighbor and to a self-denial that is subordinated to a fuller goodness in one's self, then the cult of a God that is terrifying can slip over into the demonic, into an exultant destructiveness of one's self and of others."¹⁶⁵

There is inconvertible evidence of the widespread practice of ritual human sacrifice as far back as 5000 years ago. It is all a matter of blood. Blood of itself is a powerful image of life. Even today, for us the plasma used in an emergency blood transfusion is a symbol of life. For the ancients, the ritual gift of human blood would according to their myths expiate sin and appease the gods, divine the future, or bring good fortune and prosperity. Human sacrifice was practiced among the primitive agricultural peoples of Near East and northern Europe. There is some speculation, for instance, that the Copper Age Iceman (5300 years ago), discovered in the Alps with an arrowhead in his shoulder, was not murdered, but sacrificed to the mountain gods.¹⁶⁶ It is also clear that the famous Tollund Man was garroted in Denmark some 2400 years ago, apparently as a human sacrifice to the gods of the bogs (Figure 28; see Google Image Search: Tollund Man).

In all the high civilizations, "from ancient Egypt to Polynesian Hawaii to the Inca empire," as Jared Diamond reminds us, organized religion developed in accord with one basic tenet: "the chief or king is related to the gods, [and] he or she can intercede with the gods on behalf of the peasants (e.g., to send rain or ensure a good harvest)."¹⁶⁷ Human sacrifice was viewed as indispensable to the working of the mythic cosmology that in

their belief guaranteed the good order of society.¹⁶⁸ Mass human sacrifices, for instance, routinely took place at the death of a ruler. In Egypt the Pharaohs were buried with their retainers. In the remote African kingdom of Kerma (1500 B.C.) located south of Egypt between the third and fourth cataracts of the Nile the grave of a king has been found with the bodies of 500 sacrificed victims. In ancient Mesopotamia kings were interred with their palace servants. In China the entombed rulers of the Shang (1700-1027 B.C.) and the Qin dynasties (200 B.C.) were surrounded by the corpses of workmen and warriors.¹⁶⁹

The high civilizations of the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru also practiced systematic human sacrifice. At the top of a pyramid, Aztec priests would cut out the hearts of prisoners of war and direct the flow of blood to pour down the steps---a sacrifice to guarantee, they believed, that the sun-god would continue his daily procession across the sky. In Peru, temple priests routinely sacrificed children and teenagers to the sun-god of the Incas.¹⁷⁰ In 1995, for instance, the best preserved Inca mummy, the 12-14 year old Ice Maiden, was found on the 20,700 foot summit of Mount Ampato (higher than Mount McKinley) where, it was believed, she had been first drugged, buried alive, and frozen to death in a ritual sacrifice 500 years ago (Figures 29 and 30; see Google Image Search: Inca Ice Maiden). An autopsy performed later at Johns Hopkins University demonstrated that she had actually been killed by a blow to the head (Figure 31: Google: Sacrificial Mace Inca).

To shift to the Middle East, E.O. James, professor emeritus of the History of Religion at London University, writes that among the Canaanites of biblical Palestine the presence of tiny bones in city and temple walls give shocking evidence of frequent infant sacrifice:

Numerous bodies of children discovered in the foundations of buildings leave no room for doubt that oblations [offerings] of this character were of common occurrence among the Canaanites to strengthen the walls of houses and cities. Thus, in the whole area of the high place at Gezer skeletons of new-born infants were buried, deposited in jars with food-offerings in smaller vessels, two at least of the bodies showing marks of fire....That the infants were an oblation of first-born devoted to the temple from birth may be deduced from the fact that they were less than a week old...¹⁷¹

Without denying the mythological and theological explanation for the existence of human sacrifice, René Girard in his groundbreaking studies of human violence has suggested a more profound reason for the practice: human sacrifice served the basic function of solving conflicts in society. His analysis¹⁷² runs as follows:

- the community is beset with “internal tensions, feuds, and rivalries”;
- members of the community choose as victim someone not fully integrated into the community, either someone outside the community or marginal to it, like prisoners of war, slaves, small children or infants, unmarried teenagers, the physically handicapped, or even the king who by his position is isolated and essentially ‘caste-less’;¹⁷³
- all the members offer the victim in sacrifice as a surrogate for themselves; and,

- as a result, the sacrifice protects the community from its own violence.¹⁷⁴

In other words, for Girard, human sacrifice is an act of violence inflicted on a surrogate victim. All the pent up conflicts in the community settle on the person of the victim and are, for the time being at least, eliminated from the community by the victim's death. In primitive society, moreover, human sacrifice was not so much a judicial expiation of violence after the fact, but more of "an instrument of prevention in the struggle against violence." The intent was "to prevent the spread of violence by keeping vengeance in check."¹⁷⁵ The Chinese *Book of Rites*, for instance, states that in general sacrificial rituals have one purpose: they "pacify the country and make the people settled....It is through the sacrifices that the unity of the people is strengthened."¹⁷⁶ The significance of Girard's analysis for our day lies in the undeniable persistence of violence in a world that has long denied the existence of the mythical gods of primitive and ancient peoples. In short, Girard is working at the second and third levels of human operation, giving a more plausible explanation of human violence and reaching a conclusion that is for many much more probable than earlier theories.

At the Level of Judgment Living at the level of myth and magic, says Lonergan, can thus "block...the development of intelligence, rationality, and virtue." Early man had constructed his world symbolically. Much in the construct was true, but much was false. It is abundantly clear that primitive *Homo sapiens sapiens* and the creators of the ancient high civilizations possessed common sense to a highly developed degree. It is equally clear that they lacked "a capacity of fundamental critical thought."¹⁷⁷ They did not evaluate nor were they capable of evaluating the truth and value of the myth and magic that dominated their lives. What was lacking was required a capacity for critical thought that came only later in the Axial Age with the rise of the individual and a sense of personal responsibility. Only then did early man begin to reinterpret his symbolic construct, jettisoning the false and reaffirming what was true.¹⁷⁸

Expression in the World's Great Religions During and after the Axial Age, according to Friedrich Heiler, significant common areas of belief emerged in Zoroastrian Mazdaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, and Christianity, and Islam. Lonergan listed the seven salient features: "the first, the existence of a transcendent reality; secondly, the immanence of that reality in human hearts; thirdly, the characterization of that reality as supreme beauty, truth, righteousness, goodness; fourthly, the characterization of that reality as love, mercy, compassion; fifthly, our way to that reality is repentance, self-denial, prayer; sixthly, that way is love of one's neighbor, even of one's enemies; seventhly, the way is love of God, so that bliss is conceived as knowledge of God, union with him, or dissolution into him."¹⁷⁹

In Greece, as we have already seen, critical critical thought developed with the early philosophers and the advent of Socrates with his entrance into the realm of theory.¹⁸⁰ Here as "in nearly every field of thought," Edith Hamilton reminds us, the Greeks "took the first indispensable steps" to deal with myth and magic with critical intelligence:

...the ancient world was a place of fear. Magical forces ruled it and magic is absolutely terrifying because it is absolutely incalculable. The minds of those who might have been scientists had been held fast-bound in the prison of that terror. Nothing of all the Greeks did is more astonishing than their daring to look it in the face and use their minds about it. They dared nothing less than to throw the light of reason upon dreadful powers taken completely on trust everywhere else, and by the exercise of the intelligence to banish them.¹⁸¹

The Greek gods and goddesses taken together, says classics scholar John H. Finley, constituted a sophisticated “analysis of the world—Athena as mind, Apollo as random and unpredictable illumination, Aphrodite as sexuality, Dionysus as change and excitement, Artemis as untouchedness, Hera as settlement and marriage, Zeus as order dominant over all...”¹⁸²

Lonergan again follows Bruno Snell in tracing the development of critical intelligence among the early Greeks. Homer, for instance, trusted the Muses to provide knowledge “by perception or by hearsay.” He believed the Muses knew everything and enabled the bard to see events as though present to them himself or as having an account of them from an eyewitness.¹⁸³ Hesiod, however, was wary of accepting everything the Muses might prompt, for he saw that they can deceive. Xenophanes went further and rejected outright “the multitude of anthropomorphic gods.” He made the wry observation, Lonergan notes, that “men made their gods in their own image, and remarked that lions, horses, oxen would do likewise were they able to carve or to paint.” His critique, Lonergan adds, was “the beginning of the long effort to conceive God, not on the analogy of matter, but on the analogy of spirit.”¹⁸⁴ Xenophanes reasoned that “god was unity, perfect in wisdom, operating without toil, merely by the thought of his mind.”¹⁸⁵ Hecataeus rejected the stories of Greek mythology as “foolish” and introduced an empirical element. In his judgment, “man’s knowledge is not the gift of the gods;” he enunciates the principle that “stories of the past are to be judged by everyday experience; one advances in knowledge by inquiry and search, and the search not just accidental, as it was in Odysseus, but deliberate and planned.” An important further advance came with Heraclitus who came to see that “the mere amassing of information” provided by eye and ear does not promote growth in understanding. One also requires “an intelligence,” what the Greeks called “a *logos*,” to “steer” one’s way through the mass of sensible data. Indeed, to be aware of the *logos* and steer by it is to be on one’s way to wisdom. Finally, to cap the development, Parmenides made clear the distinction between sense and intellect; and with him linguistic argument became “an independent power that could dare to challenge the evidence of the senses” and thus the reliability of myth and magic.¹⁸⁶ Lonergan sums up the development as follows: “...The Greek achievement was first of all the emergence of longer chains of reasoning. Heraclitus appealed to the *logos*; there were the longer chains of reasoning in Parmenides on being; then there was the discovery of the necessity of accurate universal definition; and there was the combinations of definitions with postulates as the basis of a deductive structure, such as is best illustrated in Euclid’s *Elements*.”¹⁸⁷ This then, says Lonergan, was “the miracle that effected the triumph of *logos* over *mythos*.”¹⁸⁸

Take one instance. Listen to Heraclitus whose thought so appealed to Hopkins

and Dillard. He makes the claim that he himself is awake, whereas everyone else is asleep. While they sleep, he peers into the nature of things, grasps a universal law which helps explain the unity that undergirds the variety of material things. There is no 'elemental stuff', only process. The image he chooses to express his insight is fire: nature, he reports, "ever was, and is, and shall be, ever-living fire, in measures being kindled and in measures going out." It takes a poet perhaps to appreciate the depth of Heraclitus' insight. Hopkins saw all nature as a Heraclitean fire: "million-fuelèd, nature's bonfire burns on." He cites the wonder of clouds on a windy day and watches spellbound as they parade across the sky:

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows flaunt forth, then chevy [= race]
on an air-
built thoroughfare: heaven-roisterers, in gay-gangs they throng; they
glitter in marches.¹⁸⁹

Dillard is wide awake too and gazes at the world with Heraclitian eyes. The wonder, power, and beauty of nature at times, she writes, takes one's breath away and, when it does, we "bump against" mystery:

We don't know what's going on here. If these tremendous events are random combinations of matter run amok, the yield of millions of monkeys at millions of typewriters, then what it is in us, hammered out of those same typewriters, that they ignite? We don't know. Our life is a faint tracing on the surface of mystery, like the idle, curved tunnels of leaf miners on the face of a leaf. We must somehow all take a wider view, look at the whole landscape, really see it, and describe what's going on here.

She continues:

If the landscape reveals one certainty, it is that the extravagant gesture is the very stuff of creation. After the one extravagant gesture of creation in the first place, the universe has continued to deal exclusively in extravagances, flinging intricacies and colossi down aeons of emptiness, heaping profusions on profligacies with ever-fresh vigor.

Her conclusion echoes Heraclitus and Hopkins:

The whole show has been on fire from the word go.... Everywhere I look I see fire; that which isn't flint is tinder, and the whole world sparks and flames.¹⁹⁰

One must not conclude, therefore, that myth is intrinsically pernicious and to be rejected out of hand. Indeed, when pure reason reigned during the Enlightenment and its aftermath, as noted above, the significance of image was man-handled and suffered

roughly the same fate as common sense. It came to be devalued almost to the point of complete neglect. What Annie Dillard says of the new-born infant can also be said of the Enlightenment thinker:

In a couple of years, what he will have learned instead is how to fake it: he'll have the cocksure air of a squatter who has come to feel he owns the place.

Today, she continues, “some unwanted, lost pride diverts us from all our original intent, which is to explore the neighborhood, view the landscape, to discover at least *where* it is that we have been so startlingly set down, if we can't learn why.”¹⁹¹

And so, since the Enlightenment, writes Lonergan, our civilization has had “a very marked tendency— it is not a universal rule or a necessary law---for scientific thinking to be positivistic, pragmatist, antimetaphysical.”¹⁹² Just as the Trobriand Islanders today with their myths and magic can be as pragmatic as Maine lobster men, so the modern the scientist---altogether intelligent and rational—can at the same time be antimyth and antimagic. Lonergan writes:

His conception of science is a development of the intelligent and rational department of primitive living. But instead of myth and magic..., he has antimyth and antimagic—a blank. He knows nothing about these things; he is an agnostic; and for a great part of his life he does not worry about it.¹⁹³

Indeed the existence of that ‘blank’, that ‘vacuum’ in human understanding of reality, has been a dangerous development. Because of it, warns Lonergan, the general population has much to worry about. Lonergan gives an example:

When I was a student of philosophy we had a course in education, and the educational system in Germany seemed to me to be the most thorough and marvelous that one could devise. All types of needs were met. The standards in the classical *Gymnasium* seemed to me from Canada fantastic. One obtained one's *matura* [=matriculates] in Greek when one has read all of the dramatists, most of Thucydides and Plato, and so forth.... Similar standards were maintained in the *Realgymnasia*, the *Volksschule*, and all along the line. But then the country was taken over by Hitler. If a vacuum exists in the public mind, a terrific irrational convulsion can result. This is one of the main problems of our time.¹⁹⁴

We cannot ignore the problem of the blank. Lonergan is emphatic:

We cannot be content merely to make more cultivated and more civilized the intelligent and rational part of Trobriand living, while maintaining a surrounding no man's land which used to be inhabited by myth and magic but which now is empty— we do not admit, Here be strange beasts; we simply do not bother about it.¹⁹⁵

Expression in the Judeo-Christian Tradition What is the salient point of the problem? For Lonergan, “the real problem of human development is the problem of occupying this territory, this blank, with intelligence and reasonableness...”¹⁹⁶

Perhaps precisely because of this, the twentieth century, as Lonergan reminds us, witnessed a resurgence of interest in the image and its significance. Eliade again took the lead. Primitive religion imagined time to be cyclical.¹⁹⁷ Once upon a time, in the beginning, at the moment of the world’s origin, the gods displayed a superabundance of power and creativity. The primordial first year, when order emerged out of chaos, was the aboriginal sacred event, the first appearance of sacred time. Thereafter the time is cyclical, goes round and round, and like a wheel keeps circling year after year. Each new year begins a new cycle which lasts for an entire year. During the course of a year, the individual and the community may and usually does sin: the world slips back towards chaos. The need arises for the year to be purified, consumed by fire, indeed abolished. Sacred time requires the presence and activity of the gods. Thus each year through ritual, the creation of the world is reenacted. Each year the gods create time anew. Time in effect starts over again as from its beginning. Each New Year is a rebirth, the world’s passage once again from chaos to Cosmos, to an ordered universe. Hence Eliade explains the need for ritual:

Since the sacred and strong time is the *time of origins*, the stupendous instant in which a reality was created, was for the first time fully manifested, man will seek periodically to return to that original time. This ritual reactualizing of the *illud tempus [that special time]* in which the first epiphany of a reality occurred is the basis for all sacred calendars; the festival is not merely the commemoration of a mythic (and hence religious) event; it reactualizes the event.¹⁹⁸

The people of Israel and their prophets Abraham and Moses marked a clear break with primitive religion. With them religious experience becomes understood as something new, the revelation of the presence and power of a personal God. In consequence, time is no longer cyclical but linear. Earlier people had lived in tune with cosmic cycles; the Hebrew people now live in tune with the personal presence of a revealing God who is utterly Other, but still unendingly mysterious and fascinating.¹⁹⁹ Earlier people lived in eternal time, in “a non-historical repeatable present,” some “prior repeatable time”; the Hebrew people lived “in a sequence of successive, historical events.”²⁰⁰ What gave meaning and value to the events? The people saw them as “the revelation of the will of Yahweh, who had personally disclosed himself to Abraham and Moses, and who had chosen to enter into human history and direct the unfolding of successive historical events.” Ordinary time now became sacred time and history became sacred history. Thus, says Lonergan, one can with Paul Ricoeur employ the critical intelligence initially developed by the Greeks to “read the Old Testament as a reinterpretation of the symbols of Babylon and Canaan and...discern the dialectic in which older and less adequate symbols of guilt are complemented, corrected, modified, and still retained in combination with newer ones.”²⁰¹ Indeed Old Testament writers reinterpreted the religious traditions of their neighbors to express their own experience.

They wrote of creation in the beginning without mention of “a primeval battle of the gods of a divine begetting either of kings or of an elected people, no cult of the stars or of human sexuality, no sacralizing of the fruitfulness of nature.”²⁰² New Testament writers, for their part, reinterpreted the symbolic construct found in late Judaism and Hellenistic Gnosticism. They reaffirmed interpretations of religious experience which jibed with Christian purposes. Other interpretations, says Lonergan, they submitted to “the sharpest criticism and rejection.”²⁰³ In other words, Lonergan agrees with Christopher Dawson that the singular achievement of Christianity was to transfer religion from the dominance of unconscious impulse to the control of conscience. Dawson put it this way:

Even today very little thought is given to the profound revolution in the psychological basis of culture by which the new society of Western Christendom came into existence. Stated in the terms of Freudian psychology, what occurred was the translation of religion from the sphere of the Id to that of the Super-Ego.²⁰⁴

At the Level of Evaluation and Decision Finally, the fourth level of conscious operation, the level of deliberation, evaluation, and decision. This responsible level “presupposes, complements, and sublates” the first three. It is thus on the level of “freedom and responsibility, a moral self-transcendence and... self-direction and self-control.” At the level of self-control, the human or subject takes responsibility for its proper functioning at the first three levels: being attentive or inattentive in experiencing, intelligent or unintelligent in its inquiries, reasonable or unreasonable in its judgments.²⁰⁵ It takes time, Lonergan cautions, for an individual to reach the level of a self-determining adult. And it is not an easy process. “One has to have found out for oneself,” writes Lonergan, “that one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of oneself; one has to have proved oneself equal to that moment of existential decision; and one has to have kept on proving it in all subsequent decisions, if one is to be an authentic human person.”²⁰⁶

Falling in love, oddly enough, often has an important role to play in the maturing process and is an anomaly in the unfolding of human consciousness. Ordinarily, Lonergan notes, the old scholastic maxim holds true: *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*. Nothing is loved unless it is pre-known. Knowledge precedes love. Ordinarily, the first three levels of operation precede the fourth. But falling in love proves to be the exception to the rule. Here, love precedes knowledge. When one falls in love something happens that is “disproportionate to its causes, conditions, locations, antecedents.” Falling in love marks a new beginning in one’s life and a new organization of one’s world. There is, writes Lonergan, the love of intimacy, of husband and wife, of parents and children, of Romeo and Juliet, of Lear and Cordelia. There is the love of mankind devoted to the pursuit of human welfare locally or nationally or globally. One thinks of Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Mother Teresa. And then, writes Lonergan, there is the other-worldly love that admits “no conditions or qualifications or restrictions or reservations.”²⁰⁷ Thus, for a Christian, the major exception to the Latin adage is God’s gift of his love flooding our hearts, or what St. Paul wrote about in Romans when he asserted that “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.”(Rom. 5.5).

Before being-in-love with God enters the world mediated by meaning, it is an “unmediated experience of the mystery of love and awe.”²⁰⁸ The experience is a dynamic state which Lonergan characterizes as “conscious without being known.” Further:

...it is an experience of mystery. Because it is being in love, the mystery is not merely attractive but fascinating; to it one belongs; by it one is possessed. Because it is an unmeasured love, the mystery evokes awe.²⁰⁹

Rarely is the experience immediately objectified.

And so there is in consciousness the experience of the love of God. What does it mean to be in love with God? Lonergan gives this explanation:

To be a love is to be in love with someone. To be in love without qualifications or conditions or reservations or limits is to be in love with someone transcendent. When someone transcendent is my beloved, he is in my heart, real to me from within me. When that love is the fulfillment of my unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence through intelligence and truth and responsibility, the one that fulfills that thrust must be supreme in intelligence, truth, goodness. Since he chooses to come to me by a gift of love for him, he himself must be love. Since loving him is my transcending myself, it is also a denial of the self to be transcended. Since a loving him means loving attention to him, it is prayer, meditation, contemplation. Since love of him is fruitful, it overflows into love of all those that he loves or might love. Finally, from an experience of love focused on mystery there wells forth a longing for knowledge, while love itself is a longing for union; so for the lover of the unknown beloved the concept of bliss is knowledge of him and union with him, however they may be achieved.²¹⁰

Being in love with God is something not of our doing, not the product of any knowledge or choice of ours. It is something given and its presence is a psychological reality, says Lonergan, “a conscious dynamic state of love, joy, peace, that manifests itself in acts of kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5.22).”²¹¹

Lonergan draws out the profound implications of the gift of God’s love.

That grace could be the finding that grounds our seeking God through natural reason and through positive religion. It could be the touchstone by which we judge whether it is really God that natural reason reaches or positive religion preaches. It could be the grace that God offers all man, that underpins what is good in the religions of mankind, that explains how those that never heard the Gospel can be saved. It could be what enables the simple faithful to pray to their heavenly Father in secret even though their religious apprehensions are faulty. Finally, it is in such grace that can be found the theological justification of Catholic dialogue with all Christians, with non-Christians, and even with atheists who may love God in their hearts while not knowing him with their heads.²¹²

Lonergan asks whether the religious experience of Christians is specifically different from religious experience in general and, if so, how does it differ from nature-mysticism or soul-mysticism? His answer? For Christians as indeed as for any monotheist the experience is intersubjective. Religious experience for a Christian is an encounter with a personal being, not just with a force of nature. God's gift of his love is thus "an objective manifestation of God's love in Christ Jesus." As a result of the gift, "you are related to Christ as God."²¹³

How does Lonergan as a Christian philosopher and theologian explain what occurs at this fourth level of operation in the realm of transcendence? Lonergan is supremely aware, as we have already seen, that all religious development is of necessity dialectical. "Genuine religion," he notes, "is discovered and realized by redemption from the many traps of religious aberration." In man's search for meaning, says Lonergan, each human being experiences a pull and a counterpull within consciousness. He invites you to verify this for yourself in your own consciousness. There you will discover the pull or attraction to what is reasonable, to do what is best to do. Yield to the pull and you put an end to all further questioning. You enjoy what Eric Voegelin calls the luminous experience of existing in the truth of reason. But there is also in each of us the counterpull to pleasure, indeed to an excess of pleasure. Give in to the counterpull and one still experiences the first pull. For questions remain unanswered: one is embarked on a questionable path and one's conscience remains ill at ease. One has the unsettling experience, as Voegelin puts it, of "existing in untruth".²¹⁴

Human authenticity, says Lonergan, "is a matter of achieving self-transcendence." In day to day existence, one experiences the agonizing struggle between authenticity and unauthenticity, between myself as transcending and myself as transcended. The achievement of self-transcendence, says Lonergan, is "always precarious, always a withdrawal from unauthenticity, always in danger of slipping back into unauthenticity."²¹⁵ Not a pretty prospect, he admits. But achievement is possible for one who is in love with God. Lonergan puts it this way:

Our advance in understanding is also the elimination of oversights and misunderstandings. Our advance in truth is also the correction of mistakes and errors. Our moral development is true repentance for our sins.... So we are bid to watch and pray, to make our way in fear and trembling. And it is the greatest saints that proclaim themselves the greatest sinners, though their sins seem slight indeed to less holy folk that lack their discernment and their love.²¹⁶

Man is not only open to the transcendent, but, as we have seen, the ultimate fulfillment of a human being's capacity for openness and for self-transcendence occurs in religious experience. In Lonergan's judgment, "man can reach basic fulfillment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm in which God is known and loved." The sphere of religion is "the world as mediated by ultimate meaning and motivated by value." It finds expression over time in symbols. For the Christian, it means "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). It is the human response to

“God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Rom.5:5).” Such a wholehearted response finds its ground in St. Paul’s adamant conviction that “... There is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe— nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).²¹⁷

Here it is Lonergan’s account of Christian meaning and motivation:

There occurs, then, a response to ultimate value in conversion from waywardness or in a call to holiness. The Christian message will give that response a focus and an interpretation: the response will be taken as God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us; the focus will be found in the objective expression of the same love by the Father sending the Son to us and revealing his love in the Son’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection. From preaching the message and from the gift of the Spirit, the Christian community is born, spreads, passes on from generation to generation. It lives by its discernment between the authenticity of a good conscience and the unauthenticity of an unhappy conscience. It devotes its efforts to overcoming unauthenticity and promoting authenticity. It is praxis alive and active. But as yet it is not praxis questioned, scrutinized, made explicit and thematic.²¹⁸

Being in love with God, as we noted above, is a conscious dynamic state. The mystery fascinates: “to it one belongs; by it one is possessed.” The mystery leaves one awestruck. Insofar as it is conscious without being known, Lonergan equates it with Rudolf Otto’s *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*, Paul Tillich’s being grasped by ultimate concern, and St. Ignatius Loyola’s consolation that has no cause, precisely as understood by Karl Rahner.²¹⁹

Once when Lonergan remarked during a lecture that “being in love does not presuppose or depend on any apprehension of God,” a listener reminded him of his support of Karl Rahner’s position that “consolation without a cause” means “consolation with a content but without an object.” His listener pushed him: “Could you explain more precisely what this content without an object is?” Lonergan replied:

The content is a dynamic state of being in love, and being in love without restriction. It is conscious but it is not known. What it refers to is something that can be inferred insofar as you make it advance from being merely conscious to being known. And then because it is unrestricted, you can infer that it refers to an absolute being. But the gift of itself does not include these ulterior steps. They are further steps. And consequently this content without a known object is an occurrence, a fundamental occurrence, the ultimate stage in a person’s self-transcendence. It is God’s a free gift. It involves a transvaluation of values in your living, but it is not something produced by knowing. It is going beyond your present horizon; it is taking you beyond your present horizon.

His listener was persistent: “There would be no insights, no concept, no judgment?”

Loneragan: “Not of itself, no.”

Listener: But aren't the mystical writings of St. John of the Cross the result of insight? How can it be said that insights do not occur when he attempts to express in language the content of this mystical experience of the transcendent?

Loneragan: “There is mystical experience of the transcendent. There is the effort to say what is happening, to find out what is happening.”

Listener: “But in that case you're objectifying. You said previously you had a content without an object. Aren't you making an object out of content now?”

Loneragan: “Yes, you are discovering it. There isn't an already apprehended object. But you can find the object by reflecting, and that reflection involves insights.... Writing the *Living Flame of Love* or the *Spiritual Canticle* is like any other writing—a matter of experience and understanding and judgment and verbal creativity. But that doesn't mean that the mystical experience itself is that. It is one thing to have the experience. It is another thing to describe it and express it and talk about it and evaluate it.”²²⁰

Being in love with God, Lonergan goes on to explain, is conscious on the fourth level of intentional consciousness. Lonergan focuses with precision on what consciousness at the fourth level is not and what it is:

It is not the consciousness that accompanies acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching. Is not the consciousness that accompanies acts of inquiry, insight, formulating, speaking. It is not the consciousness that accompanies acts of reflecting, marshaling and weighing the evidence, making judgments of fact or possibility.

What is it then? Briefly, writes Lonergan:

It is the type of consciousness that deliberates, makes judgments of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely. But it is this consciousness as brought to a fulfillment, as having undergone a conversion, as possessing a basis that may be broadened and deepened and heightened and enriched but not superseded, as ready to deliberate and judge and decide and act with the easy freedom of those that do all good because they are in love. In the ‘literature of illumination’, to use Annie Dillard's happy phrase, religious experience enters what Lonergan calls the world “mediated by meaning and regulated by value”. Indeed, he says, it gifts that world with “its deepest meaning and its highest value.”²²¹ Within this context, religious experience understands itself, relates itself to the object of ultimate concern, and, says Lonergan, “draws on the power of the ultimate concern to pursue the objects of proximate concern” with a greater degree of fairness and efficacy.²²²

The upshot, for Lonergan, is that “the gift of God's love occupies the ground and root of the fourth and highest level of man's intentional consciousness.” To paraphrase the mystics, “it takes over the peak of the soul, the *apex animae*.”²²³

Pure experience of the transcendent is the starting point for the human subject in the realm of transcendence. The authentic human response to any experience of the

transcendent is conversion at the fourth level of operation. For Lonergan, conversion is authentic if it is religious, moral, and intellectual:

Normally it is intellectual conversion as the fruit of both religious and moral conversion; it is moral conversion as the fruit of religious conversion; and it is religious conversion as the fruit of God's gift of his grace.²²⁴

Such conversion, says Lonergan, is "basic to human living" and any objectification of it "provides theology [both practical and theoretical] with its foundations."²²⁵ It provides the basis for the practice of the spiritual life, for its communication to others, and for a theoretical reflection that finds expression in the various cultures of the world. It is the rich source therefore from which ideals, beliefs, and performance emerge. Indeed it is also the point at which one takes a personal stance: one attempts to identify which doctrines are true, how to reconcile them "with one another and with the conclusions of science, philosophy, history," and how to communicate them "appropriately to the members of each class in every culture."²²⁶

But over the centuries reports from pioneers in the realm of transcendence testify to the dialectical nature of the religious development which emerges from the raw experience of the transcendent. The struggle, writes Lonergan, is not "between any opposites whatever but the very precise opposition between authenticity and on authenticity, between the self as transcending and the self as transcended."²²⁷ In the realm of religious experience, Lonergan explains that "the human subject was self-transcendent intellectually by the achievement of knowledge, that he was self-transcendent morally inasmuch as he sought what was worth while, what was truly good, and thereby became a principal of benevolence and beneficence, that he was self-transcendent affectively when he fell in love, when the isolation of the individual was broken and he spontaneously functioned not just for himself but for others as well."²²⁸ Conversion, for Lonergan, involves a release from bondage that enables a new exercise of freedom. Conversion is an about-face that repudiates old behavior and begins a new. Lonergan echoes Paul Tillich in defining religious conversion as a matter of being grasped by ultimate concern. It is, Lonergan says, 'other-worldly' falling in love." It is a total and permanent self-surrender to a higher power without conditions, qualifications, reservations. In other words, no ands, ifs, or buts about it. The surrender, as Lonergan conceives it, is not an act but a dynamic state. It is prior to subsequent acts and the principle of the acts.

For Lonergan, the scholarly work of a theologian presupposes the functional specialties of research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. But the theologian as a person—as rational and responsible subject, maintains Lonergan, will employ a fifth functional specialty, what Lonergan calls 'foundations'. The functional specialty 'foundations' deals with doctrines, systematics, and communications.²²⁹ The foundational reality for Lonergan is the threefold conversion. Conversion occurs on the fourth level of consciousness, where the theologian deliberates, evaluates, and decides in response to the gift of God's love. Lonergan spells out the specific implications of conversion:

It is a decision about whom and what you are for and, again, whom and

what you are against. It is a decision illuminated by the manifold possibilities exhibited in dialectic. It is a fully conscious decision about one's horizon, one's outlook, one's world-view. It deliberately selects the frame-work, in which doctrines have their meaning, in which systematics reconciles, in which communications are effective.²³⁰

Conversion is the decision that moves one from inauthenticity to authenticity. It occurs at "the level of freedom and responsibility, of moral self-transcendence, and...of self-direction and self-control".²³¹ We function precisely as authentic human beings, writes Lonergan, truth a degree that "we are attentive or inattentive in experiencing, that we are intelligent or unintelligent in our investigations, that we are reasonable or unreasonable in our judgments." Therewith evaporate two notions that have bedeviled philosophy since the time of Kant: "the notion of pure intellect or pure reason that operates on its own without guidance or control from responsible decision; and the notion of will as an arbitrary power indifferently choosing between good and evil."²³²

Conversion, as Lonergan conceives it, is a slow process of maturation the human subject needs time and experience, trial and error, to find out for himself what it means for him "to be intelligent, to be reasonable, to be responsible, to love." Over time, the maturing subject uncovers oversights, acknowledges failures in understanding, corrects mistakes, admits sins and repents them. In other words, all this occurs at the level where consciousness becomes conscience. Authentic decisions are not the work of a metaphysical will, but of a good conscience.

Lonergan reminds us that, when older Catholic theology spoke of inner experience or of God, it used common sense speech "shot through with figure and symbol" or the theoretical language of metaphysics.²³³ For instance, in explaining the gift of God's love, Old Theology employed a metaphysical psychology to speak of the soul's essence and its natural potencies---sensitive and intellectual, apprehensive and appetitive. For it, sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift, a supernatural entity, "an entitative habit, absolutely supernatural, infused into the essence of the soul" and "rooted" there. Grace operates through supernatural habits and acts called virtues that are "prolongations perfecting our nature."²³⁴ In Lonergan's analysis, the older theology spoke the language of metaphysics. It had reached the stage where the realm of common sense and the realm of theory were distinct, but had not yet been "explicitly distinguished from and grounded" in the realm of interiority.²³⁵ Once identified in consciousness, the realm of interiority can be described in terms of intentional and conscious acts on the four levels of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. Because he identifies interiority as a distinct realm of meaning, Lonergan is able to begin his analysis of the realm of transcendence with a description of the gift of God's grace as a religious experience, as a dynamic state of being in love without restrictions, which manifests itself in inner and outer acts. With this as a base, Lonergan is able to set up special theological categories which show up in doctrines, systematics, and communications.²³⁶ Lonergan identifies this dynamic state with what traditional theology named sanctifying grace.²³⁷ He is then able to transpose his analysis back into traditional metaphysical terms:

... the dynamic state of itself is operative grace, but the same state as principle of acts of love, hope, faith, repentance, and so on, is grace as

cooperative.²³⁸

And again:

...The active potencies are the transcendental notions revealed in questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation. The passive potencies of the lower levels as presupposed and complemented by the higher.²³⁹

Different traditions, as we have seen, interpret the experience of conversion differently. For Lonergan, writing as a Christian theologian, religious conversion is “God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.”²⁴⁰ How have Christian saints and theologians interpreted of the meaning of God’s love over the centuries? Lonergan puts it this way:

It is the gift of grace, and since the days of Augustine, a distinction has been drawn between operative and cooperative grace. Operative grace is the replacement of the heart of stone by a heart of flesh, a replacement beyond the horizon of the heart of stone. Cooperative grace is the heart of flesh becoming effective in good works through human freedom. Operative grace is religious conversion. Cooperative grace is the effectiveness of conversion, the gradual movement towards a full and complete transformation of one’s whole living and feeling, one’s thoughts, words, the deeds, and omissions.²⁴¹

First, to repeat, there is the gift of God’s love. It spontaneously wells up in consciousness and orients one to what is “transcendent in the lovableness.”²⁴² Such love “reveals itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control.” In undifferentiated consciousness it will express its reference to the transcendent both through sacred objects, places, times, and actions, and through the sacred offices of the shaman, the prophet, the lawgiver, the apostle, the priest, the monk, the teacher.²⁴³

Then, the gift of love brings new sight, illumination, enlightenment, new understanding, That fulfillment, he adds, “dismantles and abolishes the horizon in which our knowing and choosing went on and it sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing.”²⁴⁴ Indeed, the eye of a love of which he writes reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, or repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel.²⁴⁵ All this comes to a climax, for Lonergan, with questions for decision: “Will I loved him in return or will I refuse? Will I live out the gift of his love, or will I hold back, turn away, withdraw?”²⁴⁶

Help in rising to these challenges comes, says Lonergan, in the person of the apologist, friends, or a spiritual director. The apologist can provide “needed information, interpretation, the formulation of new and the dropping of mistaken judgments of the fact and of value.” A faith community and a spiritual director can help one to integrate God’s

gift into his life and make any appropriate adjustments.²⁴⁷ When gifted by love, one possesses the eye of love. Lonergan quotes Pascal who said that the heart has reasons which reason does not know. Reason Lonergan takes to mean the compound of activities at the first three levels of cognitional activity, namely, experiencing, understanding, and judging. By the heart's reasons, Lonergan understands the feelings that are intentional responses to values, either the recognition of value or a preference of one value over another. What Pascal therefore means according to Lonergan is this: "besides the factual knowledge reached by experiencing, understanding, and verifying, there is another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love."²⁴⁸ Finally, when the eye of love "reveals values in their splendor,...the strength of this love brings about their realization." In other words, moral conversion.²⁴⁹

While being in love is always intersubjective, it is not always recognized as such in the realm of transcendence. Since the transcendent may register in consciousness without being known and as not of this world, for the Buddhist it is nothing at all. For Buddhists, any reality, any being is denied to the transcendent. Enlightenment is all. Of this, more later. For others, the experience of the transcendent can be overlooked. God can become "remote, irrelevant, almost forgotten."²⁵⁰ Or it may be that, as Lonergan has written, the experience of mystery of love will remain latent in consciousness as not adverted to, not objectified, but present nonetheless as "a vector, an undertow, a fateful call to the dreaded holiness."²⁵¹ Indeed, says Lonergan, it may take many years of prayer and self-denial for "immersion in the world mediated by meaning" to become less absorbing and allow the experience of the mystery to become "clear and distinct enough to awaken the attention, wonder, inquiry."²⁵²

At this point the experience needs to be amplified and strengthened. Here Lonergan is quite clear. We must keep withdrawing from the inauthentic, keep eliminating oversights and misunderstandings while correcting mistakes and errors, ever repenting our sins, ever skirting the "many traps of religious aberration." Like the great saints, we must watch and pray, in fear and trembling, though their sins seems slight indeed to less holy folk that lack their discernment and their love."²⁵³ According to the great Christian spiritual tradition, the gift of God's love and the dynamic state of being in love which it evokes become manifest in three ways: the purgative, the illuminative, and unitive. One is able to overcome temptation and withdraw from sinning. One finds oneself capable of a more refined discernment of values and commitment to them. One welcomes the arrival of the serenity of joy and peace which come as unmistakable evidence of the presence of God's love "that hitherto had been struggling against sin and advancing in virtue."²⁵⁴ One may then move more deeply into the unmediated experience of the mystery of love and awe. The experience in its immediacy, according to Lonergan, "though it differs in intensity, though it resonates differently in different temperaments and in different stages of religious development, withdraws man from the diversity of history by moving out of the world mediated by meaning and towards a world of immediacy in which image and the symbol, thought and word, lose their relevance and even disappear." Experience of the transcendent, of course, can "bear fruit in a consciousness that lives in the world mediated by meaning."²⁵⁵ But it can also draw one out of the world mediated by meaning and motivated by value and send one into the cloud of unknowing.²⁵⁶ Once one is oriented to what is "transcendent in loveliness" and yields in self-surrender, one is able to dispense with "any intellectually apprehended

object.”

What Lonergan has written about the differentiation of consciousness is relevant to any understanding the movement to prayer without image, word, or symbol. Religiously differentiated consciousness, says Lonergan, “is approached by the ascetic and reached by the mystic.”²⁵⁷ Children play in the world mediated by ‘make-believe’, not a real world but a world they create ‘just for fun’. Adults move from the real world to a world mediated by theory, the world of abstraction, that has “a mysterious relevance to successful performance in the ‘real’ world.” Further, when they listen to Rachmaninov, gaze at Vesuvius from across the Bay of Naples, or indeed are “stopped by the beauty of any kind,” they break out of their regular routines and embrace “fresher and deeper rhythms of apprehension and feeling.” Finally, the mystics among us, says Lonergan, withdraw from the world mediated by meaning, dropping all the “constructs of culture and the whole complicated mass of mediating operations,”²⁵⁸ and enter “into a silent and all-absorbing self-surrender in response to God’s gift of his love.”²⁵⁹ Lonergan is speaking here about a different type of consciousness where “one is for God, belongs to him, gives oneself to him, not by using words, images, concepts, but in a silent, joyous, peaceful surrender to his initiative.”²⁶⁰ One can let “lapse all images and thoughts so as to permit God’s gift of his love to absorb one.”²⁶¹ Indeed, he says, the mere memory of a prior orientation and self-surrender allow one to be “content with the negations of an apophatic theology” by which Lonergan means “enumerations of what God is not.”²⁶²

Imageless prayer has had a long history. For as long as humans have been able to speak, there has existed the religious differentiation of consciousness. Men and women have withdrawn from common sense activities necessary for human living sought solitude and silence, to develop a growth in the holiness. Lonergan reminds us that “such ascetics and mystics develop a type of consciousness expressed by the peace and joy on the countenance of a statue of a seated Buddha.”²⁶³ The inner life of Zen Buddhist masters and their disciples, to take an instance, reaches its climax in an experience of enlightenment (or *satori*). It is notoriously difficult to express the reality of the *satori* experience in words. “He that speaks does not know: he that knows does not speak.”²⁶⁴ Enlightenment, however, rarely arrives during *zazen*, when one is sitting in meditation, contrary to what one might expect:

Master Hui-neng, for example, got Enlightenment by listening to the chanting of the Diamond Sutra, Master Teshan got it by observing that Master Lung-t’an blew a candle flame out, Master Ling-yun got it by seeing a peach flower falling, Master Po-chang got it when his master Matsuo twisted his nose in his young days, Master Hakuin got it to by hearing the sound of the temple gong.²⁶⁵

Enlightenment seems to result from “a tremendous effort of mind and body: the eyes concentrated in a single point, the mind emptied of ideas and images.” Then after weeks, months, even years of strenuous Zen practice, the moment comes: “everything unifies and Enlightenment comes as an enormously joyful relief.”²⁶⁶ Johnston ventures this account of the experience:

It is a great crash accompanied by joy and followed by deep peace. It has

been poetically compared to the smashing of a layer of ice or the pulling down of a crystal tower; or the clouds have parted and the bright sun pierces through—others will say that it is as though their skull were broken into a thousand pieces.²⁶⁷

The enlightenment experience is wholly transformative. It brings “calm, and joy, interior freedom and detachment: it gives that liberty from the shackles of worldly desire which, says Buddhism, is the source of all our suffering.”²⁶⁸

To give a celebrated instance. A Japanese business executive, Mr. K. Yamada, a disciple of Zen Master Yasutani Hakuun, reports:

I awoke suddenly in the dead of night. My mind was not clear at first, when there occurred to me the passage: “Now I have realized clearly that mind is the mountain, the river and the earth, a son, the moon, and the stars.”²⁶⁹ I repeated it; and then suddenly something like an electric shock ran through my body, and heaven and earth collapsed. Instantaneously the raptures of delight welled up in be like surging waves as I laughed aloud with my mouth wide open, a succession of roars of laughter.... “There is no need of reasoning, no need of reasoning at all,” I cried once or twice [more laughter]. It was as though the sky broke open and gaped and laughed its head off [prolonged laughter]. My family said afterwards that my laughter did not sound human at all.²⁷⁰

The sources stress that Zen Enlightenment is an experience of absolute unity. Indeed, this kind of language is not foreign to similar accounts of their experience by Christian mystics. Johnston explains the meaning of absolute unity: “it is beyond subject and object; the empirical ego is so submerged that there is no longer ‘I’ and ‘it’ but pure existence or ‘is-ness’.”²⁷¹

Helpful here is Walter Conn's study of the Zen practice of Thomas Merton and his reflections on transcendent experience in pure consciousness.²⁷² Zen awareness for Merton is “the ontological awareness of pure being beyond subject and object, an immediate grasp of being in its ‘suchness’ and ‘thusness’.” The experience is ‘purely spiritual’, which Conn calls a “non-reflexive, non-self-conscious awareness . . . beyond the scope of psychological observation and metaphysical reflection.”²⁷³ Zen awareness, for Merton, is “not ‘consciousness of’ but *pure consciousness*, in which the subject as such ‘disappears’.”²⁷⁴ As Merton puts it, the awareness is “a stepping stone to an awareness of God” and, as he states confidently “if we enter into ourselves, find our true self, and then pass ‘beyond’ the inner ‘I’, we sail forth into the immense darkness in which we confront the ‘I AM’ of the Almighty.” Merton of course acknowledges the immense abyss that exists between creature and creator, but affirms the paradox is that “our inmost ‘I’ exists in God and God dwells in it.” The upshot is that there “appears to be but one I.” One is simply aware of oneself “as a self-to-be-dissolved in self-giving, in love, in ‘letting-go’, in ecstasy, in God. . .”²⁷⁵ A claim that boggles the Western mind and at times raises among Christians the specter of pantheism. Johnston quotes Carl Jung’s insight:

To us, consciousness is inconceivable without an ego. If there is no ego

there is nobody to be conscious of anything. The ego is therefore indispensable to the conscious process. The Eastern mind, however, has no difficulty in conceiving of a consciousness without an ego. Consciousness is deemed capable of transcending its ego condition; indeed, in its higher forms, the ego disappears altogether.²⁷⁶

Johnston suggests some lines from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* that may help in understanding what Zen and Christian mystics are getting at:

music heard so deeply
That is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. . . .²⁷⁷

Johnson explains: "In this typical, intense moment, music is heard so deeply that there is no longer a person listening and music listened to; there is no 'I' opposed to 'music'; there is simply music without subject or object, for both are submerged in one: you are the music."²⁷⁸

At this point let us take stock with Lonergan one more time: living in the world of transcendence boils down to praxis in the realm of transcendence, a world mediated by ultimate meaning and motivated by ultimate value. The task is to detect whether there is "any real fire behind the smoke of symbols" employed by religion to express ultimate meaning and ultimate value. In the end, Lonergan takes his stand on authenticity:

- on the authenticity with which intelligence takes us beyond the experimental infrastructure to enrich it, extend it, organize it, but never to slight it and much less to violate its primordial role;
- on the authenticity with which rational reflection goes beyond the constructions of intelligence and draws sharply the lines between astrology and astronomy, alchemy and chemistry, legend and history, magic and science, myth and philosophy;
- on the authenticity with which moral deliberation takes us beyond cognitional process into the realm of freedom and responsibility, evaluation and decision, not in any way to annul or slight experience or understanding or factual judgment, but to add the further and distinct truth of value judgments and the consequent decisions demanded by a situation in which authenticity cannot be taken for granted.²⁷⁹

In other words, Lonergan is not naive. The age of innocence is over. For praxis to be authentic, he says, one must employ a hermeneutic of suspicion as well as a hermeneutic of recovery.

What are the implications of authentic religious praxis? Pure religious experience is something given; its shares in the givenness of every kind of experience, says Baron von Hügel, "from the givenness of the pebble and the star...on to the immensely greater givenness of the human spirit, and the primary, absolute givenness and reality of God"²⁸⁰ What is given is some event that 'registers' in consciousness, not just an illumination but

“a compound of feeling and willing,” perhaps dim at first, remaining latent perhaps, but somehow present in the ever present now, a vector, an undertow in the flow of consciousness, and, as Lonergan intimates, a fateful call to a dreaded holiness, a call that haunts one. Such, then, is one’s apprehension of the gift of God’s love. The experience is direct, conscious, immediately given, not a result of deduction or inference, indeed as immediate and so as familiar as the love one experiences when one is in love with another. No special mystical faculty is needed; every man and every woman who has ever lived has the capacity to receive and register the reception of the gift, become aware of it, accept it, respond to it. While always a particular gift to a particular individual, however, the gift of God’s love is never solitary, always social, not given to the individual for himself alone, but as part of a group. God intends all human beings by virtue of the gift to become unique and fully developed persons, true; but, as von Hügel insists, always and “only as necessary constituents and docile parts of the large whole, as members, through a visible organization of the invisible church.”²⁸¹ As von Hügel explains: “you must get a larger experience—you gain it by a study of history; the individualistic bias simply doesn’t work.” Or put more simply: “behind every saint stands another saint.” That, he says with winning self-effacement, is “the great tradition—I never learnt anything myself by my old nose.”²⁸²

The gift of God’s love is intended to equip us for living our lives, for the service of God and his greater glory, a service that should at the same time “transfigure the world”. The high goal in life for the person flooded with God’s love is “the civilizing of spirituality and the spiritualizing of civilization.”²⁸³ This Christian interpretation of religious experience is thoroughly incarnational: there is always in the life of a religious person, according to von Hügel, “a tension, a friction, a one thing at work in distinctly another thing, like yeast in meal, like salt in meat.”²⁸⁴ Living one’s life, for von Hügel, is finally not a problem for the mind to solve, but a mystery calling forth the whole of man’s love and self-surrender.”²⁸⁵

I will let Huston Smith have the final word:

... the ultimate questions human beings ask—What is the meaning of existence? Why are there pain and death? Why, in the end, is life worth living? What does reality consist of and what is its object?—are the defining essence of our humanity,... the determining substance of what makes human beings human....It is the intrusion of these questions into our consciousness that tells us most precisely and definitively the kind of creature we are. Our humanness flourishes to the extent that we steep ourselves in these questions—ponder them, circle them, obsess over them, and in the end allow the obsession to consume us.²⁸⁶

1. *Method in Theology*, 266.

2. *Ibid.*, 84.

3. Marlise Simons, “Newly Found Cave Paintings in France Are the Oldest, Scientists Estimate,” *The New York Times Book of Archeology*, 11. See also Judith Thurman survey of recent activities at Chauvet and differing theories about the meaning of the art in “Letter from Southern France: FIRST IMPRESSIONS. What does the world’s oldest art say about us?”, *The New Yorker*, June 223, 2008, 58-67. See Google

Image Search: Chauvet

4. Jacquetta Hawkes, *Prehistory* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1965 pb), 53.
5. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 194.
6. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 236-237.
7. *Ibid.*, 237.
8. *Ibid.*, *Collection*, 237.
9. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 194. Lonergan is drawing on the work of Bronsilaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion*, 17-36.
10. *Method in Theology*, 90.
11. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis Of Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York, 1990), 14-15.
12. Stephen L. Sass, *The Substance of Civilization* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998), 10-11.
13. "Openness and Religious Experience" in Vol. 4: *Collection*, 185-186.
14. Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco/HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 12.
15. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 7.
16. *Method in Theology*, 103.
17. *Ibid.*, 102.
18. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis Of Philosophy*, 15-16.
19. *Method in Theology*, 103.
20. *Ibid.*, 103.
21. *Ibid.*, 103.
22. "Openness and Religious Experience" in *Collection*, 186.
23. *Ibid.*, 103.
24. For Lonergan on the question of God, see Chapter 19 of *Insight* and also "The General Character of the Natural Theology of Insight," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 3-9; "The Natural Desire To See God," *Collection*, 81-91; "2 The Existence of God", *Understanding and Being*, 237-246; "2 Probability Theory and the Existence of God," *Understanding and Being*, 337-341; and "3 The Question of God", *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 205-208 and also 195-196
25. *Quest for Self Knowledge*, 236.
26. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*, 7.
27. *Ibid.*, 201.
28. Quoted in Michael Hill, "Nature's Power," the Baltimore Sun, Sunday, September 21, 2003, 2C.
29. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle*, 10-11, quoted in Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 470.
30. See Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. John W. Harvey. London: Oxford University Press, 1923, paperback, 1958.
31. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. by Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1959), 8-9.
32. "Making, Knowing and Judging," *The Dyer's Hand*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 55.
33. Abraham H. Maslow, "Lessons from the Peak Experiences," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 2, 1962. Quoted in *The Third Force*, 57.
34. *Ibid.*, 57.
35. Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, 98-99.
36. "Religious Experience" in *A Third Collection*, 118.
37. *Method in the Theology*, 69.
38. Frank Goble, *The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow* (New York, Pocket Books, 1971). In a gracious and winning Foreward (ix), Maslow writes: "I am very happy that Mr. Goble has done so well what I have often wanted to do but couldn't. He has brought together into a systematized and simplified organization what is, after all, an unstructured sprawl of writing, far too much to expect anything but professional students to read. This kind of abstracting, condensing, and simplifying so that the essential structure shows through clearly is an uncommon talent. Mr. Goble has it, and I do not." See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, New York: HarperCollins, 1990; Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph.D., *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology To Realize Your Potential*

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- for *Lasting Fulfillment*, New York: Free Press(Simon and Schuster, Inc.), 2002; Peterson, Christopher & Martin E.P. Seligman, *Character, Strengths, and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 for the direction Positive Psychology has taken in recent years in bringing conventional empirical science to bear on positive emotions and self-actualization as stressed in the 1960s by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.
39. *A Third Collection*, 118.
 40. *The Third Force: The Psychology of Abraham Maslow*, 57.
 41. *Ibid.*, 56.
 42. Quoted in *The Third Force*, 57.
 43. Abraham H. Maslow, "Music Education and Peak-Experiences," *Music Educators Journal*, 1968. Quoted in *The Third Force*, 57.
 44. *Ibid.*, 29.
 45. Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Van Nostrand, New York, 1962.
 46. *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1963), 129. Happold also writes of the three aspects mysticism has taken: nature-mysticism, soul-mysticism, and God-mysticism. These aspects are "not necessarily mutually exclusive; they may and do often intermix." See pp. 43-45.
 47. Margaret Isherwood, *The Root of the Matter* (Gollancz). Quoted in F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: a Study and an Anthology*, 129-130.
 48. Warner Allen, *The Timeless Moment* (Faber and Faber), quoted in F. C.Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1964), 132.
 49. *The Timeless Moment*, 132.
 50. Warner, *The Timeless Moment*, quoted in F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, 133.
 51. Vera Brittain, *Testament of Friendship* (Macmillan) quoted in F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, 130-131.
 52. Quoted in Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 27-28.
 53. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 33-34.
 54. *Soliloquium de arrha animae* (MPL 176:970), quoted in *Late Medieval Mysticism*, edited by Ray C. Petry (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957)), 94-95.
 55. *St. Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated with introduction and notes by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, [30], 26-27.
 56. F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, 39.
 57. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 33.
 58. *Insight*, xxviii.
 59. *Method in Theology*, 305.
 60. *Ibid.*, 115.
 61. *Ibid.*, 305.
 62. "Horizons," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2004), 27.
 63. Abraham Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (New York: Viking Press, 1970) 89-90. Quoted in Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 373-374.
 64. *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 374.
 65. *Method in Theology*, 118.
 66. See "First Lecture: Religious Experience," *A Third Collection*, 115-128.
 67. *The Dyer's Hand*, 58.
 68. *Ibid.*, 113.
 69. See *Ibid.*, 30-31; also "Horizons", *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 13-16.
 70. *The Dyer's Hand*, 58.
 71. "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection*, 70.
 72. *Ibid.*, 59.
 73. *Ibid.*, 57.
 74. *Ibid.*, 57-58.
 75. *Ibid.*, 58.
 76. See "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," *A Third Collection*, 129-145.

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77. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 20.
 78. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 1-2.
 79. C.V. Wedgwood, *The Spoils of Time*, 20.
 80. Paul Jordan, *Early Man*, 1-2. Indeed, the earliest art found in Australia is dated as far back as 40,000 years ago; *ibid.*, 90.
 81. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 222.
 82. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 11.
 83. *Insight*, 532.
 84. "Making, Knowing and Judging," *The Dyer's Hand*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 54-55. See F. C. Happold, *Mysticism*, 29.
 85. *Method in Theology*, 108.
 86. See F. C. Happold, *Mysticism*, 43 and 353-362.
 87. *Prehistory*, (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1965 pb), 53.
 88. *Insight*, 533.
 89. "Making, Knowing and Judging," *The Dyer's Hand*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 56-57, 60.
 90. *Method in Theology*, 272-273.
 91. "Metaphysical Analysis and Metaphysical Integration," *Understanding and Being*, 217. See Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion: A Study of the Element of the Sacred in the History of Religious Phenomena* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958).
 92. "The Human Good As Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 55.
 93. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 240.
 94. "The Human Good As Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 57.
 95. *Understanding and Being*, 217.
 96. Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 4.
 97. *Ibid.*, 32.
 98. *Ibid.*, 502.
 99. Quoted in Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, 503.
 100. *Insight*, 544-545.
 101. Cited by Lonergan in "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 78.
 102. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 205.
 103. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 220.
 104. *Method in Theology*, 64.
 105. Quoted by Helen Vendler in *Seamus Heaney*, 79.
 106. "Metaphysical Analysis and Metaphysical Integration," *Understanding and Being*, 217.
 107. *Ibid.*, 218.
 108. "Art" in *Topics in Education*, 220.
 109. "Exegesis and Dogma" in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 145.
 110. "Metaphysical Analysis and Metaphysical Integration" in *Understanding and Being*, 219.
 111. "Art" in *Topics and Education*, 221.
 112. *Ibid.*, 221.
 113. "Metaphysical Analysis and Metaphysical Integration" in *Understanding and Being*, 216.
 114. *Ibid.*, 216.
 115. "The Human Good As Object: Differentials and Integration" in *Topics in Education*, 56.
 116. *Ibid.*, 77.
 117. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 242.
 118. *Ibid.*, 242.
 119. "The Dehellenization of Dogma" in *A Second Collection*, 20.
 120. "Reality, Myth, Symbol," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 386.
 121. Oxford Concise Dictionary
 122. *Insight*, 546.
 123. Quoted in F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: a Study and an Anthology*, 38.
 124. See Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, who summarizes the research of Pascal Boyer in *The*

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- Naturalness of Religious Ideas: The Cognitive Theory of Religion.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
125. Joseph Flanagan, *The Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 240.
 126. "The Human Good As Object: Differentials and Integration" in *Topics in Education*, 57.
 127. Georges M. A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, 150, quoted in Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 470.
 128. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 240.
 129. Paul Horgan, *Approaches to Writing* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 158.
 130. Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 241.
 131. *Ibid.*, 243.
 132. *Ibid.*, 259.
 133. *Ibid.*, 241.
 134. *Ibid.*, 245.
 135. *Ibid.*, 259.
 136. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 13.
 137. *Ibid.*, 17.
 138. *Ibid.*, 14.
 139. *Method in Theology*, 13, and *Insight*, 74.
 140. *Insight*, 532.
 141. *Ibid.*, 534.
 142. *Origins of the Human Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard university Press, 1991, quoted in Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*, 113.
 143. *Insight*, 537. Lonergan cites Ikhnaton's "concern with being and its ground" as an early flash of philosophic insight.
 144. Colin Renfrew, *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from? The parallel visions of artists and archeologists*, 116.
 145. *Method in Theology*, 278.
 146. *Ibid.*, 112.
 147. *Ibid.*, 328-330.
 148. *Ibid.*, 266.
 149. *Ibid.*, 114.
 150. *Ibid.*, 114.
 151. See, for instance, Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters*, 213-233.
 152. *Method in Theology*, 114-115.
 153. *Ibid.*, 114.
 154. *Ibid.*, 109. See also F. Heiler, "The History of Religions As a Preparation For the Cooperation of Religions," *The History of Religions* edited by M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959, pp. 142-153.
 155. "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection*, 67. See William Johnston, *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing, The Still Point, Christian Zen, and Silent Music: The Science of Meditation*.
 156. *Method in Theology*, 114. On pluralism in religious language, see also *Method in Theology*, 276.
 157. Raymond Panikkar, "Metatheology or Diacritical Theology as Fundamental Theology". *Concilium*, Vol.XLVI (1969), 43-55, see p. 49; quoted in "Prolegomena to the Study of the Emerging Religious Consciousness of Our Time," *A Third Collection*, 68.
 158. Raymond Panikkar, "Metatheology or Diacritical Theology as Fundamental Theology". *Concilium*, Vol.XLVI (1969), 43-55, at 54. Quoted in "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," For discussion of universal salvation of all man and women, see "Lecture 1: Philosophy of God," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 176-178.
 159. "Judgment," *Understanding and Being*, 110-111.
 160. *Insight*, 543.
 161. "Dimensions of Meaning," Vol. 4" *Collection*, 237. For bias, see *Insight*, 191-206, 218-242. See also "4 The Control of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 117-118. Lonergan calls

- attention to “the manifold warnings against various forms of illusion in devotional and ascetical writings. While this tradition should be in integrated with the findings of depth psychology, it is of great importance to be aware of current corrections of earlier views,” and gives the following references: L.v.Bertalanffy, *General Systems Theory*, New York: Braziller, 1968, 106 ff., 188 ff. A. Maslow, *Toward the Psychology of Being*, Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962, esp. 19-41. Ernest Becker, *The Structure of Evil*, New York: Braziller, 1968, 154-166. Arthur Janov, *The Primal Scream*, New York: Putman, 1970.
162. “Dimensions of Meaning,” Vol. 4" *Collection*, 237.
 163. “Faith and Beliefs” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 45.
 164. “Metaphysical Analysis and Metaphysical Integration,” *Understanding and Being*, 218.
 165. “Faith and Beliefs” in the volumes 17: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 45.
 166. “Did the ‘Iceman’ of Alps Die as Human Sacrifice,” *National Geographic News*, January 15, 2002.
 167. Quoted from Jared Diamond’s review of David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin’s Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*, *The New York Review of Books*, Volume XLIX, NUMBER 17, November 7, 2002, 31.
 168. See Elizabeth P. Benson and Anita A. Cook, *Ritual Sacrifice in Ancient Peru*, Austin: University of Texas, 201.
 169. See Mike Parker-Pearson, “Bodies for the Gods: the Practice of Human Sacrifice”, www.BBC.co.uk/history/ancient/prehistory/human sacrifice.
 170. See Patrick Tierney, *The High Altar: the Unveiling the Mystery of Human Sacrifice*. New York: Penguin, 1989.
 171. E.O. James, *Sacrifice and Sacrament* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1992), 95.
 172. “Sacrifice as Sacral Violence and Substitution ,” *The Girard Reader*, Edited by James G. Williams, 77.
 173. *Ibid.*, 81.
 174. *Ibid.*, 77.
 175. *Ibid.*, 87.
 176. Quoted in René Girard, “Sacrifice as Sacral Violence and Substitution ,” *The Girard Reader*, Edited by James G. Williams, 78. See Also A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1952, 158.
 177. “Exegesis and Dogma,” *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 145-146.
 178. *Method in Theology*, 306.
 179. “Faith and Beliefs” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 41.
 180. “Dimensions of Meaning,” *Collection*, 236.
 181. Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way to Western Civilization*, N.Y.: Mentor Books: The New American Library of World Literature, 1963, 16th printing, 26.
 182. John H. Finley, *Four Stages of Greek Thought*, 95-96, quoted in Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 15.
 183. *Method in Theology*, 90.
 184. *Ibid.*, 307.
 185. *Ibid.*, 91.
 186. *Ibid.*, 91-92.
 187. “The Theory of Philosophic Differences,” *Topics in Education*, 159.
 188. “The Dehellenization of Dogma,” *A Second Collection*, 20.
 189. “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the Comfort of the Resurrection” in *A Hopkins Reader: Selections from the Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*(Edited with an Introduction by John Pick. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), 80.
 190. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 8-9.
 191. *Ibid.*, 11-12.
 192. *Understanding and Being*, 100.
 193. *Ibid.*, 100.
 194. *Ibid.*, 100-101.
 195. *Ibid.*, 101.
 196. *Ibid.*, 101.
 197. See *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 68-95.

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198. Ibid., 81.
199. See Joseph Flanagan, *Quest for Self-Knowledge*, 246.
200. Ibid., 245.
201. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 242..
202. *Method in Theology*, 306-307.
203. Ibid., 307.
204. Christopher Dawson, *Understanding Europe* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952) 14; quoted in "History," *Topics in Education*, 254 n33.
205. *Method in Theology*, 121.
206. Ibid., 121.
207. Ibid., 289.
208. Ibid., 112.
209. Ibid., 106.
210. Ibid., 109.
211. Ibid., 106.
212. Ibid., 278.
213. "Lecture 3: The Relationship between the Philosophy of God and the Functional Specialty 'Systematics'," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 218.
214. "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection*, 190.
215. "The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World" in *A Second Collection*, 170.
216. *Method in Theology*, 110.
217. "The Response of the Jesuit as Priest and Apostle in the Modern World" in *A Second Collection*, 171.
218. "The Ongoing Genesis of the Methods" in *A Third Collection*, 161.
219. Ibid., 106.
220. "Lecture 2: The Functional Specialty 'Systematics'," *Philosophical and Theological Papers in 1965-1980*, 193-194.
221. *Method in Theology*, 112.
222. Ibid., 112.
223. Ibid., 106-107.
224. Ibid., 267-268.
225. Ibid., 130.
226. Ibid., 267.
227. Ibid., 111.
228. Ibid., 289.
229. Ibid., 267.
230. Ibid., 268.
231. Ibid., 121.
232. Ibid., 121.
233. Ibid., 120.
234. Ibid., 288-289.
235. Ibid., 107. See also "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," *Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 391-408.
236. See *Method in Theology*, 292.
237. Ibid., 120.
238. Ibid., 107. For a fuller development, see Lonergan's *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Toronto, Buffalo, London: Published for Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, Toronto, By University of Toronto Press, 2000.
239. *Method in Theology*, 120.
240. Ibid., 241. For a fuller development of grace as operative and cooperative in St. Thomas, see *Theological Studies* 2(1941), 289-324; 3(1942), 69-88; 375-402; 533-578. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
241. *Method in Theology*, 241.
242. Ibid., 278.

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243. Ibid., 266.
244. Ibid., 106.
245. Ibid., 122-123.
246. Ibid., 116.
247. Ibid., 123.
248. Ibid., 115.
249. Ibid., 243.
250. Ibid., 110.
251. Ibid., 113.
252. Ibid., 113.
253. Ibid., 110.
254. Ibid., 289.
255. "Doctoral Pluralism," Vol. 17: *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 79.
256. *Method in Theology*, 342. At this point, Lonergan noted that he had found William Johnston's, *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing*, New York, Rome, Tournai, Paris: Desclee, 1967 "extremely helpful" and added that "readers wishing to fill out my remarks will find in his book a position very largely coherent with my own."
257. *Method in Theology*, 273.
258. Ibid., 29. On patterns of experience, writes Lonergan, see *Insight*, 181ff. On peak experiences, A. H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1962; A. Reza Aresteh, *Final Integration in the Adult Personality*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965; William Johnston, *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing*, New York, Rome, Paris, Tournai: Desclée, 1967; *Christian Zen*, New York: Harper and Row, 1971; A. H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, New York: Viking Press, 1970.
259. *Method in Theology*, 273.
260. Ibid., 278.
261. Ibid., 342.
262. Ibid., 277-278. Here are Lonergan refers the reader to Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, Montréal: Palm, and Freiburg: Herder, 1964, pp. 129 ff.
263. "The World Mediated by Meaning", *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 113.
264. Quoted by William Johnston, *The Still Point: Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism* (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971), 1.
265. Johnston, *The Still Point: Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism*, 11.
266. Ibid., 13.
267. Ibid., 11.
268. Ibid., 13.
269. A classic saying of Zen Master Dozen (1200-1253), founder of the Japanese Soto school of Zen Buddhism.
270. Johnston, *The Still Point: Reflections on Zen and Christian Mysticism*, 11-12. See also *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment* compiled & edited, with translations, introductions & notes, by Philip Kapleau, foreword by Huston Smith (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967) 189-204 and 204-208.
271. Ibid., 21.
272. Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation Of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986) 260-263.
273. Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (New York: New Directions, 1968) 4, 23-24, and *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Delta, 1968) 14. Quoted in Conn, *Christian Conversion*, 337, n118.
274. Ibid., 24.
275. Ibid., 337, n120.
276. C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, trans.R.F.C.Hull (London, 1958), 484. Quoted in Johnston, *The Still Point*, 23.
277. T. S. Eliot, *The Dry Salvages*, lines 210 ff. Quoted in Johnston, *The Still Point*, 22.
278. Johnston, *The Still Point*, 22.
279. "Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection*, 160.
280. Quoted in Joseph P. Whelan, S. J., *The Spirituality of Friedrich von Hügel*, (New York, Paramus,

Toronto: Newman Press, 1971), 90.

281. *Ibid.*, 90-91.

282. *Ibid.*, 178.

283. *Ibid.*, 72.

284. *Ibid.*, 256, note 168.

285. *Ibid.*, 138.

286. Huston Smith, *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco/HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001), 274-275.

8

The Realm of Art

*. . . there is a stream of consciousness, and the stream involves not only succession but also direction. Conspicuous in this direction is a concern to get things done. But behind palpable activities, there are motives and purposes; and in them it is not difficult to discern an artistic, or, more precisely, a dramatic component.*¹

*. . . Human knowing and feeling are incomplete without expression. The development, then, of symbols, of the arts, of literature is intrinsic to human advance.*²

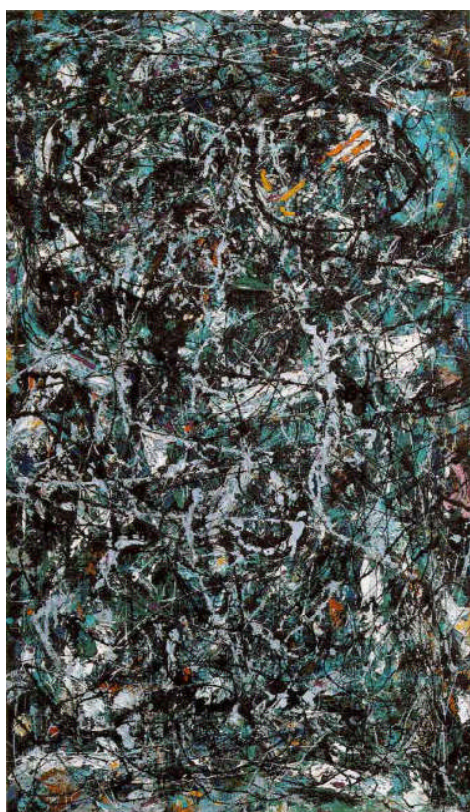
Bernard Lonergan

Jackson Pollock first displayed his paintings to European eyes at the Venice Biennale in 1948. One initial assessment spoke for the reaction of many: Jackson's stunning and disconcerting work presented "the seamier side of America — sentimentalism, hysteria, and an undirected and undisciplined exuberance."³ But a remarkably perceptive Scots artist, Alan Davie, grasped what was new and significant in Pollock's work: "a passionate interest in the art of primitive peoples [coupled with a sense of] liberation — a setting free of the natural spiritual flow within us."⁴ By the mid-1950s, many more artists and critics were welcoming Pollock's work "as an example of liberation: liberation from outmoded studio practices [he dripped paint directly onto the canvas], liberation from their teachers and liberation from a limited European horizon."⁵ By 1956 when he died, Pollock was as well-known as Picasso. Indeed, by then the art capital of the world had shifted from Paris to New York.

British artist Robyn Denny bespoke the dawning realization of the historic shift that had taken place in the modern art world with the birth of Abstract Expressionism in America when he wrote:

Europe and the old world seemed to be abandoning in its art the attributes of thrust, inventiveness and risk. Hence the new developments in American painting, and especially in the works of Jackson Pollock (Figure 1), were a timely affirmation that the old heart of art was still alive and in its rightful place at the center of life.⁶ Indeed, in Jeremy Lewison's judgment, "Jackson Pollock will continue to be the most innovative artist of his generation and, with Picasso and Matisse, one of the greatest of the twentieth century."⁷

Liberation, thrust, inventiveness and risk — all are indeed themes central to Lonergan’s understanding of the realm of art. He locates art in its own realm of meaning distinct from the realms of common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence; and explains how an understanding of its nature slips naturally into his basic cognitional and volitional analysis of how the human mind works. As he had already noted, consciousness flows in many and varied patterns:



**Figure 1 Jackson Pollock
Full Fathom Five**

Source: ibiblio

- It can flow...in the dramatic pattern of ordinary living in which I am dealing with other people,
- in the practical pattern of people who do things, get things done,
- in the intellectual pattern of people like Thales tumbling into the well when he was studying the stars,
- in the mystical pattern of people who withdraw entirely from the imaginative world.⁸

But art he places in the aesthetic pattern of experience, differentiating it from the other patterns in the flow of consciousness — biological, practical, intellectual, dramatic — which we have been attempting to appropriate in the course of this book.⁹ Indeed he roots art in the spontaneity that first manifests itself in the joy of children at play and celebrates the fact that:

...there exists in man an exuberance above and beyond the biological account-books of purposeful pleasure and pain. Conscious living is itself a joy that reveals its spontaneous authenticity in the untiring play of children, in the strenuous games of youth, and the exhilaration of sun-lit morning air, in the sweep of a broad perspective, in the swing of a melody.¹⁰

He affirms “that experience can occur for the sake of experiencing, that it can slip beyond the confines of a serious-minded biological purpose [food and shelter and reproduction], and that this very liberation is a spontaneous, self-justifying joy.”¹¹

For Lonergan, then, art means joy and playfulness and freedom. He argues that art liberates “intelligence from the wearying constraints of mathematical proofs, scientific verifications, and common-sense factualness.”¹² Art is a “break from a ready-made world” and so an artist like Jackson Pollock “breaks away from ordinary living (or from what earlier artists like Picasso have already achieved)” and opens up “a moment of new

potentiality.”¹³ There is in a great creative artist what Lonergan calls “a release of potentiality,”¹⁴ and indeed what artist Briget Riley reported spotting early on in Pollock—“an explosion of vitality.”¹⁵ It is such vitality that makes art so important to society. American artist George Bellows put it this way:

All civilization and culture are the results of the creative imagination or artist quality in man. The artist is the man who makes life more interesting or beautiful, more understandable or mysterious, or probably, in the best sense, more wonderful. His trade is to deal with *illimitable* experience.¹⁶

Lonergan sees the artist, then, as using intelligence to discover through insight “ever novel forms that unify and relate the contents and acts of aesthetic experience.”¹⁷ This is confirmed by painter Edward Hopper who wrote of his belief that “the great painters, *with their intellect as master*, have attempted to force this unwilling medium of paint and canvas into a record of their emotions (emphasis added).”¹⁸ It is precisely because art opens a “new horizon” that it is exciting and full of adventure. Art introduces us to what is “different, novel, strange, new, remote, intimate.”¹⁹ — words which recall for this reader Hopkins’ fascination with “all things counter, original, spare, strange...”²⁰ and his ecstatic whoop: “Glory be to God for dappled things,” Indeed, Lonergan argues that the artist withdraws from ‘practical living’ in an effort to explore further “possibilities of what life, ordinary living, can be.” What Lonergan is saying is that art not only reveals “a fuller, profounder reality” but something with the power to transform one’s life.²¹ As a result, the rest of us may lack the genius of creative artists, but we can all be beneficiaries of Michelangelo’s *Pieta*, Beethoven’s *Heroica*, van Gogh’s *Starry Night*, or Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* if we allow them to shape our lives.

Lonergan is at pains to remind those of us who are not artists that “there is an artistic element in all consciousness, in all living.” Indeed, our lives often become ‘humdrum’ and we tend to think of our lives “simply in terms of utilitarian categories.”²² But in fact, Lonergan is quick to hammer home the point that even the day-to-day “life we are living is a product of artistic creation.”²³ And so art is important for us because the artist opens the way to a “fuller living in a richer world;” the great artist is a pioneer and his art “an exploration of potentiality.” As Columbia professor Edward Tayler put it to incoming freshman — wannabe “lawyers, accountants, teachers, businessmen, politicians. TV producers, doctors, poets, layabouts...You’re here for very selfish reasons. You’re here to build a self. You create a self, you can’t inherit it. One way you create it is out of the past.”²⁴ Each great book (and every great work of art), in critic David Denby’s words, is “a mold-shattering world of its own.”

In the end, Lonergan argues, any human being who yields to the experience of great art becomes a conscious “subject in act, emergent, ecstatic...” Lonergan roundly affirms the ‘great tradition’ championed by the English literary critic F. R. Leavis (and reaffirmed by Tayler and Denby) who maintains that art has the capacity to transform the human self --- in contrast to postmodernist literary and art critics who, in literary critic Sven Birkerts’ judgment, reject “the meaning system that governed literary art for so long.”²⁵ Great literature like all art is, in Birkerts’ precise pronouncement, “existentially useful.”²⁷

Artistically differentiated consciousness, says Lonergan, enables the conscious subject to become “a specialist in the realm of beauty,” one who “promptly recognizes and fully responds to beautiful objects.” In the more talented among us, he adds, “higher achievement is creating.” For the gifted writer, painter, musician, sculptor, choreographer artistically differentiated consciousness “invents commanding forms; works out their implications, conceives and produces their embodiment.”²⁸ Jackson Pollock — like all great artists—grasped in the artistic pattern of his sensible experience significant new meaning, what Susanne Langer terms ‘significant form’. She borrowed the phrase from art critic Clive Bell who introduced it in his search for what could serve as the common denominator of all art.²⁹ Bell wrote:

There must be some one quality without which a work of art cannot exist; possessing which, in the least degree, no work is altogether worthless. What is this quality? What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions? What quality is common to Santa Sophia and the Windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto’s frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca, and Cézanne? Only one answer seems possible — significant form.³⁰

Or what Harvard professor Elaine Scarry in her book *On Beauty* calls “symmetry.” There must be then some consequential element in great art — what Denby identifies as “depth, intensity, moral significance, structural and figurative ingenuity...”³¹

In her philosophy of art, Langer appropriated Bell’s term (significant form) but gave it a more central and emphatic position. Art, in Langer’s definition, is “the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.”³² Lonergan, in turn, warmly embraced Langer’s theory of art, but gave his own twist to her definition, bringing it into harmony with his own cognitional and volitional theory. For him art is “the objectification of a purely experiential pattern.”³³ In his analysis, the ‘pattern’ is perceived on the first level of conscious activity, becomes ‘objectified’ on the second, is ‘verified’ by the work of art on the third, and is the value of the beautiful on the fourth, whatever form the work of art may take — cathedral, stain glass window, bowl, carpet, sculpture, sonnet, or symphony.

In this book we have been listening to Lonergan as he differentiates the various intentional currents in the flow of undifferentiated consciousness. He identified how common sense deals with the practical (chapter 1), how theory deals with the description and explanation and existence of reality (chapter 2), how interiority deals with the basic operations of the human mind as intentional (chapters 3-6), how transcendence deals with the transcendent (chapter 7), and finally in this chapter how the human subject comes to appreciate beauty and create art.

And our question at this point? In what way does the invariant pattern of the mind’s basic operations function in the realm of art? There are in the human subject, as Lonergan often reminds us, “four successive, related, but qualitatively different levels” of conscious and intentional operations:

- There is the *empirical* level on which we sense, perceive, imagine, feel, speak, move.

- There is an *intellectual* level on which we inquire, come to understand, express what we have understood, work out the presuppositions and implications of our expression.
- There is the *rational* level on which we reflect, marshal the evidence, pass judgment on the truth or falsity, certainty or probability, of a statement.
- There is the *responsible* level on which we are concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide, and carry out our decisions.³⁴

To repeat, the question for Lonergan is how does this play out in the realm of art. How does the human mind deal with the beautiful at each level of conscious operation? It is useful to distinguish these levels of conscious operations. But Lonergan reminds us that the many operations are conjoined in a single compound knowing [and]...are just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit.”³⁴

Art at the Level of Experience (the first level of conscious operation) The first level of human consciousness is the level of sensible experiencing: seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, feeling. Sensible experience is enormously rich: “There is the endless variety of things to be seen, sounds to be heard, odors to be sniffed, tastes to be palated, shapes and textures to be touched.” And all importantly, this is the level at which we experience feelings — “pleasure and pain, desire and fear, joy and sorrow, and in such feelings there seem to reside the mass and momentum of our lives.” Further: “We move about in various manners, assume now this and now that posture and position, and by the fleeting movements of our facial muscles communicate to others the quiet pulse or sudden surge of our feelings.”³⁵ All these sensations, feelings, movements at the first level of consciousness are the raw material of art. Artistic meaning therefore makes its appearance in the manifold sensible data of human consciousness — amid all those sights, sounds, touches, flavors, scents — as ‘significant form’.

What then is significant form at the first level of experience? Lonergan identifies it as ‘purely experiential pattern’. Consciousness is ordinarily undifferentiated, but, says Lonergan, on the sensitive level it is patterned. There is always in our consciousness a pattern, “a selecting, an organizing.”³⁶ Indeed, he maintains, patterning is “essential to consciousness.” Check it out for yourself: “if one hears a tune or a melody, one can repeat it; if one hears a series of street noises, one cannot reproduce them.” Why? The pattern in the tune or melody — something you “can pick out and be conscious of” — is the key insofar as the pattern is “more perceptible” than the noise of the city. Once in the mid-1990s I remember walking along a street in downtown Wuhan, where amid the sounds of a city of 15 million Chinese I heard — to my delight — the familiar voice of Stevie Wonder blaring from a loudspeaker outside a record shop: “I just called to say I love you.” The tune I remember hearing, but I cannot reproduce the ambient street sounds. But, of course, a master like Richard Rodgers can, if he puts his mind to it, come up with a reasonable facsimile of the discordant sounds of a modern city — New York, as in *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*. Besides melody, says Lonergan, verse can make words easy to recall. Thus: *30 days hath September, April, June, and November*. In the 1930s a new shaving cream was widely advertised on the radio with a jingle that remains embedded in my memory: *Barbasol, Barbasol,... No brush, no lather, no rub-in,... Wet*

your razor, then begin. Poetry too has the power to make aphorisms memorable: “Something there is that doesn’t like a wall...” Or: “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing; /Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring.” (Pieria, of course, being the region in ancient Macedonia where the Muses were worshiped and the Muses being the nine goddesses who presided over the liberal arts and sciences and so the source of artistic inspiration.) In much the same way, a patterned decoration can make a glass surface visible: pictures of birds patterned on plate glass windows prevent birds from crashing into public buildings.³⁷ What we have been talking about so far is pure pattern as experiential — concrete pattern as experienced in the concrete flow of consciousness.

First, a closer analysis of artistic pattern. In his analysis of the flow of consciousness in the artistic pattern, Lonergan is careful to exclude alien patterns — what he calls ‘impure patterns’. Excluded are patterns that ‘instrumentalize’ experience: conventional signals that make the senses an “apparatus for receiving and transmitting signals.” Red light, step on the brake; green light, gun it. Traffic lights ensure ready-made behavior in a ready-made world. This sort of pattern, as is evident, does not arise spontaneously out of the subject; rather, you are free to instrumentalize your sensory power in a mechanical process.³⁸

Excluded also as extraneous and so impure are otherwise legitimate scientific intellectual patterns that explain and define sensible experience. Thus, you can put your senses at the service of scientific intelligence: you can clarify conceptually, by genera and a series of differences. A scientist, for instance, sees what you and I may miss --- a botanist looking at an orchid or an entomologist looking at a fruit fly. Their capacities for observation have been developed in a specialized way that enables them to make their senses instruments of scientific inquiry. A scientist will understand the reality of the flower and the bug in a scientific way and express it in scientific language. All quite legitimate, but such knowledge is not Lonergan’s concern here and so he excludes it from the realm of art.³⁹

Excluded next are *a priori* theories of experience that reshape the pattern and subordinate it to some cognitional view drawn from physics, physiology, or psychology. You can reshape your sensitive experience by ‘the dictates’ of a psychological or epistemological theory and thereby introduce ‘a philosophic motif’ that devalues the spontaneous patterns of your experience.⁴⁰ Lonergan is thinking of a Hume who held that impressions are objective, but that the pattern of impressions is subjective — as a mere mental construct. Hume introduced a philosophic motif and thereby devalued the pattern. But for one who holds that truth arrives with judgment on the third level of conscious operation, then “the difference between subjectivity and objectivity does not arise on the level of experience.”⁴¹ Lonergan also excludes agitprop — political ideology propagated through literature, drama, art, or music in a focused effort to sell communism or fascism or, for that matter, capitalism. Lonergan concedes that out of art there “may arise a lesson, but into them a lesson may not be intruded in the manner of didacticism, moralism, or social realism.”⁴²

Excluded finally are patterns determined by selfish motives. Lonergan thus excludes “putting one’s sensitive living at the disposal of a utilitarian motive” — where one is always asking “what I can get out of it.”⁴³

Lonergan’s conclusion? Put briefly, it runs:

There are many ways, then, in which one's sensitive living may be instrumentalized. And when one speaks of a pure pattern of experience one intends to exclude that instrumentalization."⁴⁴

Lonergan by intent ushers all such alien, impure, utilitarian patterns off stage and leaves the purely experiential pattern center stage front. Lonergan bids us be aware that "to be conscious of something" means that there is in our consciousness "a patterning in what is perceived and a pattern of feelings that flow out of the perceiving and are connected with it."⁴⁵ Exclude what is alien, says Lonergan, and your experiencing "will find its full complement of feeling." Exclude alien patterns and purely experiential pattern finds release. Free from all that might cramp, experience is "allowed its full complement of feelings."⁴⁶ The focus on the purity of existential pattern thus "aims at not impoverishment, but enrichment." In excluding impure patterns, Lonergan spotlights something of extraordinary importance — "the experiencing subject with his capacity for wonder, for awe and fascination, with his openness to adventure, daring, greatness, goodness, majesty."⁴⁷

And so give sensible experience room to fall into its own spontaneous patterns and Lonergan is confident it will take "its own line of expression, development, organization, and fulfillment." Such experience has its own rhythm — like breathing in and breathing out. It builds up tensions to be resolved and is rich with variations that multiply and grow — "like the build-up of a symphony,"⁴⁸ And yet it will remain interconnected in an organic unity that eventually manifests itself.⁴⁹ What is outstandingly momentous about elemental meaning? It is the specific concrete element that opens up the new horizon—the fuller, profounder reality. And what is the consequential element in such meaning? Something that is "other, different, novel, strange, new, remote, intimate."⁵⁰ Words which remind one perhaps of Gerard Manley Hopkins's fascination with what is 'original, spare, strange' Hopkins coined the word 'inscape' — a term which English professor Glenn Hughes argues persuasively is what Lonergan means by 'elemental meaning'. Hughes writes:

By *inscape*, Hopkins refers to a thing's uniquely individual form, the singular self-expressiveness that a thing is As the prefix *in-* suggests, it is a penetrating and organizing apprehension, a "scaping," of the essential and unique form of a thing, or person, or scene — the felt design of its absolutely individual "self" or "selving" within creation.⁵¹

And according to Robert Bernard Martin, Hopkins' biographer, inscape is the "meaning [of the thing, person, scene], the inner coherence of the individual." Such a meaning one perceives, he insists, "only through close examination or empathy, but it is not dependent upon being recognized; rather, it is inherent in everything in the world, even when we fail to notice it."⁵²

Hopkins was convinced therefore that "the created world in all its particularity was the gift or expression of God through his Word, the Logos who is Christ; and that all of nature is therefore, as it were, 'Christed'; that all patterns of beauty in nature are ontologically self-expressions of Christ; and that the principal duties of persons is to

praise and serve God through proper use of creation.”⁵³ In one of his notes on the Spiritual Exercises Hopkins spelled out his thought:

God utterance of himself *in* himself is God the Word, *outside* himself is this world. The world then is word, expression, news of God. Therefore its end, its purpose, its purport, its meaning, is God and its life or working to name and praise him.⁵⁴

For Hopkins, according to Glenn Hughes, one finds elemental meaning in “all things counter, original, spare, strange.” Hopkins points to “skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow” and “rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim” and directs attention to:

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how)
With swift, slów, sweet, sóur, adázzle, díml...”

And his emphatic conclusion?

He fathers-forth whose beauty is pást change:
Práise him.⁵⁵

In the aesthetic pattern of experience, as already noted, the subject’s world is changed from the quotidian to the world of beauty and art. Lonergan invites his readers to reflect on the aesthetic rush of a visit to an art museum, a symphony, a ballet, a play where we find ourselves transported —

- from the space in which we move to the space off within the picture,
- from the time of sleeping and waking, working and resting, to the time of the music,
- from the pressures and determinisms of home and office, of economics and politics to the powers depicted in the dance,
- from conversational and media use of language to the vocal tools that focus, mould, grow with consciousness.⁵⁶

The world of perceived beauty, you discover to your surprise, is truer and more real than the world of the humdrum. And indeed not only your world, but you yourself are transformed. Thus transformed, you are liberated from being a replaceable part (adjusted to a ready-made world and integrated within it) and become yourself, says Lonergan, “emergent, ecstatic, originating freedom.”⁵⁷

It is indeed possible to write of elemental meaning of the transformed subject in his transformed world in conceptual terms, as we are doing here. You can describe, explain, interpret it. But no description, explanation, interpretation can reproduce elemental meaning. Just as you can, says Lonergan, devise thermodynamic equations to guide your control of heat, but the equations cannot make you feel warm or cool. In brief, it takes an artist to communicate elemental meaning and this he does not by description or explanation, but by creating a work of art. Only the work of art itself —

poem, stature, symphony, painting --- can express and so communicate elemental meaning.⁵⁸

We have been following Lonergan as he analyzes the “concrete pattern of internal relations” in an aesthetic experience or in a work of art. And so, the purely experiential pattern of meaning at the first level yields what Lonergan terms ‘elemental meaning’.⁵⁹ What then is elemental meaning? It is a mode of experience, but, as Lonergan insists, attend to it and recognize that it is ‘merely experience’. Lying, as it does, within the cognitional order, it is conscious, indeed an awareness, already intentional, but not yet reaching its fullest stage of intending. That comes with later levels of operations. It is known only by the human subject and unknown to others, (and so has to be expressed for it to be communicated); indeed it is not fully known at first by the conscious subject herself. Elemental meaning is still a bud, waiting its development. It is complex, many-sided, but still “only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified.” The subject is aware of it, but has not yet got hold of it. One must “behold, inspect, dissect, enjoy, repeat it; and to do that, he has to objectify, unfold, make explicit, unveil, reveal.”⁶⁰ That is the work of insight, artistic insight, artistic understanding at the second level of operation. The conclusion is obvious: just taking a look at the world out there does not give you understanding of the world out there either in creative thinking or in creative art ; something more (insight and understanding) is required. As Hugo Meynell puts it: “Immediate experience merely gives us *clues* to the real world., which itself can be known only through the medium of judgment based on understanding.”⁶¹

It bears repeating at this point that one should not too closely identify elemental meaning with the first level of experience. Understanding art is similar to understanding a smile. What a smile means is in the concrete smile and one apprehends it in its concreteness, understanding and judging it simultaneously with experiencing it. As Glenn Hughes puts it: “When a friend smiles and I ‘receive’ it, I don’t have to conceptualize anything to ‘grasp’ the meaning. (It’s ‘symbolic.’) That is, the meaning is ‘in’ the concrete smile, and I apprehend it in its concreteness. I understand and know what a smile means (and as I get older I can recognize a bitter smile, a tired smile, an ironic smile, a false smile, a warm smile, a lascivious smile.) The levels of understanding and judgment are all operative at once, but are functioning “compactly’ when I grasp the meaning of a smile as, and in, ‘elemental meaning’.”⁶²

Art at the Level of Understanding and Formulation (the second level of conscious operation) At the second level of consciousness, there are sense data and insight — insight into something embedded in the sensible flow of consciousness. In Lonergan’s analysis:

In insight you add intelligibility to the sensible data. Sensible data or imagined data are potentially intelligible. At the moment of insight, you have actual intelligibility [something actually understood], you click.⁶²

A moment’s reflection reveals that there is an identity between intelligibility in act (elemental meaning) and intelligence in act (insight).⁶³ By the act of insight you pluck the fish from the stream of sensible data; by the act of artistic insight, you pluck beauty from the stream. Indeed at the moment of artistic insight, you actually grasp and understand

elemental meaning, significant form, artistic pattern, and symmetry. This is not to suggest that the intelligible in act is 'out there'. The concern here is with an encounter of subject with object. So elemental meaning is not one with either the object (intelligible in act) or with the subject (intelligence in act), but with both at once, in the encounter. The to-be-understood and its being-understood yield meaning, in the encounter. As Lonergan says, one cannot 'know' the meaning of a smile nor the meaning of a work of art, if one only experiences smile, painting, or words of a poem. "One has to understand and know as well; so understanding and judgment must be involved, also, in the meaningful apprehension of elemental meaning."⁶⁴

As we explored the various realms of meaning, we have come to understand how the word 'understand' itself takes on various meanings. In the realm of common sense, what is understood by means of practical insight is the solution to a problem of how to make something (the invention of tools and their use) or how to get people to cooperate with one another (in government, business, or any collaborative effort.) In the realm of theory, what is understood by means of theoretical insight is the solution to the question what is this; in chemistry, for instance, elements in the periodic table. In the realm of art, what is understood by artistic insight is elemental meaning, purely experiential pattern, significant form, or beauty in the concrete.

Consider with Lonergan the full sequence from potential to actual in the area of coming to understand. Elemental meaning (the beautiful) may be present to animal consciousness, but is not properly an intelligible even in potency. But elemental meaning as present to a subject that is intelligent as well as sensitive (a human being) may fairly be described as intelligible in potency (able to be grasped and understood, but not yet grasped or understood). Case in point: mere reverie.

Elemental meaning is actually intelligible when Hopkins, for instance, alert to beauty in the stream of his sensible consciousness wonders, inquires, looks for the beautiful, and grasps, say, the beauty of 'trout that swim.' The imagined object is no longer merely 'given'; it is there as a something-to-be-understood — an elemental meaning (significant form) to be grasped. For elemental meaning (purely experiential pattern) as present to intelligent consciousness as something-understood constitutes elemental meaning as intelligible beauty in act. Here inquiry and wonder give place to actual understanding of the elemental meaning that constitutes this beautiful person, place, or thing. Hopkins reaches insight, grasps the beautiful, plucks the stippled trout from the stream,⁶⁴ and finds words to replicate the beauty he glimpsed: *rose moles all in stipple upon trout that swim.*

Elemental meaning begins in consciousness as mere experience, embedded but as yet unexpressed. True, it is intentional but has not yet "reached its full stage of intending." It is therefore not yet "fully known" to the one who experiences it. Within the data of one's consciousness at the first level "the pattern of his experience in its complexity, its many-sidedness, is only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified." At this moment, the artist is "aware of it, but has not yet got hold of it." The artist's task at the second level of artistic operation is to "behold, inspect, enjoy, repeat it; and to do that he has to objectify, unfold, make explicit, unveil, reveal."⁶⁵ One first gets "a grasp of the commanding form" through insight, but the artistic insight must then "be expanded, worked out, developed" in a work of art. And so there follows a creative process of 'adjusting, correcting, completing the initial insight'⁶⁶ until the work

of art is complete. Art is thus not a simple record of experience, but involves a grasp of “what is or seems significant, of moment, concern, import.” The artistic insight, Lonergan avers, grasps what is “truer than experience, leaner, more effective, more to the point” than quotidian experience.

A closer look now at the realm of writing. Economics, Carlyle famously pronounced, is the dismal science. Indeed, Lonergan adds, all scientific writing is dismal inasmuch as scientific terms express meaning, but fail to ‘resonate’ in human consciousness. Poetry and fiction, by contrast, use words that mean but also resound with feeling. Lonergan explains: “They have a retinue of associations, and the associations may be visual, vocal, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, affective or evocative of attitude, tendencies, and evaluations.” Our entire lifetime — through childhood and the whole process of our education — is devoted to “the very genesis, structure and molding of our consciousness” in such a way that enables us to respond to the resonances that words can create. To be specific, the words of poets and fiction writers “introduce us to the world of human potentiality.” They convey “the many dimensions of experience as experienced by the subject’ and “exhibit the concrete manner in which men apprehend their history, their destiny, and the meaning of their lives.”⁶⁷ The lyric poem, as Lonergan reminds us, evolved from the chorus in Greek drama and is “the expression of the subject” who responds to nature, the human condition, and the divine. The scope of drama is far wider, being “the expression of destiny in the group, in group action, or in the action of different groups.”⁶⁸

To understand more fully the process we have been considering, Lonergan advises us to get reports from the field, — from the artists themselves rather than from an analyst or theoretician like himself.⁶⁹ Artists are the best witnesses in testifying to how significant form is grasped — often mysteriously — by the conscious subject at the first level of consciousness and how the subject begins to express it at the second level. Their testimony clarifies the transition between the two levels. They put concretely what Lonergan asserts abstractly. One striking phenomena they report is that significant form arrives as a gift, — as, in Sven Birkerts’ words, “an unpremeditated spark from outside the circle of volition,”⁷⁰ and not as something simply willed. Birkerts lines up his witnesses.

First, listen to the Irish poet Seamus Heaney on Robert Frost:

Frost put it this way: “a poem begins as of lump in the throat, a homesickness, a lovesickness. It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.” As far as I am I concerned, technique is more vitally connected with that first activity where of the “lump in the throat” finds “the thought” then with “the thought” finding “the words.” The first epiphany involves the divining, vatic, oracular function [the level of experiencing]; the second, the making, crafting function [the level of formulation which we consider next].⁷¹

Then, Plato — among the first to write of poetry as inspiration, as an alteration of consciousness:

The poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he is not in this state, he is powerless and unable to utter his oracles.⁷²

Third, Russian poet Joseph Brodsky on the phenomenon of inspiration:

...there is a certain domineering note, or tune, that is going through one's mind. It's a very strange thing. I say tune; I can just as well say noise. In either case, what ever it is, it's not just exactly a tune, a musical hum. For this hum has a certain psychological overlay. It's an extremely grey area...It's a certain frequency, so to speak, in which you operate and which, at times, you change.⁷³

And then there is great 20th century Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva who notes what goes on in her consciousness:

I obey something which sounds constantly within me but not uniformly, sometimes indicating, sometimes commanding. When it indicates, I argue; when it commands, I obey.

The thing that commands is a primal, invariable, unfailing and irreplaceable line, *essence appearing as a line of verse* The thing that indicates is an oral path to the poem: I hear a melody, but not words. The words I have to find.

More to the left — more to the right, higher — lower, faster — slower, extend — break off: these are the exact indications of my ear, or of something *to* my ear. All my writing is listening.⁷⁴

Finally, another 20th century giant, the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam:

The poem is alive through an inner image, that resounding mold of form, which anticipates the written poem. Not a single word has appeared, but the poem already resounds. What resounds is the inner image, what touches it is the poet's aural sense.⁷⁵

Anyone can versify. The more talented versifiers among us write for Hallmark. But great poetry is rare: it arrives like a bolt of lightning. Randall Jarrell put it this way: "A good poet is someone who manages, in a lifetime of standing out in thunderstorms, to be struck by lightning five or six times."⁷⁶

To repeat. The purely experiential pattern of meaning at the first level yields what Lonergan terms 'elemental meaning'.⁷⁷ What is elemental meaning? It is a mode of experience, but, as Lonergan insists, attend to it and recognize that it is 'merely experience'. Lying, as it does, within the cognitional order, elemental meaning is conscious, indeed an awareness, already intentional, but not yet reaching its fullest stage of intending. That comes with later levels of operations. It is known only by the human subject and is unknown to others, (and so has to be expressed for it to be communicated);



**Figure 2 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
Mme Rivière**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

indeed it is not fully known at first by the conscious subject herself. Elemental meaning is still a bud, waiting its development. As the artists quoted testify, it is complex, many-sided, but still “only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified.” The subject is aware of it, but has not yet got hold of it. One must “behold, inspect, dissect, enjoy, repeat it; and to do that, he has to objectify, unfold, make explicit, unveil, reveal.”⁷⁸ That is the work of insight, artistic insight, artistic understanding and formulation at the second level of operation.

At the second level, the painter uses not words but colors in an attempt to create a virtual space. A painting presents only what is there to be seen. You cannot hear any sounds. You cannot touch or smell. You can only see. And so it is a place you cannot enter, move around in or

‘bump into things’ as you can in actual space. The picture frame sets the painting apart from the actual world. Indeed it pulls you out of the actual world (where you live, move, and have your being at this particular hour on this calendar day and year) and presents you with a space that is available only to your sense of sight. And incidentally, because the other senses cannot function in this space as in actual space, it is irrelevant for all practical or theoretical instrumentalizations of experience.⁷⁹

The artist, of course, expresses his insight in symbols. Lonergan defines symbol as “an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.”⁸⁰ Indeed elemental meaning is embedded in feeling-laden images and so becomes incarnate in the symbol. At the second level, therefore, the task of the artist is to take the artistic insight — the spacial image and “sharpen it, bring it to the point, unfold it, develop it, present it, express it effectively.”⁸¹

English painter Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942) asked how Ingres’ Portrait of Mme Rivière (Figure 2) differs from a color photograph and answers: “First in this, that all dross, external to what has interested the painter, has been fired out.” Next it differs in

“that each line and each volume has been subtly and unconsciously extended here and contracted there, as the narrator is swayed by his passion, his rhetoric.” The result? “The drawing has become a living thing with a life, with a debit and credit of its own. What it has borrowed here, it may, or may not, as it pleases, pay back there.” And there is, he said, a final difference: a compromise “has, from the necessity of the case, to be set up, and it, the very compromise itself, is the creation of the beauty of color in a picture.”

Sickert explained:

Nature having the range of all colors, plus the range from light to shade, can set this double range against the painter’s single range of color, in a uniform light. So the great painters of the world have in their traditional cunning hit upon the plan of attenuating, as they cannot but do, the light and shade of their pictures, and paying us back by drenching each tone with as much of the wine of color as it will hold, without contradicting the light and shade.⁸²



**Figure 3 Pablo Picasso
Pedro Manach**

Source: Wikipedia

The artistic pattern of which Lonergan writes, moreover, is concrete, not abstract. Abstract pattern would be the pattern “in a musical score or in the indentation in the grooves of a gramophone record.”⁸³ All the notes, to be sure, are printed on the page, but the musical score is not the music. The pattern in the score is one thing; the pattern in the music as played is another. Music becomes concrete only when played. Lonergan’s interest lies in the concrete pattern. There is always some concrete empirical element in the data of consciousness⁸⁴ on which art is based. So you will find the concrete pattern in this music, in this painting, in these statues or buildings, in this dance. Attend then, says Lonergan, to the empirical element --- the concrete pattern; in painting attend to “these colors,” in music to “these tones,” in sculpture to “these volumes,” and in ballet to “these movements.”⁸⁵ Put briefly, the pure pattern is experiential, it occurs and is perceived in the sensible data of consciousness. Thus George Bellows directs attention to “a point of departure, a kernel, a unit established, around which the creative imagination builds or weaves itself.”⁸⁶

What then constitutes the concrete pattern in art? Internal relations, says Lonergan. He spots the pattern in “the internal relations of colors, tones, volumes, movements.” In painting, for instance, the pattern lies, not in the colors “as unrelated” nor in the colors “as representative of something else.” Langer makes the same point when she states that colors “are warm or cold, they advance or recede, enhance or soften,



Figure 5 Picasso Friendship

Source: WP Clipart



**Figure 4 Pablo Picasso
The Lovers**

Source: WP Clipart

or dominate other colors; they create tensions and distribute weight in a picture.” She stresses the obvious with wry humor:

Colors in a paintbox don’t do such things. They are materials, and lie side by side in their actual, undialectical materialism.⁸⁷

As Picasso put it: “In reality one works with few colors. What gives the illusion of many is that they have been put in the right place (Figure 3).”⁸⁸ Attend then, Lonergan urges, to the internal relations. A painting may be related to something, may indeed be representative — Rembrandt’s *Prodigal Son* (the father and the son are recognizable) or Cézanne’s *Mont Sainte Victoire* (the mountain in France is identifiable). Or the painting may be non-representative, like Pollock’s *Full Fathom Five* (See Figure 1, p. 2) (with just a hint of a human figure) in its ambitious attempt to express the unconscious or, as he himself says, “an inner world — in other words — expressing the energy, the motion, and other inner forces”⁸⁹ or what art critic Jeremy Lewison specifies as a dark world of “anxiety, helplessness and disillusionment.”⁹⁰ But, says Lonergan, don’t attend just to the father and son in the Rembrandt portrait or to the terrain in the Cézanne or the trace of a figure in the Pollock abstraction. No, attend to the pattern in the paintings — the relationship of the colors and their shapes to one another. Attend to the internal relations of the pattern, because the relations are there whether or not the art is representational; because, Lonergan asserts, in “the set of internal relations between these tones, or between these colors, or between these volumes, or between these movements” lies the significant form in the realm of beauty.⁹¹

Picasso is illuminating on this point and confirms, I think, Lonergan’s analysis:



Figure 6 Matisse Interior at Nice

Henri Matisse, French, 1869-1954, *Interior at Nice*, 1919 or 1920, Oil on canvas, 52 x 35 in. (132.1 x 88.9 cm), Gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman, 1956.339, The Art Institute of Chicago. Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago. <http://www.artic.edu/aic>

There is not...a figurative (Figure 4) and a nonfigurative art (Figure 5) A person, an object, a circle, are figures; they act upon us more or less intensely. Some are nearer to our sensations, produce emotions which concern our affective faculties; others appeal more especially to the intellect. They must all be accepted, for my spirit has as much need of emotion as my senses. Do you think it interests me that this picture (Figure 5) represents two people? These two people once existed, but they exist no longer. The vision of them gave me an initial emotion, little by little their real presence became obscured, they became for me a fiction, then they disappeared, or rather were transformed into problems of all sorts. For me they aren't two people any more, but forms and colors, understand, forms and colors which sum up, however, the idea of the two people and conserve the vibration of their life.⁹²

Matisse explains, I think, how his own paintings (for example, Figure 6) express the pattern which Lonergan will call elemental meaning:

Expression, to my way of thinking, does not consist of the passion mirrored upon a human face or betrayed by a violent gesture. The whole arrangement of my picture is expressive. The place occupied by the figures or objects, the empty spaces around them, the proportions — everything plays a part....⁹³

Nature, for Matisse, is always the source of his art:

Nature reveals herself to me in very complex forms One must see one's model correctly and experience it in the right way To achieve progress nature alone counts, and the eye is trained through contact with her. It becomes concentric by looking and working. I mean to say that in an orange, an apple, a bowl, a head, there is a culminating point; and this point is always — in spite of the tremendous effect of light and shade and colorful sensations — the closest to our eye; the edges of the object recede to a center on our horizon.⁹⁴

Matisse spent his career playing creatively with the colors and shapes suggested by the human body (See Figures 7-9).



Figure 7 Henri Matisse Blue Nude 1907

Source: Wikipedia

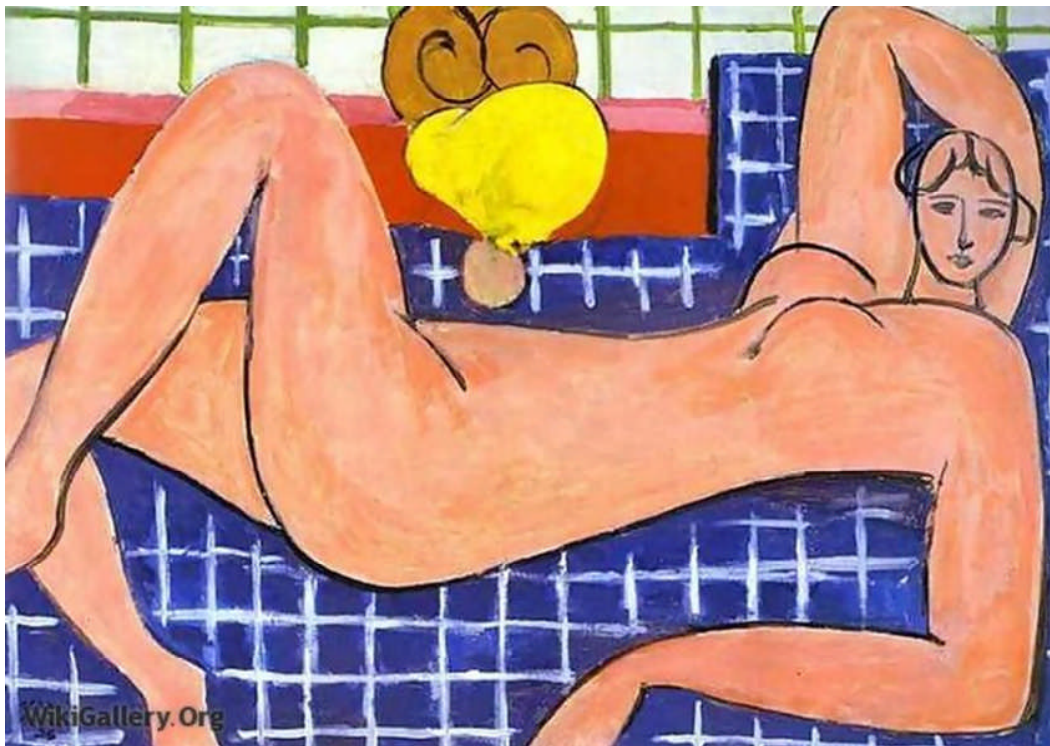


Figure 8 Henri Matisse Pink Nude 1935

Source: WikiGallery

In *Easter and the Totem* (Figure 10), according to Jeremy Lewison, Jackson Pollock “plunders Matisse and allies him with Picasso” in a painting created shortly before his death in which “the sensuousness of earlier dripped, all-over surfaces is translated into delicate brushwork within a clearly structured, hierarchical composition.”⁹⁵

The artist’s reliance on nature is well illustrated, I think, by what Vincent van Gogh wrote about his own creative process:

I seldom work from memory....When I have a model who is quiet and steady and with whom I am acquainted, then I draw repeatedly till there is one drawing that is different from the rest, which does not look like an ordinary study, but more typical and with more feeling....HOW [DOES IT HAPPEN] THAT I CAN EXPRESS SOMETHING OF THAT KIND? Because the thing has already taken form in my mind before I start on it.⁹⁶ The first attempts are absolutely unbearable. I say this because I want you to know that if you see something worth while in what I am doing, it not by accident but because of real intention and purpose....

Van Gogh then writes of his landscape paintings (Figure 11):

When I once get *the feeling of my subject*, and get to know it, I usually draw three or more variations...only I always refer to Nature for every one of them and then do my best not to put in *any detail*, as the dream quality would then be lost. When Tersteeg or my brother then says to me: "What is that, grass or coal?" I answer: "Glad to hear that you cannot see what it is." Still it is enough like Nature for the simple peasants of this part of the country. They say: "Yes, that's the hedge of Juffrouw Renese," and "There are the beanpoles of van der Louw."⁹⁷



**Figure 9 Henri Matisse
Blue Nude 1954**

Source: Wikipedia



**Figure 10 Jackson Pollock
Easter and the Totem**

Source: ibiblio

Listen to Picasso:

There is no abstract art. One always has to begin with something. One can then remove all appearance of reality; one runs no risk, for the idea of the object has left an ineffaceable imprint.⁹⁸ It is the thing that aroused the artist, stimulated his ideas, stirred his emotions. Ideas and emotions will ultimately be prisoners of his work; whatever they do, they can't escape from the picture; they form an integral part of it, even when their presence is no longer discernible. Whether he likes it or not, man is the instrument of nature; it imposes its character, its appearance, upon him. In my Dinarde pictures, as in those of Pourville, I expressed almost the same vision. But you have seen yourself how different is the atmosphere of the pictures made in Brittany and in Normandy, since you have recognized the light of the cliffs of Dieppe. I did not copy this

light, I didn't pay particular attention to it. I was simply bathed by it; my eyes saw and my subconscious registered their vision; my hand recorded my sensations. One cannot oppose nature. It is stronger than the strongest of men! We have all an interest in being on good terms with her. We can permit ourselves some liberties, but only in detail.⁹⁹

And what of music? What is music's elemental meaning? Its significant form? Its purely experiential pattern? Music, says Lonergan, is "the image of experienced time."¹⁰⁰ According to Susanne Langer who Lonergan follows in his analysis, "music spreads time out for our direct and complete apprehension." Music, she says, lets hearing — and hearing alone — "monopolize time: organize, fill, shape it..." Music seems to give time 'substance', but the substance is made up entirely of sound; hence it is transitory. "*Music makes time audible,*" she adds, "*and its form and continuity sensible.*"¹⁰¹ For Lonergan, music expresses the 'now' of the human subject. "The time that is the 'now' of the subject," he notes, "is a time in which many things are going forward at once."¹⁰² Subjective time, Langer reminds us, is filled with states of mind, with tensions that are "physical, emotional, and intellectual." We speak of a good time, an exciting time, a boring time, and times that try men's souls.¹⁰³ Music expresses the subjective 'now', says Lonergan, "by taking one theme, and then another, and blending

them.” In the blending, weaving, plaiting, there are “oppositions, tensions, resolutions.” And so, Lonergan notes, “the life of feeling that is in the ‘now’, in its rhythms and turmoil and peace, is expressed in the music.”¹⁰⁴ And the shape of the music corresponds to the way in which feelings multiply and change. A pattern of perceiving in the perceiver, he goes on to assert, is the pattern of the perceived. There is an exact correspondence between the two; for instance, the pattern in the music and the pattern as perceived in the consciousness of the one listening to the music. Lonergan concludes that “the time of the music [the sound of the music over time] is isomorphic with the life of feeling of the subject.”¹⁰⁵ What then is the elemental form, the significant form of music? It is the image of experienced time. Music is not a single note all by itself, he observes; one note is related to others and together they unite in a work of art. Gabriel Marcel expresses the same idea:

When we speak of the beauty of a melodic line, this aesthetic qualification does not refer to an inward progress, but to a certain object....Gradually, as I pass from tone to tone, a certain *ensemble* emerges, a form is built up It is the very essence of the form to reveal itself as duration, and yet to transcend, in its own way, the purely temporal order in which it is manifested.¹⁰⁶

Form inevitably makes its appearance. Lonergan reminds us that “if you sing a single note, the inevitability of form is taking over; there is only a limited number of notes you can go on to. The surprise that the master musician or composer causes is to go on always to further notes that would not occur to you, and yet retain the inevitability of form.”¹⁰⁷ And so Langer notes that “musical time has form and organization, volume and distinguishable parts.”¹⁰⁸ What music produces, she concludes, is an illusion of time passing, “abstracted from actuality to become free and plastic and entirely perceptible (to the ear).” It is important to understand the risks of careless listening to music. Music requires full attention and, as Langer emphasizes, “musical hearing is itself a talent, a special intelligence of the ear, and like all talents it develops through exercise.” What then, she asks, is one to listen for? “The principle in musical hearing is . . . to experience the primary illusion, to feel the consistent movement and recognize at once the commanding form which makes this piece an inviolable whole.”¹⁰⁹ The inattentive listener, the purely passive listener misses “the logical connectedness of the tonal sequence.” The result? “...we can be startled by a sudden *sforzando* [a note played with sudden, strong emphasis], without being puzzled at its unexpected incursion. We hear



**Figure 11 Vincent van Gogh
The Cypress Trees**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

succession rather than progression.”¹¹⁰

What Lonergan teaches about elemental meaning holds true, not only in literature, painting, and music, but also for the solid volumes of a sculpture or the movements of dance.¹¹¹

The process of objectification of the purely experiential pattern in all works of art is much like the process in the realm of theory we have already explored when one moves from the act of understanding to the formulation of the definition, where “the definition is the inner word, an expression, an unfolding of what one has got hold of in the insight.” The creation of the work of art is thus the objectification of the elemental meaning one has got hold of in the feeling-laden image.¹¹²

Insight into elemental meaning is not conceptual, indeed it is incapable of conceptual formulation. It can only be expressed in a work of art.¹¹³ But the creation of a work of art, Lonergan insists, is not simply a “spontaneous manifestation of feeling.” A certain “psychic distance between the subject and his experience” must take place — to make room for what Wordsworth termed “recollection in tranquility”. Mozart, Lonergan reminds us, protested that he could not compose when assailed by life’s trials and troubles. Indeed, Swinburne expressed the same idea, but put it more cryptically: “Distance is the soul of beauty.”¹¹⁴

Elemental meaning — purely experiential pattern — is thus constitutive of the work of art. Indeed, elemental meaning is “constitutive of the symbols that express our affectivity and aggressivity, that expresses our existential psyche, our deep desire for transformation and integration.”¹¹⁵ It is constitutive of “our imagination bodying the forth longing and dread, hope and fear, love and hate, joy and sorrow, delight and pain.”¹¹⁶ Symbols, as Lonergan affirms, have their own meaning. If you wish to explain artistic meaning and attempt to express the meaning of a symbol in words, you go beyond the symbol. You move away “from the elemental meaning in an image or symbol to a linguistic meaning.” For elemental meaning can only be expressed in a work of art; or, as Osip Mandelstam put it with dry wit, if a poem is indeed amenable to paraphrase, “there the bed sheets have never been rumped, there poetry, so to speak, has never spent the night.”¹¹⁷

A poem is always a gift and, as Birkerts reminds us, “cannot be thought or willed onto the page.”¹¹⁸ We’ll end this section on the expression and formulation of an artistic insight by citing Theodore Roethke vivid description of the process by which he succeeded in creating his poem, “The Dance”:

It was 1952. I was 44, and I thought I was done. I was living alone in a biggish house in Edmonds, Washington. I have been reading — and re-reading — not Yeats, but Raleigh and Sir John Davies. I had been teaching the five-beat line for weeks — I knew of quite a bit about it, but write myself? — no: so I felt myself a fraud.

Suddenly, in the early evening, the poem “The Dance” started, and finished itself in a very short time — say thirty minutes, maybe in the greater part of an hour, it was all done. I felt, I knew, I had hit it. I walked around, and I wept; and I knelt down — I always do after I’ve written what I know it is a good piece. But at the same time I had, as God is my witness, the actual sense of a Presence — as if Yeats himself were in

that room. The experience was in a way terrifying, for it lasted at least half an hour. That house, I repeat, was charged with a psychic presence: the very walls seem to shimmer. I wept for joy.¹¹⁹

Art at the Level of Judgment (the third level of conscious operation) At the third level of consciousness, one asks of the hypothesis, the formulation expressed at the second level, Is it true? One assembles evidence, weighs it, assesses the connection between the evidence and the conclusion, and takes a stand as a rational person and takes responsibility for one's judgment.¹²⁰ The work of art is the equivalent of judgment in the realm of common sense, theory, and transcendence.¹²¹ One asks of the artist's creation, Is it beautiful? The work of art must express the beautiful; it is the distinct carrier or embodiment of artistic meaning. Indeed, the work of art is the proper expression of elemental meaning. The artist objectifies elemental meaning: he unfolds, makes explicit, unveils, reveals the elemental meaning he grasps within a data of his consciousness.¹²²

For an artist's creation to be successful, for it to be judged a work of art, for it to be beautiful, it has to be alive. Recall the words with which we began this chapter: liberation, thrust, inventiveness, exuberance, joy and playfulness and freedom. Significant form is a living form. As Langer says, "it *expresses* life --- feeling, growth, movement, emotion, and everything that characterizes vital existence." Harvard professor Elaine Scarry joins the chorus at this point:

Beauty quickens. It adrenalizes. It make the heart beat faster. It makes life more vivid, animated, living, worth living.¹²³

Significant form is "a highly articulated form where in the beholder of recognizes, without conscious comparison and judgment but rather by direct recognition, the forms of human feeling emotions, moods, even sensations in their characteristic passage." Langer credits artists like Delacroix, Matisse, and Cezanne with a clear understanding of how 'living' form communicates 'vital reality': "the emotive import belongs to the form itself, not to anything it represents or suggests."¹²⁴ Thus Matisse: "A work of art must carry in itself its complete significance and impose it upon the beholder even before he can identify the subject matter." He gives an instance: "When I see the Giotto frescoes at Padua I do not trouble to recognize which scene of the life of Christ I have before me (Figure 12), but I perceive instantly the sentiment which radiates from it and which is *instinct in the composition in every line and color* (emphasis added)." The scene's title, he adds, "will only serve to confirm my impression." Or as Langer puts it: "'Dead spots' are simply inexpressive parts. From beginning to end, every stroke is composition; where that is attained, there is truly "significant form".¹²⁵ The work is alive.

Elaine Scarry has an intriguing way of making the same point when she writes:

The almost-aliveness of the beautiful object makes its abrasive handling seem unthinkable. The mind recoils—as from a wound cut into living flesh—from the possibility that the surface of Jan Brueghel the Elder's painting *Flower Stems in a Clay Vase* should be cut, torn, or roughly touched. Its surface has been accorded the gift of life . . .¹²⁶

At the third level of conscious operation, then, “the validation of the artistic idea is the artistic deed” — the work of art itself.¹²⁷ In distinction to a man of common sense or of the theoretician, says Lonergan, “the artist establishes his insights, not by proof or verification, but by skillfully embodying them in colors and shapes, and sounds and movements, in the unfolding situations and actions of fiction.”¹²⁸

At the third level of conscious operation definitions are affirmed. Hence Lonergan defines art as follows: “art is the objectification of a purely experiential pattern.”¹²⁹ In art, elemental meaning finds its full expression in the symbolic meaning. The symbolic is a unique kind of “objectifying, revealing, communicating consciousness.”¹³⁰ First, symbolic consciousness is different from reflective critical consciousness. Critical consciousness concerns itself with classes, univocal terms, proofs; it follows the “principles of excluded middle and of noncontradiction [If A, then B; but A, therefore B].” Lonergan scholar Glenn Hughes puts it this way: “An artwork, thus, is not an *explanation* of anything, but an *exploration* of a way of seeing, or of hearing, or of shaping one’s living” and the exploration is “expressed in the pre-reflective, concrete language of symbols.”¹³¹

Lonergan himself puts it this way: “the expression of artistic meaning... is on a more concrete level than the concept.” Art doesn’t require the kind of reflexivity one needs to produce conceptual meaning. The artist uses the symbol to create a work of art and, says Lonergan, “the symbolic meaning of the work of art is immediate” and doesn’t need concepts to communicate.¹³²

Symbolic consciousness deals “not with class, but with representative figures, not with univocity but with multiple meanings.” Symbolic consciousness does not present proofs the way a lawyer does in a courtroom. In literature, it establishes its point “by repetition, variation, and



Figure 12 Giotto Visitation

Source: Wikimedia Commons

all the arts of rhetoric.” Symbolic consciousness does not concern itself with definitions — with precisely defined meanings (a human being is a rational animal), but with multiple meanings. As a result symbolic meaning employs simile, metaphor, synecdoche (using the part or the individual to express the whole, thus ‘bread’ for food in ‘Give us this day our daily bread’) to express the normal flow of consciousness.¹³³

Art at the Level of Decision (the fourth level of conscious operation) The fourth level of consciousness is the responsible level. At this level, says Lonergan, “we are

concerned with ourselves, our own operations, our goals, and so [we] deliberate about possible courses of action, evaluate them, decide and carry out our decisions.”¹³⁴ At this level of deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, and execution, he says, “one has to decide for oneself what one is to make of one’s self.” This is the level of value, of choice, of existential decision. In questions for reflection at the third level, what is intended is truth and being. What is intended at this level is value. The goal here, says Brian Cronin, is “the actualization of true values.” Indeed, here many questions arise spontaneously. Cronin lists a few:

- should I do this?
- which is the better course of action?
- is this right or wrong?
- how should I behave?¹³⁵

And so we decide, but not just once and for all: for only by repeating a good decision in all subsequent decisions, is one able to become an authentic human being.¹³⁶ This then is the level of commitment.¹³⁷

For a work of art to be art, Lonergan insists, it has to have something more than the meaning conveyed in the other realms of desire — must have some “ulterior significance”.¹³⁸ Indeed art justifies itself by its “ulterior purpose or significance.”¹³⁹ Consider then, What does a work of art attempt to do? For Lonergan it attempts to express something “outside the limits of adequate intellectual formulation or appraisal.” The work of art “seeks to mean, to convey, to impart something that is reached, not through science or philosophy, but through a participation and, in some fashion, a re-enactment of the artist’s inspiration and intention.”¹⁴⁰ A work of art is “pre-scientific and pre-philosophic, it may strain for truth and value without defining them.” It is also “post-biologic” in that “it may reflect the psychological depths yet, by that very fact, it will go beyond them.”¹⁴¹ For the beholder, the work of art is “an invitation to participate” in meaning “on a more concrete level than the conceptual.”¹⁴² Art presents beauty and beauty presents ‘something more’ than description or explanation; it presents “the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the ‘plus’ that is in things and that drops out when you say that the moon is just earth and the clouds are just water.”¹⁴³ As Hopkins says in *God’s Grandeur*, “There lives the deepest freshness deep down things.” And so work of art can bring with it (and bring one to a realization that) “the splendor of the world is a cipher [a secret code], a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is *present*.”¹⁴⁴

At this fourth level, says Lonergan, we are in the realm of artistic intelligence — a “world mediated by meaning and regulated by values.”¹⁴⁵ In other words, it is a realm mediated by artistic meaning — beauty --- and motivated by artistic value — the power of beauty to transform one into a fuller, more authentic human being.¹⁴⁶ It is a level where incarnate artistic meaning exerts its power (whether expressed in music, painting, sculpture, literature or dance) to motivate human action, indeed to transform human beings.¹⁴⁷ Beauty has the power to shock and open the self to new possibilities. Rilke famously registered the imaginative shock of a headless statue from ancient Greece in his *Torso of a Youth from Miletus* which ends with the imperative, “You must change.” Elaine Scarry reminds us that art is capable of causing in us a “radical decentering.” She

reports Iris Murdoch's account of how the shock of sighting a kestrel hovering was enough to make her forget herself, what she call an "un-selfing"; she had been feeling self-centered, she said, "anxious . . . resentful . . . brooding perhaps on some damage done to [her] prestige" and suddenly the sight of the kestrel made it possible for her to transcend herself or, in Scarry's words, "free to be in the service of something else."¹⁴⁸

Arthur Schopenhauer, as was noted in an earlier chapter, was convinced of the power of music to transform human beings. He recounted a story his mother told him as a child of a celebrated cellist who on his way home one night in a drunken stupor wandered into a warehouse compound guarded by bloodhounds:

No sooner had he passed through the gate of the warehouse complex than the pack of dogs rushed towards him. But he pressed himself against the wall and drew his bow across the strings of his instrument. The dogs halted, and as, more boldly, he played his sarabandes, polonaises and minuets, the bloodhounds peacefully crouched around him, listening."¹⁴⁹

In his mature years, Schopenhauer became convinced that music leads to a "better consciousness" where 'the will' for some moments loses its irresistible and malign power. In music, as his biographer Safranski puts it, "the 'thing in itself', the will, is present as pure play, without embodiment." In music, Schopenhauer wrote, "the deepest recesses of our nature find expression;" in music, says Safranski "the 'thing in itself' really starts to sing..."¹⁵⁰

One might add here the question, What do "Rock-a-bye, baby in the treetop" and "Home, home on the range" have in common? They are both lullabies, the one sung by a mother to lull her infant to sleep and the other by a cowpuncher to quiet restive cattle in the night.

At this level, one is concerned with values. Here one responds intentionally to values. As Lonergan points out, "the apprehension of values and disvalues is the task not of understanding but of intentional response."¹⁵¹ Response to value requires a discriminating taste. "Such response is all the fuller, all the more discriminating, the better the man one is, the more refined one's sensibility, the more delicate one's feelings."¹⁵² Again, listen to Columbia Professor Tayler's peptalk to incoming freshmen:

Don't get sucked in by false ideas. You're not here for political reasons. You're here for very selfish reasons. You're here to build a self. You create a self, you don't inherit it. One way you create it is out of the past....There is nothing you'll do in your four years at Columbia that's more important for selfish reasons than reading the books of this course.¹⁵³

Respect for the great tradition in the humanities, however, is not in vogue at the moment. David Denby did an online search of university catalogues in the early nineties and was disappointed to find that "the aesthetic case for literature appears to be in abeyance." Indeed, he wrote, "I couldn't find more than a hint that literature might offer extraordinary degrees of pleasure, that it might offer knowledge of an idiosyncratic, transcendent, and irreplaceable sort." What he did find dismayed him, but to his surprise also reassured him:

Art is the hidden secret of university literature courses, the love that dare not speak its name. If the books were not of superlative value, they wouldn't be read in courses in the first place, but an unacknowledged conspiracy appears to exist not to admit this. Most professors appear too embarrassed or self-conscious to raise the issue of value. According to theory, *value can no longer be proved*, so evaluation is not a question of any particular interest. In other words, the thrill of sublimity, of heart-shopping beauty, of excited access to a spiritually overwhelming realm, has been ruled out of existence in literary study.

Elaine Scarry would seem to agree with Denby's assessment when, speaking of the beautiful things banished from the humanities ("beautiful poems, stories, paintings, sketches, sculpture, film, essays, debates") she writes that "conversation about the beauty of these things has been banished, so that we coinhabit the space of these objects (even putting them inside us, learning them by heart, carrying one wedged at all times between the upper arm and the breast, placing as many as possible into our bookbags) yet speak about their beauty only in whispers."¹⁵⁴ Postmodern contextualism, Denby finds to his dismay, "has a way of flattening everything out..." and relegating the transformative power of literature to "a backwater."¹⁵⁵ Literary critic Sven Birkerts assessment strikes the same note, but is much more optimistic — postmodernism "suddenly seems dated, exuding the 'period' quality of Norman Bel Geddes's Art Deco." The modernism that lent support to the great tradition, he suggests, "glares quietly from the shadows, like the varnished portrait of the family patriarch..."¹⁵⁶ With Denby and Scarry and Birkerts, I am convinced, Lonergan would have concurred.

We are accustomed to "withdraw from more ordinary ways of living" from time to time, Lonergan says, "to devote ourselves to a moral pursuit of goodness, to a philosophic pursuit of truth, to a scientific pursuit of understanding, an artistic pursuit of beauty."¹⁵⁷ And so, in such pursuits the different operations within consciousness are "conjoined in a single compound" intending (knowing and loving) and the operations at the various levels are "just the successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the Eros of the human spirit."¹⁵⁸

Art, as Lonergan repeatedly insists, is an exercise of freedom, an escape from "the confines of serious-minded biological purpose," indeed an escape that brings "a spontaneous, self-justifying joy."¹⁵⁹ The aesthetic pattern of experience in conscious living finds spontaneous expression in joy and wonder and play. "To the spontaneous joy of conscious living," Lonergan notes, "there is added the spontaneous joy of artistic creation."¹⁶⁰ The artistic freedom of which Lonergan writes is twofold: it liberates sense and intelligence. Art first enables sense experience to slip the traces of "biological purposes" and then "liberates intelligence from the wearying constraints of mathematical proofs, scientific verifications, and common-sense factualness."¹⁶¹ Animals, Lonergan notes, are "safely sheathed in biological routines," but it is "man's artistry [that] testifies to his freedom." Man or woman can do and so be whatever they please. And so they may propose to themselves "What am I to be? Why?"¹⁶²

Lonergan alerts us to the intriguing fact that the current of our consciousness, as it flows, already has a direction. And "conspicuous in this direction," he notes, "is a

concern to get things done” — not merely to act, but to act responsibly and freely. “Behind everything I say or do,” he notes, “lie motives and purposes and in them it is not difficult to discern an artistic, or, more precisely, a dramatic component.”¹⁶³ For Lonergan, then, the fourth level is the level of a dramatic pattern of living and the dramatic pattern is simply a more precise mode of the artistic pattern.¹⁶⁴ All living takes place in the dramatic pattern of experience. That means all concrete living takes place through concrete decisions at the level of freedom, freedom from the confinement of the biological pattern. Thus the spider spins its web because it must; it is locked in web-making. Man, on the other hand, is less determined; “were the pianist’s arms, hands, and fingers locked from birth in natural routines of biological stimulus and response,” says Lonergan, “they could never learn to respond quickly and accurately to the sight of a musical score.”¹⁶⁵ And so man’s first and most basic work of art is his own living, his own freely chosen decisions. As Edward Tayler informed the first year students at Columbia, “You’re here to build a self. You create a self, you don’t inherit it.”

The life we are living is then the concrete product of artistic creation — “the result of a succession of ongoing decisions by which we make our way through life.”¹⁶⁶ Art is an exploration of potentiality, “the potentialities of concrete living.”¹⁶⁷ Art explores fresh possibilities for living our lives. “Aesthetic liberation, artistic creativity, and the constant shifting of the dramatic setting” — changing locales and social milieu -- - “open up vast potentialities” for living one’s life.¹⁶⁸ All the world is a stage and there are many roles to audition for and play. The artist is one who “withdraws from the ready-made world [the world of practical living] . . . to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world.” He explores the “possibilities of what life, ordinary living, can be.”¹⁶⁹ Art stretches us to think about “exploring the full freedom of our ways of feeling and perceiving.”¹⁷⁰

In sum, there is, at the first level of consciousness and underlying the other levels, a steady flow of sensitive impressions (sights, sounds, smells, etc.).¹⁷¹ Consciousness floats along freely before the subject determines what choice he will make. But, even before the choice is made, the flow of consciousness has its direction determined by the subject’s intentionality — those inbuilt “tendencies of the human spirit to what is true, to what is right, to what is good,” and in this case to what is beautiful.¹⁷² Man is essentially free. By this, Lonergan means that you are free to grasp “possible choices of action” which are motivated by reflection and to be executed by decision.¹⁷³ Herein lies the possibility of real self-transcendence.¹⁷⁴

What Lonergan calls ‘apprehensions of value’ show up in consciousness midway between judgments of fact and judgments of value — judgments that something, some person, some course of action is good. Such apprehensions are given in feelings; indeed “feelings reveal values.” Lonergan explains:

Apprehensions of value occur in a further category of intentional response, which greets either the ontic value of the person or the qualitative value of beauty, of understanding, of truth, of noble deeds, of virtuous acts, of great achievements. For we are so endowed that we not only ask questions leading to self-transcendence, not only can recognize correct answers constitutive of intentional self-transcendence, but also can respond with

the stirring of our very being when we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of real self-transcendence.”¹⁷⁵

When we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of self-transcendence, our spontaneous response can be “the stirring of our very being.” Neal Oxenhandler, emeritus professor of French at Dartmouth, writes in his memoir of the influence of Albert Camus — the person, the political writings, and especially the novels, --- and reflects “how we invent the meaning of our lives through the stories of others.”¹⁷⁶ We will bring this chapter to a close by letting his vivid account of the imaginative shock of Camus’ life and writings and their impact upon his life and thought serve as concrete summation of Lonergan’s conviction that all great art – whether in literature, painting, sculpture, music, and dance – is relevant to living one’s life in freedom, precisely as “an exploration of the potentialities of concrete living”:¹⁷⁷

I write about Camus as I saw him during my student years...and as he came to play a role in my own intellectual development, I emphasize the histrionic figure who swept us off our feet and into his wake...This is the Camus who became exemplary for millions of Europeans and Americans, between 1945 and 1960, as a witness against evil. His heroism lay not only in his passion and personal integrity but also in his persistent effort to rescue certain fundamental values — freedom, moral responsibility, social justice — from the oppressive atmosphere of postwar life under the twin shadows of the Holocaust and the Bomb...Reading him I began to understand the moral dimension of human life, the weight of my own choices, my responsibility to others, none of which I had been able to learn from my family or teachers.¹⁷⁸

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1. *Insight*, 187.
 2. *Method in Theology*, 303-304.
 3. Quoted in Jeremy Lewison, *Interpreting Pollock* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999), 7.
 4. Quoted in Lewison, *Interpreting Pollock*, 7.
 5. *Interpreting Pollock*, 8.
 6. *Ibid.*, 9.
 7. *Ibid.*, 10.
 8. "The Theory of Philosophic Differences," *Topics in Education*, 188.
 9. See *Insight*, 181-189.
 10. *Insight*, 184.
 11. *Ibid.*, 184.
 12. *Insight*, 185.
 13. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 224-225.
 14. *Ibid.*, 224.
 15. Quoted in *Interpreting Pollock*, 9.
 16. Quoted in *Artists on Art: From the XIV to the XX Century*, Edited by Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves (New York: Pantheon Books, 1945), 462.
 17. *Insight*, 184.
 18. Quoted in *Artists on Art: From the XIV to the XX Century*, 472.
 19. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 216.
 20. "Pied Beauty," *A Hopkins Reader*, 50-51.
 21. *Ibid.*, 217.
 22. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 217.
 23. David Denby, *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf and other Indestructible Writers of the Western World* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2nd addition 2005), 22.
 24. Quoted in David Denby, *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf and other Indestructible Writers of the Western World* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2nd addition 2005), 31-32.
 25. Sven Birkerts, "This Year's Canon," *Readings*, 156.
 26. "Art", *Topics in Education*, 217.
 27. Sven Birkerts, "This Year's Canon," *Readings*, 157.
 28. *Method in Theology*, 273.
 29. Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from Philosophy in a New Key* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953) 40.
 30. Clive Bell, *Art* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1914) 8. Quoted in *Feeling and Form*, 32-33.
 31. David Denby, *Great Books*, 8.
 32. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 40.
 33. *Method in Theology*, 61. See also "Art", *Topics in Education*, 211.
 34. *Method in Theology*, 9.
 35. "Self-Transcendence: Intellectual, Moral, Religious," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 316-317.
 36. *Method in Theology*, 61.
 37. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 211.
 38. *Ibid.*, 212.
 39. *Ibid.*, 213.
 40. *Ibid.*, 213-214.
 41. *Ibid.*, 214.
 42. *Method in Theology*, 62.
 43. "Art." *Topics in Education*, 214.
 44. *Ibid.*, 214.
 45. *Ibid.*, 212.
 46. *Ibid.*, 215.

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47. *Method in Theology*, 62.
 48. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 215.
 49. *Method in Theology*, 62.
 50. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 216.
 51. Glenn Hughes, "Gerard Manley Hopkins and Lonergan's Notion of Elemental Meaning," paper given at the annual Lonergan Workshop, Boston College, 2006, 14.
 52. Robert Bernard Martin, *Gerald Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1991), 205; quoted in Hughes, 14.
 53. Glenn Hughes, "Gerard Manley Hopkins and Lonergan's Notion of Elemental Meaning," 11.
 54. Quoted with emphasis added in the Hughes, 13, from Christopher Devlin, S.J., ed., *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gérard Manley Hopkins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 129.
 55. "Pied Beauty", *A Hopkins Reader*, 50-51.
 56. *Method in Theology*, 63.
 57. *Ibid.*, 63.
 58. *Ibid.*, 63.
 59. *Ibid.*, 62.
 60. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 217.
 61. Hugo Meynell, *Postmodernism and the New Enlightenment*, 70.
 62. Comments in a personal letter to the author. For Lonergan on the phenomenology of a smile, see Vol. 10, *Topics in Education*, 166-167.
 62. "Discussion 2," *Understanding and Being*, 286.
 63. Cf. *Insight*, 677.
 64. Comments in a personal letter to the author from Glenn Hughes.
 64. Cf. *Understanding and Meaning*, 165 and 415.
 65. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 217-218.
 66. *Method in Theology*, 63-64.
 67. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 229.
 68. *Ibid.*, 232.
 69. *Topics in Education*, 224.
 70. Sven Birkerts, *Readings*, 162,
 71. Quoted in Sven Birkerts, *Readings*, 163.
 72. *Ibid.*, 163.
 73. *Ibid.*, 161.
 74. *Ibid.*, 170.
 75. *Ibid.*, 170.
 76. Quoted in Birkerts, *Readings*, 167.
 77. *Method in Theology*, 62.
 78. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 217.

 79. Cf. *Topics in Education*, 223.
 80. *Method in Theology*, 64.
 81. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 191.
 82. *Artists on Art*, 397.
 83. *Method in Theology*, 61.
 84. "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 393.
 85. *Method in Theology*, 61.
 86. Quoted in *Artists on Art from the XIV to the XX Century*, 461.
 87. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 84-84.
 88. "Christian Zervos: Conversation with Picasso", quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, editor, *The Creative Process: A Symposium* (New York: New American Library, 1955) 57.
 89. Quoted in Jeremy Lewison, *Interpreting Jackson Pollock*, 37. See Figure 1, page 2.
 90. Jeremy Lewison, *Interpreting Jackson Pollock*, 37.
 91. See 'Art', *Topics in Education*, 211.

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92. "Christian Zervos: Conversation with Picasso", quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, editor, *The Creative Process: A Symposium* (New York: New American Library, 1955), 58.
93. Quoted in Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 83.
94. From two letters to Émile Bernard, 1904; quoted in *Feeling and Form*, 78.
95. Jeremy Lewison, *Interpreting Pollock*, 78.
96. Surely the artistic insight, the significant form.
97. Vincent van Gogh, "Letter to Anton Ridder van Rappard," quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, *The Creative Process*, 54-55.
98. Surely Picasso is speaking here of the reality which Lonergan calls artistic insight.
99. "Christian Zervos: Conversation with Picasso", quoted in Brewster Ghiselin, editor, *The Creative Process: A Symposium* (New York: New American Library, 1955), 57-58.
100. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 227.
101. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 110.
102. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 228.
103. *Feeling and Form*, 112.
104. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 228.
105. *Ibid.*, 228, n.50.
106. Quoted in *Feeling and Form*, 116.
107. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 215.
108. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 116.
109. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 147.
110. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 136.
111. In "Art," *Topics in Education*, Lonergan treats briefly of elemental meaning in sculpture, 225-226, and in dance, 228 n. 52, 216 n. 20, and 211.
112. *Ibid.*, 218.
113. "Art," *Topics in the Education*, 219.
114. Quoted in Sven Birkerts, *Readings*, 174.
115. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 196.
116. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 196.
117. Quoted in *Readings*, 176.
118. Birkerts, *Readings*, 161-162.
119. *Ibid.*, 161.
120. Cf. Brian Cronin, *Value Ethics: A Lonergan Perspective*, 97.
121. *Method in Theology*, 64.
122. *Ibid.*, 67.
123. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just*, 24-25.
124. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 82.
125. *Ibid.*, 79.
126. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 69.
127. *Insight*, 185.
128. *Ibid.*, 185.
129. *Ibid.*, 218.
130. *Ibid.*, 219.
131. Glenn Hughes, "Gérard Manley Hopkins And Lonergan's Notion of Elemental Meaning," 6.
132. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 219.
133. *Ibid.*, 220.
134. *Method in Theology*, 9.
136. *Method in Theology*, 121.
137. *Ibid.*, 340.
138. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 221.
139. *Insight*, 185.
140. *Insight*, 185.
141. *Ibid.*, 185.

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142. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 219.
143. *Ibid.*, 222. Lonergan is referring to the indictment brought against Socrates "that he held the moon to be just earth and the clouds just water." Lonergan is emphasizing the importance of the symbolic for human living: "to think of the moon as just earth and the clouds as just water, of the mountains as thrown up by contractions in the earth's surface and of rivers as just part of the earth's circulatory system is to drop something away from reality, away from man's world of experience. (221-222)"
144. *Ibid.*, 222.
145. *Method in Theology*, 121.
146. *Ibid.*, 121.
147. *Ibid.*, 73.
148. Quoted in Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and on Being Just*, 113.
149. Safranski, Rüdiger, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, 17.
150. *Ibid.*, 236-237.
151. *Method in Theology*, 245.
152. *Ibid.*, 245.
153. David Denby, *Great Books: My Adventures with Homer, Rousseau, Woolf and other Indestructible Writers of the Western World*, 31-32.
154. Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being*, 57.
155. David Denby, *Great Books*, 7.
156. Sven Birkerts, "This Year's Canon," *Readings*, 154.
157. *Method in Theology*, 13.
158. *Ibid.*, 13.
159. *Insight*, 184.
160. *Ibid.*, 185.
161. *Ibid.*, 185.
162. *Ibid.*, 185.
163. *Ibid.*, 187.
164. *Ibid.*, 187.
165. *Ibid.*, 189.
166. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 231.
167. *Ibid.*, 232.
168. *Insight*, 191.
169. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 217.
170. *Ibid.*, 232.
171. "The Human Good as Object: Differentials and Integration," *Topics in Education*, 62.
172. *Ibid.*, 63.
173. *Insight*, 619.
174. "Horizons," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 17.
175. *Ibid.*, 17.
176. Neal Oxenhandler, *Looking for Heroes in Postwar France: Albert Camus, Max Jacob, Simone Weil*, 2.
177. "Art," *Topics in Education*, 232.
178. Neal Oxenhandler, *Looking for Heroes in Postwar France: Albert Camus, Max Jacob, Simone Weil*, 3-4.

9

The Centrality of History

For more than a hundred years it has been gradually realized that the history of scores of centuries is drawing to a close.¹

Karl Jaspers

The new scene is one of technology, automation, built-in obsolescence, a population explosion, increasing longevity, mobility, detached and functional relations between persons, universal, prolonged, and continuing education, increasing leisure and travel, instantaneous information, and perpetually available entertainment. In this ever-changing scene God, when not totally absent, appears an intruder. To mention him, if not meaningless, seems to be irrelevant.²

Bernard Lonergan

We have arrived at the point where one may ask a final question: What is the future of Lonergan studies? Has Lonergan's understanding of understanding anything of lasting significance to offer to the development of systematic, scriptural, pastoral, or spiritual theology, to interfaith and interreligious dialogue, to feminist studies³, to facing the environmental crisis?

Lonergan often pondered the future and the need for coming to terms with modern culture and consequently with the reordering of society. He wanted to make an impact on history; he wanted to develop leaders who would in their turn play a significant role in determining the future course of history. What did he discern as the characteristic marks of the contemporary world? As far back as 1968 he wrote with remarkable prescience:

The new scene is one of technology, automation, built-in obsolescence, a population explosion, increasing longevity, mobility, detached and functional relations between persons, universal, prolonged, and continuing education, increasing leisure and travel, instantaneous information, and perpetually available entertainment. In this ever-changing scene God, when not totally absent, appears an intruder. To mention him, if not meaningless, seems to be irrelevant.⁴

Lonergan and the Role of History in His Life Work What gave unity to the story of his life and work as a Christian believer who happened to be a philosopher and theologian confronting contemporary issues? What single theme “captured Lonergan’s interest”? Frederick Crowe makes a persuasive case for the theme of history.⁵ And by history he means ‘change’, the ongoing process of change in human affairs. Lonergan’s interest in historical change is the inner force that drove the whole of his thought and activity. It is Crowe’s contention, then, that “the need to understand history, basic history, the history that happens, is the chief dynamic element in [Lonergan’s] academic work: not insight, not method, not economics, not emergent probability, but history.”⁶ Understanding history and change, for Lonergan, means understanding what actually happens in the unfolding of history and includes what historians write to record and interpret the events and the context within in which events happen. Lonergan makes it clear to his readers that “every act of meaning [or understanding] is embedded in a context,” and that “over time contexts change subtly, slowly, surely.”⁷ To give an instance: many wars took place between 1900 and 1985 – a period of unprecedented violence when almost 100,000,000 lives were lost. In a brilliant study of the appalling violence of the twentieth century, Niall Ferguson focused on the first World War which began with the assassination of an Austrian archduke in the Balkans and singled out three decisive factors in 1914 —economic volatility, ethnic disintegration, and the end of empires — which help to explain the vehemence and range of the violence.⁸ By contrast, in 2008 the political context in Europe had so changed that, when Kosovo declared itself independent from Serbia, life went on as before and, but for a few demonstrations, without an outbreak of hostilities.

For Crowe, then, history is the ‘key’ to understanding all of Lonergan’s writings; it is “the principle . . . and the single idea or set of ideas that unlocks the secret of someone’s mind and life and works.”⁹ Thus Lonergan could state in 1959:

Reflection on history is one of the richest, profoundest, and most significant things there is. In the past few centuries any great movement has been historical in its inspiration and its formulation.”¹⁰

Twenty years later Lonergan repeated his conviction about history and change:

To understand men and their institutions we have to study their history. For it is in history that man’s making of man occurs, that it progresses and regresses that through such changes there may be discerned a certain unity in an otherwise disconcerting multiplicity.¹¹

There are two components at work:

a constant human reality . . . [and] a variable human historicity. Nature is given at birth. Historicity is what man makes of man.¹²

Consider, he suggests, the role education plays in the making of man and the difference between a child who enters kindergarten and who years later graduates from his university with a doctoral degree. The difference, he notes, between the child and the new

doctor is but “the recapitulation of the longer process of the education of mankind.” He develops the idea of the evolution of cultures: “Religions and art-forms, languages and literatures, sciences, philosophies, the writing of history, all had their rude beginnings, slowly developed, reached their peak, perhaps went into decline yet later underwent a renaissance in another milieu.”¹³ Social institutions also undergo a similar process of development:

The family, the state, the law, the economy, are not fixed and immutable entities. They adapt to changing circumstance; they can be reconceived in the light of new ideas; they can be subjected to revolutionary change.¹⁴

The key word here is ‘historicity’ or what Alan Richardson called ‘historical mindedness’.¹⁵ Lonergan encourages us to grasp what is meant by a person’s historicity when he writes:

What counts in a person’s life is what he does and says and thinks. But all human doing, saying, thinking occurs within the context of a culture and consists in the main in using the culture.

But, Lonergan reminds us that cultures undergo continuous change:

They wax and wane; meanings become refined or blunted; value-judgments improve or deteriorate. In brief, cultures have histories.

Indeed, he pursues the thought:

It is the culture as it is historically available that provides the matrix within which persons develop and that supplies the meanings and values that inform their lives. People cannot help being people of their age, and that mark of time upon them is their historicity.¹⁶

In brief, what Lonergan is insisting upon is the critical role that an understanding of historical change plays in our understanding of anything. Take human nature, for instance. Aristotle and the Scholastics were interested in nature as given and static, in man in the abstract. Lonergan, along with philosophers from Descartes to the present, was interested in human nature in the making, as dynamic, in “mankind in its concrete self-realization.”¹⁷ He explains:

In contrast with the static, minimal, logical approach, there is the contemporary, concrete, dynamic, maximal view that endeavors to envisage the range of human potentiality and to distinguish authentic from unauthentic realization of that potentiality.¹⁸

It was Lonergan’s ‘second nature’, Crowe concludes, “to think in terms of change, development, history.”¹⁹

In 1937-1938, Lonergan tells us, he first became interested in history.

Philosophy was already by then what he called “my fine frenzy.”²⁰ But by 1938 when he was 30 years old he became convinced that the philosophy of history was philosophy’s ‘essential branch’.²¹ Indeed, in an earlier letter to his Provincial (January 22, 1935) he had already made the boast: “I can put together a Thomistic metaphysics of history that will throw Hegel and Marx, despite the enormity of their influence . . . , into the shade.”²²

Thirty five years later, in a retrospective article written when he was 68, Lonergan recalled how in the late 1930s he had indeed worked out ‘a theoretical analysis of history’. In it he had employed an analogy drawn from physics, from Newton’s planetary theory, to help explain what happens in history:

Unless some force intervenes, planets move in a straight line with constant velocity (First Law of Motion).

But the law of gravity between sun and planet intervenes, so that the planet’s orbit becomes elliptical.

But an additional intervention — “the influence of the gravity of the planets on one another” --- causes “the perturbed ellipses in which the planets actually move.”

Lonergan applies this analogy to what he calls a “rather theological analysis of history.” Thus:

- A first assumption: men and women “always do what is intelligent, rational and reasonable.” The result? Progress; indeed “an ever increasing progress.”
- A second assumption: in fact men and women “can be biased and so unintelligent, unreasonable, and irresponsible in their choices and decisions.” The result? Decline; straight-line progress is derailed.
- A third assumption: God’s love and grace have been given to individual men and women in the message and work of Jesus Christ. The result? Redemption; the possibility of progress is restored and actual progress is back on track.²³

In 1938, Lonergan was assigned to pursue doctoral studies in philosophy at the Jesuit flagship Gregorian University in Rome. Naturally his preference was to concentrate on the philosophy of history, but he was realistic enough to be aware that others had not yet recognized it as “the essential branch” of philosophy. But he wrote his provincial superior requesting permission to devote as much free time to the philosophy of history “as I prudently judge can be spared.”²⁴ But there was an unexpected change in plans and Lonergan was suddenly shifted from philosophy to doctoral studies in theology.²⁵ In the event, Lonergan spent his whole life teaching Thomistic theology but all the while attempting to introduce historical consciousness into theology.²⁶ Thomism had its strengths; for, as he wrote: “Human nature was studied extensively in a metaphysical psychology, in an enormous and subtle catalogue of virtues and vices, in its native capacities and proneness to evil, in the laws natural, divine, and human to which it was subject, in the great things it could accomplish by God’s grace.”²⁷ Thus, for many

Catholic theologians, in Lonergan's judgment, "everything essential had been said long ago," and for them the "urgent task" of Thomism today was "to find the telling mode of expression that would communicate to the uneducated today the wisdom of great men of the past."²⁸ But what Lonergan came to identify as one major defect of classical Thomism was precisely its "stress on human nature to the neglect of human history."²⁹ In Thomism, he wrote, "there was no notion that man had existed on earth for a hundreds of thousands of years; or that there had been, and still was going forward, an ascent from crude primitive cultures, through the ancient high civilizations, to the effective emergence of critical intelligence in the first millennium B. C., and to the triumph of scientific intelligence in the last few centuries."³⁰ More of this later in this chapter.

The Role of History in Theology History was central to Lonergan's whole enterprise. It is no surprise then that one of Lonergan's abiding concerns was to introduce history into theology. Thus, history is the dominant theme in Lonergan's understanding of Jesus, his life and his work. Lonergan often referred to Romans (5.5) where Paul proclaimed the glad tidings — the central event of history — that in Christ God has poured out his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. How and why did the outpouring of divine love take place? Lonergan found answers in the letter to the Ephesians (1.3-10): God's grand intent, hitherto hidden, was to rescue men and women from the crippling effects of sin and suffering, adopt them into God's family as sons and daughters, bring them together into a unity in Christ, and send them off to broadcast the good news to the rest of human kind. Ephesians speaks of God's activity in Christ as ongoing in history: over time Christians grow up in Christ --- he being the head and they the body — and are entrusted with the welcome but costly task of communicating to all who will listen their own liberating and transforming experience of the divine initiative. Embracing the argument and message of Ephesians, Lonergan viewed all history as unified in Christ.

In a 1958 lecture, Lonergan argued that we can discover the power and influence of Christ's death and resurrection in their historical aftereffects. Jesus of Nazareth is "the historical person who founded a church and down the ages has exerted an influence upon the lives of countless millions, more intimate and more profound than any other historical figure."³¹

Christ influenced history in the field of religion, most of all in the Christian Church which Lonergan defined as "a community that results from the outer communication of Christ's message and from the inner gift of God's love."³² The Christian Church structured itself over time under the leadership of the twelve apostles, the Seventy-two, the seven deacons, "Paul's companions, helpers, deputies," and finally "titled elders, titled bishops, titled deacons"³³ and their successors.

Among Christ's signal agents in history have been the charismatic founders of movements or religious orders and congregations: Anthony of Egypt, Benedict of Monte Casino and his sister Scholastica, Francis of Assisi and Clare, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila and all those who followed their way of living and communicating the mystery of God's intention for the human race.³⁴

Christ influences history especially through Christian preaching which struggles to apply Scripture and tradition to the quotidian needs of each generation.. We communicate through sharing "common meaning" which in the case of Christianity is "the formal constituent" of community and which as such involves "a common field of

experience..., common or complementary ways of understanding... common judgments...common values.”³⁵ Mindful of the sad experience of the past when missionaries tended to smuggle in European culture along with the Christian message, Lonergan was convinced that Christian preachers and teachers will communicate more effectively if they leave their own cultural luggage at home (insofar as that is humanly possible) and are prepared to “enlarge their horizons to include an accurate and intimate understanding of the culture and the language of the people they address.”³⁶

Lonergan invites us to take a closer look at the historical causality of Christ. Throughout history Christianity as a religion became “domiciled” in different times and places and made its influence felt in the culture in which it took root.³⁷ Thus, he wrote:

[The Catholic religion] expressed itself in the New Testament, but it kept adding further expressions in the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, the Greek and Latin Fathers. An entirely new mode made its appearance with Byzantine Scholasticism, and this recurred on a universal scale with the medieval canonists and theologians. Humanism, the Renaissance, the Counter-Reformation brought in another style, a new mode of concept formation, a different mentality.”³⁸

Indeed for him, as Crowe puts it briefly, “Christ permeates all history.”³⁹

While Christianity had its benevolent effect on cultures, Lonergan was quick to admit that Christianity also had its negative influence: it produced its share of failures in the course of its history. Lonergan highlighted the Church’s successes and its failures when it became the religion of the Roman empire in the East (Constantinople) and in the west (Rome):

. . . the healing process, when unaccompanied by creating, is a soul without a body. Christianity developed and spread within the ancient empire of Rome. It possessed the spiritual power to heal what was unsound in that imperial domain. But it was unaccompanied by its natural complement of creating . . . So when the Roman empire decayed and disintegrated, the church indeed lived on. But it lived on, not in a civilized world but in a dark and barbarous age in which, as a contemporary reported, men devoured one another as fishes in the sea.⁴⁰

Then there was the Church’s failure in the world of ideas to produce and promote an alternate and compelling vision to the eighteenth century Enlightenment and liberal view of ‘history as progress’. More recently it failed to counter the grand-scale Rosenberg myth that energized the Nazis or the Hegelian and Marxist interpretations of history that many Russians and Chinese thinkers found intellectually intoxicating. Christopher Dawson attributed the Church’s failure in the face of such appalling threats to the “largely passive attitudes” of Christians, while Eric Voegelin charged that Christians, who were content to wait in mute patience for the second coming of Christ, left a gaping “vacuum of meaning” in the unfolding of history, a void “which these modern philosophies of history [were] attempting to fill.”⁴¹ The voice of the Christian intellectual tradition was not heard or heeded in the civic community which Lonergan

defined as “a complex product embracing and harmonizing material techniques, economic arrangements, and political structures.” Nor was its influence felt in the cultural community, what Lonergan called “cosmopolis,” a term he used to mean not “an unrealized political ideal,” but “a long-standing nonpolitical, cultural fact.” What then is cosmopolis?

It is the field of communication and influence of artists, scientists, and philosophers. It is the bar of enlightened public opinion to which naked power can be driven to submit. It is the tribunal of history that may expose successful charlatans and may restore to honor the prophets stoned by their contemporaries.⁴²

Lonergan was ardent in pushing the notion that “Catholic intelligence is to be used to the limit;” but he faced squarely that “so complex, so arduous, so excellent is the task confronting it that failure is both easy and disastrous.” He noted with sadness and a touch of wit that “the misadventures of Catholic intellectuals could be taken as a counsel to wrap one’s talent in a napkin and bury it safely in the ground, were not that conclusion clean contrary to the gospel, which demands, beyond capitalist expectations, one hundred percent profit.”⁴³

To avoid a similar failure in the world of ideas today, ‘napkin theology’ will not do; rather, if the causality of Christ is to be operative today, Lonergan insists theologians listen to two current needs that clamor for attention. We need economic theorists whose task is, among others, to provide a “new and specific type” of analysis which will reveal “how moral precepts have both a basis in economic process and so an effective application” to the process. In other words, to demonstrate convincingly that economics needs morality. We also need moral theorists. Their task? Supply “specifically economic precepts that arise out of economic process itself and promote its proper functioning.”⁴⁴ In other words, concrete policies that solve concrete problems. Lonergan is thinking of moral precepts that will be “technically specific” and effective; otherwise “it is futile to excoriate what does exist while blissfully ignoring the task of constructing a technically viable economic system that can be put in its place.”⁴⁵ Lonergan then asks, Is my proposal utopian? Not really. His answer echoes William James: “It asks merely for creativity, for interdisciplinary theory that at first will be denounced as absurd, then will be admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant, and perhaps finally be regarded as so important that its adversaries will claim that they themselves discovered it.”⁴⁶

So much for the failures. After noting the causality of Christ during the last 2000 years “not only in art, law, technology,” Lonergan gives a concrete instance of how the theology of the incarnation, specifically the doctrine of the consciousness of Christ, has exerted an influence on the history of ideas. It forced Lonergan himself in his dialogue with empiricists (Hume and his followers) and idealists (Kant and his followers), as we have seen, to explain “knowing” and to differentiate consciousness from perception. Crowe recaps Lonergan’s critique of consciousness in the light of intentionality analysis:

From Lonergan’s viewpoint the difficulty philosophers have is due to thinking of consciousness as perception and as therefore having an object

[the thinking subject itself]. But think of consciousness as internal experience [an experience in which the thinking subject is always present to itself, whether registering what is present or adverting to what it registers] and much of the difficulty vanishes.⁴⁷

Lonergan showed how Christianity has been shaped by the historical influence of the Christ in both the world of thought and in the world of action. Indeed, Christian theology has passed through four stages: the linguistic, the literate, the logical, and the systematic. Christianity in action over the centuries has “learned from experience, in a dialectic of failure and success, what was involved in restoring all things to unity in Christ.”⁴⁸

Christ acts in history through Christians who not only live and communicate the Christian message, but who also take an active role in creating a better world. Indeed, for Lonergan who believes that the God’s love is poured out in the Spirit on all human beings, Christ acts also through all men and women of authenticity. Christ influences history through the theological virtues that “equip God’s people for work in his service” (Ephesians 4: 12). In fact, the supernatural virtues “possess a profound social significance.” In 1951, he explained why:

Against the perpetuation of explosive tensions that would result from the strict application of retributive justice, there is the power of charity to wipe out old grievances and make a fresh start possible. Against the economic determinism that would result were egotistic practicality given free rein, there is a liberating power of hope and that seeks the first the kingdom of God. Against the dialectic discernible in the history of philosophy and in the development-and-decline of civil and cultural communities, there is the liberation of human reason through divine faith; for men of faith are not shifted about with every wind of doctrine.⁴⁹

In 1976 Lonergan returned to the idea of the possibility of recovery when a culture is in steep decline; he asked whether “a people, a civilization, recover from such decline?” His response was sanguine and full of hope, for he was wedded to the possibilities of faith and self-sacrificing love: To my mind the only solution is religious. What will sweep away the rationalizations? More reasoning will hardly do it effectively, for it will be suspected of being just so much more rationalizing. And when reasoning is ineffective, what is left but faith? What will smash the determinisms — economic, social, cultural, psychological — that egoism has constructed and exploited? What can be offered but the hoping beyond hope that religion inspires? When finally the human situation seethes with alienation, bitterness, resentment, recrimination, hatred, mounting violence, what can retributive justice bring about but the duplication of the evils that already exist? Then what is needed is not retributive justice but self-sacrificing love.⁵⁰

What Lonergan has in mind is the love of “the suffering servant, . . . self-sacrificing love.”⁵¹

When questioned about how to deal with such determinisms, Lonergan affirmed

that it is “hope beyond hope...that will break them.” He himself had little hope in distributive justice alone which history shows will often “just duplicate the evils.” Indeed, he said, “If it’s an eye for an eye, well there won’t be many eyes left.”⁵²

Human development, in Lonergan’s analysis, has “two vectors, one from below upwards, creating, the other from above downwards, healing.”⁵³

First, development from below upwards:

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

Second, development from above downwards:

There is the transformation of falling in love: the domestic love of the family; the human love of one’s tribe, one’s city, one’s country, mankind; the divine love that orientates man in his cosmos and expresses itself in his worship.

In the end, what difference does love make?

Where hatred only sees evil, love reveals values. At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved. Where hatred reinforces bias, love dissolves it, whether it be the bias of unconscious motivation, the bias of individual or group egoism, or the bias of omniscient, short-sighted common sense. Where hatred plods around in ever narrower vicious circles, love breaks the bonds of psychological and social determinisms with the conviction of invasion and the power of hope.⁵⁴

But beware of any mixture of love and hatred, Lonergan warned, for “healing can have no truck with hatred.”⁵⁵ History has at least taught that “professions of zeal for the eternal salvation of souls do not make the persecution of heretics a means for the reconciliation of heretics.” Persecution has bred “ongoing enmity” and “wars of religion.” Religious wars have never vindicated religion but fostered the contemporary secularism that disdains religion.⁵⁶

Lonergan and the Future of Theology Lonergan was concerned not so much with making specific contributions to Catholic theology as in pointing to the need for “a total transformation of dogmatic theology”⁵⁷ and “a complete restructuring of Catholic theology.”⁵⁸ How will Lonergan’s own influence affect the ongoing work of systematic theologians? What Lonergan provides is not so much a new system of theology but, as he wrote in *Method in Theology*, a new system for *doing* theology:

When the classicist notion of culture prevails, theology is conceived as a

prominent achievement, and then one discourses on its nature. When culture is conceived empirically, theology is known to be an ongoing process, and then one writes on its method.⁵⁹

The Task of Theologians: Shifting from the Metaphysical to the Experiential And so, theology today is undergoing a profound change and what underlies that change, in Lonergan's judgment, is modern cognitional theory. Indeed he traces the ways in which he sees the change occurring:

From such cognitional theory one can go on to explaining why [discovering one's conscious operations and the relations between them in the process of coming-to-know] is knowing, and so arrive at an epistemology. From cognitional theory and epistemology one can go on to setting up a metaphysics, that is, to state in general what one knows when one does come to know. On this showing metaphysics ceases to be the first science on which all others depend. But ceasing to be the first science has its advantages, for now a metaphysics can be critically established....⁶⁰

That brings Lonergan to a conclusion which is of paramount importance for theology: "every statement [metaphysics] makes about reality can be validated by a corresponding cognitional operation that is verifiable."⁶¹

Indeed, Lonergan sees the shift he has been describing as more a matter of structure than of content: "Where before the metaphysical was primary, now the experiential is primary." Lonergan gives the following illustrations of the shift:

Where Aquinas spoke of forms, we can experience insights. Where he transposed from Augustinian *veritas* to his own *esse*, we can advert with Newman to the unconditional character of assent. Where he discoursed at length on virtues as operative habits, we can think with the Greeks of *arete* as excellence and develop the moral feelings that promote it. Where he conceived the grace of justification as a supernatural habit, we can note his doctrine that grace makes us choose what is right where before we chose what was wrong, and so can give it the more familiar name of conversion.⁶²

For Aquinas, finally, "theology was not only a science, but—something better—wisdom;" such wisdom we can retain, Lonergan says, "in terms of the successive sublations observed in intentionality analysis where the curiosity of sense is taken over by the inquiry of intelligence, where inquiry is taken over by rational reflection, where reflection prepares the way for responsible deliberation, where all are sublated by being-in-love---in love with one's family, in love with the human community, in love with God and his universe."⁶³ Anything sublated, in Lonergan's understanding of sublation, is not canceled but taken up into a higher reality.

The Role of History in Scriptural Studies In 1977 Scripture scholar and historian Ben F. Meyer joined the two century long quest for the historical Jesus with his book *The*

Aims of Jesus. In it he sought to identify, interpret, and explain the goal that gave ‘radical unity’ to all Jesus said and did. Twenty five years later it was republished with an enthusiastic introduction by N. T. Wright who called the book a ‘masterpiece’. He wrote:

Ben was a scholar’s scholar. His untimely death robbed us not only of a gentle, wise and witty friend but of a razor-sharp mind and an encyclopedic range of reading and sympathy. He was astonishingly learned, fluent in many languages ancient and modern, at home with an enormous range of ancient and modern sources. He was master of a writing style that made demands on the reader but always rewarded the effort, sometimes with flashes of impish wit.⁶⁴

Much of the quest for the historical Jesus from H. S. Reimarus in the late eighteenth century to the Jesus Seminar today suffered, in Meyer’s judgment, from ‘tacit assumptions’ which undermined the enterprise. From the start, as Meyer argues in Part I of his book, the quest was burdened with the excess baggage of “anti-Christian biases and agendas,” indeed “philosophical baggage needlessly inhibiting and encumbering exegetes and historians.”⁶⁵ In his view, “Enlightenment propaganda had become cultural assumption.” Current cognitional theory had shaped the course of the quest: “That Reimarus⁶⁶ was a deist, Strauss⁶⁷ a Hegelian, Holtzmann⁶⁸ a liberal, Bultmann⁶⁹ an existentialist, that all of them were children of the Enlightenment, and that their enabling hermeneutical resources were also in every case inhibiting and reductionist, would seem basic to the understanding of the quest.”⁷⁰⁷¹ Meyer was ready to engage in dialectic:⁷² “I should like not only to disagree with much of the work previously and currently done in historical-Jesus research but to allow the disagreements to be traced to their roots and the roots to be exposed.”⁷³

What were the biases? What were the assumptions? The two hundred year search for the historical Jesus was commonly judged to be ‘a failure’. What was at the root of the failure? What a mistake had the searchers made? From the time of David Friedrich Strauss’ *Life of Jesus*, Scripture critics felt ‘the old mistake’ was a lack of source-criticism. After Wrede’s landmark study of the messianic secret, searchers felt compelled to deal with the nature of the sources, meaning “a critical examination of the sources of the New Testament narrative.”⁷⁴ But such research labored under the weight of a cultural dilemma that affected every effort to retrieve the Christian heritage. The dilemma was the incompatibility between intellectual honesty and traditional Christian belief. In other words, a basic either/or: you can’t be intellectually honest and at the same time believe in Jesus. Make no mistake, Meyer does not question the honesty of the critics, past or present. What he does question are the presuppositions (often unacknowledged) of the historians from Reimarus to Schweitzer, Bultmann, and contemporary questers.⁷⁵ First, what reveals such presuppositions is purpose, so Meyer asks “What were the purposes of the questers in their quest?” He found that “for Reimarus, the purpose was to commend the religion of reason and to discredit that of revelation; for Strauss, to translate Christianity into Hegelian wisdom; for the post-Bultmannian ‘new quest’, to reintroduce Jesus into theology as more than a merely factual presupposition.”⁷⁶ Second, Meyer asks, what judgments about history determine the range of the hypotheses — the possible answers — which historical research can deliver. He holds up for critical examination

one remarkable consistency he finds running through the entire Jesus quest: judgments that limit what kind of answers one can conceive as historically possible. At this point the questioners confront their dilemma: “How can one still believe in Jesus Christ without violating an ideal of intellectual honesty?”⁷⁷

But, Meyer argues, intellectual honesty is historically dependent upon ‘antecedent judgments of the truth of things’. In other words, revise your understanding of how the mind grasps knowledge and truth (your cognitional theory) and you must revise your notion of intellectual honesty. In chapters 3-5 of this book, we traced the process over time from Descartes to the present by which philosophers grappled with the formulation of cognitional theory, specifically with determining the conditions for the possibility of coming to know (and decide). For Lonergan and Meyer, most of these thinkers found themselves ending up in what a critical realist could only describe as an epistemological cul-de-sac. It is Meyer’s contention that Lonergan made the ‘basic breakthrough’ that opened the way for new and constructive advances in the Jesus quest.⁷⁸

Meyer used Lonergan’s analysis of understanding to challenge two distinctive judgments of post-Enlightenment thinkers: anyone, they maintain, who accepts an empiricist or idealist theory of knowledge must logically conclude (1) that ‘the universe is a closed system’; and (2) that ‘the only way to judge the past is by the present’.⁷⁹ What follows? Miracles are impossible and Jesus was a man just like you and me — nothing more. Thus, Bultmann: “It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles.”⁸⁰ The epistemological underpinning of these two assertions is in Lonergan’s judgment, seriously flawed. Lonergan dealt with the ‘old mistake’ of the closed universe world-view that “mistakenly overlooks the abstract character of the invariant formulations which empirical science aims at.”⁸¹ Dealing with this age-old mistake is, Lonergan argues, the rightful province of cognitional theory, “since cognitional theory, not empirical science, is equipped to answer such questions as ‘What is the nature of empirical science?’.”⁸² As for the principle of analogy, Troeltsch, its originator, was correct in recognizing that the resources for historical interpretation are “imminent in the knowing operations of the interpreter,” but the principle itself was ‘simplicistic’. As both Lonergan and historian R. G. Collingwood point out, the principle, “connoting likeness and diversity,” is “vitiating when made to mean not a process, but a body of knowledge, and not a body of knowledge but only a pool of assumptions” which have not been “sufficiently tested.”⁸³ Were you to embrace as a Scripture scholar these two common assumptions, Meyer argues, you could not help but be logically compelled to limit your research to ‘salvage operations’ and in the process to discard much of the Christian heritage.⁸⁴

One clarification bears repetition at this point: at issue is not the honesty of the questers both past and present. Meyer takes their honesty as a given. Nevertheless, he insists that their quest is seriously flawed by ‘common but uncriticized cultural assumptions.’⁸⁵ With so much of the Christian heritage at risk, Meyer is ready and eager to enter a dialectical dialogue.

In his critique of earlier questers, Meyer felt that their deficiencies revealed “the need for a fully articulated historical method.” He drew on Bernard Lonergan for the method and on Collingwood, as had Lonergan himself, for the interpretation and

explanation of history.

Briefly, as Meyer reminds us, history is “reconstruction through hypothesis and verification.” Its first principles are:

- History is knowledge (not belief);
- historical knowledge is inferential (not unmediated);
- the technique of history is the hypothesis; [and]
- hypotheses require verification.⁸⁶

Meyer’s final chapter in Part I deals with the relationship between ‘history and faith’. Today many believers fear, says Wright, that “the objective results of an ‘honest’ historiography pose a fatal challenge to Christian faith in any of its traditional or orthodox forms.” Others indeed maintain that “to engage in serious historical study of Jesus is itself the capitulation to the skepticism of the Enlightenment.” Their fear is that thereby one seeks to ground faith in a Jesus we ourselves have ‘reconstructed’ rather than in God and his revelation. But it is Wright’s judgment that “in fifteen evocative pages [pp. 95–110], Meyer offers a way forward out of this sterile either/or.”⁸⁷

As a Christian believer, Meyer needed no convincing that God is the one who alone “provides the ground and secures the truth of faith.” But he is aware that from Pentecost on “Christian faith has been a confession of events in human history.” One need not be ‘wedded’, as were and are so many questers, “to the unending skepticism of the Cartesian tradition.” Rather, Wright restates what Meyer maintains that “history can and must *instruct* faith, showing that many past understandings of what the gospels were saying, are inadequate and misleading.” Indeed, Wright concludes, Meyer has made a convincing case that history enables us “to make real progress in understanding who Jesus actually was, what the gospels intended to say about him, and how faith might be informed, redirected and, through challenge and question, actually strengthened by such historical investigation.”⁸⁸

In Part II of the book (for which Part I served as a ‘grounding’⁸⁹), Meyer works out in detail what history can tell us with probability about ‘the Jesus of first-century Palestine’. He agrees with Bultmann that the way to seek understanding of a historical figure is “to concentrate on the subject’s self-epitomizing deed and to grasp it in the after-life (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) which eminent deeds generate.”⁹⁰ By this process one identifies the life-defining theme of a person’s words and deeds. In the case of Jesus, Meyer ends Part II with four historically probable facts about Jesus of Nazareth: first, “the prospect of a violent death belonged unthematically to [Jesus’] self-understanding from the start” [the theme registered without be adverted to]; second, “under the impact of the Baptist’s execution, the deadly hostility of his critics, and the consequent threats to his life, this early became thematically conscious” [adverted to and embraced]; third, thereupon Jesus “conceived his death in sacrificial terms;” and fourth, “despite a powerful instinct of recoil he went willingly to his death.”⁹¹ To assert that a fact is ‘historically probable’ is to say the same as what historians mean when they assert that Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon or was later assassinated in Rome.

Meyer concludes Part II with a question. What motivated Jesus to “epitomize his

life in the single act of going to his death?" Or more specifically, "What energized his incorporating death into his mission?"⁹² Relying on the historical data one can garner from Galatians, Ephesians, John and Revelation, Meyer is confident one can asset with probability that "the historical Jesus acted out of love, that love generated his deepest aims."⁹³ Thus: "Jesus 'loved me and handed himself over for me' (Gal. 2.20; cf Eph. 5.2); 'having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (John 13.1); he 'freed us from our sins by his blood' because 'he loves us' (Rev. 1.15)."⁹⁴ Crowe reminds us of Lonergan's stand that what Christ did as a historical figure affected the lives of countless millions of people, "making a difference not on the level of wars or politics or literature, but on the level of sin and repentance, of anguish and faith, of evil and hope, of love and forgiveness, and thus exerting an influence 'more intimate and more profound than any other historical figure.'"⁹⁵ This Christ accomplished by the law of the cross, the mystery — the secret counsel of God — by which the evils in the world are transformed into good by the acceptance of suffering that is the consequence of sin.⁹⁶

One final all important corollary. If authenticity means that deeds⁹⁷ cohere with talk,⁹⁸ then, Meyer concludes, "Jesus can be known historically to be a completely authentic man."⁹⁹

The Pastoral Importance of Authenticity and Self-Transcendence in History As a philosopher and theologian, indeed as priest and apostle, Lonergan wanted to make an impact on history, wanted to avoid decline and promote progress. He was passionate in his conviction that shapers of history must be men and women of authenticity and self-transcendence if they were to avoid neurotic, individual, group, and general bias in their individual lives and in the direction they would give to history. He assumed others would agree that "man's deepest need and most prized achievement is authenticity."¹⁰⁰ When in 1970 Lonergan discussed the response of Jesuits to Vatican II, he gave three reasons why the topic of authenticity and self-transcendence is pastorally important; and, indeed, why it is of supreme practical importance both for one's personal development and for the apostolate. What he said of Jesuits, I would say in passing, applies *mutatis mutandis* to world leaders, to media pundits, and to the top executives who direct the all powerful military, industrial, and university complex in the United States today. The three reasons he gave for starting with authenticity?

- First, I wished to get out of the abstract and static context dictated by logical clarity, coherence, and rigor and into the concrete, open, and ongoing context dictated by intention, inquiry, reflection, and deliberation.
- Secondly, I wished to get out of the context of a faculty psychology with its consequent alternatives of voluntarism, intellectualism, sentimentalism, and sensism, none of which has any serious, viable meaning, and into the context of the intentionality analysis that distinguishes and relates the manifold of human conscious operations and reveals that together they head man towards self-transcendence.
- Thirdly, I wished to have a base, a starting-point, a springboard, in people as they are and as they can discover themselves to be; for without such a

base, talk of the Spirit, the Word, the Apostolate, the Jesuit priesthood is all in the air; it sounds abstract, irrelevant, without substance.¹⁰¹

First and fundamentally, as we have already noted, Lonergan's intentionality analysis provides the basic method for doing any thinking or deciding well. Writing in 1970 on the relationship between philosophy and theology, Lonergan contended that the core contribution philosophy can make to theology is method — a method to judge what is true and choose what is good, and so make progress toward authenticity. He reminds us that “Aristotle's basic thesis was the objective reality of what is known by understanding;” Aristotle was convinced that “intellect penetrates to the inwardness of things.” But from the time of Hume, as we saw in chapters three and six, many modern thinkers deny “the objectivity of the intelligible, the denial that understanding, knowing a cause, is knowing anything real.”¹⁰²

Because theology is a cognitional performance, method helps provide complete and accurate answers to three fundamental cognitional questions: “There is the question of cognitional theory: What precisely is one doing when one is knowing? There is the question of epistemology: Why is doing that knowing? There is the question of metaphysics: What does one know when one does it?”¹⁰³ Once these questions are answered, says Lonergan, “one reaches the method of theology by asking and answering the specific question: What are we doing when we do theology?” Lonergan concludes that intentionality analysis “underpins a philosophy of action—a philosophy of deliberation, evaluation, decision, deed.” Indeed, such a philosophy reaches out to influence a whole range of subjects for future investigation: “a philosophy of religion, a dialectical history of theology, a philosophy of culture and of communications.” Indeed, he was confident for the future because “in all these areas [philosophy] blazes trails for theology to follow, enlarge, enrich.”¹⁰⁴

Conversion as Foundational to Theology Conversion---intellectual, moral, and religious---is, as Lonergan repeatedly stresses, foundational to authentic human living. And theology too, if it is to be empirical, will above all be reflection on conversion:

...Conversion is fundamental to religion....Reflection on conversion can supply theology with its foundation and, indeed, with a foundation that is concrete, dynamic, personal, communal, and historical. Just as reflection on the operations of the scientist brings to light the real foundation of the science [as Lonergan invites the reader to do in *Insight*], so too reflection on the ongoing process of conversion may bring to light the real foundation of a renewed theology.¹⁰⁵

In 1976 Lonergan responded to a questionnaire from Jesuit headquarters in Rome in which he was asked what he considered to be a necessary and minimum core of philosophical studies for one studying for the Jesuit priesthood (and ideally, I would add, for anyone pursuing a career as leader in any field):

The minimum core I would describe as religious, moral, and intellectual conversion. By religious conversion, which is the foundation of the other

two, I mean the habitual acceptance of God's gift of his love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Rom. 5.5). By moral conversion I mean the existential decision to guide one's decisions and one's actions not by satisfactions but by values, by what truly is worth while. By intellectual conversion I mean an adequate understanding of the difference between the world of immediacy (in which the infant lives) and the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values (into which the child, the adolescent, the adult gradually enter). Along with an understanding of this difference there would be required practical knowledge of all the symptoms of the infantile regression which confuses the real with the immediately given and pronounces the meaningful to be unreal, or abstract, or controversial . . .¹⁰⁶

Lonergan went back three centuries to trace how Catholic dogmatic theology began and how in the recent years dogmatic theology had undergone a complete transformation:

A normative structure that was deductivist has become empirical. A conceptual apparatus that at time clung pathetically to the past is yielding place to historicist, personalist, phenomenological, and existentialist notions.¹⁰⁷

The upshot is that such a thoroughgoing transformation of dogmatic theology needs the new kind of foundation which Lonergan advocates:

It is to consist not in objective statement, but in subjective reality. The objective statements of a *de vera religione, de Christo legato, de ecclesia, de inspiratione scripturae, de locis theologicis*, are as much in need of a foundation as those of other tracts. But behind all statements is the stating subject. What is normative and foundational for subjects stating theology is to be found, I have suggested, in reflection on conversion, where conversion is taken as an ongoing process, concrete and dynamic, personal, communal, and historical.¹⁰⁸

Thus, the new scholarship in hermeneutics (interpretation) and the study of history, for instance, have rendered "the old style dogmatic theologian obsolete" and it is Lonergan's contention that he "cannot be replaced on the basis of the old style notions of (Aristotelian) science and (Scholastic) philosophy."¹⁰⁹ The speculative intellect and pure reason have long been dethroned. The result, for Lonergan, is clear:

Neither the scientist nor the philosopher has at his disposal a set of necessary and self-evident truths. He has to observe external nature. He has to attend to his own internal operations and their relations to one another. Neither the observing nor the attending reveals necessity. They merely provide the data in which insight may discern possible relationships. And which further experience may confirm as *de facto*

valid.”¹¹⁰

Lonergan refuses to prophesy; but, in a few summary statements, he does give some indication of where he sees contemporary theology heading:

First, then, there is going to be a lot less metaphysics. It has ceased to be the basic and universal science....General theological terms will find their roots in cognitional theory. Specific theological terms will find their roots in religious experience. There will be far less talk about proofs, and there will be far more about conversion, intellectual conversion, moral conversion, religious conversion. The emphasis will shift from the levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging, to the level of deliberating, evaluating, deciding, loving.¹¹¹

Contribution of Intentionality Analysis to Spiritual Theology Lonergan develops the importance of intentionality analysis further in discussing how it can contribute in the future to spiritual theology and by implication, (although Lonergan does not expressly say in any detail) to an understanding of the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises provide a creative framework for ongoing conversion, authenticity, and self-transcendence.

Barry Lopez, author of *Arctic Dreams* and winner of the National Book Award, tells of an Eskimo hunter who was asked “What do you do when you enter unfamiliar terrain?” “I listen,” he said. Ignatius Loyola asks those who follow the method of the Spiritual Exercises to make a hush at the start of each period of prayer and listen. From a close reading of Bernard Lonergan’s work, one can conclude, I suggest, that he made a hush and listened both to Scripture and to the events of history, past and current. Lonergan was bowled over, it seems, by three Pauline texts. First, we have been flooded with God’s love: “...God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Rom. 5. 5)” Second, God has disclosed a secret plan for the human race: “God has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1. 9-10)” Third, Christ equips the people of God with gifts of the Spirit to shape history and bring it to fulfilment in line with God’s plan: “...his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Eph. 4.11-13)”¹¹²

Method, says Lonergan, is more an art than a science.¹¹³ Method, at its best, can be discovered in observing a master at work. Lonergan studied the working procedures of successful scientists and discovered the method they used in their specialty. He then went on to uncover the more fundamental method that underlies the working habits of all successful men and women when they operate at their best. He identified the more general and basic procedures of the human mind when it is engaged in functioning as the mind is designed to function. Indeed, underlying the activity of all successful artists—thinkers and doers and makers of all sorts---is a basic, fundamental, general (or

transcendental) method; it is, he says, “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.”¹¹⁴ Transcendental method, moreover, is “the concrete and dynamic unfolding of human attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility.”¹¹⁵ The task of any special method, says Lonergan, is to specify “the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible, [Be in love].”¹¹⁶

The method of doing theology is no exception; it operates according to the general and fundamental method that is common to all successful cognitional and volitional activity in the natural and the human sciences. As Lonergan says wryly, “however true it is that one attends, understands, judges, decides differently in the natural sciences, in the human sciences, and in theology, still these differences in no way imply or suggest a transition from attention to inattention, from intelligence to stupidity, from reasonableness to silliness, from responsibility to irresponsibility.”¹¹⁷ Transcendental method, however, makes up only a part of theological method. It provides “the basic anthropological component,” but not “the specifically religious component.”¹¹⁸ The Christian mysteries make up the religious component.

The field we are interested in is the field of practical theology (or spiritual theology), the art of making wise decisions and taking responsible action as a Christian. “Practical wisdom,” says Michael McCarthy, “determines the right thing to do, the best thing to do, here and now, in this place and time.”¹¹⁹ He goes on to say that practical theological reflection “is a fallible, self-correcting, constantly revisable, cooperative blending of theory and *praxis*.”¹²⁰

One time honored method of doing practical theology is the method of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Their specific method, it seems to me, cries out for examination in light of Lonergan’s generalized method. Ignatius himself was a mystic, and a master of the spiritual life. He was also a master psychologist. He was a pre-modern-scientific psychologist, it is true, but he was able to retrace the steps he had gone through in his own process of spiritual development and objectify the process in a set of practical exercises that enables others to retrace the steps for themselves.

The method of the Exercises, like that of theology, is more an art than a science and so it is that a retreatant learns of the art of Ignatian prayer by doing the exercises and not by reading the book of the Exercises. The method of the Spiritual Exercises supplies what Lonergan says of method in general---it is “a framework for creativity.”¹²¹ The Spiritual Exercises, says Lonergan, are “a practical manual on a method of cooperating with grace.”¹²² Indeed, a personally guided Ignatian retreat provides “a framework for collaborative creativity.”¹²³ What counts is the example and skill of a director who has mastered the Exercises, his suggestions for prayer, and his comments on the retreatant’s performance in prayer. This paper will concentrate not so much on the content of the Exercises, but more specifically on the operations a retreatant performs in following the structure of an Ignatian retreat.

It is my conviction that both retreatant and director can, in reflecting on the process of the retreat using Lonergan’s intentionality analysis, discover in themselves and for themselves “the dynamic structure” of their own cognitional, moral, and religious being.¹²⁴ Such reflection is an exercise in self-appropriation. Such appropriation of one’s own interiority, subjectivity, and operations, and their structure, norms, and potentialities, says Lonergan, is in itself “a heightening of intentional consciousness;”

by it, one attends not merely to the objects one intends, but also to the intending subject and his acts.¹²⁵ By it, one enters the realm of interiority. There one discovers, Lonergan affirms, the rock on which the thinking person can build with assurance. “The rock,” he says, “is the subject in his conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility.”¹²⁶

When Lonergan applied transcendental method to theology in general, he conceived theology as “a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing toward an ideal goal.”¹²⁷ Practical theology for its part aims at wise decisions and responsible Christian behavior. Ignatius instinctively relied, it seems clear, on the intrinsic dynamism of the human subject and designed the *Spiritual Exercises* as a set of related and recurrent operations cumulatively advancing toward a concrete goal. The retreatant embarks upon a regime of spiritual exercise with God’s grace to overcome oneself and put order in one’s life by avoiding decisions biased by disordered love.¹²⁸

There are eight special activities, says Lonergan, that occur in the process of moving from possible courses of action to wise and responsible activity. These specialties are separate, but functionally interdependent as parts of one and the same process.

Let us apply Lonergan’s eight functional specialties to spiritual theology: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. All of them occur in the making of a successful Ignatian retreat. These specialties are skills, moral and religious, able to be imitated and learned by the apprentice from the master. These skills aim to reach the ends that are proper to experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding.

First, research: be attentive. Research deals with the past and seeks to uncover the data of one’s life at the level of experiencing. For a retreatant in the first week research is an exercise in memory: I recall all the sins of my life, the places where I lived, the people with whom I associated, and the occupations in which I was engaged. By memory, I summon up all the relevant data of my life, the special data one deals with in making fundamental life decisions. In a retreat, I am interested in my personal past, not every detail of it, but what is “important, significant, exceptional,” in my life.¹²⁹ I am interested in my life as experienced. Therefore, I attend to the data of my life.

Second, interpretation: be intelligent. Interpretation deals with the data of my life at the level of understanding. By interpretation, I aim to understand the meaning of the data of my life. I seek a clear and Rubicon understanding of myself, the person I am, I want to understand what significant decisions I have made in the course of my life. Why did I do what I did? What kind of person have I been constructing by my decisions? In brief, who am I? My memory of myself, says Lonergan, is “an existential memory constitutive of a personality qua personality...., a fundamental determinant, of what I do.” The loss of that memory would make me an amnesia victim. In consequence, I am interested in understanding the data of my life, in reaching some understanding of the meaning of my life.

Third, history: be reasonable. History deals with the story of my life at the level of judging. The functional specialty of history is not concerned merely with “gathering and testing all available evidence;” it is much more interested in any “interlocking discoveries that bring to light the significant issues and operative factors in one’s life.”¹³⁰ I want to judge the kind of person I am in the light of the Principle and Foundation (which

implicitly includes the vision of the Gospel) and the role I have played in the unfolding drama of creation, sin, and redemption. I want to be aware of the what Lonergan calls the existential memory which is constitutive of the personality as personality; he writes:

A man is not just a thing; he is what he does. What he says, what he works for, is all a function of his experience, his accumulated experience, understanding, judgment, his mentality, his way of thinking, what he approves of and disapproves us, what he wants and does not want.”¹³¹

I want to consider what the existential constitutive memory of myself reveals and then judge whether the decisions I made were authentic or inauthentic, morally good or morally bad, self-transcending or self-serving, decisions leading to growth or to decline. As a retreatant, I am concerned with the drama of my life as it plays itself out in terms of sin and redemption (St. Ignatius) and decline and progress (Lonergan), and the kind of person I have become as the result of my decisions and actions, my defects, oversights, and failures to act.¹³² In consequence, I am interested in learning whether my understanding of my life is correct, accurate, unbiased.

Four, dialectic: be responsible. Dialectic occurs at the level of deciding. Dialectic deals with the inner conflicts in personal history and endeavors to bring such conflicts to light, and attempts to “unravel conflicts concerning values, facts, meanings and experiences.” and promotes conversion (M 235). Religious development is dialectical. It is ever a withdrawal from inauthenticity. Ever an elimination of oversights and misunderstandings, ever a correction of mistakes and errors. Ever repentance for sins. Religious development is a struggle between opposites, not just any opposites but the very precise opposition between authenticity and inauthenticity, between the self as transcending and the self as transcended. It is a struggle that goes on internally; and in the first week of the Spiritual Exercises it is a discerning study of one’s own history.¹³³

Let’s pause for a moment to take stock. The Spiritual Exercises begin with an exercise in self-appropriation. Ignatius invites you to take a hard look at your past. In this first phase of the retreat, Ignatius has you calculate the present trajectory of your life in relation to your objective as expressed in the Principle and Foundation. He sets up four different tasks, Lonergan would say, that lead to a heightening of consciousness. Through research (or memory of the past) you gather together the significant data of your life; through interpretation you come to some understanding of the patterns of the data that indicate the actual direction your life is taking; through history you affirm the correctness of your understanding that your life is indeed off course; and through dialectics you identify the disordered affections or biases that have skewed the trajectory of your life.

In this second phase of the retreat, you confront “the present and the future in the light of what has been assimilated from the past.”¹³⁴ Through the first four functional specialties you arrive with God’s grace at conversion or foundations.

Foundations brings to light the opposite poles of a conflict in personal history that dialectics uncovers.¹³⁵ Foundations is on the level of decision. The decision is basically the acceptance of a gift—the gift of God’s love which “has flooded our inmost hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given (Rom. 5.5).”¹³⁶ The decision finds expression in the Offering of the Kingdom contemplation. Indeed, says Lonergan, “the acceptance of this gift both constitutes religious conversion and leads to moral and even intellectual

conversion.”¹³⁷ Foundations thereupon provides the foundational horizon for a reformed and new life as a Christian. Upon acceptance of the gift of God’s love you are in a position to plan for the future and begin to live as a fully committed follower of Jesus Christ, free from disordered affections and willing to seek and find God’s will.

Through doctrines you apprehend the set of meanings and values that inform authentic Christian living as expressed in the central mysteries of Christianity; these doctrines are opposed to the “aberrations that result from the lack of conversion.”¹³⁸ These doctrines are contained in the Kingdom, the Incarnation Contemplation, the Two Standards, as well as in the mysteries of the life of Jesus. They are also implicit in the three Pauline texts which struck Lonergan with such force. Through systematics you come to understand and respond to the “religious realities affirmed by the doctrines”¹³⁹ in an order and sequence that promote conversion from inauthenticity and sin and on-going growth in holiness and self-transcendence. In consequence, by contemplation of the mysteries of Jesus’ life, passion, death and resurrection you come to know, cherish, and put on the mind and heart of Christ.

Through communications, finally, you henceforth share with others by word and deed the reality and meaning of yourself as a converted and maturing Christian: your horizon, your knowledge, your values, your character.¹⁴⁰

Our main interest here has been not so much in the theological content of the *Spiritual Exercises*, but their method. Our contention is that the method is based on the dynamic structure of the cognitional and moral being of the retreatant. The method offers “not rules to be followed blindly but the framework for creativity,”¹⁴¹ for a creative (attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible) acceptance of the gift of God’s love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Let’s take stock one final time. It is on the fourth level of human consciousness, says Lonergan, that you respond to God’s love and move from inauthenticity to authenticity. In inviting retreatants to pray over Scripture in making the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius presupposes that the God’s love has already been poured out in your heart through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5.5), that God has a role for you in the unfolding of his secret plan, and that he subsidizes your efforts to serve God and God’s people. Thus, at this fourth level, in response to God’s love, you decide to believe, to trust God and dare to entrust yourself and all your cares to God. At this level you choose or refuse to use God’s creatures as means to the end for which you are created. At this level you choose or refuse to choose what is more conducive to reach the end for which you have been created; it is here that you choose the *magis* or not. If you have sinned, it’s at this level that you feel guilt, sorrow and shame for your sins; you resolve not to sin again; you resolve to make amends. It’s at this level that you make the offering of the Kingdom and the *Suscipe* of the *Contemplatio*. It’s at this level that you make your election. At this level you practice the steps of the general and particular examen. At this level you become a contemplative in action. At this level you reach or fail to reach unrestricted openness as an achievement; and it is here that you reach or restrict universal antecedent willingness. In other words, what Ignatius calls ‘indifference’. It’s here that you take the steps that lead to progress or to decline. It’s at this level that you make yourself the person you are with the kind of character you have. Finally, it is at this level that you reach a state of ongoing intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, the point where you realize with humility that “the task of repentance and conversion is life-

long.”¹⁴² It is precisely here that you play your role in history---perhaps modest, perhaps crucial. Lonergan writes: “The challenge of history is for man [or woman] progressively to restrict the realm of chance or fate or destiny and progressively to enlarge the realm of conscious grasp and deliberate choice.”¹⁴³

Contribution to Interreligious Dialogue Lonergan’s intentionality analysis and his emphasis on understanding history have their contribution to make in ongoing interreligious dialogue. In dialogue with non-believers, in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, or in spiritual conversations, intentionality analysis enables one to speak directly from the heart to the heart, from personal experience to personal experience, without presupposing a shared metaphysics. One speaks out of one’s personal experience and so evokes “the personal experience of those to whom he speaks or for whom he writes.” Lonergan explains:

Cognitional theory, epistemology, and metaphysics are needed, but they are not enough. They have to be subsumed under the higher operations that integrate knowing with feeling and consist in deliberating, evaluating, deciding, acting. It is on this level that people move from unauthenticity to authenticity; it is on this level that they decide to believe; it is at the root of this level that God’s love floods their hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). As before, so here too the account is not to presuppose a metaphysical framework of potencies, habits, acts, objects, but basically it is to proceed from personal experience and move towards an analysis of the structures of our conscious and intentional operations. More than anywhere it is essential here to be able to speak from the heart to the heart without introducing elements that, however true in themselves, have the disadvantage of not being given in experience.

Lonergan’s Contribution to Resolving the Current Crisis in Catholic Theology Finally, says Lonergan, intentionality analysis and an understanding of history and change are of practical utility for anyone who is serious about addressing the current crisis in Catholic theology. What is at the root of the crisis?

The current crisis is a shift in horizon. The earlier [classicist] horizon was a basic outlook in terms of logic and of eternal truths, with the consequence that serious change of context was assumed to be impossible and so its possibility was not investigated. The current [modern] horizon is a basic outlook in terms of method and developing doctrines.¹⁴⁴

Lonergan, it must be emphasized, sees a strong continuity running between the culture of the past and the present day culture, between the classicist world view and the modern, between the Aristotelian ideal of science and modern science; thus, he sees that the task of Christian thinkers “is not some simple-minded rejection of all that is old and some breezy acceptance of everything new. Rather it is a disengagement from a culture that no longer exists and an involvement in a distinct culture that replaced it.”¹⁴⁵

Lonergan identifies areas in which the modern world will continue to affect the

task of theology in the future: history, philosophy, religious studies, method, and communications.¹⁴⁶

First, the shift from a classicist view to a modern view depends upon the introduction of modern methods of historical study into the field of theology. For this, says Lonergan,

A great revolution was needed—and it is not yet completed—to make the development of doctrine an acceptable notion, to have it apprehended not merely in some abstract and notional fashion but concretely and really through exact study of relevant texts, to admit historical methods not only in the patristic and medieval and later fields but also in the scriptures, and finally—to come to the as yet unfinished task—to effect the synthesis of historical and theological aims so that we have neither history without theology nor theology without history, but both.¹⁴⁷

Second, theology will continue to have a profound need for philosophy:

The primary need is for the theologian to know what he is doing when he is doing theology....Briefly, theologians have minds and use them, and they had best know what they doing when they use them. Again, to put the matter historically, to follow Aquinas today is not to repeat Aquinas today, but to do for the twentieth century what Aquinas did for the thirteenth. As Aquinas baptized key elements in Greek and Arabic culture, so the contemporary Catholic philosopher and/or theologian has to effect a baptism of key elements in modern culture.¹⁴⁸

Third, if theology is to take its place in the contemporary world, theology must be acquainted with the field of religious studies: the phenomenology of religion, the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion, the history or religions, and the philosophy of religion. Thus, in the spirit of Vatican II, the theologian is “to reflect on his religion, not in isolation from all others, but in conjunction with others....to attend, not only to the differences separating his religion from others, but also to the similarities that connect them with one another.”¹⁴⁹

Fourth, for theology to communicate with the modern world, says Lonergan, it will have “to know the uses of symbol and story, the resources of the arts and of literature, the potentialities of the old and the new media of communication, the various motivations on which in any given area it can rely;” briefly, it needs to grasp “the themes that in a given culture and class provide *a carrying wave for the message*.”¹⁵⁰

With so many tasks required, Lonergan’s final observation is obvious: “...no modern science in its entirety is known by any individual...[but is] parceled out among the many minds of the scientific community.” Novelist and literary critic John Updike makes the same point with reference to scientific inventions:

When this reviewer was a child, inventors were still presented as great men, almost of of whom happened to be American: Fulton and the steamboat, Bell and the telephone, Edison and the light bulb, Ford and the

assembly line. Now who knows who invented the Xerox machine, the pocket calculator, the squeezable shampoo bottle?

But today, he continues:

the tide of information is inexorable. Every month, in the pages of *Scientific American*, men, generally conjoined in teams, using mirrors and radio telescopes and the statistical manipulation possible to the computer, arrive at empirical conclusions about questions of perception and cosmology that used to belong exclusively to philosophers. Einstein was the last man to make a popular impression with an individual feat of thought, and, while particle physics accumulates bizarre microcosmic truths, the tarnish of old glamour gathers on his name. Amid reality's graining multiplications, who can track a single mind, however brilliant?¹⁵¹

The same kind of teamwork in theology will be increasingly necessary, for, as Lonergan insists, "there are today no omnicompetent theologians."¹⁵²

Conclusion: The Task of Christian Leaders Today---*Aggiornamento* To sum up: Lonergan makes it possible for Christian thinkers and leaders, clerical and lay, men and women to make the transition from a classicist world view to a contemporary world view. Writing two decades after Vatican II (1982), he put his finger on what he was convinced was the one overriding cause of the contemporary crisis in Catholicism. In the classicist world, he wrote, "Scholasticism was a monumental achievement..., profound and enduring" in its influence. Yet its defects were "the defects of its time;"¹⁵³ and for this reason, today Scholasticism is largely abandoned:

It could not inspect the methods of modern history and thereby learn the importance of history in theology. It could not inspect modern science and thereby correct the mistakes in Aristotle's conceptual system....Cultural change...has made Scholasticism no longer relevant and demands the development of a new theological method and style, continuous indeed with the old, yet meeting all the genuine exigences both of Christian religion and of up-to-date philosophy, science, and scholarship."¹⁵⁴

Lonergan was much taken with Ortega y Gasset's notion of operating on "the level of our times."¹⁵⁵ Thus in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan writes: "To operate on the level of our day is to apply the best available knowledge and the most efficient techniques to co-ordinated group action."¹⁵⁶ No single theologian can do the work of theology today. Coordinated group action, by contrast, will have many efficient and beneficial effects:

- [It] will...set the church on a course of continual renewal.

- It will remove from its action the widespread impression of complacent irrelevance and futility.
- It will bring theologians into close contact with experts in very many different fields.
- It will bring scientists and scholars into close contact with policy makers and planners and, through them with clerical and lay workers engaged in applying solutions to the problems and finding ways to meet the needs both of Christians and of all mankind.¹⁵⁷

It was to meet the crisis in human affairs in our times that John XXIII called for a general council (which, it should be noted in passing, embodied to a degree the kind of coordinated group action which Lonergan advocates). The pope called specifically for *aggiornamento*. Because of his intentionality analysis and his sense of history, Lonergan's understanding of Pope John's intention is focused, clearheaded, and balanced in its assessment both of what *aggiornamento* is and of what it is not:

...*Aggiornamento* is not some simple-minded rejection of all that is old and some breezy acceptance of everything new. Rather it is a disengagement from a culture that no longer exists and an involvement in a distinct culture that has replaced it....The Church's involvement in classicist culture was an involvement in a very limited view that totally underestimated the possibilities of cultural change and so precluded advertence to the need for adaptation and zeal to effect it.

On the other hand, Lonergan is quick to note:

...modern culture with its many excellences and its unprecedented achievements nonetheless is not just a realm of sweetness and light. The suffering, the sins, the crimes, the destructive power, the sustained blindness of the twentieth century have disenchanted us with progress and made us suspicious of development and advance. *Aggiornamento* is not desertion of the past but only a discerning and discriminating disengagement from its limitations. *Aggiornamento* is not just acceptance of the present; it is acknowledgment of its evils as well of its good; and, as acknowledgment alone is not enough, it also is, by the power of the cross, that meeting of evil with good which transforms evil into good.¹⁵⁸

In an address given in 1965, Lonergan stated that "classical culture cannot be jettisoned without being replaced; and what replaces it cannot but run counter to classical expectations." He was prescient enough to sketch unerringly the situation in which we would find ourselves at the beginning of the new millennium. Writing in 1965 shortly after the close of Vatican II, he identified three forces — right, left, and center --- that would battle for the soul of the Church today: "a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. . . . a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility." But Lonergan was

convinced that in the long run “what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.”¹⁵⁹

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1. Karl Jaspers, “The Limits of Educational Planning, *Philosophy and the World: Selected Essays*, 22.
 2. “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 114-115.
 3. It should be noted that modern scholars have begun to examine fundamental feminist concerns in the light of Lonergan’s thought. See Cynthia S. W. Crysedale, ed., *Lonergan and Feminism*, Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 1994, which suggests that “a common concern for freedom, authenticity, and genuine personhood constitutes a point at which the intellectual project of Bernard Lonergan and the burgeoning of contemporary feminist thought converge” (xi).
 4. “The Absence of God in Modern Culture,” *A Second Collection*, 114-115.
 5. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J., *Christ and History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935-1982* (Ottawa, Canada: Novalis, 2005), 14.
 6. *Ibid.*, 168.
 7. “Revolution in Catholic Thought,” *A Second Collection*, 49.
 8. Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), xli.
 9. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 168.
 10. “History,” *Topics in Education*, 233-234; quoted in Crowe, *Christ and History*, 169.
 11. “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” *A Third Collection*, 171; quoted in Crowe, *Christ and History*, 169-170.
 12. “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” *A Third Collection*, 170.
 13. *Ibid.*, 170.
 14. *Ibid.*, 170.
 15. *Ibid.*, 171. See Alan Richardson, *History Sacred and Profane* (London: SCM, 1964), 32.
 16. “Revolution in Catholic Thought,” *A Second Collection*, 233.
 17. “Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,” *A Third Collection*, 171.
 18. “The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” *A Second Collection*, 165.
 19. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 169.
 20. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 22.
 21. *Ibid.*, 24.
 22. Quoted in Crowe, *Lonergan*, 22.
 23. “*Insight Revisited*,” *A Second Collection*, 271-272. On page 272 Lonergan comments: “The whole idea [the theory of history] was presented in chapter twenty of *Insight*. The sundry forms of bias were presented in chapter six and seven on common sense. The notion of moral impotence . . . was worked out in chapter eighteen on the possibility of ethics.”
 24. Quoted in Crowe, *Lonergan*, 24.
 25. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 38, n. 10.
 26. *Ibid.*, 90.
 27. “The Future of Thomism,” *A Second Collection*, 48.
 28. *Ibid.*, 48.
 29. Crowe, *Lonergan*, 53.
 30. “The Future of Thomism,” *A Second Collection*, 48.
 31. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 180.
 32. *Method in Theology*, 361.
 33. “The Response of the Jesuit As Priest and Apostle in the Modern World,” *A Second Collection*, 177-181.
 34. See *Method in Theology*, 114; also, Crowe, *Christ and History*, 186-188.
 35. *Method in Theology*, 356-357.
 36. *Ibid.*, 362.

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37. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 180.
38. "The Future of Christianity," *A Second Collection*, 159-160.
39. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 180.
40. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 107-108. Quoted in Crowe, *Christ in History*, 182.
41. "Philosophy of History," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 76-77. Quoted in Crowe, *Christ and History*, 181.
42. "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," *Collection*, 109.
43. *Ibid.*, 112.
44. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 108. Quoted in Crowe, *Christ and History*, 182.
45. *Ibid.*, 108 and 109 n14.
46. *Ibid.*, 108. William James spotted three stages in the career of a theory: "it is attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true, but obvious and insignificant; finally it is seen to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it." *Pragmatism*, (London: Longmans, 1912), 198. Quoted in "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 102.
47. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 183. See Chapter 5 of this book for details.
48. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 183-184.
49. "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World," *Collection*, 112.
50. "Third Lecture: The Ongoing Genesis of Methods," *A Third Collection* 158.
51. *Method in Theology*, 117.
52. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 252 n23.
53. "Healing and Creating in History," *A Third Collection*, 107-108.
54. *Ibid.*, 106.
55. *Ibid.*, 106 -107.
56. *Ibid.*, 106.
57. "Theology in Its New Context," *A Second Collection*, 67.
58. "The Future of Christianity," *A Second Collection*, 161.
59. *Method in Theology*, xi.
60. "Revolution in Catholic Theology," *A Second Collection*, 235-236.
61. *Ibid.*, 235-236.
62. "Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation," *A Third Collection*, 52.
63. *Ibid.*, 52.
64. Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2002), 9a.
65. *Ibid.*, 54.
66. Reimarus' *The Goal of Jesus and His Disciples* (published posthumously in 1778), appeared in 'the twilight of the Age of Reason' and judged Christian dogma to a fraud and to be rejected. For Meyer's assessment, see *The Aims of Jesus*, 25, 27-31. 257-258, nn 4 and 10.
67. David Friedrich Strauss' *Life of Jesus* (1835) had an unparalleled impact of the quest for the historical Jesus. For Meyer's critique of Strauss, his effort to 'neutralize [Christian dogma] by [Hegelian] interpretation', his successes and basic failure, see *The Aims of Jesus*, 25; 32-36; also 256 n 2.
68. Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (1832-1910) published *The Synoptic Gospels: Their Source and Historical Character* (1863) in an effort to supply through 'factual history' what many thought was most missing in Strauss' approach: "a thoroughgoing examination of the sources and a concluding sketch of the career of Jesus." See Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 25; and Meyer's assessment of the sterility of Holtzmann's approach, 36-40.
69. Rudolph Bultmann devalued history and championed keryma theology: 'the proclamation of salvation in the death and resurrection of Christ' and our 'response to the challenge Jesus proposes as proclaimer...' See Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 49-50, and his assessment of Bultmannian theology as a new form of gnosticism, 49-51; 57.
70. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 27.
71. *Ibid.*, 9c.
72. See *Method in Theology*, 128-130; 235-266
73. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 20.
74. *Ibid.*, 13.

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75. Ibid., 4.
 76. Ibid., 14.
 77. Ibid., 15.
 78. Ibid., 15-16; 57-58.
 79. Ibid., 16. Compare the Troeltschean principle of analogy.
 80. Rudolph Bultmann, 'New Testament and Mythology', *Kerygma And Myth*, ed. H. W. Bartsch; translated by R. H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1964). Quoted in Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 255 n18.
 81. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 17.
 82. Ibid., 17.
 83. Ibid., 18. See Lonergan, *Insight*, 589, and A. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 240.
 84. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 18.
 85. Ibid., 18.
 86. Ibid., 9d; see also 87-93 on establishing historical facts.
 87. Ibid., 9e-9f.
 88. Ibid., 9f.
 89. Ibid., 20. Part I deals with theory; Part II with practice.
 90. Ibid., 252.
 91. Ibid., 252.
 92. Ibid., 252.
 93. Ibid., 90-91.
 94. Ibid., 253.
 95. Crowe, *Christ and History*, 127.
 96. Ibid., 127-128. On the law of the cross see also, *The Dynamism of Desire*, edited by James L. Connor, S.J., chapter on the Third Week.
 97. Gal. 2.20; Eph. 5.2; John 13.1; Rev. 1.5.
 98. Mark 12.28-34.
 99. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus*, 249; 253.
 100. *Method in Theology*, 254.
 101. "The Response of the Jesuit," *A Second Collection*, 170.
 102. "Verbum: Definition and Understanding," *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, 33-34.
 103. "Philosophy and Theology," *A Second Collection*, 203.
 104. Ibid., 207.
 105. "Theology in Its New Context," *A Second Collection*, 67. Cf. Avery Dulles on conversion as Lonergan's chief contribution to modern theology, "The Ignatian Charism and Contemporary Theology," *America*, April 26, 1997, pp. 14-15.
 106. "Questionnaire on Philosophy: Response," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, 362-363.
 107. "Theology in Its New Context," *A Second Collection*, 67.
 108. Ibid., 67.
 109. "Revolution in Catholic Theology," *A Second Collection*, 237.
 110. Ibid., 236.
 111. Ibid., 237.
 112. Frederick E. Crowe has worked out the implications of these texts for Lonergan in *Christ and History*.
 113. *Method in Theology*, 3.
 114. Ibid., 4.
 115. Ibid., 24.
 116. Ibid., 20.
 117. Ibid., 23.
 118. Ibid., 25.
 119. "Theological Reflection and Christian Renewal," unpublished manuscript, 37.
 120. Ibid., 35.
 121. *Method in Theology*, xii.
 122. Gordon Rixon, S.J., "Lonergan and Mysticism," *Theological Studies* 62 (2001) 485.

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123. *Method in Theology*, xi.
124. *Ibid.*, xii.
125. *Ibid.*, 83.
126. *Ibid.*, 20.
127. *Ibid.*, 125.
128. *Spir. Exer.* [21].
129. *Method in Theology*, 182.
130. *Ibid.*, 182.
131. "The Philosophy of History," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 73.
132. *Method in Theology*, 179.
133. *Ibid.*, 128.
134. *Ibid.*, 143.
135. *Ibid.*, 144.
136. *Ibid.*, 327.
137. *Ibid.*, 327.
138. *Ibid.*, 299. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, intentionality analysis provides the Scripture scholar with the method for undertaking an adequate analysis of the techniques that are used both in hermeneutics and critical history by biblical scholars who may themselves be variously naive realists, empiricists, positivists, idealists, or phenomenologists. Otherwise, says Lonergan, "any attempt to get beyond the 'Jesus of history' to the 'Christ of faith' risks being blocked by usually unacknowledged philosophic assumptions" of biblical scholars. Thus, in the long run, intentionality analysis makes it possible for retreatants to get beyond fundamentalism or philosophic roadblocks to an intelligent and accurate understanding of the Scripture passages they use in prayer. See *A Second Collection*, "Philosophy and Theology," 203.
139. *Method in Theology*, 349.
140. See *Method in Theology*, 356.
141. *Ibid.*, xii.
142. *Method in Theology*, 118.
143. *Insight*, 228.
144. "Philosophy and Theology," *A Second Collection*, 206.
145. "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," *A Second Collection*, 113.
146. Lonergan gives an interesting illustration of how his method in theology may be applied to Christology in "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection*, 74-99. He concerns himself with seven related topics: "psychology, history, philosophy..., Christological method in its religious and theological aspects,....the meaning of Chalcedon,....(and) the main issue: Can one be truly a man without being a human person? (75)" The occasion of the article is Piet Schoonenberg's contention that the fact that Jesus was a human person overrules "any apparently conflicting doctrine, be it scriptural, traditional, or conciliar,"—a contention which, in Lonergan's judgment, Schoonenberg tries to buttress with a "mystifying exegesis of scripture, tradition, and the councils (95)." The implication is that Schoonenberg's failure to achieve critical realism may have led him to a position which, in Lonergan's judgment, has its source not in orthodox Christian tradition but in the adoptionist heresy of the Ebionites.
147. "Theology and Man's Future," *A Second Collection*, 136.
148. *Ibid.*, 138.
149. *Ibid.*, 138.
150. *Ibid.*, 141.
151. Review of *Vico and Herder* by Isaiah Berlin, *Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism* by John Updike, 590-591.
152. "Theology and Man's Future," *A Second Collection*, 140.
153. *Method in Theology*, 279.
154. "Unity and Plurality," *A Third Collection*, 246-247.
155. *Understanding and Being*, Editorial note i, 409.
156. *Method in Theology*, 367.
157. *Ibid.*, 367.
158. "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," *A Second Collection*, 113.

159. "Dimensions of Meaning," *Collection*, 245.

10

Lonergan and the Ecological Crisis

A religion that promotes self-transcendence to the point not only of justice, but of self-sacrificing love, will have a redemptive role in human society in as much as such love can undo the mischief of decline and restore the cumulative process of progress.¹

Bernard Lonergan

In the early 1980s Carl Sagan, Hans Bethe, Freeman J. Dyson, Stephen Jay Gould, and twenty other prominent scientists issued an open letter to the world religious community. It was an ironic and, indeed astonishing statement from the descendants of 18th century rationalists who had long separated the sacred from the profane, scoffed at the cosmological myths of their ancestors, and neglected or ignored man's inbuilt capacity as mythmaker. They wrote as scientists who had experienced deep "awe and reverence for the universe" and who now expressed their forebodings about its well-being. They were alarmed by mindless inroads into the environment "whose long-term biological and ecological consequences" no one yet knows. Greed driven policies had committed us all unwittingly to a policy of collectively assured mass destruction. The ecological crisis was fast approaching the point, they were convinced, that put planet Earth at risk as a habitat for life. Aware that "what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect," they issued their urgent appeal to religious leaders worldwide "to commit, in word and deed, and as boldly as is required, to preserve the environment of the earth."²

It becomes clearer that we need a multiple approach to the contemporary ecological crisis. The ancient Greek word *kosmos* meant "an order of the whole that overlaps the boundaries of science, philosophy, and religion."³ We need science to explain the physical and biological dimensions of the universe, myths to present its humanistic dimension, philosophy to explain its intelligibility, and theology to pinpoint the responsibility of human beings for the continuance of life on our planet. Science needs the help of religion to hammer into our collective psyche the salient truth of our times: humanity is drifting deathwards. The appeal of science to religion some three decades ago was in essence a shout: "Hurry up; it's getting late." The future depends on human decision — intelligent, functionally effective, and executed without further delay.

In a remarkable book published in 1992 mythmakers Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme tell the story of the universe.⁴ Its full title was *The Universe Story from the Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era: A Celebration Of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*. Its goal

was to:

- tell the awesome story of “an evolutionary sequence of irreversible transformations” in an emotionally compelling way,
- enable the reader to experience the joy of existence — its sheer abundance, elegance, and beauty, and share the authors’ impulse to celebrate key events in the story, and finally
- move the reader to participate in the ongoing adventure in an increasingly intelligent and responsible way.⁵

Berry-Swimme narrate the dramatic story of the birth of the universe, its unfolding over 15 billion years, and the arrival of planet Earth at the brink of ecological disaster. Their grand narrative raises urgent theological questions. It is the judgment of Anne Marie Dalton that Lonergan’s grand notion of emergent probability provides the theoretical framework within which theologians can construct a convincing theology of ecology.⁶

What shapes the telling today, Berry-Swimme explain, is a “most significant change” in our scientific thinking about the universe — we have passed “from a sense of cosmos to a sense of cosmogenesis.”⁷ The emphasis now is not on the cosmos — a description of the universe as static, but on cosmogenesis— the grand narrative of the explosive birth of the universe and its flaring forth up to the present moment, from Big Bang up to Right Now. For human beings, it is the story of “a developing community, one with an important role for the human in the midst of the process.”⁸ New scientific knowledge reveals key moments in the story’s plot — moments in the unfolding that now in hindsight strike us as fascinating, awesome, and sacred. Indeed, as Berry-Swimme insist, moments to celebrate with reverence and joy: “Earth seems to be a reality that is developing with the simple aim of celebrating the joy of existence.”⁹

It all began 15 billion years ago with the Big Bang. --- that aboriginal instant when “all the energy that would ever exist in the entire course of time erupted as a single quantum” — the ‘singular gift’ of existence. An unimaginable sextillion particles, light, and time burst into being. Space began as “a vast billowing event” --- a huge cloud of ever expanding particles which has continued ballooning to this day.

Reflect for a moment on the seed event, the first flaring forth, the initial fireball, the trillion-degree blast of heat that accompanied the creation of the universe *ex nihilo* — “a reality layered with the power to fling a hundred billion galaxies through vast chasms in a flight that has lasted fifteen billion years.”¹⁰ That means any activity you perform now from the flick of a finger to moving a piano or sending rockets to the moon is “powered by the same numinous energy that flared forth at the dawn of time.”¹¹ Further, one should not imagine the Big Bang as a solitary thermonuclear fire ball, David Toolan cautions, but as “the first fortissimo bars of a great symphony.” During the first second the heat was so intense that everything that came into existence immediately perished, each storm of particles (quarks, electrons, protons, muons, photons, and their antiparticles) disappearing into the void as suddenly as it appeared like so many flashbulbs going off during Monday night football or so many sky rockets exploding on the Fourth of July. Repeat, all that cosmic activity in one second flat. Indeed, during that

initial single second, as Berry- Swinne tell us, “the primeval fireball thundered through a thousand universe annihilations and as many universe rebirths.” Indeed, after that initial second of superabundant cosmic activity of unimaginable hurricane force “only one billionth of the original matter” remained with the ability to endure.¹² Astonishing. Only a billionth and yet matter enough. For from it evolved the universe we are rapidly coming to know today.

The new creation in its emergence was able to maintain, who knows how, a delicate balance that has perdured. Indeed the initial rate of expansion was timed just right. A nanosecond slower and the universe would have collapsed like a punctured balloon into a “quantum foam”. A bit faster and its elements would have shot out, flung too far apart “for anything truly interesting to happen.”¹³

What did happen was a surprise — a period lasting a billion years when the expanding universe was able to maintain a delicate equilibrium. From it came evolutionary transformations¹⁴ that over time led to the universe as we know it today. During that critical initial period the elegant balancing act continued until the freely symmetric interactions of the particles “hardened into a structure”: the primordial particles settled (who knows how¹⁵) into four particular activities with determined intensities that became the bases of hydrogen and helium atoms, gravity, and electromagnetism. Again, timing mattered. A slightly different kind of interaction and all the stars would have been in and out of existence in a flash and there would have been no galaxies, indeed no sun, no earth, no life, no you, no me. In the event, the universe expanded and established with “stunning elegance” the fundamental laws that kept the universe project functioning and open to “all the immensely complex possibilities of its future blossoming.”¹⁶ These foundational activities took coherent shape at the end of the universe’s first phase of existence and would determine the “fundamental architecture of the universe’s interactions... for all time:” the size and intensity of stars, the height of mountains, the shape and strength of sea shells, the power and movements of mammals.¹⁷

To continue. After its first several hundred thousand years of existence the universe reached a point when the fundamental building blocks appeared: protons and neutrons in bonded relationships, stabilizing as primordial hydrogen and helium atoms. Again a balancing act so delicate that the particles ended not as inanimate iron nuclei (literally as dead as doornails), but as nuclei “essential for the emergence of the first living cells.”¹⁸ As David Toolan puts it, “the initial explosive energy, the mass of the universe, and the strength of gravitational forces were exactly balanced so that life could emerge.”¹⁹ What does Toolan make of this? That something highly unlikely had occurred: “against all the odds the universe is fine-tuned for life.”²⁰ The wonder of wonders, he says, is that “the dice were loaded in our favor from the outset.”²¹ He quotes Stephen Hawking’s admission: “the odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous.” Hawking went on to venture a cautious afterthought: “I think there are religious implications.”²²

To repeat, 14 billion years ago something like a shudder passed through our billowing universe. It lasted for 4 billion years and created “the cosmic patterns for all future existence”--- shaping (who knows why?) hydrogen and helium atoms into galaxies, one hundred billion of them, including our own Milky Way and its galactic neighbors: Andromeda, Virgo, Pegasus, Fornax, and the Magellanic Clouds, each galaxy, as Berry-Swimme say, pinwheeling its way through space, each bringing forth from its

entrails “billions of billions of primal stars.”²³ The most powerful, the Supernovas, exploded, a second generation of stars appeared and over time new chemical elements came into existence, each in its turn: carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, molybdenum, calcium, magnesium, and all the rest on the Periodic Table.

The transformations continued and were irreversible. 5 billion years ago: the collapse of supernovas into billions of stars. 4.5 billion years ago a supernova in the Milky Way (itself a swirling disk of one billion stars) gave birth to its own star, our Sun, and over time its planets and our Earth.

And then 4 billion years ago another surprise: the first living cell called prokaryotes²⁴ emerged, a cell with the capability of producing another living cell. These cells, Berry-Swimme tell us, “possessed a new order of creativity, allowing them to fashion a chemical glove to catch the packets of energy hurled by the Sun at the speed of light, and to use these glowing quanta as food.”²⁵ In consequence, 3.9 billion years ago, the emergence of photosynthesis, cells with the ability to transform the energy of the sun (snatching photons from sunbeams) into substances capable of supporting organic life, indeed able “to convert the energy of a particle rifling through the air at the speed of light into the molecular structures of food.”²⁶ We are talking here, in common speech, about Bacteria, living beings with remarkable characteristics:

- around five thousand species have been identified...
- the hardest creatures anywhere on Earth...
- can live in boiling water...
- can be frozen like rocks and then come back to life...
- found higher and deeper and in colder and hotter regions than any other sort of living being on Earth...
- are the advanced guard of life...
- always the first to enter an area...
- no community of life anywhere on Earth that lack [them]...
- are irreplaceable...
- a spoonful of earth has an estimated billion bacteria in it...
- are the core form of life in Earth’s community.²⁷

Next, 2 billion years ago, the first eukariotic cell developed: a cell enclosed in a membrane, a cell with a nucleus.²⁸ Indeed a cell with the singular capacity to withstand the chemical effects of oxygen that would otherwise incinerate. Further, a cell able to transform oxygen’s “dangerous energy for its own purposes.” In addition the eukariotic cell made meiotic sex possible: now “two genetically different beings could unite and fashion out of their genetic endowments a radically new being.”²⁹ It could also eat living things and so initiate “predator-prey relationships.” In brief, the eukariotic cell is “the basis of all advanced forms of life.”³⁰

Eventually (600 million years ago) trillions of the eukariotic cells — “the most advanced organism on earth” — joined forces and the first multicellular organisms

emerged — “corals, worms, insects, clams, starfish, sponges, spiders, vertebrates, leeches...”³¹ At that time the basic body plans for all future animals were created. No new phyla (the basic plant and animal kingdoms) would ever appear.

Thus, with the eukariotic cells came the start of the Phanerozoic³² eon, the advent of macroscopic animals from jellyfish to dinosaurs; macroscopic, that is, large enough to be seen not through a microscope like bacteria but by the naked eye.

Not surprisingly, living beings for ninety per cent of earth’s story had been confined to the oceans. But 370 million years ago emerged the wood cell that enabled a living thing to stand up to the force of gravity. The first plants appeared on the land surface of the earth, developing root systems and vascular vessels to transport water and food through its structure by osmosis. Then came the gymnosperm (the male and female gametes brought together to make a living seed), the ‘naked seed’³³ (pine cones and spruce needles) that could be blown across continents and over time create the great forests of conifers and broad leafed trees that made possible the arrival and survival of air-breathing animals.³⁴

Then abruptly, 245 million years ago, the end of the ancient life (Paleozoic) era with the mass extinction of almost all living plants and insects and animals, indeed “75-95 percent of all species.”³⁵ Why and how, we don’t yet know; perhaps the result of a bombardment of comets. What we do know is that only “a vastly impoverished animal world” survived. Among the survivors were invertebrates that lived submerged in the safety of the ocean depths.³⁶

And yet fortuitously, 216 million years ago, the emergence of vertebrates: reptiles, lizards, and eventually the dinosaurs and, 150 million years ago, the first birds.

100 million years ago: the advent of flowers and plants. The creation of the angiosperm³⁷ (plants with seeds enclosed in an ovary to be fertilized by pollination) boosted fertility and speeded up the growth rate from seed to fully grown plants and flowers. Trees take a year or more to produce seeds; but plants only days or weeks. Insects insured and facilitated the process of plant fertilization. In addition, seeds containing concentrations of proteins make energy available to animals in small packages for quick consumption and eliminate the need for long periods of eating to sustain life.

Then suddenly, another doomsday. At the end of the Mesozoic era — a cataclysm 67 million years ago that wiped out the dinosaurs and the marine reptiles. Earlier (some 114 million years ago) placental mammals had emerged and some survived. After the cataclysm animals that give birth to live young became the predominant vertebrates and underwent a population explosion. “A time of stupendous creativity”³⁸ brought horses, cattle, and goats, rabbits and rodents, cats and dogs, hyenas and the great cats — lions and tigers, cheetahs and leopards — and the great beasts: the walrus, dolphin, and whale, the hippo, rhino, bison, elephant, and woolly mammoth.³⁹

Finally the arrival of the hominids. 2.6 million years ago, homo habilis; 1.5 million years ago, homo erectus; 200,000 years ago, archaic homo sapiens; 40,000 years ago, modern homo sapiens sapiens. Pause and reflect for a moment: since the origin of life on Earth, biologists estimate that billions of living species have come into existence and then gone extinct. Perhaps ten to thirty million species exist today. Of them, two million have been classified, a bare one percent of all the species that have ever existed. The power of life to live and survive is awesome. The colossal catastrophe that marked the end of the Mesozoic era was in the event “overcome by life’s fecundity;” indeed, “the

overall richness of life on the planet surpassed that of any previous era.” One fact astonishes: “there was never a time in four billion years of Earth’s life with as many species as there were when the human first arose in Earth’s community.” Berry-Swimme suggest that the only appropriate word to describe the environment when *Homo sapiens* arrived is “paradise.”⁴⁰

At this point an inevitable question arises: Is the universe intelligible? Is there any pattern discernable as it expands and differentiates itself? More precisely, can one understand the process by which the universe unfolds and develops? Lonergan scholar Anne Marie Dalton is convinced we can if we use “Lonergan’s heuristic account of world process and the role theology within it as the theoretic tool toward a construction of a Christian theology of ecology.”⁴¹ Berry-Swimme’s grand narrative and Lonergan’s grand theory of emergent probability go together like bulb and socket.⁴² Together they make a formidable pair, each complementing the other, each lending credibility to the other. Once joined they illuminate. Berry-Swimme supply the data and modern science’s explanation of the data. Lonergan provides a fuller explanation of the world process analyzed from a higher viewpoint. He helps us understand how the universe functions. As noted earlier, he employs what he calls the notion of emergent probability.⁴³ Included in his analysis is what becomes all important in dealing with the global ecological crisis: “the human and emergent process by which humans come to know the universe and to act within it.”⁴⁴ Berry-Swimme grasp the universe with tweezers, to use Lonergan’s image, holding the concrete data firmly for inspection in anticipation of discerning a verifiable explanation of the data. Theoretical explanation does not automatically “replace” description. Description, says Lonergan scholar Anne Marie Dalton, “remains important as the control against which the theory is tested, retested and often discarded in favor of one that is more adequate.”⁴⁵

Berry-Swimme’s new story of the universe, Dalton writes, is “a concrete example of Lonergan’s heuristic account of world process.”⁴⁶ In Lonergan’s judgment, emergent probability explains the remarkable fact that the universe for all its complexity is indeed inherently intelligible. It is governed by familiar classical laws and statistical laws which we are able to understand. Classical laws are abstract, ignore concrete occurrences, and define relationships, but with the one proviso: “other things being equal.” Classical laws deal with cause and effect: at 32°F, water freezes. Classical laws are only contingently necessary — necessary only if certain conditions are fulfilled. Statistical laws deal with the data of concrete happenings — the “other things” that are almost never equal. You ask how can you know anything when other things are not equal? Your answer will not be a classical law. It will be a statistical law: “an ideal frequency, an ever-so-often.” Insights into data can grasp frequencies and their grasp can be verified in the event.⁴⁷ In consequence, statistical laws deal with probabilities that are not fixed by classical laws. For instance, one can safely predict that nighttime temperatures next January in Washington, DC, will in all likelihood drop below the freezing point.⁴⁸ Again, TV news channels routinely predict the outcome of elections before all the votes are in. In consequence, predicting the weather or election results depends not on classical, but statistical laws.

Lonergan asks the question “what world view is involved by our affirmation of both classical and statistical laws?”⁴⁹ In answering, he wishes to show “how both classical and statistical laws can coalesce into a single, unified intelligibility

commensurate with the universe of our experience.”⁵⁰ Because it can be understood by classical and statistical laws, the universe we humans experience is, in Lonergan scholar Charles Hefling’s words, “an inherent, intelligible pattern that Lonergan names *emergent probability*.”⁵¹

Lonergan finds the clue to his answer, he tells us, in the notion of what he terms “the scheme of recurrence.” For him, a “scheme” is a process and the cosmos involves a process that is emergent. What emerges are schemes (processes) that come into existence, recur, and survive. One thinks of gravity and electromagnetism. World process, to repeat, is an emerging process. What emerge and survive are schemes of recurrence. Processes can be systematic or non-systematic. A systematic process is determined by laws and in its unfolding is predictable. A scheme of recurrence is a movement that expresses itself in a coil. If A, then B; if B, then C, if C ... then A will recur. In other words, an ever recurring scheme. If the seeds are sown (A), then wheat springs up (B); if wheat grows to maturity, it produces seeds for the harvest ©; if seeds are harvested ©, then there are seeds to sow again (A). Thus schemes are circular relationships between events, so that if they recur, then, other things being equal, they will keep recurring. Some instances. The planets keep circling the sun in their orbits. The Gulf Stream keeps circulating around the surface of the Earth. Ginkgo trees thrive on the streets of Washington, D.C. Curiously, ginkgos are living fossils, first emerging an incredible 270 million years ago.⁵² They survived two catastrophic events at the end of the Permian and the Mesozoic eras. More recently four ginkgos survived the atomic blast at Hiroshima and are venerated today by the Japanese people; they have renamed the ginkgo “the Tree of Hope.”⁵³ In consequence, whenever such schemes function, other things being equal, they keep on recurring indefinitely.⁵⁴ Thus “an ‘eco-system’ is a combination of interdependent schemes of recurrence and the phrase ‘balance of nature’ point to the fact that such systems keep going on unless they are interfered with.”⁵⁵ Indeed, it is the dependability of cyclical schemes of recurrence that inspires hope in the human heart.

World process is not only systematic; it is also non-systematic. A non-systematic process results from a violation of the laws that determine the systematic process. Something new can happen. Darwin was surprised to find an ouzel (a species of thrush) in the Galapagos which hunted for food underwater and not on land like European ouzels.⁵⁶

The universe is therefore not a lock-step, mechanical design, but neither is it merely a chaotic and hence unknowable set of discrete events.⁵⁷ Any event, any given thing does not emerge independently; each is “already embedded in a cyclic relationship among surrounding events and things”⁵⁸ upon which each depends as they upon it. Every cyclic scheme is also embedded in other schemes or sets of schemes. As Dalton concludes, “schemes of recurrence explain why highly improbable events occur and even survive, even though the probability of occurrence and survival is hardly ever the same.”⁵⁹

Accordingly, “systematic process is monotonous, but non-systematic process can be the womb of novelty.”⁶⁰ For Lonergan, “systematic process is little more than a perpetual repetition of essentially the same story,” while non-systematic process produces “significant changes.”⁶¹ Thus once a scheme of recurrence is in place, there is the probability of new and different schemes of recurrence emerging by chance. Each new scheme includes and depends upon the previous scheme.⁶² Each new scheme, once in existence, becomes itself a systematic scheme if it keeps recurring. But as Lonergan

notes, “the narrower the basis for the emergence of each later set of schemes, the greater the need to invoke long intervals of time.”⁶³

Only over billions of years, as we have seen, has world process given rise to what Lonergan calls the “pyramid” of new schemes which nature has been constructing since the universe began. Each new scheme depends upon and sublates earlier schemes. Thus:

- The coagulation of particles into hydrogen and helium depend upon particles created in the Big Bang.
- Supernovas depend upon hydrogen and helium atoms.
- Stars and their galaxies including the Milky Way, the Sun and our Earth upon the collapse of supernovas.
- Living cells (prokaryotes) upon hydrogen atoms
- Trees and plants upon wood cells and living cells that change protons into energy by packing proteins into seeds.
- Animals depend upon seeds
- Among the animals, vertebrates depend on and sublata all of the above.

The subsequent physical evolution of vertebrates— enlarged brain size, the ability to walk upright and to speak, and their cultural evolution — community effort in hunting, farming, metallurgy, trade, law, politics — each a new level of recurring schemes that presuppose and build upon earlier schemes of recurrence. In consequence, each new scheme of recurrence rests on earlier schemes “in a splendid ascent of novelty and creativeness.”⁶⁴ At the peak of the pyramid is *Homo sapiens sapiens* and the human brain.⁶⁵

Lonergan makes a further point: “schemes can be arranged in a conditioned series, such that the earlier can function without the emergence of the latter, but the latter cannot emerge or function unless the earlier already are functioning.”⁶⁶ Thus animals depend upon plants, but not plants on animals. A herd of deer presupposes leaves to nibble and grassy meadows on which to graze without leaf or grass depending on deer. Lonergan analyzes the point more closely when he explains that any emergent scheme sublata its predecessor:

what sublata goes beyond what is sublata, introduces something new and distinct, puts everything on a new basis, yet so far from interfering with the sublata or destroying it, on the contrary needs it, includes it, preserves all its proper features and properties, and carries them forward to a fuller realization within a richer context.⁶⁷

Take carbon, for instance. Carbon is essential for life; indeed “the storm of electricity” in the carbon atom is a power essential for the thinking process in the human brain.⁶⁸ It is a compound of six protons, six neutrons, and six electrons, assembled originally in the centers of stars. The human brain that emerges sublata carbon, but is a whole, something new and not just the sum of its component parts. David Toolan asks “Who am I? and can

answer with what is the literal truth: “star stuff, Earth stuff, a being literally conceived in far-off parts of the universe and seeded here on this planet...Each one of us is a distillation, a condensed centrifuge of cosmic energy.” Toolan quotes Rainer Maria Rilke here:

The inner—what is it?
If not intensified sky...

In other words, you and I are actually star dust. Toolan recalls the Ash Wednesday mantra “Thou art dust” and rightfully suggests the priest could say with equal truth “Thou art star dust.”⁶⁹

In the area of human affairs, such as business, finance, and politics, if a scheme of recurrence performs perfectly, new schemes continue to occur by reason of emergent probability. If they do, the result is human progress. If any scheme is interrupted, if neurotic, individual, group or general bias disrupts the scheme, there can be breakdowns and blind alleys and progress stops and decline begins.

To get specific about the current environmental crisis. New York Times reporter Elizabeth Kolbert published her alarming findings on global warming in *Field Notes From a Catastrophe*. Among them the following:

- In Iceland, a man monitoring glacial advance and retreat passed on the prediction that by the end of the next century, his country, where glaciers have existed for more than two million years, will be essentially ice-free.
- Perennial sea ice, which 25 years ago covered an area of the Arctic the size of the continental United States, has since lost an area “the size of New York, Georgia and Texas combined.”
- Carbon dioxide levels, if emissions go unchecked, could reach three times pre-industrial levels by the end of the century.
- The United States is the largest emitter of carbon in the world...accounting for a quarter of the world’s total, with the average American putting out 12,000 pounds of carbon a year, or about 100 times what the average Bangladeshi does. In two decades, the Chinese will surpass Americans in this disheartening achievement...

Ms. Kolbert quotes the eerie forecast of Marty Hoffert, a physics professor at New York University: “it may be that we’re not going to solve global warming The earth is going to become an ecological disaster and, you know, somebody will visit in a few hundred million years and find there were some intelligent beings who lived here for a while, but they just couldn’t handle the transition from being hunter-gatherers to high technology.”⁷⁰

As a man of faith, Lonergan was himself always hopeful. If bias is recognized and dealt with intelligently and responsibly, schemes will begin to recur again and recovery, redemption, and renewed progress are possible. Intelligent and responsible decisions depend upon human authenticity and self-transcendence.

The birth of the universe, its unfolding over 15 billion years, and the role of the human in the evolutionary process have brought the Earth to the brink of ecological disaster and have given rise to urgent theological questions. Dalton maintains that Lonergan provides a theological explanation of Berry-Swimme's descriptive and explanatory narration. Lonergan's notion of emergent probability offers a theoretical framework within which theologians can construct a convincing theology of ecology.

World process is intelligible and becomes intelligent within the human subject. The unique situation of humans in world process is that, while they are subject to emergent probability, they can grasp its intelligibility and can in consequence take the initiative in influencing probabilities. Lonergan puts it this way: "among the probable possibilities is a sequence of operative insights by which men can grasp the possible schemes of recurrence and take the initiative in bringing about the material and social conditions that make the schemes concretely possible, probable and actual."⁷¹ The criteria for progress, according to Lonergan, is the exercise of personal authenticity and responsibility. Progress depends upon "the authentic lives of persons and communities."⁷²

On the other hand, if persons or communities make judgments and decisions skewed by neurotic needs, individual, and group bias, the successful functioning of society is interrupted and triggers the longer cycle of decline. Over time, the "empirical residue" is "increasing unintelligibility" and growing "irrationality and incoherence within society," all ending up in what Lonergan calls the "social surd." *Surdus* in Latin means deaf, dull, mute. It is used to translate the Greek word *alogos* which means irrational, literally, without reason. It means something that cannot be expressed in a rational way because it is unintelligible. A society in decline is a social surd, a social absurdity.⁷³ One thinks of the meltdown of the stock market in 2008. Financial practices driven by naked greed and ambition no longer made sense and the bubble burst. Overnight Wall Street became the symbol of financial absurdity. Or as Elizabeth Kolbert writes, "It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing."⁷⁴

For Lonergan the exercise of human authenticity in society and culture provides the only solution to decline. Human authenticity flourishes in community and for Lonergan community is threefold:

- Corresponding to experience and desire, there is intersubjective community. Its basis is spontaneous tendency. Its manifestation is an elemental meaning of belonging together. Its nucleus is the family. Its expansion is the clan, the tribe, the nation.
- Corresponding to intellectual insights and the good of order, there is civil community. It is a complex product embracing and harmonizing material techniques, economic arrangements, and political structures. The measure of its development distinguishes primitive societies from civilizations.
- Corresponding to judgments of value, there is cultural community. It transcends the frontiers of states and the epochs of history. It is cosmopolis, not as an unrealized political ideal, but as a long-standing,

nonpolitical, cultural fact. It is the field of communication and influence of artists, scientists, and philosophers. It is the bar of enlightened public opinion to which naked power can be driven to submit. It is the tribunal of history that may expose successful charlatans and may restore to honor of the prophets stoned by their contemporaries.⁷⁵

Human authenticity, Lonergan was convinced, will flourish most of all in cosmopolis.⁷⁶ Only cosmopolis will guarantee the authentic operation of human responsibility in society and culture. The precise purpose of cosmopolis is “to provide critical and long-range viewpoints capable of overturning decline and guiding progress within the common-sense of affairs of the world.”⁷⁷ For Lonergan cosmopolis results only from a series of conversions, intellectual and psychic, moral, and ultimately religious.⁷⁸ For Lonergan, finally, the full import of cosmopolis can be fully understood only within a religious horizon, specifically a Christian horizon. Here one recalls Lonergan’s insistence on the centrality of Christ’s role in history.

Lonergan was convinced that only love can solve the problem of the social surd.⁷⁹ God first loved us and our response must be love. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and will and your neighbor as yourself. If you love God and neighbor you must love the universe and will its good order that God created and now sustains. The order of the universe “includes all the good that all persons in the universe are or enjoy or possess.”⁸⁰

Lonergan continues:

To will the order of the universe is not to will the clockwork perfection of mechanist thought but the emergent probability of the universe that exists. It is not to demand that all things be perfect in their inception but to expect and will that they grow and develop. It is not to exclude from man’s world the possibility of the social surd, nor to ignore it for it is a fact, nor to mistake it for an intelligibility and so systematize and perpetuate it, but to acknowledge it as a problem and to embrace its solution.⁸¹

It follows that one must love all human beings with a self-sacrificing love. Self-sacrificing love of God and all of one’s neighbor is repentant:

[It] deplors and regrets the scotosis of its dramatic bias and its involvement in the individual, group, and general bias of common sense; it repents its flight from self-knowledge, its rationalization of wrong, its surrender to evil; it detests its commitment to the counter-positions, its contribution to man’s decline through the successive adjustments of theory to ever worse practice, its share in the genesis and the propagation of the myths that confer on appearance the strength and power and passion that are the due of reality.⁸²

Such repentance overflows in sorrow:

. . . evil is revealed to be not merely a human wrong but also sin, revolt against God, an abuse of his goodness and love, a pragmatic calumny that hides from oneself and from others the absolute goodness and perfect love that through the universe and through men expresses itself to men.⁸³

Finally, such love is joyful:

For it is love of God above all and in all, and love is joy It is at one with the universe in being in love with God, and it shares its dynamic resilience and expectancy. As emergent probability, it ever rises above past achievement. As genetic process, it develops generic potentiality to its specific perfection. As dialectic, it overcomes evil both by meeting it with good will and by using it to reinforce the good. But good will wills the order of the universe, and so it wills with that order's dynamic joy and zeal.⁸⁴

It was Lonergan's conviction that "a religion that promotes self-transcendence to the point not only of justice, but of self-sacrificing love, will have a redemptive role in human society in as much as such love can undo the mischief of decline and restore the cumulative process of progress."⁸⁵ For Lonergan, God's redemption in Jesus is the solution to the problem of decline. Indeed the authentic mission of the Church, in its expressions and actions, is to generate (or to be) *cosmopolis* in the world.⁸⁶ For Lonergan, Dalton reminds us, cosmopolis is, "in the end, a religious solution" to the problem of evil.⁸⁷

In the end, the grand story which Berry-Swimme narrate and Lonergan's emergent probability explains is by no means "the story of a mechanistic, essentially meaningless universe" detailed by post-enlightenment scientists who intentionally eliminated any sense of human communion with nature.⁸⁸ Modern scientists have discovered that from its beginning the universe has a "mysterious self-organizing power" that over the millennia has worked itself out in an evolutionary sequence of irreversible transformations. Attend to the story, say Berry-Swimme, immerse yourself in it to the point of entrancement; it will evoke a new and even greater sense of awe than our primal ancestors experienced when in intimate communion with the natural world they stood fascinated by the splendor of a new day dawning or haunted by "night sounds" in the tropical rain forest or transfixed by the terrible beauty of lightning crashing all around or terror-struck by the catastrophic upthrust of earthquakes.⁸⁹ *The Universe Story* is ambitious — it attempts to provide for our time "what the mythic stories of the universe provided for tribal peoples and for the earlier classical civilizations" and indeed to insert "the human into the irreversible historical sequence of universe transformations." Truly authentic and self-transcending individuals, motivated by value, will assume responsibility for the welfare of the ecological environment. The book is also modest: its authors express the hope that "others will fill in what is missing, correct what is improperly presented, and deepen our understanding of the ongoing story."⁹⁰ In the end, attend to yourself and to the great nature writers like Barry Lopez who reports from the field that "the world is in flames I see the developers' bulldozers arrayed at the mouth of every canyon, poised at the edge of every plain" and, taking stock, echoes the

cry of eminent scientists to religious leaders almost three decades ago:

What being a naturalist has come to mean to me, sitting in my mornings and evenings by the river, hearing the clack of herons through the creak of swallows over the screams of osprey under the purl of fox sparrows . . . is this: Pay attention to the mystery. Apprentice to the best apprentices. Rediscover in nature your own biology. Write and speak with appreciation for all you have been gifted. Recognize that a politics with no biology, or politics without field biology, or a political platform in which human biological requirements form but one plank, is a vision of the gates of Hell.⁹¹

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1. *Method in Theology*, 55.
 2. "Preserving and Cherishing the Earth: An Appeal for Joint Commitment in Religion and Science; quoted in David S. Toolan, S.J., "'Nature is a Heraclitean Fire': Reflections on Cosmology in an Ecological Age." *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (23/5: November 1991) 1.
 3. *Ibid.*, 8.
 4. Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story from the Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era: A Celebration Of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992)
 5. *Ibid.*, 1-5.
 6. Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth: The Contributions of Thomas Berry and Bernard Lonergan* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1999.
 7. Berry-Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 2.
 8. *Ibid.*, 14.
 9. *Ibid.*, 3.
 10. *Ibid.*, 20-21.
 11. *Ibid.*, 17.
 12. *Ibid.*, 21.
 13. *Ibid.*, 18.
 14. *Ibid.*, 3.
 15. *Ibid.*, 19.
 16. *Ibid.*, 18-19.
 17. *Ibid.*, 19.
 18. *Ibid.*, 22.
 19. "Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire," 18.
 20. *Ibid.*, 18.
 21. David A. Toolan, S.J., "Nature Is a Heraclitean Fire: Reflections on Cosmology in an Ecological Age" (*Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 23/5: November 1991), 17.
 22. *Ibid.*, 19.
 23. *The Universe Story*, 7.
 24. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prokaryote> From Greek *pro* (before) *karyon* (nut, kernel, cell).
 25. *The Universe Story*, 9.
 26. *Ibid.*, 89.
 27. *Ibid.*, 119.
 28. Cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eukaryote>. Called eukariotic from the Greek *eu* "true" and *karyon* "nut".
 29. For meiotic sex, see Berry-Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 105-111. See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meiosis>
 30. *The Universe Story*, 139.
 31. *Ibid.*, 10.

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32. Phanerozoic. "Visible life", i.e., visible to the naked eye. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phanerozoic>
33. Gymnosperm (naked seed): see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gymnosperm>
34. Berry-Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 116-117.
35. *Ibid.*, 271.
36. *Ibid.*, 118.
37. Angiosperm (seedcase): see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angiosperm_Phylogeny_Group
38. *The Universe Story*, 123.
39. *Ibid.*, 123-124.
40. *Ibid.*, 140.
41. *A Theology for the Earth*, 2.
42. *Ibid.*, 2-4.
43. For a summary of the essentials of the notion of emergent probability, see *Insight*, 125-126. For the consequent properties of a world process, see *Insight*, 126-128.
44. *A Theology for the Earth*, 143.
45. *Ibid.*, 142 and *Insight*, 316-317.
46. *Ibid.*, 143.
47. On the universe as 'emergently probable' see Charles C. Hefling, Jr., "Philosophy, Theology, and God" in *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 129-132.
48. *A Theology for the Earth*, 144.
49. *Insight*, 115.
50. *Ibid.*, 117.
51. See *Insight*, 121-128.
52. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ginkgo_Biloba
53. <http://www.xs4all.nl/~kwanten/hiroshima.htm>
54. *Insight*, 125.
55. Hefling, op. cit., 129-130.
56. Berry-Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 135.
57. *A Theology for the Earth*, 145.
58. *Ibid.*, 144.
59. *Ibid.*, 144.
60. *Insight*, 51.
61. *Ibid.*, 52.
62. *Ibid.*, 48.
63. *Ibid.*, 128.
64. *Ibid.*, 52.
65. Michael Shute addresses head on the possible problem that, since it is hierarchical, Lonergan's explanatory account of world process is open to the feminist charge that the great chain of being is a distorted patriarchal hierarchy. But, Shute argues, Lonergan's insistence upon authenticity and self-transcendence enables one to distinguish between hierarchies that 'enrich' and those that 'impoverish.' See "Emergent Probability and the Ecofeminist Critique of Hierarchy" in Cynthia Crysdale, ed., *Lonergan and Feminism*, 147-174.
66. *Insight*, 125.
67. *Method in Theology*, 241.
68. Berry-Swimme, *The Universe Story*, 38.
69. Toolan, "Nature is a Heraclitean Fire," 37.
70. Quoted by Mariana Gosnell in her review of Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe* (New York Times, March 16, 2006).
71. *Insight*, 235, 252.
72. Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 148.
73. Decline has recognizable characteristics. See Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 148-150; *Insight*, 247-250, 251-257; *Method in Theology*, 52-55 and 242-244.
74. Quoted by Mariana Gosnell in her review of Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe* (New York Times, March 16, 2006).
75. "The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World" in *Collection*, edited by Frederick E. Crowe

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76. See Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 161; *Insight*, 238-242.
77. Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 161.
78. *Ibid.*, 162.
79. For Lonergan's solution to the problem of evil and decline, see *Insight*, 687-730.
80. *Insight*, 699.
81. *Ibid.*, 699.
82. *Ibid.*, 700.
83. *Ibid.*, 700.
84. *Ibid.*, 700.
85. *Method in Theology*, 55.
86. Anne Marie Dalton, *A Theology for the Earth*, 166. *Insight*, 718-725; *Method in Theology*, 364-368.
87. Dalton., 162-163; also 163-167.
88. *The Universe Story*, 238.
89. *Ibid.*, 238.
90. *Ibid.*, 5. For Anne Marie Dalton's final assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of *The Universe Story* in the light of Lonergan's intentionality analysis, see *A Theology for the Earth*, 199-200.
91. *Vintage Lopez*, (New York: Vantage Books, 2004), 124-125.

Epilogue

*The present work, then, may be said to operate on three levels. It is a study of human understanding. It unfolds the philosophic implications of understanding. It is a campaign against the flight from understanding.*¹

Bernard Lonergan

We have reached the point where we must answer the questions we raised in the introduction to this book. Who then is Bernard Lonergan? What has he achieved? Something really important that merits the world's attention? Or something that will not hold up under the relentless winnowing of time? If his achievement is indeed significant, what precise contribution has he made? In particular, has he produced anything of use to believers engaged in dialogue with contemporary secular thinkers?

In the course of the book you have been tracing Lonergan's exploration of the realms of meaning and have come to some understanding of the reach of desire and the realms in which the Eros of your spirit operates. Yours has not been, as Lonergan predicted, a journey to "some distant region of the globe" which you never visited, or "some strange and mystical experience" which you never shared. Rather, to paraphrase Proust, "the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in understanding understanding."²

The aim of the present book, moreover, is the same as the aim of *Insight*: "to issue an invitation to a personal, decisive act." For many, Lonergan warned, it would be a hard slog, a prolonged and arduous journey of self-discovery, for "the labor of self-appropriation cannot occur at a single leap" and, "like all development, it can be solid and fruitful only by being painstaking and slow."³ But happily, he promised, the journey would end in "a personal appropriation of the concrete, dynamic structure immanent and recurrently operative in [your] own cognitional activities."⁴ Lonergan was confident that you would by self-appropriation reach bedrock, your self in your conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility.⁵

Lonergan mapped five realms of meaning and invited you to explore the terrain with him. As he put it, "pluck my general phrases from the dim world of thought to set them in the pulsing flow" of your own life.⁶

In the course of the book, then, you explored the realm of common sense. One wishes to understand how things are made and how they work. Also how people work together in the fields of technology, economy, and politics — indeed in any area where human cooperation is required to move the human race from the search for food and shelter through the creation of the ancient great civilizations and finally by trial and error and a centuries long history of progress, decline, and recovery to reach the age in which you live today. You then explored the realm of theory, where man's inquiring mind toils

to understand the nature of things and how things relate to each other. You next explored the realm of transcendence where one desires to know and love God and the neighbor as oneself. You went on to explore the realm of art where one desires to grasp significant form and so to appreciate or create the beautiful. Most importantly for Lonergan midway on the journey you explored the realm of interiority. There one wishes to understand how the mind comes to know the true and choose the good by an inbuilt, invariant structure of interrelated cognitional and volitional operations: experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. Indeed such activities are what enable you to explore the reach of desire, the five rich realms in which desire functions. By his analysis of intentionality Lonergan laid bare for you the bedrock of all intentional and volitional activity. That rock is you, something verifiable within consciousness, yourself as a human subject with an inbuilt, invariant structure — those dynamic patterns of intentional activities from which stem all coming to know and decide. These activities if properly used guarantee the objectivity which modern empiricists and idealists fail to reach, for as Lonergan helped you demonstrate for yourself authentic subjectivity yields objectivity. The hope is that by now you have discovered and appropriated that transcendent something within yourself -- the original and normative pattern of current and related operations that yield cumulative and progressive results. This generalized method transcends all special methods and makes specific what Lonergan calls the transcendental precepts or the five imperatives for authentic living:

- Be attentive.
- Be intelligent.
- Be reasonable.
- Be responsible.
- Be in love.⁷

Obey the precepts, Lonergan asserts, and you will advert to “the difference between attention and inattention, intelligence and stupidity, reasonableness and other reasonableness, responsibility and irresponsibility.”⁸ Put it another way. Obey the precepts and you grow in authenticity. Ignore them and your life becomes inauthentic. The civilization that obeys them makes progress; indeed, Lonergan was convinced, society ignores them to its own peril.

In his preface to *Insight*, Lonergan asks himself, What practical good can come of this book? His answer is unequivocal: “Insight is the source not only of theoretical knowledge, but also of all its practical applications and, indeed, of all intelligent activity.” His reasoning runs as follows:

Insight into insight, then, will reveal what activity is intelligent, and insight into oversights will reveal what activity is unintelligent. But to be practical is to do the intelligent thing and to be unpractical is to keep blundering about. It follows that insight into both insight and oversight is the very key to practicality.”⁹

Pedro Arrupe, the charismatic leader of the Jesuits from 1965 until 1983, seems to have shared Lonergan's conviction:

Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

With Lonergan in the lead, then, you followed the investigations of great philosophical pathfinders from the ancients like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle through the early moderns like Descartes, Hume, Kant, Schopenhauer, Marx and Nietzsche and finally to postmodernists like Lyotard and Rorty. By using the functional specialty of dialectics, you traced the paths by which many secular thinkers since the Enlightenment have ended up in a philosophical cul-de-sac, metaphysically homeless, alienated in the world without meaning or ultimate purpose and who in the event lost all belief in reason, in God, in any Beyond. It is the inherited consensus of the modern secular elite that the center does not, indeed cannot, hold. As Lake Wobegon philosopher Garrison Keillor put it facetiously:

I don't think any of us believe what we say we believe. It's just our neurons responding to a phrase or something, a learned response that makes us feel warm for some reason that goes back to childhood. And in the end it doesn't matter. We're motes of dust on a tiny insignificant planet spinning around in a solar system so vast our minds can't comprehend it, and one day the planet will implode and all will be lost -- Beethoven, Plato, Monet, the Minnesota Twins --- and it won't make any difference to the cosmos whatsoever, so why should we care who wins the election in November?

As noted earlier, the intellectual world today is for Lonergan, sharply divided between "this-worldly secularists and other-worldly believers." There is a deep intellectual divide between the way they understand reality and values. What are the practical implications? Lonergan sees it this way:

The other-worldly believers hold that God exists and is operative in religious living; the this-worldly secularists do not. Again, the other-worldly believers acknowledge other-worldly values, and this acknowledgment influences in varying degrees their this-worldly valuations; but the this-worldly secularists avoid such a complication for they acknowledge no other-worldly values and so are free to concentrate on the values of this world.¹⁰

In the present crisis of philosophy, however, Michael McCarthy insists that "the

need for cognitive unity has never been greater, but to many responsible thinkers the aspiration to satisfy it now seems vain and illusory.”¹¹ For them our understanding is fragmented and, sadly, nothing adds up. There is no intellectual glue to hold the pieces together in a coherent whole. Indeed, we all live in a grotesque era marked by the horror of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, the Gulag archipelago, by genocide in Ruanda, by the attack on the World Trade Center and the collateral slaughter of civilians in Iraq and the torture of suspected terrorists in Guantánamo. In the end, life is but an aching wound. The only option, secular thinkers suggest, is “that we must learn to live, culturally and personally, without intellectual connection and unity.”¹²

For his part as philosopher, theologian, and Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan took a different and radically optimistic position based on the supporting bedrock which you have discovered for yourself in your own consciousness. One final summary spells out the implications:

...knowing in the strictly human sense is achieved when we break from the world of the infant, from the world that is reached, seen, heard, into the world as mediated by meaning, the world of ‘is’ and ‘is not.’ The world that is mediated by meaning [and motivated by value] is the world of the believer, the world of the theologian, the world of a realist philosophy, the world of natural and human science, and the world of common sense.¹³

Indeed Lonergan was embedded in the two thousand year old Christian faith and tradition with its vision of sin and redemption playing itself out in history. He embraced the abiding Christian concern for the transcendent value of ‘truthfulness, beauty and goodness’, a value which, as literary critic Lucy Beckett writes, “rests in their relation to the absolute truth, beauty and goodness that are one in God and that are definitively revealed to the world in Christ.”¹⁴ Lonergan restores faith in reason and in reason’s ability to reach objective knowledge.

In the end, Lonergan was convinced, understanding understanding enables you to understand something of the truth, the goodness, the beauty, and, yes, the glory of all that can be understood. With Lonergan you can assert with confidence, based on faith and reason: God exists and God’s grandeur is real. The journey ends with a cry of wonder: “Our subject has been the act of insight or understanding, and God is the unrestricted act of understanding, the eternal rapture glimpsed in every Archimedean cry of ‘Eureka.’”¹⁵ Or as Hopkins trumpeted:

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

1. *Insight*, xii.

2. Alexandra Johnson, *Leaving a Trace* (Boston, New York, London: Little, Brown and Company, the 2001) 91.

3. *Ibid.*, xxiii.

4. *Ibid.*, xvii.

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5. *Method in Theology*, 20.
 6. *Insight*, xix.
 7. *Method in Theology*, 20.
 8. *Ibid.*, 20.
 9. *Insight*, xiv-xv.
 10. "Pope John's Intention," *The Third Collection* 234.
 11. *The Crisis of Philosophy*, 284.
 12. *Ibid.*, 284.
 13. "The Analogy of Meaning," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, 199.
 14. Lucy Beckett, *In the Light of Christ*, 1.
 15. *Insight*, 684.

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